



**UNIVERSITY** *of the*  
**WESTERN CAPE**

**THE PROMOTION OF READING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS  
THROUGH TEXT SELECTION, EVALUATION AND INNOVATIVE  
METHODOLOGIES**



BY

PARVEEN PALEKER

A THESIS IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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SUPERVISOR: PROF. SIVAKUMAR SIVASUBRAMANIAM

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that **THE PROMOTION OF READING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS THROUGH TEXT SELECTION, EVALUATION AND INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

*ppaleker*  
.....

December 2016

Parveen Paleker



## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late uncle Abdul Rashied Paleker and my late grandparents Abida and Omar Paleker who have been instrumental in my passion towards reading, empowerment and education. This thesis is also dedicated to my pillars of strength, my beloved parents Zainul Abideen and Halima Paleker. Thank you for all that you have done for me and continue to do for me. Lastly, my late and dear friend, Mariam Ebrahim, my journey and long stay here at UWC is because you stood alongside me and guided to this point. Your helping hands, critical eye and technology skills are sorely missed especially during the M.Ed process.



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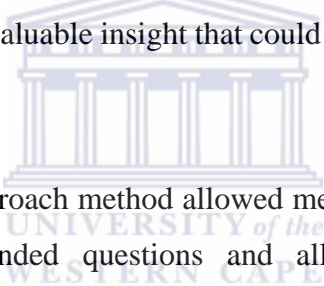
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## ABSTRACT

This study facilitated and evaluated the pedagogical approaches to the literacy pandemic that has afflicted South African learners, particularly high school learners in grade 8 and 10 in the English Home language classrooms. One of the key aims of the study was to find alternate and innovative pedagogical methods to increase the literacy levels in South African schools with the underlying focus being on promoting reading among High School learners. The objective of the study was to provide recommendations based on the findings of the research data, that could assist the educators and the school management on how to facilitate, guide and support high school learners in term of promoting reading through text selection, text evaluation and innovative teaching methodologies. Based on the proposed research questions, aims and objectives, this study was conducted using a qualitative approach to obtain data. It was proposed that the knowledge of the factors which demotivate learners from reading could be used to help educators to promote reading among high school learners. It was also proposed that this information would provide valuable insight that could be used to address the low literacy level at the school.



The qualitative research approach method allowed me to conduct interviews; classroom observations; pose open-ended questions and allow for further discussion and investigation based on responses from participants. The study was situated within an interpretive, qualitative research paradigm using a case study design. The research was conducted in the Western Cape at a government high school named Cravenby Senior Secondary School (CSS). The motive behind choosing a government funded school is based on my belief that schools such as these need support given that one finds that the majority of South African learners are in the government schools. The research participants we derived from the focus group sampling method which consisted of 12 learners per group thus having 24 learners altogether from grade 8 and grade 10. Four educators also participated in the study; three of the four educators taught the grade 8 learners and two of the four educators taught the grade 10 learners. The research instruments included, for the learners, a demographic information sheet, interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations. The participant educators had to complete an information sheet, questionnaire, and participate in an individual interview as well as classroom observation. Content analysis was used to analyse and qualitative data by virtue of a three-stage open coding process for the content analysis. This was organized

according to the main and sub-questions. The responses from the research participants was presented in the form of a summary in linear notes and summary tables. Key themes and issues were highlighted as themes and sub-themes in alignment with the theoretical framework.

The findings of the study illustrated learners do in fact read too little and that their academic achievements are largely motivated by the amount of time they spend on reading. The study also proves that learners will read and engage with texts which they are able to relate to. The findings revealed that they the selection of texts which should be read and studied in high schools needs to be reevaluated and aligned to the needs and interests of learners and their daily realities. Based on these findings and those that are discussed in chapter four recommendations were made in how based on how to assist high school educators in their various roles to teach; guide; support; facilitate and evaluate literacy and promote reading among high school learners.

#### **KEYWORDS:**

Approaches  
Curriculum  
Educators  
Evaluation  
Innovation  
Learners  
Learning  
Literacy  
Literature  
Methods  
Pedagogy  
Prescribed text  
Reading  
Teaching  
Text selection





## Table of Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	ii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vii
<b>KEYWORDS:</b> .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.1 A POINT OF DEPARTURE .....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND; RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	2
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	5
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	6
1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	8
1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
1.7.1. DATA COLLECTION METHODS .....	10
1.8 STUDY SETTING,CONTEXT, PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT .....	11
1.9 DATA ANALYSIS.....	12
1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH .....	13
1.11 RESEARCH ETHICAL STATEMENT.....	14
1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE .....	14
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	16
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	16
2.2 DEFINITIONS OF KEYWORDS AND THEMES.....	16
2.2.1 DEFINING LITERACY .....	16
2.3 LOW LITERACY LEVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	18
2.4 LINKING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY TO THE CURRICULUM.....	19
2.5 LANGUAGE AND LEARNING .....	21
2.6 READING IN RELATION TO LITERACY.....	21
2.7 LITERACY RESULTS CALL FOR CONCERN .....	24
2.8 READING AS A PROCESS .....	26
2.9 TEXT SELECTION AND EVALUATION .....	27
2.10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON LEARNING.....	29
2.11 SOME ISSUES IN TESTING READING.....	36
<b>2.12 PROMOTING AND TESTING READING</b> .....	37

2. 12. 1 SOUTH AFRICAN CURRICULUM APPROACHES AND CLASSROOM REALITIES .....	41
2.12.2 CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR.....	54
2.12.3 CURRICULUM SYNERGY .....	56
2.13 INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL METHODS- BLENDED LEARNING .....	58
2.14 CONCLUSION .....	59
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>60</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	60
3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY .....	60
3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	61
3.4. SITUATING THE STUDY IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	62
3.4.1 DEFINING AND CRITIQUING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH .....	62
3.5 CASE STUDY DESIGN.....	64
3.5.1 CRITIQUE OF A CASE STUDY DESIGN .....	65
3.6 RESEARCH SITE; CONTEXT; PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT .....	66
3.6.1 OVERVIEW .....	66
3.6.2 RESEARCH SITE .....	66
3.6.3 SAMPLING .....	67
3.6.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....	68
3.7. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	70
3.8. DATA COLLECTION METHODS; INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES .....	73
3.9 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEETS .....	75
3.10 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND RELATED PROCEDURES .....	83
3.11 INTERVIEWS .....	83
3.11.1 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS .....	83
3.11.2 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS.....	86
3.11.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS.....	86
3.11.4 INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS .....	87
3.11.5 INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS .....	87
3.11.6 QUESTIONNAIRES .....	88
3.11.7) QUESTIONNAIRES WITH LEARNERS .....	88
3.11.8) Questionnaire with the educators.....	93
3.11.9 CRITIQUE ON THE USE OF QUESTIONNAIRES.....	98
3.12 DATA ANALYSIS.....	99

<b>3.13 VALIDITY OF DATA</b> .....	99
3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	100
3.15 SUMMARY .....	101
<b>CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA</b> .....	102
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	102
4.1.1 RATIONALE FOR DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS .....	103
4.2 RESEARCH SITE .....	105
4.3 ACCOUNT OF SAMPLING.....	106
4.4 PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF DATA.....	107
4.5 PRESENTATION OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS .....	108
4.5.1 PROTOCOL.....	108
4.5.2 CLASSROOM SETTING.....	109
4.5.3 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS .....	110
4.5.4 DEBRIEFING AND SUMMARY: PERSONAL VIEWS OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS .....	115
4.6 FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS .....	116
4.6.1 FOCUS GROUP INDICATIONS- Grade 8 and then Grade 10 Participants .....	119
4.6.2 PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM EDUCATORS.....	142
4.6.2.2 EDUCATORS' RESPONSE TO THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	148
4.7 SUMMARY of FINDINGS- ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	153
4.8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....	154
4.8.1 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS (LEARNER PARTICIPANTS).....	154
4.8.2 FINDINGS FROM EDUCATOR PARTICIPANTS .....	157
4.9SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	160
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION</b> .....	161
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	161
5.2 Common Themes .....	161
5.2.1Theme 1: Out-dated material and approach.....	161
5.2.2 Theme 2: Implications.....	165
5.2.3 Theme 3: Stimulating pedagogical methods .....	169
5.2.4 THEME 4: EDUCATOR SUPPORT.....	170
5.3 SUMMARY .....	170
5.4 CONCLUSION .....	172
<b>CHAPTER 6-CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	173

6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	173
6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY .....	174
6.3 RE-EXAMINING RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES .....	175
6.4 PEDAGOGY AND INNOVATION.....	175
6.5 OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS .....	177
6.5.1 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS (LEARNER PARTICIPANTS) .....	177
6.5.2 FINDINGS FROM EDUCATOR PARTICIPANTS.....	179
6.6 LIMITATIONS OF the STUDY .....	184
6.6.1 LIMITATION ONE: SCHOOL AND GRADE SELECTION.....	184
6.6.2 LIMITATION TWO: LEARNER AND EDUCATOR AVAILABILITY .....	184
6.6.3 LIMITATION THREE: SAME INSTRUMENTS USED FOR GRADE 8 AND GRADE 10.....	185
6.6.4 LIMITATION FOUR: OPPORTUNITY NOT PRESENTED .....	185
6.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	186
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	187
6.8.1 RECOMMENDATION 1: INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND ASSESING .....	188
6.8.2 RECOMMENDATION: TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION .....	190
6.8.3RECOMMENDATION: NEGOTIATED CURRICULUM .....	190
6.9 CONCLUSION .....	192
7 REFERENCES .....	194
8 APPENDICES	
LETTERS OF PERMISSION Appendix: i .....	203
Appendix: ii .....	204
APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET .....	205
APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WCED) .....	207
APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL.....	209
APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION.....	211
APPENDIX 5: PERMISSION LETTER TO GRADE 8 and 10 English Home Language Educators	213
APPENDIX 6: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE EDUCATOR .....	215
APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS /EDUCATORS .....	216

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is meant to inform the background to my study and the promotion of reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative methodologies context in which the research was conducted. I further explain the problem statement, then the rationale for the study as well as the assumptions that the study was based on. Furthermore, the chapter presents the aim, objectives and research questions to which I intend providing answers later in this study. In addition, the chapter briefly discusses the research issues that the study was predicated upon and the rationale for my choice of method. Lastly this chapter provides an outline of chapters that would constitute my thesis.

### **1.1 A POINT OF DEPARTURE**

I believe that education is a reflection of society's worthiness. The low literacy levels in South Africa (SA) appears to present problems of complex and an ever complexifying nature as well. It is important that SA has educated and literate people so that its society can become self-sufficient and have critical thinkers who make informed decisions for the benefit of their society and country at large. More importantly I believe that the more literate people in SA, the stronger the country's economy is likely to be. Reading in my opinion is a vital element in literacy. It is evident based on South Africa's annual budget presented that the lion's share of its financial budget is allocated towards education. However, SA's low literacy levels continue to remain low and calls for urgent intervention. I feel that the low literacy levels in SA can improve if learners read more. Through reading, I believe that learners vocabulary can expand and their writing and conversational skills can improve. Additionally, I believe that the low literacy levels will improve if innovative pedagogical applications are implemented to teach the curriculum. Furthermore, it is important that SA's educators use a negotiated approach to the curriculum. I then wish to firstly present a brief background and rationale which serves to motivate the reason for the proposed study. The purpose of the research is to study and re-evaluate the pedagogical approaches to the illiteracy pandemic among South African learners and society. One of the key aims of the study is to find pedagogical methods to increase the literacy levels in South African schools with the underlying focus being on promoting reading among our South African High School learners. The research was conducted in Cape Town at a government high school

named Cravenby Senior Secondary School during the first academic term of 2015. The motive behind choosing a government school is due to my belief that schools such as these need support and one finds that the majority of South African learners are in the government schools. If government schools can improve their literacy levels, this would help the South African economy as more learners would progress in high schools and possibly further their education and training post grade 12.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND; RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Even after twenty years of democracy in South Africa, this developing country's literacy levels still continue, to feature among the lowest in the world literacy expectancy levels. This shocking news affects me deeply as a young and recently qualified educator and senior tutor of Academic Literacy at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Furthermore, the reality of these low literacy levels is rife in the very classes (in which I teach) that is packed with first year university students who have just exited the South African schooling system. There are many reasons which drive these low literacy levels in South Africa (SA). Thus, this research aims to highlight some of the reasons for these low literacy levels in South Africa. This research focuses on one element of literacy and that being reading.

All the non- white people were deemed to have been at a disadvantage in terms of education during the Apartheid era (pre 1994) in South Africa. As a consequence of this, SA's literacy levels are low and their education system is still undergoing a process of transformation. The desired South African schooling system is one where every South African learner is guaranteed quality and equal education. As a means of moving forward, Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was introduced with a view of promoting an equal education system and curriculum to undo the injustices of Apartheid. OBE's main objectives was to introduce new methods and approaches to teaching and learning with the emphasis on learner-centred approaches in all learning areas (Department of Education-DoE, 2002). One of the main objectives of the language curriculum of OBE was to strengthen learners' language competencies such as communication and comprehension skills, language skills, listening skills as well as thinking, writing and reasoning skills. During the Post-apartheid period, the OBE curriculum was introduced to all schools in SA. Since then, the curriculum has been

revised several times in an attempt to improve the education crisis in SA. However, OBE was perceived as a failure in South African schools as it was not effectively implemented and executed in all of the schools across SA. According to Christie (1992, p.221) there was no improvement in learners' performance in literacy despite the new approaches to teaching and learning which was introduced by OBE. The lack of educational change came as a result of daily contextual realities of teaching and learning; continuing schooling inequalities and issues such as the 'poverty gap' across the South African schooling system (Spren and Valley: 2010, p 55-56). This is to suggest that OBE was a curriculum that SA's schools were not ready for nor quipped in order for OBE to be fully implemented in schools. While Apartheid may have been over; the harsh effects of it are still rife in the majority of schools in SA. Many of the government schools in SA (especially in Townships and the Cape Flats) remained under-resourced or dysfunctional in terms of facilities and material as well as human resources. In addition, there was a lack teacher-training workshops to ensure sufficient training pre implementation of OBE and while OBE was being taught at schools. Hence the failure of OBE in South African schools was as a result of the lack of planning and resourcing before the implementation of it.

In terms of educational change SA schools still face a paucity of textbooks and learning support material which are vital to learning and teaching. Furthermore, there were teacher training inadequacies where teachers were poorly trained and prepared for the realities of the classroom; while others received no training. In SA classrooms there is a lack of educational support. There is a need for teacher-training especially for educators who teach at bilingual schools and have learners with special needs coming from low socio-economic backgrounds who have many domestic problems that has an impact on their learning and development (Spren and Vally, 2010, p.40-42). These learners with special needs can be referred to as learners who do not have access to reading materials outside of the classroom as well as learners who have learning barriers/challenges.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) introduced in 2011 replaced OBE. CAPS provides advisory content and skills that should be covered over a specific period of time in an academic year. In addition, the amount of formal assessments in CAPS are stipulated by the Department of Education (DoE). CAPS shows educators how they should plan; teach and assess learners in a specific time-frame (this is grade and learning area specific). All of the above stated are ways in which school

management and district officials are able to monitor the implementation of the curriculum and provide support to educators (DoE, 2011).

This study is driven by my personal experience (high school and BA English major student) dating back from 2003-2011 where I disliked learning the Shakespearian texts selected. The method of teaching and evaluation created this dislike and reluctance towards reading the Shakespearian texts and other texts too. The method of evaluation by educators/lecturers was strict and demanded restricted answers; limiting the option to express personal views and interpretations of the texts. Thus, I have always felt that the strict marking criterion for assessing literature in the SA classrooms needs to be changed so that there is room for open-ended responses and personal interpretation of texts.

Looking at the old education system in SA and to a degree the current education system (CAPS), one sees how it caters to passive receptive learners. The curriculum does not allow for debates and learners challenging the information the educators impart on them. Instead the education system of CAPS is more like the banking education practice where learners are seen as depositories for knowledge. This limits learners thinking and class interaction and engagement. The curriculum was driven by examinations often driving learners towards the method of parroted learning. Furthermore, the curriculum strictly used textbooks and worksheets thus making it a teacher-centred curriculum. Given my rather disempowering experience in high school, I would like to promote a negotiated curriculum approach towards teaching and learning as I feel that it is important for educators and learners to be given opportunities to decide which texts should be selected and taught and how it should be evaluated through a guided curriculum. Hence, the advice to have a discussion with district officials from the DoE regarding the selection of texts and its relevance to learners should be made. Teaching and evaluating texts should not only be limited to language; grammar and restricted answers; it should however be directed at freeing the mind of learners in a way that they are able to discuss the texts they read openly and critique it in a way they interpreted the text by also providing substantial evidence to their claims.

The main focus of my research is on improving literacy through promoting reading among high school learners. This then will firstly discuss the research problems identified, which prompted this research. Secondly, the research questions and



objectives I wish to base the study on will be presented. As a foundation for this research problems a literature review and theoretical framework will be presented later on in chapter two to highlight the breath and diversity of literature that relates to the research problems and questions; thus resulting in the research questions and methodology being better understood.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

My research problem identified that South African youth read far too little and as a result South Africa's literacy levels are low. There is a lack of interest in reading among high school learners which has serious repercussions for their schooling and future careers. The school curriculum is often a child's first induction to reading; this could either steer a child in the direction of wanting to read or be the reason for no interest in it. I believe, the more learners read the better they are able to interact with various people and understand the world. Knowledge can be acquired and understood through reading. Reading broadens one's understanding, increases knowledge and vocabulary. It gives room for expression and can be done for investigative purposes or as a hobby or means of relaxation. The method of evaluating reading can influence a learner to read more; or to develop a feeling of not wanting to read. Reading is crucial for development and gaining knowledge in order for a learner to pass and pursue further studies. Thus, South Africa's low literacy levels can be addressed by promoting reading in its schools.

In my opinion education happens through reading. Through my teaching and personal experiences, I have observed that the South African society by large has no desire towards reading. There is a lack of reading in SA. Furthermore, educators are not creative in their attempts to promote and evaluate reading. The manner educators use to expose and introduce learners to reading often push them away from the desire and enjoyment of it. Literature texts made available to learners are restricted and often found boring and the strict marking criteria for evaluation hinders learners desire to read. The evaluation methods of texts are restricted and educators furthermore expect a particular "right" answer which limits learners' ability to explore and present their own interpretation of what they have read and understood.

This low literacy level in SA identified as my research problem is interesting to me as I whole-heartedly believe in the power of reading and through its promotion improve

SA's literacy levels. Additionally, I am of the opinion that the lack of reading is a major problem which mirrors SA's low literacy levels. To succeed at school and tertiary level, I believe that the more a learner reads the better the results of that learner would be. Reading gives rise to making informed decisions (critical thinking); thus this can result in economic independence. If more SA citizens are able to read and write; the researcher is of the opinion that this could improve SA's economy, having more educated citizens working at places requiring specialised knowledge and qualification. Furthermore, they can create jobs due to their literacy competencies.

There are many reasons why learners perform poorly in the English subject. One of the reasons could be that English may not be their mother tongue. Another reason could be that the learners read very little. However, in some instances there are external factors contributing towards learners' poor performance. One of these reasons came to my mind while watching a documentary film called *Testing Hope Molly Blank*. This documentary showed some educators are not equipped and experienced to teach the prescribed texts and some teach English in the home language of the learners (Blank, 2008). In light of this, through classroom observations and interviewing educators I will also find out if the educators understand the text they are teaching and how they respond to learners' questions pertaining to the text.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature I have reviewed and the desire to promote reading among high school learners through text selection, text evaluation and innovative methodologies, necessitate my posing the following research questions:

- 1) How are texts selected?
- 2) Why are texts selected?
- 3) How are texts taught?
- 4) How are texts evaluated?
- 5) How can texts that are taught be evaluated?
- 6) Why do learners read very little?
- 7) Why do learners have low literacy levels?

## 1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

South Africa's schools currently use CAPS as it seeks to provide educators with guidelines on language teaching through a text-based and communicative approach. Despite this attempt to help educators and learners reach the international literacy level, SA's low literacy levels continues. While CAPS recommends that the text-based approach is one of the best suited strategies used to facilitate language learning; this study will attempt to investigate how educators understand and implement the use of it in order to teach; improve learners' literacy skills and promote reading. While the primary aim of this research is to promote reading at high school level through text selection, evaluation and innovative pedagogical methodologies the following were among my research aims and objectives too:

1. Investigate English Language educators' implementation of the Text-Based Approach to the curriculum.
2. Observations will also be done to find out how texts are selected.
3. To examine how these texts are taught to the learners. Additionally, observation and investigation will also be conducted to see how learners receive; understand and respond to these lessons.
4. To determine innovative applications that can enhance language learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

The objective of the study was to find practical methods to motivate learners to read and progress to the next grade. When evaluating literature, the aim was to move the focus from grammar and expected answers by directing this focus towards open-ended responses. The objective was to drive the use of a variety of alternate and variation of assessment approaches as opposed to the common ones predicated on formal tests and examinations. In light of the above, the underlying objective of this study is to motivate more South African learners to read; empower and enrich themselves to a level that enables them to access further higher education opportunities. While some objectives stated are long-term goals, my main aim as the researcher is to address the low reading levels in SA and seek out ways to improve it by starting at a high school where learners are encouraged to read, become literate and further their education post matric level.

## 1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the research questions, aims and objectives my study used a qualitative approach to obtain data. The qualitative approach allowed me to conduct interviews; classroom observations; pose open ended questions and allowed for further discussion and investigation based on responses from participants (Punch, 2009). Given the complexifying nature of the research problems identified and the research questions and aims stated earlier; my choice to use key aspects of qualitative research enabled me to understand the participants' responses in terms of their understanding (Mouton, 2001, p. 194). This view is deemed to be an effective way in which specific information regarding values, opinions, behaviour and social contexts of a particular group can be obtained. Qualitative research in psychology involves an in-depth study of psychological phenomena within naturally occurring setting and from the perspective of the research participants. This study involves a school which accommodates learners from a low socio-economic background. Thus, I feel that their emotions and views would form the basis of the qualitative methodology in my study, which can support a phenomenological approach. Interviews have been structured and conducted as a means of extracting research input from the school and its participants. The reason for using a qualitative approach to research is to capture naturally occurring phenomena from the insider's (research participant's) perspective, which results in detailed idiographic representations. Qualitative research is conducted in a real life setting and findings are considered context is culture bound and require in-depth description under which research is conducted (Gutkin and Reynolds, 2009, p. 31). Qualitative research is most appropriately done in a case study style. *Case* refers to the individual (e.g., teacher) and the context (e.g. classroom) (Gutkin and Reynolds, 2009).

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on the low literacy levels in SA particularly that of reading as mentioned earlier, the focus of my research was on promoting reading through text selection and innovative pedagogical strategies. The design of the study is that of a case study. Therefore, the research was designed to use classroom observations; interviews; audio recordings; and gathering marks of learners' English assessments and comparing these with their ability to read and the amount of time per week they spend on reading. The research examined the types of literature learners are exposed to at high school level and the significance thereof. Additionally, the method which the English educators use to teach and evaluate literature was observed and this was to be done to see if reading was promoted by the educators. The response and progress from learners was also meant to provide insight into what the causes are for learners' low literacy levels and reasons learners did not want to read.

Interviews were conducted to gather information about a specific topic from a group of individuals. Focus groups are an efficient way to gather information from a range of informants and the group size vary from the population that is being explored (8-10 members). Although a larger group would provide a wider range of perspectives and may prevent participation by all members by contrast smaller groups could provide more in depth information from participants. In depth interviews are semi-structured and focuses on gathering data from individuals about specific topics related to the research question. In depth interviews are one of the primary methods for gathering data from the individuals who represents the population of interest (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009, p.39). Therefore, I choose 12 learners per group in order to have control and gain maximum input and response from every member. Throughout the study I engaged with the English educators at the schools and provided them with feedback of the findings and progress of the study; this I believe ensured that the research information is gathered is accurate.

### 1.7.1. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection method consisted of classroom observations; questionnaires; conducting interviews at the high school with its Principal; the HOD and English educators and their learners. In addition, some aspects of the phenomenological research method were utilized in order to obtain data based on the study.

The school Principal and HOD for English provided me with the background information and demographics of the school. A discussion with the Principal and the English educators around their approach of CAPS took place. Furthermore, they were asked to respond to the question “How do you believe you can assist learners with poor and low literacy levels at your school”? The aim of this question was to allow educators to do some introspection on their current pedagogical methods used in their classrooms and allow them to be creative and innovative in their responses. This question was aimed at creating a discussion that will provide insight into the current literacy pandemic South Africa faces. After the discussion, classroom observations were conducted to observe the educators’ teaching methodologies and observe their learners’ responses while they teach literature. Subsequently, through this observation I looked at the educators’ pedagogical methods used and whether or not these methods promote reading; free writing and probe open-ended questions. Therefore, the interviews and observations were conducted in order to see whether or not a negotiated curriculum is practised in the English classroom. I examined the correlation between the amount of time a learner spends on reading and the results that learner obtains for English. This was done to see if the idea of a learner who reads frequently performs well academically is true. The intention of this study is to promote a culture of reading in both schools and communities so that SA has more literate and empowered learners who will pursue studies beyond the gates of high school. The interviews were consistent with the five research questions posed as well as some of the aims and objectives of the study. These were to be phrased as questions to the English HOD, educators and their learners. The study made use of structured interviews and unstructured interviews as they are perhaps the best suited methods for assessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and their ideas of reality (Punch, 2009, p. 145). Thus, the interviews with the Principal, HOD, English educators and their grade 8 and 10 learners were designed to cover the research questions and aims of the study. These interviews initially were unstructured so that the researcher could gain a wide spectrum of the

phenomenon at the school regarding pedagogical methodologies, text selection and evaluation methods. Thereafter, a round of structured interviews took place with the above mentioned participants. In the structured interviews the HOD together with the English educators were also interviewed individually. Interviewing the HOD is necessary because the HOD is in control of implementation and assessing the English curriculum within the school and the findings are reported via the HOD to the school Principal.

I was meant to provide a report to the school including the research findings and an overview of the school promotion methods of reading and evaluation of texts. Subsequently the report was meant to provide educators with ideas to enhance/improve their pedagogical and evaluation methods so that it promotes reading at school which appeals to learners. I would also urge the school's Principal and HOD of English to raise the point with district officials from DoE (when they do their school visits) to reevaluate the selection of texts and see whether or not they are still valid in the classrooms currently and if these texts appeal and are relevant to learners' interests. Texts selection should serve its academic purpose and desired outcomes; however, it should be selected based on its relevance and interest to the learners.

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## **1.8 STUDY SETTING, CONTEXT, PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT**

This research required the participation of one government High School (which mainly has learners from a middle- low socio-economic background) that has a minimum of three English educators. Participation by the Principal; English HOD and English educators was required in the study. Classroom observations were conducted and this was meant to specifically look at grade 8 and 10 learners' and their responses to the texts as well as lessons presented by educators. I have chosen a school in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town close to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) where I proposed to conduct the study: Cravenby Senior Secondary School.

## 1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

I understand that I am required to put aside all personal judgements and experiences and not force opinions and beliefs on research participants, as this could influence the participants' participation and truthfulness when conducting the research (Creswell, 1998). While collecting data it is important that it be transcribed and coded correctly in order to be used to reflect a true observation and study. The use of coding, I believed would help to create meaning and also discover new concepts that emerge from the data (Babbie and Mouton, 2001, p.492). The CAPS document was consulted to understand which prescribed texts are used for grade 8 and 10 learners. Classroom observations were conducted to see the methods used by educators to teach and evaluate prescribed texts and to also see learners' responses to this. I aimed to present data obtained from interviews; written responses and observations with educators and learners. In light of this, I made use of a thematic approach to identify themes which relate to the research questions of this study. According to Creswell (Creswell, 1998) the general structure of phenomenological study follows using six steps and this was meant to chime in with the key stages of my study:

- 1) The first step *Introduction: Problem and questions* will state the background; rationale and research questions which the study will answer (Creswell, 1998).
- 2) The second step *Research procedures: phenomenological and philosophical assumptions, data collection, analysis, outcomes*. Once I as the researcher obtain ethical clearance it will be taken to the school where the study will commence along with a brief summary of the research proposal and the researcher's visiting duration. I will be introduced to the school Principal, English HOD and educators. Lesson observation in the English class and interviews will be conducted with educators and grade 8 and 10 learners (Creswell, 1998).
- 3) The third step *Significant statements* will arise while conducting research (Creswell, 1998).
- 4) The fourth step *Meanings of statements*, will be unpacked by me and can be done through the help of the participants for an authentic and deepened understanding (Creswell, 1998).
- 5) The fifth step *Themes of meaning* looks at common themes that arise as a result of the findings of the research (Creswell, 1998).



- 6) The 6<sup>th</sup> *Exhaustive descriptions of phenomenon* are done through prior research and findings that I gain through the study. These are in-depth descriptions of what is to happen out in the field (Creswell, 1998).

All research conducted was captured and transcribed. The captured data from classroom observations; interviews; questionnaires; personal communications; official documents and learner performances will be presented. Furthermore, the thematic approach to identify themes relating to the study's research questions and aims would be stated.

## **1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

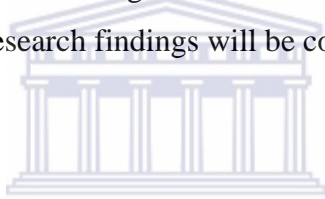
This study aimed at finding solutions to improving the low literacy levels in SA through promoting reading at high schools. The importance of this research stretches far beyond looking at methods to improve literacy at high schools. A key outcome would be to utilize this opportunity while gaining research, to provide educators and learners a platform to voice their experiences; concerns and recommendations in terms of improving the classroom experience is of importance. The study is significant in that it provides reasons and possible solutions for the low literacy levels in SA that can be further addressed. Some of the pedagogical challenges will be known as result of this study. The research findings will be shared with the school and with their permission it will be made available to interested parties such as the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

## 1. 11 RESEARCH ETHICAL STATEMENT

### **Ethical considerations**

*(Adapted from the Faculty of Education's (2006) Ethical Guidelines for Students, University of the Western Cape and (Burton & Bartlett 2005).*

This study aimed to ensure the identity and information given by all voluntary participants are kept highly confidential and only used for the stipulated research. The Principal; HoD for English; English Educators and their learners were asked to participate in the study; the researcher informed participants they may withdraw from the study at any given point. All participants were asked to sign consent forms that will protect all parties' rights and integrity. A copy of this consent form can be seen in appendix 4, 5 and 6. In the case of putting together the information gained throughout the study the participants were given fictitious names when the thesis will be composed. The research is based on honest findings and aims to reflect integrity on all parties involved in the study. The research findings will be communicated to all respondents upon completion of study.



## 1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the study, which focuses on the historical and contextual background of the study. Furthermore, the rationale will be discussed and the research problem and objectives will also be stated.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

This chapter examines relevant theories that support the objectives of this study. An overview of literature on the SA's low literacy levels and its schooling context will be stated together with a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework and how it will be applied to the data analysis and interpretation.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter elaborates on research methods that have been used in obtaining the study data. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations as well as research limitations.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis and presentation of data**

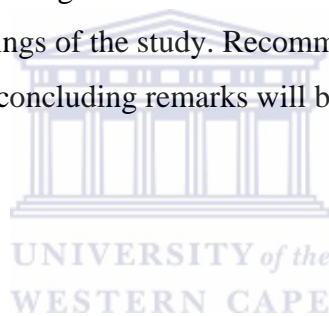
This chapter will provide a detailed discussion on how the data was obtained and analyzed. It will be presented together with the interpretation of the data and the findings on the basis of the conceptual framework. The chapter will end with a synthesis of the findings.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter will be based on the findings of chapter 4. The discussion will be based on the findings of the study and this will be linked to the conceptual framework and theories I employed in chapter 2.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter will highlight the significance of the findings from the study. Conclusions will be drawn from the findings of the study. Recommendations that are relevant to the study will be made. Lastly, concluding remarks will be stated.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The history of the South African curriculum and to date its current literacy pandemic was discussed in the introductory chapter. Furthermore, I used my points of emphasis to alert my readership to the lack of reading and the desire to promote reading among high school learners through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogical methods. In this current chapter, I aim to examine relevant literature and theoretical orientations that can support and deepen the objectives of my study. In light of this, an overview of literature on SA's low literacy levels, its schooling context together with a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework and how it will be applied in my study thus assumes centrality and immediacy. Furthermore, key definition of themes relevant to my study discussed and thereafter I provide an overview of the South African education landscape prior and post 1994. In addition to this, an overview of the literacy levels in South Africa and the global context will be presented. Thus, this literature review serves as the basis to support the aims and objectives of the study.

### **2.2 DEFINITIONS OF KEYWORDS AND THEMES**

In order to understand the problems identified and the research questions; it is important to firstly provide some definitions of keywords and themes that arise in this thesis and literature review.

#### **2.2.1 DEFINING LITERACY**

My research is aimed at promoting reading through text selection and evaluation due to the low literacy levels in South Africa. It is important that I firstly begin to define what literacy is. While this study is centred on the promotion of reading the underlying issue to be dealt with within this topic is literacy. Internationally literacy is defined as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts” (UNESCO, 2013). According to Shohet from the Quebec centre for literacy:

“Literacy is a complex set of abilities needed to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture- alphabets, numbers, visual icons- for personal and community development. The nature of these abilities, and the demand for them, vary from one context to another” (Shohet, 2008, p.4).

Looking at definitions of literacy, I infer that it is the ability to read and write in a language and in this study the focus is on English Literacy in South African classrooms at high school level. The South African education system is aimed at providing learners with functional literacy skills. Functional literacy can be referred to the ability to use both reading and writing skills effectively for purposes and activities which are required normally in one’s adulthood. Both adults and young children are exposed to various forms of literacy on a daily basis and it is important that literacy is appreciated and understood by all who come across it. Hence, I feel it is important that high school learners become literate and transfer these literacy skills to their siblings, parents and communities. Being literate enables one to understand multiple literacies such as visual, written, oral, audio; media and socio-cultural and make critical judgements about information obtained by these various literacies.

When a person is literate he/she should be equipped with the necessary skills that enable the practice of reading and writing. What then is reading? Reading is the acquisition of language and knowledge. Reading involves a cognitive process of decoding in order to create meaning. Reading furthermore fuels an interaction between the reader and the text. Reading is viewed as a process whereby meaning-making occurs together with various levels of meaning and understanding taken from the text that was read (Alderson, 2009). The reader is able to create meaning of the text by reflecting on his/her prior knowledge; experience; social settings and their personal background. Reading gives room for creativity and often helps to build an imagination; as words help to create images in the mind of the reader. Reading can help one to relax and escape into an imaginary world that allows the reader to forget about reality and everyday challenges to a certain extent. Thus, it can be deduced that reading allows the reader to escape into an imaginary world without any restrictions (ALC Course Reader, 2014).

## 2.3 LOW LITERACY LEVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA

### *EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE PRIOR TO 1994*

I believe that a country's literacy levels are dependent on two things, namely current and past economic situation of the country and secondly its education system. Due to the injustices of the past in South Africa and the unequal education system, people of colour were not as educated and privileged in terms of schooling opportunities and educational development. Hence, I am also of the opinion that the low literacy levels in South Africa are strongly linked to its education curriculum. Prior to 1994 white people were privileged in terms of being the superior race to black people. White people had access to the best education system; sector and resources and support within the country. Due to these resources and being in the position of power as the ruling party was only led by white people; they flourished academically and were more literate than all non-white people.

The injustices of the past and the level of poverty in South Africa have an effect on the daily classroom realities. These daily classroom realities indicate barriers to learning which implicates the curriculum approaches. Due to poverty, access to daily needs, education and resources are battle familiar to many South African learners

The apartheid education system is one of the primary causes of the significant social inequalities present in South African society. The 1990 curriculum policy system could be characterized as Eurocentric, sexist, authoritarian, prescriptive, unchanging, context-blind and discriminatory (Jansen & Christie, 1999). During this time the manners in which curricula were being introduced to schools were not sensitive to the socio-economic circumstances which affected the way it was implemented and received. There seemed to be a lack of consciousness about or disregard for the effect socio-economic circumstances had on education and vice-versa. The country had a system with 18 education departments catering for different provinces, homelands and population groups.

## 2.4 LINKING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY TO THE CURRICULUM

A schooling curriculum is a vital component to learning and meaning making. One method of undoing the injustices of the past was through reworking the education system of the country; as education provides skills, opportunity, employment, poverty alleviation and helps to boost the country's economy through job creation and having less crime. One of the key changes that came about with the election of a democratic government was addressing the education imbalances of the past by providing an equal education system for all South Africans; this was one of the first key issues the new government wanted to address initially as a means of moving forward and trying to undo some of the pass injustices. At this stage it is important that I highlight and discuss the South African education system and curriculum. The Continuous Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) came about as an amendment from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and preceding this was the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). CAPS provide educators with a grade and subject specific guideline entailing the outcomes, assessment and content that should be covered over a specific period of time (Jansen, 2008). The RNCS had four specific outcomes which focused on Literacy. The first outcome was reading and viewing. This outcome focused on the learner's ability to read and see information and for enjoyment and respond critically to aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts. The second outcome writing and presenting suggested that the learner will be able to write various kinds of texts such as factual based and imaginative texts. The third outcome thinking and reasoning required learners to be able to use language as a mechanism to think critically and substantiate claims which they make. Furthermore, through these outcome learners were expected to be able to use information for learning by either accessing or processing it. The last outcome was language structure and use as this outcome wanted learners to recognise and use sounds, words, and grammar to create their own texts and to understand given texts (RNCS). In light of the above Literacy outcomes, these boil down to the function and practice of reading. Only through reading can learners attain these four outcomes. Reading opens up a world of discovery. Reading increases knowledge and is a base and foundation for all other literacy skills to be developed further.

One of the key developmental issues that arose from the NCS to CAPS was a call to improving the quality of learning. This led to resulted in the Annual National

Assessments (ANA) that were written during the third term of school annually by Grade R-9 learners in public schools. The ANA test results is aimed at providing educators with empirical evidence of the learners' abilities and challenges at a particular grade and stage. These tests were also meant to indicate to the educator the critical foundation skills which the learner has acquired or still needs to acquire in order to progress in a particular grade. In 2015 the ANA's was rejected by the teacher unions as educators refused to mark these ANA's of the learners. They felt it was a waste of time and gave them extra marking which they did not have time for. Speculation also went around that some educators taught towards the ANA's which was not the purpose of having ANA's.

It is important for me to mention that the majority of the learners in grade 8 and 10 classes at CSS stem from Afrikaans speaking homes; however, they are at a school where the curriculum is taught as English being their home language. This furthermore is an issue that the school needs to address and deal with. My suggestion would be that these learners in particular be encouraged to read more especially in this case where they attend an English medium school and Afrikaans is their home language. Reading in English will help sharpen their reading skills and improve their vocabulary and understanding. In terms of Languages of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) in the Western Cape, Afrikaans and Xhosa are being marginalised (Mbatha & Plüddemann, 2004, p.34). Based on this quotation and the current affairs of South Africa especially looking at language in tuition, one can see that there is more emphasis placed on teaching and learning in English rather than in one's mother tongue; and this also seems to be a global trend (teaching and learning in English). It is evident that the dominance of English is consolidated through the South African schooling system and societies beliefs at large. Language is power; parents choose to have their children educated in schools who have English as a medium of instruction as it is perceived as the language of the privilege and the language of status as it is promised to. English is perceived by parents as a stepping stone to success and a job and this is based on them being previously schooled under the apartheid regime where they were excluded from being educated in English medium schools. If one looks at South Africa's hierarchy, we see that the Government uses English as the medium of communication in spite of the country's eleven official languages. The common use of English in government and the



business sector has reduced the status of languages such as Afrikaans and Xhosa (PRAESA: Papers No. 21).

## **2.5 LANGUAGE AND LEARNING**

Through language as one is able to access and understand learning content, it can be said that language is central to one's learning and life. There is an emphasis on learning through the medium of English and the reasons for this are both intrinsic and extrinsic. Parents place great emphasis on the need for their child to be at an English medium school despite the fact that the learner stems from a non-English speaking background. This is often seen as a language barrier at school and thus learners battle in a main stream English school where they have English as a home language subject even though English is not the learner's home language. Learning in a language which is not a learner's home language can have serious implications on the learners personal; communicative and educational and cultural experiences and thus could limit the learner from expressing and participating effectively in the class and in assessment activities too.

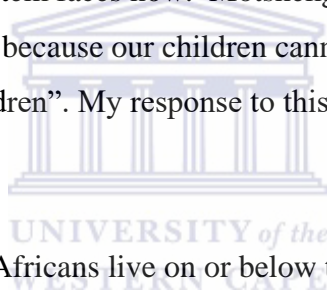
## **2.6 READING IN RELATION TO LITERACY**

Reading is an essential life skill and is often attributed as one of the important factors to the success of a school and progress of a learner. According to State Library of Western Australia (2015, p1) "There are strong links between literacy, school performance, self-esteem and life chances with poor literacy skills being linked with lower education, earnings, health and social outcomes". My study is to be conducted at a high school with the primary focus being on the promotion of reading through text selection and innovative pedagogy. A large part of being literate is having the ability to be able to read. Thus, I feel it is important that I discuss the various types of reading comprehensions that exist and how it will be relevant to my study. Every learner is unique and thus learns and reads in a specific way that is not always the same as their classmates. There are various types of reading comprehensions that learners can be associated to. Silent reading happens, when a person reads to himself/herself to understand the contents read. This is also referred to as reading comprehension. Reading a text out loud it is referred to as oral reading and this can be done without any understanding of the meaning of the texts. Reading comprehensions are used to distinguish the reasons for reader's reading. Literal comprehension is done in order to

remember and understand the information read in great detail. Inferential comprehension requires the reader's experience and intuition to seek for information in a text which is not always explicitly stated. Critical or evaluative comprehension seeks to compare information in a text with the reader's own beliefs and knowledge. Lastly, appreciative comprehension is done to experience and gain an emotional or a valued kind of response from the text (Richards and Schmidt, 2002).

There are different strategies and speeds used when reading different texts. Reading can be done for the purpose of relaxation; looking up unfamiliar words in a dictionary or when looking for specific detailed information (*intensive reading*). Learners read for various purposes and reasons. When one looks at the classroom context and daily realities the example of intensive reading come to mind. Intensive reading is when a learner is doing a comprehensive test and is reading the text looking for specific detailed information which answers the question posed in the test. The majority of school learners use intensive reading especially during assessments. Based on the focus on my study the ideal classroom learner in my opinion is one that would read beyond this point and reason, for deeper meaning and acquisition of knowledge among other aspects too. Secondly, *quick reading* is glancing over the texts often leaving out some words. Scanning is also a form of reading and this is done when looking for specific information. Skimming requires an overall sense of the text. Predicting reading is by looking at headings or pictures and then predicting what the text is about. I believe that learners do not read enough nor are they exposed to reading activities and texts they are intrigued by at school. However, on the other hand Education minister of basic education Angie Motshekga stated in a The New Age paper "Our children can't read" (2015, p. 5). I have to agree with Motshekga as this was evident not only during my classroom observations but also while interacting with both the grade 8 and 10 learners at CSS. Furthermore, I spend a considerable amount of time per week with first year students at University teaching them academic literacies. During class time and activities, it is evident that learners do not read enough, they are lazy to read and one can assume that they exist the schooling system having been spoon-fed. I think to reinforce the practice of reading the school day should start off with a 30 minute reading period (Monday-Thursday) which "forces" learners to engage with various reading materials supplied by both the school and the learner. The reading material can include anything from academic related publications, newspaper articles, magazines,

novels etc. This 30 minute reading period should not be utilized to do homework or for educators to make up on missed out teaching time. To support this idea Motshekga adds “Drop everything and Read campaign must correct the imbalance” (2015, p. 5). The imbalance refers to the South African educational crises in which most of our learners lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. Motshekga adds “Our kids are not at an appropriate level, and this means when they have to look for information there is always a lagging (behind)” (2015, p. 5). Can our learners complete on international levels in terms of basic literacy skills? Basic instructions are misinterpreted and often ignored by students and this is evident their response to analysing texts. It is important that our society mobilize as well as sublimate the practice of reading so that this can influence our learners to partake in reading activities and robust debates. This will facilitate critical thinking which can infuse a lot of stimuli into the very process of education as a whole and help address the pandemic of low literacy levels that the South African schooling system faces now. Motshekga (2015, p. 5) states “There is a crisis. We are in big trouble because our children cannot read or write. We need to look at the way we raise our children”. My response to this would be it is easier said than done.



The vast majority of South Africans live on or below the borderline. Poverty is rife and the majority of learners who participated in my study are from middle-low socio-economic backgrounds. Their struggles are very different from those who stem from affluent backgrounds. They come from poverty, drug and gang infested environments. Their ability to see the link between what Shakespeare has written hundreds of years ago and their current living situation certainly draws no connection. We live in a modern era where our current university students are sensory learners and technology driven; this is evident through their attachment to their smart-phones. Making teaching more appealing through innovation is one of the key elements of the research and current classroom practises. While it is said that the basics of English needs to be grasp by learners before Grade 4, I have found that the basics are lacking in Grades 8 and 10 as well as first year university students. This brings me to the point that the mother tongue of these learners is not English and thus it becomes a challenge for learners to learn in a language which is not spoken and read often enough. Furthermore, Matshekga makes a suggestion that will help our learners to read more by promising that the Department of Education (DoE) will be donating more books to libraries and

also by providing learners books to read at home (materials outside of the curriculum). Future plans of the DOE are meant to increase access to libraries and as well as ensuring that all schools allocate specific times for reading. This will ensure that those learners who come from poor homes also have access to books at home in addition to their prescribed school books. It is evident why first year university students' failure, drop-out rate and plagiarism rate is so high; this is due to lack of skills transferred at high schools when it comes to accessing libraries and books. Learners are not taught how to use libraries and texts hence they battle when they enter tertiary institutions where it is expected that they know how to use libraries and interact with sources that are not their own and implement it into their own learning experiences and knowledge.

## **2.7 LITERACY RESULTS CALL FOR CONCERN**

Due to the low literacy levels pandemic in South Africa I felt it is a need to look deeper into this matter and the cause and effect of this pandemic. As previously mentioned by the Minister of Basic Education the need for learners to read, below are some literacy assessment results extracted schools within SA and this is then furthermore discussed. Looking at the recent Annual National Assessment Standards (ANAS) results of 2012 which was based on the Progress In International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) it signposted that SA learners at school are not performing well in terms of meeting the international literacy requirement standards. The ANAS results showed that learners who achieved a percentage between 0-29% in the test meant that the learner did not achieve the basic requirement. It is evident that 42.3% of Grade 9 learners who are aged between 14-16 years old scored between 0-29% for their First Additional Language. While on the other hand 24.7% of Grade 9 learners scored between 0-29% for their Home Language. Prior to the year 2012, in 2011 Grade 4 learners who are aged between 10-12 years old were tested mainly in African languages achieved below the International centre point despite the fact that this was an easier test set-up. Based on these statistics it is evident that learners are not able to answer basic questions which are based on comprehension passages. Thus, I believe that if learners are able to read better they would be able to engage with their texts, critically evaluate the texts, and formulate opinions and arguments based on this. Readings teaches critical skills that are fundamental building blocks to literacy.

Grade 5 learners aged between 11-13 years old, 43% of them failed to reach the Low International Benchmark (LIB) which indicates that a large percentage of these learners have not mastered the basic skills of reading nor have they met internal level of reading. Looking at these results one would assume that these learners perform poorly and are unable to read according to what is expected of them, yet these very learners progress to grade 6 which is the start of the senior phase at primary school. It is said that these results come as a consequence of learners being taught to “parrot fashion learning” rather than being taught to read independently. A study done in Durban, South Africa showed that 13 percent of Grade 5s (11-year-olds) were illiterate this new data was revealed from the national education evaluation and development unit (Jansen, 2013). The Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga responded to these shocking results by saying that from the classroom research conducted in urban and rural areas, it had become “quite clear that most of our teachers can’t teach reading” (Jansen, 2013). Based on this response from Mostshekga it is reasonable to say that becoming literate starts with the basics of reading which echo pedagogical methods that are implemented to teach reading. These and many other studies on literacy in SA indicate that the country’s low literacy level is a serious problem that the South Africans face with regards to reading. It is assumed that after seven years of being through the primary school curriculum system and prior to that a compulsory year in grade R learners should therefore have been thought the basics of reading and sentence construction. Once learners come to high school the educators assume that grade eight learners can read and write in English even if English is not the learners’ mother tongue.

The curriculum is rather demanding in terms of time constraints at high school and both human and material resources are limited at government schools. Unlike at primary schools where educators identified those learners who experienced difficulty with reading and writing, these learners were then sent to the remedial teacher for extra help and lessons; at high school this process is not carried out. There are various reasons why high schools do not offer remedial classes. Some of these reasons include: educators assuming that learners at grade eight level are able to read and write well, while another reason would be that there are no remedial educators to assist learners who experience difficulty in reading and writing. Vygotsky viewed language as a complex semiotic system. Vygotsky states language is essential to cognition because it helps to think about the world and to communicate with others (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

It also provides the means to reflect on and regulate personal thinking (Eggen and Kauchak, 1997). Thus, I feel that the low literacy level pandemic should be addressed by acknowledging that high school learners experience literacy difficulties and thus this problem should be addressed by promoting reading and helping educators to teach reading while teaching their subject English.

The literacy pandemic in South Africa can be addressed through various ways. “Oral language is the foundation of literacy” (Louie and Sierschynski: 2015, p103). A learner’s home language has a major role in the learner’s performance at school. If a learner’s home language is different to that of the medium of instruction at the school he/she attends, this poses a learning barrier towards that learner and a challenge to the educator as well. Learners should be encouraged to not only read as often as possible but also to engage with the educator and their peers through group work and communication based on classroom activities. Oral communication can assist in the understanding of learners and can also help in developing cognitive thinking skills and well as oral skills. This idea can be supported with the views of Louie and Sierschynski (2015, p.104) who states that “when English Learners are placed in a small group or in pairs to solve a problem or to complete a task, the collaboration creates a context for meaningful extended language use”. Therefore based on the current low literacy levels in SA it is of paramount importance to address this pandemic as a means of moving the country forward and mitigating the aftermath of the past injustices.

## **2.8 READING AS A PROCESS**

In light of the above discussion on the low literacy level pandemic in South Africa and of the various types of reading styles learners adopt, I feel it is required to now discuss the process of reading and how reading can help to improve the low literacy levels.

Reading is a process and the schooling curriculum has certain expectation of a learner in terms of their level of skill and competencies; reading being one of the fundamental skills. By the time a learner reaches grade 8 he or she is expected to read well and be fluent. Now, the reality of this is very slim given my work with first year university level students who lack basic reading skills and confidence. The lack of reading is indeed seen as a barrier to learner and further development and skills acquisition. The

skill of reading needs not only to be taught well but also needs to be infused and embedded in the curriculum; teaching; assessments and classroom practises daily. Currently, it is a real challenge getting learners to read. The sad reality that they have little to no inclination and interest to want to read is in fact a reality that we are faced with daily. The texts made available to learners no longer interest the current learners we are dealing with. We are dealing with a new generation of learners whose reading is limited to that of social media and shorthand texts messages. Gone are those days of learners sitting with real books to read for academic or leisure purposes. Learners are keen to be on their mobile phones and tablets browsing the internet, playing games or conversing over various social media platforms. The act of reading needs to be enforced and encouraged daily through schools and communities as reading is an interactive process.

## **2.9 TEXT SELECTION AND EVALUATION**

Literacy is not only about the evaluation of reading, but also about reader response to these texts through writing and testing comprehensive skills. The second focus area of my study focuses on text selection and evaluation. The text-based approach focuses on learners being able to read and interpret texts within the context they exist and for the purpose intended to serve. The approach allows learners to make informed decisions and judgements when engaging with texts. The approach strives to protect learners from individuals who prey on the illiterate. For example, insurance companies who take advantage of people who are unable to comprehend the fine print embedded in their contracts. The manner in which this is done is through giving learners the opportunity to experience their engagement with texts whereby they are given information about how the text is constructed and framed. They are thus able to gain literacy through experiencing engagement and interaction with texts.

The text-based approach forces learners to read comprehend and think critically. The active engagement with texts would be a deciding factor in the ability of learners to make informed decisions when confronted with real world text in social engagements and interactions. Thus, the view of using the text-based approach to the curriculum is seen as an effective simulation of real world experiences. Thus a text-based approach could be seen as a mediator for working and developing the schemata of a learner

independently. Vygotsky's often-quoted definition of zone of proximal development presents it as the distance between the actual developmental level 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, p.86).Part of promoting reading is done by selecting relevant texts that learners are expected to read and study and thereafter also be tested on to determine their understanding of the texts.

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for languages advocated for a text-based approach to teaching literacy. A text based approach to literacy requires learners to write specific texts of their own such as speeches, dialogues, various narratives and reports etc. The purpose of using a text based approach to teaching literacy is to enable learners to read; become confident and be critical thinkers while reading, writing and evaluating texts (RNCS GET Band: Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes: Languages, p. 26). The concern regarding a text- based approach to literacy is that learners do not read enough and their vocabulary is limited, hence they are unable to fully execute the practice of the text-based approach in the classroom. With regard to higher cognitive functioning, Vygotsky believed that language is very important; it allows for self- reflection, meaning and trade of ideas all which are crucial to learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 86). Therefore, I underscore the need for a negotiated curriculum when selecting and evaluating texts. The DoE together with educators' and learners' input are needed to select texts that are in keeping with the learners' interest and the curriculum objectives. The method of evaluating texts should be done in various ways having an element of creativity and a section for open-ended responses which could appeal to learners and motivate them to read and enjoy their prescribed texts. Some educators only have their teaching qualification but have very little competence in practical teaching; thus indicating a gap between qualification and competences. At some schools there are various barriers to learning stemming from learners personal challenges to under resourced schools and inexperienced educators due to lack of support and teacher-training. According to Taylor (Jansen, 2013), the head of the unit which reports to the Basic Minister of Education said that "it was true that resourcing, policy and school leadership are all very important, once children are in classrooms, learning depends heavily on the teacher". Taylor continued saying that "from the classroom research conducted in urban and rural areas, it had become quite clear that



most of our teachers can't teach reading" (Jansen, 2013). Therefore, the way in which texts are taught and evaluated need to be reevaluated and teacher training should also be provided so that it can address the needs of the students and their barriers to learning and at the same time this should also be done in order to promote reading.

## **2.10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON LEARNING**

There are both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that have an effect on learners learning. A learner's daily environment has an impact on the learner's behaviour and performance. It is said that one's environment has a large influence on one's ability to learn. Socio-economic factors and location are of the contributing factors to learners' barriers to learning. Learners are exposed to two different types of environments every day of the week; namely the home environment and the school environment in which learners spend the bulk of the school day at. The question remains: does the environment have an impact on one's ability to learn or one's desire to want to learn? I think that without a doubt the environment one's finds oneself in has an impact on one's brain and behaviour. It is important for the school to create an environment that welcomes learners and allows them to feel special and safe. Similarly, it should be the responsibility of educators to create a similar "safe heaven" environment in the classroom where learners support from both the educator and classmates, acknowledged and important. The classroom environment should also be designed in a way that promotes reading and the actual outcomes of the subject taught in that class. This implies that there should be visuals that display the essence of content that is taught by the teacher throughout that specific academic year. The reason for me suggesting the above stated view is that learners come from various socio-economic backgrounds with various challenges and domestic issues that have a large influence on their behaviour and performance at school. Based on my observations at the school of study, these factors were highlighted to me and I propose to discuss them further be discussed under the findings chapter.

It is evident that learners learn differently and that their environment and social setting has a direct impact on their learning and acquisition of knowledge. In relation to this I would like to bring to light the non-constructivist versus the constructivist models of learners learning. The non-constructivist model of learning will be divided into three

main areas which I will attempt to address.

The first focus is on the **Development through transition from outside of the learner**; which means that learning is viewed as a copy of reality and teaching is seen as a transmission, making learning a passive process (Smith, 2013, Book 3: p 6). Development through transmission sees knowledge as coming from outside of the learner's mind, this refers to external forces such as stimulus response conditioning by virtue of practical teaching using visual aids and practical examples (Smith, 2013, Book 3:6). This view sees the curriculum being implemented as curriculum approach as product and the transmission thereof as content.

The second focus and set of views on knowledge is **Development through maturation** which views knowledge which sees the origin of knowledge as internally. Additionally, it sees views knowledge as stage by stage process that unlocks knowledge and ideas through aging whereby with age comes wisdom and this means that with aging the mind further develops and becomes mature. In this view of knowledge, the educator is seen as the driving force behind the learner teaching their full potential (Smith, 2013, Book 3:6). In this view, the origin of knowledge comes from inside the learner together with a stage by stage development of learning (mind development).

Lastly, the third focus is the **Development through construction** which views knowledge as a product being constructed with the help of both the learner's physical and social environment. This means that learners are actively involved in the construction of both knowledge and meaning, which also aids understanding the way the world works and exists. This view of knowledge draws on one's experiences and understanding; these processes also change with time and can be maintained and developed through the learner. Education is aimed at the process of facilitation of concepts and meaning being created by posing intellectual challenges such as asking open-ended questions that will evoke learners' response and meaning creation. This view of knowledge alludes my thoughts to Piaget who believes that in order for a learner to learn or construct meaning an educator should tap into the schemata of a learner and guide the meaning and knowledge making process of the learner. This view of knowledge construction further promotes a sense of independent learning through by giving learners investigative tasks and by posing questions that will require a higher

order of thinking as well as thinking out of the box (Smith, 2013, Book 3:6).

In relation to the above views of knowledge and my own interpretation thereof, this will further be discussed and critiqued based on the two theorists of the constructivist idea namely Piaget and Vygotsky. Both Piaget and Vygotsky believe that learners are active constructors of meaning knowledge and both these theorists reject the notion of simple maturation as well as the impact the environment has on a learner and transmission of knowledge as “enough” ways to transfer and explain learning. Piaget and Vygotsky do however differ from one another; their differences will further be discussed.

Piaget (1964) states that children are born and ready to adapt and learn from the world; they do not have to be deliberately taught. This refers to Piaget’s cognitive development theory which talks about a comprehensive theory of nature of development of a child. A child develops through aging, personal environment and thus one can deduce that a learner’s childhood has a large role and impact on the learner’s biological maturation. Furthermore, Piaget believes that children construct knowledge as they mentally organize information from the environment. In addition to this Piaget also believes that children manipulate and explore the world and by this they develop. Piaget believes that children learn in various ways. Piaget believes that what children learn in the classroom depends to a large extent on what they already know (schemata). The schemata of a child could possibly be complete; incomplete or even wrong; however, this is still the child’s ideas which they use to make sense of everyday experiences. Piaget believes that children do not enter the class with a blank slate and empty head; they come to class with what is known as partial schemata. Piaget believes that it is the educator’s role to enhance, modify, extend and elaborate on the child’s schemata by creating a learner-centred classroom which will serve as a supportive environment. I believe that Piaget’s theory of learners learning should be incorporated into the English classroom. The literature used should be linked to everyday life experiences, and learners should be shown the relevance of the literature in today’s society irrespective of era from which the literature comes from.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that children learn best through demonstration. Vygotsky believes that a lesson should open for opportunity and challenge your learners. Vygotsky speaks of everyday knowledge as “spontaneous knowledge” and school

knowledge as “scientific knowledge”. Vygotsky deliberates that children cannot work with their everyday knowledge in an abstract or generalised way; however, he suggests that this everyday knowledge can be used to scaffold knowledge. Scaffolding is a support structure and learning process that is developed to promote and provide learners with a deeper level of understanding during the learning process. As an educational practitioner, I see how I have adopted some of Vygotsky’s theory into my practice. While I believe in providing learners with the foreground of theory, I do however place more emphasis on the demonstration of this theory into practise. Thus through my teaching experience I too believe that learners learn and respond best through demonstration by showing them and asking them how the theory taught and given to them comes to life. On the other hand, according to Wood et al. (1976, p. 90) scaffolding is defined as: “Those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence”. Scaffolding is also referred to as assistance or support. One method to address this and what Wood et al says is by providing learners with support through demonstration by providing learners with actual practical examples of the lesson and task at hand. This can be done by illustrating and showing learners the link between their theoretical teaching material and practical examples so that learners can visual and see the reality and practicality of some of their lessons which may at times seem farfetched and beyond their comprehension.

Vygotsky advocates for Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is defined 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, p. 86). Vygotsky was of the opinion that learners learn best through class interaction and activities with their peers (peer-learning). Based on this Vygotsky advised educators to make use of cooperative learning tasks in order for learners who are less competent to learn from their more skilful classmates within the ZPD. Vygotsky advised educators to make use of cooperative learning tasks because he was of the belief that if a learner is within the ZPD and receives the necessary support this will enable a learner to achieve/complete the task successfully and enable a learner to eventually being independent when doing problem solving. ZPD and scaffolding however require support such as resources and motivation; ZPD also occurs over a period of time and

through a process. I will further discuss how children learn in my practical example through firstly explaining what everyday knowledge and school knowledge is by providing examples thereof.

Everyday knowledge (EK)	School knowledge (SK)
Informally gained without any specific aims.	Aimed at creating an academic culture reflective of social circumstances and local practices. Expansion on our everyday knowledge.
Comes from specific contexts, comes from everyday experiences, learning to mop the floor, washing dishes, closing the windows, withdrawing of curtains at sunset etc. One is not often aware of this learning that is occurring. You are able to do things and know things with sometimes not explain how you know these things.	Teaches skills such as reading, writing, numeracy- skills that cannot really be self-taught, it requires a mediator and or educator. In this practice you are aware that you are learning and that you should know how to explain why and how you did certain things-reasoning existing and important
The development occurs naturally without any real effort.	Systematic learning; planned out with attaining specific objectives/outcomes.
Very hands-on and practical, such as climbing a tree, washing dad’s car, saving pocket money for the weekend luxuries etc.	Often text-based, theories and concepts used and very little practical and outdoor learning such as excursions, field trips, lab work etc. for the majority of South African learners.

Vygotsky sees Everyday Knowledge as ‘spontaneous’ knowledge. Earlier in this review, I mentioned that Piaget speaks of learners bringing their schemata to class and having ideas that should be enhanced and linked to the lesson; on the other hand, Vygotsky believes that children do not gain understanding of academics by drawing on the schemata they bring with them.

Vygotsky sees School Knowledge known as ‘scientific’ knowledge as fundamental. Everyday learning and teaching knowledge of *school learning* refers to the extension of everyday experiences; which imparts specific skills such as numeracy; reading and writing which we often cannot teach ourselves. Furthermore, it arranges learning systematically according to coherent patterns; however, it is not limited to a direct hands-on approach. School learning is often text-based, de-contextualized, generalized and theory based. School knowledge is created with the aim of building an academic culture which expresses local practices, languages and beliefs. Knowledge gained

through school learning and formal education provides skills and knowledge often useful beyond the classroom. These skills and knowledge knowing or unknowingly form part of our day to day living. Therefore, in order for scaffolding to occur within the ZPD of a learner it is of utter importance that the scaffolding methodologies match the requirements of the learner. Otherwise, this will negatively affect the end result of the learner completing the task successfully. This is due to the fact that learners learn differently and thus your scaffolding as an educator needs to address the learners' needs. All in all, Piaget's and Vygotsky's learning theories boil down to the following: Piaget is of the opinion that learners learn through experience (discovery learning) whereas Vygotsky is of the opinion that learners learn through guided experiences (ZPD).

It is believed by many theorists that there should be a certain amount of linkage between everyday knowledge and school knowledge while many others believe that there should be no link and that the two knowledge systems should be kept separate. By linking school knowledge and everyday knowledge sometimes problems occur when these two types of knowledge go against each other's beliefs and understandings. I believe that it is important for a learner to be able to bring what they know to class (everyday knowledge) and to be able to use this as a base of knowledge and understanding to further explore and develop these ideas by using school knowledge to make meaning of experiences and the future. On the other hand, learning should not happen in isolation. Many learners are not aware of what is happening in and around them, let alone what is happening globally. Learners are largely responsible for taking initiative in acquiring knowledge. As educators we should provide them with the basics which they should use to navigate their way around a lesson or task. Furthermore, it is on the responsibility of the learner to use their resources to acquire more and develop further acquisition of knowledge and opportunities. To support my idea of EK and learners learning and developing Floden and Buchmann, in Moll et al (2002, p.149) says:

“To have more equal opportunities children must imagine themselves in futures not determined by their immediate environments and local beliefs. No matter how much as school is able to raise a student's achievement test scores, the increase does little to equalize opportunities unless students can see and act on the possibilities created. Understanding what happens to oneself and envisioning

what could happen, could require more objective perspectives and lively imagination”

My interpretation of the above quotation is that a learner should not be limited to its everyday knowledge nor should the success and future of a learner be determined by what happens in school. It is up to the learner to go beyond what s/he is taught, given and exposed to. This leads me to briefly return to Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which states that educator’s role is to enhance what learners know and further develop learners’ knowledge and understanding to a level where they are able to work independently.

While it is understood what constitutes Every day and School knowledge are, South Africa faces many challenges which have a major effect on and contribute to these two knowledge systems. Firstly, South African learners come from vastly different communities, belief systems and socio-economic backgrounds. When one looks at these division sectors, it can be seen as another factor and that is the inequalities and injustices of pass (apartheid) that exist today. South Africa has a very unequal distribution of wealth and resources that create many barriers to learning and accessing knowledge as well as meaning creation. The types of Everyday knowledge vary greatly from a learner in a rural community to a middle class learner to that of a wealthy learner. These three types of learners are exposed to different everyday experiences and access to resources points that has effects on their everyday and school knowledge. I have highlighted this point for a specific reason which brings into question whether or not educators are able to work with learners EK and what effect will this then have on their learning.

According to Wood et al. (1976) there are certain processes that aid effective scaffolding; namely five processes, which I will mention and discuss now.

The first process is *Gaining and maintaining the learner’s interest in the task*. The lesson needs to be interesting and captivating; thus I would suggest that various approaches be taken in order to gain the learners attention, such as ask probing questions as you introduce the topic or theme; play a game or have a word search that will intrigue learners and also give them insight into the lesson. The second process is

*making the task simple*. This for me implies that the task needs to be simplified and broken up into various parts that will not lessen the standard of testing, instead the task will test all levels of understanding and will cater for all learners irrespective of their learning proficiency. The third process is *emphasizing certain aspects that will help with the solution*. I interpret this step as one which the educator provides hint and guidelines that directs the learner to the desired response. The fourth process is *control the child's level of frustration*. Learners tend to get frustrated when they cannot execute a task as they expect to. Thus it is important that the educator facilitates this session by firstly being calm and thereafter motivating the learning to attempt the task and also then the educator should also include process two and three which will help to eliminate the learners' frustration. The last process being *demonstrate the task*; which means that the educator should illustrate what needs to be done by showing and explaining how the task should be completed.

## 2.11 SOME ISSUES IN TESTING READING

Literacy levels and competencies are often associated to testing reading and writing. However, before one begins to test reading, one needs to demonstrate the act of reading in a manner that appeals to the learner and motivates the learner to want to also be able to read. In addition to this the educator needs to then teach the skills of reading and reinforcing this practice and thereafter motivate learners to read on a daily basis. To support what has been stated above regarding the importance of teaching the skill of reading and why it is important the State Library of Western Australia (2015, p. 1) states:

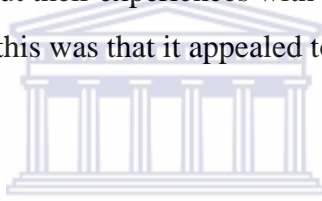
“Reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for building the skills and knowledge necessary for children to successfully learn to read when they begin school. Children who are good readers are usually successful learners.”

Reading across the curriculum is stated as one of the reading norms in the CAPS document. I beg to differ on this point as during conversations with both learners and students at the school of study as during my classroom observations I have noted that very minimal reading is actually conducted in the classroom among learners. One of the challenges to get learners to read at home is the lack of reading material, access to reading material as well as the fact that learners are more intrigued by television and



spending time with their cell phones playing games and participating in chats on various social media platforms. In light of this, a basic practice such as reading before bedtime has been replaced with chatting online to friends.

According to James Patterson of Knowledge Quest (article 2) he suggests that there are three ways to get learners to read. The first method would be to give learners books that they would love to read and I concur with this sentiment as it was evident that learners responded better to reading a book they enjoyed than a book which did not interest them. The second method would be to assist parents and educators in finding books that their children would enjoy reading. The third method would be to listen to learners and pay careful attention to what they say and respond to their requests to literature genres that they are interested in. Having interviewed groups of learners and having spent time in the classroom with them, I realised that they were not exposed to literature that interested them and the literature that interested them were well received and these learners eagerly told me about their experiences with the literature and why they enjoyed it. The main reason was for this was that it appealed to the learners and they could relate to the stories.



## **2.12 PROMOTING AND TESTING READING**

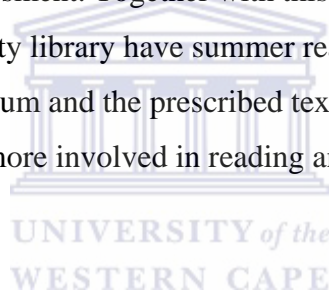
George Carlin famous for being a comedian yet very passionate about English, education and psychology once said “Don’t just teach your children to read... Teach them to question what they read. Teach them to question everything”. The sad part is that learners question life but very few question the curriculum and texts being taught and selected by educators. The desire to question texts and information given by the educator appears to be rather vague. The demand to use literacy is increasing due to the fact that we now live in a digital age. It is said that a picture says a thousand words....Looking at the literature books (readers) for grade 1 learners, these contain many pictures and few words. These readers progress each year thereafter with few pictures and more words. By the time a learner reaches the end of primary school (grade 7) more often than not, there are no pictures in their readers; only words. This is because it is believed that pictures help to build a child’s vocabulary and imagination. While it can be deduced that by the time a child is in grade 7 (age of approximately 12-13 years old) he/she has somewhat of an imagination and a developing vocabulary. The question remains why have the pictures been reduced over the years to a point where there are no

pictures in the learners' readers? I believe pictures are more visually appealing and stimulating than words. Pictures often trigger one's imagination and in the case of learners it opens up a new world of imagination and creation.

While it can be argued that one cannot assess pictures especially in grades 7-12, Louie and Sierschynski state "Wordless picture books contain literary elements and structures in their visuals. We can teach English learners to engage in discussion, analysis, and production of their own texts through close viewing" (2015, p 103). Louie and Sierschynski suggest that wordless books can be assessed, and I am inclined to agree with their views. Pictures can be given in a book and learners can be instructed to write their own stories using the pictures as a guideline and their imagination. Alternatively, the book can be started off with the same story written in words and can be then left for each learner to write up their own end to their story. This exercise will test creativity; reading; thinking and writing skills of the learner and this activity will also tap into the learner's imagination. As observed by Louie and Sierschynski (2015, p103) "In order to accomplish this goal, teachers should structure and provide appropriate classroom support to motivate readers to bring who they are to the reading task". The quotation can be explained by stating that educators should provide platforms for learners to tap into their imagination and schemata and guiding them to write their own narratives and test various reading and writing skills other than that which is of the norm (reading a book and answering questions based on the book). The core of literature exists within visual as well as verbal texts which are both embedded literary components and fundamental structures (Lukens, 2004).

Testing reading through the use of innovation and technology can be accomplished through various methods that will help learners to read as well as motivate them into becoming involved readers. Parent involvement in the curriculum is one of the fundamental components to learners progressing. The designing of an attractive; easy accessible and comprehensive website for one's school could be done. Through this website each grade will have a tab for each subject and in this case the focus will be English Home Language as a subject. The website should include the following information, assessment dates, project/assignment instructions, guidelines and due dates. In addition to this the English Home language tab should also be used as a platform to upload the title of books and poems together with the authors' details that

will be studied during the course of the year and in which term it will be covered. In addition to this the themes of the literature should be highlighted together with some questions that can be used to test learners understanding of the literature. The purpose of having the website and English Home Language tab will be to give learners and parents' access to the curriculum and its outcomes throughout the year and even over school holidays. This opportunity can be utilized to work over holidays, weekends and during the school term, to maximize time and to plan ahead, this is both beneficial to learners who work ahead of the class and those who take longer to learn and grasp work. One of the main aims of having this website up and active would be to influence learners and parents' expectations of the academic year that lies ahead and hopefully this will motivate learners to read over the weekends and especially over the long summer and winter school holidays. Hopefully this will give learners a head-start to the academic year that lies ahead for them and which literature is required of them to be read in preparation for assessment. Together with this I would propose that members of the community or community library have summer reading programs that will speak to the outcomes of the curriculum and the prescribed texts. This should be done to keep learners occupied but also more involved in reading and preparing for the year or school term ahead.



This study drew on the literacy skills of grade 8 and 10 learners with a particular focus on their perception and interpretation regarding their literature texts. Through this experience some classroom realities were exposed, thus influencing my notion that both the cognitive and sociocultural aspects of reading and its development need to be taken into account when promoting reading and literacy. To support my notion Street (1985) believed that sociocultural views on literacy are linked to social practice. To add to this (Pahl & Roswell, 2005) linked the emphasis on identity being central to reading as a result of literacy learners bringing their identities into their meaning making processes; as learners learn to read their cultural experiences go before them. In light of this, the work and theories of Piaget and Vygotsky assume particular relevance in my study. According to Piaget, a child's learning in the classroom depends to a large extent on what they already know (schemata) (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). The schemata of a child could possibly be complete, incomplete or even wrong; however, this is still the child's ideas which they use to make sense of everyday experiences. Piaget believes that children do not enter the class with a blank slate and empty head; they come to class

with what is known as partial schemata. Piaget believes that it is the educators' job to enhance, modify, extend and elaborate on the child's schemata. In light of this, I am of the opinion that if an informed approach to text selection; innovative teaching methodologies and evaluation is done reading will be naturally promoted through these activities and pedagogical styles. Vygotsky places a lot of emphasis on the use of language. He says that "thought without language is vague" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). This is acceptable because language allows one to express one's thoughts and to verbalise it, otherwise it would be unclear and indistinct. He goes on to explain, that language enables thinking to be precise and then internalised. Language is crucial as it will help learners to understand the content of the lesson. "Thus language facilitates cognitive development and provides children with a vehicle to produce, test, and refine their thoughts about the world" (Vygotsky, 1986, p.86). Vygotsky further believed that a lesson should open opportunity and challenge learners. Vygotsky speaks of everyday knowledge as "spontaneous knowledge" and school knowledge as "scientific knowledge". He believes that children cannot work with their everyday knowledge in an abstract or generalised way; however, he suggests that this everyday knowledge can be used with scaffolding knowledge. ZPD however needs support such as resources and motivation; ZPD also occurs over a period of time and through a process. According to Vygotsky's ZPD, a learner can learn on their own if they can gain access to knowledge through books; thus this requires a learner to be able to read and understand what they are reading. Looking at both Piaget and Vygotsky's theories regarding learners schemata and enabling learners to learn through ZPD reinforces the importance of learner's ability to read and write well; thus indicating the importance of teaching reading. It is important for educators to know their role and what is expected in order to fulfil this and help to develop their learners to the best of their and the learners' ability. As agents of change, educators should adapt their pedagogical methods to suit their learners' needs and challenges. Currently the use of technology must be incorporated into teaching in order to gain the attention, participation and interest in learning and development of knowledge from our technology driven learners. The resources that are made available to educators should be effectively utilized to enrich the teaching and learning experience of both the educator and learners. Lessons that are interactive and visually stimulating motivate learners to learn. Therefore, teaching could further enhance learning and create a deepened understanding and meaning of the lesson through the use of technology and innovative pedagogical applications. This use of

technology infused into the curriculum practice links with ZPD as learners will also be able to learn on their own and access extra learning material and help-guides.

I see cultural, socio-economic and language barriers, especially, within the South African classroom hampering the implementation of those beneficial learning practises that could be distilled from these theories. Cultural heritage plays a major role in the mind sets of whole communities. The attempt at influencing the thinking and consequently the learning of certain cultural groups may prove very challenging. What may seem as dietary habits, for example, to one cultural group may be vital for the religious practice of another. The life styles led by previous generations may, within a particular society, also give rise to a complacent attitude, which hinders learning. Learners usually represent a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. Learners from economically disadvantaged communities have to contend with many external factors, such as gangsterism, substance abuse, dysfunctional homes, poverty and many forms of abuse. Another possible threat is not having the adequate resources and support from the school and from the Education Department. Learners attending English-medium schools would also face challenges considering that English may not be their first language. It is, therefore vitally important that the teacher recognises these challenges and compensates for them, ensuring optimal learning, even in less than favourable circumstances.

## **2. 12. 1 SOUTH AFRICAN CURRICULUM APPROACHES AND CLASSROOM REALITIES**

While the newly elected democratic South African government has attempted to undo the injustices of the pass by providing an equal education system my question in regard to this provision is: Do the South African curriculum and its outcomes speak to the daily classroom realities of the country? Curriculum 2005 (C2005) can be regarded as an intervention to a previously oppressive and destructive education system. Luckily 1990 brought about a time when the rest of the world was turning its back on South Africa, forcing the ruling political party and government to change its ways. Along with the freeing of political prisoners and the unbanning of political movements, so emerged movements geared towards a change in the country's education policy. From this point onwards we saw committees such as the National Education Coordinating

Committee (NECC) initiating organizations such as the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) to develop options for education policies. The NEPI put an emphasis on non-racism, non-sexism, equalities and redress as the platform for post-apartheid education. This is just an example of many organizations or groups that were formed to address the country's education system and curriculum problem. Other organisations included the Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC) who focused more on vocational and entrepreneurial education, the Education Policy and Systems Change Unite (EDUPOL) which placed an emphasis on business in education and even foreign-funded organisations led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and non-governmental organisations also proposed alternatives to the curriculum. This large effort from various sectors within the economy, including that of foreign and independent organisations showed that the need for transformation in education was recognised as critical at the time.

While I aim to address the low reading level and practice of reading in South Africa by promoting reading through text selection and evaluation, I feel it is important to relate firstly discuss the past and current curriculum. This will be done in order to understand certain curriculum outcomes and limitations. According to Jansen & Christie (1999), even the apartheid government showed efforts to address the curriculum problem and this was evident in the publication of their *Education Renewal Strategy* also known as CUMSA of which the core focus was the rationalisation of the large number of syllabi, the development of core learning areas and a stronger emphasis on vocational education in the curriculum. The idea of OBE and its way organizing the content in the curriculum can be attributed to CUMSA. Subsequent to this, the National Training Board (NTI) became the most important player in terms of the development of the official alternative curriculum. The NTI had lively discussions with COSATU that provided leading key role players such as Adrienne Bird and Gail Elliott who had close ties with Australia which had a positive influence on their ideologies with respect to education reform in South Africa. Pam Christie, a South African education lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand was another key role-player who specialized in the adaptation of the Australian model to suit the current educational climate in South Africa at the time.

One of the major differences between education in South Africa during the 1990's and the education system post 1994 was that after the new democratic government was elected, all schools irrespective of their socio-economic status fell under a single

administrative body in each province. After the 1994 elections, the existing curriculum was immediately purged and the introduction of Continuous Assessment (CASS) followed in 1996. It was then early in 1997 that the “key document” was released outlining the proposal for outcomes-based education, with implementation in Grade 1 scheduled for 1998 and Grade 7 in 1999. Outcomes based Education is one of the Curriculum 2005’s three design features.

*Firstly it was **outcomes-based education**, and this feature was positioned so centrally that outcomes-based education (OBE) became synonymous with C2005. An **integrated knowledge system** was the second design feature. School ‘subjects’ were jettisoned and eight ‘learning areas’ introduced for Grades 1 to 9. The third dimension of curriculum reform was the promotion of **learner-centered pedagogy**. (Harley and Wedekind: 1999)*

The above design features will form the basis of which my engagement with the four approaches to the curriculum.

The first approach to Curriculum 2005 (C2005) views the curriculum as content and education as transmission. In my opinion this approach draws its features from the traditional curricula, not necessary the traditional South African apartheid education, but from the general assumption that education is a matter of knowledge transfer from the knowing to the ignorant and it places the teacher at the center of the learning process as he/she is the bearer of the knowledge and source of transfer. Without the teacher, no learning can take place. One should however keep in mind that knowledge is not limited to factual information. Knowledge can be regarded as realisations gained by efforts, experiments or discovery, it could be in the form of values practiced by a particular culture or society or knowledge can be a skills accumulated by human beings. Certain knowledge is complementary, like learning and becoming proficient in a language which will allow one to utilize it to gain other knowledge. For example, ones proficiency in our medium of instruction of lessons in schools allows us to engage with learning areas such as mathematics, science and biology where we become knowledgeable about the topics or concepts. The transmission of content approach to the curriculum supports the idea that certain content is essential for a member of society to be exposed to in order for them to be integrated into society as contributing members. This process is called socialization.

This approach is the more traditional approach as it maintains the principles on which the earliest schools were established being that of passing on of beliefs to the younger generation in order for them to fulfill roles or take their place in society (Gintis, 1972). The feasibility of this approach is acknowledged by both Marxists and Conservatives as Marxists see the function of education as the socialization of the youth in the prevailing culture by institutionalising dominant values and beliefs which is necessary for the adequate performance of social roles (Gintis, 1972). Through the practice of reading and sharing stories through unpacking stories that have been read, curriculum as content and education as transmission can be achieved easier.

Having established that this approach emphasises content and the transfer thereof, it is critical to address one of the key criticisms of this approach which has to do with the selection of knowledge/content to be transferred. Another main argument relating to this approach tends to be between the rationalist and the empiricist view of knowledge, being that of human reason and intellect vs. human abilities (senses). While rationalists argue that knowledge is gained by the mind without the influence of the bodily senses, empiricists believe that knowledge of the world can only be acquired via our senses (for example through reading, viewing and listening). While the empiricist view does not fully support the concept of the curriculum as content approach, the rationalist view of knowledge promotes the idea that knowledge does not necessarily need to be applied objectively but that knowledge can be subjectively applied through abstract thinking. This school of thought is based on Plato's ideas on education which has greatly influenced Western civilization who view competency in numeracy and literacy as vital (Platto, 1955). Although the curriculum as content and education as transmission seems to be a typical approach to education in general, it acts like a platform or pivot on which the C2005 is based. I see this approach as central as it deals with the most important factor in education, being knowledge and its transmission.

Another key feature of this approach is the concept of generative subjects. This concept is derived from Essentialism, which was popular in the United States between 1930 and 1960. Essentialism promoted the idea that certain subjects have generative power while others do not. Essentialist, Clifton Fadiman argues that subjects possessing generative power are essential to learning other subjects in that



they enable the learner to master both minor subjects and those that are higher and more complex (Fadiman,1959). This concept relates to the example that I have earlier mentioned about knowledge of language being a key tool in knowledge acquisition. Other examples of generative subjects include numbers, the laws of nature, the past and the study of earth. This view, I am inclined to believe that it is particularly relevant to the context of South African education, even before Curriculum 2005 was introduced as the generative subjects mentioned above were seen as the key subjects taught in schools for example literacy, math, biology, sciences, physics, and history. These were the subjects on which traditional education was based and of which many racial and class groups were deprived of. The education of these subjects and more importantly its content was regarded as important, especially in formerly-colonial countries including South Africa. Exposure to this content was a norm in private and affluent schools and therefore it is essential that it remains the core of the new curriculum to ensure that the divisions and deprivations of the past are healed.

Criticisms of this approach include the view that teaching based on content and focused on cultural heritage are limited in that it would be focusing too much on the past and would be irrelevant to the learners' everyday lives or demands of their workplaces in the future. If this is the case then it would not be fulfilling the actual purpose of education, being preparation of the youth for active involvement in society. Another apparent shortfall is that there is a lack of transparency in terms of assessment which places too much power in the hands of educators thus disempowering learners which is in conflict with the idea of a learner centered curriculum. This criticism is based on the notion that goals are not clearly defined from the beginning resulting in learners not being able to adequately prepare for and anticipate assessment. The transmission of content approach to curriculum design and implementation is also said to be based on a simplistic, limited and outdated view of knowledge and learning compared to the active "meaning making" and experiential approach to education (also known as the learner-centered approach which is the third design feature of C2005). This is partly true as this approach is based on longstanding ideologies but the concepts can easily be contextualized and integrated with interactive teaching and learning methodologies to make them

applicable and effective. Neither knowledge nor the methods of its transfer are fixed.

In defense of this approach one must realize that technological change does not affect the content or method of teaching and learning in all learning areas. Secondly it is important to acknowledge that because knowledge and skills are not relevant or useful at one point in time does not mean that they have no value whatsoever. Curriculum 2005 has brought about the new role of the educator as facilitator who should constantly be managing and monitoring the systematic building up of content knowledge in learning areas in which the content is generative.

The second approach the Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-based Education is the curriculum as product and education as instrumental approach which sees content as secondary to questions of purpose. This approach to curriculum and teaching has been around for a century, was first prominent in the United States and resulted from the theories of Franklin Bobbitt. Bobbitt was concerned about the fact that the role of educators was not clearly defined at a time when scientific precision was viewed as a key factor in industry. To describe Bobbitt's philosophy in a nutshell would be to say that he was focused on precision of teaching/learning objectives with the aim of shaping learners like finished products with conveyor-belt like efficiency. *"Education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails"* (Bobbitt, 1913). In 1949, Ralph Tyler introduced the 'Tyler Rationale' which was a model for curriculum planning. The Tyler Rationale proposed the following four fundamental questions for consideration when planning a curriculum:

*What are the purposes of education?* Looking at Curriculum 2005 and its development we can ask ourselves what the aims and objectives are. According to Tyler, the answer to this should be derived from learners, society and subject matter. In considering the input of these mediating sources, Tyler's take on the product-based approach comes across as less mechanistic and industrial than Bobbitt's approach. This consideration for curriculum planning is relevant in the case of C2005 as it had regard the youth, socio-economic circumstances of the society and most importantly the subject matter as key factors for consideration when designing the curriculum.

*What Educational experiences can be provided to attain the purposes?* By posing this question, Tyler suggests that the experiences learners are exposed to in school should be carefully selected to give them the best chance of reaching the general aims and more specific objectives. It is pointless to expose learners to experiences which have no educational benefit. These learning experiences should be relevant and parallel with the objectives always ensuring that value is added.

*How can these experiences be effectively organised and how can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?* Experiences should be organised in such a way that they are complement each other in a chronological and sequential way. By organizing experiences effectively, learners are able to identify relationships between those experiences which will allow for effective integration of lessons and even learning areas. The effectiveness of the curriculum should be tested. An evaluation of the learners' ability to demonstrate evidence of enrichment is an important part of curriculum planning as this would allow the planner to determine whether an experience, the way it has been organised or its relevance should be reconsidered or reviewed.

The curriculum as product and education as instrumental approach and more important its view that clear objectives should be set in educational planning is derived from significant contributions by philosophers like Benjamin Bloom (Anderson, Krathwohl, Bloom: 2001). Taxonomy was highly recognized in development and implementation of C2005 as it classifies in detail the variety of cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives educators needs to be aware of. Post-World War II contributions to the objective movement include that of Kelly who argues four points. 1) Kelly proposed the logical argument that education is a rational activity and must be directed towards a clear goal. 2) The educational argument that pre-specified objectives are imperative for planning and assessment. 3) The scientific argument that identifying objectives allows for precision and efficiency in curriculum planning and lastly 4) the political argument that knowing what the set objectives are allow for the determination of accountability.

The curriculum as product and education as instrumental approach too has its criticisms which claim that this approach places too much emphasis as on the steps of the process to ensure a set objective or goal and fails to consider the realities of

the learning process. Critics feel that breaking down experiences into smaller components or processes takes away the appreciation of the process as a whole. If reading is taught in a fun and interactive way learners would be more interested in the texts that they are required to read and study. CAPS fails as it does not directly assess reading. However, all the assessments require the practices of reading as a foundation. This curriculum as product and education as instrumental approach has also been said to disregard the idea of education as an open-ended experience whereby active involvement and human agency is essential for enriching experiences.

The contribution of the curriculum as product and education as instrumental approach is evident in C2005; it defines learning areas and assessment standards. This allows educators and learners to determine whether they are on the right track in terms of the goals, the experiences to achieve those goals, the route taken and the reflection process. For example, when one looks at learners interpreting texts this is highly dependent on the learners' social background; thus it is for this reason that one should consider various possibilities when it comes to meaning making of texts. The interpretation of texts is equally as important as having the curriculum as emancipatory and education as critical approach. Previously the South African curriculum concentrated on being product orientated and was more focused on fragmented behavioral objectives. Whereas the C2005 has allowed for narrow objectives to be replaced with broad outcomes which accommodate different learning styles, social circumstances and religious and cultural differences which impact the learning process in schools. This enables learners, irrespective of where they are situated to achieve similar goals. The product approaches view of assessment has also been influential in the development of the new curriculum as C2005's assessment standards clearly stipulates how learners should be assessed which results in learners knowing exactly what the goals are and how they need to demonstrate their competencies. C2005 places great emphasis on formative assessment which revolves around learners' demonstration of understanding and a constructive reflection processes whereby learners are given feedback which allows them to address the areas of concern before their final or summative assessment takes place. C2005 took into consideration a learner-centered approach giving the learner to the benefit of doubt by allowing them to make sense and meaning based on their intuition and judgment. C2005 also considered the product-orientated curriculum as

it aimed to address the economic-driven needs of the country by making schooling a productive process. Although these were steps in the right direction, moving away from a system of basic transmission of content and knowledge, it has been said to be contradictory as it promotes a system whereby goals and objectives are the focus, followed by processes and methods to achieve those goals.

The third approach to C2005 is the curriculum as process and education as developmental approach. This approach can characterize as an approach that emphasizes the process of learning. It considers the fact that not all classrooms are the same and that different methods of achieving similar goals are acceptable. Lawrence Stenhouse, whose writings formed the basis of this model that puts process above product. The idea of education in terms of this model is much like the process of doing research whereby a question is posed, the relevant information is sourced and used as evidence from which to develop a hypothesis and draw conclusions which are not necessary final but are open-ended for discussion and reflection. This approach to the curriculum addresses both the learning process and the process of curriculum development. While other approaches focus more on the learning process, the principles of this approach such as the view that goals should be specific but not prescribed, the recognition of the importance of enquiry, experimentation, adaption and open-endedness apply to both the learning and curriculum development processes. The approach therefore views content, knowledge and policy, in the case of the curriculum, as being provisional in the sense that it will be the best account until something better comes along and also situated in the sense that we see things from our point of view. This approach draws from the empiricist view that knowledge is gained through our senses. For example, if we take Piaget's notion that when children are faced with the unknown, they assimilate it into their existing knowledge and accommodate themselves accordingly. Thus they are personally and actively involved in knowledge acquisition and production. The curriculum as process model therefore supports the fullest possible development of the learner. This model is also supported through Dewey's claim that education is not knowledge, but self-realization.

Some the principles of this approach which are evident in C2005 include the curriculum's support of a continuously experimental and active learning process, the serious consideration of learners needs and interests, the promotion of critical

engagement with content and culture and the inclusion of moral and social development.

Criticisms of this model are aimed at the concern that planning around children's needs can be problematic as their ability to express their true needs are not always fully developed, resulting in misconception and unclear or irrelevant criteria for selecting curriculum content. It is also said that not all interests have the potential to make for constructive learning and that general interests cannot form the crux of the curriculum.

The fourth and final approach to C2005 is the curriculum as emancipatory and education as critical approach. The agenda of this approach is more political than the others in that it is geared towards questioning and challenging society, especially established structures which are oppressive and hindering to the development of human potential. The justification of the approach is centered on Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educationalist whose theories were used as the basis for many emancipatory and literacy projects around the world. Freire theories are aimed at the empowerment of the oppressed. Through reading one is able to empower the oppress and provide them with access to knowledge. The central concept of his theory revolves around the human beings becoming subjects of their own lives rather than passive objects of political forces beyond themselves (Freire P, 2007) and that in order to become fully human we need to fulfill certain needs. This can be referred to as independent learning and through reading one is able to do this.

Freire's (2007) theories can be characterized with the help of the following issues: 1) Human Agency, which implies that humans are not passive objects and that our ability to actively engage with the world through understanding, creating and reflecting on reality allows us to constitute and modify knowledge; 2) The culture of silence that speaks to the effects of being oppressed such as low self-esteem and unproductive lifestyles resulting in a blurred view of reality and the inability to reflect on it; 3) Education is always political and one has to be weary of education that is domesticating instead of liberating in the sense that it reinforces oppression; Contrary to idea of education as process of knowledge transfer and regurgitation, 3) Freire promotes 'conscientisation; which is aims to bring the oppressed learner to 'critical consciousness' (Freire, 1970: 18) suggests that a learning process should

always begin with a process of lived experience and continuing to relate content with that experience, secondly to take a step back in order to reflect on the learning process from an outside point of view which will allow for a more in-depth reflection and thirdly that learning process should entail the understanding of rationality in the sense that connections should be made between isolated components in order to gain realization of cause and effect; 4) Praxis which can be described as the need for learning to take place through action. Freire believes that the learning process should entail, the ongoing alternation of abstraction and reflection, action, and further reflection (Freire, 1970: 119); 5) Dialogic teaching which means consideration of the learner's culture and experience. Teachers should be receptive and responsive to the experience, culture, knowledge and vocabulary of students (Ibid, p85-6).

Criticisms of this theory include the concern that the idea undermines traditional communal values of the oppressed as it promotes critically reflective individuals. Another criticism of the emancipatory approach is that it is unrealistic as a few critically reflective individuals cannot transform an entire society. Bowers and Berger also point out a criticism that Freire fails to recognize the teacher's superiority to the learner. This critique was originally brought forward by Youngman (1986) who acknowledges that Freire resolves this in a 1987 dialogue with Shor where he admits that the educator's role is significant essential in the directive nature of education.

The curriculum as emancipatory and education as critical is a key approach to the South African C2005 and Outcomes-based education as it is important that learners are aware of the political implications of the curriculum decisions so that learners can play an active role in the transformation of circumstances in society and in their lives. The idea of dialogic teaching in this approach relates a lot to the concept of cooperative learning which allows for the inclusion and consideration of active involvement of the learners in lessons which promotes the generation of new knowledge. Taking an interest in learner experiences, cultures and views is also evident in C2005 and OBE as it promotes making lessons relevant. One way of making lessons relevant is by using current themes to teach old concepts and consideration of new ways of reasoning and through the use of integration of technology and new socially constructed literacies into lessons. This information is vital in order to provide learners with reading material and literacy programs that

will be of interest and significance to the learners and this I believe is one way of promoting reading.

The above approaches to C2005 have all made a considerable contribution to the way the curriculum has been designed and remain to have an influence on the redesigning of the curriculum since it was first introduced in 1996. All the above approaches appeal to me. I do however have my own view of what education is and how it should be facilitated and the approaches which would be best suited to my philosophy with respect to teaching and learning. The curriculum as process and education as developmental approach appeals to me as I strongly believe that there is not a single method or route to achieving a goal. I understand that classrooms in South Africa will have vast differences and we need to be open to various ways of reasoning. I believe that engagements between educators and learners are not always predictable in the sense that you cannot be sure of what the lesson will produce. For example, one discussion could spark another which could expose a whole new approach to the lesson.

I feel that this approach is suitable for literature and literacy lessons alike as the interpretation of literature is not a one-sided affair and there are not set methods for interpretation. Interpretation of text is highly dependent on the reader's social background and it is for this reason that one should consider various possibilities when it comes to making meaning of texts. Equally relevant in the interpretation of text would be the curriculum as emancipatory and education as critical approach. The features of this approach are evident in the current suggested way that learners are to engage with texts. We need to be aware of not only the content or idea within texts but also where these texts originate from and who they are aimed at. Many writers of texts create texts to position the reader in a certain way that influences the reader's interpretation of the text. The emancipatory approach to curriculum which promotes critical engagement and is opposed to the culture of silence and the awareness of political agendas and for these reasons it is a suitable approach to adopt when teaching and learning literature as it will create an awareness in the learner not to accept literary texts at face value and that a deeper analysis of text is necessary to be able to effectively interpret not only the message but the intention and motivation behind the texts. In this way learners empower themselves by not allowing themselves to be positioned by political motives or popular belief.



As a language educator, I subscribe to the belief that effective communication is the basis for any successful engagement. Over the years we have seen communication develop at a rapid pace across all cultures which has had a significant impact on all industries. The ability to communicate effectively will be the deciding factor on whether desires are fulfilled or goals are achieved in life. I therefore feel that the concepts promoted by the curriculum as process and education as development approach such as the empiricist notion that knowledge is provisional and that newer knowledge is always anticipated is suitable for teaching the values of always improvising on means of effective communication. Communication methods are not always equally as effective in each and every situation and therefore the notion of experimentation, open-endedness and adaption is appropriate for teaching effective communication as it sensitive multiple contexts. The curriculum as emancipatory and education as critical approach also applies to teaching effective communication as the communication methods and motives should always be critically analysed and questioned. This, I believe will help learners to improve the way they produce and interpret communicative processes. This approach is also useful when creating an environment where debates or discussions about current events or similarly interesting topics can be discussed. These two approaches can are also be appropriate to in language learning as they will allow learners to express themselves better. In addition, they will develop confidence to grapple with issues especially when it comes to engaging with sensitive issues like norms, values and practices deemed acceptable by society.

The approaches I have focused on so far, allow me to see the curriculum not as one-sided or fixed, but open to adaptation dependent on the socio-cultural situation in which I may be required to implement it. I am able to recognize the influence of each of the approaches in the critical outcomes as specified in the NCS being, problem solving and teamwork which derives from the curriculum as process model, communication ability which comes from the curriculum as content model, technology and environmental awareness as well as self-affirmation which can be attributed to curriculum as emancipatory model and research ability which can be identified in the curriculum as process model.

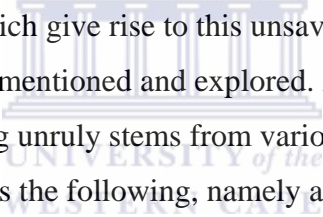
Knowing why these outcomes form part of the curriculum gives me a better sense of which routes to consider in order achieving the intended aims. As an educator it is

important for me to make the curriculum suitable for the learning environment by adapting to one's classroom, the resources and whatever other socio-economic circumstances that may have an impact on teaching and learning. In order to understand and respond to the curriculum, reading is fundamental and thus I believe reading is at the core of literacy development and understanding the outcomes and requirements of the curriculum. These approaches are there to assist educators and inform them of the important factors to take into consideration when taking measures to adapt the curriculum in order for effective learning to take place. These approaches can help educators to make change that is effective. These approaches have also been enlightening in a sense that it has exposed the various paradigms that exist with respect to the purpose and approach to education.

### **2.12.2 CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR**

The reason for dedicating a specific section in this literature review toward addressing classroom behaviour is based on my observation done at the school where the research was carried out at. Classroom behaviour has a large influence and impact on learners learning and educators being able to deliver a lesson and facilitate learning. Once there is a problem with the school and classroom behaviour this has a negative repercussion on the learning productivity within the classroom. Often educators are blamed for learners' poor performance; however, it is important to make mention of the fact that educators across South Africa face the challenging behaviour of learners in the classroom with reference to undisciplined behaviour and the aversion of accepting the educator as an authoritative figure. This behaviour can be viewed by an outsider as the educator being weak and unable to control the classroom; however, at the other end of the spectrum this very classroom behaviour often disempowers the educator. Furthermore, this misbehaviour results in a lack of successful learning. There are many laws which protect the learners of South Africa and their right to an education and learning. This makes it extremely difficult to discipline learners in the classroom. When learners become unruly and disruptive; an educator is forced to keep that learner/s in the classroom instead of putting the learner outside of the classroom until the learner has calmed down and regained composure to be able to enter the learning environment. Disciplinary procedures include sending a note to the parent or

guardian of the student. However, this does not always work as the parents of these learners come from low socio economic backgrounds. They either work or find it difficult to report to school in order to deal with their child's learning and discipline issues. Furthermore, the parent/guardian cannot afford to travel to school to deal with these issues. While learners' rights are often highlighted there is a lack of mention of their responsibility; thus one finds that their rights often motivate them to indulge in acts of misbehaviour and demonstrate a rebellious misdemeanour. Learners and parents are very familiar with their right but fail to remember their responsibilities that go alongside these rights. The lack of parent involvement in their child's progress is clear (Prinsloo, 1998). Classroom misbehaviour is a serious barrier to learning and so too is keeping learners engrossed in the current curriculum a great challenge; while their interest is different to that of generations before the curriculum has not been changed to address these issues at hand.



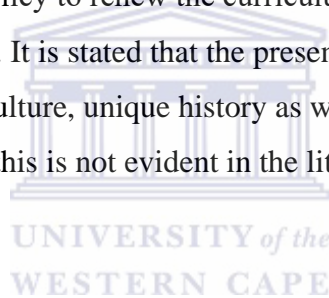
There are various factors which give rise to this unsavoury behaviour of learners. A few of these reasons will be mentioned and explored. According to Prinsloo (1998) the problem of learners being unruly stems from various situations. These situations can be identified as the following, namely a disruption of family life and or community; poor role modelling; lack of parent supervision and presence; lack of affection, care; low socio economic status; single parenthood; as well as emotional insecurities (Najman et al. 2000: p439). The factors influencing the teacher and learning process are "the individual, the classroom, the school, the family, the community and the broader society" (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010). In view of these influences, it is important to remember whilst teaching a lesson that learners may have pre-conceived ideas, which may have been learned from any these factors. One needs to be sensitive to these influences as they all contribute to the learners' development. I am inclined to concur with Prinsloo (1998); Najman (2000) and Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) as these reasons were evident while discussing the behaviour matters with educators at the school of research. While also speaking to learners these factors came out and it was evident why certain learners behaved in an unsavoury manner and this also explained why the school has psychologists that come in on a weekly basis to deal with the above stated issues which learners face. Learners accept certain texts while rejecting the

majority of prescribed texts. While investigating the reason for their rejection towards many of their prescribed texts I discovered through classroom observations and the interview process that the learners were unable to relate to those texts and more over these texts were taught in a very mandarin and boring fashion which further pushed learners away from wanting to read and engage with these texts. Behaviour is not something that should be dealt with solely by educators for the obvious reasons that it is not their responsibility to be disciplinarians nor do they have the time or qualification to deal with such issues and the issues related to learner's misbehaviour. Parent involvement and participation in schools are increasing and evident. Educators are swamped with over-sized classrooms and a demanding workload and parents and guardians who are not interested in their child's performance and future. Many parents leave their child at school with the assumption that their child's future and educational needs are solely the responsibility of the school and the educators. Parents/guardians should be instrumental in their children education. Parents need to create an environment at home that is conducive to learning. The practice of reading needs to be seen and reinforced at home. Parents/guardians should make time in the evenings to sit with their children to assist and facilitate their homework being done. I would also suggest that reading be done every evening for at least 20 minutes during the week. The family could discuss what they are reading and its relevance. Reading a newspaper or community paper could be a starting point for this activity. Thus classroom behaviour is largely dependent on what happens at home. If the learners home setting is controlled and discipline and reading is enforced, these acts are likely to filtrate in the classroom.

### **2.12.3 CURRICULUM SYNERGY**

Curriculum synergy refers to the interaction between the curriculum and the learner. It is important to note that there is collaboration between the curriculum and the interest of learners. As a result of this, it is also important to note that the curriculum evolves with time and its practices (Prinsloo, 1998). In order for the content of the curriculum to be meaningful to learners it should be embedded into their culture and life (Prinsloo, 1998). It is evident that learners distance themselves from learning and find the curriculum pointless when the content does not speak to their daily realities or future work related needs. This also leads to the learners behaving in an unacceptable way; not

completing tasks; skipping class or being absent minded while the lesson is being conducted. In light of this, this research is aimed at the evaluation of text selection for promoting innovative reading methods; because the literature used in the South African curriculum has not changed over the years despite the fact that times have changed and so too has learners interest in reading also changed. For centuries across the globe and South Africa, Shakespeare's plays have been studied. But I wonder if; anyone has questioned the relevance of this to the South African learners' realities or needs? The vast majority of learners perform poor in literature studies at high school level (this is evident from the research site) and I propose to return to this set of issues later in my thesis. Learners are not interested in these types of plays as they cannot see the link between this and their everyday experiences. South Africans do not speak in the same way that the Shakespearean plays are written and this deters learners from want to read and learn about these plays. Despite the fact that since 1994 it has been a top priority of South Africa's education policy to renew the curriculum; this is still a work in process 22 years on into democracy. It is stated that the present curriculum strives to reflect learners' life experiences, culture, unique history as well as future work related needs (Prinsloo, 1998); however, this is not evident in the literature selected or taught at high school level.



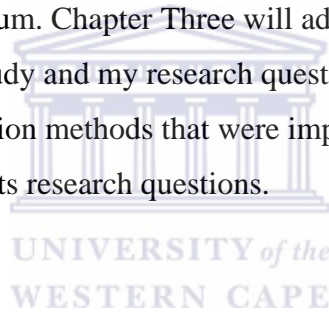
## 2.13 INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL METHODS- BLENDED LEARNING

Looking at curriculum synergy, as times change and the need and interest of learners' change the curriculum needs to be adjusted to cater to the needs and interests of the learner. This brings to the point of blended learning. Blended learning is about taking the curriculum and infusing it with technology to modernise it to cater to the needs and interest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its technology driven learners. Curriculum and blended learning are associated with innovation which is one of the key aims of this research.

Currently, one lives in an era where one is attached to one's technological devices; both teaching and learning needs to speak to these changes. One's learners are glued to their smartphones and devices. It is time to utilize this opportunity to enhance the curriculum and teach it using these devices in order to captivate learner's attention and use their attachment to their smart devices in a productive way that is aimed at reinforcing reading and promote it. Innovation is associated with creativity and design. Due to the fact that the current learners have different interests to those of the bygone times; it is important that teaching changes to address these learners' needs. The chalk board is out-dated; the photo copied notes are no longer visually stimulating. One is exposed to a world of applications (Apps) where technology is incorporated. Innovation refers to the implementation of something new and that which carries value. Why innovation and why change? For the obvious reason that learners have different daily realities and interests which the curriculum does not necessarily factor in. New creations can add value and meaning to learning; thus innovation is one way of promoting and enhancing student centred learning and problem based learning which addresses the learners' interest and daily realities. The use of innovation should also be disciplinary relevant and I will return to this point later and explain with practical examples in Chapter Four and Five. Innovative pedagogical teaching methods do not necessary only require the educator to be innovative when it comes to teaching and assessing; but the use of innovation should also motivate learners to be innovative and creative in their response to reading and literature and assessments in general. When an educator utilizes innovation in teaching and assessing learners acquire these innovation competencies.

## 2.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has so far reviewed current developments and understandings of the promotion of reading, and the ways in which texts can be taught and evaluated to promote reading through innovative pedagogical methods. Furthermore, this chapter has taken a look at historical developments and theories linked to the promotion of reading and text selection as well as the use of innovative pedagogical methodologies that can be used to promote reading. It is evident that we are dealing with sensory driven learners and thus there is an urgent need for transformation in our curriculum and classroom practices. The need for the use of technology in teaching and evaluating is here. As knowledge builders, it is important that we open up our schools and classrooms as a space for learners to become actively involved in the curriculum by allowing them to bring along their experiences and knowledge to the class. This will ensure an understanding of their world and needs and allow us to adjust and reinforce certain areas of our curriculum. Chapter Three will address the research design methodology used in my study and my research questions. Furthermore, this chapter will address the data collection methods that were implemented to obtain the data which this thesis needs to answer its research questions.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter provided a review of literature relevant to the study. This chapter provides a discussion and justification of the research design and methodology I used in the study to obtain the data. I propose to provide an overview of the research design will alongside a review of qualitative research methodology. Based on the research questions, aims and objectives this study I decided on using a qualitative approach to obtain data. The qualitative approach has allowed me the researcher to conduct interviews; classroom observations; pose open ended questions and allow for further discussion and investigation based on responses from participants (Punch, 2009). Given the complexifying nature of the research problems identified and the research questions and aims stated earlier; qualitative methodology enabled me to understand the participants' responses in terms of their understanding (Babbie and Mouton. 2001, p 194). I believe that this is an effective way in which specific information regarding values, opinions, behaviour and social contexts of a particular group can be obtained. I will now discuss the different data collection methods and techniques used in the study. Following this, I will discuss the procedures used in the field of study as well as the ethical considerations.

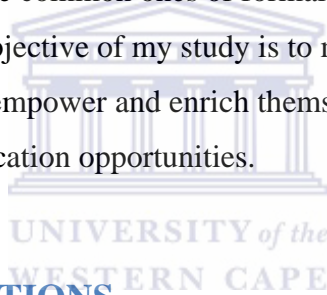
### **3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aims of the study, as stated in Section 1.5 were to firstly investigate English language educators' implementation of CAPS. Following this was the investigation of the method and procedure used for text selection. In addition to this, the aim was also to then include observations of how these prescribed texts were taught and evaluated. Furthermore, observations were done to grasp the educators' Text-Based approach to the curriculum. With regard to the learners, the aims of the research was be to see how CAPS and the text selection was received. Furthermore, observations were done as well as focus group interviews to gain insight as to how lessons and evaluations were received and responded too by both educators and learners.



Due to the use and influence of technology one of the key components of the research objectives is to determine if innovative applications enhance language learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills. Furthermore, the objective is also meant to determine whether or not educators make use and have access to innovation strategies and programs. Lastly and more importantly, the objective of the research is to find practical methods and solutions that will help educators to enhance their teaching and evaluation practices so that this can serve as a motivation for learners to read more and improve their literacy skills in order for them to progress to the next grade and remain within the schooling sector and not drop out of school due to failure.

Where evaluating literature texts is concerned, the aim is to move the focus from grammar and expected answers by directing this focus towards open-ended responses. The objective is to drive the use of a variety of alternate and variation of assessment approaches as opposed to the common ones of formal tests and examinations. In light of the above, the underlying objective of my study is to motivate more South African learners to read; help them empower and enrich themselves to a level that enables them to access further higher education opportunities.



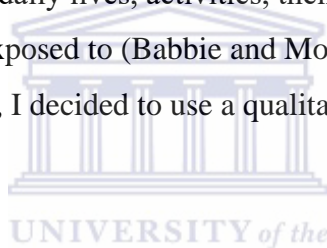
### **3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The literature I have reviewed necessitates my posing the following research questions:

- 1) How are texts selected?
- 2) Why are texts selected?
- 3) How are texts taught?
- 4) How are texts evaluated?
- 5) How can texts that are taught be evaluated?
- 6) Why do learners read very little?
- 7) Why do learners have low literacy levels?

### **3.4. SITUATING THE STUDY IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

As this study is focused on educators and learners and the execution of promoting reading through the curriculum practises, as well as identifying which factors do or do not promote reading, this study is best positioned in a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm. According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative research approach is implemented when one wants to understand the context or setting in which participants in the study address an issue or problem. “Qualitative research allows a researcher to examine in detail the experiences if people within their natural setting and to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by social, economic, cultural and physical context that they live in” (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey. 2011, p 9). Therefore an important aspect of a qualitative approach is to attempt to gain insight into the participants of your study’s daily lives, activities, their social setting and the environment that they are exposed to (Babbie and Mouton. 2007; De Vos et al. 2005). Above all, for these reasons, I decided to use a qualitative approach to my study.



#### **3.4.1 DEFINING AND CRITIQUING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

One of the key objectives of qualitative research is to understand the experiences and responses of people in order to understand why and how they make meaning of certain things within a specific domain (Bogdan and Biklen, 2008:38). Qualitative research methods are pieces of information that can be presented in the form of images, words, or impressions. Symbolically it is also a representation of reality. However, qualitative research can be seen as “soft and unscientific” according to Ritchie et al: 2003). Furthermore, Silverman (2001) believes that qualitative research can be questioned as to how the researcher categorises and events described and this thus then questions the reliability of the study. Qualitative research involves various data collection methods that are not quantitative (numbers). Its primary focus is in-depth of a focus area by providing quality and extensive data. Furthermore, qualitative research involves a subjective methodology and it also incorporates historical and social contexts which could be related to a particular phenomenon. According to Gillham (2000: 10) qualitative research enables the researcher to clarify the data and provide possible explanations for the participants’ actions and or behaviour. Lastly, qualitative research

helps to provide methods that can be used in order to gain ground theory from ones study.

Qualitative research in psychology involves an in-depth study of psychological phenomena within naturally occurring setting and from the perspective of the research participants. This study involved a school which accommodates learners from various socio economic backgrounds but more so learners from a low socio-economic background. Thus, I feel that their emotions and views would befit a qualitative methodology in my study, which can support a phenomenological approach. There are various approaches one can utilize when conducting a study using the qualitative research methods. Some of the approaches I wish to discuss are: participant observation; ethnography; phenomenology; historical and case study. Participant observation is when the researcher is immersed in the study and looks for tension between the participant as observer and observer as participant. Ethnography is describing a way of life (culture) from a particular group's perception. This was done through the discussion sessions with participants as well as the preparation sessions held in order for participants to complete the questionnaire with clarity of the questions that were asked. Phenomenology describes the structure of experiences as they present themselves to the consciousness. Historical refers to a systemic collection and objective evaluation of data related to past occurrences. The researcher was seeking to understand the causes and effects and possibly explain the current issues and anticipate what could occur in the future as a result of the past and present. Lastly, the case study approach provides the researcher with insight into the phenomenon by an in-depth study of each case (group, class, grade, school).

The reason for my using a qualitative approach in my research is to capture naturally occurring phenomena from the insider's (research participant's) perspective which results in detailed idiographic representations. Interviews were structured and conducted as a means of extracting research input from the school and its participants. Qualitative research is conducted in a real life setting and findings are considered context is culture bound and require in-depth description under which research is conducted (Gutkin & Reynolds, 2009, p. 31). Qualitative research is most appropriately done in a case study style. Case refers to the individual (e.g. teacher) and the context (e.g. classroom) (Gutkin& Reynolds, 2009).

One set of interviews were structured for the four educator participants of the study. Additionally, the educators were also asked to fill in a 17 item questionnaire. The two groups of learner participants were each given a 20 item questionnaire, which was also used as a platform for further discussion and clarification of their responses. The interview for the educator comprised of 11 questions. A qualitative case study design method according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) allows the researcher to be receptive to new ideas; issues and undercurrents that arise from within the study and external factors that contribute towards the study findings. Overall the qualitative case study design research methodology was employed as it provided an opportunity to explore experiences both learners and educators within a specific context within the South African schooling system.

### **3.5 CASE STUDY DESIGN**

According to Yin (2009:13) a case study is conducted when a researcher has limited control over the immediate situation in which the participants of the study find themselves in. Thus this study fits with this notion of Yin in that I as the researcher had limited control over the way in which texts were selected and taught and reading was promoted among high school learners with specific reference to grade 8 and 10 English home language learners. Furthermore, Yin (2009: 11) believes that the case study research methodology is fitting especially when studying people in their real life context as evidence such as direct observation and interviews of the participants are included in the study. This furthermore can provide me with a holistic and meaningful characteristics of the realities of peoples' everyday lived experiences. Due to the fact that this study was based at a school and looked at experiences and perceptions of text selection and evaluation as well as the promotion of reading in the English classes of grade 8 and 10; I decided that the case study design was best suited as one of the main research methodology instruments.

### 3.5.1 CRITIQUE OF A CASE STUDY DESIGN

Case studies, however allow the researcher to be active and interact with the research participants during the duration of the research process. Moreover, case study research method according allows for the researcher to become a self-reflective practitioner, therefore allowing the researcher further and in-depth immersion into the data to better deeper understand the data (Simons, 2009:23). Therefore it is important that the researcher who uses the case study research method stays objective, remains neutral and keeps an open mind to continue looking for data and review the analysis thereof until it makes sense (Gilham, 2000:13). Furthermore Gilham (2000: 18) recommends that the researcher initially only collects data and remains objective by keeping an open-mind. For example I as the researcher am a fairly newly qualified educator and therefore I am able to teach and reach out more towards my learners as the age and interest gap between them and me is very little. Thus I am able to understand their interest and needs and the way in which they would enjoy learning best.

However, it is important that I understand that I am studying educators and learners from different educational and social backgrounds who may not perceive teaching and learning the way I do. According to Simons (2009, p 70) the case study design also allows the researcher to explore the history and social setting of the participants in order for the researcher to interpret the influence as well as the meaning of the actions and responses and behaviour of the participants. Simons (2009:70) cautions that although it is important to have insight to the history and social context of participants of the study; the researchers should be cautious not to link participants' previous lived experiences to their current behaviour, actions and capabilities in the case study. Therefore it is vital that the researcher only selects relevant information regarding the participant's history and personal information within the context of the case study. This was a challenge as I would be involved in discussions in the classroom, over break times as well as with the participants of the study when collecting data. The way in which I overcame these challenges were in two ways during break we would discuss matters that steered away from the classroom and teaching and when getting into personal discussions in the interviews I would close my book and file when irrelevant information that could question the creditability o my research arose and I would not make any notes of these occurrences.

## **3.6 RESEARCH SITE; CONTEXT; PARTICIPANTS AND RECRUITMENT**

### **3.6.1 OVERVIEW**

This research required the participation of one government High School (which mainly has learners from a middle- low socio-economic background) that has a minimum of three English educators. Participation by the Principal; English HOD and English educators were required in the study. I conducted classroom observations and this specifically looked at grade 8 and 10 English Home Language classes and the learners' responses to the texts taught and evaluated as well as lessons presented by their educators. I chose to conduct this study at a school in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town close to UWC. I proposed to conduct the study at Cravenby Senior Secondary School; where I completed my practise teaching in 2012 while completing my Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGCE). To protect the privacy and anonymity of the educators and learners' fictitious names were used in the study. This school remained as my favourite for various reasons and I always felt the need to go back and answer to learners why school is so boring? Why must Shakespeare plays be a part of their studies? CSS is furthermore a combined primary and secondary school that is separated by an interleaving gate. The reason why I mention this is because of this very reason that it affected my research design. As a result of this I wanted to incorporate the grade 8 learners as part of the study as majority of the grade 8 learners come from CSS's primary school block. I wanted to find out more about the skills that the primary school equipped and transferred to these learners with in terms of reading and literacy.

### **3.6.2 RESEARCH SITE**

In terms of the site selection I selected Cravenby Senior Secondary School (CSS) which is situated in Cravenby in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. CSS once previously known as a predominantly "Indian" dominated school due to the repercussions of apartheid and the dynamics of the Group Areas act. Twenty-one years into democracy many things have changed for this community in Cravenby including the school CSSS. In the Post-apartheid phase, more parents felt the need to remove and place their children into private schools as well as schools outside of the area for various reasons,

some families even relocated due to the freedom of movement and the abolishment of the group areas act which allowed one to purchase a home in any given area in South Africa. This resulted in a change in student enrolment and demographics at CSSS. By 1998 this pandemic was seen more evidently and by the year 2000 the school needed to allow more learners from other areas to enter the school so that it could uphold its enrolment numbers as well as its financial support from the fees it received. This resulted in learners from Ravensmead and other neighbouring areas as well as learners from Mannenberg and the Cape Flats entering CSSS. All this had serious repercussions for the School, its goals and image which it was once known for. Majority of the current learners are now coloured and stem from previously disadvantaged areas (low-socio-economic backgrounds).

### **3.6.3 SAMPLING**

The study used a sampling method to represent an entire population. According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2006: 202) a sample group “is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher “. This judgement should also factor in the following elements that contain the most characteristic representative or typical attributes of the population such as race; gender; age etc. I did not encounter any difficulties when selecting the sample groups as the educators involved in the study eagerly assisted me in the selection progress. One government public school was selected as the school where the study would be conducted. This school was selected as a representation of most of the South African schools based on enrolment numbers and resources and funding. The purpose of selecting such a school was in the keeping with one of the aims of the research which was meant to find ways in which to promote reading at the majority of the government schools. All educators were eager to assist in the study and were responsive and participated fully in the study and they were extremely helpful and provided much insight relevant to the study as well as to the complexities faced by many educators within the WCED and schools in general. Sampling also refers to the participants that were selected for the study and the reason and purpose the researcher had for those selections. Two sample groups were selected, 12 learners from grade 8 and 12 learners from the grade 10 English home language classes were selected. The criteria for selecting was to have equal representation of gender, race, academic achievement and to have learners from different socio economic backgrounds and

reading levels. These processes are further discussed below under research participants as well as under the heading Research Design and Methodology that is presented later on in this chapter.

### 3.6.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

#### Summary of the biographical characteristics of the participants

<u>Educator</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Grade/s currently teaching</u>	<u>Years of teaching experience</u>
<u>Ed 1</u>	M	8	10 years
<u>Ed 2</u>	F	8 10	2 year
<u>Ed 3</u>	F	8 9	5 years
<u>Ed 4</u>	F	10	28 years

#### **PROFILE OF LEARNERS**

This study was conducted from the English Home language classes which comprised of learners from Grades 8 and 10. This sample group of learners during the research period were aged from 14 years-17 years old. They came from areas such as Ravensmead, Parow, Goodwood, and Cravenby (surrounding areas of the school) within the northern suburbs. From the grade 8 sample group there were 6 boys and 6 girls which I selected based on equal gender, socio economic, academic performance representation. The Grade 10 sample group comprised 12 learners, 5 boys and 7 girls; these reason why there was not equal gender representation was due to one of the male participants who were initially identified and asked to join the study, left the study. Time was limited and one girl asked if they could then join the study. The sample groups comprised of a total of 24 learner participants which were selected based on factors such as academic performance; ethnicity; age; gender; etc. The reasons why I chose grade 8 and grade 10 learners as the grade 8 participants are a reflection of the junior phase in the secondary school and the grade 10 learners are a reflection of those learners who are entering the senior phase.



## **PROFILE OF EDUCATORS**

There are five English educators at CSS. The school only offers English as a home language subject, considering the fact that the majority of learners stem from homes and areas in which Afrikaans is the home language and mother tongue of learners. There are 4 classes per grade. I have closely worked with 3 of the educators as they were responsible for teaching the four grade 8 classes as well as the four grade 10 classes. Altogether there are four female educators and one male educator responsible for teaching English at CSS in the high school. While two of the educators are young and new into the teaching system the three remainder educators have been in the teaching sphere for a number of years (over 12 years respectively). I chose to work with these four educator participants as they were the responsible English Home language educators for the two sample learner groups, which I selected. I felt it would be fitting to work closely with these educators to see how and if their teaching has an impact on their learners performance and reading activities. It was refreshing to work with such a diverse group of educators. Of the five English educators, four were participant educators of the study, two educators (Educator 1 and 2) were experienced and in the practise of teaching for a very long period of time and having had international teaching experience too. The two other educators (Educator 3 and 4), on the other hand were new to the profession of teaching English. Educator 3 was in fact a new graduate in the field of education and educator 4 had less than five years of teaching experience which also merits their fresh, young and innovative pedagogical methodologies that they present to the classes they teach as well as to CSSS overly.

It occurred that educator 3 was recently moved from the schools primary school teaching block into the high school block-. Now, this is a major change and adjustment for both the educator and learners affected by the move. From classroom observations and speaking to the learners, they have adapted well to their new educator (educator 3) whom they received in the third term of 2015. “We prefer educator 3 over our previous teacher Mr Y” was a general comment made by learners when asked how they felt about the change of educator. The reason I asked learners how they felt was because they indicated that towards the end of the academic year in term three they received a new educator. Having a new educator in term three could be seen as a barrier to learning as the learners would be used to the teaching style of their previous educator and having formed a special bond with that educator. Instead, the learners indicated that

they welcomed this change as their new educator was much more engaging in lessons and taught them in a more “fun and interactive” way than their previous educator. Through classroom observations the class also echoed that the only thing that disrupts them is the fact that two of their educators were changed and replaced in the 3rd term of school. These learners requested that educators not be replaced during the course of the year as it unsettles them and breaks the special bond between learner and educator. Being recently involved in a similar situation I can relate to the learners concerns and support structure being disrupted mid-way through the academic year. I also observed that the educators have changed their attitude toward teaching. This is due to numerous reasons. One of the reasons was the fact that I have observed learners’ disinterested negative attitudes towards teaching and learning. The second reason stems from the leadership and mismanagement of the school time table where the educators are also expected to teach Life Orientation as a subject (a subject they have no knowledge or practise of or interest in). Educators’ expressed during interviews and staff discussions their disheartenment and a lack of passion towards the teaching profession due to the above stated reason and the many administrative duties they are being tasked with.



### **3.7. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Research design refers to the plan and structure used to obtain the research of this study. Furthermore, the research design also helps the researchers to collect and analyse evidence that addressed the research questions of the study. Investigative questions were set up with the aim of obtaining answers which address the aims and objectives of the study. Additionally, the research design provides an explicit and detailed outline of the activities planned within a study (Tuckman, 1994:16). Based on the low literacy levels in SA mentioned earlier, the focus of my research was on promoting reading through text selection and innovative pedagogical applications, for which this study aims to provide explicit details using substantial evidence from the data collected on this topic.

According to Stake’s (1995) a qualitative case study design as an approach to the study; provides an exploration of a phenomenon using a variety of data collection sources. In light of this, my research was designed to use interviews; classroom observations; audio

recordings; and gathering marks of learners' summative assessments in English and comparing these with their ability to read and the amount of time per week they spend on reading. The research design comprised mainly of weekly classroom observations in the 8 classrooms. Furthermore, my research design also included interviews and questionnaires with educators as well as group and individual interviews with the two sample groups of the grade 8 and grade 10 learners (12 learners per sample group). The research examined the types of literature learners are exposed to at high school level and the significance thereof. Additionally, the methods which the English educators use to teach and evaluate literature were observed and were done to see if reading is promoted by the educators. The response and progress from learners also provided insight into what the causes are for learners' low literacy levels and reasons why learners do not want to read.

Interviews are conducted to gather information about a specific topic from a group of individuals. Focus groups are an efficient way to gather information from a range of informants and the group size vary from the population that is being explored (8-10 members). Although a larger group provides a wider range of perspectives and may prevent participation by all members by contrast smaller groups more in depth from participants. In depth interviews are semi-structured and focuses on gathering data from individuals about specific topics related to the research question. In depth interviews are one of the primary methods for gathering data from the individuals who represents the population of interest (Gutkin and Reynolds. 2009, p.39). Therefore, I chose twelve learners per group in order to have control and gain maximum input and response from every member. These research design methods were used in order gain an in-depth insight into the daily experiences of an educator as well as personal insight into the experiences of the learners. Throughout the study I have engaged with the English educators at the schools and provided them with feedback of the findings and progress of the study; this has ensured that the research information is gathered is accurate.

**Research  
Design  
Model**

**Purpose:**

- 1) Explore possible ways of promoting reading among high school learners.
- 2) Evaluating text selection process
- 3) Find out how texts are taught and evaluated.
- 4) Explore possible existing and new innovative pedagogic methods to promote reading.

**Title:**

*The Promotion of Reading among High School learners through Text Selection, Evaluation and innovative methodologies*

**Research Questions:**

- 1) How and why are texts selected?
- 2) How are texts taught?
- 3) How are the texts that are taught evaluated?
- 4) How can the texts that are taught be evaluated?
- 5) Why do learners have low literacy levels?

**Data Collection  
Methods**

- Qualitative Approach
- Semi structured

**Context**

- \*Southern Suburbs School in the Western Cape, Cape Town.
- \*One ordinary public school.
- \*Sample group of grade 8 and 10 English Home language learners.
- \* English Home language Educators

**Analysis**

A mixed method mainly using a qualitative approach will be utilized to analyse the data using a deductive and holistic approach; this will also comprise of the following analysis methods:

- Content*
- Narrative*
- Discourse*
- Frame work*

### **3.8. DATA COLLECTION METHODS; INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

The research methods implemented in the study were consistent with that of a qualitative approach. The data collection methods comprised of focus group interviews, individual interviews; classroom observations as well as questionnaires. Participants included the school Principal; the HOD for Languages and English educators and sample groups of grade 8 and grade 10 learners. Participating educators and the sample groups of learners were asked to answer questionnaires to deepen and enrich the study. In addition, some aspects of the phenomenological research method were utilized to obtain data based on the study.

Data was collected every week on a Tuesday from 28th July till 29th September 2015. The instruments included firstly discussions with the principal; HOD for languages as well as the high school Educators for English at CSSS. In addition to this instruments such as questionnaires and interviews were set up for both educators and learners respectively. Furthermore, classroom observations were conducted as well as discussions around the curriculum, text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogical methodologies were done in the English classrooms in Grade 8 and 10.

The school Principal and HOD for English provided me with background information and demographics of the school. A discussion with them and the English educators around their approach of CAPS took place around a round table discussion.

Furthermore, they were asked to respond to the question “How do you believe you can assist learners with poor and low literacy levels at your school”? The aim of this question was to allow educators to do some introspection on their current pedagogical methods used in their classrooms and allow them to be creative and innovative in their responses. This question was aimed at creating a discussion that will provide insight into the current literacy pandemic South Africa faces. After the discussions, classroom observations were conducted on a weekly basis to observe the educators’ teaching methodologies and observe their learners’ responses while they teach literature. Subsequently, through this observation I was closely looking at the educators’ pedagogical methods used and whether or not these methods promote reading; free writing and probe open-ended questions. Therefore, the interviews and observations were conducted in order to see whether or not a negotiated curriculum is practised in

the English classroom. Later on I examined the correlation between the amount of time a learner spends on reading and the results that learner obtains for English. This was done in order to see if the idea of a learner who reads frequently performs well academically is true. This result and outcome was benched according to the learners' performance from term 1-2 according to the mark obtained for English in the June report.

The intention of this study is to promote a culture of reading in both schools and communities so that SA has more literate and empowered learners who will pursue studies beyond the gates of high school. The interviews covered the research questions posed as well as some of the aims and objectives of the study. These were phrased as questions to the HOD for Languages, English educators and their learners. The study made use of structured interviews and unstructured interviews as they are perhaps the best suited methods for assessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and their ideas of reality (Punch, 2009, p. 145). Thus, the interviews with the HOD for languages; English educators and their grade 8 and 10 learners were designed to cover the research questions and aims of the study. These interviews initially were unstructured so that the researcher could gain a wide spectrum of the phenomenon at the school regarding pedagogical methodologies, text selection and evaluation.

Thereafter, a round of structured interviews was conducted with the above mentioned participants. In the structured interviews the HOD together with the English educators were also interviewed individually. Interviewing the HOD is necessary because the HOD is in control of implementation and assessing the English curriculum within the school and the findings are reported via the HOD to the school Principal.

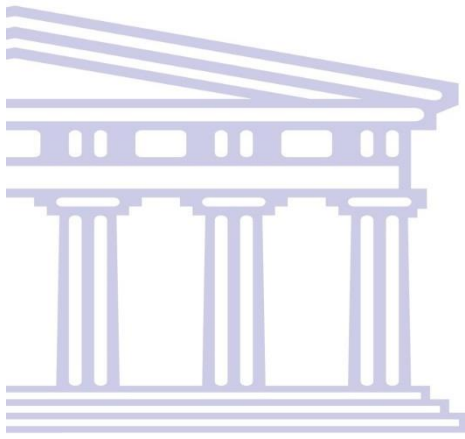
The researcher would provide a report to the school including the research findings and an overview of the school promotion methods of reading and evaluates texts.

Subsequently the report will provide educators' with ideas to enhance/improve their pedagogical and evaluation methods so that it promotes reading at school which appeals to learners. I would also urge the school's Principal and HOD of English to raise the point with district officials from DoE (when they do their school visits) to re-evaluate the selection of texts and see whether or not they are still valid in the classrooms currently and if these texts appeal and are relevant to learners' interests. Texts selection

should serve its academic purpose and desired outcomes; however, it should be selected based on its relevance and interest to the learners.

### **3.9 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEETS**

Biographical information sheets were used to collect biographical details from the school, educators and learners who participated in the study. Details obtained from the biographical sheets for the educators included the grades they taught; their years in teaching experience, their gender and skills. Details obtained from the biographical sheets for the learners included: their age; gender; race; home language; June results obtained for the subject the study was based on; demographics. Permission sheets were also given to all participants (educators and learners); in the case of being a minor (all learners) this document was given to the learner to take to their parent/guardian to read and then decide if their child could participate in the study. These two documents needed to be completed and returned to the researcher on the agreed day and time. However, some learners forgot to give these documents to their parents/guardians while a few also indicated that they do not wish to participate in the study thus there was a delay in conducting the interviews. With the help of the educators we were able to identify other learners who could participate in this study and these learners were then given the two documents to fill out. However, in the meantime while waiting for the documents to be returned from parents and guardians; I proceeded with classroom observations and interviews with the educators who agreed to participate in the study. Below are copies of the appendices (1; 4; 5 & 6) that were issued to all involved participants of the study and was mandatory to be completed before the participant was able to be a part of the study.



Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

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University of the Western Cape**

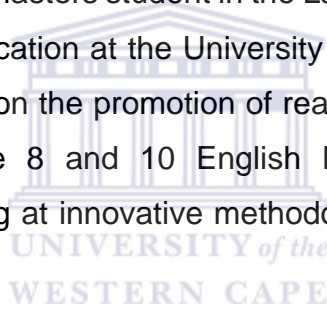
## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET**

Respective Principal; HoD of English and English Educators

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I, Parveen Paleker am a Masters student in the Language Education Department within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.



#### **Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) Investigate English Language educators' implementation of the Text-Based Approach to the curriculum.
- 2) To examine how prescribed texts are taught to the learners. Additionally, observation and investigation will also be conducted to see how learners receive; understand and respond to these lessons.
- 3) To determine innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

The main purpose of this study is to attempt to find innovative practises that can assist in promoting reading and improving learners literacy levels. The aim is to



highlight the power of innovation and that for every barrier to there is a potential solution. It is important to know that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The researcher's participants, who are Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language educators and learners, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)



Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Tel: 021-9592449

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)



Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I, Parveen Paleker am a Masters student in the Language Education Department within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.

I would appreciate your child's participation in my research study in order to obtain the following specific objectives.

- 1) To examine how prescribed texts are taught to the learners. Additionally, observation and investigation will also be conducted to see how learners receive; understand and respond to these lessons.
- 2) To determine innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

#### **Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The main purpose of this study is to attempt to find innovative practises that can assist in promoting reading and improving learners' literacy levels. The aim is to highlight the power of innovation and that for every learning barrier there is a potential solution. It is important to know that the learner's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The researcher's participants, who are Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language educators and learners, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker  
Tel: 0849603874  
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam  
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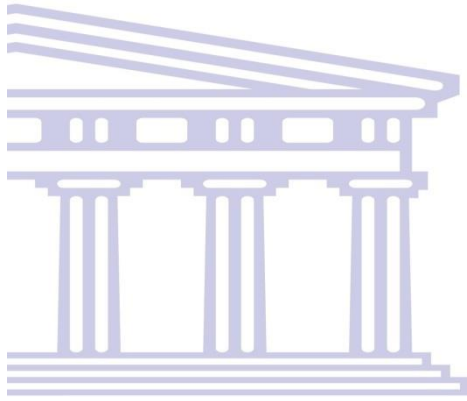
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(Full name of Parent/Guardian)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian) hereby give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the above stated research study. I am aware of the objectives of the study and that my child's identity will be protected and that this study will not interfere with my child's academic performance.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

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



Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

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**APPENDIX 5: PERMISSION LETTER TO GRADE 8 and 10 English Home Language Educators**

Cnr School & York Street  
Cravenby  
Western Cape  
7501

Dear Ms/Mr \_\_\_\_\_

**Re: Permission to conduct research in your classroom**

I, Parveen Paleker am a Masters student in the Language Education Department within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.

The title of my research is: The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The main purpose of this study is to examine common issues that impede learners' literacy levels and their desire to read. I would like to request your permission to conduct research in your English Home language classroom at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. Furthermore, I would like to research innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills. I will observe how you teach literature to Grade 8 and or 10 English Home language learners. I would

like to interview you as well as a few of your grade 8 and 10 learners (a sample group). I will also interview 15-20 learners per grade for the purposes of the above stated research. The research will not interfere in any way with teaching and learning in the school. In addition, all participants in the study will remain anonymous. The Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand teachers' perceptions and practices in teaching English to Home Language learners.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below. I hope that you will consider my request.

Yours sincerely,

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

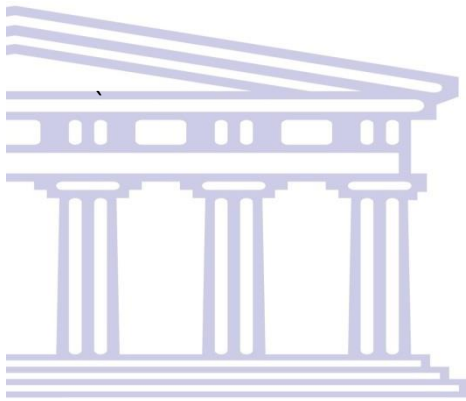
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**APPENDIX 6: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE EDUCATOR**

**Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

As an Educator at Cravenby Senior Secondary School, I hereby acknowledge the following:

1. The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt or interfere with my daily classroom practices.
2. Participation of my class in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any stage of research.
3. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my identity as well as that of my learners.
4. I am assured that my classroom participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.

Educator's Signature:

..... Date: .....

Researcher's Signature:

..... Date: .....

School Principal's Signature:

..... Date: .....

### **3.10 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND RELATED PROCEDURES**

Classroom observations and discussions occurred on a weekly basis where the researcher attended all the grade 8 and 10 English home language classes at the school where the study was conducted. This classroom observations and discussions were done in order to gain introspect into the learners learning environments; the educators teaching experiences and methods used as well as to see how learners learn and experience various lessons.

### **3.11 INTERVIEWS**

Interviews can either be structured or unstructured, due to the nature of the study and time constraints the researcher chose to utilize structured interviews which will help to answer the research questions of the study. Conducting interviews requires the researcher to be a good listener; empathetic; understanding and to also have patience (Altrichter, Feldman, Posch and Somekh; 2008:104). Interviews are used in qualitative and quantitative research as means to collect data. Interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to engage with participants on a personal level. Furthermore interviews provide a researcher insight into peoples lived experiences and personal views. Interviews are a frequently used method of data collection when employing a qualitative research approach (Babbie: 2001). According to Miller (2011) interviewing can be described as “a two-way conversation” with the purpose of obtaining rich descriptive data about how the participant perceives reality based on their beliefs, opinions, views and ideas. According to Holstein & Gubrium (2011) Interviews vary in structure, quality and nature of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee.

#### **3.11.1 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Structured interviews are usually utilized to capture data when one uses a quantitative approach. Structured interviews include the use of questions which are either close; close ended; pre-coded or fixed choice (Bryman et al: 2015). Structured interviews make use of standardised questions. These questions should be posed by the interviewer for the interviewee to answer. There are various ways of doing interviews. Firstly, the interviewer should set out sufficient time and make the necessary arrangement for the interview to take place. Then the interviewer should consult with the interviewee and

book a suitable time and venue in which the interview should be conducted. The norm of interviewing is done face to face where the interviewer sits opposite the interviewee and asks the questions in a specific generalised sequence. These days' interviews are also done via telephone or internet connectivity platforms. As this study is set at a school and I allocated time to spend at the school I drew up a schedule with the educators in order to personally interview each of them at the best suited time; this was during their admin periods and after school. One the following pages are the questions that were used for the structured interviews.







Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

Dear Educator

The questions that I am about to pose are meant to support and strengthen my research investigation. I will be much obliged if you could respond to them freely and frankly.

1. How would you describe your learners' literacy levels in your class?
2. Are your learners on par with their reading and critical thinking skills in terms of what is expected as per CAPS?
3. What is your perception of the language requirements in the CAPS curriculum?
4. What is your evaluation of the English Language textbooks used in the CAPS curriculum in high schools?
5. Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom?
6. Name the difficulties that your learners experience with regard to language and literature?
7. How do you handle these above stated difficulties that your learners experience? What specifically do you do to help learners learn better and understand the literature texts and lessons?
8. How often do your learners read in class per week? Do you give them any reading tasks or home-work?
9. In terms of innovation are there any that you utilize to teach and evaluate literacy and the literature aspect of the curriculum?
10. How do you see educators contributing to a learner-centred approach when teaching and evaluating literature?
11. What are your views regarding the ANA's; its aims and objectives?

### **3.11.2 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Conducting individual interviews allow the researcher/interviewee to focus on what participants and pay particular attention to their body language and emotion expressed (Mcburney, 2001). By observing the participant's body language and facial expression the researcher can be alerted to any misunderstanding of the context and thus the researcher is able to provide clarity and explanation to the participant. Mcburney (2001) critiques individual interviews by stating that the interviewee could be prompt to discuss or divulge information that the interviewer wants to hear or that could influence the interviewers' voice and views. I choose to manually record the discussions and interviews and often repeated the interviewee's responses for clarity and further discussion. The set of questions found in appendix 7 was used for the individual interviews.

### **3.11.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Focus group interviews are a useful research method as it allows for group interaction and mutual understanding of questions posed by the researcher (Mills, 2007:66). Based on the 24 learners who were selected to be research participants; two focus groups were created. One group was specifically for the grade 8 learners and the other for the grade 10 learners. A structured interview schedule was set up to accommodate all learners selected to participate in the study and be removed from the classroom environment into a space of ease and comfort to allow participants to freely be able to express their views and opinions. To avoid dominance in response and allow for equal opportunity, each participant was given an opportunity to respond to the questions (Mills, 2007:66). Certain responses were debated and this tabled more questions from the interview.

### **3.11.4 INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS**

The interview with the learners was done in preparation for the questionnaire that they would later on receive. Questions and discussions were adapted from the questionnaire. This interview platform was a base for the learners and I to get to know one another better as well as to gain insight into their academic experiences and their feeling towards reading and literacy. This information was gathered based on the learners' expressions of the reading practices in the English classroom as well as their views on the subject teaching, text selection and evaluation methods used by their educator in their English classroom. Similarly, the same questionnaire was set up and structured for grade 10 learners. The interview required at least one hour. The researcher chose to do focus group interviews to gain a wider spectrum of views and to generate informal discussions that would hopefully provide the researcher with further insight into the phenomenon and study. The focus interview allowed the participants to further engage and comment on one another's experiences and ideas as well as responses. This give the researcher more insight into the participants' daily realities, challenges and classroom experiences.



### **3.11.5 INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS**

The interview with the educators comprised of 11 questions. Each educator was interviewed individually to ensure that their confidentiality and privacy of their views and opinions were respected. The purpose of these individual interviews with the educators was to establish the points of view of each educator on CAPS. Furthermore, this process was also followed to gain insight into the educators teaching practises; view of reading and teaching reading strategies. The individual educator interviews were used to gain insight on the views educators hold on text selection; evaluation and innovative teaching methods being used in the classroom.

### **3.11.6 QUESTIONNAIRES**

Questionnaires allow the participants of a study to freely express themselves through written responses in an environment they best see fit to do so. Therefore, I decided to not only use interviews but also make use of questionnaires to gain more introspection into learners' experiences and challenges concerning reading and studying their prescribed texts. The main aim and objective of using the questionnaire method to obtain data is in order to obtain facts and opinions regarding a specific phenomenon in which participants are informed about a specific issue (De Vos et al., 2005). In this case educators were informed about my concern regarding the low reading and literacy levels in South Africa and how to combat this by promoting reading among high school learners through text selection and evaluation as well as innovative pedagogy.

According to De Vos et al. (2005) questionnaires are defined as being a set of questions presented on a form which is to be completed by a participant of the study. Should the researcher be interested in gaining the perspective and attitude of the participants regarding a specific phenomenon; the researcher is then advised to use the questionnaire method to obtain this information (Babbie and Mouton, 2007). It is for this specific reason and motivation that I decided to make use of a self-reflective questionnaire for both groups of participants namely the educators and grade 8 & 10 English home language learners. Once I met the educators and learners and identified the specific groups of participants; I then began to introduce myself and the purpose of and outline of my study. Following this I observed several classes to gauge the setting and teaching and learning practices. Thereafter I gave the participants the questionnaires. I tried to keep the questions simple and basic for easy understanding and to allow the participants to say as much as possible without being restricted due to the nature of questions posed. Once the participants completed the questionnaires I thanked them and engaged in conversation regarding their feelings and opinions regarding the questions of the questionnaire.

### **3.11.7) QUESTIONNAIRES WITH LEARNERS**

The questionnaires with learners comprised of 20 questions. With the learners on the other hand, I took them to the staff room and planning room so that they could feel empowered to freely voice their opinions without having any disruption or influence from fellow classmates or educators. Below is the sample questionnaire.



Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

**APPENDIX 8: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR LEARNERS**

Dear Learner

The questions furnished below are meant to support and strengthen my research investigation. I will be much obliged if you could respond to them freely and frankly.

1) Name of School? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Is English your Home Language or Second Additional Home Language?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) Which language/s do you speak at home?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5) What was your result for the English Home Language subject which appeared in your June academic report? Please indicate the percentage amount as well as the code:

\_\_\_\_\_ %      Code: \_\_\_\_\_

6) Do you enjoy reading? Provide reasoning for your choice in answer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) How often do you read per week?

\_\_\_\_\_

8) How much time per day do you spend on reading at school?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) How much time per day do you spend on reading at home?

\_\_\_\_\_

Explain the culture of reading at your home (does your family members read? What do they read? How often do they read? Are you motivated to read?)

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10) Do you read any other texts besides your prescribe texts? If Yes, state what other literature you are interested in and that you are reading currently

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11) Do you enjoy and look forward to attending and participating in your English class?

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12) What are your views regarding your prescribe texts for English Home Language? Do you like reading your prescribed texts? Does the topics and themes interest you?

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13) Name the texts that you have covered for this year and also name the current texts that you are engaging with for term 3 and 4. Then describe your feelings regarding these texts and what are your opinions about them.

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14) How are your texts taught to you? (Describe the method, the mood of your educator, the settings, etc.)

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15) Name the different methods that have been used to evaluate/test your understanding of the prescribed text?

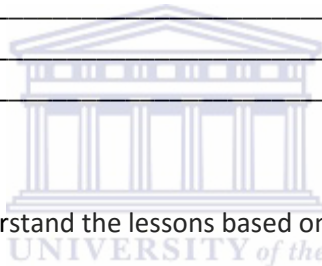
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16) How well do you understand the lessons based on the prescribed texts?

On a scale of 1-5 (one being zero understanding and 5 being you have understood everything that was taught and is able to answer all questions based on the sections explained and covered in class. Rate yourself and thereafter explain.

Circle the most appropriate rating based on your understanding of the texts when it is taught to you in class:

1    2    3    4    5

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17) Do you read the text on your own outside of class time? If your answer is yes, provide the amount of time (in hours) you spend on reading the text.

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18) Do you turn to other methods or sources to deepen your understanding of the prescribed texts? Which sources or methods do you turn to for this assistance?

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19) How would you like your educator to teach the prescribed literature texts to you? Explain what you would like should be done to help you better understand these texts and be interested in the texts.

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20) How would you like your understanding of the texts to be evaluated/tested?

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If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Tel: 021-9592449

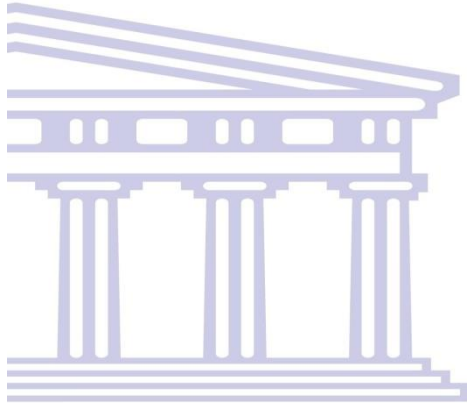
Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)



### **3.11.8) Questionnaire with the educators**

The questionnaire for educators comprised of 17 questions. I allowed the educators to take the questionnaires home with them and submit this to me before the study closed; this was approximately two months. On the follow page the sample questionnaire which the participant educators were asked to complete follows.





Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

**Language Education Department  
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University of the Western Cape**

**APPENDIX 8: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS**

- 1) Name of School? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Amount of English Educators: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Which grades do you teach: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Years of experience as an English Educator: \_\_\_\_\_

6) What are your views and opinions of the current curriculum in place CAPS? Looking at the text-based approach to teaching and learning, what are your views on this?

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

7) Do you believe in the practise of a negotiated curriculum or a text based curriculum? Motivate why.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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8) What teaching methods do you implement in your classroom while teaching the curriculum?

a) When you select texts and teach texts:

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b) When you evaluate learners' understandings and interpretation of the texts:

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c) What are your feelings towards promoting reading at school and encouraging learners to read? How can this be done?

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10) What would you recommend should be done to improve the low literacy levels in South Africa, specifically looking at high schools?

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11) What are you currently doing to improve the low literacy levels existing in your classroom?

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12) How would you try to encourage your learners to read?

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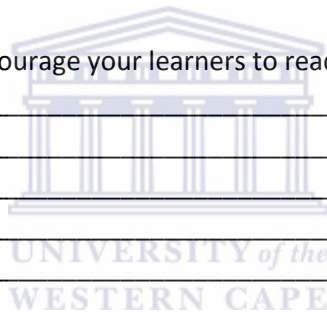
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13) Do you have any support or workshops that you can attend at your school or from the DoE to assist you in your challenges you face with your learners in terms of reading and understanding literature?

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14) How often do you meet with the HoD for English at your school?

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15) Does the HoD for English at your school provide you with support and do you work as a team with your HoD and fellow English educators?

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16) When do you recall last was your lessons observed and or evaluated by the Principal/HoD or external moderator?

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17) How would you feel about being externally moderated twice a year? And being given positive criticism and support from a teaching and learning specialist or H.O.D.

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If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker  
Tel: 0849603874  
Email: palekerparveen@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam  
Tel: 021-9592449  
Email: ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za

### 3.11.9 CRITIQUE ON THE USE OF QUESTIONNAIRES

While convincing the learner participants that their opinions and feedback carry a contributing factor to changing current and moreover future teaching and evaluating practices; learning about their personal perspective regarding reading and their daily classroom experiences and challenges were often highlighted by the learners. The learner participants were more receptive to the interviews than the questionnaires. When asked why this was the case the learners responded that they were tired of writing and they do not enjoy writing. This brings me to the point that qualitative interviews are flexible thus making it seem more applicable to use when collecting data in one's research. However, due to the high demand of the curriculum and having a jam packed day I often found my schedule being shifted due to educators not being able to send the participant learners out of class in order to participate in the study and complete the questionnaires. I however encouraged the participants to write as much as they can and even sub-divide the questions into part a, b and c and answer in point form as opposed to only full sentences.

I think one of the disadvantages (which I prefer to term as limitations of the study) was being limited to conducting my study within the boundaries of grade 8 and 10 English home language classrooms as opposed to having conducted my research in all the grades from 8-12. Another limitation of the study was using a sample group as opposed to using all the learners in grade 8-10. This I saw as a limitation as I would have liked have the responses for the interviews and questionnaires from the entire grade 8 and 10 group of learners for a wider perspective of the study and its findings. It was also not possible to work with all the high school English educators. Furthermore, this study could also be seen as a disadvantage it focused mere on the English language literacy pandemic as opposed to accommodating both the Languages of English and Afrikaans which the learners study and the schools offers.

While educators found the questionnaires useful and beneficial they also could deduce the direction of my study and thus asked me a few questions too. The educators were concerned about their responses and that I would disclose this and their verbal responses to the management of the school. I reminded them of the ethical forms and consent forms I initially supplied them with and gave them my word that their information would be treated as confidential. The educators were very hopeful in that

their responses would mean change and that this study would be the catalyst of the change. I felt very pressurised and responded to their call by saying that at the end of the study I will provide the school management and WCED a copy of the study and the underlying issues as well as possible solutions to the identified problems.

### **3.12 DATA ANALYSIS**

There were three brief qualitative questions and these were captured on spread-sheets according to the order of questions presented. Thereafter the responses were analysed and common responses were noted and highlighted. Lastly the qualitative data sets were analysed and coded according to the question setting. The interviews were then recorded and captured in various categories according to educator and learner responses. The common responses were also highlighted for further discussion and analysis. Furthermore, the responses from each research participant was recorded and presented in the form of an excel sheet with colour coding and the summary of these responses were tabled and the quantitative responses were also recoded in a graph. The entire data analysis can be seen in table form summary and linear summary on pages 110-152 in Chapter 4, alternatively the summary of this can be found on pages 153-159.



### **3.13 VALIDITY OF DATA**

I reckon that the validity of my data is about me being trustworthy and presenting data of a credible nature. Validity in qualitative research is foregrounded by trustworthiness (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1998). This simply means that the researcher should present findings which are a true reflection of the study and the phenomenon under investigation. It is also important as a researcher to remain objective and only report on issues relevant to the study without being bias. Credibility according to Shenton (2004) it is a congruency of findings with reality. In other words the reality of the investigation should be represented within the findings truthfully. Multiple data sources not only provide depth in the research but also provides validity of research results (Cohen and Manion, 1989). Discussions took place with each educator and sample group of grade 8 and 10 learners respectively. This was done to provide the participants with a backdrop of the research and also to gage if the questions for the interview and questionnaire addressed issues mentioned in the discussion and the aims and objectives

of the study. I then piloted the interview and questionnaire with a matric English educator whose responses was not used for the purpose of the study; however the participant's guidance; feedback and verbal response to conversation regarding the research gave me the opportunity to re-look and slightly adjust the questions for the interview; questionnaires and discussions. Interviews and questionnaire responses were transcribed and this was sent to participants for verification; minor changes were made.

### **3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics addresses issues surround beliefs of what is right and wrong and what is morally acceptable and immoral. Participants were invited to participate in the study and were also informed that they can withdraw from the study at any given point without providing reasoning. All participants were asked to complete consent forms before participating in the study. Furthermore, the participants were informed that their identities and contributions (shared information) towards the study will remain anonymous and remain protected. The consent forms were one way of ensuring and reassuring the participants that their identities and responses during the study would be treated with confidentiality and the consent forms is a guarantee that their participation and views will be private. Additionally, their responses to the study will be treated confidentially and will be tabled and presented using fictitious names for the purposes of presenting and analysing data.

Consent forms were given to all participants. The purpose of these forms is to protect their rights and privacy and also to protect the researcher and insure that everything is done ethically so that the study remains objective and truthful. Participants were informed that their responses in the interviews and questionnaires will be analysed and transcribed; this information will be made available to the researcher's supervisor and other bodies, however the participants' identity at all times shall remain anonymous and fictitious names shall be given in this instance.



### 3.15 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to comprehensively explain and justify the research methods used in this study by offering a detailed description of the research context, site and design. Furthermore, the aim of this chapter was to provide an outline and discussion of the methods of data collection and analysis used in the study. In addition to this the method of recruitment and consent was also explained to emphasize and ensure that the research was conducted in a trustworthy and ethical manner and that the findings display a true reflection of this. The following chapter will provide the data analysis of the research and following this a discussion of the findings of the study will be presented.



## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter stated the research process followed. In addition, it provided an overview of the research methodology used in the study to obtain the data that will be presented and discussed in this chapter. This chapter will then present the data gathered from the study, which looked at the promotion of reading through text select, text evaluation and innovative pedagogy at Cravenby Senior Secondary school (CSS). Subsequent to the presentation of data and analysis; the discussion thereof along with a synthesis of the findings will be presented in chapter 5.

The data to be presented in this chapter was gathered from three instruments. These were namely: classroom observations; interviews and questionnaires. The data collected required that I analyse; categorise and summarize it. Furthermore, this process required that I separate the data in an order which aims to answer the research aims and questions of my study. The data will be presented together with the interpretation thereof on the basis of the conceptual framework which I believe will accentuate the synthesis of the findings.

The aim and objective of my data analysis is to formulate verifiable interpretation thereof. A better understanding of the learners' access to reading and classroom paradigms and their barriers to learning, I believe, can assist the process of answering the research questions now. In addition to answering these questions, educators' challenges with regard to teaching and evaluating, known or unknown in the English home language classes have provided insight into the promotion of reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy. As this study is situated at a school and requiring response and affirmation, it needed to be one of a qualitative nature and therefore I decided to use qualitative instruments to collect data. Participants included the four English Home language educators of grade 8 and 10; as well as twelve grade 8 English Home language learners and twelve grade 10 English Home language learners.

The data was gathered through the use of classroom observations; interviews and questionnaires. The collected data was then analysed. Following this the data was then coded (breakdown and grouping of data) in a way that would answer the research questions posed in chapter one of this study.

The data to be presented, I believe is a faithful reflection of the voice and views of the participants of the study. Furthermore this chapter will faithfully reflect my observation and reactions to the shared information stated by the participants of the study and their views regarding teaching and learning and the promotion of reading; text selection and innovative teaching that occurs in the English classroom.

This chapter will firstly provide the orientation of sampling under the following headings:

- Research Site
- Participants

#### **4.1.1 RATIONALE FOR DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The underlying rationale for the data presentation and analysis in this chapter is synonymous with the intricate nature of my study given that it is situated at one school with two focus groups of 12 participants each and four educator participants. Thus the above stated will be presented in a progressive as well as a blended/ intertwined way. Due to the quantum of participants and two focus groups within one discipline specific (English Home language), I felt that the data should be presented in one chapter and interpreted in another chapter (chapter 5) given the quantum of data collected and its linkages to various focus groups. This will be done to indicate the immediacy and primacy of my data; thus allowing the analysis of the data to be more specific and focused in chapter 5. Thus due to the nature of this study and the amount of data collected; this chapter will only deal with the presentation and analysis of data

Researchers often delay the process of analysing data at a later stage; however, I believe that this delay may result in one not being able to see what the data is truly reflecting. The delay may cause a loss in connection between the data collected and the experiences and memory of that day of the researcher. Thus, I sat with each component of the study and dealt with each phase: classroom observations; interviews and

questionnaires separately. I recorded and coded each phase immediately once the process was completed. From this I drew the similarities, differences and unique trends and themes that emerged from the data and this will be highlighted and discussed more in detail in the Discussion chapter 5. The flow of each section to be presented in this chapter came about through each phase (classroom observations; interviews and questionnaires) being categorised in the following three ways: recording of data; analysis of data and interpretation of data. In doing this, my aim was to create a thematic continuum therefore giving me a deeper appreciation of the data and a sense of direction in terms of a beginning, middle and end in chapter 4 as well as to lay the groundwork for discussion of data in chapter 5.

Having used qualitative instrument data methods; the data will be presented in the following method: presentation; examination, and description. As a result the identified trends in the promotion of reading through: text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy in conjunction with the research aims will enable me to highlight the various ways educators promote reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy. The format of this presentation allowed me to firstly work through getting to know the learners and educators by conducting classroom observations. Through this process I was then able to work through the interview questions for both educators and the learners of the two focus groups in a systematic manner conducting the interviews separately with each educator and each focus group of learners. Consequently, I then immediately probed into discussion in relation to the responses received from the learners and the educators' interviews. The discussions based on the learner and teacher responses included quotations from the interview data in order for the participants to validate and substantiate the points made. The findings then lead to a detailed discussion and the overall summary of findings. Though the components in chapter 4 are presented and discussed separately, they are interconnected as they constitute the findings of the study. I present below the sampling; presentation and examination of the data.

## 4.2 RESEARCH SITE

The school that this research is based on is situated in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town within a residential area.

Although I have outlined and discussed the research site earlier in the methodology chapter 3, I wish to recapitulate on this here because it assumes special prominence in the data to be discussed. The school comprises of a diverse population in terms of educators and in its intake/composition of learners. The learners reside from areas within and surrounding areas of Cravenby such a Ravensmead; Goodwood; Parrow and Bellville. It was also noted that there are students who travel from the southern suburbs and the Cape Flats to school on a daily basis. While the few learners who come from Cravenby and Parrow are fortunate to be dropped and fetched from school daily by parents and guardians the vast majority of learners travel via lift-clubs and public transport. The transportation to and from school daily have major implications for learners. These challenges included long distance traveling leading to cost implications as well as a lack of nutrition. The lack of nutrition is being dealt with by the school through the help of the WCED and community members whereby learners are given a meal daily. The learners who travel via public transport have to walk to school and often in winter this poses as a threat due to the cold and heavy rainfall; thus on days when there are heavy rainfall the absenteeism rate is high at school. These learners', who walk to school, walk with fear of being attacked and robbed; some of the students carry weapons to school as a means of protection when travelling. The school consist of 1200 approximately 750 learners and 40 educators of which 8 are employed on a contract basis and 32 being full time employed. The sample was a selection of from the above population. Overall the above impacts learners' ability and access to reading. Furthermore, the above stated has a major impact on the way the learners are meant to read as well as their reading aptitude and their attitude towards reading. The ecosphere of the school also plays a pivotal role in learners' attitude towards learning and developing their skills.

### 4.3 ACCOUNT OF SAMPLING

The data that was be presented and analysed in this chapter is derived via the sampling method. Sampling refers to the selection of participants one uses in a study. This selection is done based on specific requirements, aims and objectives of the study. The study used a sampling method to represent an entire population. I selected the four grade 8 and 10 English educators and well two sample groups from grade 8 and 10. According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2006: 202) a sample group “is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher”. Like any sampling, this judgement should also factor in the following elements that contain the most characteristic representative or typical attributes of the population such as race; gender; age etc.

The school selected as my research site, I believe, is a fully functional school. From the four educators who participated in the study three were females and one was male. Three of the four educators have been in the field of education for a number of years while one educator was newly appointed.

Focused group sampling was used from the grade 8 and 10 learners; a sample group was taken from each grade comprising of 12 learners per group. The sample group of the grade 8 learners were aged between 13-14 years and the grade 10 sample group learners were aged between 15-17 years old. Due to time constraints and other limitations I was only able to select a sample group of 12 learners per grade and the reason for selecting this amount was that I at least wanted a 10% representation of the grade and safety sake I took 2-3 learners extra and thus there were 12 learners per grade group. To create equal and fair representation equal number of boys and girls were selected and the sample group took learners from various educational; racial and economic backgrounds. The learners were very eager to participate in the study. They were very vocal and responsive during the interview and responded in detail. While I found that the classroom observations were informative and the questionnaires (given to the educator participants) allowed participants to say as much as they want; I found that the most useful instrument was the interviews with participants as well as conversations held with them. From the interviews and discussion I learnt the most and bulk of my findings came from this.

#### 4.4 PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF DATA

This section captures educators' experiences and response to the English curriculum, the essence of teaching and evaluation as well as the implementation of CAPS (grade 10 educators). Furthermore, this segment also captures learners' responses to literacy and reading as well as the way in which they experience the English curriculum with reference to the lessons received and evaluations specific to texts and literature. Being a facilitator and tutor gave me limited down time to conduct research. Thus I was only able to spend Tuesdays at school. The educators were very accommodating in this sense and made provision on Tuesdays during class time for the learners to participate in the study. I also utilized the two intervals to do interviews with learners as doing this after school would create a transport and safety problem. Once the learners were dismissed at the end of the school day; this was when I would conduct the interviews with educators and discuss the day and the classroom observations. These classroom observations helped me in building relations with the educators as well as the learners. This was important as I needed the participants to be comfortable with me and be able to freely express themselves. Moreover, I did these classroom observations first so that I could gain insight into the classroom realities and make certain that my questions of the interview and questionnaires suited the level of understanding of participants as well as their everyday experience. Trust was fundamental and with the passage of time the learners and educators drew closer to me and we could easily have conversations and they were able to be themselves in the classroom. During my schedule I also had free time on some Mondays and Wednesdays and due to the educators being so welcoming and accommodating I would be at school observing more lessons and continuing with the research processes.

## 4.5 PRESENTATION OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

### 4.5.1 PROTOCOL

Classroom observations included the observation from the period of registration right up until 12th period. While some educators expected their learners to be lined up outside the class before they enter the classroom others expected the learners to merely enter the class and settle down soonest. It should be noted that the school in general has a major discipline issue. Learners pitch late to class and take a while before settling down. The English home language educators decided that the periods were too short in duration to get anything productive done in class; thus they merged two periods and kept the learners for a double period (one hour) whether or not this is favourable or beneficial is debatable. One should note that their class usually begins 10-15 minutes late after the actual period has begun. After the learners have eventually settled down and are seated they need to be told to remove their bags from their backs and take out their books. This has been noted and observed on many occasions. The lack of interest in the English classes for both grade 8 and 10 definitely exists; but more so for the grade 10 learners as they have stated that they have no desire to be at school nor to engage in the “boring”, “irrelevant books” being taught. Merging two periods has its pros and cons. Learners become restless after the first period is complete. One-hour duration for a class is too long; however, 30min period is far too little. I would suggest that the school stick to the DOE guideline and have periods that run for 45 minutes each, having less periods, and making it more efficient, effective and focussed

Generally, the school has a major problem with discipline and enforcing it thereof. Learners receive warning sheets but these are taken lightly as learners do not serve detention nor are their parents forced to come to school when their child misbehaves or breaks the school’s rules. I noticed that only one of the educators has classroom rules that are placed on the wall within the classroom. This educator is also the one who has control over her class and as soon as the learners enter the class they almost immediately settle down to greet the educator and then are seated to begin the lesson of the day. I believe that a good foundation at school begins with disciplined learners. Once learners behave they are able to function and be proactive in class. The school takes a considerable amount of time to settle down between each period. This is firstly



disruptive and secondly it wastes teaching time. I have witnessed how learners take the longest route from one class to the next. This issue is not dealt with by school management effectively. Learners bunk class in between periods and hide at the back of the school or on the staircases of the last blocks of the school. Looking at the schools teaching resources, it is limited. The educators have a card that allows them a certain amount of photo copies which limits them from rolling off copies of activity sheets, learning aids and summaries for the learners.

#### **4.5.2 CLASSROOM SETTING**

Three of the four classes are quite small and cramped up while the one class is very spacious. In the three classes that had a smaller space than the 4<sup>th</sup> class, learners there were seated in pairs where as in the spacious class learners are seated in groups of 4 and 6. I found that in the spacious class where learners were seated in groups, they worked well and were more productive during lessons and class activities than the other three classes. Classroom set up is important as it aids can help to aid a productive or disruptive classroom. Educators should be strategic in the way in which they arrange their seating in the classroom and which learners they place next to one another is also important. Peers and groups should be created in such a way that helps learners to be productive and work together to achieve their personal best. The ideas of how best to seat learners and arrange classrooms will furthermore be discussed in chapter 6 under the possible recommendations.

The following section is based on my classroom observations. This specifically looked at the educators teaching styles with reference to a lesson being given and the way in which learners engage with the educator.

## 4.5.3 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

### **DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATORS TEACHING STYLE AND LESSONS DELIVERED**

This section will firstly give a brief overview of each of the four participant educators. Secondly, this section will state what each educator's lesson was based on (the topic/theme of the lesson). In addition to this the section will discuss how the educator conducted the lesson and lastly how the lesson was received by the learners.

#### *4.5.3.1 Educator 1:*

This educator is experienced in the field of education and is very passive in his approach towards teaching and learning. This educator has very calm approach towards teaching and learning. One of the challenges identified by the educator is the limited resources the educator has and the learners have in terms of textbooks and readers. One sees how the lack of support from management affects the work and progress of an educator and makes the educator feel very disheartened.

#### **Lesson on: Poetry: Liberating Love**

The educator tries to settle the learners and then hands out the textbooks. The educator then introduces the poem and provides background information regarding the poem. The educator asks for a volunteer to read the poem. The educator then proceeds to explain the poem by firstly asking the learners what they thought the poem was about. The educator asks learners for the meaning of certain words and phrases; where learners were unable to answer the educator guided their thought processes and the helped the learners to derive the expected responses to the question. Learners were then asked to write down the questions from the board that were based on the poem. These questions will be answered the following day when the learners have access to their textbooks and the poem again. I believe learners should each receive a copy of the textbook or alternatively they should be given a course reader that has the necessary tasks and activities rolled off in the form of a booklet that they are able to access and utilise together with their personal workbooks.

#### **4.5.3.2 Educator 2:**

This is a newly qualified educator that is passionate about teaching and tries very hard to teach and control the class and implement discipline. She enforces reading and the promotion of literacy through identifying new words and writing it down on the board. She then hands out the dictionaries to the learners and then they are expected to look up the words and give feedback by providing the meaning of the words and writing it down in their workbooks and creating sentences using these new words that they have learnt.

#### **Lesson on: Poetry- Liberating Love (grade 8)**

This was a double period (duration 1 hour). The class started 16 minutes late due to discipline issues.

The educator wrote down 10 new words on the board for learners to copy into their workbooks. These words were identified from the poem and related to the lesson of the day. Learners were asked to use the dictionaries to find the meanings of the words and also note this in their workbooks. This was a timed activity of 10 minutes. The educator then selected random learners to state the meaning of each of the 10 words. This activity I believe expands the learners' vocabulary and knowledge and furthermore this activity promotes literacy. This activity also sets the mood for the lesson and helps learners to settle down and become focused.

The educator then began with the lesson by asking one learner to read the poem to the class. The poem is published in the learners' textbook titled English for Success. It is important to note learners share textbooks as there is not enough textbook for each learner. Thus the learners only have access to this textbook during class time. Learners were then asked to listen and then note each of the 13 questions based on the poem in their workbooks. The educator then proceeded to explain and discuss the poem. Once this was done it was the end of class. Learners will then only answer the 13 questions tomorrow when they have access to the textbook. I have a problem with this as I believe that this poem together with the questions could have been rolled off for each learner so that they could complete this activity at home and always have the poem as a reference in their workbook.

### ***4.5.3.3 Educator 3:***

Educator three is privileged to teach in a large size classroom. The room is filled with academic material that makes the class look appealing and learner friendly. Looking at the educator's background; she has social science and drama as a background and one sees how this has a positive influence and impact on her teaching and learning styles. Her learners are engrossed by her lesson as she uses drama techniques and good voice projections especially when she teaches literature. She teaches these literature texts in a manner that brings the characters to life.

### **Lesson on: Writing a business letter (grade 8)**

The learners are well behaved and settle down soon after they enter the classroom. One notes that discipline is of utmost importance in this class. The educator greets the class and the learners return the greeting and are then instructed to be seated. The lesson almost starts immediately once the learners are seated and take out their books to work.

Before the educator introduces the topic and lesson of the day; the educator uses clues and linking words so that learners can guess the topic and theme of the lesson. The skill of writing a business letter is then linked to everyday life so that learners are able to see where they can apply this skill. The educator uses this activity to show learners the similarities and differences of various letters. This activity I believe also taps into learners' prior knowledge and schemata. The educator then proceeds to read out an example of a business letter to the learner. This is done so that learners are aware what is expected of them and this serves as an example for the learners to work from. The learners are given the floor to ask questions about the business letter. The educator then tests the learners understand of the letter that was read to test their listening and comprehensions skills too. The learners are very vocal and responsive. Soon here after the learners set down to begin writing their own business letters together with a guideline template as a reference.

#### 4.5.3.4 Educator 4:

With over 30 years of teaching experience this educator has a great wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of teaching English. The educator has two very different grade 10 classes to teach among other classes too. The two grade 10 classes are very different to each other. The one class is an average-above average class (class A) whereas the other class has a low IQ level and learners battle to concentrate and perform well (class b). The educator is unable to teach everything to class b and this can be seen as unfair and unjust. But having been in the class I have seen the discipline issues and the lack of interest from the learners in learning and participating in academic activities. To combat the discipline issues in the classroom and that which is experienced by the educator, the educator has a black book to record the misbehaviour of the learners who do not do their homework or classwork. Detention slips were handed out to learners who did not complete their homework however these learners disciplined an attitude which indicated that they did not care about the slips

#### **Lesson on: Merchant of Venice**

The lesson started 15 minutes late due to discipline issues. The learners did not take out their workbooks immediately once they entered the classroom. Instead the learners sat as receptively; however, many of these learners did not pay attention to the lesson nor did they take down any notes of the lesson. Due to the play book *Merchant of Venice* being stolen; the educator played an audio of the play. While some learners listened to the play being read out to them others fell asleep.

The educator pauses the audio recording of the play and then poses leading questions. Very few of the learners are able to answer the question, and approximately 20% of the learners in the class interact and answer the questions. The educator also asks the learners at certain parts in the lesson to write down important points from the various scenes and the implied meanings thereof. Out of the 32 learners present in the class 4 learners do not pay attention to the lesson nor do these learners write down notes based on the lesson.

At the end of the lesson I then asked the learners about their views regarding Merchant of Venice and the entire class responded negatively saying that they do not enjoy

learning this play as they find it boring and cannot relate to the story line. A common statement made by learners was that they compared this play to that of *Lost Boys* and the learners said that they would much rather read *Lost Boys* than *Merchant of Venice* as they can relate better to the story and the language used in the book. As the lesson was coming to its end, I posed a question and asked the class of 32 learners the following question:

Do you enjoy reading the play *Merchant of Venice*?

The second question I asked:

What book or play do you enjoy reading?

**Question 1 response:**

All 32 learners responded negatively and said “no” they do not enjoy reading *Merchant of Venice*. One brave learner stood up and stated the following “Shakespeare’s books are boring and junk and we don’t like reading his stuff. The language he uses, we don’t understand”. This caused a stir of emotion and class began to express their dislike toward Shakespearian texts/plays.

**Question 2 response:**

The class responded that they enjoyed reading the book titled *Lost Boys*. The following are common views from learners given for enjoying the book by:

- 1) We can relate to the book.
- 2) It is easy to read.
- 3) It was fun to read and learn about.
- 4) We could understand the story and it was interesting

This section above gave an overview of each participant educator and their teaching experience and style. In addition to this the section also described a lesson presented by each participant educator. The purpose of this was to see the teaching style of the educator, the resources used by the educator to conduct the lesson as well as how learners receive the lesson and interacted in the classroom. Furthermore, this was also done to see how much of literacy skills are embedded into the lesson and how the practise of reading is infused into the lesson.

#### **4.5.4 DEBRIEFING AND SUMMARY: PERSONAL VIEWS OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

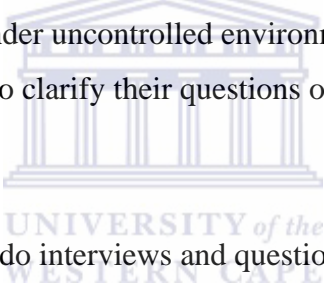
The following are my personal views and position based on the above four participant educators' classroom and lesson observations. In today's situations, it is becoming more challenging to be an educator. Learners are not always receptive to learning. They challenge the educators constantly and if a lesson does not interest them they switch off and engage in private conversations in the classroom or put their heads on the table and sleep.

Due to learners constantly using their cell phones and social media platforms, they have become accustomed to the use of predictive texts and thus cannot spell and often write using shortened versions of the words and phrases. This affects the writing, spelling and reading of learners.

Through the classroom observations I am able to confirm that a large percentage of the learners are visual learners and they do not want to write nor read. The learners are very disinterested in the classroom activities and the curriculum. If they do not see value in the lesson being taught they do not pay attention to that lesson. Learners are not taught critical thinking skills and this I believe will enhance the teaching and learning experiences. Moreover, their attitude towards the literature lessons can be changed if they are taught to apply their critical thinking skills to the texts they read and study. Learners know very little about the world; they lack general knowledge and I believe this and the global day-to-day activities should be infused into lessons and assessment activities. Lastly, I feel that the lessons taught should be linked to something learners can relate to and the themes and topics covered should interest and stimulate the learners and not bore them. I hope to return to this discussion in chapter 5 where I will provide possible solutions to and recommendations for the problems and challenges that I have identified.

## 4.6 FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

This section will present the findings from the focus group interviews conducted as well as the questionnaires. A copy of the four objectives as well as the 18 research questions posed is presented below and this I believe will act as a prelude to my presentation of the findings. I visited the research school on Tuesdays with the aim of conducting classroom observations initially. Later on my visits to the school was done with the mission of conducting interviews and having discussion sessions dealing with the process of the questionnaires with the focus groups and learners from the grade 8 and 10 classes. Tuesdays were also used to do classroom observations and speak to the learners and educators regarding the curriculum and their current challenges and recommendations to the stated challenges. However, later on Tuesdays were used to interviews and allow learners time to complete the questionnaires as I did not want to send these documents home with them as I was concerned that it would not be completed during their spare time or that it may get lost. Furthermore, I was concerned that if this was completed under uncontrolled environment the participant would not have the researcher present to clarify their questions of uncertainty regarding the questionnaire.



On the day that I planned to do interviews and questionnaires with the participants I would go to the class and then fetch the sample group. We would then have a casual conversation that the participants would usually start. We would then either meet in the staff room or admin room. I would set up the venue ahead of time in a fashion that would allow a round table discussion to occur and where we would face one another (12 participants and I). The seating arrangements were done in this was to ensure a sense of unity and equality and participants could freely sit where they wanted to and next whomever they pleased to. These sessions may have been held in venues where educators usually are present; however I booked these venues ahead of time to ensure that the visibility of educators. This was done to ensure the learners that their views and expressions are treated with respect and confidentiality and that their educators would not have access to their shared voices during this time.

Though the questions of the questionnaires presented below for both grades 8 and 10 learners were the same; I decided to keep the two sample groups' feedback separate. I was able to get more in detailed responses from the grade 10 learners due to their level



of maturity; schooling experience and knowledge regarding reading; text selection and text evaluation. This can be seen below in the data analysis of the questionnaires in section 4.6.1.

It should be noted that CSS has a registration period in which the educators have their form class with them. Furthermore, the day comprises of 12 periods with duration of 30 minutes per period. The school day also has 2 intervals. I began visiting the school on the 14th of August to discuss my proposal with the Principal and HOD for Languages (do note that the school does not have an HOD for English). I was given official permission to commence the study at Cravenby Secondary School on the 4th of August 2015 till 25th September 2015. I spent every Tuesday at the school and I also went to school on a Monday and Wednesday during my free time to complete interviews with both educators and learners.

**The two focus groups from grade 8 and grade 10 were formulated in order to have discussions and also to explain each question of the questionnaire given to the participants. This was also done to gain a group perspective of each response too.**

**The results to be presented address four objectives:**

- 1) To determine if learners enjoy reading and how much time per day learners spend on reading
- 2) To have insight into learners' exposure of reading and culture of reading at home
- 3) To determine if learners read beyond the classroom
- 4) How texts are taught and evaluated and what are the views of learners' regarding their prescribed texts

**The following research questions were posed in order to determine the above stated aims:**

- 1) Is English your Home language or Second Additional Language?
- 2) Which language/s do you speak at home?
- 3) Result in percentage and code achieved for English in your June report.
- 4) Do you enjoy reading? Provide reasoning for your answer.
- 5) How often do you read per week?
- 6) How much time per day at school do you spend on reading?
- 7) How much time per day at home do you spend on reading? Explain the culture of reading at your home (does your family read? What do they read? How often do they read? Are you motivated to read?)
- 8) Do you read any other texts beside your prescribed texts? If yes, state what other literature are you interested. Currently what are you reading?
- 9) Do you enjoy and look forward to attending and participating in your English class?
- 10) What are your views regarding your prescribed texts for English Home Language? Do you enjoy reading your prescribed texts? Do topics and themes in the texts interest you?
- 11) Name the texts that you have covered for this year and also name the current texts that you will be engaging with in term 3 and 4. What are your opinions regarding these texts? Describe your feelings regarding these texts.
- 12) How are the texts taught to you? Describe the method, mood of your educator and the classroom setting etc.
- 13) Name the different methods that have been used to evaluate/ test your understanding of the prescribed texts?
- 14) How well do you understand the lessons based on the prescribed texts? On a scale of 1-5 (one being zero understanding and 5 meaning that you have fully understood everything that was taught to you and you are able to answer all questions based on the sections explained and covered in class.
- 15) Do you read your prescribed texts outside of class time? If yes, provide the amount of time (in hours) you spend on reading the text.
- 16) Do you turn to other methods or sources to deepen your understanding of the prescribed texts? Which sources/methods do you turn to for assistance?
- 17) How would you like your educator to teach the prescribed literature texts? Explain what you think should be done in order to help you to understand these texts.
- 18) How would you like your understanding and knowledge of the texts to be evaluated or tested?

#### 4.6.1 FOCUS GROUP INDICATIONS- Grade 8 and then Grade 10 Participants

In this section I will be providing the findings from the two focus groups (grade 8 and 10) based on the response to each of the above 18 questions. This will be presented by firstly stating each (one of the 18) question. Following this will be the grade 8 focus group responses to the question/s. Thereafter the grade 10 focus group responses will be provided. So the pattern will be as follows: question; grade 8 responses and then grade 10 responses. Similarities and differences will be highlighted and key issues will be pointed out from each of the two focus groups.

- 1) Is English your Home language or Second Additional Language?

##### **Grade 8 response:**

Home language	7 Learners
Second additional language	5 Learners

##### **Grade 10 response:**

Home language	9 Learners
Second additional language	3 Learners

- 2) Which language/s do you speak at home?

##### **Grade 8 response:**

Language/s spoken at home	Amount of participants:
English	12 Learners
Afrikaans	8 Learners
Indigenous languages (French; Khokni Shona; Swahili and Urdu)	5 Learners

##### **Grade 10 response:**

Language/s spoken at home	Amount of participants:
English	12
Afrikaans	6
Indigenous languages (French; Kinyarwanda; Shona; Swahili and Urdu)	3

Of the 12 grade 10 participants, 6 participants indicated that they mostly speak Afrikaans at home. Of the 12 participants three only speak English at home. The three remaining participant do speak English at home however they mainly speak their indigenous languages such as Kinyarwanda; French; Swahili and Xhosa.

3) Result in percentage and code achieved for English in your June report.

**Grade 8 response:**

Percentage obtained	Code achieved	Amount of learners
51-60%	4	1
60%-69%	5	7
70-79%	6	4

**Grade 10 response:**

Percentage obtained	Code achieved	Amount of learners
40%-49%	3	3
50%-59%	4	3
60%-69%	5	3
70%-79	6	3

4) Do you enjoy reading? Provide reasoning for your answer

All 12 of the **grade 8** participants responded positively and said that they do enjoy reading.

**Summary:**

From the 12 **grade 10** participants, 11 participants indicated that they enjoy reading while only 1 participant indicated that the person does not enjoy reading. The participant indicated that he/she does not enjoy reading as “it doesn’t interest me and I’m busy”.

### Common reasoning for participants enjoying reading:

<b>Views of the learners whose home language is English</b>
visualise what is happening
put myself into shoes of character
do self-reflection
creative poem write and get inspiration from books
Helps me to relax
calms me
It helps me with my spelling
Helps me to use my imagination
Improves my language
Lightens my mood
It is exciting
When I don't have data I read.
Keeps me busy when I am bored.
<b>Views of the learners whose home language is Afrikaans</b>
if interesting, read for hours
if not interesting, read to pass time
read anything that captures and interests me
Fun
interesting, read continuously
excites me a lot
Fun
Interesting
It is a great way to pass time
It helps when writing essays and short stories
<b>Views of the learners whose home language is Xhosa</b>
improves my vocab
love extending my vocab
love to be up to date with media
enjoy learning new things
learn new things
Improves my vocabulary
Improves my state of mind
<b>Views of the learners whose home language is Shona/French/Kinyarwanda/Sawhili</b>
depends on what book it is
read when I'm bored
I love books and different stories

5) How often do you read per week (outside of class time)?

**Grade 8 response:**

Reading activity	Amount of learners
Daily	
Week days only	7
Twice a week	2
Thrice a week	1
Once a week	1
Often	1

**Grade 10 response:**

Reading activity	Amount of learners
Daily	6
Weekends	2
Week days only	2
Twice a week	1
Never	1

6) How much time per day at school do you spend on reading?

**Grade 8 response:**

Time per day at school spent on reading:	Amount of Learners:
10-20min	7
21-30min	4
2hours	1

**Grade 10 response:**

Time per day at school spent on reading:	Amount of Learners:
15-30min	1
30min	11

- 7) How much time per day at home do you spend on reading? Explain the culture of reading at your home (does your family read? What do they read? How often do they read? Are you motivated to read?)

The following tables are a reflection of learners reading activities at home and at school as well as their culture of reading which they are exposed to or restricted from. These responses I believe provide hefty insight into the learners' literacy skills and reading abilities and well as limitations. These findings below and its relevance will be discussed in detail in the following chapter 5.

**Grade 8 response:**

<b>Time per day at home spent on reading:</b>	<b>Amount of Learners:</b>
Occasionally	2
10-20min	2
21-30min	6
1-1.5hours	2

<b>No. of participant learners</b>	<b>Time participant spends on reading at home</b>	<b>Does your family read? Explain the culture of reading at your home.</b>	<b>What does your family read?</b>	<b>How often do they read?</b>	<b>Are you motivated to read?</b>
<b>1</b>	Occasionally	Yes. Mom and granny spend hours reading	Sister downloads books onto her phone (mystery and fantasy).  Books and newspapers	everyday	Yes. I see people reading all the time. I don't want to miss out on anything.
<b>2</b>	Everyday	Yes.	Newspaper, novels, books and	Several times a week.	Yes. I love reading, if something

			online stories.		interests me.
<b>3</b>	Occasionally	Yes. My family says it is important to read.	Newspapers. Die Son.	Few times a week.	Yes. My parents read a lot and this motivates me to read as much as them.
<b>4</b>	20 minutes	Yes. When we want to prepare for church.	The Bible. Anything and other publications.	4 times per week.	Yes. I am motivated to read so that I can learn.
<b>5</b>	1 hour every alternate day	Yes, they do.	The bible, magazines and newspapers.	Every day.	Yes. My parents tell me to read the bible a lot. They encourage me to read a lot to expand my vocabulary and be good at English.
<b>6</b>	20-30 minutes	Yes my parents read every day.	The bible; newspapers, magazines and books.	Every day.	Yes. I am motivated because my father reads a lot.
<b>7</b>	1-1.5 hours	Yes. My siblings and father read a lot.	The holy Quraan.	Every alternate day.	Yes. My mother motivates me to read to become wiser.



<b>8</b>	45 minutes every alternate day	Yes my parents read.	The holy bible; newspapers.	Every day.	Yes. My mother motivates me to read so that it can benefit me at school.
<b>9</b>	1 hour	Yes. My grandparents read.	The holy bible and newspapers.	Every day.	Yes. My parents force me to read the bible and improve my reading.
<b>10</b>	1 hour every alternate day	Yes my family reads sometimes.	Newspapers.	Every alternate day.	Yes.
<b>11</b>	30 minutes	Yes.	Newspapers and magazines.	Every day.	Yes. Because you gain knowledge.
<b>12</b>	30 minutes	Yes.	Articles, stories.	Every alternate day.	Yes. I have to know both bibles, I am catholic.

**Grade 10 response:**

<b>Time per day at home spent on reading:</b>	<b>Amount of Learners:</b>
Occasionally	
10-20min	3
21-30min	3
1-2hours	6

<b>No. of participant learners</b>	<b>Time participant spends on reading at home</b>	<b>Does your family read? Explain the culture of reading at your home.</b>	<b>What does your family read?</b>	<b>How often do they read?</b>	<b>Are you motivated to read?</b>
<b>1</b>	20 minutes	Yes. My parents read	Books and newspapers	everyday	Yes. My parents motivate me.
<b>2</b>	1 hour	Yes.	Newspapers.	Everyday	Yes. We speak about world events.
<b>3</b>	30 minutes	Yes.	Books.	Every alternate day.	I am motivated by what my family reads.
<b>4</b>	30-40 minutes.	Yes.	The Holy Bible.	Every day.	Yes. My father always encourages me to read.

<b>5</b>	2 hours.	Yes.	Magazines and newspapers. Thriller books. Pamphlets.	4 times a week.	Yes. It improves my English.
<b>6</b>	1 hour.	No.	Newspapers, magazines & internet.	Seldom (weekends).	Yes. I enjoy it.
<b>7</b>	1 hour.	No.	Magazines and newspapers.	Weekends.	Yes. I enjoy it.
<b>8</b>	15 minutes	Yes.	Magazines and newspapers.	Once or twice a week.	Yes. I do the same as my family.
<b>9</b>	1-1.5hours.	Yes. My mother and sister.	Books and newspapers. Novels- Fifty shades of grey, Pride and Prejudice	Every day.	Yes. Depends on what it is.
<b>10</b>	1hour.	Yes.	The Bible. Newspapers; books (Mills and Boon)	Occasionally.	Yes.
<b>11</b>	30 minutes.	Yes.	Newspapers.	5 times per week.	No. my mother doesn't force me to read.
<b>12</b>	15 minutes	Yes. My mother loves to read.	Mills and Boons books.	5 times a week.	No. my mother forces me to read.

- 8) Do you read any other texts beside your prescribed texts? If yes, state what other literature are you interested. Currently what are you reading?

**Grade 8 response:**

*The entire group of 12 learners in grade 8 indicated that they all do read texts other than their prescribed texts.*

<b>Types of reading material</b>	<b>Amount of participant response</b>
Religious Scriptures	2
Anthropology	1
books/novels	3
Stories	1
Comics	1
Horror Books	4
adventures books	2
Fiction	2
comic	2
sport books	1
Poems	1
Romance Books	4
Fiction books	2
Fairy tales	1
Newspapers	1
Magazines	3
Dictionary	1
SA cricket magazines	1
Dialogues, Different languages	1
online posts, online stories	1

**Grade 10 response:**

Of the 12 grade 10 learners 2 learners indicated that they do not read other texts other than their prescribed texts; whereas the remaining 10 learners read additional texts.

<b>Types of reading material</b>	<b>Amount of participant response</b>
Fiction	4
Non fiction	1
Teenage romance/drama books	6
books/novels	3
Religious scriptures	2
Biographies	1
Comics	2
Magazines	2
adventures books	1

**Only two of the 12 grade 10 participants indicated that they were reading books that were not prescribed to them.**

9) Do you enjoy and look forward to attending and participating in your English class?

**Grade 8 response:**

<b>Participants responses</b>	<b>Amount of participant responses</b>
Yes	11
No	0
Sometimes	1

**General participant responses (Grade 8)**

<i>I enjoy participating because I love getting involved in class discussions.</i>
<i>It is one of my favourite subjects.</i>
<i>I participate in class to learn from my mistakes.</i>
<i>I like participating and listening.</i>
<i>I participate everyday because most people don't want to participate</i>
<i>I enjoy it because I like the teacher.</i>
<i>When I'm energetic, I love participating.</i>
<i>I participate and look forward to it new lessons.</i>
<i>We learn new things and we participate.</i>
<i>If I know the answers, I'm always keen to share it with the class.</i>

<i>At least every time we do literature</i>
<i>Sometimes we are tired and hungry if it is at the end of the day.</i>
<i>I don't look forward to English when we get it last period because we are hungry and tired.</i>
<i>I don't participate when it's last period because I'm tired.</i>
<i>I look forward to class, but I don't participate because I'm tired.</i>
<i>But sometimes I'm tired and don't want to read.</i>
<i>It becomes boring during the last period.</i>
<i>I always try to answer questions in class</i>
<i>We get 2 English periods every day.</i>

**Grade 10 response:**

<b>Participants responses</b>	<b>Amount of participant responses</b>
Yes	8
No	4

**General participant responses (Grade 10)**

<i>I participate.</i>
<i>I enjoy class when we read Lost Boys.</i>
<i>It is fun and entertaining.</i>
<i>Most lessons are interesting</i>
<i>It gets boring.</i>
<i>Participating in the class is fun, you get to share your opinions and connect with the texts.</i>

- 10) What are your views regarding your prescribed texts for English Home Language?  
Do you enjoy reading your prescribed texts? Do topics and themes in the texts interest you?

**Grade 8 response:**

*10 of the participants indicated that they do enjoy reading the prescribed texts.*

I enjoy reading short stories with my class and most of them are relatable

I like reading because I learn new things

I enjoy reading the poems and short stories

It is boring and not current

Yes, most of them are interesting

*2 of the participants indicated they do not enjoy reading the prescribed texts.*

**Common views and opinions from the Grade 8 participants regarding their prescribed texts of the curriculum**

**Grade 10 response:**

From the 12 participants 5 of the participants indicated that they only enjoy reading the book *Lost Boys*. Other than that they do not enjoy the other prescribed texts. Six of the participants indicated that they did not enjoy reading any of the prescribed texts. The remaining 1 participant indicated that some of the texts like the poems were “ok”.

Seven of the 12 participants indicated that the themes of the prescribed texts do not interest them as they said that the texts themes were boring and difficult to understand. The remaining 5 participants indicated that they the book *lost boys* was a text they identified as being interesting as they could relate to the theme and context of the text.

**Common views and opinions from the Grade 10 participants regarding their prescribed texts of the curriculum.**

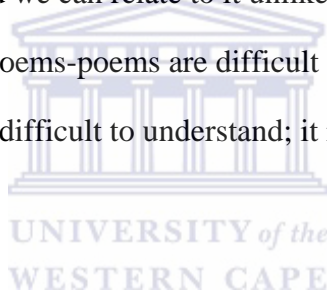
*Lost Boys* is interesting and we can relate to it unlike *Merchant of Venice*.

I do not like the books or poems-poems are difficult to understand

Shakespearian language is difficult to understand; it is pointless because we don't know how to use it.

It is boring and not current

*Lost Boys* is interesting



11) Name the texts that you have covered for this year and also name the current texts that you will be engaging with in term 3 and 4. What are your opinions regarding these texts? Describe your feelings regarding these texts.

**Grade 8 response:**

- 1) The birth of Shaka
- 2) Miss South Africa
- 3) The bus stop
- 4) The sacred milk of Komangae
- 5) The Vendetta
- 6) Two brothers and a snake
- 7) Bad Boys
- 8) To Philip

Most of the Grade 8 learners indicated that they do not understand the text titled *Two brothers and a snake*.

**Grade 10 response:**

<b>Names of texts covered and to be covered in term 3 and 4:</b>	<b>Feelings and opinions regarding the text:</b>
1) Lost Boys	Really like the book; easy to understand; I can relate to it; I can imagine the setting as I am familiar to a similar setting. Easy to understand. Relatable; modern and fun.
2) Merchant of Venice	Do not understand; complicated; boring; interesting; language is hard to understand; out-dated; awesome; difficult to understand;
3) Portrait of Machine	Is not interesting.
4) The face of my mother takes the shape	
5) Sonnet 116 (poem)	I hate it. Not interesting; boring
6) Refugee mother and child; Walking Away; A banded Bundle When I have fears I may seize to be; Congregation of the story tellers; (poems)	Boring;
7) The Magistrates Daughter; Global Warming (short stories)	Interesting;

**The majority of the participant learners indicated that they find the texts hard to relate to except for the book titled Lost Boys. They find that the texts selected are out-dated and boring and they are unable to relate to them.**

12) How are the texts taught to you? Describe the method, mood of your educator and the classroom setting etc.

**Grade 8 response:**

**How are texts taught?**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
The teacher teaches well	3
Teacher teaches in a fun exciting interactive way	4
Teacher reads to us and explains the work	4

7 of the 12 participants indicated that their educator teaches them the texts in a fun and entertaining way especially poems and short stories.



**Mood of the educator:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Energetic even though we (the learners) may be tired	2
Happy sometimes angry	3
Always enthusiastic	2
When teacher reads, the mood depends on the learners	1
Teacher maintains a normal tone with the class even when something bad happens	1
Sometimes teacher is in a bad mood and is boring	1
Teacher is fun, sweet and sometimes aggressive, always in a good mood	1

**Classroom Setting:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Classroom setting is ideal, spacious and we can move around	6
Very nice education colourful posters	7
Posters are interesting but they are mostly for grade 12 learners.	1

**Grade 10 response****How are texts taught?**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
The teacher gives background information; reads and explains and then gives activities	12
Teacher plays an audio to listen to and the explains the work or text.	3
Teacher picks a learner to read	1

**Mood of the educator:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Teacher is serious when it comes to learning but is also fun, exciting and energetic	5
Teacher becomes angry because students don't listen.	1
Enthusiastic	5
Teacher dramatizes and is interesting to listen to	3

**Classroom Setting:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
We do not sit next to our friends	1
We don't sit in groups	1
Classroom setting is ideal, spacious and we can move around	3
Very nice education colourful posters-motivational	2
Posters make the class look presentable and attractive	1
No posters for reading	1
Classroom has motivational quotes and posters created by learners	6

13) Name the different methods that have been used to evaluate/ test your understanding of the prescribed texts?

**Grade 8 response**

Tests/exams  
Orals  
Plays/drama  
Dialogues  
Debates  
Letters/essay  
Movie review

The most common methods used to test/evaluate learners understanding of prescribed text are done through tests and examinations. The formative marks are derived from assessments such as class tests, letters, essay writing and perhaps an oral and or drama. Assessments such as orals, drama/plays movie reviews and dialogues are not done often. However, these methods are stated by learners as the more preferred methods of assessment as opposed to test and examinations and essay writing. Evaluation can be done in various ways, while it is important to assess learners through specific testing instruments educators should also be receptive to alternate testing methods such as dialogues, orals, drama, complete the writing of a narrative. All these will still test reading and writing however they will come across as methods learners prefer over the usual essay writing, tests and exams. These testing instruments will bring out an element of fun and creativity from within learners and at the same time these testing instruments will also help to improve learners' literacy and critical thinking skills.

**Grade 10 response:**

Tests  
Exams  
Speeches  
Home work  
Posters  
Unprepared reading  
Comprehension activities  
Listening comprehension  
Literature class tests



Compared to grade 8 evaluations the grade 10 learners have presented a variety of evaluations. The most common being tests still. However, they do unprepared reading once in the term and have completed one listening comprehension test and one literature class test per term too. Unprepared reading is not often tested according to the learners and they only recalled doing it once during the course of the year.

14) How well do you understand the lessons based on the prescribed texts? On a scale of 1-5 (one being zero understanding and 5 meaning that you have fully understood everything that was taught to you and you are able to answer all questions based on the sections explained and covered in class.

**Grade 8 response:**

The average on a scale of 1-5, the participants rated their understanding of the prescribed texts taught to them at 3 out of 5. The reason behind their rating can further be understood by their response. They do not enjoy all the poems and stories that are selected to be taught. The participants also indicated that they find difficulty in understanding the short stories and poems. Five of the twelve participants indicated that they understood the short stories and poems when it is taught to them in class but later on when they are on their own they find it difficult to answer questions pertaining to the short stories and poems.

**Grade 10 response:**

The average on a scale of 1-5, the participants rated their understanding of the prescribed texts taught to them at 3 out of 5. The reason behind their rating is because the Shakespearian texts as well as most of the short stories and poems taught to them did not interest them and the participants indicated that they had difficulty in understanding the texts and themes thereof. All 12 of the participants indicated that they did not understand Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare.

15) Do you read your prescribed texts outside of class time? If yes, provide the amount of time (in hours) you spend on reading the text.

**Grade 8 response:**

Six of the participants indicated that they do read their prescribed texts outside of the classroom. While on the other hand the remainder 6 participants indicated that they do not read their prescribed texts outside of the classroom. The reason why the 6 participants do not read their prescribed texts outside of the classroom is because they have indicated that they do not have access to their texts books and they are only occasionally allowed to take home their learner books but not the textbook. These 6 participants also indicated that each learner in the class does not have their own personal copy of the textbook and that they need to share during class time. When questioning the educators for the reason behind this scenario the educators informed me that they have a shortage of textbooks and this is because previous years learners have

not returned the textbooks. Thus there is a shortage of the textbooks and they no longer allow the learners to take the books home as all the learners do not bring the books back to school.

**Amount of time the Grade 8 participant spends on reading the texts outside of the class:**

Participant 1: 5-10min

Participant 2: 30 min

Participant 3: Only read if there is homework that requires reading in order to answer the task.

**Grade 10 response:**

Nine of the 12 participants indicated that they do not read the prescribed texts outside of the classroom. The main contributing factor for this is due to learners not having access to hard copies of these plays/books. For example the Shakespearean play Merchant of Venice books were stolen from the school hence the educators needed to improvise and purchase the audio copy of the book in order to play this for the learners and then explain certain important parts of the play and then ask the learners to note these important highlighted parts for future reference. However, the participants indicated that they do not like listening to the audio recording of the book, they find it too vague and boring and some learners even fall asleep while listening to the audio.

16) Do you turn to other methods or sources to deepen your understanding of the prescribed texts? Which sources/methods do you turn to for assistance?

**Grade 8 response:**

Five of the 12 participants indicated that they do not consult any other sources other than the lessons and help given in class. The remaining seven participants indicated that they do in fact turn to other methods and sources to deepen their understanding of the prescribed texts.

**The seven participants indicated that they consult with sources such as:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Library	3
Help from older siblings	1
English Tuition classes	1
Download questions and guidelines from the internet	6
Father helps me with my homework	1
Friends	1
Educational Television programmes	1

**Grade 10 response:**

Four of the 12 grade 10 participants indicated that they do not consult any other sources other than the class lessons and notes received by the educator. The 8 remaining participants indicated that they do make use of other methods and sources available to deepen their understanding of their prescribed texts.

**The 8 participants who indicated that they consult with sources for the purposes of understanding the texts better said they make use of sources such as:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Study guides	2
Group studying and discussion with friends	7
Download questions and guidelines from the internet	1
Older cousin assists	1

- 17) How would you like your educator to teach the prescribed literature texts? Explain what you think should be done in order to help you to understand these texts.

**Grade 8 response:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Exciting activities	6
Play games related to the work (quizzes)	7
Role plays/ drama	6
Watch videos relating to the work	1
Make jokes while reading the texts	1

Of the 12 participants 4 of the participants indicated that they their educator’s “current practices are acceptable”. This group of participants come from one educator. This particular educator offers a variety of learning techniques and also has a background in teaching drama and performing arts. Learners are very focused in this educator’s class and she teaches using posters and dramatic expressions while teaching and engaging with learners during the lessons.



**Grade 10 response:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Watch a movie or play at a theatre	9
More pictures and posters	3
Role plays	5
Update or change the prescribed books	8
Outdoor reading and teaching of prescribed texts	1

Generally, the entire group of participants expressed the need to the curriculum to be revised and that the selection of texts that are taught and evaluated needs to be changed so that it can be more appealing to the learners.

18) How would you like your understanding and knowledge of the texts to be evaluated or tested?

**Grade 8 response:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Exams	7
Reading	1
Tests	3
Orals	3
Quizzes	4
Debates/role plays	5
Sharing reading experiences	4
Fun assessments	3
Group work (such as Q&A sessions)	2
Activity sheets	1

Based on the feedback from the participant learners it is evident that they are requesting to be assessed in various ways other than just the conventional methods of test and examinations. There is a call for the use of alternative assessments through more oral presentations, quizzes that test content taught. The fun assessments include group activities and role plays that test and teach the prescribe texts to help learners to better understand the texts and as well as testing their interpretation thereof.

One of the participants said that they wanted the texts to be evaluated or tested in the following way “We can read for 20minutes in the morning Monday-Friday and we can give feedback about what we have read”. This response is key to my research and I will later on also present this method as one of the solutions that could be implemented to promote reading and at the same time evaluate texts.



**Grade 10 response:**

<b>Types of participant responses</b>	<b>Amount of participants with these views:</b>
Weekly tests	7
Pop quiz	9
Online quizzes and assessments	2
Write summaries	6
Role plays	3
Spot tests	2
Debates/role plays	8
Presentations	5
Spelling bees	2
Group work (such as Q&A sessions)	2
Mondays recap on work of the previous week especially areas of difficulty mentioned by learners.	1

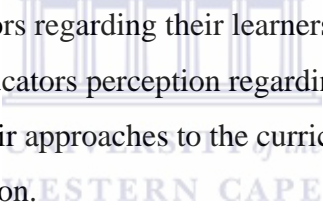
As seen above learners are requesting alternative methods for assessments and evaluations. Learners want to be tested on content through the instruments such as quizzes; weekly tests; debates/role-plays and writing of summaries on work they have completed in order to see if what they have understood is correct. This summary writing method of assessment can also assist learners when studying as these summaries will lighten their study load.

## 4.6.2 PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM EDUCATORS

### **QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS**

The four educator participants were invited to be a part of the study as they were the four educators of CSS who taught the English home language classes for grade 8 and 10 learners. I proceeded to give the questionnaires to the educators so that they could complete this at their own time and give it the necessary time and thought required to complete it. In the meantime I proceeded with classroom observations of lessons held by all four of the participant educators. Later on, toward the end of my data collection procedure I then set out time with each educator individually to conduct a structured interview that could assist the four objectives of the study that was mentioned earlier in this chapter.

**The presentation and analysis of data to follow aims to address the following 5 objectives:**

- 
- 1) The views of educators regarding their learners reading abilities.
  - 2) To determine the educators perception regarding the curriculum and its requirements and their approaches to the curriculum in terms of teaching; learning and evaluation.
  - 3) To gain insight as to how educators expose learners to reading and culture of reading within the classroom.
  - 4) How texts are taught and evaluated and the views of educators have regarding the prescribed texts.
  - 5) To gain insight regarding the support structures available for educators in terms of support guidance and innovation moving forward.

**The following research questions were posed in order to determine the above stated aims:**

The following table 4.6.2.1 to be presented reflects the questions and responses to the 18 questions posed to the educators in the questionnaire given to each participant. I believe the perceptions and insights of educators are valuable to my research aims and objectives. Their insights and responses, I believe provide clarity to my assumptions regarding the low literacy levels of high school learners in South Africa. Furthermore, their responses and advice provide me with ideas for possible solutions and recommendations to the research questions and the challenges faced by educators in terms of promoting literacy through reading. This will be further discussed and elaborated on in chapters 5 and 6.



### 4.6.2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE FROM THE FOUR PARTICIPANT EDUCATORS

Questions	EDUCATOR 1	EDUCATOR 2	EDUCATOR 3	EDUCATOR 4
<b>1.Name of school?</b>	Cravenby Senior Secondary	Cravenby Senior Secondary	Cravenby Senior Secondary	Cravenby Senior Secondary
<b>2.Which grades do you teach?</b>	8	8, 9, 10	8, 9	10
<b>3.Years of experience as an English Educator:</b>	Over 10 years	1 year	4 years	28 years
<b>4.What are your views and opinions of the current curriculum in place, CAPS?</b>  <b>Looking at the text-based approach to teaching and learning, what are your views on this?</b>	<p>It encourages learners to be more critical and acquire more skills.</p> <p>Time and lack of resources hinder effective teaching and learning</p>	<p>curriculum is very broad which allows for diversity</p> <p>allows for all learning types to be addressed and focused</p> <p>textbooks are sometimes not suitable for learners</p> <p>questions do not allow learners to be challenged, sometimes it is too simple</p>	<p>it is an integrated approach which streamlines the curriculum if approached correctly with skill and competency to engage all learners, irrespective of cognitive development</p>	<p>The text based approach contextualises the concepts for the learners. Language structures should be taught via the text that the learner is currently decoding for reading. This approach does not separate the parts of the curriculum. This method further allows for the communicative approach to be reinforced.</p> <p>CAPS is far more structured and clearly defines what teachers need to deliver in the classroom. All CAPS aligned textbooks are easy to follow.</p>
<b>6.Do you believe in the practise of negotiated curriculum or a text-based curriculum? Motivate why.</b>	<p>Learner development growth/development/empowerment is the ultimate goal.</p> <p>English teaching allows for a variety of texts/materials/info to be infused into the curriculum.</p>	<p>it is better because all learning levels and learning styles are catered for</p>	<p>I believe in both crucial to combine the two in order to cover all aspects within the curriculum, without neglecting the aim wrt content and context</p>	<p>From my experience this year as curriculum adviser, teachers need to teach a combination. The curriculum is broad but does not cater for all learners. Teachers need to contextualise the curriculum by choosing relevant texts that learners can identify with and make meaning. A negotiated curriculum has both positive and negative points. Learners are not in a position to decide what they wish to learn. Teachers cannot go into a classroom unprepared and then decide what to do. Poor planning leads to restless learners.</p>
<b>7 a) What teaching methods do you implement in your classroom while teaching the curriculum?</b>		I use a combination of methods		Different methodologies are implemented depending on content and learners viz learner centered; content focussed; interactive participatory.

<p><b>b) When you select texts and teach texts:</b></p>	<p>Learners should read, listen and actively engage the texts - discussions etc.</p> <p>Evaluate writers aim - tools/style of writing</p> <p>Language</p>	<p>some areas are teacher-centred e.g. language</p> <p>I use co-operative teaching a lot because learners engage more</p>	<p>various reading material is selected (source based) and learners work in groups to gather info according to instructions given</p> <p>Q&amp;A activity plays a major role in the approach</p> <p>verbal feedback is of utmost importance and writing is an important way to record information</p>	<p>Texts have to be relevant and within the parameters of the requirements as per CAPS</p>
<p><b>C) When you evaluate learners understandings and interpretation of the text:</b></p>	<p>Memorandum</p> <p>Rubrics</p> <p>alternative response</p>	<p>direct group evaluation is better, however, it is dependent on what is being evaluated</p> <p>class discussions are better for text-based or language evaluations</p>	<p>Q&amp;A method</p> <p>role play depending on text</p> <p>audio approach - listening to understand</p>	<p>Formal and Informal assessments have to be done. Teachers tend to just mark the formal assessments as marks are required for promotion and progression. However learners need to practise doing tasks therefore a number of informal both written and verbal assessments must be done. Questions must cater for all levels as per Bloom's taxonomy or Barretts bearing in mind that at least 40 % of questions are at level 1 and 2 etc</p>
<p><b>8. What are your feelings toward promoting reading at school and encouraging learners to read?</b></p> <p><b>How can this be done?</b></p>	<p>Reading period (part of language lesson)</p> <p>library</p>	<p>reading is the most important aspect in teaching, therefore it should be encouraged more in high school</p> <p>additional period for reading</p> <p>**few times are limited</p>	<p>I am a 'champion' wrt reading; if they cannot read with understanding, they can't comprehend and can't analyse information and are not able to synthesize information</p> <p>I encourage learners to read all the time.</p>	<p>Reading is a vital component of the curriculum. Reading should be promoted across the curriculum. At the primary school level there is a reading period allocated. However at High School teachers must use every opportunity to allow learners to read texts out loudly in class, create an interest in reading by encouraging learners to read. Have book quiz, visits to the library</p>
<p><b>10. What would you recommend should be done to improve the low literacy levels in South Africa, specifically looking at high schools?</b></p>	<p>proper school library (well resourced)</p> <p>encourage 'old-fashioned' research – books</p> <p>suggest/recommend specific resources</p>	<p>focus should be on understanding</p> <p>teachers should include parents</p>	<p>teachers should be re-trained as they are not always able to teach the skill in an integrated approach</p> <p>learners will be able to advance if the skill is taught correctly</p>	<p>Schools need to compile an action plan to improve the results. Activities should be fun and creative thus sparking the interest of the learners. Teachers themselves do not read – have a few minutes of reading every day and questions asked. A reading culture has to be created. It is also not the sole responsibility of the language teacher to promote literacy.</p>

<b>11.What are you currently doing to improve the low literacy levels existing in your classroom?</b>	Reading materials/books are available to learners.  Oral requirements  book list - 10 books to read	providing additional support for learners after school  focus more on comprehension and understanding  reduce the CAPS time-frame	learners read and discuss many issues which they are comfortable with and enjoy  have extra (remedial) classes in areas of difficulty	I select learners to read in class while we analyse a text. I specifically target those learners who are busy and talkative to keep them occupied and their minds academically stimulated.
<b>12.How would you try to encourage your learners to read?</b>	Recommend free, easily downloadable texts that would appeal to learners.	I provide learners with up-to-date and fun reading material that motivates them and their interest is stimulated	using various resources that interest them and different approaches to reading  encourage them to form a reading club and gather once a week for discussions	I recommend that teachers do more modelling of reading; monitoring of books read; working with the librarian..create opportunities for learners to discuss daily issues etc.
<b>13.Do you have any support or workshops that you can attend at your school or from the DoE to assist you in your challenges you face with learners in terms of reading and understanding literature?</b>	None	Yes, there a few workshops - focus is more on process then skills	No, not really	The department or curriculum advisors are always having workshops on facing challenges and teaching the content. However teachers need to be resourceful and empower themselves as there are tons of information on the internet.
<b>14.How often do you meet with the HoD for English at your school?</b>	Seldom - acting language HoD limited/no English teaching experience	never/rarely	we have weekly meetings, depending on the needs	Depends – normally once a term
<b>15.Does the HoD for English at your school provide you with support and do you work as a team with your HoD and fellow English educators?</b>	Work mostly with fellow English educators	when needed	Yes	Since there was no appointed HOD fellow teachers used to assist each other.
<b>16.When do you recall were your lessons observed and or evaluated by the principal/HoD or external moderator?</b>	Only done for IQMS purposes  regular checks on files/preparation	only for IQMS  never moderated/evaluated	Only during IQM's	Not in 2015.

<b>17.How would you feel about being externally moderated twice a year, and being given positive criticism and support from a teaching and learning specialist or HoD?</b>	If it is of a developmental nature, I would support the idea.	I would welcome this as it would benefit and enrich	I'd say once a year	Professional development is always welcomed
<b>18.Notes or closing comments</b>	Literature studies at our schools have degenerated into literature preparation for tests or examinations. Choice of novels/ drama/ poetry often debated			



## 4.6.2.2 EDUCATORS' RESPONSE TO THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview guide and response of the 4 participant educators:

Questions	EDUCATOR 1	EDUCATOR 2	EDUCATOR 3	EDUCATOR 4
<p><b>1.How would you describe your learners literacy levels?</b></p>	<p><b>Classroom:</b> Few learners read on the appropriate level that they should be on. Majority of the learners do not read. They express themselves poorly. The grade 8 learners in particular, their home language is not English and this is a challenge for both educator and learner.</p> <p><b>At school:</b> We don't take reading seriously at this school. We don't see books; there are not enough prescribed books for each learner to have their own copy for the term.</p> <p><b>The department</b> They took the reading component mark away. So now educators do not evaluate reading they as there is no reason to because no marks are being allocated for this. So the problem stems from the DoE; if they made reading a priority and for it to be assessed educators and learners would follow this.</p> <p><b>The principal and HoD</b> They do not take educators seriously. No books for this year, limited resources and they respond by saying these needs will be met next year;</p>	<p>Very poor gr 8 and 10 - they are not exposed to reading at home</p> <p>Disadvantaged communities - gangs therefore no attendance of library</p>	<p>Most of the learners from grade 8 are from an Afrikaans background.</p> <p>The overall literacy performance level if learners are at the "Elementary/Mode-rate achievement level.</p>	<p>Very bad; low generally. This is influenced a lot by learners speaking Afrikaans and moreover speaking using slang and not proper Afrikaans or English.</p>



	however the current learners suffer.			
<b>2. Are your learners on par with their reading and critical thinking skills in terms of what is expected as per CAPS?</b>	<p>No. this I believe is due to the lack of resources.</p> <p>Confidence comes with the ability to express yourself and learners are not doing enough of this.</p> <p>One way of achieving these outcomes is through debating; however the school no longer offers debating and nor does the curriculum test this.</p>	<p>No, CAPS is too difficult for them</p> <p>over ambitious time frame of CAPS is too much pressure</p>	<p>With regards to reading they are able to extract relevant information from text (reading and viewing), identify main ideas and purpose, express opinion, and interpret information from visual text.</p> <p>In essence they perform satisfactory. Their areas of weaknesses are:</p> <p>a) Interpreting and analysing information</p> <p>b) Inferring meaning and assonance etc.</p> <p>Overall most of the learners read fairly well; they just need to build up more confidence to read aloud.</p>	<p>They follow the curriculum; however comparing these learners to the years gone by they are not mature; creative or logical thinkers.</p> <p>CAPS is easy to understand; follow; teach and assess. The kids are bored and disinterested in the texts and classes in general. The classes are big-too many learners per educator. CAPS doesn't cater for the high-flyer students. Inclusive education is difficult given the classroom logistics.</p>
<b>3. What is your perception of the language requirements in the CAPS curriculum?</b>	<p>Tests and the tasks are nonsense. Tests too little skills. Negatively prepares the learner for progress.</p> <p>Language is terribly neglected.</p>	<p>CAPS is too difficult and over ambitious time frame is too much pressure.</p>	<p>That all areas such as: reading and viewing, Listening and Speaking; Writing and Presenting; Language Structures and Conventions, should be covered thoroughly as required in the CAPS document, to equip learners adequately irrespective of their backgrounds.</p>	<p>It is well covered.</p>
<b>4. What is your evaluation of the English Language textbooks used in the CAPS curriculum in high schools?</b>	<p>Oxford grade 8 and 12. Very good textbook and useful content. Oxford focuses on CAPS and provides relevant texts</p> <p>Grade 8 share these textbooks.</p> <p>The English subject does not have an HoD hence the subject is suffering and there are no team meetings.</p>	<p>textbook is mediocre questions are too difficult - grade 8 struggles a lot and it lacks examples</p> <p>New curriculum should be focused on learner development skills time needs to be allocated for classroom intervention.</p> <p>CAPS is like 'higher grade' which does not cater for the majority of the learners in lower grade'</p> <p>Too boring and does not challenge - grade 10</p>	<p>Fairly good as all aspects are covered. Enough activities are given that would provide for language proficiency, that would reflect the basic interpersonal communication skills required etc.</p>	<p>Texts are found in various textbooks and for grade 10 two books are used. As an educator we use lots of textbooks to draw up one lesson.</p>

<p><b>5.Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom?</b></p>	<p>Laptop and voice overs. Very little usage of the laptop and audio- perhaps once or twice a week. Very little educational value.</p> <p>Poem presented and taught using power-point is entertaining and creative however learners absorb more through this.</p>	<p>Teacher talk time is 30 min - explains concepts</p> <p>Learners can only communicate if they understand the basics of the lesson. Pair work and group work - 'buddy system' works well because learners feed off from one another.</p> <p>Learners are good at different things.</p> <p>When kids don't understand I use visuals.</p>	<p>Methods: Lots of speaking; role-plays; reading of text to introduce the topic. Lots of group work; providing a number of practical (aural and visual) examples, writing words on the board to strengthen spelling. We also have a word of the week to improve inferential meaning and writing ability, engaging in higher order thinking skills when teaching visual literacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of blooms taxonomy is essential in this context</li> </ul>	<p>Group work; discussions. There has not been an opportunity for debates yet. Not all learners are able to structure or verbalise an argument.</p>
<p><b>6.Name the difficulties that your learners experience with regard to language and literature?</b></p>	<p>Lack of resources. Their attitude towards learning and empowering themselves is very weak. Most of the learners speak Afrikaans as their home language and the school has many foreign learners with a lack of comprehension in English.</p>	<p>Language and vocabulary because they don't read Literature is far away from learners' lives and reality. Comprehensive skills lacking and under developed. Grade 10 could only concentrate for no more than 30 min on reading.</p>	<p>Parts of speech: common errors and misconceptions are experienced in identifying for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concord</li> <li>Verb/adverb</li> <li>Noun classes</li> <li>Adjectives</li> <li>Prepositions</li> <li>Passive and active voice</li> <li>Direct and indirect speech</li> </ol> <p>Sometimes learners' misconstrues a question entirely. Figure of speech and figurative and literal language.</p>	<p>They hate literature especially with reference to Shakespeare.</p> <p>Also due to budget constraints we have been teaching the same literature for a number of years.</p> <p>Learners definitely lack critical thinking.</p>
<p><b>7.How do you handle these above stated difficulties that your learners experience?</b></p>	<p>I provide extra work sheet activities and assistance but very learners request extra learning activities and help.</p> <p>meetings and after school help sessions.</p>	<p>Literature gets taught auditory and visual opposed to just reading the book. **no books to take home means no re-enforcing of reading.</p>	<p>My teaching methods serve as a tool to assist the weaker learner struggling with any section in the language.</p>	<p>It is very difficult. Each learner does not have a literature or text book of their own. I show them the movie once we have completed reading and studying the book.</p> <p>I provide learners with question; summary and worksheets-n response to literature.</p> <p>Reading literature in the classroom- however there is no reading homework.</p>

<b>What specifically do you do to help learners learn better and understand the literature texts and lessons?</b>	Provide learners with electronic and audio aids to help them in certain areas of difficulty.	In Oct and Nov, after school classes held twice a week for grade 8 (33 students)	I do have a remedial session that focuses specifically on the difficult areas that learners cannot cope with.	No access to the internet or computer. I use audio tapes do not have books to read from.
<b>8.How often do your learners read in class per week?</b>	Monday-Wednesday during the literature classes.	Every day (not always in depth task that requires reading)	Learners read every day and they are also given reading exercises to do at home. Learners are also encouraged to belong to a library. I also bring magazines and newspapers to the class to encourage my learners to read.	The curriculum makes no provision for reading specifically.
<b>Do you give them any reading tasks or homework?</b>	Yes as far as possible.	Not enough text books therefore no homework.  No primary resources is a big problem	Yes, I do. They are given exercises to do at home. Learners are also encouraged to belong to a book club	No.
<b>9.In terms of innovation, are there any that you utilise to teach and evaluate literacy and the literature aspect of the curriculum?</b>	Audio and laptop.  The school has a computer lab but learners do not have access to it.  The school was given tablets however no one has access to it. The school was given internet but educators and learners cannot access the wi-fi so these resources are pointless if educators and learners cannot access and utilize these resources.	Auditory, visual, projector-poetry, analyse together - works well and results in classroom discussion.	Yes.	No access to the internet of computer. Hence I use audio tapes for learners to listen to the books being read to them.
<b>10.How do you see educators contributing to a learner-centred approach when teaching and evaluating literature?</b>	To make it relevant give learners help guides.  Our learners are not critical thinkers. Hence we should try to see a bit of “their” world in what they read. Motivate them and challenge them; make lessons relevant to their daily realities and interests.	Learners giving more feedback - using the OHP for discussion.  Teachers should use modern technology.	There are quite a lot that educators can do; but, firstly we as educators need to master the skill of teaching and then we can transfer skills to our learners using innovative methods before an improvement is made or seen.	The curriculum does not make provision for this; they do not allow this.  In the old curriculum I would give reading homework (our learners then had books to read from). Then we would ask the learner to imagine they were a character and write a diary entry. They could act out a scene from the play. They could write their own dialogue for

				a play using the existing characters
<b>11. What are your views regarding the ANA's?</b>	<p>No to ANA's . ANA's are extra unnecessary work. We do all that here at CSS, from grade 1-9; and it is a duplication of what is being done and more.</p> <p>In terms of CAPS if you have the resources and do what is required as an educator and learner you do not need ANA's.</p> <p>Reflection is lacking. Common tests are preferred and this is to ensure that the curriculum is completed.</p>	<p>ANA's is a waste of time and unrealistic, not used as development</p> <p>nice practices for the learners, but a waste of marking and time for the teachers.</p>	<p>ANA's has its pros and cons. It can be something good for educators if they are given feedback on the learners' performance to improve on the various aspects within the context of the content. ANA's would also be useful if it was actually used as an assessment that reflects in the learners report.</p>	<p>ANA's are a waste of time. Teachers were teaching towards ANA's and not teaching the curriculum- an absolute flaw in ANA's approach and validity.</p> <p>ANA's tests certain skills and not the curriculum- it should in fact test both skills and the curriculum.</p>

## **4. 7 SUMMARY of FINDINGS- ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the findings from the study presented in this chapter as well as in this section I aim to use these findings to answer the five research questions that will be stated below which was also posed and foregrounded in chapter 1 of this study.

### **1) How and why are texts selected?**

Texts are selected based on the prescribed list given by the DoE. The texts selected are also based on what the school already has and the funds the school has in order to purchase new or additional books.

### **2) How are texts taught?**

Texts are taught through dramatization by the educator; reading of the texts; playing audios of the texts as well as playing the movie of the texts.

### **3) How are texts evaluated?**

Texts are evaluated in two forms, formative and summative. Formative assessments include class tests, essay writing, comprehension assessments; orals; creative writing. Summative assessments are in the form of term tests and examinations.

### **4) How can texts that are taught be evaluated?**

There are various forms of evaluation. What is important is that we provide learners with various options of assessments. We should incorporate more orals, role plays; create writing; listening and comprehension tasks; online and class tests and quizzes. Group tasks that tests learners understanding and interpretation of texts. The groups should be formed using the inclusion of learners with different skills and cognitive levels so that the strong learners can assist the weaker ones and together they can empower one another.

### **5) Why do learners have low literacy levels?**

Learners have low literacy levels due to the lack of resources and motivation to read. Learners are also not exposed to productive environments where reading occurs. The books that are at the disposal of learners are boring and do not interest learners. Furthermore, learners are not encouraged and exposed enough to the practice of

reading. Reading is an active fun practice that allows one to escape into a world of imagination; learners should be exposed to this pleasure of reading and not see reading as a daunting task as they do.

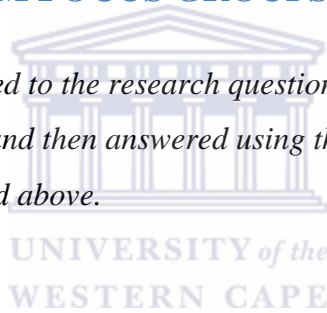
## **4.8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Below in this section, the summary of findings of this chapter will be presented.

Alongside this will be an explanation of the findings and highlights and the significance there of in light of the research questions, aims and objectives of my study. The summary of findings to be presented below are based on sections 4.5.3 (Classroom Observations); 4.6 (Findings from the focus groups) and 4.6.2 (Presentation of Data from Educators).

### **4.8.1 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS (LEARNER PARTICIPANTS)**

*Looking at the 4 aims aligned to the research questions of the learner participants; these aims will be restated and then answered using the responses from the participants as well as the data presented above.*



#### **Aim 1**

*To determine if learners enjoy reading and how much time per day learners spend on reading.*

#### **Grade 8:**

All 12 of the grade 8 participants indicated that they enjoy reading and do read every day. Seven of the 12 participants indicated that they read during the week outside of classroom time. At school the majority of participants indicated that they spend between 10-20minutes on reading. Reading at school refers to reading of activity sheets and instructions. There is no formal reading program or material explicitly given with the main focus being on promoting reading and literacy.

### **Grade 10:**

Looking at the grade 10 participants, 11 of the 12 participants indicated that they do enjoy reading. However, these learners do not all read every day. Six of the 12 participants indicated that they read daily. In comparison to the grade 8 learners these grade 10 learners read less than them. These grade 10 learners indicate that they spend on average 30 minutes a day reading at school; this includes activity sheets and instructions as well as written work. The grade 10 learners are also limited to reading resources in terms of prescribed texts and this could pose as a contributing factor to their minimal reading activities.

### **Aim 2**

***To have insight into learners' exposure to reading and culture of reading at home.***

22 of the 24 participants indicated that they are exposed to a culture of reading at home and that they are motivated to read. I believe differently based on further engagement with the learners. There is a lack of family bonding and reading time together as a family. The culture of reading is dying in many households. Learners indicated that in the evening post dinner, the family usually separates and everyone does what they want to. This includes watching of television series and sitting on social media platforms till bed time arises.

### **Grade 8:**

All 12 of the participants indicated that they are exposed to a culture of reading at home. The types of reading material at home that are read are mostly that of newspapers and Holy Scriptures. It was indicated by the participants that 1-2 members in the household actually reads. So the culture of reading upon discussing this with the participants is actually very poor and almost non-existent. The household does not spend time together reading and discussing current affairs.

### **Grade 10:**

Ten of the 12 participants indicated that there is a culture of reading in their homes. Most of the households mainly also read newspapers and holy scriptures. As mentioned above, the culture of reading is not very active within these participants' homes and thus this I believe influences the reading activities of the participants.

### **Aim 3**

#### ***To determine if learners read beyond the classroom.***

There are 6 participants altogether out of the 24 participants that have indicated that they read beyond the classroom and the prescribed books of the curriculum. This indicates that the majority of learners only really read if they have to do so. Four of the 6 participants that have indicated that they read beyond the classroom, are passionate readers who continuously read as a daily activity and hobby and they visit the library often too.

### **Aim 4**

#### ***How texts are taught and evaluated and what are the views of learners regarding their prescribed texts***

The grade 8 learners are much more excited about their literature lessons compared to the grade 10 learners. The grade 8 learners have all indicated that their educators are vibrant and present lessons in a very enthusiastic manner that excites the learners. The grade 8 learners enjoy all their prescribed texts and simply indicated difficulty in one of the texts.

The grade 10 learners seem to have more difficulty in understanding their prescribed texts compared to the grade 8 learners. The grade 10 participants indicated that they do not enjoy reading and studying most of their prescribed texts especially the Shakespearian ones as they cannot relate to these texts and find the language difficult to understand. They are disinterested in their literature classes and lessons and express feelings of boredom.

The learners and educators indicated that the texts which are taught are usually evaluated through comprehension assessments, essay writing, tests and examination.



## 4.8.2 FINDINGS FROM EDUCATOR PARTICIPANTS

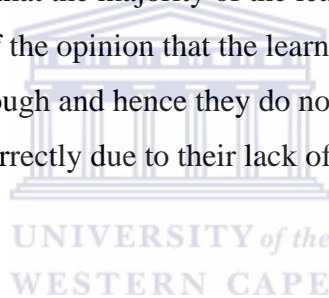
*Looking at the 5 aims underlying the research questions of the four educator participants; these aims will be restated below and then answered using the responses from the four participants as well as the data presented above.*

### **Aim 1:**

***The views of educators regarding their learners reading abilities.***

All four of the educators believe that their learners do not read enough. There are also mixed thoughts in that of the educators, they do believe that some of the learners reading skills are satisfactory; however they have indicated that the only a handful of learners read daily and are top achieving students as a result of this.

All of the educators have indicated that only a few learners read on the appropriate level that they should be on; and that the majority of the learners do not read. Furthermore, these educators were also of the opinion that the learners generally express themselves poorly; they do not read enough and hence they do not always answer assessment questions effectively and correctly due to their lack of reading and comprehension skills.



### **Aim 2:**

***To determine the educators' perception regarding the curriculum and its requirements and their approaches to the curriculum in terms of teaching; learning and evaluation.***

Regarding the curriculum the grade 8 educators feel that most of their learners are coping and that the literature selected could be made more appealing in alliance with the interest of the learners. Generally, the grade 8 learners perform satisfactory. Educators have indicated that for the grade 10 learners CAPS is too challenge for the majority of the learners. Furthermore, CAPS is over ambitious in terms of its time frame and expectation of outcomes. This timeline of CAPS places too much pressure on both the educator and learner; thus lessons are rushed and the bulk of the learners do not grasp the basic concepts of lessons and perform poorly in summative and formative assessments.

In terms of teaching; learning and evaluation; the educators follow the curriculum guidelines; timelines and outcomes. The grade 10 educators teach and assess as per guidance from CAPS. Educators teach often towards what they are going to assess. In my observation and interviews with educators I also discovered that out of the four grade 10 classes two classes had large percentage of learners which were not from a higher thinking order. Allow me to explain this statement. In these cases, educators found it a challenge to teach these learners everything that they planned to and thus the educator made mention that she teaches only the most important elements of the lesson and does not go into extra detail or discussion as the learners do not have a very good concentration span nor are they very interested in the literature lessons especially that of Shakespeare.

Educators assist learners with difficulty through extra tasks and learning aids such as summary guides and audio recordings.

All educators have expressed a great challenge in teaching the curriculum as learners are expressing a disinterest in the classroom and more so towards the curriculum. Learners are constantly engaging on their cell-phones and thus educators are of the opinion that the curriculum should have technology infused into its teaching; learning and evaluation practices.

**Aim 3:**

***To gain insight as to how educators' expose learners to reading and culture of reading within the classroom.***

Educators have indicated that the curriculum does not make provision for reading. One educator indicated that she brings newspapers and magazines to the class to encourage learners to read and engage with these texts. All educators have indicated that they do ask learners to read some texts and tasks instead of the educator reading for the class. Educators indicated that they would place more emphasis on reading if it was to be a means of evaluation as there is just too much to complete given the current curriculum.

**Aim 4:**

***To determine how texts are taught and evaluated and what are the views of educators regarding the prescribed texts.***

The learners are usually given background information initially and then the educator begins to teach the texts and read the texts to the learners and have learners also read the text to the class. The educator will make emphasis on certain important parts of the texts and then create a class discussion around this. Lessons are recapped to allow the educator to gauge learners understanding and interpretation of the text so that the educator knows where to begin the next lesson.

All the educators believe that the texts which they are teaching are not stimulating the minds of their learners. The educators believe that it is time that the school and the DoE change the list of prescribed books so that it can appeal to the interest of the learners.

**Aim 5:**

***To gain insight regarding the support structures available for educators in terms of support guidance and innovation moving forward.***

The one educator indicated that there are workshops available for educators. Additionally, the educator added that educators should make use of the resources they have at hand and make the most of it to enhance teaching and learning.

Overall the educators indicated that there is very little support from the school's management as well as the DoE. In terms of innovation the school has computers, tablets as well as Wi-Fi (internet) facilities however learners are not able to access these and educators are limited to these resources. All in all, innovative teaching and learning is limited especially in regard to the non-mathematics and science subjects.

## 4.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of three focus groups; two consisting of a grade 8 and a grade 10 sample group of English home language learners and the last group being 4 of the grade 8 and 10 English Home language educators. The two learner focus group findings portrayed the experiences and views of literature and lessons received in the English home language classes. These findings furthermore gave insight into these learners' interest and abilities in terms of reading and literacy. It is evident that learners read far too little and the reading is not enforced enough through the curriculum, teaching and evaluation thereof. Furthermore, though the finding from the four educators this portrayed educators teaching and learning experiences in and around the classroom. In this regard educators expressed having great difficulty in teaching the curriculum due to limited resources and the lack of interest from learners in terms of being at school and reading the current prescribed texts. Furthermore, these expressions of the educators support that of the learners as the learners have also indicated that they do not enjoy their prescribed texts as they find it boring and cannot relate to it. The findings from the learners also indicate that they experience great difficulty in studying and understanding Shakespeare's plays and many of their prescribed poems too. Due to the fact that this study was based on three sample groups and represent only a fraction of learner representation from grade 8 and 10 English home language classes I am aware of the possibility the views echoed from the stated sample groups many not necessary be that of the other learners. However, through classroom observations and discussion with all the classes the learners echoed the same feelings and expressions towards the literature texts that they are taught and evaluated on. Similarly, the implications drawn from this study are specific to this school context and do not necessary represent that of all schools in the Western Cape. However, at the same time one should be mindful that the circumstance the school finds itself in terms of resources and learners attitudes represents that of the masses in the Western Cape and has relevance to many of the schools in this province. In the following Discussion chapter 5, I will be using the presentation and analysis of data from this chapter 4 and use this as foreground to link this to the theories identified in chapter 2. My intention in doing this is to indicate how the literature speaks to the finding of my study.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented the findings and analysis of my study in a chronological order. Firstly, the classroom and lesson observation of the four educator participants were presented and analysed. Secondly, the findings from the two focus groups of grade 8 and grade 10 English home language learners were presented and analysed. Lastly, the findings from the interviews and questionnaires of the 4 participant educators were presented and analysed. This now brings us to this chapter 5, which serves as the discussion chapter. This chapter aims to highlight the findings presented in chapter 4 and furthermore signpost the reader to the importance thereof. In addition, the discussions in this chapter will be examined in light of the theories identified and discussed in chapter two alongside the findings which was presented in chapter 4.

### 5.2 Common Themes

#### 5.2.1 Theme 1: Out-dated material and approach

Drawing on Freire's (2007) idea on the 'pedagogy of the oppressed', this chapter contends that the literature material and the approach employed in teaching do not help learners to reflect on what they learnt overtime.

Based on the findings presented in chapter 4, I wish to note that the learners want to read; despite the fact the participant educators expressed their concerns that learners do not read enough nor do they have an interest in reading their prescribed literature materials. The findings presented in chapter 4 can verifiably attest to this. Furthermore, the grade 10 learners indicated much enthusiasm when they shared their views about the book *Lost Boys* which they enjoyed reading because they could understand the language used in the book and furthermore they could relate to the story. From these findings as well as the classroom observations, I discovered that there are two key aspects that deter learners from wanting to read their prescribed texts and especially the plays of Shakespeare. These two aspects can be stated as:

- 1) The teaching methodology is out-dated.
- 2) The literature material is out-dated.

Learners are being spoon-fed by the educator on the key issues which arise from the literature material. This is evident from the data presented in Chapter 4 under section 4.5.3.4 classroom observations. This is quite reminiscent of Freire's view/work of (2007) wherein he refers to the concept of *Banking Education*. *Banking Education* is when the educator teaches the lesson in a depository manner and learners absorb in the key points of the lesson; store and make written notes of lesson. This information is stored until the learners are assessed based on the topics covered in the lessons. Once the assessment is complete the learners forget about those lessons and knowledge deposits from the educator. This is type of pedagogy is believed to be of no benefit if learners only store information and not reflect on it to nor use it in their day to day lives. To combat the issue of using out-dated literature material one can apply what Pressley and Hilden (2002) suggests. Pressley and Hilden (2002) suggest that educators should stimulate learners and motivate them to read by providing them firstly with interesting texts and secondly with choices in reading materials and writing assessments. These pedagogical and assessment suggestions will help learners to create their own authentic purpose for reading. Instead of reading and writing being imposed on the learner they will learn to create their own purpose for reading. By giving learners choices in text selection and evaluation/assessments learners will feel as if they are in control of their own learning. As a result, this will create self-agency which is contrary to the pedagogy style of *banking education*.

For Freire (2007: p 21) *banking education* contends that,

“The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence — but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher.”

In light of Freire's view of what *banking education* does, my findings support these beliefs as educators assume that learners do not know and thus they feel they should give and tell them everything in a lesson (deposit information). This also goes against what Vygotsky says regarding the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); which is the

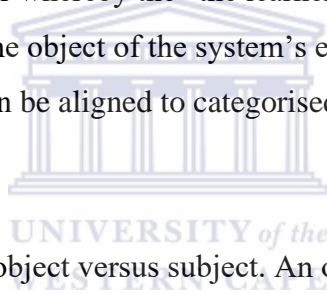
distance between the actual developmental levels determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). Learners should be encouraged to think independently and in a group setting too provided that they are guided by their educator/facilitator/expert peer. Part of promoting reading is done by selecting relevant texts that learners are expected to read and study and thereafter also be tested on to determine their understanding of the texts. While Shakespeare's plays and the other out-date literature material may not be relevant to learners' interests in reading; the South African classroom realities are limited in this sense.

All schools in SA are not able to abolish teaching his works as they are not financially capable of replacing these texts and purchase other literature texts, which might more expensive for learners to study. In light of this challenge, the educator should be tasked to show the learners how the themes and topics in the literature relate to the world and their daily realities. It should be the role of the educator to guide the learners to see this. So while conducting a lesson before giving the learners information regarding the texts and unpacking some scenarios within the text, the educator should ask the learners text based questions as well as their views of the incidences presented in the literature. If learners are unable to come up with the expected answers, the educator can assist them by placing them in groups so that they can discover the answer in the form of collaborative learning and if that does not work then only should the educator state the answer.

According to Freire (2000: p. 22-23) "Banking education maintains and even stimulates the contradiction through the following attitudes and practices, which mirror oppressive society as a whole". This quote implies that educators assume they know everything and therefore transfer their knowledge to the learners in a depository manner. This results in learners being taught what the educator knows as if they know of nothing better. This is wrong as learners enter the class with a schemata and not an empty slate. It is important that educators tap into learners' schemata's so that learners are also able to share and transfer their knowledge about the world and the subject at hand. Thus *banking education* supresses' learners' and limits their views about the world. This is supported by Chapter 4 section 4.3 classroom observations where the educators teach in

a depository style and do not link the lesson to the learner's daily realities nor tap into their schemata while teaching and highlighting the key issues of the lesson.

In this regard *banking education* can be compared to tunnel vision in that learners are indirectly forced to accept what they are being taught and they are directed to thinking in one specific uniformed way. *Banking education* furthermore limits learners' ability to use their reflective critical thinking skills. These skills are very important for a developing adolescent. This is because these skills teach the learners problem solving and how to be confident in their voice and opinions which are essential going into adulthood and further higher education institutions. Aronowitz critiques Freire's method of categorising learning. Aronowitz (2015: p 3) suggests that Freire advocates for assimilation of knowledge in accordance to the learners own needs as opposed to rote learning. Aronowitz (2015: p 3) argues that Freire views pedagogy as empowerment for the learner whereby the "the learner becomes a subject of his or her own education rather than the object of the system's educational agenda." The implied meaning of the quotation can be aligned to categorised learning where learners can be divided into two groups.



The two groups are termed object versus subject. An object learner is aligned to Freire's concept of *banking education* where the learner is seen as an object and a deposit for knowledge based solely on the educator's perception and ideas of knowledge. This is referred to as objectification where the learner is viewed as receptive and being a depository for knowledge. Objectivism furthermore gives rise to individualism and this is where the learner takes in the knowledge given by the educator and accepts what he/she has been taught without questioning or engaging in this knowledge nor reflecting on their daily realities. On the other hand, the other group termed subject. A subject learner is one that is actively involved in the learning and meaning making process. Such a practise is referred to as subjectivism which implies that the learner is able to reflect on their daily realities and is able to challenge what is being taught and transferred. This is subjectification where the learner is able to reflect and include their daily experiences. This practice is referred to as collectivism, where the learner takes on the knowledge presented by the educator and internalises this alongside what he or she already knows and is able to relate to as a result of his or her daily experiences. This leads to the process of reflection where the learner not only uses this knowledge for



storage and assessment purposes but also uses this knowledge in practise in the learner’s daily life. When one looks at the interviews and questionnaire responses from the learner participants in Chapter 4 section 4.6.1 question 11; 12; 13 and 14 and section 4.5.3.4 Educator 4: learner responses to the lesson; this shows how the lessons are not related to the learners’ daily realities. Therefore, learners are unable to relate to the text and unable to see the link between the texts themes and their daily realities and how they connect to one another. Based on the study conducted it was evident that learners were not actively involved in the meaning making process. Texts were taught to the learners in a banking depository manner. The wrong choice of text selection is largely the reason why learners do not enjoy reading nor do they actively participate in the lesson. Furthermore, the evaluation methods are boring and routine like as indicated by the learners’ responses see pages 134-138 (a summary of responses)

### 5.2.2 Theme 2: Implications

Based on the theory and concept of *banking education* by Freire (2000), I propose to explain what studying Shakespearian plays does to learners and what the pedagogical methods used when teaching Shakespeare does to learners. Refer to Chapter 4 pages 130-139 for an in-depth presentation.

<b>1) What studying Shakespeare’s play does to learners:</b>	<b>2) What the pedagogical methods employed when teaching Shakespeare do to learners:</b>
a) Causes resistance learning as learners resist learning about Shakespeare and reading his plays.	a) It forces learners to take notes only when the educator tells them to do so and indicates that certain sections are important.
b) Language barrier between the learner and the language used in the plays.	c) Learners do not pay attention to the lesson. Some of the learners pretend to pay attention however they cannot explain what the educator spoke about or what the audio of the plays has covered.

<p>d) Majority of the learners' attitude towards the lesson and the English subject changes once they are told that the lesson in the class on the particular day will be on Shakespeare's play.</p>	<p>Listening to the audio of the Shakespearian plays makes learners quiet and due to the language barrier and the disinterest towards his plays learners lose focus in the lesson and some learners even put their heads down on the desk and fall asleep.</p>
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In light of the above table, my analysis of these attitudes from learners towards Shakespeare and the educators' pedagogical methods employed when Shakespeare is taught is one that is of resistance learning. The learners are resisting the lesson on Shakespeare and reading the texts and in turn Shakespeare's plays are being portrayed as being rebellious. Meaning Shakespeare's plays are difficult to understand and thus learners resist reading the play and paying attention to lessons on the play. The distinction between learners' cognition and the play is that there is a language barrier. Learners cannot relate to Shakespeare's plays nor are they able to see the link between the themes highlighted in the play and their daily realities. Vygotsky viewed language as a complex semiotic system. Vygotsky states language is essential to cognition because it helps to think about the world and to communicate with others (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). It also provides the means to reflect on and regulate personal thinking (Eggen and Kauchak, 1997). While learners may resist the language used in Shakespeare's plays; educators should educate learners in terms of how to use their ideas by regulating their personal thinking skills to reflect on the literature.

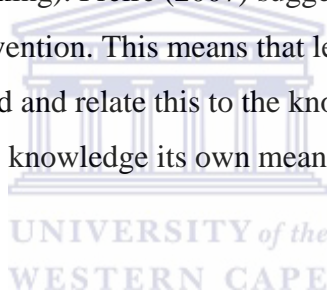
Freire (2007) argues that no real learning can take place if learners are not actively involved in the lesson. Piaget's cognitive development theory talks about a comprehensive theory of nature of development of a child. A child develops through aging, personal environment and thus one can deduce that a learner's childhood has a large role and impact on the learner's biological maturation. Piaget (1964) believes that children construct knowledge as they mentally organize information from the environment. In addition to this Piaget also believes that children manipulate and explore the world and by this they develop. Piaget believes that children learn in various ways and what they learn in the classroom depends to a large extent on what they already know (schemata). The schemata of a child could possibly be complete;

incomplete or even wrong; however, this is still the child's ideas which they use to make sense of everyday experiences. Therefore, banking education, as evidenced by some of my findings, is a flawed pedagogy as it does not tap into the schemata of learners. Piaget believes that children do not enter the class with a blank slate and empty head; they come to class with what is known as partial schemata. Piaget believes that it is the educator's role to enhance, modify, extend and elaborate on the child's schemata by creating a learner-centred classroom which will serve as a supportive environment. Therefore, learners' schemata should be tested before a new lesson begins and as shown by my data this never happens. Additionally, the educator should ask learners to identify the themes in the literature texts and state how they can relate to it. This will assist learners in overcoming the language barrier of the texts and they will begin to accept literature instead of resisting it due to the language barrier.

The lessons pertaining to Shakespearian plays and other literature texts are presented in standardised ways by the educators. Below I describe a literature lesson and indicate how the theory of *banking education* is put into practise in the classroom. A typical lesson for example begins in the following manner. The educators begin the lesson by telling the learners what they will cover in the lesson on that specific day. Learners are then expected to take out their notebooks. The educator does a recap on the previous lesson and very few learners are able to respond the questions posed regarding the recap of the previous lesson. The educator then begins to play the audio of the Shakespeare play as learners do not have physical copies of the play. The audio is placed on pause and then the educator begins to explain the important parts and instructs the learners to make notes of these points mentioned. This method of teaching is boring as indicated by the learners and it does not motivate the learner to participate in the lesson or pay attention to the lesson. Additionally, this demotivates the learner from reading the texts.

Using the audio of Shakespeare's play to teach the play is viewed as an innovative pedagogy. In the case of using technology to teach Freire (2007: p 12) argues that "more and more, the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and repression". Linking this argument of Freire to the classroom observations I conducted; technology was used to teach the Shakespearian text Merchant of Venice. While this may be seen as an innovative teaching method because

learners do not have hard copies of the text; it is not by any means empowering to the learners. Instead it is suppressing to them. This suppression is evident in learners listening and note-taking and not critiquing and discussing the text and its events. While the above stated is based on the finding of my study, these teaching practices are also linked to Freire's "banking concept" of education, which limits learners abilities in that it only extends as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (Freire: 2007). In light of this, I believe that the findings of my study has evidenced the key issue in focus here. According to Freire (2007: p 21), the "Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher." Freire argues that as a result of this education becomes an act of depositing whereby learners are the depositories and the educator is the depositor (Freire: 2007). These results in the educator transferring the knowledge and the learners receive this, memorize it and repeat it (parrot fashion learning). Freire (2007) suggest that knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention. This means that learners should use their ideas which they have of the world and relate this to the knowledge shared by the educator in order to reflect and give this knowledge its own meaning; specific to that of the learners' daily environment.



In light of the above, to support the claims that Freire makes, I have noticed considerable evidence in the classroom observations of my study Chapter 4, section 4.5.3 how educators simply deposit information when they conduct a lesson. Learners absorb the information and make notes of what the educator feeds them. This information is then stored in the note books of learners to be accessed later on in the term for the purposes of evaluation where learners then repeat the given information which was transferred from the educator. Knowledge indeed does occur when learners are able to challenge what they are told and when they are able to reflect and critique on what they have been taught. In the instance where they are seen as depositories and simply fed information to be regurgitated in tests and examinations, the skills of knowledge and meaning creation as well as reflective learning does not occur. This could all also be seen as contributing factors to why learners resist literature lessons especially that pertaining to Shakespeare's literature. This is also because learners are not challenged in their thinking instead they are just given information overload which they are expected to internalise and regurgitate during assessments.

### 5.2.3 Theme 3: Stimulating pedagogical methods

I believe that pedagogical methods employed when teaching literature should enable learners to think critically and apply this and their creative minds to the text analysis. This leads me to briefly return to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978) which states that educator's role is to enhance what learners know and further develop learners' knowledge and understanding to a level where they are able to work independently.

I believe if lessons were presented using different teaching approaches that stimulated learner responses and asked them to apply their critical thinking and readings skills; this would spark an interest in learners' participation in the lesson. Furthermore, this would indirectly force learners to participate in the lesson. However, while reflecting on the interviews and questionnaires (see chapter 4) the typical lessons the learners said they received followed the same style and manner of depository of information. In support of my argument Freire (2007: p15) suggest "critical and liberating dialogue which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation". This infers that the educator should engage more with the learners by asking them questions regarding the text and their interpretation thereof. Based on the data presented in chapter 4, page 110-152 educators do not engage interactively with learners. Additionally, the educator should be guiding the learners' thoughts in a way that motivate learners to read and participate in the literature lessons. Learners should be actively involved in the lesson. They should be asked to read the text out aloud in groups and then create summaries in the form of a story board/poster/power-point presentation; this is one way of innovative teaching that can be used to promote reading and be used as an alternative method of evaluation. Based on the feedback given by the learners reflecting on pages 130-135 and clear indications on page 138 in chapter 4 learners are requesting for lessons to be more interesting and interactive as educators to assess them in various ways other than tests, examinations and essay writing. In light of this feedback from learners these suggestions are given above for the educator in order to liberate the learners by guiding them to see the link between the literature materials and their daily realities. This in turn will help break their barriers of language which learners see as a stumbling block to understanding Shakespeare's texts as well as other literature materials.

#### 5.2.4 THEME 4: EDUCATOR SUPPORT

Based on the interviews and the questionnaires conducted with the four participant educators, it was evident that the educators lacked support. These participant educators also said that they would prefer support such as lesson evaluation to improve their teaching and learning as well as support such as workshops to keep them up to date with current trends and practices to employ in the classroom. Learners' cognitive development is largely dependent on their educator's ability to transfer knowledge and support their learning process. Alongside this the educator plays the role as a motivator for learners to pursue their goals and study hard so that they can improve their current situations and escape the poverty cycle which they exist within. Educators need support in dealing with learners' daily challenges such as domestic abuse, socio economic factors. At CSS there are social workers that are assigned to the school; however, this is not enough to service all learners that require support. On the other hand, educators need training and guidance to help them deal with the situations of the classroom and learner's misbehaviour and more importantly their lack of interest in learning. Learning incentives need to be created to combat these issues mentioned above.

#### 5.3 SUMMARY

In summary, this brings me back to the two key aspects that deter learners from wanting to read their prescribed texts and especially the plays of Shakespeare. As previously stated in this chapter these two aspects I refer to are:

**1) The teaching methodology is out-dated.**

The method of teaching Shakespeare can be referred to as I read (the educator) and you listen (the learner) and take notes. This results in conversations and responses being very fragmented and abrupt. The teaching methodology employed to teach these texts also make it difficult for the learners to comprehend.

**2) The literature material is out-dated.**

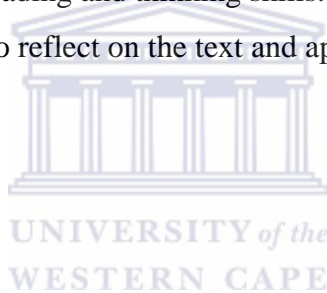
You may ask what is so out-dated in Shakespeare's literature. Shakespearean literature which serves as a text-based approach to literacy does not reflect and relate to the learners' daily lives. It is alien to them. The deep vocabulary of the language used in Shakespeare is rejected by the learners and this can be seen as an act of

rebellion/resistance. According to Du Toit and Orr (1987: 4) “Language is a body of words; but it is also a subtle and complicated instrument for combining words to express our thoughts”. My interpretation of this quote is that the message of an author is expressed in the choice of words. Thus if the reader is unable to understand the words (language used) the message will not be understood. And this is this case learners experience when reading and studying Shakespeare’s plays and other literature texts. The concern regarding a text- based approach to literacy is that learners do not read enough and their vocabulary is limited, hence they are unable to fully execute the practice of the text-based approach in the classroom.

In regard to higher cognitive functioning, Vygotsky believed that language is very important; it allows for self- reflection, meaning and trade of ideas all which are crucial to learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 86). My findings indicate that the lessons on Shakespeare and on some of the short stories and poetry in the curriculum for grade 10 learners do not allow self-reflection, meaning and trade of ideas. In light of the above, this illustrates the idea of Freire’s theory ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’. It is evident that the literature material and the pedagogical approach employed in teaching do not help learners to reflect on what they learn overtime.

Garcia (2016: p 179) agrees and employs Freire’s pedagogical design in her research. She furthermore sees the importance to create knowledge based on a relationship between the learners and their world. Additionally, Garcia agrees with Freire’s inclusive style of pedagogy. According to Freire (2007: p 43) “Teaching cannot be done by the top down, but only from the inside out by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the teacher.” Based on this argument of Freire, Garcia (2016) used community based pedagogy in her experiment which was foregrounded by Freire’s argument that pedagogy should be inclusive of the learners’ ideas, history as well as the ideas and knowledge of the educator. This brings me to the very point highlighted in my findings, where the learners indicate that they are unable to see the link between the literature materials and their immediate environment. According to Botha and Du Toit (1999: 8) “Students must be competent in language usage skills to be able to grasp the sense and meaning of prescribed information sources”. Due to the majority of learners how language not being English this serves as a barrier to learning and impacts sense of meaning when reading.

Garcia (2016) critiques Freire's work however supports Freire's idea of constructing a relationship between literacy and the learner's environment. To support the skill and practise of reflective reading, Du Toit and Orr (1987) state when critical reading, one does not just accept a piece of writing. One's opinion, feelings, knowledge and attitudes are as important as the author's, and it is important to be aware of what effect the writer is trying to have one. This can be established by asking questions. Based on my findings in chapter 4; educators lack the pedagogical method of asking questions and guiding learners to see the link between their literature material and their everyday environment. Therefore I believe that it is important for learners to express their feelings; attitudes and knowledge about the texts. As a result, one is then also able to see how learners add depth, value to the literature and how they express appreciation towards the literature material. By providing the platform for learners to challenge the text though reflection one is then able to also test learners understanding of the text which shows their critical reading and thinking skills. In this the educator is also able to see how the learner is able to reflect on the text and apply the knowledge gained to use in their everyday life.



## 5.4 CONCLUSION

The findings that I have referred to in the preceding discussion confirm my belief that learners read far too little. Their lack of reading has implications on their performance in the English Home language subject and classroom as well as their overall literacy level and academic performance at school. This lack of reading is underlined by two factors as previously stated. These factors are the out-dated reading materials and the out-dated pedagogical styles implemented to teach these out-date reading materials as seen in chapter 4 pages 110-152. This chapter has critically discussed the theory of Freire in relation to the findings of my study. Through Freire's concept of *banking education* he advocates for education to liberate learners. In essence Freire suggests educators should employ pedagogical methodologies that are aligned to liberating learners through reflective learning and not oppress their learners by teaching them using the *banking education* concept where learners are viewed as depositories for knowledge.



## CHAPTER 6-CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Once you learn the joy of reading a whole world of discovery opens up and you’ll never look back.”*  
*Toby Reynolds*

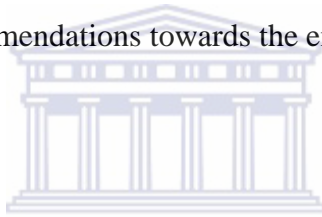
### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Chapter 5 I provided a discussion on how the findings of my study relate to the educational theories discussed in chapter 2. This will be the concluding chapter of my thesis which will firstly provide an overview of the study. Secondly, this chapter will indicate the highlights of my study in relation to the research questions; aims and objectives. Lastly, this chapter will provide possible recommendations to the obstacles identified within the study. Furthermore, this chapter will also provide ways in which educators can overcome the current day challenges experienced in improving learners’ literacy skills; teaching reading as well as assessing literature. These recommendations may or may not work for the educator. However; these recommendations to be mentioned and explained are based on my teaching and learning experiences and practices as well as classroom observations made outside of the research site.

The problem statement of my thesis is that South African youth read far too little and as a result South Africa’s literacy levels are low. There is a lack of interest in reading among high school learners which has serious repercussions for their schooling and future careers. The school curriculum is often a child’s first induction into reading; this could either steer a child in the direction of wanting to read or be the reason for no interest in it. I believe, the more learners read the better they are able to interact with various people and understand the world. Knowledge can be acquired and understood through reading. Reading broadens one’s understanding, increases knowledge and vocabulary. It gives room for expression and can be done for investigative purposes or as a hobby or means of relaxation. The method of evaluating reading can influence a learner to read more; or to develop a feeling of not wanting to read. Reading is crucial for development and gaining knowledge in order for a learner to pass and pursue further studies. Thus, South Africa’s low literacy levels can be addressed by promoting reading in its schools. In light of this I have used three theoretical frameworks namely banking education; Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1986) and schemata in order to

understand why learners do not read and further learn about coping strategies to motivate learners to read and improve their low literacy levels.

To simply make recommendations without giving praise and credit to educators would be wrong. In today's challenging times the role of an educator stretches far beyond that of teaching; drafting lesson plans and evaluating from 8am-3pm. It is a challenging task that requires lots of passion as well as patience; time and sacrifice. With social media and the influences this and other technological devices and applications has on learners and their ability to learn; this presents another challenge and obstacle for educators. At this point I wish to commend the educators of Cravenby Senior secondary School as well as all educators for their dedication and commitment to serve, educate and empower our learners in hope of a better future for them and our country. With this said and data presented in chapter 4, the educators featured in my study have indicated the need for extra support and have welcomed alternate methods of teaching. As a result, I wish to present some recommendations towards the end of this chapter under section 6.8.



## **6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY** *ITY of the*

This study offered a perspective of the daily classroom realities in relation to the promotion of reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative teaching methodologies. The study used a qualitative approach to gather data. These data collection methods included classroom observations; interviews; questionnaires; two focus groups and 4 educator participants. The structure of the data collection strategies are outlined and discussed in Chapter 3. The data attained from these instruments were presented and analysed in Chapter 4. The discussion based on the findings and the theories that could be alluded to them were presented in Chapter 5.

### 6.3 RE-EXAMINING RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

As I have stated earlier in chapter 1 the main aim of my study was to examine the common issues that impede learners' literacy levels and their desire to read.

Furthermore, one of the key aims was to find innovative pedagogical strategies that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

**In Chapter 1, the main research questions for this study were foregrounded as:**

- 1) How are texts selected?
- 2) Why are texts selected?
- 3) How are texts taught?
- 4) How are texts evaluated?
- 5) How can texts that are taught be evaluated?
- 6) Why do learners read very little?
- 7) Why do learners have low literacy levels?

### 6.4 PEDAGOGY AND INNOVATION

The conclusions indicate that the choice of pedagogy and innovation was specific to each educator's style. Furthermore, the educator's use of innovation and various pedagogy styles in the classroom in terms of teaching and assessments were limited based on the school's infrastructure and resources and limited access to these. While innovation includes the use of technology in teaching and assessing, educators are limited in terms of access to these technological infrastructure and training especially at government funded schools in South Africa. All schools do not have computer labs and internet connectivity. The schools in the Western Cape which have computer labs only have between 1-2 labs which can cater for 30-70 learners limiting access to all learners equally. While many learners call for a changes in educators' approach to the curriculum in terms of teaching, learning and assessing as seen in chapter 4 page 110-152 and pages 153-159, educators require resources and training from the DoE in order to meet these requests. While blended learning seems ideal to use and implement in the classroom, access to technology and internet does not support this practice. However, if more learners and all educators have access to the internet and computers/tablets blended learning could be used to facilitate learning, teaching and assessments.

Innovation can also be linked to practices outside of using technology. Innovation is content specific. I believe that the term innovation in the case of teaching and assessing language is referred to as methods for creative teaching to empower learners through the use of various creative intriguing and stimulating styles of teaching and assessing. Therefore, innovation does not necessarily refer to the use of computers and applications nor are these ruled out. Innovation in the case of my study refers to new methods that can be employed in the classroom and at home to assist learners and motivate them to read more and be more involved in the classroom.



**The following is a reiteration of the key findings and conclusions drawn from this research.**

## **6.5 OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS**

This section will highlight the summary of findings and simultaneously answer the research questions which were posed in chapter 1. Alongside this will be an explanation of the findings and highlights and the significance thereof in light of the research questions, aims and objectives of my study. The summary of findings to be presented below are based on sections 4.5.3 (Classroom Observations); 4.6 (Findings from the focus groups) and 4.6.2 (Presentation of Data from Educators)

### **6. 5.1 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS (LEARNER PARTICIPANTS)**

*Looking at the 4 aims aligned to the research questions of the learner participants; these aims will be restated and then answered using the responses from the participants as well as the data presented above.*

#### **Aim 1**

***To determine if learners enjoy reading and how much time per day learners spend on reading.***

***The section below is based on the findings from chapter 4, page 118-129.***

The entire sample group of 12 grade 8 learner participants indicated that they enjoy reading and do read every day whereas 11 of the 12 grade 10 participants indicated that they enjoyed reading. From the grade 8 group, seven of the 12 participants indicated that they read during the week outside of classroom time; where as in grade 10, six of the 12 participants indicated that they read daily. At school the majority of participants indicated that they spend between 10-30minutes on reading. Reading at school refers to reading of activity sheets and instructions. There is no formal reading program or material explicitly given with the main focus being on promoting reading and literacy. In comparison to the grade 8 learners the grade 10 learners read less. The grade 10 learners are also limited to reading resources in terms of prescribed texts and this could pose as a contributing factor to their minimal reading activities.

### **Aim 2**

#### ***To determine if learners are exposed to reading and culture of reading at home.***

With reference to data presentation on pages 121-128 it can be seen that of the 24 learner participants, 22 of these participants indicated that they are exposed to a culture of reading at home and that they are motivated to read. I believe differently based on further engagement with the learners. There is a lack of family bonding and reading time together as a family. The culture of reading is dying in many households. Learners indicated that in the evening after dinner, the family usually separates and everyone does what they want to. This includes watching of television series and sitting on social media platforms till bed time arises. As mentioned above, the culture of reading is not very active within these participants' homes and thus this I believe influences and impacts the reading activities of the participants.

### **Aim 3**

#### ***To determine if learners read beyond the classroom.***

Reflecting on the data presented on pages 120-131, from the 24 learner participants, only 6 participants have indicated that they read beyond the classroom and the prescribed books of the curriculum. This indicates that the majority of learners only really read the materials which the curriculum prescribes and educator instructs them to read in the class.

### **Aim 4**

#### ***How texts are taught and evaluated and what are the views of learners regarding their prescribed texts***

The grade 8 learners are much more excited about their literature lessons compared to the grade 10 learners as seen by the data reflecting in chapter 4, pages 131-137. The grade 8 learners have all indicated that their educators are vibrant and present lessons in a very enthusiastic manner that excites the learners. The grade 10 learners seem to have more difficulty in understanding their prescribed texts compared to the grade 8 learners. The grade 10 participants indicated that they do not enjoy reading and studying most of their prescribed texts especially the Shakespearian ones as they cannot relate to these texts and find the language difficult to understand. They are disinterested in their literature classes and lessons and express feelings of boredom. The learners and

educators indicated that the texts which are taught are usually evaluated through comprehension assessments, essay writing, tests and examination.

## **6.5.2 FINDINGS FROM EDUCATOR PARTICIPANTS**

*Looking at the 5 aims underlying the research questions of the four educator participants; these aims will be restated below and then answered using the responses from the four participants as well as the data presented above.*

### **Aim 1:**

***The views of educators regarding their learners reading abilities.***

All four of the educators believe that their learners do not read enough. There are also mixed thoughts in that of the educators, they do believe that some of the learners reading skills are satisfactory; however, they have indicated that the only a handful of learners read daily and are top achieving students as a result of this. All of the educators have indicated that only a few learners read on the appropriate level that they should be on; and that the majority of the learners do not read. Furthermore, these educators were also of the opinion that the learners generally express themselves poorly; they do not read enough and hence they do not always answer assessment questions effectively and correctly due to their lack of reading and comprehension skills.

### **Aim 2:**

***To determine the educators' perception regarding the curriculum and its requirements and their approaches to the curriculum in terms of teaching; learning and evaluation.***

Regarding the curriculum of grade 8 educators feel that most of their learners are coping and that the literature selected could be made more appealing in keeping with the interest of the learners. Generally, the grade 8 learners perform satisfactorily. Educators have indicated that for the grade 10 learners CAPS is too challenge for the majority of the learners. Furthermore, CAPS is over ambitious in terms of its time frame and expectation of outcomes. This timeline of CAPS places too much pressure on both the educator and learner; thus lessons are rushed and the bulk of the learners do not grasp the basic concepts of lessons and perform poorly in summative and formative assessments.

In terms of teaching; learning and evaluation; the educators follow the curriculum guidelines; timelines and outcomes. The grade 10 educators teach and assess as per guidance from CAPS. Educators teach often towards what they are going to assess. In my observation and interviews with educators I also discovered that out of the four grade 10 classes two classes had large percentage of learners which were not from a higher thinking order. I wish to explain this statement. In these cases, educators found it a challenge to teach these learners everything that they planned to and thus one of the educators made mentioned that she teaches only the most important elements of the lesson and does not go into extra detail or discussion as the learners do not have a very good concentration span nor are they very interested in the literature lessons especially that of Shakespeare.

Educators assist learners with difficulty through extra tasks and learning aids such as summary guides and audio recordings. All educators have expressed a great challenge in teaching the curriculum as learners are expressing a disinterest in the classroom and more so towards the curriculum. Learners are constantly engaging on their cell-phones and thus educators are of the opinion that the curriculum should have technology infused into its teaching; learning and evaluation practices.

**Aim 3:**

***To gain insight as to how educators' expose learners to reading and culture of reading within the classroom.***

Educators have indicated that the curriculum does not make provision for reading. One educator indicated that she brings newspapers and magazines to the class to encourage learners to read and engage with these texts. All educators have indicated that they do ask learners to read some texts and tasks instead of the educator reading for the class. Educators indicated that they would place more emphasis on reading if it was to be a means of evaluation as there is just too much to complete given the current curriculum.



**Aim 4:**

***To determine how texts are taught and evaluated and what are the views of educators regarding the prescribed texts.***

The learners are usually given background information initially and then the educator begins to teach the texts and read the texts to the learners and have learners also read the text to the class. The educator will make emphasis on certain important parts of the texts and then create a class discussion around this. Lessons are recapped to allow the educator to gauge learners understanding and interpretation of the text so that the educator knows where to begin the next lesson. All the educators believe that the texts which they are teaching are not stimulating the minds of their learners. The educators believe that it is time that the school and the DoE change the list of prescribed books so that it can appeal to the interest of the learners.

**Aim 5:**

***To gain insight regarding the support structures available for educators in terms of support guidance and innovation moving forward.***

One of the educators indicated that there are workshops available for educators.

Additionally, the educator added that educators should make use of the resources they have at hand and make the most of it to enhance teaching and learning.

Overall the educators indicated that there is very little support from the school's management as well as the DoE. In terms of innovation the school has computers, tablets as well as Wi-Fi (internet) facilities however learners are not able to access these and educators are limited to these resources. All in all, innovative teaching and learning is limited especially in regard to the non-mathematics and science subjects.

**Based on 6.5 Overview of findings and the data presented and analysed in Chapter 4; I wish to briefly answer the following 5 research questions.**

**1) How and why are texts selected?**

Texts are selected based on what the curriculum stipulates should be taught and also what texts the school already has in their possession. The educators to an extent based on their resources at the school also have a part to play in the selection of the texts which are taught especially the short stories and poetry.

**2) How are texts taught?**

Text are taught using audio recordings of the text and furthermore the texts are read by the educator and by the learner in the classroom. Thereafter the key issues of the texts are highlighted by the educator and then discussed for the learners to make notes thereof.

**3) How are texts evaluated?**

Texts are usually evaluated in the forms of comprehension test; summative tests and examination. Alternatively, response to texts is also used where the learner is asked to discuss the implied meaning of a particular part in a text.

**4) How can texts that are taught be evaluated?**

There are so many ways one could assess and evaluate text other than the conventional methods of tests and examinations. Texts can be assessed and evaluated in form of group presentation based on learners' interpretation of the texts; orals and role plays. Summary writing and poster presentation can also be used to tests learners understanding of the text. Due to learners being engrossed in their cell phones, PC and other technological devices, the need to incorporate blended learning in the curriculum and its practices should be employed. Thus, text can also be evaluated through the use of online quizzes; tests; PowToon's and other presentations too. Most learners are visual learners and thus the educator needs to be creative in drafting stimulating assessments.

### **5) Why do learners have low literacy levels?**

As indicated by the educators' response in chapter 4, learners have low literacy levels as a result of their lack of reading and the influence of using their cell phones which have predictable texts and which affect their reading and writing abilities. Low literacy levels are also largely depending on the type of learner one has. Low literacy levels feed into learners who are visual learners and stimulated by the prescribed learning materials. Due to the majority of the learners being visual learners, the prescribed texts do not stimulate these learners in terms of learning with the aid of visuals. This once again brings me back to the point that learners have made regarding their prescribe texts which they cannot relate to and thus have no interest in reading these texts. Our current learners are modern day learners and thus are inclining to the use of technology such as tablets, laptops and android phones. These technology devices open a new world of learning to learners that does not necessary of embed the skill of reading. These devices also expose learners to series and gaming which are seen as more intriguing, stimulating and fun as opposed to reading their prescribed text. This does not make technology bad. However, technology should be used to teach and assess reading.

The overview of the findings aimed to answer the 5 research questions.

Furthermore, this study aimed to find out if learners are reading and how much of time learners spend on reading at home and at school. This study also aimed to find out more about the Grade 8 and 10 learners exposure to reading. In addition to this the purpose of the study was also to find ways to alternate ways promote reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy strategies.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS OF the STUDY**

During the processes of classroom observations; data gathering; data presentation and analysis I faced some challenges which I am inclined to see as limitations to my study. I wish to address here below these limitations

### **6.6.1 LIMITATION ONE: SCHOOL AND GRADE SELECTION**

My study was carried out at one high school and this I believe was the first limitation of my study. Ideally a study of this nature could would have been more effective if I could have reached out to more government schools in the Western Cape. The findings only present a sample group of 24 learners; 12 learners from Grade 8 and 12 learners from Grade 10 and the four English educators of Grade 8 and 10. Based on the scope of my research and the lack of time; my research space was limited to grade 8 and 10 learners only. I was furthermore only able to work closely with the 24 learner participants and thus this research may not be a more definitive/inclusive reflection of the entire Grade 8 and Grade 10 format.



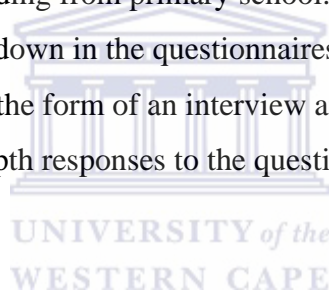
### **6.6.2 LIMITATION TWO: LEARNER AND EDUCATOR AVAILABILITY**

As a researcher, I was given a timeframe to be at the school. Furthermore, I had to feel content with the timetable of the educators and learners. I was based at the school only on Tuesdays for less than a period of two months. This meant I had to rush through the aims and objective of my study. Due to the limited time and learners also being absent and educators not always being able to accommodate me I would return to the school on a Wednesday or Thursday if I had free time. I could only work with the learner participants during class time and during break time (second interval only). After school, meeting was not an option due to learners' transport arrangements. After school was the only time I would get to work with the educator participants. More often than not the Tuesday afternoons were set aside for computer workshops which the educators needed to attend. This created a delay for me and I then needed to contact the educators outside of our scheduled time to create alternative meeting time. Educators were busy with term tests and awards and this created more of a delay in collecting data from the educators. I collected data up until the end of November due to all the delays. I did not want to rush the process of data collection from the educators as I felt their input and

insights would be invaluable toward my study. Thus I arranged together with the educators to meet on alternative days and even converse over the telephone to gain insight in order to answer research questions.

### **6.6.3 LIMITATION THREE: SAME INSTRUMENTS USED FOR GRADE 8 AND GRADE 10.**

Due to the fact that my thesis focused on the promotion of reading through text select; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy; I decided to select the Grade 8 and 10 learners as my two focus groups. I believe that these are two important levels in terms of literacy acquisition and development. I then set out to create two instruments namely a set of interview questions and a questionnaire. I decided to use the same set of instruments for both Grade 8 and 10. Later I discovered that I should have asked the Grade 8 learners less questions and more direct questions related to their reading materials for English and their background of reading from primary school. I also noted that learners were lazy to write their thoughts down in the questionnaires and therefore I decided to ask them the same questions in the form of an interview and group discussion in order to get their opinions and in-depth responses to the questions in order to have a true reflection of their voices.



### **6.6.4 LIMITATION FOUR: OPPORTUNITY NOT PRESENTED**

While I advocated for a 20-30 minute reading slot and a few strategies to use to teach and assess texts innovatively; I was unable to employ these ideas in the classroom to see if they could improve learners reading skills and assessment marks for English.

## **6.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Language teaching and learning is constantly evolving based on the needs and expectations of learners; educators and the curriculum. With learners inclined to use technological devices more, innovative teaching and assessments needs to be developed and employed in the classroom and beyond. Thus the research conducted in this study has provided useful results. Conclusions as to the barriers to reading as well as innovative pedagogies to be employed in the classroom. The data collected from this study from the four educator participants reveal that each educator has a different teaching approach while there are similarities presented by two of the four educators the two remainder have very different approaches to teaching. The research has also indicated some of the common barriers to teaching and learning indicated by both the educators and the learners.

Based on the setting of the study and the sample groups' selection, the discoveries of the study have been narrow. Therefore, I recommend that further studies need to be carried out at all government schools in the province firstly and then throughout South Africa to discover other barriers to reading and strategies to employ in order to promote reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy. This would provide in-depth information and a broader understanding of why learners do not read and what can be done to promote reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative pedagogy.

## 6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Innovative teaching and evaluation methods 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.

“In these days of curriculum change in South Africa, teachers are often exhorted to make learning relevant to the lives and expected careers of learners-both from the learner-centred point of view (personal relevance and from social adaptation point of view (relevance to the needs of the economy and the workplace). They have also been encouraged to see themselves as learner-centred facilitators, and to employ group learning approaches to enable learners to draw on their own stories of prior knowledge and systems of interpretation- the everyday knowledge they bring with them to school” (Smith, 2013, Book 3: 15)

In light of this I offer recommendations with a view to promoting reading and improving learners’ low literacy levels. There are many barriers to learning and improving the low literacy levels in South Africa. Many of the barriers raised in this research are common and known as these are the daily realities of many of the South African schools. There is a keen interest from WCED and many the communities for a better focus on improving learners’ reading and writing skills and moreover their low literacy levels. By promoting reading and having learners enjoy the practice of reading and gaining new hope and knowledge through books, I believe that these learners can complete school successfully and pursue further studies in the hope of a better future for themselves and their families. However, it is important to realise that this investigation to improve low literacy levels and promote reading through text selection and innovative pedagogy is a journey and not an end point. Thus, the recommendations are designed to help navigate the journey of discovery in hope of achieve teaching practises that will help to promote reading and improve the low literacy levels of South African learners. These recommendations can be used as a trial and error method to help this journey of discovery in creating innovative teaching methods that will encourage learners to read more and engage with their literature materials.

**The recommendations that follow are (1) innovative teaching and assessing; (2) technology innovation; (3) negotiated curriculum; (4) how to teach and evaluate Shakespeare's plays.**

### **6.8.1 RECOMMENDATION 1: INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND ASSESING**

Majority of the learners from Grade 8 and 10 are visual learners and therefore I believe that it is important to take this into consideration when teaching and assessing these learners. Educators' need to teach learners the texts using visual aids to assist learners in understand the texts and its context. The teaching methods need to evolve; learners should be asked to map out or draw what they have learnt about the text. Thereafter the educator can instruct the learner to put words to their picture and create their own meaning and allow learners to reflect on their daily realities and link this to their texts that they have read.

Based on the text, the educator should select and write down 5-10 words on the board that is in the text. Then instruct the learners to think about the words on the board and then write a sentence using each of the words on the board. This can broaden learners' vocabulary and also give them ideas as to the theme/topic of the text.

One way to asses learners' understanding of a text is by giving them a listening comprehension task. When the learners have completed the task we can ask them to discuss the story they have heard and then brainstorm as a group and write their own end to the same story. Learners can then create a story board in the form of a poster. Learners should then take ownership of their piece of writing and then add their voice to it. Learners are then expected to read their piece out aloud to the class. The peers then applaud their classmate. The writing maybe very good or still requires development. However this exercise gives learners an identity that students can now relate to when they see that particular student they will have extra insight to that learner's character and ability. This exercise not only tests audio; writing; reading and oral presentation skills but also provides the learner with a safe and free space area for learning and developing and recognition of being important. This activity can be done



once a term. This is one way of completing multiple assessments and doing that in a creative and innovative way.

Learners have requested for texts to be evaluated in other forms besides written forms. Perhaps the school's computer lab which is un-used can be utilized to do online line quizzes based on texts. Alternatively, quizzes can be conducted in class and learners can be asked to study a particular text and be placed in groups and quizzes can occur; this can be run by learners and guided by educator.

Posters can be made about certain poems or texts and this can be done by learners, either individually or in groups. This is a creative way to responding to the learners understanding of a particular text. It can be displayed in the class and the learner's classmates and go and view and read the poster to gain knowledge and show appreciation. Alternatively, the learner can present the poster to the class or the group the learner sits in (every learner in the group gets a chance to present their poster and ask one another other questions). The group can peer-assess the poster and then the educator can assess the poster and collectively these two marks can be combined to give the learner a mark, perhaps 40:60 ratios can be used to determine the weightings of the educator versus group's overall assessment of the learners' poster and presentation. Bearing in mind the group will be given the same criteria/rubric to assess their peer on as what the educator will be using to assess the learner on. According to Vygotsky (1986) ZPD promotes social interaction and thus learners are able to also learn on their own and from peers. "What the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1987:211). The use of ZPD is to ensure the learners cognitive development increases.

### **6.8.2 RECOMMENDATION: TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION**

This recommendation is something that educational application developers can look into creating. When learners no longer have mobile data, they either watch television or read a book. A free application could be created as an incentive whereby learners could have unlimited access to a range of books which educationally appropriate books and books which also appeal to the interest of learners. This application can provide short stories, comics/ dialogues and books that are applicable to school learners these can be tabbed under different folders making it grade specific.

### **6.8.3 RECOMMENDATION: NEGOTIATED CURRICULUM**

I believe in the practice of a negotiated curriculum assessments should be aligned so as to cater for learners at different levels. Learners should be given a choice of which assessment they would like to do some of the time. Learners learn differently and are not products hence their development cannot be views as an outcome based approach. While we may teach a lesson with desired outcomes, every learner learns something different and something similar from the lesson, however they do not all take away the same knowledge as their peers or as desired by the curriculum.

At the beginning of each new teaching month allow learners to “voice” their ideas; thoughts and opinions about your lessons as an educator. In this, the learners are expected to indicate what they would like the educator to “re-teach” or what the educator can do to improve the learners understanding regarding a topic/theme. Alternatively, the learner is also able to comment on what the educator is currently doing in his/her teaching practice and in turn this will holistically indicate to the educator what is working or what is not working for learners. It is evident based on the study conducted that learners desire relevant to read and study relevant literature texts. The curriculum should be revised to cater for this need of learners and old and out-dated texts should be removed from the English syllabus. Texts that are un-appealing to learners’ interest should be taught in an interesting and innovative way and certain themes can be related to daily contextual realities.

#### **6.8.4 RECOMMENDATION: HOW TO TEACH AND EVALUATE SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS**

One requires a passionate educator that is able to transfer knowledge of the plays in an informative, creative and intriguing way that will appeal to the learners.

Furthermore, the educator must be able to show and introduce the Shakespearian plays in a way that indicates to the learners the relevance of Shakespeare plays in today's current times even though learners see his plays as old and outdated. This should be done by asking probing questions regarding the themes that are highlighted in Shakespeare's plays; such as love, hatred and betrayal. Learners should be asked if they see and experience those themes in currently and then show them that Shakespeare plays have identified those very themes. According to Vygotsky (1987) assessment need not be strict and structured it should bring out the best in the student.

One way of testing Shakespeare and gaining learners interest in the play is through creative writing. The learners can be tasked with an activity to write a response to a situation identified in the play. Additionally, the learners can be tasked to write a letter in which the learner writes to the character in the play in whereby the learner gives the character insight into the way in which the learners see what is happening in a particular scenario in the play. In the letter the learner then also gives advices and guidelines that the carry should following so that the scenario in the play can be resolved. This exercise tests the learners' knowledge gained by reading the text. Additionally, it also tests critically reading; analysing and writing skills. Lastly I also see this activity, indirectly as a means to show to the learners that Shakespeare plays can be interesting and can also be relevant and have been written for all of time even though the language that is used in the play may be over dramatic; its themes and messages relate to everyday life.

## 6.9 CONCLUSION

Education is a reflection of higher order and government, and these ideals are represented through our educational policies. Another element to the curriculum is the way in which it is implemented by educators and experienced by learners. The role of educators these days are increasing from being administrative; to being an educator, mediator, coach, facilitator, psychologist and so much more. It is important that educators be guided and reminded of their roles.

It is evident that the Grade 8 and 10 learners' express common views regarding their reading orientations and the interest in their reading materials at school. Educators with many years of experience stick to their methods of teaching and assessing which I believe needs to be revisited. The reason I suggest this is that transformation strategies' need to address the current learners' barriers to learning which keep evolving. Learners' interest is changing as a result of their daily realities and the influence of social media and technology. These teaching; learning and assessment strategies' need to be developed and employed based on the learners' schemata and the type of learner one has (for example sensory; auditory etc.). Being an English medium educator it is challenging especially when the majority of one's learners speak Afrikaans as their home language as indicated in this study. This reflects a language barrier that causes learners be distracted; disinterested and hinders their meaning of a lesson too. As a result, learners do not perform to the best of their ability.

In this final chapter of my thesis, my findings have been explicit and I have been able to draw some conclusions. The aim of the study was to examine the common issues that impede learners' literacy levels and their desire to read. Furthermore, one of the key aims was to research innovative strategies that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills. In addition the purpose of the study was to promote the practice of reading among high school learners through text selection; text evaluation and innovative methodologies. Keeping these aims in mind, I designed by main research questions, which I believe have been answered in chapter 4 and 5. Based on my research aims and objectives and research questions I have stated some recommendations that I believe will assist in the promotion of reading through text selection; text evaluation and innovative methodologies. This study has been a voyage of discovery and this was enhanced through the insights given by all the research participants. It was evident that learners

are not exposed to a well- grounded culture of reading at home and at school. There is lack of access to interesting reading materials for our learners to read. I believe learners are largely influenced by what they see at home; if a culture of reading is inculcated at home this will filter through at the school as well. While I am of the opinion that many of the school's literature materials are out-dated and need to be replaced; I also believe that these texts can be resuscitated to life if they are taught using visuals and innovative teaching strategies. However, I also believe that the Department of Education needs to incorporate reading materials that speak to learners' interests.



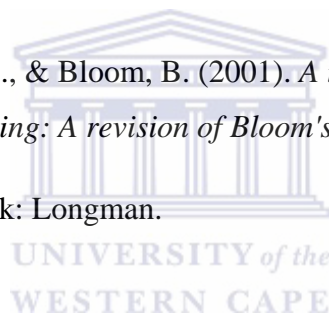
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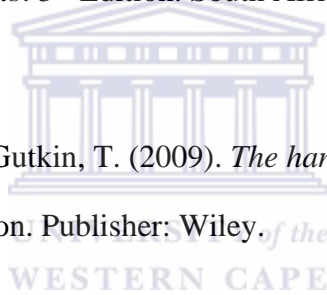
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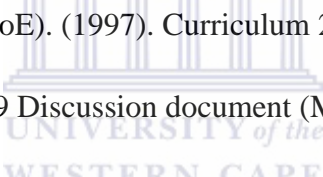
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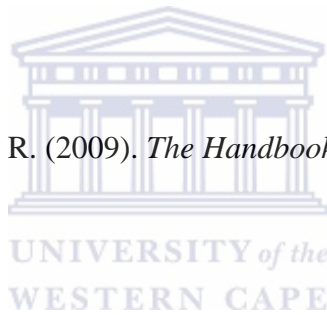
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## 8 APPENDICES

### LETTERS OF PERMISSION Appendix: i



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

25 June 2015

**To Whom It May Concern**

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:  
Ms P Paleker (Education)

Research Project: The promotion of reading among high school learners through test selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies

Registration no: 15/5/11

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*



Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)  
tel: +27 021 467 9272  
Fax: 0865902282  
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
[wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

**REFERENCE:** 20150708-1064  
**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Parveen Paleker  
56 Mavis Road  
Rylands Estate  
Gatesville  
7764

**Dear Ms Parveen Paleker**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE PROMOTION OF READING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS THROUGH TEXT SELECTION, EVALUATION AND INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES**

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 **11 August 2015 till 25 September 2015**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:  
**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

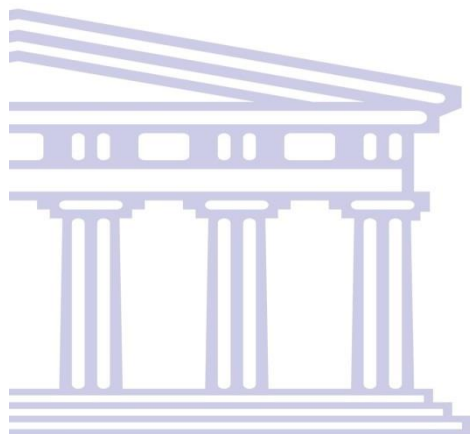
Kind regards.  
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard  
**Directorate: Research**  
**DATE: 10 July 2015**

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Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)





Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

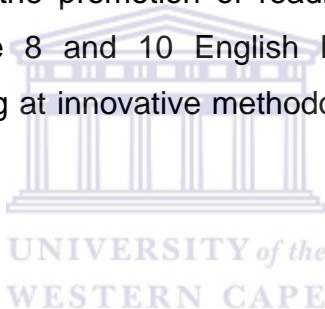
**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET**

Respective Principal; HoD of English and English Educators

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I, Parveen Paleker, am a Masters student in the Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.



### **Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) Investigate English Language educators' implementation of the Text-Based Approach to the curriculum.
- 2) To examine how prescribed texts are taught to the learners. Additionally, observation and investigation will also be conducted to see how learners receive; understand and respond to these lessons.
- 3) To determine innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

The main purpose of this study is to attempt to find innovative practices that can assist in promoting reading and improving learners literacy levels. The aim is to highlight the power of innovation and that for every learning barrier there is a

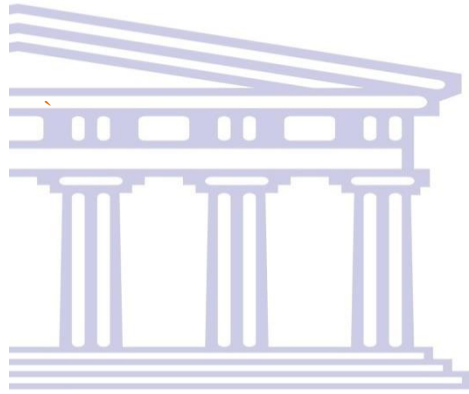
potential solution. It is important to know that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The researcher's participants, who are Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language educators and learners, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from participants' will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker  
Tel: 0849603874  
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam  
Tel: 021-9592449  
Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)





Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
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Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WCED)**

56 Mavis Road  
Rylands Estate  
7764

The Research Director  
Western Cape Education Department  
P/B X9114  
Cape Town

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Permission to conduct research at Cravenby Senior Secondary School**

I, Parveen Paleker, am a Masters student in the Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.

The title of my research is: The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The main purpose of this study is to examine common issues that impede learners' literacy levels and their desire to read. I would like to request your permission to conduct research at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. Furthermore, I would like to research innovative applications that can be used to

enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills

I will observe how English educators teach literature to Grade 8 and 10 English Home language learners. I would like to interview some of the English educators and their grade 8 and 10 learners. I will also interview 15-20 learners. The research will not interfere in any way with teaching and learning in the school. In addition, all participants in the study will remain anonymous. The Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand teachers' perceptions and practices in teaching English to Home Language learners.

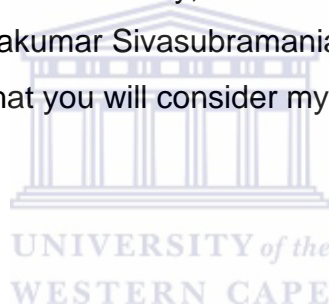
If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below. I hope that you will consider my request.

Yours sincerely,

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

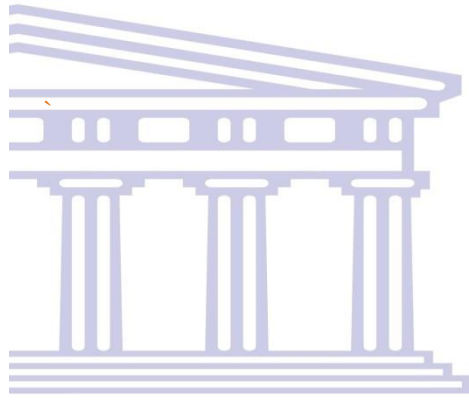
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)



Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

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**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

### **APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL**

Cnr School & York Street  
Cravenby  
Western Cape  
7501

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Permission to carry out research at your school in the learning area English.**



I, Parveen Paleker am an Education Masters' degree student in the Department of Language Education at the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape. I hereby wish to apply for permission to carry out my research in the English Home Language classrooms for grade 8 and 10 at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. The title of my research is: The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

My research involves observing lessons given by the English educators in the classroom and conducting interviews with them and noting students' participation. In addition, I will be interviewing these educators and some of their learners as well. Focus groups will also be used to extract information for my research and audio recordings will be used where required to do so if need be. The identity of all educators and learners will be kept confidential; their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time they wish to do so.

I vow to abide by the instructions given to me by the Western Cape Education Department and your institution. Furthermore, I can assure you that my research will not disrupt the teaching time. At the end of the study I will make my research findings available to your school should you wish to receive this information. All information about your institution, its educators and learners

will be treated as confidential and their identities will be kept anonymous and participants will be given fictitious names.

I would gladly meet with the concerned parties for any further inquiries or discussion based on the purpose of this research. Thank you for your time, understanding and cooperation.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Yours sincerely,

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

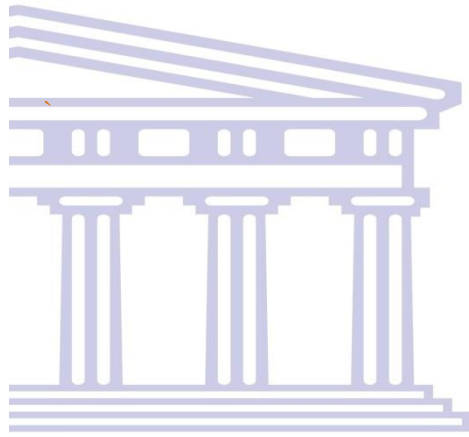
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

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**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I, Parveen Paleker am a Masters student in the Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.

I would appreciate your child's participation in my research study in order to obtain the following specific objectives.

- 1) To examine how prescribed texts are taught to the learners. Additionally, observation and investigation will also be conducted to see how learners receive; understand and respond to these lessons.
- 2) To determine innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills.

#### **Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

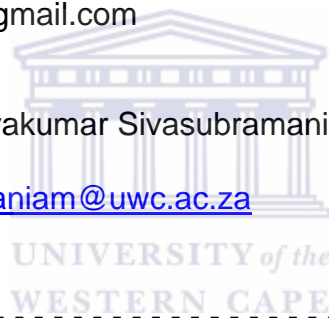
The main purpose of this study is to attempt to find innovative practices that can assist in promoting reading and improving learners literacy levels. The aim is to

highlight the power of innovation and that for every learning barrier there is a potential solution. It is important to know that the learner's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The researcher's participants, who are Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language educators and learners, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.

Parveen Paleker  
Tel: 0849603874  
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam  
Tel: 021-9592449  
Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)



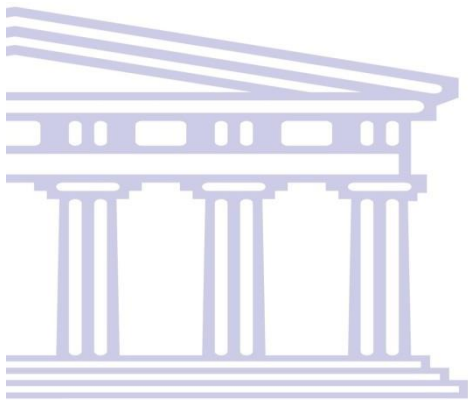
-----  
(Full name of Parent/Guardian)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian) hereby give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the above stated research study. I am aware of the objectives of the study and that my child's identity will be protected and that this study will not interfere with my child's academic performance.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

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





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Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

**Language Education Department  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDIX 5: PERMISSION LETTER TO GRADE 8 and 10 English Home Language Educators**

Cnr School & York Street  
Cravenby  
Western Cape  
7501

Dear Ms/Mr \_\_\_\_\_

### **Re: Permission to conduct research in your classroom**

I, Parveen Paleker am a Masters student in the Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am conducting research on the promotion of reading through text selection and evaluation in the Grade 8 and 10 English Home Language Classrooms. Furthermore, I am looking at innovative methodologies to promote reading and improve literacy.

The title of my research is: The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

The main purpose of this study is to examine common issues that impede learners' literacy levels and their desire to read. I would like to request your permission to conduct research in your English Home language classroom at Cravenby Senior Secondary School. Furthermore, I would like to research innovative applications that can be used to enhance language teaching and learning; promote reading and increase literacy skills. I will observe how you teach literature to Grade 8 and or 10 English Home language learners. I would

like to interview you as well as a few of your grade 8 and 10 learners (a sample group). I will also interview 15-20 learners per grade for the purposes of the above stated research. The research will not interfere in any way with teaching and learning in the school. In addition, all participants in the study will remain anonymous. The Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand teachers' perceptions and practices in teaching English to Home Language learners.

If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below. I hope that you will consider my request.

Yours sincerely,

Parveen Paleker

Tel: 0849603874

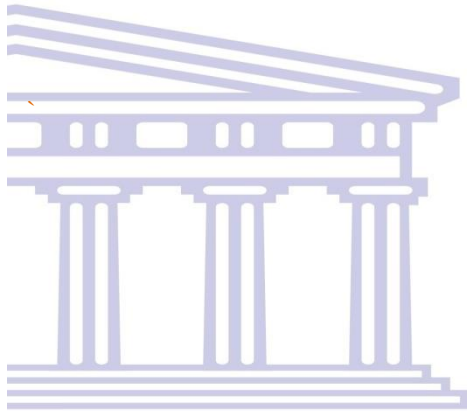
Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)



Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Tel: 021-9592449

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)



Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535  
Western Cape South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 959-2442/2650  
Fax: (021) 959-3358/2647

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**APPENDIX 6: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE EDUCATOR**

**Research Title:**

The promotion of reading among High School learners through text selection, evaluation and innovative methodologies.

As an Educator at Cravenby Senior Secondary School, I hereby acknowledge the following:

1. The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt or interfere with my daily classroom practices.
2. Participation of my class in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any stage of research.
3. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my identity as well as that of my learners.
4. I am assured that my classroom participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.

Educator's Signature:

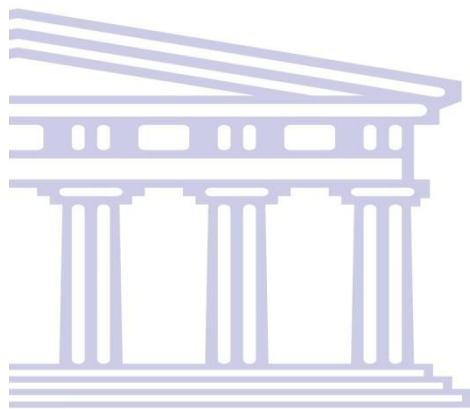
..... Date: .....

Researcher's Signature:

..... Date: .....

School Principal's Signature:

..... Date: .....



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## **APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS /EDUCATORS**

Dear Educator

The questions furnished below are meant to support and strengthen my research investigation. I will be much obliged if you could respond to them freely and frankly.

1. How would you describe your learners' literacy levels in your class?
2. Are your learners on par with their reading and critical thinking skills in terms of what is expected as per CAPS?
3. What is your perception of the language requirements in the CAPS curriculum?
4. What is your evaluation of the English Language textbooks used in the CAPS curriculum in high schools?
5. Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom?
6. Name the difficulties that your learners experience with regard to language and literature?
7. How do you handle these above stated difficulties that your learners experience? What specifically do you do to help learners learn better and understand the literature texts and lessons?
8. How often do your learners read in class per week? Do you give them any reading tasks or home-work?
9. In terms of innovation are there any that you utilize to teach and evaluate literacy and the literature aspect of the curriculum?
10. How do you see educators contributing to a learner-centred approach when teaching and evaluating literature?



b) When you evaluate learners understandings and interpretation of the texts:

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9) What are your feelings towards promoting reading at school and encouraging learners to read? How can this be done?

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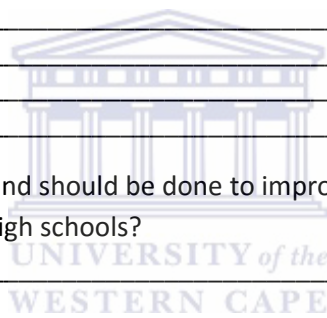
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10) What would you recommend should be done to improve the low literacy levels in South Africa, specifically looking at high schools?



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11) What are you currently doing to improve the low literacy levels existing in your classroom?

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12) How would you try to encourage your learners to read?

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18) Do you have any support or workshops that you can attend at your school or from the DoE to assist you in your challenges you face with your learners in terms of reading and understanding literature?

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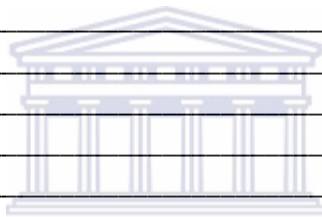
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19) How often do you meet with the HoD for English at your school?

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20) Does the HoD for English at your school provide you with support and do you work as a team with your HoD and fellow English educators?

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21) When do you recall last was your lessons observed and or evaluated by the Principal/HoD or external moderator?

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22) How would you feel about being externally moderated twice a year? And being given positive criticism and support from a teaching and learning specialist or H.O.D.

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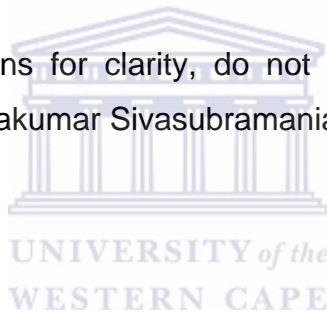
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If you have any questions for clarity, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, on the numbers and emails furnished below.



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Email: [palekerparveen@gmail.com](mailto:palekerparveen@gmail.com)

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