EXPLORING A GRADE 5 ENGLISH TEACHER'S STRATEGIES FOR HELPING HER LEARNERS DEVELOP THEIR READING LITERACY: A CASE STUDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

(English Language Teaching)

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

SALLY-ANN ROBERTSON

January 2013

ABSTRACT

Despite South Africa's constitutional commitment to multilingualism, literacy in English is important in education and the economy. English is widely perceived as the language of opportunity, and many South African primary schools have chosen English as their language of learning and teaching (LoLT). In terms of South Africa's 1997 Language in Education Policy, this choice means that such a school has to comply with English Home Language curriculum requirements. In situations where few learners (or teachers) have English as a home language, the choice of English as LoLT poses particular challenges, perhaps most crucially in the early years of literacy development.

This investigation explores the work of an intermediate phase teacher working in the Eastern Cape province at a "no-fee" school where English is the chosen LoLT, but where the majority of learners have isiXhosa as their home language. A qualitative interpretive approach was used to focus on the teacher's strategies for developing her Grade 5 learners' reading literacy in English.

Data were derived via lesson observation and in-depth interviewing. Fourteen of the teacher's English lessons were observed and she was interviewed twice.

Analysis of the data shows that few learners meet the reading literacy levels outlined in National Curriculum Statement guidelines. The teacher, working as she is in what are essentially subtractive bilingualism circumstances, is

poorly equipped to cope with the task of developing her learners' reading literacy.

I argue that educational policy, contributing as it does to the ongoing displacement, by English, of many South African children's home languages, not only undermines the post-apartheid Government's attempts at linguistic equity, but also contributes significantly to unequal reading literacy achievement across South Africa's different socio-economic sectors. Department of Basic Education officials, academics and others involved in decision-making around teacher education and development need to work together to interrogate policy and put in place more effective support structures to help teachers better cope with the exigencies outlined above.

CONTENTS

iii

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA:	Annual National Assessment
ANC:	African National Congress
AS:	Assessment Standard
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CUP:	Common Underlying Proficiency
DBE:	Department of Basic Education[1]
DEAR:	Drop Everything and Read
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE:	Department of Education
EFAL:	English First Additional Language
EHL:	English Home Language
FAL:	First Additional Language
HL:	Home Language
L1:	Referring to the first (home or mother-tongue) language
L2:	Referring to the second language learners
LEP:	Limited English proficiency
LiEP:	Language in Education Policy
LO:	Learning Outcome
LoLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSM:	Learning Support Material
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
OBE:	Outcomes-based Education
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SACMEQ:	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAL:	Second Additional Language
SES:	Socio-Economic Status
SGB:	School Governing Body
SLA:	Second Language Acquisition
SSR:	Sustained Silent Reading
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

---

[1] In 2009 South Africa's National Department of Education was split into two divisions: the Department of Basic Education (DBE), dealing with all schools form Grade R-12, and with adult literacy programmes; and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This case study is concerned with literacy. It focuses on the work of a Grade 5 teacher at one of South Africa's primary schools. Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky and Seidenberg (2001) point out that the term 'literacy' tends to be interpreted rather more broadly than simply 'reading', but note that "the starting point for literacy is reading skill" (p. 34)[2].

In this chapter I highlight some of the factors that led to my choosing reading literacy as the topic for my research. The first of these is South African learners' poor levels of reading proficiency. The second is the marked 'bimodal distribution' (Fleisch, 2008) of reading proficiency in this country. I believe this bimodality is closely related to decisions made around the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Having explained why these factors influenced my choice of research topic, I introduce the research site and the research goals I set myself. I close the chapter with an outline of the overall thesis structure.

1.2   South Africa's reading literacy challenge

Two recent international surveys have demonstrated how low reading literacy levels are in South African primary schools generally, compared to many schools in other countries in Africa and elsewhere.

The 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) marked South Africa's first effort at external benchmarking of South African learners' reading literacy levels against an international standard[3]. South Africa's performance relative to the other 39 countries participating in the study was described by Professor Sarah Howie,

---

[2] I am mindful that definitions of 'literacy' have evolved beyond the simple ability to read and write, but for the purposes of this case study, my own conceptualisation of literacy will be guided mainly by the kinds of literacy (or literacies) required in terms of the assessment standards at the Grade 5 level outlined in South Africa's Department of Education Languages Learning Areas curriculum documents.

[3] Only one other African country – Morocco – participated in PIRLS 2006.

national co-ordinator for South Africa's participation in PIRLS 2006 as "not good" (S. Howie, lecture presentation, 13 August 2008). Only 3% of our Grade 4 learners and 6% of our Grade 5 learners reached the High International Benchmark of 550 points (Howie et al, 2008, p. 28). Worse still, only 13% of our Grade 4 learners, and 22% of our Grade 5 learners reached the Low International Benchmark of 400 points (Howie et al, 2008, p. 26). When averaged, South African learners' 2006 scores failed to reach even the international average score of 500 points (Howie et al, 2008, p. 24). Notwithstanding the fact that it was a mix of Grade 4 and 5 South African learners who contributed to the study, compared with Grade 4 learners for most other participating countries, South Africa's learners achieved the lowest overall scoring in PIRLS (Howie et al, 2008).

Van Staden and Howie, in a 2008 conference paper, argue that an important area pointed to by the PIRLS 2006 findings is inadequate attention to building teachers' capacity to teach reading literacy effectively. Van Staden and Howie argue that the PIRLS 2006 assessment highlights a need to focus on "teachers' continued professional development at Intermediate Phase" (n.d., unpaged). In terms of Chall's model of reading development (detailed in Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin, 1990, p. 12-13), Stage 3 is characterized by a transition from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' (commonly in the fourth year of formal schooling). Zimmerman (2010) notes the frustration many intermediate phase teachers experience when they find that many of their learners have not yet adequately made this transition and cannot in fact "read and thus comprehend text, as would be expected" (p. 2) [4].

In relation to measures of intermediate phase reading achievement on the African continent itself, South Africa participated in the 2005-2010 Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) project. This project (SACMEQ III) assessed the reading achievement of Grade 6 learners from 15 southern and eastern African countries (SAQMEC III) (Hungi, et al., 2010). Table 1 shows - in order of achievement level - the SACMEQ III reading score findings.

---

[4] In Chapter 4 I report on how I used two of the PIRLS 2001 literary texts to gauge the reading comprehension of the Grade 5 learners at my research site (see Section 4.3).

Table 1: SACMEQ III Reading Scores for participating countries (2007)

Participating country	Grade 6 learners' mean reading scores
Tanzania	577.8
Seychelles	575.1
Mauritius	573.5
Swaziland	549.4
Kenya	543.1
Zanzibar	536.8
Botswana	534.6
Zimbabwe	507.7
Namibia	496.9
South Africa	494.9
Uganda	478.7
Mozambique	476.0
Lesotho	467.9
Zambia	434.4
Malawi	433.5
SACMEQ III	**512.0**

(Hungi, et al., 2010, p. 16-18)

Not the least worrying aspect of these SACMEQ III findings is that they represent a drop in South Africa's performance rating relative to the earlier (SACMEQ II) survey findings (1998-2004). Of the 14 African countries participating in SACMEQ II, South Africa's Grade 6 learners came in at eighth position for reading literacy (van der Berg, 2005). Fifteen African countries participated in SACMEQ III, and South Africa's Grade 6 learners came in at tenth position for reading literacy.

There are three further worrying aspects of the SACMEQ III findings as regards South Africa's poor performance rating. The first is that the mean reading score of our Grade 6 learners is below the SACMEQ mean. The second is that even countries which spend less of their national budget on education than does South Africa - Kenya, for example (Murray, 2011a, unpaged) - scored better than South Africa. The third - from an internal perspective - is the fact that the discrepancy between the mean score of South African learners with the lowest socio-economic status (SES) and that of South African learners in the highest SES bracket is greater than for any other participating country. The difference is 182.4 points, with South Africa's Grade 6 mean reading score for learners

from high SES backgrounds being 605.5 (well above the SACMEQ III mean) and our Grade 6 mean reading score for learners from low SES backgrounds being 423.2 (the second lowest mean score of *all* of the participating countries) (Hungi, et al., 2010, p. 16).

One final point to be made in relation to these most recent SACMEQ findings is that, as Table 2 below shows, the SACMEQ III performance scores of Eastern Cape Grade 6 learners – representing the province in which the present investigation was conducted – were the second lowest in the country. This is similar to the finding in the SACMEQ II evaluation, where our Province's Grade 6 learners were shown to score in the lower half of the country's score range (Moloi & Strauss, 2005).

Table 2: SACMEQ III Reading Scores for South Africa's provinces (2007)

Province	Grade 6 learners' mean reading scores
Western Cape	583.4
Gauteng	573.1
North West	506.3
Northern Cape	505.6
Free State	491.1
KwaZulu-Natal	485.6
Mpumalanga	473.6
Eastern Cape	447.8
Limpopo	425.3
South Africa	**494.9**
SACMEQ III	**512.0**

(Hungi, et al., 2010, p. 17)

Taken together, the PIRLS (Grades 4 and 5) and SACMEQ (Grade 6) surveys cover all grades in the intermediate phase. Findings from these studies highlight the serious literacy development challenges facing those who work in our intermediate phase classrooms.

1.3   South Africa's 'at risk' learners

The "bimodal distribution" (Fleisch, 2008, p. v) of reading literacy achievement in our country, which is so clearly demonstrated in both the PIRLS 2006 and SACMEQ III

findings discussed in the previous section, is a major cause for concern. A depressingly high percentage[5] of South African primary school learners struggle to become fully proficient in their language of learning and teaching (LoLT), thereby compromising their capacity to optimally gain from their schooling experiences. The children in the first mode are generally of lower SES and "overwhelmingly from disadvantaged schools" (Fleisch, 2008, p. v). In the main, children in the second (more successful) mode are from middle-class homes and attend better-resourced schools (Fleisch, 2008, p. v). In a *Business Day* article entitled "SA's 'incomes-based' education system perpetuates inequality", Doron Isaacs (co-ordinator of South African community-based organisation Equal Education[6]), citing Fleisch's bimodal distribution of achievement, asks: "What is this two-humped camel if not the perpetuation of educational apartheid?" (2010, unpaged).

The school in which the present study is situated aims to provide a better than average learning experience for its children. It is not 'a disadvantaged school'. That said, the majority of its learners do come from homes of lower SES, and – as I show – this, together with their observed reading literacy proficiency, certainly places most of them squarely within the first mode of Fleisch's bimodal achievement distribution pattern. This places an additional challenge on their teachers, most especially their English teacher.

1.4   South African schools' mandate to choose their LoLT

The effect of SES on reading literacy achievement is significantly compounded by schools' decisions regarding what LoLT to use. English is a high-stakes language in both global and national terms and is thus widely recognised in this country as the language of opportunity. English is also the main language of assessment in South Africa's schools and other educational institutions. Literacy in English is thus very important, and this has undoubtedly contributed to the ongoing displacement, by English, of many South African children's home languages in the teaching and learning environment.

---

[5] Fleisch estimates this percentage to be as high as 80% (Fleisch, 2008, p. v).

[6] For links to Equal Education's website, see http://www.equaleducation.org.za/welcome_ee.

In terms of South Africa's Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (1997), schools have the mandate to choose which of South Africa's eleven official languages they want as their LoLT. Many South African schools have chosen English as their LoLT. If a school chooses English as its LoLT the language teacher is obliged to follow the English Home Language (EHL) syllabus *even if* its learners are not English Home language speakers. This is the situation at the primary school in which the present study is located. Learners at this school thus face the twofold demand of (a) coping with actually *acquiring* the LoLT; and (b) needing to *develop sufficient reading proficiency* in this LoLT to cope with the learning demands of their other curriculum learning areas. As this study shows, their English teacher is apprehensive that many of her learners may fall short on this dual challenge, a challenge exacerbated by their low SES[7]. When asked what she saw as her biggest problem with her Grade 5 learners, the teacher replied: "They can't read. And they can't … and even if they read … some of them *can* read, they *can* recognise words, and they read quite *fluent* some of them. But then they don't *understand* what they're reading" (Interview 1, Lines 78-80 [Appendix F]).

1.5   Research site

Ashleigh Primary[8] is one of South Africa's oldest schools. Although the school's facilities are owned by a private trust, the school is under the control of the Eastern Cape Provincial Education Department. In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 it is categorized as a "public ordinary school" (South Africa. President's Office, 1996). It provides schooling for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7, and catered, during the apartheid era, for 'children of colour' (mainly Coloured Afrikaans-speaking children). Subsequent to the disbandment of apartheid, however, many of the Coloured children migrated to former Model C schools and their places were taken by Black African children from the surrounding townships.

---

[7] A small-scale contextual analysis conducted at Ashleigh Primary a few years ago suggested that the teacher's apprehension may indeed be well-founded (Jackson, 2008).

[8] "Ashleigh Primary" is the pseudonym used throughout to refer to the research site school.

The school can accommodate approximately 240 learners. Its current complement is 238 children, of whom 228 are isiXhosa mother tongue. The remaining learners are either Coloured Afrikaans-speaking or Black African who have another African language as their home language.

Ashleigh Primary is designated a Quintile Three school[9]. This suggests that the children attending it come from better off homes than many other South African children. Most of the children at this school do, however, come from disadvantaged backgrounds in terms of the socio-economic circumstances of their families. The school's annual tuition fee was set at R210.00, but many of the children's families were unable to pay this amount. As a result of recent legislation regarding the status of schools catering for children in such circumstances, Ashleigh Primary has been given what is referred to as a "No-fee school" status (School Principal, e-mail communication, February 6, 2011). This means that the Government subsidises each child by providing a *per capita* amount per child. The school may therefore not charge fees, although it is allowed to do occasional fundraising when additional funds are required for specific projects. In recognition of the straitened home circumstances of its learners, Ashleigh Primary also runs a feeding scheme whereby learners are given sandwiches during the midmorning break, and either soup or a plate of samp and beans at lunchtime.

When I embarked on this study the children were still accommodated in the cramped circumstances of the school's original building, but building operations for a new block of eight classrooms were at an advanced stage. By the end of the study the children had relocated to their new spacious and well-equipped classroom, and the refurbishing of the original building was well underway. This refurbishment will provide the principal with an office, and include also a staff room, computer laboratory, kitchen, multipurpose hall, library and study centre.

---

[9] South African schools are classified into five quintiles depending on a school's catchment area. Using census data, catchment areas are assessed in terms of the income, unemployment rate and level of education of the communities different schools serve. Quintile 1 represents the poorest schools; Quintile 5 the least poor schools (Kanjee & Chudgar, 2009).

Prior to 1994, the school's LoLT had been Afrikaans. Post-1994 the school changed this to English "to enable us to meet the Xhosa speakers "half-way" because it is their second language" (School Principal, e-mail communication, June 12, 2011). In this same communication the Principal wrote: "parents have been so determined to ensure that their children are taught in English because they believe that it puts children in a better position to access good schools and ultimately tertiary institutions where English is the Language of teaching and learning".

Notwithstanding the fact of the majority of the school's learners being isiXhosa-speaking, Ashleigh Primary's governing body (SGB) opted to retain English as the LoLT with the concomitant condition that English lessons be geared towards the achievement of the learning outcomes contained in the EHL curriculum (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2002a). In a recent newspaper report written in response to rumours that some schools might be flouting official admission policy the principal of Ashleigh Primary is quoted as saying that "As a school we never use methods designed to exclude pupils. We are guided by the policy of the Department of Education", an important aspect of which includes making sure "a prospective pupil would not be disadvantaged by being taught in a language that wasn't their mother tongue" (Musekwa & Jijana, 2011).

Ms B[10] is in charge of English teaching at Ashleigh Primary. Her work is integral to the school's commitment to ensuring that its learners are not disadvantaged by their home language being different from the school's LoLT. Her task is complicated by the fact that, as noted, the children come from homes low down on the socio-economic ladder. It is Ms B's responsibility to help these children develop their proficiency in English so that they can tackle the demands of South Africa's EHL curriculum, and help them develop their language and literacy skills so that they can more readily cope with the demands of their other curriculum learning areas through the medium of English.

---

[10] "Ms B" is used throughout in referring to the English teacher participating in this study.

1.6   Goals of the study

It has been my impression that the main foci of attention for understanding the problems of low literacy levels appear to have fallen either on the foundation phase (Grades R to Three) or – in response to disappointing matriculation outcomes – on the closing years of the secondary schooling period (Grade 12 mainly). Notwithstanding that both PIRLS and SACMEQ have focused on children's literacy achievements in Grades 4, 5 and 6; the intermediate phase has received less attention. As a former Grade 5 classroom teacher myself, and as one who currently works as a teacher educator at both pre-service and in-service levels, I need to improve my insight into some of the challenges South African intermediate teachers face as they adjust to new curriculum expectations and to changes in the home language profiles of their classes[11].

The central goal therefore for my study is to identify and analyse some of the ways in which Ms B contributes to the ongoing reading literacy development of her Grade 5 learners. In pursuing this goal I hope also to improve my understanding of the challenges faced by an intermediate phase teacher in a school that commits to learning outcomes of an EHL curriculum when the majority of its learners struggle to communicate in English.

1.7   Research questions

The following research questions guide the investigation:

- What strategies does the teacher use to support learners' reading literacy development?

- Does the teacher believe that these strategies are successful in developing learners' reading literacy in English?

- What, in her view, constrains her teaching of reading literacy? How might the constraints be overcome?

- Has she adapted her strategies in any ways over the years?

---

[11] The most recent Annual National Assessment (ANA) results (2011) show that literacy achievement in the Eastern Cape has deteriorated in the Intermediate Phase. In the opinion of Sarah Murray this decline is mainly because so many children in this province are taught and assessed in English (S. Murray, personal communication, February 16, 2012).

1.8 Thesis outline

In this chapter I have noted research evidence highlighting the severity of the literacy crisis facing South Africa, especially in the Eastern Cape. I have introduced the research site, and have outlined my research intentions and motivation for choosing this particular focus.

In the next chapter I explore some of the literature on challenges relating to literacy development in circumstances where learners low on the socio-economic ladder face the hurdle of acquiring their literacy in a language different from that spoken in the home, and the particular challenges faced by a teacher of such children. I also examine the language policy that has created the kinds of pedagogically flawed circumstances at the school where this research is situated. I then look at the views of literacy specialists on optimal ways of promoting reading literacy, even where circumstances are non-ideal.

I begin Chapter Three by putting my methods under the spotlight. I go on to describe how I collected and analysed my data. The chapter ends with a consideration of issues of validity; objectivity versus subjectivity; and research ethics bearing on my study.

In Chapter Four I present and analyse the data. I identify what I have perceived as the main threads emerging from the data I have collected on the teacher's efforts to help her learners develop their literacy proficiency. This chapter was a particularly challenging one. Peshkin (1988) urges researchers to "be meaningfully attentive to their own subjectivity" (p. 17). My research task was not to evaluate, but rather to understand, the teacher's situation. In presenting and analysing the data, I have tried, therefore, to assume the kind of stance implied in the words of advice from my supervisor: "Write from the inside, not the outside. If you or I were in that situation would we be able to do anything different? Probably not." Echoing the van Staden and Howie argument I cited earlier (Section 1.2), my supervisor continued: "The problem is that teachers are simply not adequately prepared for the challenges they are being asked to deal with" (S. Murray, personal communication, March 9, 2011).

In the final chapter I summarise the main conclusions from the research, and draw attention to its limitations. I close with suggestions for possible further investigation into this crucially important area: support for intermediate teachers' capacities to promote their learners' literacy development.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to my investigation of an intermediate phase teacher's strategies for developing her Grade 5 learners' English reading literacy. Given that the literature in this area is vast, it is a challenge not only to make wise selections from the available literature, but also to guard against being overwhelmed by its extent. This chapter touches on a small fraction of what is available.

In selecting literature for this review, I begin by looking at that pertaining to the structural and curricular educational changes that followed South Africa's transition to a fledgling democracy. The changes to the linguistic make-up of South African classrooms has meant that many of our teachers are now teaching children who are neither wholly familiar with nor fully competent in the language of learning.   Included in this chapter, therefore, is a review of some key literature around second language acquisition, and of literature relating to the issue of L2 as the vehicle for the development of early literacy. I then give attention to literature on the development of foundational reading competence. Finally I consider potential impediments to mastery of the reading process. Overlying all the above is consideration of how children's SES can (and usually does) influence their progress towards becoming literate.

2.2   Educational transformation in South Africa

South African teachers have faced significant structural and curricular change since the African National Congress (ANC) government came to power in 1994. The "birth of a new democracy" (DBE, 2009, p. 11) required that teachers play a key role in re-shaping South Africa's divided and unequal educational system. Outcomes-based education (OBE), with a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, was what the Ministry of Education chose as the vehicle for such re-shaping. Nearly two decades on, South Africa's educational terrain remains an extremely complex and uneven one, most especially in relation to differential levels of literacy development across the different sectors of our society.

2.3. South Africa's LiEP: Principles versus practice

In line with its curriculum initiatives, South Africa's Ministry of Education promulgated its new LiEP in 1997. During the transition to ANC rule, policy makers were anxious to actualize democratic principles, and, as noted in Chapter One, South Africa's LiEP gave schools the right to choose which of the country's eleven official languages to use as their LoLT. There are those who question whether this policy perhaps "errs on the side of allowing too much choice" (Desai, 1999, p. 46).

In a paper on language policy and practice in the Eastern Cape, Probyn et al. cite sources in which South Africa's LiEP was hailed as "the most progressive in the world" and "an example to other African countries" (2002, p. 29). Less positively, Heugh (2000a) contends that however good South Africa's LiEP may be - based as it is "on the internationally accepted principle of mother tongue education in the context of a bilingual or multilingual framework" (p. 3) - this principle has yet to be adequately realized in practice in the majority of South African classrooms.

The language choices made in many South African schools after promulgation of the 1997 LiEP clearly demonstrate how the best of intentions may "often [be] undermined by prevalent social beliefs as to the value of particular languages" (McKay & Rubdy, 2009, p. 10-11). Under Nationalist Party rule the language in education question had become increasingly politicized (Hartshorne, 1995). In particular, the Nationalist government's policy of separate development contributed to mistrust of the motives behind initiatives advocating mother-tongue instruction (Granville et al., 1997). Hartshorne cites Hawes' observation that "language policies for education are … seldom, if ever, decided on educational grounds alone" (1995, p. 206).

Despite research evidence showing a good correlation between "mother tongue education and scholastic achievement" (South Africa. DBE, 2010a, p. 5), and despite the 1997 LiEP's advocacy of mother tongue instruction (particularly for the early years of

schooling), many black South African parents chose English as their children's LoLT[12]. Granville et al. (1997) note Ndebele's argument that choices are not always free, but rather "structured in dominance and … determined by 'pragmatic necessity' " (unpaged). The dominant status of English, both in South Africa and in global terms, must inevitably have fueled parents' "perception that 'access to English' is what their children need, in order to succeed in our society" (Granville et al., 1997, unpaged). Heugh damns the DoE for failing to adequately provide parents with the kinds of information needed to make informed decisions about the choice of LoLT for their children (2002b, 2002c).

Research in Eastern Cape schools found many SGBs not to be especially "well-equipped to make decisions about school language policy" (Probyn et al., 2002, p. 29). Probyn's research team selected four schools for a deeper analysis of language practices relative to policy. They noted that while all four schools had made changes to their (implicit) language policy and to their teaching practices in response to an increase in the perceived importance of English, only one school (a former model-C school) had actually drawn up a language policy document.

Also working in an Eastern Cape context, De Klerk (2002) explored parents' and teachers' perspectives on the LoLT issue. De Klerk argues unequivocally that additive bilingualism (early literacy and language development in learners' mother tongue coupled with the opportunity to acquire English) offers learners "the best chance to develop cognitively and to succeed academically" (2002, p. 2). That said, her interviews with several Eastern Cape isiXhosa-speaking parents revealed that despite a measure of emotional regret, parents arrived at their decision to send their children to English-medium schools via exactly the kind of 'pragmatic necessity' mentioned by Granville et al. (1997, unpaged). These schools, they realised, offered a better quality of education than would be possible at the available isiXhosa-medium schools (de Klerk, 2002, p. 12).

---

[12] Later (Section 2.9.1) I note that there has been an encouraging increase in numbers of South African foundation phase learners acquiring *initial* literacy learning through the medium of their home language.

The parents included in de Klerk's survey represented "a small elite group" (2002, p. 12). As such, they are different from the parent body of Ashleigh Primary. It seems, however, that the parents of learners at Ashleigh Primary share a similar view: "... from what ... the parents tell me, they want their kids here because they feel they [are] going to be taught better than what's happening in the township. Whether this is true or not, I don't know. But that is what parents tell me" (Interview 1, Lines 474-477 [Appendix F]).

Few would contest the idea that 'access to English' is important; nor the widely-held perception that English is a language of "upward mobility" (Probyn 1998, p. 3). Where, however, schools catering mainly for non-English home language learners take a straight-for-English route, there is a risk that learners' "prospects of academic success" may be compromised (Probyn, 1998, p. 3), and thus their prospects of upward mobility also. Alluding to a "breakdown between policy and practice" (p. 77), Probyn writes of the need to help South African teachers develop their professional capacities to cope with the challenges involved in teaching through the medium of an additional language. Granville et al. (1997) similarly argue in favour of channeling resources into teacher professional development to reduce the threats posed by a straight-for-English choice.

2.4. South Africa's Languages Curriculum

Supporting learners' ability to acquire and develop the language skills they need in their other learning areas is central to a Languages Learning Area teacher's job. As the NCS document notes, this is the learning area that "develops reading and writing, the foundation for other important literacies" (South Africa. DoE, 2002a, p. 5). Helping learners develop mastery of the LoLT is thus especially important, for "without language no other Learning Area could exist" (South Africa. DoE, 2003, p. 19).

It was for the first time, through the NCS for the Languages Learning Area, that all South Africa's eleven official languages were placed on an equal footing[13]. The NCS advocated an "additive or incremental approach to multilingualism" in order that all

---

[13] The pre-1994 situation was that English and Afrikaans were the only two *official* languages in South Africa, and as such the teaching of these languages was well-supported and resourced. The teaching of African languages was accorded lower status and, to a large extent, marginalised.

South African learners might "reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages and that they are able to communicate in other languages" (South Africa, DoE, 2002c, p. 20).

2.4.1 'Home' as compared with 'First Additional' language curricula

Each of the official languages is covered in the Languages Learning Area Statement at three levels: home language, first additional language, and second additional language (South Africa, DoE, 2002c, p. 20). In this section I deal only with issues pertaining to the NCS's recommendations relating to *home language* and to *first additional language*.

The NCS for HL is based on the premise that in a school where English is the LoLT, children arrive at that school able to understand and speak English. By contrast, the NCS for FAL does not assume that learners "have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school" (DoE, 2002b, p. 4; DoE, 2002c, p. 4).

The Languages Learning Area Statement recommends that "whenever possible" learners' home language should be their LoLT, especially in the early years of acquiring literacy, and that in circumstances where there needs to be a transition from HL as LoLT to FAL as LoLT, this needs to be carefully managed (South Africa, DoE, 2002c, p. 20). It is also recommended that children's HL "should continue to be used alongside the additional language for as long as possible" (DoE, 2002a, p. 5; DoE, 2002b, p. 5). Most importantly, relative to the circumstances pertaining at schools such as Ashleigh Primary, the DoE recommends that "where the language of learning and teaching is an additional language for the learner, teachers and other educators should make provision for special assistance and supplementary learning of the additional language, until such time as the learner is able to learn effectively in the language of learning and teaching" (2002b, p. 5; 2002c, p. 5).

2.4.2 Recommended language teaching principles

The DoE recommends that, through their language policy and practices, schools observe the following four key principles:

- additive bilingualism;
- recognition of the desirability of (at least initial) mother tongue education;
- an integrated approach in the teaching/learning of the six language learning outcomes;
- assessment strategies that form an integral part of the learning process so as to ensure that learners receive ongoing, constructive feedback regarding their progress and achievement.

In addition to these four principles, other key principles recommended in the NCS for the Languages Learning Area include:

- using a *communicative approach* with the emphasis on communicating and on making meaning of text (oral/written/visual);
- using a *text-based approach* involving teaching/learning about the characteristic features of a range of different text-types;
- promoting *high levels of critical literacy* in learners which they can apply to both their reading and their writing of texts;
- using a *process approach* to writing whereby the production of texts, and not only the finished product, is given emphasis;
- paying explicit attention to the *development of reading strategies* such as skimming and scanning;
- teaching *language structure and use in context*.

(South Africa. DoE, 2003)[14]

2.4.3 Required learning outcomes for reading and viewing

There are six learning outcomes (LOs) for the NCS (Grades R-9) for the home and first additional languages. In terms of the learning outcome for reading and viewing (LO3) it is expected that learners will be "able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts" (South Africa, DoE, 2002a, pp. 16-17). The NCS Assessment Standards (ASs) against which Grade 5 learners' reading and viewing proficiency can be measured are set out in Table 3. (Because the Grade 5 learners at Ashleigh Primary are overwhelmingly second language (L2) rather than HL learners, I have included in the Table the Grade 5 LO3 ASs for both EHL and EFAL.)

---

[14] From 2013 the NCS Intermediate Phase documents will be replaced with the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents. Insofar as it is the NCS documents that pertain to the period during which this study took place, I have not included any explicit discussion of CAPS. Having read through draft versions of some of the CAPS documents, it does however seem to me that the same general language teaching principles which informed the NCS documents have found their way into the CAPS documents.

What emerges from this distillation of NCS requirements for EHL and the EFAL is that, barring an explicitly stronger focus on multimedia in the EHL ASs, and a stronger focus too – though perhaps not as explicit – on critical literacy, the scope contained within the ASs for LO3 in both the EHL and EFAL curriculum statements is similar.

Table 3: Reading and Viewing (LO3) Assessment Standards for Grade 5

English Home Language	English First Additional Language
■ Reads a variety of South African and international fiction and non-fiction texts for different purposes. ■ Views and comments on various visual and multimedia texts for different purposes. ■ Describes and analyses emotional response to texts. ■ Discusses how writers and visual artists relate to their readers in different ways, and how they create different views of the world using language and visual features. ■ Shows understanding of fiction text. ■ Understands the vocabulary and discusses how writers have used language to achieve effects (similes, rhythm, onomatopoeia, etc.). ■ Recognises the different structures, language use, purposes and audiences of different texts. ■ Identifies and discusses environmental, cultural and social values in texts. ■ Understands and responds appropriately to a range of information texts. ■ Interprets and discusses more complex visual texts and can change text from one form to another. ■ Selects relevant reading material and applies research skills to find information in dictionaries, reference books and textbooks from community sources or electronic media (where available). (South Africa. DoE, 2002a, pp. 75-77)	■ Understands in a simple way some elements of stories. ■ Understands, in a simple way, some elements of poetry. ■ Reads for information. ■ Reads and responds to social texts. ■ Reads media texts. ■Reads for pleasure. ■Uses reference books and develops vocabulary. (South Africa. DoE, 2002b, pp. 62-67)

As Table 3 makes clear, expectations about level (or depth) of engagement are higher for the EHL curriculum. This is of course to be expected. In light of the educational disparities inherited by the post-apartheid government, and, as Professor Kader Asmal, Minister of Education (1999-2004), cautioned, curricula must - perforce - "be differently interpreted and enacted" in different contexts (South Africa, DoE, 2002c, p.

1). In writing about conceptions of curriculum, Cornbleth (1985) distinguished between what she called 'technical project' and 'social process' views, and noted that with the latter "the focus shifts from intentions and planning to realization" (p. 36). In a later article she commented further on the ways in which context "powerfully shapes teaching and thus students' opportunities to learn" (Cornbleth, 2001, p. 74).

2.5 The LoLT issue relative to learner migration

Despite similarities in the learning outcomes for LO3 in both the EFAL and EHL curriculum documents, the assessment standards for learners are – as noted above - more demanding in the latter. This difference in required levels of achievement derives from the premise (noted in Section 2.4.1) that children enrolling at English-medium schools are able to understand and use English: an invalid premise in many instances, given the substantial changes that have taken place in the linguistic make-up of South Africa's classrooms in the past two decades.

In 1990 the Nationalist Government's Minister of Education announced that historically whites-only state schools could - under closely circumscribed conditions - admit black learners (Vally, Dolombisa and Porteus, 2002, p. 83). This marked the start of 'Model C' schools, or - post-1994 - 'ex-Model C' schools (Hofmeyr, 2000, pp. 6-7). Throughout the 1990s the desegregation of South Africa's schools continued at an accelerating rate, with a significant "flight of students out of African schools" (Chisholm & Sujee, 2006, p. 141)[15]. Murray (2002) notes that the general pattern of this desegregation was that "Indian, coloured and wealthier African learners ... migrated into formerly white schools ... less well-off African learners ... moved into formerly Indian and coloured schools [and] ... only the poorest remain in African schools" (p. 211).

This migration has put an end to the relative linguistic homogeneity (Murray 2002) that had characterized the vast majority of South African classrooms prior to the 1990s. It has also meant that a great many South African teachers – especially in formerly white,

---

[15] Chisholm and Sujee point out that statistics on the exact scale and shape of this flight have proved difficult to establish (2006).

Indian and coloured schools – have the new challenge of working with learners who are not fully conversant with the LoLT of their schools. A considerable proportion of these teachers' energy and attention now goes into helping many of their learners acquire, and then develop proficiency in, the LoLT. This applies perhaps most particularly in English-medium *primary* schools – such as the one in which the present research is located – where there may be little or no provision for mother tongue initial reading literacy development for those children who are not English mother tongue speakers.

Bloch, writing in 2002, noted that [few] South African teachers have been "trained to educate children from diverse linguistic … backgrounds", and that, in general, assimilationist practices promoted English at the expense of other mother tongues (p. 66). In such circumstances, she argued, English may well become a "medium of *des*truction" (after Keith Chick) rather than the language of opportunity envisaged by the many parents who voted in favour of it as the LoLT for their children (Bloch, 2002, p. 65).

To ameliorate the extent to which English is allowed to become a 'medium of destruction' at schools - such as Ashleigh Primary – which have a straight-for-English policy, English language teachers bear the dual responsibility for helping many of their learners actually *acquire* English, and for helping them develop their reading literacy skills *in* English. In the next two sections of this chapter, I review literature relating to both of these aspects.

2.6   Acquiring a second language

A few centrally important aspects of SLA are: comprehensible input; negotiation of (or for) meaning; comprehensible output; Cummins's BICS/CALP distinction; and finally, arguments relating to the desirability of additive, as opposed to subtractive, approaches to bilingualism.

2.6.1. Comprehensible input

Stephen Krashen adopts an essentially innatist position in relation to the learning of a second language, arguing that there are marked parallels between the ways in which

young children learn their mother tongue and their subsequent acquisition of additional languages (2009[16]).

Of the five hypotheses Krashen uses to explain his views on SLA, the two he identifies as most significant are: (1) The Input Hypothesis, which is about providing learners with comprehensible input and (2) The Affective Filter Hypothesis, which is about keeping learners' levels of anxiety low (Krashen, 2009, pp. 21; 30-33).

Regarding comprehensible input, Krashen refers to the idea of 'caretaker speech' whereby adults modify their speech to make it more accessible (comprehensible) to the listener (2009, p. 22). He explains that second language learners need to be exposed to input ('i') that is just a little beyond their current level of understanding ('i+1') (2009, p. 21). The idea of 'i+1' is close to Vygotsky's ideas of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (1962), though there is no reference to Vygotsky in the bibliography Krashen provides at the end of his text.

Krashen draws on Dulay and Burt's concept of an 'affective filter' to explain how attitudinal factors can influence learners' ability to process input effectively. He explains that if learners are lacking in self-confidence or motivation to learn, or are experiencing anxiety about the learning situation, these act as inhibitors to effective language acquisition (2009, p. 20-31). For optimal SLA, Krashen argues, it is important that the learning environment be a relaxed and supportive one so as to keep learners' affective filters low.

Both of these hypotheses are generally well-accepted, even by Krashen's detractors. Perhaps the two main problems others working in the SLA field have with Krashen's ideas relate, firstly, to his emphasis on the "comprehension-driven" (Skehan, 2001, p.

---

[16] Krashen explains that the 2009 internet edition of his 1982 text: *Principles and practice in second language acquisition,* is published online "with only minor changes", further noting: "It is gratifying to point out that many of the predictions made in this book were confirmed by subsequent research. I have changed my position on only one issue" (2009, unpaged). This relates to his (apparently newfound) acceptance of the value of meta-cognition for learners' ongoing learning development.

75) receptive skills (mainly listening, but also reading) as the main mechanisms for SLA; and secondly, to his downplaying of the role of conscious, explicit learning in SLA (as opposed to his insistence that SLA is largely a result of unconscious acquisition). In the case of the latter point, many would regard a 'learning' versus 'acquisition' distinction as something of a false dichotomy, accepting instead that "both conscious and unconscious processes are involved in learning a language" (Murray 2011b, p. 2).

It is Krashen's insistence on comprehensible input as *the* major mechanism for SLA, however, that appears to be the main source of contention. In his critique of Krashen's 'comprehension-based' explanation of SLA, Skehan (2001) cites several studies arguing that input alone (however comprehensible and well-scaffolded) is a wholly inadequate means of ensuring successful SLA. The interactionist position of SLA favoured by Skehan and others, argues that the productive skills (speaking, in the first instance, but subsequently writing as well) are equally essential to effective SLA (Skehan, 2001).

2.6.2 Negotiation of meaning

Interactionist views on SLA regard output from the learners themselves as an especially important component of the comprehension process, even if such output is initially only in the form of 'negotiation for meaning' (Pica, 1994, as cited by Skehan, 2001, p. 80). Although Pica (1994) credits Long with having drawn attention, early on, to the importance of negotiation in SLA (which as she points out, he initially referred to as 'interactional modification') (p. 497), she did a great deal to clarify the ways in which negotiation for meaning operates to enhance language learners' comprehension of L2 input. She observes that "when it comes to comprehension, negotiation appears to be a powerful commodity", concluding that negotiation of input *by* learners may in fact constitute a better aid to comprehension than interlocutors' pre-modified input (1994, p. 505). I presume by pre-modified input, Pica had in mind something similar to Krashen's idea of 'caretaker speech' (Krashen, 2009, p. 22). Negotiation for meaning on the part of the learners is likely to mean that they are taking a more active, engaged interest in their L2 language learning process. Long (1996, cited in McNeil, 2012) explains that negotiation of meaning "facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capabilities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive

ways" (p. 397), thereby making it more likely that a learner can ultimately make his/her output comprehensible. Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (as discussed in the following sub-section) is the next important element from the interactionist view of L2 language learning.

2.6.3 Comprehensible output

Whereas the receptive skills rely first and foremost on top-down processing (for example, using context and prior knowledge to help make sense of input), the productive skills require that learners focus also on bottom-up processes (such as phonology, vocabulary selection and syntax). The starting point for Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis is explained as follows:

> In producing the L2, a learner will on occasion become aware of (i.e. notice) a linguistic problem (brought to his/her attention either by external feedback (e.g. clarification requests) or internal feedback). Noticing a problem 'pushes' the learner to modify his/her output. In doing so, the learner may sometimes be forced into a more syntactic processing mode than might occur in comprehension. Thus, output may set 'noticing' in train, triggering mental processes that lead to modified output.
>
> (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, pp. 372-373)

Ongoing modification of L2 learners' output is likely to contribute to its becoming more comprehensible. At the same time such modification may bring their interlanguage[17] gradually closer to the language forms produced by proficient users of the target L2. A further important point in relation to Swain's emphasis on the importance of output relates to the teacher. One means whereby teachers can encourage output from their learners, and thus give themselves the necessary feedback basis for assessment, is through their questioning. McNeil (2012) cites a number of investigations which showed that teachers generally make much greater use of display-type questions (requiring answers already known to the teacher) than of referential questions (open-ended

---

[17] The term 'interlanguage' is generally attributed to Selinker. Bialystock and Sharwood Smith (1985) note that "it came into general currency in the early 1970s" (p. 101). Wikipedia defines interlanguage as "an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language (or L2) who has not become fully proficient yet but is approximating the target language" (Interlanguage, 2011, October, unpaged).

questions where the teacher does not have the specific answer). In a small-scale investigation that I myself conducted[18] I noted that "much opportunity for refining the quality of output is (or can be) achieved via interactions involving the asking and answering of questions" (Robertson, 2008, p. 3). My findings, however, entirely mirrored the research literature cited by McNeil. I found that, of the 537 questions a Grade 5 teacher (teaching second language learners) asked across three lessons, only 16 were referential (Robertson, 2008, p. 20).

In the following sub-section I touch on Cummins's distinction between BICS and CALP. The distinction is an especially important one where acquisition of a second language is the stepping stone to actually learning in that language.

2.6.4 The BICS/CALP distinction

Cummins built on Skuttnab-Kangas and Toukomaa's distinction between social and academic language (1976, cited in Cummins, n.d., p.1) to derive the two acronyms BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1979, cited in Cummins, n.d., p.1). These acronyms are now integral to countless discussions around the link between language proficiency and education. *Basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) refers to everyday conversational language, while C*ognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) refers to the kind of academic language that tends to predominate in classrooms. Cummins argues that problems will arise if teachers are not adequately sensitive to the differences between "the surface or conversational aspects of children's language and the deeper aspects of proficiency that are more closely related to conceptual and academic development" (Cummins, 1994, p.37). There is a risk that L2 learners' "conversational skills [may then be] interpreted as a valid index of overall language proficiency" (Cummins, 1994, p.38). Much of Cummins's work relates to immigrant children's circumstances in Canada. Based on his analyses of these immigrant children's developing proficiency in English, Cummins posited that while they were able to develop conversational fluency (BICS) in English in about two years, it took them considerably longer to develop their CALP to the same level as that of their native English-speaking

---

[18]This research was done at another Eastern Cape school.

peers. This, he estimated, could take between five and seven years to achieve (n.d., p.1). Research by Collier and Thomas supported Cummins's finding regarding the 5-7 year time frame (Collier, 1995, p. 4).

2.6.5 Additive versus subtractive bilingualism

The terms 'additive bilingualism' and 'subtractive bilingualism', coined by Lambert (1974, cited in Baker, 2011, p. 72) are widely used in the literature. Additive bilingualism involves the maintenance and ongoing development of a learner's L1 in parallel with developing proficiency in a second language. This is the kind of situation found in, for example, the immersion education programmes described by Cummins (2009), which have as their goal bilingual proficiency (p. 161)[19]. Such an approach is seen to have positive cognitive and affective dimensions (Baker, 2011, p. 72). Although South Africa's LiEP – as previously noted – advocates additive bilingualism, a straight-for-English choice generally results in subtractive bilingualism (Luckett, 1993). Subtractive approaches invariably involve side-lining of the L1 in favour of the L2, with the likelihood of 'loss' in cognitive and affective terms (Baker, 2011, p. 72).

Cummins's work helps illuminate the nature of such potential loss. He asserts that subtractive approaches to SLA are likely to "undermine the self-confidence that is essential to students' academic progress" (Cummins, 1994, p. 53). Not only this, but also – in line with his 'interdependence hypothesis' - such approaches prevent learners from maximally utilizing the resources of their L1 in the acquisition of additional languages (Cummins, 1981, cited in Cummins, 2005). In explaining his 'interdependence hypothesis' Cummins (2009) observes that "although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency etc) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying conceptual proficiency, or knowledge base, that is common across languages" and this "is true even for languages that are dissimilar" (pp. 166-167). In other words, conceptual proficiency in L1 aids learners' development of similar

---

[19] Cummins explicitly distinguishes between the terms "immersion education" and "immersion" (or "submersion") (2009, pp. 161-162). In terms of Cummins's distinction, whereas immersion education works towards bilingual development in an additive way, immersion (or submersion) is essentially subtractive in that it involves trying to develop learners' proficiency in a second language through the exclusive use of that language as the medium of instruction (2009, p. 162).

proficiency in L2, thus learners can draw on their L1 literacy-related skills and "implicit metalinguistic knowledge" (Shoebottom, n.d., p. 2) - in learning a second language. Cummins used the visual metaphor of a dual iceberg to illustrate this 'common underlying proficiency' (CUP). Notwithstanding Cummins' suggestions that CUP operates even in the case of dissimilar languages, he does say that the *degree* of transfer of this proficiency across languages is influenced by whether or not the languages involved are cognate (2005, pp. 4-5). Whereas English and Afrikaans are cognate, English and isiXhosa (or isiZulu, seSotho or any of the other African languages) are non-cognate. In a school such as Ashleigh Primary where there is a 'straight-for-English' policy, the isiXhosa-speaking learners have less opportunity than their Afrikaans-speaking classmates to take advantage of whatever underlying proficiency they have in their L1. This is precisely the kind of paradoxical circumstance that the equitable intent of South Africa's post-apartheid LiEP has unwittingly created.

2.7   Stages of reading development

In the late 1970s Professor Jeanne Chall identified six stages of reading development, from Stage 0 (emergent literacy, what Chall dubbed 'pseudo-reading') through to Stage 5 (the mature kinds of literacy required at tertiary levels of education and in the wider adult world) (1989, p. 531). Some overlapping of stages occurs for all readers and environmental factors can affect individual learners' rates of progress through the stages (Scholastic Red Teacher Resource, 2002, unpaged). The key elements of each of Chall's developmental stages are synthesised in Table 4[20]. For the purposes of the present study, the most pertinent are stages 1, 2 and 3, (although stage 4 is probably where learners ideally ought to be towards the latter parts of their Grade 5 year). Chall made no explicit stage:grade links, beyond noting that Stages 1 and 2 typically occur in Grades 1,2 and 3, and stages 3 to 5 in Grades 4 to 8 and beyond (Chall & Jacobs, 2003).

---

[20] A more detailed outline of the key elements of each developmental stage can be found in Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1990, pp. 12-13).

Table 4: Chall's stages of reading development

STAGE				FEATURES OF THE STAGE
0	Learning to read ⇑⇓		Pre-reading (emergent literacy)	Children develop their oral language skills which will later support their learning to read. They become aware of speech sounds in words and build their oral vocabulary up to about 6000 words, in the case of English. They begin to notice the print around them. As they develop a sense of the nature of reading they may start to engage in what Chall described as 'pseudo-reading'.
1		Readers build mastery over foundational decoding and comprehension skills	Initial reading	Learners learn the alphabetic principle (that letters represent sounds) and start to use sound-spelling relationships.
2			Confirmation and fluency	Learners increase their control over their decoding skills, their fluency, and other strategies they need to make meaning from familiar texts.
3	Reading to learn ⇑⇓		Reading for learning the 'new'	As learners encounter an increasing variety of different, and less-familiar, texts in different contexts accompanied by the reading demands such encounters make, they must extend their vocabulary in order to increase the amount of information they are able to obtain from these texts. In turn, exposure to this greater variety of text types serves to extend readers' background and world knowledge, as well as their strategic reading habits.
4		Readers develop analytical and synthetic reasoning	Multiple viewpoints	The linguistic and cognitive demands placed on readers increases. They are expected to be able to analyse texts critically, and understand multiple points of view.
5			Construction and reconstruction	Reading is considered *truly* constructive in the sense that skilled readers are expected to be able to take in a wide range of information and construct their own understanding based on an analysis and synthesis of information from more than one source.

[adapted from Scholastic Red Teacher Resource site (2002) (including notes taken while listening to the accompanying online video in which Dr Louisa Moats describes Chall's stages of reading).]

More recently Australian literacy expert Diana Rees (1997) has developed a six-phase reading development continuum. Rees's continuum provides helpful key indicators against which teachers can judge where their learners are along the continuum from "role play reading" to "advanced reading". Rees also provides guidelines as to what ought to be the major teaching emphases at each phase. Important to note, in passing, is the fact that the indicators used in this continuum were "extracted from research into the development of literacy in English speaking children" (Rees, 1997, p. 2) (presumably L1 English speakers). It is likely therefore, that teachers in schools such as Ashleigh Primary would need to adjust their expectations accordingly.

Not all literacy experts adhere to a phase/stage view of reading development. Perfetti, for example, favours the idea of seeing reading development in incremental terms: knowledge about, and skill in reading is built up in response to the various reading experiences to which learners are exposed (cited in Rayner et al., 2001, p. 39).

2.8 Mastery of the reading process

Cunningham describes reading as "a very rich and complex and cognitive act" (Boulton, 2003, unpaged). The complexity of the reading act, and the different kinds of cognition required to make it appear "simple, effortless and automatic" (Rayner et al., 2001, p. 31), is well captured in Scarborough's visual metaphor of a multi-stranded rope (2002, p. 98) (Figure 1, below). This diagram graphically brings out the *interactive* nature of the reading act, which, if it is to be skilled, requires the simultaneous coordination of several different elements.
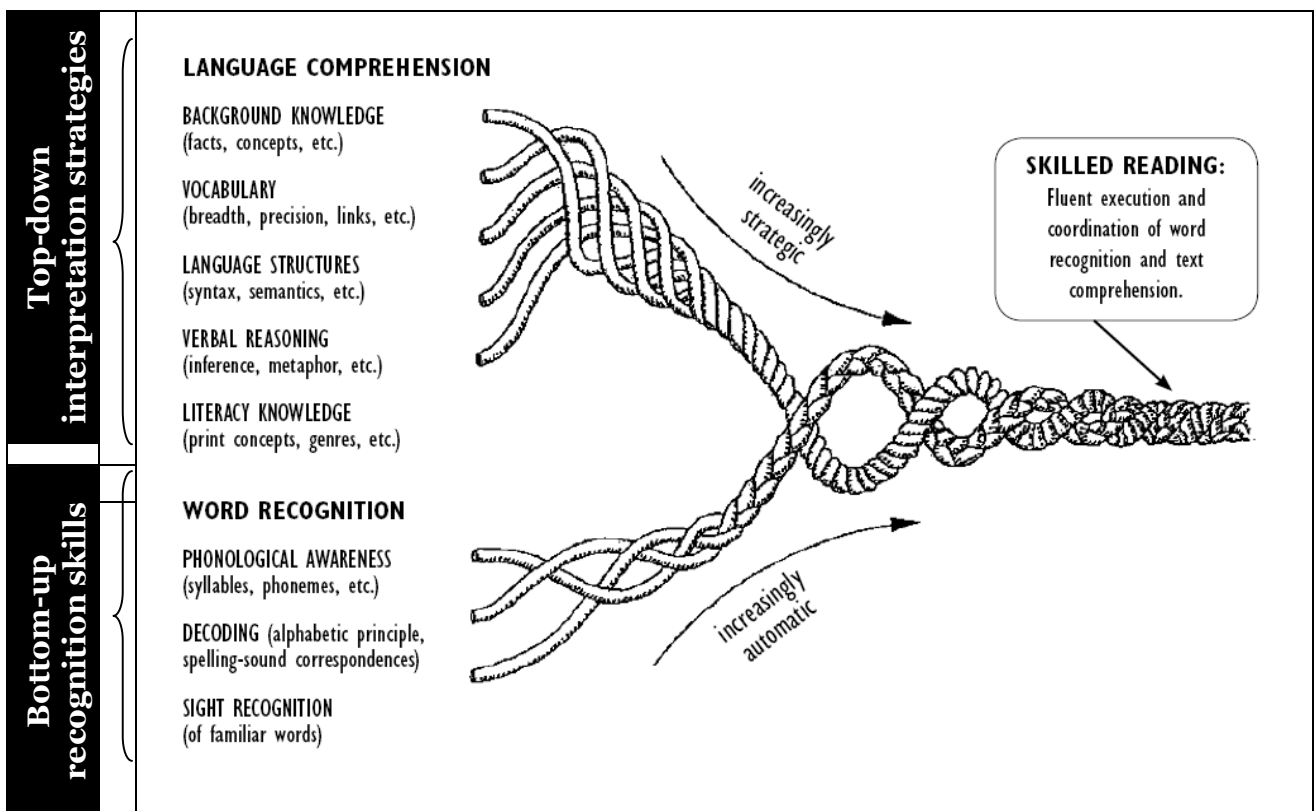
Figure 1: Scarborough's "rope" model showing the elements that, together, constitute skilled reading (slightly adapted[21] from Scarborough, 2002, p. 98)

As Scarborough's diagram illustrates so well, reading comprises two main components: the bottom-up word (and/or phrase) recognition skills, and the top-down

---

[21] I have added the "bottom-up recognition skills" and "top-down interpretation strategies" labels to Scarborough's diagram (after Eskey, 1988, p. 95).

comprehension and interpretation skills. Early interpretations of what is involved in becoming a skilled reader tended to focus mainly on the first of these components: the bottom-up 'mechanics' of reading (the precise, sequential decoding of the text on a page). Goodman (1967), in his challenge to such "phonic centered" or "word centered" approaches (p. 1), argued instead that reading is essentially a 'psycholinguistic guessing game', calling – primarily – on higher order 'top-down' processes. In Goodman's view skilled readers do not rely on "precise perception and identification of all elements" (Goodman, 1967, p. 2) in a text. They draw first and foremost on their prior knowledge (of language conventions and of the world) to develop hypotheses about the likely 'message' contained in the text. They then make as efficient, rapid and economical use as possible of visual cues from the text to refute, refine or confirm the accuracy of such predictions (Goodman, 1967, p.2). Only if a hypothesis is refuted, does a more careful re-reading of the text then become necessary (Silberstein, 1994, p. 6).

Eskey (1988), although acknowledging the value of the psycholinguistic model in highlighting the importance of the top-down aspects of the reading process, argues that such a model gives insufficient attention to the difficulties experienced by less skilled readers - most especially second language readers (p. 93). He claims that "in making the perfectly valid point that fluent reading is primarily a cognitive process", top-down approaches "tend to deemphasize the perceptual and decoding dimension of that process" (1988, p. 93). Eskey thus aligns himself with an interactive model of reading (as initially developed by Rumelhart, 1977) whereby equal importance is assigned to both bottom-up and top-down processes (1988, p. 93-94): "skills at all levels are interactively available to process and interpret text" (Eskey & Grabe, 1988, p. 224).

An interactive model of reading sees reading as neither merely a process of decoding nor simply a guessing game. Instead - as Eskey explains - reading involves a "constant interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing … each source of information contributing to a comprehensive reconstruction of the meaning of a text. Good readers are both good decoders and good interpreters of texts, their decoding skills becoming more automatic, but no less important as their reading skill develops" (1988, p. 94). In terms of this model, it could thus be said that a *symbiotic* relationship is set up between

the bottom-up and the top-down components, which – in Eskey's words – represent "from text to brain" and "from brain to text" processing respectively (2005, p. 564). Carrell distinguishes between the "two basic modes of information processing" involved in reading (1984, p. 333). She describes the bottom-up processes as being data driven (the data being the information *in* the text that requires decoding and a lower-order type of recognition) (1984, p. 333). The top-down processes, on the other hand, deriving as they do from what a learner brings *to* the text in order to 'make meaning', she describes as being conceptually driven (Carrell, 1984, p. 333).

Other discussions around reading as an interactive process include not only a vertical top-down/ bottom-up axis, but also a horizontal axis between text and reader (see, for example, Langhan, 1993). A key aspect of reading teachers' work is to facilitate a productive flow along this horizontal axis by selecting texts that are at the right level for their learners.

2.9   Potential impediments to mastery of the reading process

Although skilled readers may make reading appear "simple, effortless and automatic", it is in fact "for many children an extraordinarily effortful task, a long and complicated process that can last for years" (Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky & Seidenberg, 2001, p. 31). I now explore some factors that may make this mastery process more effortful, slow, and complicated.

Citing Stanovich, Chapman and Tunmer (2003) note that reading problems may give rise to learning difficulties. They caution that "once the "cascade" of failures and motivational problems commences, it is difficult to reverse the negative spinoff effects on academic achievement, motivation, and behavior" (2003, p. 17). In the following subsections I review some literature on obstacles to mastering the reading act. The discussion included here is not concerned with difficulties deriving from cognitive 'abnormality'. The focus is instead on the kinds of problems learners of broadly normal cognitive potential may experience, particularly if they come from economically deprived backgrounds, and if, in addition, they are learning in an L2 environment. In the case of the children attending Ashleigh Primary both of these circumstances pertain.

Stanovich has written extensively on the 'Matthew Effects' that derive from the reading process (amongst others, 1986, 1993). In essence it refers to the phenomenon whereby learners who read a lot get into a positive feedback loop: the more they read the better they become at reading. By contrast, children who do not read well tend to read less and thereby get into a negative feedback loop, and the gap between them and more successful readers widens progressively[22]. In an article he co-authors with Cunningham, it is argued that the cognitive consequences of reading are "reciprocal and exponential" extending way beyond the "immediate task of lifting meaning" from text; with potentially devastating consequences for those children whose opportunities for rich exposure to text is – in one way or another - impeded (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, p. 1). Stanovich notes that "there are several factors contributing to Matthew effects in reading development" (1986, p. 381). Some of these factors are discussed in the following sections.

2.9.1. The language in which literacy learning occurs

One factor widely perceived to be key to literacy development is whether or not children acquire their initial literacy in their first language. Our DBE reports that since 1998 there has been "a steady and significant increase" in the number of South African foundation phase learners learning in their L1 (55% in 1998; 80%in 2007) (2010, p. 17), prompting Murray's (2011c) observation that most South African children learn to read and write in L1 (p. 3). A survey conducted in the Western Cape cautions, however, that using the L1 "as the medium of instruction is not a reliable predictor of superior performance in literacy": several other factors contribute to literacy outcomes (Hill, 2009, p. 9). Pretorius and Currin (2010) express a similar view. While not disputing the desirability of home language instruction they emphasise that "language is not a sufficient condition for reading development" (2010, p. 75). The comparatively better PIRLS 2006 results for Grade 4 and 5 African learners learning through the medium of

---

[22] The American sociologist Robert Merton is generally credited with having coined the term 'Matthew effect', which he used to describe the cumulative benefit of wealth and status whereby 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer'. The term has its origins in a verse from the book of Matthew in the Christian Bible: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath" (Chapter 25, Verse 29 [King James Version]).

English [23] as opposed to African learners in many mother-tongue rural settings bear out this point (Howie et al, 2008), as indeed does the 2010 DBE report on the status of the LoLT, in which it is noted that the percentage increase (from 55% to 80%) in HL instruction for FP learners has not, in fact, "translated into improved learning outcomes" (p. 21)[24].

As a general rule, however, and as earlier noted (Section 2.3), research indicates that acquisition of initial reading literacy is best achieved through the medium of a child's first (or main) language (Abadzi, 2006, p. 30). Brain imaging work lends weight to this view. Neuroscientists have shown that different areas of the brain are engaged depending on whether individuals are using their L1 or an L2. Whereas "specific areas of the brain are used by one and all for the mother-tongue ... the principle 'language' areas of the brain [may be] off limits for the new language, and other, less specialized areas are pressed into service ... areas ... that have not been 'designed' to cope with language" (Ross, 2001, p. 8-9).

Rayner et al. explain that English has a deeper and less consistent orthography than many other languages with alphabetic writing systems (2001, p. 36). Research using comparative brain imaging both for Grade 1 learners and for university students reading in their mother-tongue showed that Italian mother tongue readers were consistently faster and more accurate than English mother tongue readers (Ross, 2001, p.8). Brain imaging suggests that reading in English is "a more complex task and needs to involve

---

[23] Howie, et al., (2008) note that "only 17 to 18% of English and Afrikaans learners in either grade could reach the High and Advanced International Benchmarks, rendering this small group the only South African learners who could be considered competent readers. The majority of learners, more than half of the English and Afrikaans speaking learners and over 80% of African language speakers in South Africa, do not even reach the lowest international benchmark, leaving these learners without basic reading skills and strategies to cope with academic tasks" (p. 29).

[24] In light of South Africa's performance in PIRLS 2006, a decision has apparently been taken that, for the PIRLS 2011 study, little purpose would be served by getting South African learners to complete the substantive PIRLS tests. Instead they will complete much more scaffolded (prePIRLS) comprehension tasks specifically designed "for countries where students are still developing fundamental reading skills and are not ready to face the reading demands of the PIRLS passages ... prePIRLS reflects the same conception of reading as PIRLS, except it is less difficult" (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), n.d.). The intention of prePIRLS is that it should provide a basis for diagnosis of areas of weakness in reading literacy (as opposed to simple cross-national comparison) (S. Murray, personal communication, December 5, 2011).

more areas of the brain" than reading in Italian, which is "highly 'phonetic' in its written form" (Ross, 2001, p. 8-9). As previously noted, the main L1s of learners at Ashleigh primary are Afrikaans and isiXhosa. As a moderately proficient user of Afrikaans, I know that this language's written form is strongly phonetic. I am not competent to make any similar observation about isiXhosa, but I understand its written form is also strongly phonetic (N. Somhlahlo, Subject Adviser, Eastern Cape Department of Education, personal communication, August 9, 2011). This suggests that the studies cited by Ross (above) might have significance too to reading tasks in IsiXhosa or Afrikaans as compared with reading tasks in English, and most especially where English is a reader's L2.

For many children, and for a variety of reasons, the ideal of initial literacy instruction in L1 is not always possible, or, indeed – as per the discussion in Section 2.3 – perceived as desirable. For such children the amount of required 'effortfulness' (after Rayner et al., 2001) inevitably multiplies. Koda (2007) makes the important observation that because "L2 reading is crosslinguistic [it is] … inherently more complex than L1 reading" (p. 1). Koda's research suggests that in the case of non-cognate languages the transfer of literacy-related competencies is likely to be more difficult, and thus a further contributory factor to levels of required 'effortfulness': a challenge faced by many South African learners and, by extension, their language teachers.

August and Associates (2003) note Collier and Thomas's finding that there are "long-lasting negative effects on academic achievement associated with initial literacy instruction in [L2]" (p. 2)[25].   If initial literacy instruction cannot be done in L1, a *bilingual* approach may be preferable insofar as it then allows for Cummins's common underlying proficiency hypothesis to come into play. Goldenberg and Friedlander (2011) cite five meta-analyses which examined the relative benefits of bilingual reading instruction as against 'straight-to-L2' immersion approaches. All five meta-analyses

---

[25] Goldenberg and Friedlander (2011), while noting that more research is needed, argue that "we also need to put into practice the results of research we have, such as findings about the contribution of primary language reading instruction to L2 reading achievement" (p. 6).

concluded that L1 reading literacy contributes positively to L2 reading achievement (p. 2). This applies also in the case of children who, having developed their initial literacy skills in their L1, then need to *transfer* these skills across to a second language (August & Associates, 2003, p.2). August and Associates note Collier and Thomas's finding that once such learners have developed linguistic proficiency in the L2 they usually progress quickly towards achieving "academic parity" with their peers (2003, p. 2).

2.9.2 The effect of SES on reading achievement

In Chapter One I noted the performance of South Africa's intermediate phase learners in two multi-national surveys: PIRLS 2006 and SACMEQ III. I also noted Fleisch's concern for the marked bimodal distribution in South African children's reading literacy achievement, directly linked to their families' SES (2008). This pattern is by no means unique to South Africa.

Awareness of correlates between reading literacy level and SES may be seen as an outgrowth of work - such as that done by Basil Bernstein in the 1960s and 70s - on links between levels of educational attainment and social class differences in language development and usage. In an early paper outlining his theory of the 'elaborated' and 'restricted' codes, Bernstein wrote of the "differential response to educational opportunity made by children from different social classes" (1964, p. 55). It is beyond the scope of the present work to engage in discussions around the constituents of 'social class' except to note that it is a multi-faceted and complex concept, embodying unresolved and controversial issues. In linking literacy achievement to SES, literacy experts seem to choose less contentious terms such as, amongst others, "poor children" and "low-income children" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003); "lower SES children" (Hoff, 2005) and "children from families on welfare" (Hart & Risley, 2003).

Hart and Risley's (2003) research into differences in word exposure across different SES groups provides startling insight into the exponential difference in children's language development that can occur in the pre-school years. Hart and Risley's (American-based) research focused on the amount of talk, the amount of vocabulary growth and the style of verbal interaction between parent and child in professional families, working class

families and families on welfare for children between the ages 7-8 months and 3 years of age. Their findings showed that by age 3 a child from a professional home had experienced more than 30 million more words worth of cumulative verbal experience than a child from a family on welfare. Their analysis further revealed that children from professional homes were exposed to significantly more encouraging, affirming verbal interactions than their working class and welfare family counterparts. The ratio of encouraging as compared to discouraging verbal interactions in a professional home was in the region of 32:5; whereas for a child from a welfare family this same ratio was closer to 5:11 (p. 117). Hart and Risley report a strong correlation between these findings for the participating children at the pre-school stage with these same children's subsequent language skill and vocabulary growth by the time they were in Grade 3: "We were awestruck at how well our measures of accomplishments at age three predicted measures of language skill at age nine–ten" (2003, p. 115).

Hoff (2005) identifies several pieces of research indicating that children's early oral language development is a strong predictor of the outcome of their later reading development: "reading and writing … [the] secondary language skills, [are] built on the foundation of the primary language skills of speaking and listening" (2009, p. 355). Hoff (2005) notes that "at every point of development, children differ in the size of the vocabularies they command, the complexity of the structures they produce and the skill with which they communicate" (p. 56), and while she acknowledges that this may arise in part from genetic differences, overwhelmingly it is the social context that she diagnoses as the main determinant of developmental differentials in children's oral, and subsequently literacy, achievements. In a later text (2009), Hoff reports her own research into the causes and consequences of such differences. Her explanations are strongly reminiscent of aspects of Bernstein's work. In comparing the experiences of higher SES children with that of lower SES children, Hoff writes: "lower-SES mothers talk less to their children, and they use a more restricted vocabulary and shorter sentences" (2009, p. 364). This, together with lower-SES children being read to less often, and experiencing little or no modeling of the act of reading, there being fewer books in the home, and there being less of a family tendency to use public libraries contributes to a "mismatch between the style of language use valued at home and the

style of language use expected in the school" (2009, p. 364). Closer to home, Pretorius and Naude (2002) observe that "in order to learn to read and write, a child should be exposed to literacy objects" (p. 447). Their study of the pre-literacy development of randomly selected Tswana-speaking children living in an informal settlement (squatter camp) showed that "these underprivileged township children [had] had little experience with handling books" and consequently lacked "a basic knowledge of print" (Pretorius & Naude, 2002, p. 447).

Freebody (2007) notes [this] "long tradition of research confirming a strong correlation between material affluence and aspects of school achievement, especially literacy" (p. 23). He notes also that this correlation does not seem "to change a great deal over time or across locales" (2007, p. 23), further observing that explanations for "literacy disadvantage ... share a disposition" to blame parents for their "disadvantaging practices" (2007, p. 24). From his ensuing discussion, however, it is clear that Freebody does not accept family circumstances as the only source of disadvantaging practice (2007). That said, there are a number of initiatives in South Africa which are geared towards mediating such home-based 'disadvantaging practices'. One such example is UNISA's Family Literacy Project, launched under the leadership of Professor Myrna Machet. The introductory webpage for this project notes that: "due to the high rate of illiteracy and the lack of a reading culture within South Africa, many thousands of children start school with little concept of what reading means and without having developed preliteracy skills that ease their subsequent acquisition of language, literacy and cognitive skills, which form the basis for success in the learning context" (UNISA, n.d., unpaged). Included in the design of this UNISA project is helping parents to understand the importance of storybook reading as a means of developing their children's emergent literacy skills.

2.9.3 The 'Fourth-grade slump'
In countries such as the United States, where much research has been done, most children of normal intelligence progress through the earlier stages of reading development in a similar way (Chall, 1983). Once, however, the controlled and scaffolded reading typically found in the early grades (Grades 1 through 3 normally)

gives way to texts that are "more varied, complex, and challenging linguistically and cognitively" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, unpaged), unevenness in children's reading achievements begins to emerge.

Increased text complexity is often accompanied by an expansion in the number of subject areas making up the curriculum (as witness the case for South African learners moving into Grade 4). Whereas only three learning programmes are offered in the foundation phase (Languages, Numeracy, and Life Skills); come the intermediate phase and South Africa's Grade 4 learners have to contend with eight learning areas (Languages, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Natural Science, Life Orientation, Technology, Arts and Culture, and Economic and Management Sciences).

Encounters with new knowledge areas and less highly controlled vocabulary can put considerable strain on whatever automaticity and fluency capabilities learners may have developed in the earlier grades. Chall and Jacobs note that many teachers observe what has become known as a 'fourth-grade slump' (2003, unpaged). They note too that this slump is more prevalent amongst low SES children (Chall & Jacobs, 2003, unpaged). Ashleigh Primary's Grade 5 learners are certainly in this low SES category; and also - as noted - are not acquiring their initial literacy through the medium of a home language. Although I understand that Chall's stages were developed with reference to neither of these factors, it is clear from her writings that the plight of children at risk was centrally important to her (Chall, 1983; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Chall, 2000; Valsami, n.d.) As Mary Jager Adams explains in her foreword to Chall's text: *The academic achievement challenge: What really works in the classroom?* Chall's own education was affected by both of these factors (Chall, 2000, p. iii). Chall's observations about disadvantaged children being more prone to a 'fourth-grade slump', together with Cummins's time frame regarding the 5-7 years it can take for L2 learners to achieve CALP parity with their L1 peers (as discussed in Section 2.5.4), go some way towards explaining why, in respect of learners such as the Grade 5s at Ashleigh Primary, a teacher might say, "The progress isn't what it should be" (Interview 1, Line 114 [Appendix F]).

2.9.4 Phonological discrepancies between L1 and L2

August and Associates (2003) note that L2 learners may "encounter problems because of the discrepancy between sounds in their first language and English" (p. 31). This can then impact negatively on their alertness to English phonology and thence its relationship with the alphabetic principle. August and Associates cite research demonstrating that it is possible to teach L2 learners "to hear sounds that do not appear in their first language" (Kramer, Schell & Rubison (1983), and Stuart (1999), cited by August & Associates, 2003, p. 11-12). Such hearing (or listening) ability as they may have developed in earlier grades may not, however, be sufficient to ensure they are able to decode all (or most) of the new words they will encounter in their Grade 5 English texts. Cunningham, Nathan and Schmidt Raher (2011) point out that this difficulty may be more acutely felt by L2 learners in situations where "orthographies vary in their level of transparency" (p. 274) (so, for example, the fact that English has a much deeper orthography than isiXhosa). Citing August and Vockley (2002), Cunningham, Nathan and Schmidt Raher caution that where such difference in orthographic depth is present "sound-symbol correspondence instruction needs to be particularly explicit in the teaching of reading" (2011, p. 274).

2.9.5 Deficits in vocabulary knowledge

Based on a two-year study of the way in which children from low-income backgrounds manage the transition from Stage2 to Stage 3 of reading development, Chall and Jacobs (2003) report that decoding *per se* is not a significant problem in the early stages of reading development because reading tasks at this level are generally highly controlled and scaffolded. Difficulties arise when texts become "more varied, complex, and challenging linguistically and cognitively" (2003, unpaged) and where learners can no longer draw on a reservoir of words from their oral vocabulary to help them make meaning of these texts. There is, as Adams (2010-2011) notes, "a very strong relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension", in part because "written texts draw upon many more words than normally arise in oral language situations" (p. 5).

Opinions vary as to *how* vocabulary knowledge should be taught, but, as Chall notes, such knowledge is accepted as centrally important to reading achievement (1987, p. 15). In a report on their two-year study Chall and Jacobs (2003) identify vocabulary knowledge – in particular more abstract and academic words - as the major stumbling block for children from low-income backgrounds. Grade 4 low-income children were on average a year behind the expected grade standard; by Grade 7 they were more than two years behind the expected grade standard (Chall and Jacobs, 2003, unpaged).

Whereas "skilled readers can tolerate a small proportion of unknown words without disruption of comprehension", in the case of L2 learners "the proportion of unknown words is [likely to be] high, disrupting comprehension" and "unlike native English speakers [they may] not have a good intuitive sense of English grammar or the structure [which further] hinders comprehension" (August & Associates, 2003, p. 32). Waring and Nation (2004) contend that a reader's tolerance level for unknown words may in fact be extremely low. Research indicates that successful reading comprehension generally depends on a reader recognising 95-98% of the words in a text (Waring & Nation, 2004, p. 12, 19). Klingner (2004, citing Gunning (2002), p. 60) reports a similar percentage. Here again the 'Matthew Principle' may come into play, for, as Stanovich (1986) argues, "if the development of vocabulary knowledge substantially facilitates reading comprehension, and if reading itself is a major mechanism leading to vocabulary growth which in turn will enable more efficient reading - then we truly have a reciprocal relationship" (p. 380).

Direct vocabulary instruction has an important place alongside the kind of incidental and contextual vocabulary learning that can occur through reading (Nation & Waring, 1997, pp. 11-13). Nation (2001) distinguishes between four main types of words (Table 5*)*.

Table 5: The four main kinds of vocabulary

	% content of average text	Examples
High-frequency words	c̲ 80	a, because, but, down, for, in, of, little, some, the, what, which, up
Academic words	c̲ 9	assume, conclude, define, discuss, explain, maintain, plus, similar
Technical words	c̲ 5	increment, indigenous, morpheme, regeneration, yield
Low-frequency words	c̲ 5	curious, perpetuity, plummet (and including proper nouns)

(Table information derived from Nation, 2001, pp. 6-22)

Nation and Waring suggest that wordlists such as West's The General Service List (GSL) and the University Word List (UWL) can help teachers of L2 learners "judge whether a particular word deserves attention or not, and whether a text is suitable for a class (1997, p. 17). They provide compelling evidence that a combination of the first 2000 words on the GSL and the 836 words contained in the UWL will cover roughly 85-90% of the words learners will encounter in the texts they use (1997, p. 16).

2.9.6 Lack of fluency and automaticity

Reading fluency involves more than just an ability to *recognize* words in a text; it involves *rapid* recognition (Hook & Jones, 2002; Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Stahl, 2004; Kuhn & Stahl, n.d.). Such rapidity is – essentially - a function of automaticity.

In 1974 La Berge and Samuels put forward a somewhat tentative-sounding view that "fluent reading may underlie or assist in effective engagement with text" (cited by Kuhn & Stahl, n.d., unpaged). Subsequently, Stahl (2004) - more unequivocally - identified fluency as a "crucial component of effective reading" (p. 187). In the same article, Stahl observed, however, that there is a degree of confusion as to what exactly fluency is and how it might be taught (2004, p. 187). That said, August and Associates' definition seems fairly typical: fluency is "the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression" (2003, p. 16). Mikulecky (2008) includes also the further idea that fluency involves adjusting reading rate according to reading purpose, but then goes on to assert that "reading fluency does not refer to oral reading … because it is possible for

someone to read a passage aloud fluently and not comprehend it at all" (2008, unpaged). This (counterintuitive) assertion appears to be at odds with phrases such as "effective engagement with text" La Berge & Samuels, as cited by Kuhn & Stahl, n.d., unpaged) and "with proper expression" (August & Associates, 2003). Further, in the absence of an oral rendition, it is difficult to see how teachers might assess their learners' reading fluency. It is probably discrepancies such as this which underpinned Stahl's claims regarding "some confusion" (2004, p. 187) regarding what constitutes fluency.

Confusion aside, there appears to be consensus regarding the following two aspects of fluency: (a) the idea of automaticity: "rapid", "precise" and "unconscious processing" (Silberstein, 1994, p. 7); and (b) the idea that *non*-fluent reading presents obstacles to comprehension. It is likely that slow, hesitant, error-laden reading (i.e. reading that lacks the effortlessness of automaticity) uses up so much of a reader's short term (or working) memory capacity that insufficient cognitive resources are then available for focusing on the more important act of comprehending (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, p. 1; Klinger, 2004, p. 6; Penner-Wilger, 2008, p. 2; Abadzi, 2008, p. 584-586; Cunningham, Nathan & Schmidt Raher, 2011, p. 260). In this regard Cunningham, Nathan and Schmidt Raher make the unequivocal statement that "automaticity with word recognition plays a fundamental role in facilitating comprehension of text, and thus is a primary determinant of reading achievement throughout schooling" (2011, p.259). Such word recognition must, of course, involve not only the semantics of the word, but also its syntactical status. Eskey (2005) demonstrates this point by giving an example where the word 'well' is used variously as a noun, an adjective, an adverb, a verb and a disjunct (or adverbial adjunct) (p. 568).

The aim of reading is comprehension, and fluency is a key stepping stone towards this: "fluency affects reading comprehension by freeing cognitive resources for interpretation, but it is also implicated in the process of comprehension, as it necessarily includes preliminary interpretive steps"[e.g. "ability to group words appropriately into meaningful grammatical units for interpretation"; "rapid use of punctuation"; "determination of where to place emphasis or where to pause to make sense of a text"] ;

(August and Associates, 2003, p. 16). The two strategies for improving fluency these writers highlight are: (1) repeated reading (with feedback) to increase reading speed and oral accuracy (and possibly comprehension as well); and (2) encouraging learners to increase the amount of reading they do. The 2000 report of the National Reading Panel (USA) acknowledged the "positive impact" fluency instruction had "on reading comprehension abilities" (Grabe, 2004, p. 55). There are various ways of providing learners with opportunities to practise oral reading, perhaps the most common way being 'round robin reading'. Round robin reading, however, is generally not viewed positively by reading experts, who suggest that it focuses on oral performance at the expense of comprehension, and can be especially anxiety-inducing for less confident readers (Serafini, n.d.; Opitz & Rasinski, 2008; Yaris, 2011). The reading of drama scripts, for example, has been identified as an eminently more authentic way of providing learners with repeated opportunities to practise their oral reading skills than round robin reading.

Independent silent reading is regarded as an effective way of developing learners' reading proficiency levels. However, as Konza (2011) points out, citing America's National Reading Panel's findings, this may be less effective for struggling readers (p. 6). For such readers it may be better to replace practices such as Sustained Silent reading (SSR) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) with teacher-centred reading instruction (Konza, 2011, p. 6). Pretorius and Currin in their work on a South African Grade 7 reading intervention project made a similar observation. Simply improving access to print resources had little impact on the reading proficiencies of the weakest readers in the project. These learners needed more specialized help with even the most basic skill of decoding (2012, p. 73).

2.9.7 Limited background knowledge

Comprehension, as Hirsch observes, is "knowledge dependent" (2010-2011, p. 31), and, as both Scarborough's diagram (Figure 1) illustrates, several kinds of knowledge contribute to the comprehension process. Hirsch (2003) divides these into two categories: 'knowledge of words' and 'knowledge of the world'.

Paulo Freire (1991) noted in this regard that "reading the world precedes reading the word, and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world" (p.139) Speaking of his own educational experiences, Freire paid tribute to one of his teachers, Eunice Vasconcello: "With her, reading the word, the phrase, the sentence never entailed a break with reading the *world*. With her, reading the word meant reading the *word-world"* (1991, pp. 141-142). Although involved primarily in the education of adults, Freire commented on the profound effect his family's impoverished circumstances during the Great Depression had on his own early education, circumstances probably not unlike those of many of the Grade 5 learners at Ashleigh Primary: "I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge" (cited by Stevens, 2002, unpaged). Bourdieu's ideas around the link between schooling, social class, 'habitus' and 'cultural capital'[26] (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2000, p. 836-839) are relevant to a discussion of the connection between social class and knowledge, and can be related back to aspects of the earlier discussion around SES and reading achievement.

Schema theory helps explain how the different schemata that children from different social backgrounds have available to them impact on their ability to make sense of the texts they encounter in school. In exploring the significance of schema theory for reading (particularly L2 reading) Carrell (1984) cites Anderson et al's assertion that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (p. 332). Drawing on an interactive model of reading, Carrell notes that reading comprehension is

---

[26] Bourdieu described 'habitus' as being constituted by "the lifestyle, the values, the dispositions and the expectations of particular social groups" (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2000, p. 837). For him it would be the knowledge, skills and 'habitus' of the dominant culture of a particular society that would represent what comes to be seen as 'cultural capital' in that society (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2000, p. 836-839). In terms, then, of these ideas, a family's SES would influence the development of a particular kind of 'habitus'. This, in turn, would affect the extent to which, in their pre-school years, the children of this family would (or would not) internalise the kinds of skills, knowledge and values that could subsequently be commuted into cultural capital in a classroom situation. According to Haralambos, Holborn and Heald's interpretation of Bourdieu's ideas "the educational attainment of social groups is ... directly related to the amount of cultural capital they possess" (2000, p. 837). In the main, children of families lower down the SES hierarchy are less likely to have the requisite amount (or type) of cultural capital that would enable them to fully take advantage of what is on offer in the classroom.

a function of a three-way interaction between a readers' conceptual abilities, his/her text-processing strategies and his/her background knowledge (schemata) (1984, p. 332). Reading comprehension difficulties arise either because a reader fails to activate the relevant schema from his/her repertoire, or because he/she does not possess the relevant schema (Carrell, 1984, p. 333). In either event, Carrell suggests, it is possible for a teacher to design activities to assist learners in building up their background knowledge (1984, p. 333). These include pre-reading activities, vocabulary building activities, the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, and teaching learners how to monitor their own comprehension and how to react when breakdowns in comprehension occur (Carrell, 1984, pp. 333-341). In highlighting the importance of comprehension instruction as such, Carrell cites Durkin's finding in the late 1970s that whereas a great deal of teaching time is spent on *testing* comprehension, extremely little time is given to actually *teaching* strategies for comprehension (less than 1% of class time, according to Durkin) (1984, p. 337).

2.9.8 Lack of reading strategy awareness

Silberstein (1987, cited in Konaré, 1994, p. 6) distinguished between the *process* (comprehending) and the *product* (comprehension) of the reading act. Using this distinction, Konaré (1994) suggests that in many classrooms more attention is paid to the product than to the process. Pretorius and Machet (2004) make a similar observation in relation to their literacy research in disadvantaged South African schools. They note that "there is a strong reliance on the teaching of the more technical decoding skills of reading (i.e. learning the alphabetic principle and 'translating' written symbols into meaningful language), with far less attention given to reading for comprehension" (p. 47).

August and Associates (2003, p. 25) cite the findings of America's National Reading Panel on the importance of the various metacognitive strategies used by skilled readers to ensure maximal comprehension of what they read:

(1) comprehension monitoring
(2) working with peers to ensure that they comprehend
(3) using graphic organizers such as mind maps
(4) question answering

(5) generating own questions
(6) being able to recognise main points/ summarise.

Not mentioned here, but certainly important, is knowledge about structural features in different text types (genre). Advocates of genre-based approaches (amongst others, Derewianka, 1990 and Gibbons, 2002) believe that explicit teaching around the purpose, structure and grammatical features of different text types makes texts more accessible to learners, perhaps most especially to L2 learners. As noted previously (Section 2.4.2), South Africa's RNCS specifically advocates a text-based approach so as to "enable learners to become competent, confident and critical *readers* [my emphasis], writers, viewers and designers of texts" (DoE, 2003, p. 26).

2.10   Implications for intermediate phase teachers

August and Shanahan (2006) assert that "becoming literate in second language depends on the quality of teaching" (p. 3). Writing of South African circumstances, Pretorius and Machet (2004) note, however, that there is a "tendency in disadvantaged schools for underachievement to become normalized" and that this then results in teachers lowering their expectations of their learners (p. 58). Teacher expectations and underachievement are something of a hen-and-egg problem.

Rosenthal and Jacobson's study *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968) is an early, much-cited exploration of the effect of teacher expectation on learner achievement. It provided disturbing evidence of how relatively easily American elementary school teachers' expectations of children could be swayed. I would argue that teacher expectations operate at both an internal and an external level. By this I mean that a teacher may have internal, unexpressed expectations (which nonetheless influence the way in which he or she interacts with learners) as well as 'externalised' expectations (which a teacher directly conveys to the learners). In relation to externalized expectations, Green (2002) cites research showing that "teachers influence students' motivation through … communication of beliefs and expectancies" (p. 990). Her own research, based around expectancy-value theory, found a positive correlation between teachers' motivational comments to learners and learners' subsequent achievement gains (p. 1004). In relation,

however, to 'internal' expectations, other research has suggested that a teacher's beliefs and expectancies may be "lowered when factors such as race, gender and socioeconomic background are considered" (Tyler, Boykin and Walton (2006) p. 1003).

 Teacher expectations aside, as noted in some of the earlier sections of this chapter South African teachers have had to contend with an unprecedented amount of change in the past two decades. There is inevitably variation in individual teachers' capacity to cope with, and respond constructively to such change. Studies suggest that this depends to some extent on the stage at which a teacher is in his/her professional development (Maskit, 2011). It will almost certainly also be influenced by how well-prepared teachers are for this change; most particularly in relation to the kind of pre- and in-service education to which they have access.

With particular reference to preparing teachers for the task of supporting their learners' literacy development (perhaps most especially teachers working in schools such as Ashleigh Primary), Cunningham, Nathan and Schmidt Raher (2011) stress the importance of teachers (a) understanding "the intricacies of language and reading development" and (b) instructing "with attention to the complexities of the languages their students hear, speak and write" (p. 277). In similar vein, Pretorius and Machet (2004) argue that "teacher training and in-service training can play significant roles in socialising teachers into stronger literacy knowledge and behaviours" (p. 59). Konza (2011), citing reviews of research into the effective teaching of reading across four decades, notes the "compelling consistency in the findings and recommendations" of such meta-analyses (p. 1). It is puzzling and frustrating that these analyses do not appear to attract more sustained and serious attention from the sector of our professional community responsible for developing teacher education programmes. In commenting on aspects of the Intermediate Phase Systematic Evaluation, the DoE notes that "most teachers who are teaching beyond Foundation Phase are not trained to teach basic reading. They don't know how to help struggling readers" (South Africa. DoE, 2008b, p. 7). Certainly in my own initial teacher education programme in the 1970s there was never any suggestion that my classmates and I were going to need to be reading teachers as such. This field of expertise belonged to our junior primary

(foundation-level) peers. And, looking back on my subsequent experiences as a Grade 5 (intermediate-level) teacher, I based my English lessons on the assumption that my learners' initial literacy skills were in place: in relation to reading specifically, that they had mastered their bottom-up data-processing skills (Carrell, 1984, p. 333) and that they had the transition to 'reading to learn' (after Chall, 1983) well in hand. As such, I can thus identify with Ms B's comment: "I always have this expectation when they come to me to at least know the *basics* in reading …" (Interview 1, Lines 20-22 [Appendix F]). Unlike Ms B, however, I was not working in a L2 learning/ teaching environment.

The importance of an expert and systematic approach to literacy teaching, most especially for children with limited English proficiency (LEP), is exemplified in Wong-Fillmore's investigation into the differences in the language learning outcomes of teachers of LEP Grade 3 and Grade 5 learners in the United States (1985).   Wong-Fillmore's study isolated systematic, routinised classroom management and lesson structuring, together with a richness (and occasional playfulness) in language usage as key determining factors in successful language learning (1985).   An expert and systematic approach would need to include what Shulman (1986) termed deep 'pedagogical content knowledge' of literacy teaching and learning. For Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) part of this pedagogical content knowledge would involve teachers in acquiring much deeper understanding of the central role language plays in teaching and learning. They call, therefore, for teacher education programmes to include "systematic and intensive preparation in … educational linguistics" (p. 4).

Shalem and Slonimsky cite the late Professor Wally Morrow's argument that "if a teacher does not have the *concept* of 'organising systematic learning' (i.e. teaching) he will not *shape* what is taught in a manner that will enable [learning]" (in Shalem & Pendlebury, 2010, p. 18). They then provide an example of teaching 'reading', and articulate the need for expert knowledge about the practice of teaching reading: the sort of expert knowledge that will enable that teacher "to plan teaching in a way that ties all his or her moves together so that there is a sense of how each part in the lesson or in a series of lessons fits into a great whole" (2010, p. 20).

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals the complexity of the reading process, and most especially the additional challenges faced by learners who, in the first place, have not had the advantage of learning to read in their L1, and who then have to use their L2 reading skills in tackling all of their other curriculum area learning. The complexity and challenges of such a situation highlight the importance of language teachers having a deep understanding of what skilled reading involves and of the strategies they can use to help their learners develop their reading proficiency. Without such insight there is a danger that the "cascade" of failures outlined by Chapman and Tunmer (2003, p. 19) will become a reality.

CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the professional world of a South African primary school teacher (Ms B) in terms of the strategies she uses to develop the reading literacy of her Grade 5 learners (none of whom are English home-language speakers). This chapter describes the methods used to gather and analyse data for the study.

3.2   Research orientation

This research is located within an interpretive paradigm. The actors in a particular social context act according to the meanings they ascribe to that context: "Social action can only be understood by interpreting the meanings and motives on which it is based" (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2000, p. 971). In gathering and analysing data I have sought to identify and understand the 'meanings and motives' informing Ms B's interactions with her Grade 5 learners as she worked with them to develop their reading capacities. I have tried also to uncover what Ms B sees as her major challenges in this undertaking, and how her perceptions inform the ways she navigates these challenges.

I acknowledge that a view of 'reality' as being primarily socially constructed (as opposed to externally imposed) can be problematic. In my attempt to explore Ms B's 'reality', I recognize the external constraints (in the form of such things as educational policy, school and other management structures, South Africa's sociopolitical history and its socio-economic patterning) that impinge upon her perceptions of her professional circumstances, as indeed does Ms B herself. The relationship between Ms B's external reality and her subjective interpretations of, and responses to it, is, in effect, a dialectical one.

3.3   Research strategy

The study focuses on the single case of Ms B's strategies for helping her Grade 5 learners develop reading literacy skills. Writing of the value of case studies, psychologist Hans Eysenck observed the desirability of looking "carefully at individual cases—not in the

hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!" (p. 9, cited by Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224).

Stake identifies three main types of case-study: intrinsic (cases which are interesting in their own right), instrumental (a case which enables a researcher to better understand a particular aspect within the field of research), and collective (where more than one set of actors or research sites make up the case) (1995, p. 4-5). I view the Ashleigh Primary site as intrinsically interesting, although I hope it will also be seen as serving some instrumental purpose. (I discuss this point further in Section 3.8.2, where I consider issues of generalisability in relation to case study research.)

I chose to focus on Ms B because in my view she works in an especially challenging site as far as literacy development is concerned. In terms of sampling, therefore, my choice of site was purposeful (Patton, 1990, p. 169). For Stake, case-study research involves "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case" (1995, p. xi) with a view to identifying both its "uniqueness" (1995, p. 1), and its "commonality" (1995, p. 1) with other cases. While the circumstances at Ashleigh Primary may not be unique, they are almost certainly uncommon. As noted previously, what we have here is an historically Afrikaans-medium school, with a teaching staff who, although bilingual, are mainly Afrikaans home language speakers, caught up in a wave of migration away from township schools of predominantly isiXhosa speaking learners whose parents, in their quest for a 'better quality' of education for their children, have opted for English as the language of learning and teaching. In some respects, therefore, the teaching environment of Ms B (who does not herself speak isiXhosa) might represent what could perhaps be termed an "extreme case" (Patton, 1990, p. 170; Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230-231). Such a case, as Flyvbjerg points out, "can be well suited for getting a point across in an especially dramatic way" (2011, p. 306).

3.4   Data-gathering tools
Observation, document analysis and interviewing were used for data-gathering. The data were collected during three separate periods. I observed twelve sequential Grade 5 English lessons taught by Ms B during October/ November 2009 (eleven of which I

observed directly, one of which Ms B. taught in my absence, using material I had provided). I also formally interviewed Ms B during this period. In the second time period I observed two of Ms B's Grade 5 lessons, specifically requisitioned by me in October 2010. Finally I formally interviewed Ms B for a second time in August 2011. This extended period of data collection is not ideal, and I explain the reasons for it in Section 3.8.1.

3.4.1 Observation

I observed Ms B teaching a total of thirteen English lessons. Transcripts are provided in Appendix C. Apart from the last lesson observation, where a colleague went in with me to record the lesson on video camera, I used only a notebook to record my observations. I chose not to use an observation schedule, because I wanted to avoid any form of pre-specification of what to look for. Instead, I recorded my observations in as much detail as I could, and in an open-ended, descriptive way, focusing primarily on the teacher's voice and actions.

It took a great deal of sustained concentration to keep up with, and capture, everything that was going on in each lesson. Inevitably I failed to capture it all. The contrast between the transcripts of lessons from my handwritten field notes and the transcript of the (final) video-recorded lesson is marked. The average length of transcript for lessons observed using field notes was two pages, whereas the transcript from the video-recording of the final lesson was over ten pages. This is a very rough comparative measure in that it takes account of neither the length nor the nature of a lesson. A significant difference between taking field notes as compared with video-recording is, of course, that the field notes happen in 'real time' whereas in transcribing the video-tape I could replay it as often as I wished.

For all my periods of observation I remained mindful of Simpson and Tuson's description of observation as being "the most intrusive of all techniques for gathering data" (2003, p.55). My strategy for being as unobtrusive as possible was to sit quietly (in the place allocated me by Ms B), and to avoid any overt contact with the children, either by eye-contact or by displaying any reaction to what was happening in the room. In

other words, I tried to "stand aloof" (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison, 2007, p. 259). While it is impossible to gauge the extent to which my presence disrupted the normal flow of events in Ms B's classroom, my sense is that Ms B did not see me as "an intruder" (Simpson & Tuson, 2003, p. 61). On the contrary, she mentioned on one occasion that she really valued my presence because I could *see*; I could understand what she faced: "Others do not see" (Lesson 8, Line 130 [Appendix C8]).

3.4.2 Document analysis

The various learning support materials (LSMs) used in Ms B's lessons (Appendices D and E), together with information taken from Ms B's learning portfolio and from her written communications to me constitute the documentary evidence used in the study.

3.4.3 Interviews

As noted in Section 3.2, a central premise of an interpretive framework is that "action is meaningful to those involved" (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000, p. 14). To better understand a set of actions (in this instance those of Ms B) there must be an attempt to *interpret* "the meanings that actors give to their activities" (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000, p. 14). Towards this end, and as noted, in addition to observing her Grade 5 English lessons, I interviewed Ms B twice. The interviews also served a triangulation purpose, along with the lesson observations and documentary analyses. I discuss my use of triangulation in Section 3.6.2.

Both interviews were semi-structured and in-depth. The first took place after I had been observing Ms B's Grade 5 English lessons for just over 2 weeks. I wanted to get a better sense of how she interpreted her circumstances at the school in relation to the challenge of helping her Grade 5 learners cope with the literacy demands they were encountering. The second interview took place at the end of the research process. Its focus was more specific. It was intended as a stimulated recall interview (after Nunan, 1992, p.94-96) whereby I worked through the video recording of the last lesson observed with Ms B to try to see the lesson from her perspective (what she was seeking to achieve through the

lesson, how well she thought it went, and so on)[27]. Both interviews were audio-taped
and transcribed. Copies of the transcripts are included in Appendix F.

3.5   Ethical considerations

The study complied with the principle of informed consent, and with the University's
ethical protocol. Relevant documents are in Appendices A and B. Once the data for the
study had been collected, and the lesson observations and interviews transcribed, I gave
Ms B a complete set of the transcripts so that she could go through them and make sure
there was nothing in them that might embarrass or compromise her. She expressed
satisfaction with the accuracy of the transcripts, but asked me to remove one or two
allusions from them about which she felt uncomfortable. This I have done.

In line with the assurance that the anonymity of the school, of the school's principal, of
Ms B, and of the Grade 5 learners, pseudonyms have been used throughout this write-
up, and every effort has been made to remove information that might indirectly lead to
identification of the research site and/or persons related to it.

3.6   'Credibility' considerations

Reliability and validity are key concerns in any research; reliability roughly equating to
the degree to which different researchers might make similar findings given the same
research framework; validity relating to the extent to which a researcher's
interpretations of the data can be judged as logically derived and credible.

For Maxwell two key areas of threat to validity in qualitative research are firstly
researcher bias (distortions arising from the researchers' own "theory, values or
preconceptions"), and secondly reactivity (the disruption of the natural setting as a
consequence of the researcher's presence) (2009, p.243).

---

[27] In the event, although the interview did not entirely match the profile of a stimulated recall interview, it
certainly provided me with interesting insight into her perceptions of the lesson, but also, further, more
general, insights into Ms B's teaching circumstances.

As regards the 'reactivity problem', I have alluded to Ms B's reaction to my presence, and to the ways in which I attempted to minimize the effect of my presence in her Grade 5 lessons. I am reassured also by Maxwell's noting of Becker's point that "in natural settings, an observer is generally much less of an influence on participants' behaviour than is the setting itself" (2009, p. 243).

Researcher bias is a more challenging threat in this instance, most especially given my former position as a Grade 5 teacher, and my current professional involvement as a teacher educator working in the area of literacy development. I discuss this further in Section 3.6.4. Before doing so, however, I discuss three other strategies used in my efforts to enhance the credibility of the study, namely member checking, triangulation and rich description.

3.6.1 Member checking

As mentioned in Section 3.5, Ms B had the opportunity of going through all the lesson observation and interview transcripts. Although I was primarily motivated here by respect for Ms B, I was mindful that such member checking, or "respondent validation" (Nisbet & Watt, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 262), would contribute also to the data's integrity. Maxwell (2009) identifies respondent validation as "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do" (p. 244). That said, in the case of the present study it is only the data, and not my interpretation, that was subjected to a member check.

3.6.2 Triangulation

Triangulation – "the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 236) – serves rather different purposes in qualitative, interpretive research than it does in quantitative, positivist-oriented research.

In positivist research triangulation is, according to Bush (2002), "essentially a means of cross-checking data to establish its validity" (p. 100). By contrast, qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), uses triangulation not so much as "a tool or strategy of validation, but [as] an alternative to validation" (p. 5). For these writers, a

combination of data sources and data-collection methods "adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth" to a qualitative research endeavour (p. 5).

Denscombe (2007) asks that researchers be "clear and explicit about the purpose of using triangulation", implying an 'either/ or' situation: "to improve accuracy" or "to provide a fuller picture" (p. 139). I am not convinced that Denscombe's distinction can be as unequivocally applied as this, but given this case study's location within an interpretive paradigm, my use of triangulation is motivated primarily by the latter (fuller picture) purpose. Swanborn (2010) articulates this as follows: "The aim is to describe and explain an object from different perspectives, and in this way to attain a more complete result" (p. 160). Through my use of three data sources, as described, I hope to provide a fuller, more complete picture of the strategies Ms B uses to develop the reading literacy of her Grade 5 learners.

3.6.3 Rich description

In the next chapter I have tried to construct as full and complete a picture as possible of Ms B's strategies for developing her learners' reading literacy by providing "rich detail". This, according to Cresswell and Miller (2000), is another means of increasing a study's potential credibility (p. 128). A "thick description" (after Clifford Geertz)[28], they argue, "creates verisimilitude", and thereby establishes credibility "*through the lens of readers* [my emphasis] who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation" (Cresswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). These writers note that an additional benefit deriving from such 'thick description' relates to enabling readers to assess the 'relatability' of a study's findings to other settings. As I explain in Section 3.8.2, some view 'relatability' as being a more appropriate criterion for evaluating the quality of a case study than 'generalisability' (Bassey, 1981).

---

[28] Although it is the late American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, who, it seems, is most frequently credited with introducing the idea of 'thick description', Geertz (1973) in fact credits the notion to British philosopher, Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976).

3.6.4 Reflexivity

In a discussion of validity Winter (2000) writes of "the highly selective, reductive and subjective processes involved in all research" (unpaged). Similarly, Cohen, et al. (2007) note the risk that the intrusion of a researcher's own subjectivity may reduce "the likelihood of gaining the participants' perspectives and meanings" (p. 171), perhaps especially in case studies "despite attempts made to address reflexivity" (p. 256). I have tried to remain mindful of an important point made by Peshkin that, although "subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed .. [and] ... is insistently present in both the research and nonresearch aspects of our life" (1988, p. 17), "untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice" (1988, p. 21).

During my Bachelor of Education (Honours) year I was introduced to the phenomenological idea of 'epoche' (the suspension of judgment and the bracketing off of one's own preconceptions about a situation). This is easier said than done, for, as Maxwell (1992) writes, "as observers and interpreters of the world, we are inextricably part of it; we cannot step outside our own experience to obtain some observer-independent account of what we experience" (p. 283). That said, in my collection and analysis of the data I have attempted to practise 'epoche'. I am aware of the need to be alert to the ways in which my own subjectivities and life history may impinge on my interpretations of what I have seen in Ms B's classroom and heard from her in our interviews. I am mindful also that Ms B may have seen me – as a member of a university's teaching staff – in a position of relative power.

What I strove for in my interactions with Ms B was akin to Carl Roger's principle of 'unconditional positive regard' (Rogers (1959), as cited in Iberg, 2001, p. 155). Although the notion of unconditional positive regard is most usually employed within therapeutic situations, Rogers applied it also in the context of interpersonal relations (Iberg, 2001, p. 155). Notwithstanding my commitment to this position of unconditional positive regard , I recognised the risk of my researcher position being unintentionally subverted by Ms B's perceptions of me relative to what Cohen et al refer to as "issues of advocacy" (2007, p. 171). This is "where the researcher may be expected to identify with the same emotions, issues and crises as the members of the group being studied" (2007, p. 171),

as witness Ms B's "Others do not see" comment quoted in Section 3.4.1. It is my intention that this study should be helpful to Ms B. Both she and I are committed professionals. So, while this study pays close attention to Ms B's 'emic concepts', and tries not to mute them, in the overall analysis and interpretation of the data I have attempted to draw on, and arrive at, 'etic concepts' (or 'researcher's categories') (Maxwell, 2009, p. 238).

3.7   Analysis of data

The starting point for the analysis is a detailed presentation (or description) of data collected from the designated sources. Thereafter the analytic process centres around looking for some answers to the questions posed at the start of the research journey. Maxwell (2009) distinguishes between variance research questions and process research questions. It is clear that the research questions guiding the present investigation are essentially *process* questions, in that they focus on "the meaning of events and activities to the people involved in them" and on the "influence of the physical and social context on these events and activities" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 232). To reiterate my research questions, they are:

- What strategies does the Grade 5 English teacher [Ms B] use to support learners' reading literacy development?

- Does Ms B believe that these strategies are successful in developing learners' reading literacy in English?

- What, in her view, constrains her teaching of reading literacy? How might the constraints be overcome?

- Has she adapted her strategies in any ways over the years?

Beyond the broad intention of exploring strategies for reading literacy development, I entered the research site with a fairly open-ended agenda. In my observation of Ms B's Grade 5 English lessons I attempted – as noted in Section 3.4.1 - to capture as much detail as I could without any mental preconditioning as to what I ought to be looking for. A similar absence of specific selection applies to the documents included in the analysis. They are simply the materials relating to the lessons observed, and to the written

communications between Ms B and myself during the research period. The two interviews with Ms B are rather more focused insofar as I set them up with the express purpose of probing Ms B's views on reading literacy development in relation to her experiences with her Grade 5 learners.

Having clustered the relevant data around each of my original research questions, I identified key themes from which to create a more narrative account of Ms B's strategies for developing her learners' reading literacy (which includes also consideration of the impediments she perceives as being most detrimental to the effectiveness of these strategies).

3.8   Limitations to the research

Apart from the fact that this is research on an extremely small scale, I identify two main limitations to this case study: the extended and fractured time-frame for data collection, and the fact that case study findings are not readily open to generalization. This latter situation is, in part, a function of the smallness of scale, but other factors are at play as well (as discussed in Section 3.8.2).

3.8.1 Discontinuities in the data collection time frame

The original arrangement set up with Ms B was that I would observe her Grade 5 English lessons for a five week period. In the event this scheduled period of observation was curtailed somewhat. Difficulties at the school, and ill-health, obliged Ms B to make *ad hoc* changes to our planned schedule. In all, I observed less than half the number of lessons originally planned, and data collection stretched across two non-continuous periods of time.

This extended time frame is clearly far from ideal. It is not possible however to speculate on how (or to what extent) it impacted on the overall quality of the data contributing to this study.

3.8.2 Generalisability

Stake holds the view that while some generalization from case-study data may be possible, this is generally not a strong aspect of case-study research (p. 8), arguing instead that "the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization" (1995, p. 10). Bassey (1981), in his comments on the question of generalization from case studies, notes that it is seldom appropriate (or indeed possible) to make generalizations. He argues instead that "an important criterion for judging the merit of a case-study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision-making to that described in the case-study" (1981, p. 85). Bassey further extended this argument by claiming that "*the relatability of a case-study is more important than its generalisability*" [my emphasis] (1981, p. 85). Using Bart Kosko's arguments in relation to fuzzy logic that 'everything is a matter of degree'; Bassey subsequently proposed that the term "fuzzy generalization" might be used to characterize such cases (1998, unpaged). To paraphrase Bassey's arguments: if teachers can *relate* to what they read in a piece of case-study research; if they can see parallels between the reported circumstances and those they encounter within their own professional environments, this carries within it the potential for improvements in pedagogical insights and practices. This may then – in and of itself – constitute sufficient instrumental justification for the study. For Flyvbjerg (2006), the fact that "knowledge [from a case study] cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society" (p. 227).

Ms B's circumstances, while unique in some ways, are shared in other ways. In this case-study I seek to illuminate some of the challenges and paradoxes faced on a daily basis by many South African intermediate phase teachers as they strive to enhance their learners' levels of English literacy. I hope readers of this case-study can relate to what is documented here, and that they find within it some potentially helpful sources of insight for their own analyses of similar situations.

3.10 Conclusion

In the next chapter I present my findings. In so doing, and most especially in analysing them, I remain acutely aware that "the relationship between words and worlds is anything but easy or transparent" (Van Maanen, Manning & Miller, 1990, p. 7). As was so cogently remarked by Korzybski (1931), "The map is not the territory".

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the data collected from lesson observations, interviews and documents are presented and analysed relative to the following research questions:

- What strategies does the Grade 5 English teacher [Ms B] use to support learners' reading literacy development?

- Does Ms B believe that these strategies are successful in developing learners' reading literacy in English?

- What, in her view, constrains her teaching of reading literacy? How might the constraints be overcome?

- Has she adapted her strategies in any ways over the years?

As noted in Chapter 3, I observed Ms B teaching 13 English lessons. She taught one other lesson in my absence, using a comprehension task supplied by me. See Section 4.3. I interviewed her twice, the first interview taking place two weeks into the observation period; the second after observations had been completed. Additional data were derived from documents, including LSMs used in the observed lessons; some written exchanges between Ms B and myself; and Ms B's professional portfolio which she allowed me to use (e-mail communication, January 31, 2012). Most of the information in the next section comes from this latter source.

4.2 The INTERSEN English teacher

Ms B is Ashleigh Primary's INTERSEN[29] English teacher. She has taught for more than 20 years, the last sixteen in her current post.

After matriculating, she enrolled at a College of Education and obtained a Diploma in Education. She has steadily pursued her educational studies, obtaining first a Higher Diploma in Education; then a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree; and then an

---

[29] The term 'INTERSEN' refers to Grades 4-7 (a combination of INTERmediate and SENior Phase).

Advanced Certificate in Education (specializing in Information Communication Technology (ICT)). Most recently, she completed the coursework year of a Masters degree in English Language Teaching which further strengthened her awareness of the importance of what Shulman termed 'pedagogical content knowledge' (1986), noting in her portfolio: "Of upmost [*sic*] importance is the fact that teachers need core language knowledge, they need to know the structure of the language and how the language works" (November 2010).

Ms B is mindful of the problems relating to the fact of the majority of Ashleigh Primary's learners not being mother-tongue users of English: "I am convinced now that we should revisit our language policy" (Ms B's portfolio, November 2010), and she has been a key player in setting in motion an intervention strategy to improve learners' language proficiency (Ms B, e-mail communication, September 16, 2011). Some details of this intervention are outlined in Section 4.8.3.

In addition to her English language teaching responsibilities (Grades 5-7), Ms B teaches mathematics, is the school's senior phase co-ordinator, and is a member of the school's management team; she co-ordinates the school's ICT activities; and she supports the learners' extramural hockey and athletics activities. She is registered with SACE (South African Council of Educators) and belongs to SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union).

Outside school hours, she has attended numerous training courses (amongst others, READ in-service training, a Language Development programme, and a Reading Right workshop). She offers her expertise in various programmes for local teachers in their teaching and learning of ICT.

The picture that emerges from Ms B's CV is that of a motivated and hard-working professional, committed [in her own words] to "lifelong learning" as she seeks to "transform and inform [her] own participation and contribution in [her] school and community" (Ms B's portfolio, November 2010).

4.3   An estimate of Ms B's Grade 5 learners' reading comprehension

At my request, Ms B taught reading comprehension lessons to her 2009 and 2010 Grade 5 classes (Lessons 2 and 13) using texts from PIRLS 2001('The Upside- down Mice' and 'The Dressmaker' respectively [Appendix D]). My motive here was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to gauge Ms B's learners' reading comprehension. I felt the PIRLS texts – having been rigorously designed and calibrated by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) – provided an ideal means of doing so. Secondly, I felt the PIRLS activities provided an intrinsically sound framework for a reading comprehension lesson.

I asked Ms B to ensure that her learners' experience of doing these reading comprehension activities was no different from what she would normally do with them in a reading comprehension lesson. To avoid learners having any sense that these lessons were something 'out of the ordinary', I left it to Ms B's professional judgment to decide how to set up the lessons (see Appendix C2 for my briefing letter to Ms B plus her post-lesson written record in respect of Lesson 2). The time Ms B was able to allocate for these lessons was 50 and 90 minutes respectively[30].

In respect of Lesson 2 Ms B noted that a few of her learners needed extra time to complete the task, and that she had given them until the end of the school day to hand in. She also reported that while her stronger readers seemed to enjoy the story and see the humour in it, others struggled to read the passage and related questions. Some, she said, simply "circled random answers it seemed" [Appendix C2].

I marked the children's answer sheets using the mark allocations from the original PIRLS 2001 tests. Tables 6 and 7 show the spread of marks achieved by each of Ms B's Grade 5 classes.

---

[30] In the genuine PIRLS' tests, learners are given 40 minutes to read and answer questions about a passage (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Trong, 2011, p. 10).

Table 6: 2009 Grade 5 learners' achievement on a PIRLS 2001 reading comprehension activity ('The Upside down mice' text)

% range	Approximate mark range	Distribution of learners' marks (N=33)	Mark profile	
80-100	14-17	2	**Top mark**:	17 (100%)
60-79	10-13	9	**Lowest mark**:	1 (6%)
50-59	8½-9	4	**Average mark**:	8 (47%)
30-49	5-8	12		
0-29	0-4	6		

One third of the 2009 class scored higher than 60%; just over half scored less than 50%. The 2009 class average was 47%. One child in the 2009 class got all her answers correct and a second child scored 14 (c82%).

Table 7: 2010 Grade 5 learners' achievement on a PIRLS 2001 reading comprehension activity ('The Dressmaker' text)

% range	Approximate mark range	Distribution of learners' marks (N=25)	Mark profile	
80-100	14-17	-	**Top mark**:	13(77%)
60-79	10-13	8	**Lowest mark**:	1 (6%)
50-59	8½-9	1	**Average mark**:	7,6 (45%)
30-49	5-8	12		
0-29	0-4	4		

Nobody in the 2010 class scored in the 80-100% range, but apart from this the profile is quite similar to the 2009 one in the sense that just under one-third of the 2010 class also scored higher than 60%. A bigger percentage of the 2010 class scored less than 50%, however. In 2009 this percentage was 54,5%; in 2010 it was 64%. The 2010 class average was 45% (2 percentage points lower than the 2009 class)[31].

PIRLS question types fall into four main categories:
- retrieval of explicitly stated information

---

[31] If the top two marks from the 2009 Grade 5 group were to be removed, the class average would drop to 45,5% (i.e. much closer to that of the 2010 group). Insofar as the two top learners were legitimate members of the 2009 group this would not be a statistically valid action, but their presence perhaps serves to mask the generally low level of their classmates' reading comprehension proficiency.

- straightforward inferencing
- interpretation and integration of ideas
- evaluative responses.

<div align="center">(Howie et al., 2008)</div>

An analysis of the children's responses to individual questions showed that Ms B's learners coped best with retrieval type questions. Ms B's remark in our first interview that some struggled to "read between the lines" (Line 94 [Appendix F]) corroborates this. Overall, however, it was encouraging that a relatively (relative, that is, to the findings of PIRLS 2006 for South African learners nationwide) high percentage of the 2009 and 2010 Ashleigh Primary children scored above 50% (45% and 36% respectively). This level of achievement is in line with the general PIRLS (South Africa) results, and is better than many other Grade 5 classes in the country. Given the support Ms B gave to both sets of learners throughout these lessons, further comparison with South Africa's PIRLS 2006 results would be inappropriate.

4.4 Some aspects of organisation

The following sub-sections focus on two aspects of the organisation of Ms B's Grade 5 English lessons: firstly the physical layout of the classrooms in which the lessons took place; secondly the time-tabling arrangements for the lessons.

4.4.1 The Grade 5 classrooms: old and new

As noted in Chapter 1, when I began my study, building operations were well underway for the construction of a new teaching block. All the while, school work continued uninterrupted in the original 150-year old school building mere metres away from these operations. Most of the Grade 5 English lessons I observed were conducted in the Grade 5 classroom in the old building. Only my final two lesson observations took place in the new Grade 5 classroom.

The way Ashleigh Primary works is that each grade has its own dedicated classroom. It is the teachers who move; a circumstance that continued after moving to the new teaching block. Ms B therefore does not have a dedicated English classroom. Instead she was entering the children's territory, as opposed to their entering a space over which *she*

had full control. She remarked somewhat ruefully about this situation: "It would be so nice to stay in my own classroom" (Lesson 3, Lines 6-7 [Appendix C3]) [32].

On my arrival for the first day of observation Ms B introduced me to the children, saying: "Grade 5s, this is Mrs. Robertson. She will be visiting us for the next few weeks" (Lesson 1, Line 9 [Appendix C1]). The learners chorused a greeting, but otherwise showed reassuringly little sign of curiosity at my presence. Ms B indicated that I should sit at the teacher's desk at the back of the room.

The learners were organised into six groups. They were seated facing each other in two-seater desks, pushed together as shown in Figure 2. Towards the end of the third lesson-observation session, in an aside to me, Ms B expressed her concern about this seating arrangement, which she saw as being required by OBE. In her view it facilitated chatting between children. She thought it would be better if the children faced the front and worked with just one friend (Lesson 4, Lines 50-53 [Appendix C4]). Reflecting on this grouped seating arrangement in her portfolio, Ms B suggested that perhaps "teacher centred classes could be more beneficial when learning English" as, in their groups, learners were "not communicating in English at all" (November 2010).

---

[32] In our final interview Ms B revealed that this situation had changed. She had just that week managed to secure an English-dedicated classroom in the new building: "That suits me ... because I *hated* moving up and down ... It's *much* better for me [now]" (Interview 2, lines 1100-1107, see Appendix F)

KEY

Learner (indicating directions s/he is facing)

Chalkboard

Whiteboard

Window

Researcher (Lessons 1, 3-12)

Teacher's Desk

Cupboard

Cupboard

Cupboard

Cupboard

Cupboard

Doorway

Exterior wall with windows & whiteboard

Dry wall with 2 x chalkboards
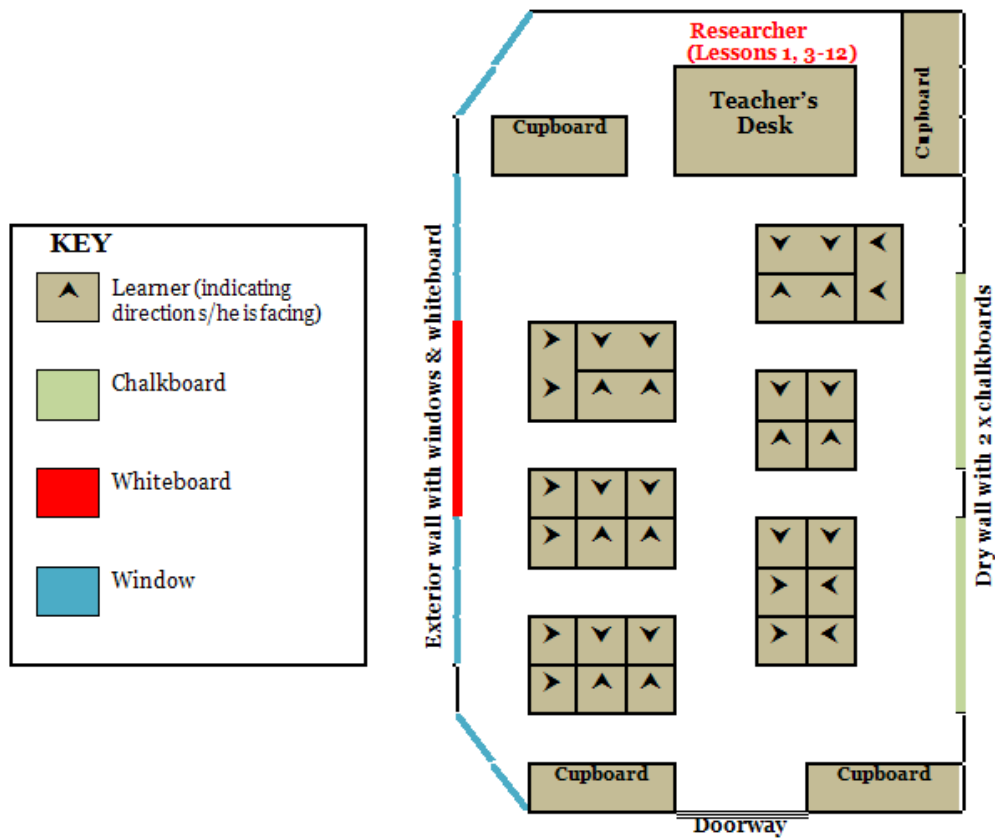
Figure 2: Grade 5 classroom layout (old building)

Wall décor in the classroom comprised the following posters:

- The alphabet in cursive
- Days of the week in Afrikaans
- Months of the year in English
- Beating 'flu together
- A triptych of Science posters:
  - ➢ Your place in the universe
  - ➢ The electromagnetic spectrum
  - ➢ Our solar system
- An advertisement for a performance of "Zina and the Song Bird" for 23-27 February
- Two A4 sheets protected in plastic sleeves reading respectively:
  - ➢ When my points are down to 30, I will be put onto daily monitoring
  - ➢ When my points get up to 90, I will get an achiever certificate.

A jumble of books and papers and a disused computer monitor occupied the top of the cupboard alongside the teacher's desk. As indicated in Figure 2, the internal wall

separating the Grade 5 classroom from its neighbour was a dry wall. This contributed quite significantly to inter-classroom noise spillage.

By contrast, the Grade 5 classroom in the new block was pristine, light, bright and spacious. There was an attractive display of children's books (in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa) on the shelving under the windows along one wall, plus a box of READ books on the teacher's desk. Laminated posters displayed on the pin boards comprised the following:

- a world map
- a map of South Africa
- Electricity
- Drug abuse
- Child abuse
- AIDS awareness
- posters relating to healthy eating:
  - ➢ a balanced meal
  - ➢ a healthy lunchbox
  - ➢ the A-Z of healthy food
  - ➢ the food pyramid
- posters relating to measurement:
  - ➢ length
  - ➢ mass
  - ➢ capacity
- and finally, next to the door, an A4 poster spelling out Miss A's[33] rules:
  - ➢ Do not talk when the teacher is talking
  - ➢ Do not talk when others are talking
  - ➢ Raise your hand to say your answer
  - ➢ Be respectful of others at all times
  - ➢ Ask questions when you do not understand
  - ➢ Always try to participate in class.

Two-seater desks were organised to allow most learners to sit in groups, directly echoing the kind of 'OBE seating arrangement' that had concerned Ms B in the old classroom.

---

[33] The class teacher for Grade 5.
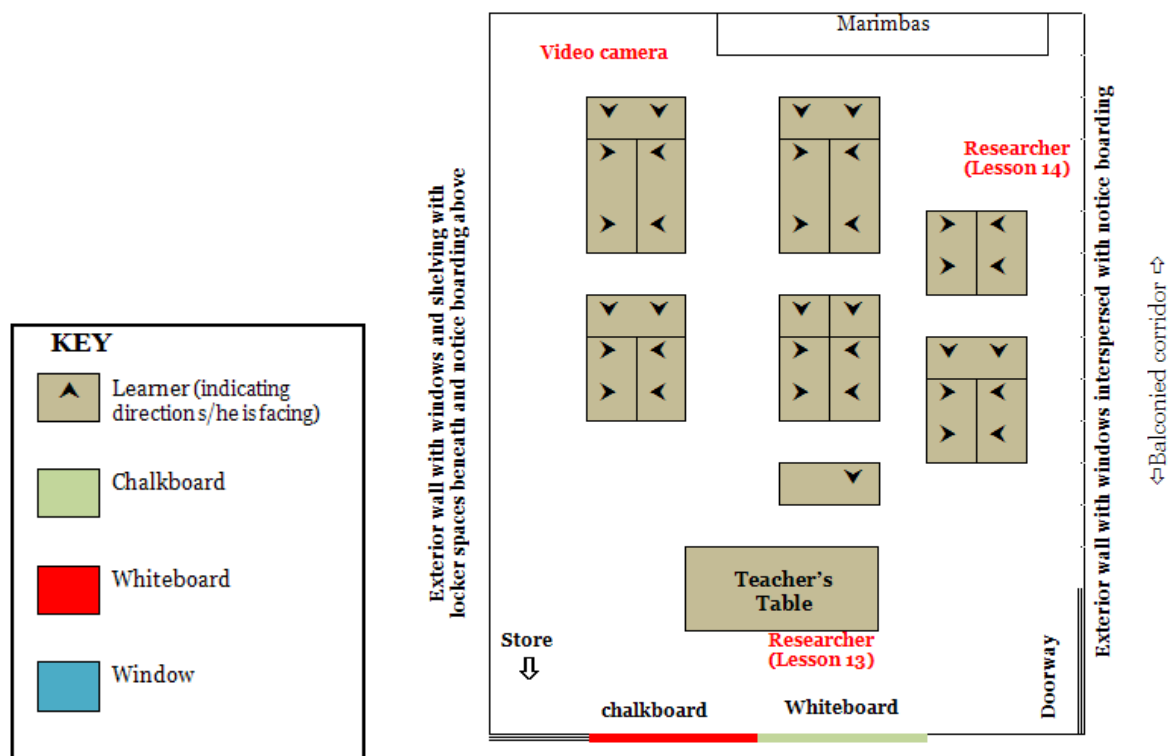
Figure 3: Grade 5 classroom layout (new building)

4.4.2 Time-tabling of Grade 5 English lessons

During the observation period the times advertised on Ashleigh Primary's time-table were not always rigidly adhered to: on occasion the bell went late, on another it even went missing, and there was also occasional re-scheduling of lesson times on some of the days to accommodate extramural events. In general, however, the school operated on a ten-day cycle as outlined in Table 8.

As the Table shows, the time allocation pattern for Grade 5 English lessons changed in 2010. Less time was allocated for English lessons (approximately 20% less)[34]. Whereas in 2009 English lessons occurred daily, albeit at different times, throughout the ten-day cycle and "for a smaller period of time" (Interview 2, Line 174 [Appendix F]), in 2010 double periods for English were scheduled in the same time slot every second

---

[34] This calculation excludes the daily half hour set aside for DEAR (which remained constant across both years).

(sometimes third) day. In the course, then, of a ten-day cycle there would be five English lesson slots, albeit for a more extended period of time: "I see them every second day for nearly two hours" (Interview 2, Line 191 [Appendix F]).

Table 8: Time-tabling of Grade 5 English lessons: 2009-2010

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
2009	←			DEAR (Whole school: 08h00-08h30)			→			
	09h20-10h10	11h25-12h15	10h35-11h25	08h30-09h20	13h05-13h50	09h20-10h10	12h25-13h05	11h25-12h15	13h05-13h50	11h25-12h15
	50 mins	50 mins	50 mins	50 mins	45 mins	50 mins	45 mins	50 mins	45 mins	50 mins
	8 hours 5 mins per 10 day cycle, averaging 48,5 mins daily teaching time **+** **6 Hours DEAR time per 10 day cycle for silent (extended) reading**									

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
2010	←			DEAR (Whole school: 08h00-08h30)			→			
		12h25-13h05		12h25-13h05			12h25-13h05		12h25-13h05	
		13h05-14h00		13h05-14h00			13h05-14h00		13h05-14h00	
		40+55=95 mins		40+55=95 mins			40+55=95 mins		40+55=95 mins	
	6 hours 20 mins per 10 day cycle, averaging 38 mins daily teaching time **+** **6 hours DEAR time per 10 day cycle for silent (extended) reading**									

Wong-Fillmore (1985) identifies the presence of structural regularities and routines as an important contributory factor in successful language learning. Routines act to reduce cognitive load (or free up cognitive space), so that more mental energy can be channeled towards more cognitively demanding activities. Although Ashleigh Primary's Grade 5 learners have daily exposure to English input by virtue of English being the school's LoLT, it could be argued that the new (2010) timetabling arrangement may have compromised the children's sense of routine *vis à vis* their *formal* English lessons as such.

A regularity present in the 2010 arrangements - but not in 2009 - was that English lessons were all at the same time of day: the last two periods. The 2009 English lessons varied from being first thing in the day to last thing, and every time slot in between,

suggesting that English lessons enjoyed equal 'time-tabling status' with all the other learning areas.

4.5   Strategies for supporting learners' reading literacy development

In the following sections I unpack some of the strategies used by Ms B to support her Grade 5 learners' literacy development. I start by tabulating some key features of eleven of the fourteen lessons she taught during the periods of observation.

4.5.1 Structuring of Grade 5 English lessons

In distinguishing between the 'intended' and the 'enacted' curriculum, Porter and Smithson (2001) note that "classroom practice is the focal point for curriculum delivery and student learning" (p. 2), and that it is this practice that ultimately determines the extent to which an intended curriculum is in fact enacted. Tables 10 to20 show the broad structure of the eleven Grade 5 lessons which involved working around extended reading texts (Lessons 1-5; 7-10; and 13 and 14). As Table 9 shows, five such texts were used during the observation periods: one information text, three narratives, and a drama. Copies of each of these texts are included in Appendix D. The information text was recycled via various tasks across four lessons. So too was the drama text. Single lessons were used for the narrative texts, although I understand from Ms B that she had had plans to follow up with other activities for Text 5.

Table 9: Lessons involving the use of extended reading text

Texts		Lessons										
		1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	13	14
1	Endangered Species and Extinction (information text)	▓		▓	▓	▓						
2	Upside down mice (literary/ narrative text)		▓									
3	The Animal Meeting (drama script)						▓	▓	▓	▓		
4	The Dressmaker (literary/ narrative text)										▓	
5	Going to Timbuktu (literary/ narrative text)											▓

Included in Tables 10 to 20 is an indication of both the instructional and the regulative aspects of Ms B's observed lessons. I draw here on Bernstein's distinction between instructional and regulative pedagogic discourse and practice (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13). As the textboxes to the right of the tables show, Ms B's teaching strategies (her instructional discourse) were not infrequently intruded upon by a need for regulative talk (behaviour management). The learners attracted relatively few admonitions from Ms B in Lesson 1 (Table 10) which may have been due, in part, to the fact that this was my first time as a visitor in their classroom. It may also have been because they were starting work on a new text. (Interestingly, this same pattern presented in Lessons 7, 13 and 14 (Tables 15, 19 and 20), all of which similarly marked the start of working with new texts.) A further common denominator with these lessons was that they were more teacher-fronted than some others.

As a way of conveying the flavour of some of Ms B's admonitions as the Grade 5s worked on tasks relating to Text 1 (Lessons 1, 3, 4 and 5), I have included *verbatim* quotes. In tables for subsequent lessons I have simply summarized the intent of such admonitions[35]. As noted, I was not present for Lesson 2, and relied on Ms B's written record of the lesson to draw up Table 11. She made no mention in her write-up of discipline issues.

---

[35] For a more comprehensive record of Ms B's *verbatim* admonitions across the observed lessons, see the lesson transcripts in Appendix C.

Table 10: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 1

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 1	**50 minute lesson 2009-10-15**	• Reads through a passage out loud [Activity 1: Endangered Species and Extinction [Appendix D]	• Listen as the teacher reads the passage	
		• Seeks learners' assurance that they have understood the passage	• No response	
		• Distributes copies of the passage and then asks learners to read through it silently on their own	• Read through the passage silently	Teacher sets time limit: "I'm going to give you 3 minutes."
		• Calls on individual children to read sections of the passage	• Take turns (selected learners) to read out loud sections of the passage	
		• Writes a list of eleven words taken from the passage on the chalkboard, and then gets the children to read through the list aloud and in unison	• Read together from the chalkboard the list of eleven words from the passage	
		• Asks children to find and underline each of the listed words as they occur in the passage	• Underline the words as they occur in the passage	
		• Asks children to look up the meanings of the underlined words in their dictionaries	• Look up the meanings of the words in a dictionary (*working in pairs because there are not enough dictionaries to go round*)	Teacher reprimands some of the children for wandering around the classroom. Instructs them to go and sit down
		• Asks children to complete a worksheet (Activity 2: Dictionary work [Appendix E] - Write out the meanings of seven of the underlined words)	• Fill in the meanings (of seven) of these words in the spaces provided on the worksheet	Teacher warns learners they must start finishing off their work: "It's nearly break-time."
		• Instructs children to hand in their worksheet and put the passage into their flip files.	• Some children do as they are told. Many leave without handing in their worksheet.	Teacher observes to researcher: "They've got to be kept busy."
LSMs: Non-fiction text; Chalkboard; Dictionaries; Vocabulary worksheet.				

Table 11: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 2

Lesson 2	50 minute lesson [Researcher not present, details based on Ms B's written report] 2009-10-16	Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
		• Distributes literary text (Roald Dahl's 'The Upside-down Mice' [Appendix D]) and reads through it out loud	• Listen as the teacher reads the story	
		• Calls on individual children to read sections of the text	• Take turns (selected learners) to read out loud sections of the story, while the rest listen	
		• Asks learners to ask questions if there are any words in the short story that they do not understand	• Response not recorded	
		• Asks learners to work together to identify difficult words, and explain their meanings	• Work as a class to try to make sense of these difficult words	
		• Reads through the comprehension questions based on the narrative	• Follow as the teacher reads through the comprehension questions	
		• Explains the design of different question types (multiple choice; open)	• Listen as the teacher explains how the different types of questions work	
		• Asks learners to read through the story again, silently on their own	• Re-read the story silently on their own	
		• Asks learners to answer the questions in the spaces provided.	• Write the answers to the comprehension questions	
LSMs: Narrative text [*one of the literary passages used for PIRLS 2001*]				

Table 12: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 3

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 3	**50 minute lesson 2009-10-19**	• Marks and returns work to those learners who completed the 'Dictionary Work' task (Lesson 1)	• Those learners who managed to complete it, receive back their marked 'Dictionary work'	Teacher instructs learners to settle down: "Okay, can we close our pencils cases; close our books.
		• Calls on individual children to read sections of the Lesson 1 text ('Endangered Species and Extinction' [Appendix D])	• Take turns (selected learners) to read out loud sections of the Lesson 1 passage, while the rest listen	Nine minutes into the lesson and some learners have still not found their copies of the relevant text. Teacher addresses a child: "N! Stop talking! N! Are you listening?"
		• Asks children to find and underline each of the listed words identified in Lesson 1	• Underline (if not already done so) the eleven words in the passage from the Dictionary work activity from Lesson 1	
		• Calls on selected learners to read out the definitions they wrote for the listed words.	• Selected learners read out their definitions	Teacher issues repeated instructions: "Stop talking! ... Quieten down! ... Sssshhh!"
		• Asks learners to construct a ten-sentence paragraph using at least five of the listed words. • Instructs learners to pay attention to correctly punctuating their paragraphs.	• Write a paragraph consisting of ten sentences using at least five of these words, paying attention to correct punctuation	Teacher again instructs learners to be quiet and get on with their work.
LSMs: As for Lesson 1; Sheets of lined paper for paragraph-writing activity.				

Teacher again instructs children to stop talking.

Teacher expresses displeasure to a child: "All this time and you've only written one sentence?!"

Teacher coaxes: "If you haven't finished you will hand in tomorrow. Promise?"

Table 13: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 4

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 4	50 minute lesson 2009-10-20	• Reminds children to use capital letters to start a sentence and when writing 'I' (first person singular	• Complete and hand in for marking the ten-sentence paragraph from the previous day's lesson	
		• Demands that children complete and hand in their paragraph-writing task from the previous lesson		
		• Returns marked work to those few children who have submitted completed work, providing where necessary, one-on-one oral feedback		
		• Works on a one-to-one basis, checking on individual children's progress		
LSMs: As for Lessons 1 & 3.				

Teacher reminds learners that many of them have not yet handed in their work.

Teacher instructs learners to settle down.

Teacher sets time limit: "Okay, I'm giving you a few minutes to finish."

Teacher reprimands some children for wasting time: "Are we here to play? Ten minutes and you've taken nothing out!"

Teacher observes to researcher: "I know even if they have it for homework this afternoon, they won't do it."

Teacher again reprimands children for wasting time: "This is taking a lot of time. You're wasting a lot of time."

Break bell rings. Teacher tells children: "Those that are finished can go. The rest must stay in and finish their work." Many children leave without finishing their work.

Table 14: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 5

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 5	**30 minute lesson 2009-10-21**	• Reminds children of the importance of correctly punctuating their work	• Listen to the teacher's reminder about correct punctuation usage	Teacher rebukes a child out of his desk: "What are you doing there?"
		• Hands out postcard blank and asks learners to use the information from the paragraph they wrote about endangered species (Lessons 3 and 4) to write a postcard to a friend	• Write a postcard to a friend expressing concern about endangered species Write the friend's address in the appropriate place on the postcard	Teacher rebukes another child: "Stop that!"
				Teacher notices another child not working: "What's your problem? Why aren't you writing? "
		• Reminds children that they need to include on their postcards the friend's address. Explains - using the chalkboard - how the address ought to be written		Teacher reprimands another child: "Sssshhh! How many times must I call your name? Don't you have work to do?"
				Teacher addresses a group of children not getting on with their work: "Where's your book? What's your problem? K is still having a conversation! K!"
		• Works on a one-to-one basis, checking on individual children's progress		Teacher reprimands a child who is not at her desk: "Why are you out of your place?"
		• Hands out a WordSearch activity to be completed as homework.		
LSMs: Postcard blank; WordSearch worksheet				

Teacher addresses the class: "Okay. I think you should stop talking now and do your work."

Teacher instructs class: "Stop talking!"

A girl becomes distressed. Teacher asks, "What's going on with you?" Child wipes away the tear running down her cheek.

Teacher warns: "I want those postcards before you go. Whether you're finished or not, I'm taking them in."

Teacher re-negotiates: "Okay? I want it before the end of the day. Okay?"

Teacher addresses a boy: "You haven't started writing *any* sentences! What have you been doing the whole time?"

Table 15: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 7

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 7	**45 minute lesson 2009-10-23**	• Distributes copies of a drama script ('The Animal Meeting' [Appendix D]) and asks children to start reading through it silently in preparation for 'performing' (reading, not acting out) it in groups	• Read a drama [The Animal Meeting] silently on their own	
		• Appoints individuals to do an initial reading through of the drama as the rest of the class listens. • Checks on their understanding of certain words (e.g. 'mongrel') • Corrects their pronunciation of certain words (e.g. 'venom')	• Appointed individuals read out loud the different character parts from the drama, as the rest of the class listens	
		• Divides the children into groups of 8 and instructs them to go and work together to practise reading their different character parts • Moves from group to group, checking on their progress and correcting them when they mispronounce a word	• In groups individual members choose their roles and then practise reading their different character parts	
LSMs: Drama script				

Table 16: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 8

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 8	**50 minute lesson** **2009-10-26**	• Marks and returns work to those learners who completed the 'Adjectives worksheet' (Lesson 6) • Captures the marks by asking children to call out their marks	• Receive back some marked work (from Lesson 5 – the WordSearch; from Lesson 6 – the Adjectives worksheet) • Call out marks allocated for these activities	Teacher instructs learners to settle down. Teacher chides those learners who have not handed in their work.
		• Explains that she needs to assess their reading. • Calls on the various groups to perform their dramas so that she can assess their reading performance. • Asks children to read their parts more audibly and with greater expression.	• Perform (by reading only) the drama they practised in Lesson 7, as the rest of the class listens, and the teacher assesses them (using a rubric 'Reading: Reading drama' [Appendix D])	Teacher expresses disbelief at one child's explanation as to why his work was not handed in.
		• Asks questions of the group to test their comprehension of what they have read.	• Group members try – unsuccessfully – to respond to questions put by the teacher about aspects of the drama, e.g. Who are the main characters? How did character 'x' feel? etc	Teacher calls on children to be quiet.
		• Explains that she will give them another chance to demonstrate their understanding the following day.		Teacher expresses concern that children had not prepared their reading by practising at home.
LSMs: As for Lesson 7.				

Teacher expresses disappointment at the children's inability to answer the comprehension questions she puts to them.

Table 17: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 9

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 9	45 minute lesson 2009-10-27	• Calls on the remaining groups to perform their dramas for assessment of their reading performance	• Continue with group presentations of the drama from the previous two lessons	Teacher starts lesson, then stops, to wait for silence.
				Teacher asks children to settle down.
		• Distributes a comprehension work sheet [Appendix E] related to the drama script for the children to complete (including – if necessary - for homework)	• Complete a comprehension worksheet with questions etc. relating to the drama [The Animal Meeting question sheet]. Task to, if necessary, be finished for homework	Teacher calls on children to be brisker getting organised to do their group readings.
				All but one child – whom the teacher cautions – focus on the task.
LSMs: As for Lesson 7 + Sheet of questions to test the children's comprehension of the drama script.				

Table 18: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 10

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 10	**50 minute lesson 2009-10-28**	• Goes through the previous day's comprehension test orally, getting individual learners to share their answers with the rest of the class	• Go through the comprehension task from the previous lesson as a whole class, teacher calling on individual learners to share their answers	The lesson gets off to a slow start. Teacher instructs the learners to settle down.
		• Reminds children about adjectives; asking them to think of adjectives to describe the emotional states of some of the characters in the drama (e.g. Chicken was <u>unhappy</u>)	• Identify some adjectives to describe the different emotional states of some of the characters from the drama	
		• Asks children to identify degrees of comparison (e.g. angry/ angrier) relating to the characters' feelings	• Listen as the teacher reminds them about degrees of comparison	
		• Draws a grid on the chalkboard to enter in the degrees of comparison (comparative and superlative: e.g. big/ bigger/ biggest) and calls on individuals to help complete the grid	• Help to complete a grid on the board for degrees of comparison	
		• Writes sentences on the board (e.g. Athi is the (cheeky) boy in the class. [cheekiest]) and instructs the children to re-write these in their exercise books, making sure they choose the degree of comparison appropriate for each sentence	• Copy sentences from the board and insert the correct comparative adjective into the sentence.	Children remain generally well –focused on the tasks assigned for this lesson.
		• Hands back incomplete (drama comprehension exercise) work to some individuals, instructing them to finish this.		
LSMs: As for Lesson 9; Chalkboard				

81

Table 19: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 13

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 13	**90 minute lesson 2010-10-15**	• Distributes literary text ('The Dressmaker' [Appendix D]) and instructs learners to start reading it silently on their own	• Read through a short story text silently on their own	
		• Reads the text aloud while learners listen	• Follow as the teacher reads the text aloud	
		• Selects learners to read sections of the text out loud	• Read out loud sections of the text	
		• Asks learners to underline any words in the text that they do not understand	• Underline words that they do not understand	
		• Gets learners to look up the meanings of unknown words in their dictionaries • Asks some learners to share the meanings they find with classmates	• Look up the meanings of these words • A few learners share with the class the meanings they have found (some are asked to show their understanding by using the word in a sentence)	
		• Explains how the different types of comprehension questions on the text work (e.g. multiple choice versus a straight question)	• Listen as the teacher explains the different types of questions	
		• Reads through each question and - in the case of multiple choice questions - the answer options also	• Listen as the teacher goes through each of the questions	
		• Gets some learners to read individual questions and suggest possible answers	• Selected learners read individual questions and suggest possible answers	
		• Instructs learners to now write their answers in the spaces provided on the test sheet	• Work individually to answer the comprehension questions	
		• Directs early finishers to choose a book from the collection on Ms B's desk and read quietly	• Early finishers read quietly on their own.	
LSMs: Narrative text [*one of the literary passages used for PIRLS 2001*]; Dictionaries				

Table 20: Key teaching strategies/ learner activities in Lesson 14

		Teaching strategies (instructional discourse)	Learner activities	Teacher control (regulative discourse)
Lesson 14	**60 minute lesson 2010-10-22**	• Explains that the story they are about to read is located in Mali • Asks learners to locate Mali on a map of Africa	• Study a map of Africa to locate Mali	
		• Shows learners an A3 sheet of paper containing pictures relating to the city of Timbuktu as well as some objects referred to in the text they are about to read	• Look at pictures relating to the text they are about to read	
		• Instructs learners to start reading through the text ('Going to Timbuktu' [Appendix D]) silently on their own	• Start reading silently on their own	
		• Reads the text aloud while learners listen	• Follow as teacher reads	
		• Selects learners to take turns to read sections of the text out loud. The text is read through twice *(15 learners get turns to read).*	• Take turns to read out loud sections of the text	
		• Asks learners to read through the text silently on their own one more time, and to underline any words they do not understand	• Read through the passage silently, underlining unknown words	
		• Distributes a vocabulary worksheet (Vocabulary is fun, let's do some Dictionary work [Appendix E]) containing ten words from the text which they have to look up in a dictionary and define • Works on a one-to-one basis, checking on, and supporting, individual children's progress	• Complete a vocabulary exercise, using their dictionaries as needed	
		• Although only a few children have completed the vocabulary exercise, Ms B asks them to report-back on the meanings of the words (*As each word is defined, Ms B sticks the relevant flashcard on the whiteboard, then writes the word's meaning alongside. She later delegates this task to selected learners.*)	• Report back on the meanings of the words done thus far	Children remained well –focused on the tasks throughout this lesson. Teacher did, however, observe to researcher: "This is taking longer than I thought." Teacher indicates that she had hoped to follow on vocabulary work with a comprehension activity.

LSMs: Fictional text; Dictionaries; Vocabulary worksheet; Whiteboard; Vocabulary flashcards

4.5.2 Some characteristic features of the Grade 5 English lessons

The following table is distilled from Tables 10 to 20. Its purpose is to highlight some commonly occurring features of Ms B's reading comprehension lessons.

Table 21: Summary of key activities in lessons involving reading comprehension

	LESSON	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	13	14	Tally
Teacher actions	Checks for vocabulary problems	▓	▓				▓	▓			▓	▓	6
	Admonishes children for lack of focus on task	▓		▓	▓			▓	▓				6
	Reads out comprehension questions		▓					▓	▓	▓	▓		5
	Reads text to learners	▓									▓	▓	4
	Sets vocabulary-related tasks	▓		▓									4
	Instructs learners to pay attention to grammatical aspects			▓	▓	▓				▓			4
	Corrects learners' pronunciation						▓				▓		3
	Explains structure of comprehension questions		▓								▓		2
	Provides background information on reading passage											▓	1
Learner actions	Several learners fail to complete tasks in allotted time	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓		▓	10
	Take turns to read sections of text aloud	▓	▓	▓			▓	▓	▓		▓	▓	8
	Identify unknown vocabulary	▓	▓	▓			▓	▓		▓	▓		7
	Read text silently	▓	▓				▓	▓			▓	▓	6
	Answer comprehension questions		▓					▓	▓	▓	▓		5
	Look up meanings of words in dictionaries	▓									▓	▓	3
	Share their word definitions orally			▓							▓	▓	3
	Write out word definitions	▓										▓	2
	Read through list of unknown words	▓											1
	Try to work out meanings of words from context		▓										1
	Write sentences containing new vocabulary			▓									1
	Learners who finish early read independently										▓		1

Table 21 reveals that three commonly occurring features of the lessons observed were firstly, that Ms B devoted considerable time to vocabulary work; secondly that she made regular use of what is sometimes termed 'round robin reading'; and thirdly, and markedly, that in all but two of the lessons, Ms B struggled to get her learners to focus on and complete tasks allotted to them. I discuss each of these aspects in turn in the following sub-sections.

4.5.2.1 Vocabulary development

Vocabulary knowledge - particularly CALP-type vocabulary - is central to making meaning of text encountered at school, and Ms B allocated a considerable amount of lesson time to vocabulary-related activity. Table 22 below shows the extent of vocabulary-related activity across seven of the eleven lessons tabled in Table 21.

Table 22: Tally of vocabulary-related activities in reading comprehension lessons

LESSON	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	13	14	TOTAL
Number of vocabulary- related activities	6	3	4	-	-	2	2	-	-	5	6	**28**

After the reading of a text, Ms B would routinely ask learners whether there were any words they were unsure of. She would approach this in various ways:

- by asking learners to underline unknown words in the text (lessons 1, 13, 14);
- by getting learners to work together orally to help each other with any words they did not know (lessons 1, 2, 3, 6);
- by handing out a vocabulary worksheet (lessons 1, 14);
- by dealing incidentally with new words as they arose (lessons 3, 6, 7).

Examples of words that Ms B's Grade 5s encountered via these various strategies are shown in the following Table.

Table 23: Examples of words used for vocabulary building

accelerated	endangered	mousetraps	species
adventure	excited	multiplied	trader
anxious	extinction	rectangular	tremendous
baited	mammals	scientist	wooden
content	mongrel	serious	

Nation and Waring (1997) note that not all words are "equally useful" (p. 8), arguing that in building second language learners' vocabulary, ensuring that they "know the 3000 or so high frequency words of the language ... is an immediate and high priority and there is little sense in focusing on other vocabulary until these are well learned" (p. 11). I used the University of Essex Psychology Department's Children's Printed Word Database to do a word frequency search on the words contained in Table 23. Essex University's word database derives from words read by children between the ages of 5 and 9 (a younger age bracket than Ashleigh Primary's Grade5 learners). The database shows that the frequency per million of basic words such as 'a', 'and' and 'the' is in the 27 000-62 000 range. As Table 24 demonstrates, the words contained in Table 23 are, comparatively-speaking, low frequency words.

Table 24: Results from a list frequency search

Word	Frequency Per Million		Words that did not register in the frequency search	
adventure	408			
content	3		accelerated	mongrel
excited	84		anxious	mousetraps
mammals	5		baited	multiplied
scientist	5		endangered	rectangular
serious	16		extinction	trader
species	5			
tremendous	5			
wooden	84			

(Search retrieved 10:07:41 on 20/11/2012, from
http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/cpwd/downloads/list_frequency_results_download.asp)

One of Ms B's 'tools' for vocabulary development was dictionaries (among others, *Oxford Primary Dictionary, Oxford Popular School Dictionary*). She would carry her box of dictionaries from one classroom to the next. She explained that the dictionaries had been donated to the school. Given the choice, she might have selected ones "more

geared at younger children maybe, print a little bigger and so on" (Interview 2, Lines 462-464 [Appendix F]). Ms B would get the children to look up the meanings of the various words, recognizing however, that "it doesn't mean that they understand what those words mean" (Interview 2, Lines 28-29 [Appendix F]). I observed that many of the children struggled to find the words in the dictionary. Ms B suggested that this was perhaps because "they just don't know their alphabet well enough" (Interview 2, Line 517 [Appendix F]). Ms B described getting learners to know how to use a dictionary well as a "nightmare", but emphasized that this was "a skill that they must learn" (Interview 2, Line 519 [Appendix F]).

Once they had located a word in the dictionary, Ms B would instruct them to read out the definition, or – if there was a vocabulary worksheet for the lesson, write out the relevant definition, as in Lessons 1 and 14. I noticed in both these lessons that many learners simply copied definitions exactly as they were given in the dictionary, irrespective of whether or not these matched the contexts in which the words had been used in the text. Ms B commented that "sometimes in a dictionary the word doesn't give you that clear a meaning of the word" (Interview 2, Lines 757-758 [Appendix F]). Teaching children how to use dictionaries correctly is essential, for, as Hunt and Beglar (2005) observe "poor dictionary users tend to look up vocabulary indiscriminately and ignore clues from the original text … [and need therefore to be taught] to identify the unknown word's part of speech as well as contextual clues for finding the most appropriate dictionary entry" (p. 37). The following incident from Lesson 13 illustrates this point perfectly.

As per her standard pattern, after reading the text (Henning Mankell's 'The Dressmaker'), Ms B asked if there were any words the learners were unsure of. Two learners indicated that they did not know what 'content' meant (Lesson 13, Line 77 [Appendix C13]) in the sentence: "Remember that customers who are <u>content</u> will come back," said Totio. Here is what unfolded after Ms B suggested they look it up in a dictionary:

A child indicates that he's found the word in his dictionary.

Ms B: Okay. He's going to give us the meaning of 'content'.

The child reads out: 'something that's in a container'.

Ms B: Okay. I don't think that is what they mean in the passage because you can't put the customers in a container.

Another child offers a response: 'happy'.

Ms B: Yes.
        (Lesson 13, Lines 88-93 [Appendix C13])

Pertinent to making sense of the children's confusion in this instance is McLaughlin, August and Snow's observation that 60-70% of English words have multiple meanings which can only be worked out from context (2000). It is difficult though to gauge if the source of the children's initial confusion here was simply a result of their not knowing how to use a dictionary properly, or symptomatic of their incomplete knowledge of English syntax. In an earlier lesson (Lesson 1) where Ms B had had her learners working on a dictionary activity, she had remarked to me: "They can't distinguish between a verb and noun" (nor, indeed, as in the above case, between a noun and an adjective). She explained that she would tell them, "Go back and see if you can work it out from the context'" (Lesson 1, Lines 71-72 [Appendix C1]). Where children are unsure of a language's syntactic structure, being able to distinguish what part of speech a word is, is easier said than done, as is working things out from context.

Some learners also had difficulty 'making meaning' of names of characters in narrative text. In Lesson 13, for example, a learner asked what 'Totio' meant, to which Ms B replied, "It's the name of a person. It's a common name there" (Lines 83-84 [Appendix C13]). An identical difficulty occurred with the 2009 Grade 5s. After reading Roald Dahl's 'Upside-down Mice' aloud to the class, Ms B asked the learners if there were any words they were unsure of, whereupon a learner asked: "What does 'Roald Dahl' mean?" Ms B reported: "One of my 'stronger' learners felt that this was [a] silly [question]. I explained that it was an unusual name and we don't hear it as much as we would hear

Vuyo, Akhona etc." (Ms B's written record of Lesson 2 [Appendix C2]). This is a problem the average dictionary would not be able to resolve.

4.5.2.2   Taking turns to read aloud

On occasion after distributing a text, Ms B would instruct learners to start reading silently on their own: "But," she commented, "I can't really gauge whether they really read or if they're just gazing at the book" (Interview 2, Lines 91-92 [Appendix F]). Perhaps for this reason, she would cut short this independent reading phase in favour of either reading the text aloud herself while learners listened or by going straight to 'round robin' reading: "Sometimes I read it - I do model reading. Other times I ask some of the learners to read" (Interview 2, Lines 86-87 [Appendix F]). Ms B explained that she saw modeling as a way of assisting learners with intonation and fluency: "I think sometimes they don't really know how to pronounce certain words, especially if it's new vocabulary" (Interview 2, Lines 115-116 [Appendix F]).

Ms B's modeling would then be followed by two - sometimes more - cycles of calling on learners to take turns reading. This happened in eight of the eleven observed lessons involving reading comprehension. Ms B's rationale for these repeated cycles was, on the one hand, to assess individual children's reading, and on the other hand, as a means of "consolidating the reading" (Interview 2, Line 141 [Appendix F]). As noted in Section 2.9.6, however, this type of 'round robin' reading practice is not regarded as the best way of providing oral reading practice (amongst others, Serafini, n.d.; Opitz & Rasinski, 2008; Yaris, 2011). This is especially so in bigger classes where, as Wong-Fillmore (1985, p. 32) notes, there can then only be a few turns per child, and where children tend to be attentive only until their turn comes. It is also problematic if many of the children in the class are non- proficient readers and thus read hesitantly and stumble over words. Not only is this likely to be a stressful experience for the reader, but it is likely also to be mind-numbing for listening classmates, making it all too easy for tedium and inattention to come into play. In Lesson 14 less than half the children in the class got a turn to read, and, as shown in Table 25, on average, each of them read for just 48 seconds. As this Table shows, only a third of the selected readers managed their oral

reading fluently. A number of the others stumbled over words, three of them managing to self-correct, but most having Ms B come in to correct them.

Table 25: Profile of learners' oral reading for Lesson 14

Learner	Time given (in seconds)	Reads fluently	Stumbles over words	Self-corrects	Teacher corrects	Not audible
1	90		■	■		
2	42					■
3	36				■	
4	54		■		■	
5	40	■				
6	35	■				
7	30	■		■		
8	38	■				
9	60		■		■	
10	41		■		■	
11	33		■		■	
12	105		■		■	
13	36	■				
14	20		■	■		
15	52		■		■	
Total time given	712	5	8	3	7	1
Average time given	48					

Using a drama script, as Ms B did in Lessons 7-10, is regarded as a more productive way of giving children repeated opportunities to hone their oral reading skills (fluency, expression and prosody). In these lessons, however, there was negligible evidence of these skills, leading Ms B to censure some of the groups for their lack of expression: "How can you do a drama without expression? What would you do if you were on the stage?" (Lesson 8, Line 44 [Appendix C8]).

 When listening to children reading, Ms B looked for pronunciation, fluency, intonation, "word recognition, evidence of phonemic awareness, and things like that. I try to look at

all those things and correct them – and sometimes they self-correct" (Interview 2, Lines 261-268 [Appendix F]). In the first interview Ms B expressed the view that there needed to be more of a focus in the earlier grades on phonics, on the sounds of the English so as to avoid L1 interference in learners' pronunciation of certain English sounds. In an informal post-lesson conversation at the end of Lesson 8 Ms B expressed frustration at the Grade 5s' poor reading abilities, pointing out that they could not even pronounce the simplest words such as " 'wash' … an *everyday* [her emphasis] word" (Lines 120-122 [Appendix C8]). In our interview four days later, she alluded to the problem of mother tongue interference, explaining: "When they come to the 'u' instead of saying /ʌ/ they say /ʊ/"(Interview 1, Lines 28-30 [Appendix F]). To overcome such mispronunciations, Ms B would sometimes "take a few of them aside and try to teach them …the basic sounds, phonics, like -this is /æ/, /b/" (Interview 1, Lines 25-28 [Appendix F]).

Most of the points in the previous paragraph relate to 'bottom-up recognition skills' (see Figure 1, Section 2.8). More important at a Grade 5 level are 'top-down interpretation strategies', and here Ms B expressed concern that many of her Grade 5s had low levels of reading proficiency. As recorded in Table 9, lessons 7-10 involved working with a drama script ('The Animal Meeting'). To test the children's understanding of what they had read, Ms B asked them some oral comprehension questions. Few seemed able to answer her very simple questions satisfactorily, prompting Ms B to remark to me in our informal post-lesson conversation that her learners simply could not "read between the lines" (Lesson 8, Lines 121-122 [Appendix C8]). In our interview later she revisited this point, lamenting that even though many of the learners decoded quite well, they were not able to "*understand* what they're reading [Ms B's emphasis]" (Interview 1, Lines 78-80 [Appendix F]). Some of the reasons Ms B gave for the difficulties her learners had in understanding what they read included the fact that they were not learning in mother tongue (Interview 1, Line 89 [Appendix F]), plus a reiteration of the remark she had made earlier about their not being able to "read between the lines" (Interview 1, Line 94 [Appendix F]). In Ms B's view, few learners – less than one-third of the class – had achieved grade-appropriate levels of reading proficiency (Interview 1, Lines 129-131; 290 [Appendix F]). She felt that in such circumstances a teacher needed outside

assistance: "I think … if those learners can be taken out of the class and just be taught the basics of reading, it would make my job much easier" (Interview 1, Lines 385-390 [Appendix F]). In Section 4.8.3.2 I describe one initiative at the school whereby for a period funding had been made available to provide struggling readers with additional support.

 Ms B explained that she tried to get the children to do some reading in every lesson. In consequence, she felt, learners were "really progressing - you can see progress at the end of the year" (Interview 2, Lines 146-147 [Appendix F]).

4.5.2.3   Keeping learners on task
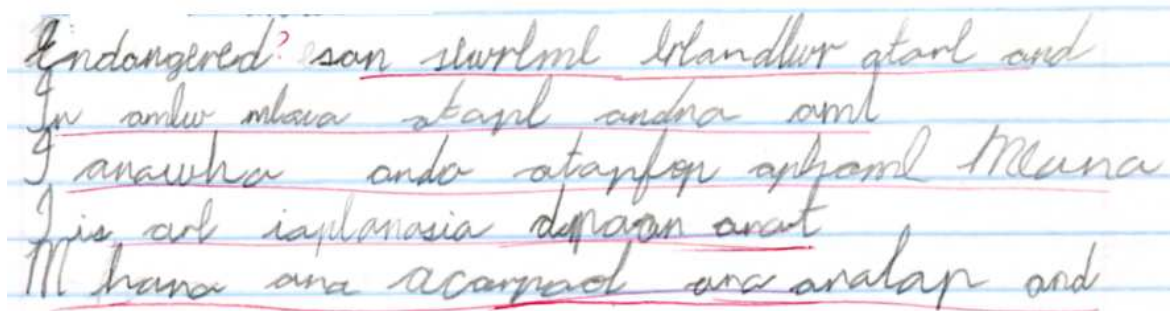
Keeping the Grade 5s focused and getting them to complete tasks on time was an issue in almost all of the Grade 5 English lessons I observed.

It was only in two lessons (2 and 13) that learners completed the assigned tasks, although in the case of Lesson 2 some children had to be given a little extra time in the course of the school day to do so. These were the two reading comprehension lessons where – at my request - Ms B used the literary passages from PIRLS 2001. As indicated in Section 4.3, the time available for these lessons was 50 and 90 minutes respectively, longer than the 40 minutes that would have been allocated under genuine PIRLS' testing circumstances. It would be impossible to establish precisely why in these lessons children managed to complete their work within the allocated time, but two factors may have been at play. Ms B may have adjusted her normal pacing in an effort to maximally meet my request. Part of the answer may rest also in the meticulous way in which PIRLS test items are designed and calibrated.

Apart from these two lessons, uncompleted work was the norm in the lessons I observed. Ms B made frequent reference to the fact that she had planned additional activities, but that the children were taking much longer than expected to complete tasks. In Interview 2, for example, she remarked, with an almost palpable sense of frustration, "That's always the case that it drags out and drags out and … then I have to

cut here and there. ... Maybe I should just keep my lessons shorter. I don't know! I don't know!" (Lines 708-720 [Appendix F]).

Time management was clearly a problem. Ms B issued frequent injunctions about time (Lesson 1: "I'm going to give you 3 minutes ..." [and later], "It's nearly break-time."; Lesson 4: "Okay, I'm giving you a few minutes to finish ..." [and later] "Ten minutes and you've taken nothing out!" ... "This is taking a lot of time." ... You're wasting a lot of time."; Lesson 5: What have you been doing the whole time?"). In Interview 2, however, Ms B made it clear that not all time issues were simply a matter of poor time management. She indicated that there was a more serious underlying problem with certain children: "I think the problem with the kids that can't learn. ... They have that problem that they can't sit still and they find it boring to work ... they're not engaged enough" (Interview 2, Lines 540-546 [Appendix F]). In Interview 1 Ms B had alluded to the relatively high number of children in the 2009 Grade 5 class (10 in the class of 34) who had been diagnosed by a regional school psychologist as having serious learning difficulties. Ms B explained, however, that parents - fearing the stigma of 'special schools' - insisted that their children remain at Ashleigh Primary: "So ... we sit with that problem" (Line 468 [Appendix F]). By way of illustration, Ms B had earlier (Lesson 4) drawn my attention to one particular child in the class whose written work from the previous lesson seemed especially problematic. Below is what the child handed in as her paragraph on endangered species:

Figure 4: Sample of a Grade 5 learner's English written work

Neither Ms B nor I could make sense of what she had written. At my request Ms B had then asked the isiXhosa-speaking teacher from foundation phase to check whether there was any sign of isiXhosa sounds or meaning embedded in the child's writing. The FP

teacher reported back that there was nothing. Ms B had then asked the child to explain what she had written but the child replied that she'd forgotten. Ms B expressed her frustration that "the new system does not have a net to help such children" (Lesson 4, Line 31 [Appendix C4]). My impression is that this particular child gives every indication of having a genuine learning problem, as indeed may the ten other grade 5s mentioned above. However, August, Carlo, Dressler and Snow (2005), citing a United States of America DoE report, do caution that expertise is required "to distinguish between a learning problem and a delay in acquiring English language skills" (p. 50).

In revisiting the problem of children not engaging with tasks, Ms B remarked that she was perhaps at times remiss: "I suppose I have to design something ... on their level – which I don't usually do. Not usually. But you know, you try" (Interview 2, Lines 555-556 [Appendix F]); but, "on the other hand ... the problem is you have to comply with the curriculum, and do things for Grade 5" (Lines 560-561 [Appendix F]).

Clearly Ms B faces a challenge in trying to set up the kind of differentiated learning programme needed to accommodate not only such children, but also a child capable of scoring 100% on a PIRLS reading comprehension test (see Section 4.3). Ms B expressed the view that the expectations of the curriculum were, for many of her Grade 5 learners, not realistic. It was, she said, "like a year ahead of them. ... I think it's just too much work for them" (Interview 2, Lines 674-679 [Appendix F]). Ms B's challenge of trying to balance the different needs of her learners with the imperative of meeting the learning outcomes stipulated in the Grade 5 EHL curriculum is revisited in Section 4.7.3.

The amount of regulative talk that Ms B had to use in the observed lessons suggests that many Grade 5s may be lacking in their ability to self-regulate (Vygotsky (1978), as cited in Leong & Bodrova, 2003, unpaged), "the underlying skill that *makes learning possible*' [my emphasis] (Bodrova & Leong, 2008, p. 2). As noted in Section 4.5.1, a feature of the lessons with the fewest instances of regulative talk was that they were the predominantly teacher-fronted ones. Once Ms B moved to a more one-on-one type of interaction with learners, as she did in a number of the observed lessons, there was a marked tendency for learners outside her immediate spotlight to lose focus on the task

at hand and engage instead in unrelated chatting and general fooling around. And so, for example, a situation arises where, in the closing minutes of a lesson, Ms B says to a child: "You haven't started writing *any* sentences! What have you been doing the whole time?" (Lesson 5, Line 84 [Appendix C5]). Disruptive behaviour affects not only the miscreant, but has a negative knock-on effect on his/her classmates and on the extent to which a classroom environment conduces to engaged teaching and learning.

4.6 The Grade 5 English teacher's assessment of her own effectiveness

It is clear from Ms B's various comments that she did not feel she had been especially successful in developing the reading proficiency of her Grade 5 learners.

In an informal discussion at the end of the fourth lesson observation, Ms B said she felt demoralized and overloaded (Line 53 [Appendix C4]). In a lesson observation a little over a week later, she volunteered that she valued my presence because I could *see* [Ms B's emphasis] and understand what she faced (Lesson 8, Line 130 [Appendix C8]). Subsequently, in the first formal interview, she acknowledged that at times she felt overwhelmed by a lack of self-efficacy: "I think my morale is sometimes very low. You know! There are times that you are *so* tired and weary, and you don't know what/ which approach to use next. What do I do? ... I *wish* there could be a button that I could press on the computer that could give me all these answers. What to do next! Something like that! Ja! But it makes me despondent" (Interview 1, Lines 307-315 [Appendix F]). Ms B is not alone in this sense of despondency - Shalem and Hoadley (2009) cite a number of recent investigations showing that morale amongst many South African teachers is at a low ebb – but I was interested in what in particular made her feel discouraged. Ms B expressed her misgivings about the school's choice of English as its LoLT, coupled with the related (and patently anomalous) requirement that it was thereby locked into a curriculum designed for first-language users of English: "I felt that our school should be first additional – English First Additional – because our learners are not home language speakers ... in my view ... it's just not right to say English is the home language there, but its officially you know it's *officially*" (Interview 2, Lines 972-983 [Appendix F]). When asked whether she felt any of her learners were able to meet the term-by-term Grade 5 'milestones' stipulated by the Foundations for Learning campaign launched in March

2008 by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, Ms B responded: "No – not at all. …
Many of them don't meet those milestones" (Interview 2, Lines 574-578 [Appendix F]).
A glance through the Grade 5 Home Language reading milestones relative to the reading
literacy behaviours observed in Ms B's class indicates that they would indeed be a
challenge for many of the learners. Ms B rued also the fact that policy stipulated that a
child could be held back only once per phase, even though he or she may not have met
the milestones, remarking, "Your hands are cut off in the end" (Interview 2, Lines 583-
584 [Appendix F]).

When asked how she married her teaching with EHL curriculum requirements, Ms B
explained that although she used the curriculum document, when choosing activities,
knowing her learners would not cope she would "go a peg down and rather use text
books more on their level" (by which she meant textbooks for EFAL) (Interview 2, Lines
990-991 [Appendix F]). Ms B did however indicate that the "major task" of developing
her learners' reading abilities to a grade-appropriate level did ultimately bear fruit: "You
struggle and struggle and the kids just don't seem to be able to read at the end of the
grade, but you sometimes see it at the end of that phase or … when they're in senior
phase. You know! You really see them – they just - suddenly all the things - it's all there"
(Interview 2, Lines 1187-1190 [Appendix F]). Interestingly, the time period Ms B
referred to here almost exactly parallels the 5-7 year estimate (made both by Cummins
(n.d.) and by Collier and Thomas (in Collier, 1995)) that it takes L2 speakers to
adequately master a LoLT.

4.7   Barriers to the Grade 5 English teacher's effective literacy teaching

Discussion in this chapter thus far has identified several impediments to Ms B's
teaching of reading literacy. In this section I highlight what appear, in Ms B's view, to
be some of the main constraints.

4.7.1 Learners learning in an 'absolutely foreign' language

Ms B noted in her portfolio that many children were learning in a "language absolutely
foreign to what they know" leading to their struggling with even the most "basic
[English] sounds" (Ms B's portfolio, November 2010). When not under her direct eye,

most of the Grade 5s' peer-to-peer talk was in isiXhosa. My arrivals and departures often coincided with break times. I noticed the language of the school playground was almost entirely isiXhosa. Ms B, too, in the first interview, confirmed that the learners were not communicating "... in English *whatsoever*" [her emphasis]. (Line 273 [Appendix F]). Continuing, she said, "And even if they come up to you they only – with the exception of the few that are quite fluent in English – they'll come and [say], "Can I go to the toilet?" That's basically *it*. The limit of having a conversation with the teacher. Very limited. And even oral. If you have to ask them to come and speak about a topic, that's your [Ms B whispers] *quietest* period. When they *can* [her emphasis] talk, they wouldn't like to talk." (Interview 1, Line 277-282 [Appendix F]). In the previous section I referred to Cummins's finding that in optimal circumstances an L2 child can develop conversational fluency (BICS) in English in about two years, but that CALP takes considerably longer. Ms B's comments suggest that most of her learners had acquired some limited BICS, but rather less CALP in their first five years of schooling. The fact that they had limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and few opportunities to communicate with English-speaking peers, exacerbated this situation.

The issue of Ashleigh Primary following the EHL as opposed to EFAL curriculum has already been touched upon. I simply reiterate here Ms B's misgivings about the appropriateness of having to follow the EHL one. She described herself as something of "a lone voice" regarding the decision to go for EHL (Lesson 8, Line 123 [Appendix C8]). That said, it is not clear what other options existed: for two reasons principally. Firstly, as Ms B herself explained, "So many learners from the township came here and ... Afrikaans was ... even a bigger problem than English" (Interview 1, Lines 245- 247 [Appendix F]). Secondly, South Africa's LiEP requires that whatever LoLT a school chooses, that language needs then to be taught at HL level. The other compelling reason - not mentioned by Ms B – is that in the event of Ashleigh Primary having chosen a mother tongue instruction route, this would in effect be putting many members of the teaching staff out of a job as – at the time of transition – few were fluent users of isiXhosa.

4.7.2 Learners 'don't have the literacy support in the environment'

Many of the homes Ashleigh Primary's learners come from are in Ms B's view ill-equipped to provide the support needed for literacy development: "lack of parental involvement makes it difficult ..." (Interview 1, Lines 116-117 [Appendix F]). She mentioned that many children were "living with old grandparents [who] can't help them with reading and writing" plus the absence of "literacy support in the environment" (Interview 2, Lines 615-622 [Appendix F]). Consequently, she argued, many of the children "just don't have ... that work ethic of doing homework. ... It's nothing to come back to school tomorrow without any homework done. ... it's the biggest fight, because they don't [*with emphasis*] do their homework. I won't say all of them ... but many" (Interview 2, Lines 630-647 [Appendix F]). Although the children's non-completion of lesson tasks often resulted in Ms B telling them they needed to finish them as homework, she ruefully acknowledged the futility of such an instruction: "I know even if they have it for homework again this afternoon they won't do it." (Lesson 4, Lines 34-35 [Appendix C4]). The fact that a high percentage of Ms B's learners had officially been diagnosed as having learning difficulties of varying degrees simply compounded the difficulties coming from home. Parental reluctance to accept such diagnoses prevented appropriate remediation being instituted. It is possible that the Government's policy on inclusive education, in particular the principle of "making sure that all learners have equal access to a single, inclusive education system" (DoE, 2002, p. 8), may have influenced Ashleigh Primary's management team against taking a stronger line regarding how best to deal with children with special needs.

4.7.3 'You have to comply with the curriculum and do things for Grade 5'

Ms B explained that she struggled to find the time necessary to do remedial activities with her weaker learners in the face of the need to satisfy official DoE requirements (Interview 2, Lines 555-558 [Appendix F]). These related mainly to the assessment tasks stipulated for each term for Grade 5. She indicated that meeting the DoE's requirements pertaining to continuous assessment was time-consuming (Lesson 3, Lines 134-135 [Appendix C3]). Quite early in the first interview Ms B started to describe how she tried to help struggling readers improve their knowledge of English phonology, but she then changed tack and explained instead how competing demands undermined

these efforts: "[so] now I haven't been doing it this term because I'm pressed for time. I mean - the exams are supposed to start!" (Lines 47-49 [Appendix F]). Ms B then gave examples of some of the things the DoE wanted assessed: "certain tasks – like a comprehension, like a written task, a dialogue" (Interview 1, Lines 51-52 [Appendix F]). Only a small percentage of her learners managed such tasks: "Most of them didn't achieve what they should have achieved" (Interview 1, Line 290 [Appendix F]).

4.7.4 'Teachers are not competent enough to deal with the issue'

Ms B indicated that although she had "always taught language", she had not specialized in language as such in her initial teacher education: "It was just I ended up teaching language when I started out. I did Afrikaans for my fourth year and English as a second language. And then people just asked me, and OK, you make the best of it. And that's how I guess I came to teach it as a subject" (Interview 1, Lines 342-345 [Appendix F]). In her professional portfolio, Ms B expressed the view that "… teachers are not competent enough to deal with the issue or have the strategies to cope with first and second additional language learners and learning," and therefore needed support via INSET training "from various stakeholders including the Department of Education" (November 2010).

Ms B was complimentary about her subject adviser. She said the subject adviser came "quite often" to the school, and was unfailingly supportive: "I have a good relationship with her" (Interview 2, Lines 1045 [Appendix F]). Ms B did however indicate that she would appreciate support of a more constructively critical nature, saying that her subject adviser was "just very pleased with everything I do" (Lesson 4, Lines 54-55 [Appendix C4]). Ms B's feeling about DoE support more generally, though, was that their training workshops were frequently hurried and superficial: "They just want us to be there to listen. You know, they're microwaving us with the new policies. (Lesson 9, Lines 62-63 [Appendix C9]).

4.8   The Grade 5 English teacher rises to the challenge

Ashleigh Primary represented Ms B's first experience of teaching "at a school where it was in transition. [Before] I was always at … a homogeneous school where it was only

Afrikaans, and so there was never that transition" [Interview 1, Lines 198-200 [Appendix F]). Notwithstanding the problems related to this transition, Ms B believed Ashleigh Primary had the potential "of being a good context for learning English" (Portfolio, November 2010), and it is clear from her comments and from my own observation, that Ms B is a key player in working towards the fulfilment of this potential. As was revealed in Section 4.2, she is a motivated individual, intent upon enhancing her ability to respond positively to the challenges she faces in her teaching. In the following two subsections I outline two such responses. They are, I believe, linked: the second evolving directly out of the first.

4.8.1 Ms B strengthens her pedagogical content knowledge

As noted in Section 4.2, one of the ways in which Ms B chose to respond to the challenges she faced was by working assiduously on her own professional development. In 2010, and despite her heavy work load at Ashleigh Primary, Ms B took the plunge and registered for a master's degree in   English Language Teaching. At the halfway mark of this qualification she remarked on the positive impact her studies were having on her professional insights and competence: "Changes have already started in my teaching, knowing something of the different theories of second language acquisition, and how I improve my practice with this information, can be attributed to this" (Ms B's portfolio, November 2010). In the second of our interviews, Ms B referred again to the positive impact her studies had had on her teaching: "I've learned a lot. I mean since the last time you interviewed me up till now a lot of things have happened. I think I've opened up so much more and I'm seeing my practice through new eyes. I think any English teacher should do a masters" (Lines 1172-1173 [Appendix F]).

Because of the protracted data collection period for this case study, I believe I was witness to a concrete example of Ms B's capacity for 'seeing her practice through new eyes'. This relates to her selection of grade-appropriate texts. I explore this in some depth in the next subsection.

4.8.2 Ms B chooses texts more "on the level of the children"

A difficulty many English teachers face is selecting texts which are at the right level for their learners: neither too easy nor too difficult (Murray, 2010). As noted, for the first of the observed lessons Ms B used a text entitled 'Endangered Species and Extinction' [Appendix D]. She then re-cycled this text via a range of tasks through Lessons 3, 4 and 5. In the last lesson I observed (Lesson 14), she used a text entitled 'Going to Timbuktu' [Appendix D]. Although in both instances several learners struggled to complete the related vocabulary tasks set by Ms B, my impression was that learners struggled less with the Timbuktu text.

When asked why she had chosen the Timbuktu text, Ms B replied, "I found that one interesting and it was also on the level of the children" (Interview 2, Lines 11-12 [Appendix F]). While it would be wrong to make direct comparison, given that different groups of learners (the 2009 and 2010 Grade 5 cohorts) were involved, Ms B's selection of the Lesson 14 text suggests an increased awareness of what constituted an appropriate level of text difficulty for her Grade 5s, along the lines of Krashen's i+1 principle (2009, p. 21). I put both texts through an online readability consensus calculator (retrieved November 12, 2012, from http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php). Using seven well-known readability formulas, the consensus calculator analyses the readability of any text uploaded into it. By way of calibration, I also uploaded the PIRLS text which Ms B, at my request, used for Lesson 2. As is shown in the following Table, there is a clear difference in the readability scores for the three texts. Based on these scores Text 1 is obviously misaligned with a Grade 5 level[36], whereas Texts 2 and 3 are well-pitched. These readability formulas were designed principally to assess texts for learners in the United States of America (where most learners are L1 users of English). Inevitably, therefore,   the texts would pose more of a reading challenge to learners such as those at Ashleigh Primary.

---

[36] Ms B took this text from a CD-ROM [Future Entrepreneurs OBE-plus: Grade 5 English First Additional Language (2006)] (e-mail communication, November 20, 2012).

Table 26: Comparison of texts using a readability consensus calculator

	Readability formulas	**Text 1** (Endangered Species)	**Text 2** (Timbuktu)	**Text 3** (Mice on the ceiling)
Determine reading ease	**Flesch Reading Ease Formula** [Score range: 0-100 (where a higher score indicates easier reading; scores of 90-100 can be understood by an average 5th grader)]	55,5	80	89,4
	Fog Scale (Gunning Fog Formula) [Score range: 0-20 (where a lower score indicates easier reading; 10=hard)]	11,1	6,1	6,7
Determine average U.S.A. school grade level	**Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level**	9	5	4
	SMOG Index	12	5	5
	Coleman-Liau Index	8	7	5
	Automated Readability Index	9-10	4-5	3-4
	Linsear Write Formula	8	5	5
	Readability Consensus	**Grade 9**	**Grade 5**	**Grade 4**
Word statistics	Total no. of words	163	351	513
	Total no. of unique words	106 (65% of total text)	187	239
	Average no. of words/sentence	14	11	11
	Total no. of characters	837	1461	2020
	Average no. of characters/word	5,1	4,1	3,9
	Average no. of syllables per word	2	1	1
	Total no. of one-syllable words	95	249	416
	Percent of single syllables in text	58%	71%	81%
	Total no. of two-syllable words	43	80	70
	Percent of double syllables in text	26%	23%	14%
	Total no. of three+ syllable words[37]	25	22	27
	Percent of 3+ syllables in text	15%	6%	5%

A second online site (Online-Utility.org, retrieved February 29, 2012, from http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp) not only provided readability scores but also identified sentences that – if re-written – might improve the readability of the texts. The potentially problematic sentences identified are

---

[37] In terms of these readability formulas, words of three or more syllables in length are adjudged 'hard' words.

shown in the following Table. The structure of the three sentences listed for Text 1 is markedly more complex than for those listed for Text 2.

Table 27: Sentences identified as compromising the readability of the texts

Text 1 (Endangered Species)	**Text 2** (Timbuktu)
• Codfish have become endangered because of over-fishing and heating of the sea as a result of global warming which has reduced the fish's ability to spawn. • Laws are now being passed to protect animals and their environment and breeding programmes introduced to increase their numbers. • Too many people on earth and the advance of technology mean that the forests and fields where the animals live are being destroyed.	• Adam's favourite thing was to watch the traders use the astrolabe to mark the position of the stars and work out the way to go. • He gave the camels food, he collected water at the water holes, he made food for his masters and he learnt to put up tent at night. • At the busy market the traders took out perfumes, cloth, salt and - most valuable of all - beautiful books. • After many weeks in the desert the walls and buildings of Timbuktu rose in the distance across the flat sands. • These they exchanged for gold, kola nuts, ostrich feathers and cowrie shells which were used as money. • One day Adam's uncle said, "The traders are here, and I am going to sell you to them." • The traders were traveling south to Timbuktu, the most famous city of the time.

In Section 4.5.2.1 I indicated that many of the words Ms B used in vocabulary building activities were of low frequency. Two frequency searches were done for the 11 words used in the Dictionary Work activity sheet for Text 1. The first, a frequency search using the Children's Printed Word Database from Essex University, revealed the following.

Table 28: Frequency search on words used in Text 1

Word	Frequency Per Million	Words that did not register in the frequency search
destroyed	3	accelerated
diseases	3	endangered
environments	14	extinction
pollution	81	
shelter	22	
spawn	49	
species	5	
technology	3	

(Search retrieved 09:44:30 on 20/11/2012, from
http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/cpwd/downloads/list_frequency_results_download.asp)

An only marginally different outcome resulted from a second frequency search. Here I used the Longman Communication 3000 (a list of the 3000 most frequent words in spoken and written English). According to Longman's analysis of its Corpus Network, these 3000 words account for 86% of English words used (n.d., unpaged)[38]. As the following Table illustrates, several of the words on Ms B's Dictionary Work worksheet are not amongst the 3000 most frequent words, and only one (environments) comes in as being amongst the top 1000 spoken *and* written English words.

Table 29: Frequency information on words used in Text 1

Word	Spoken	Written
accelerated		
destroyed	2	3
diseases	3	1
endangered		
environments	1	1
extinction		

Word	Spoken	Written
pollution		2
shelter		3
spawn		
species		2
technology	2	1

KEY		
1	=	one of top 1000 most frequent words
2	=	one of top 2000 most frequent words
3	=	one of top 3000 most frequent words
	=	outside of top 3000 most frequent words

(Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://www.lextutor.ca/freq/lists_download/)

Although many of the words in this list have cross-curricular CALP value, it is open to question whether the amount of classroom time spent on these low frequency words is justified given the pressing need to strengthen learners' grasp of more generically-useful, high frequency words.

4.8.3 The school launches a "two pronged" attack on language barriers

As mentioned in Section 4.2, Ms B was a key player in implementing a school-wide intervention strategy to improve the learners' language proficiencies. Recognising that Ashleigh Primary's English LoLT created an essentially subtractive form of bilingualism,

---

[38] Longman claim that "by knowing [the 3000 most frequent words on its Longman Communication 3000 list] a learner of English is in a position to understand 86% or more of what he or she reads" (n.d., unpaged).

and that English was, to quote Ms B, "a barrier to learning", the school launched a "two pronged approach – namely additive bilingualism and a language academic intervention – corrective and remedial teaching" (e-mail, September 16, 2011).

4.8.3.1   Additive bilingualism initiative

Ms B explained that a first step in the intervention was building teacher capacity (e-mail, September 16, 2011). Staff workshops were organised to strengthen the teachers' understandings of the concept of additive bilingualism. In recognition of the value of mother tongue (particularly for the early grades), one of the school's isiXhosa mother-tongue teachers was tasked with spending 45 minutes daily reading isiXhosa stories to the Grade 1s. In turn, the children were asked to retell these stories and answer questions about them. As a further means of building their oral confidence in the classroom setting, the children were encouraged to narrate stories from home in mother tongue. Ms B reported that this strategy seems to have resulted in the children not only becoming more interactive in class, but also becoming more confident about using the LoLT (English), even though such usage may not yet have become fully grammatically correct (e-mail, September 16, 2011).

4.8.3.2   Language academic intervention

 Ms B explained that a learner assistance programme had previously been in place to improve the language skills (reading, writing and communication) of the "INTERSEN learners (grades 4-7)" (e-mail, September 16, 2011). Funding from a private trust fund had been set aside to employ post graduate students in possession of a teaching qualification to provide additional lessons for struggling readers. Two periods a week had been allocated for these lessons. Ms B explained that the post graduate students followed a structured language remedial programme, involving amongst others, use of pictures, word building activities and word recognition activities (e-mail, September 16, 2011).   Ms B reported that this programme had resulted in an improvement in the learning behaviours of some of the children, as well as an improvement in their levels of reading and writing proficiency, but more, she said, needed to be done. "If this could be done more often, [perhaps] on a daily basis", she believed improvements might have been even greater (e-mail, September 16, 2011).

Unfortunately, however, funding ran dry; though Ms B remained optimistic that alternative funding might be found to restart the programme (e-mail, September 16, 2011). In wrapping up her description of the school's 'two-pronged' intervention plan, she noted that, while it was still a "work in progress", and much had yet to be done, "learners' reading improves all the time and we can see this across the school" (e-mail, September 16, 2011).

4.8.4   A doubling of the school's time commitment to DEAR
 The acronym DEAR stands for 'drop-everything-and-read'. Initially Ashleigh Primary set aside the first quarter hour of each school day for this. In 2009 this time allocation was doubled (e-mail, September 16, 2011). This time increase may have been partly in response to the DoE requirement that at least 30 minutes daily be spent on reading for enjoyment in the Foundation and Intermediate phases (DoE, 2008, p. 6). Ms B indicated that all but two of her colleagues took DEAR very seriously: "These two teachers ... I don't know if they think it's like a free period, the DEAR period, or whatever. ... All the other classes are dead quiet – you can hear a pin drop in their classrooms, and everyone's reading" (Interview 2, Lines 1299-1310 [Appendix F]).

4.9   Conclusion
In this chapter I have analysed data collected in the course of the case study investigation into Ms B's strategies for helping her learners develop their English reading literacy. The data reveal the extent of the burden of responsibility that falls on the shoulders of Ms B, an English language teacher who is working with at-risk children who not only lack school-appropriate proficiency in English, but who also come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Some implications of this situation are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1   Introduction

In this final chapter I explore some implications of the findings of this case-study investigation. I make suggestions for possible ways forward, both in terms of how a teacher in Ms B's position might respond to her circumstances, and in terms of what the wider educational community might do to support teachers such as Ms B. I reflect also on some of the limitations of the investigation.

5.2   Summary of findings

The following research questions guided the study:

- What strategies does the Grade 5 English teacher use to support learners' reading literacy development?

- Does the teacher believe that these strategies are successful in developing learners' reading literacy in English?

- What, in her view, constrains her teaching of reading literacy? How might the constraints be overcome?

- Has she adapted her strategies in any ways over the years?

My key findings are summarized as follows:

- The correlation between low SES and low levels of reading literacy achievement noted in the literature was apparent in much of what I observed in the reading lessons, and confirmed also in comments made to me by the English teacher during the period of study.

- When not directly interacting with their teachers, the tendency was for children to use L1. Off-task chatting observed during English lessons was predominantly in isiXhosa; language usage observed in the playground was exclusively in isiXhosa.

- At the time of the research the English teacher did not have a dedicated language teaching classroom. This made it difficult for her to create an optimally language-rich

environment for enhancing her learners' engagement with literacy-related activities. Despite misgivings, the teacher also went along with what she labeled the 'OBE seating arrangements' imposed by the children's class teacher. In the English teacher's view, a more teacher-focused seating arrangement with children facing the front (instead of in groups) would have better suited their language learning needs, and would have reduced non-lesson-related chatting in L1.

- In eight of the eleven lessons involving reading and working with extended texts, the English teacher employed a 'round robin' reading strategy. On each of these occasions less than half of the Grade 5s got turns to read aloud short sections of text.

- With some notable exceptions, learners struggled to comprehend texts used in English lessons. In the observed reading comprehension lessons, while some learners coped with questions requiring retrieval of explicitly stated information, the majority did not manage questions requiring higher-order processing of text.

- Some of the texts used were not well-matched to a Grade 5 level of reading proficiency. (Independent measurement of three of the five texts, using an online readability consensus calculator, indicated, for example, that one of the texts chosen by the English teacher was more appropriate for a Grade 9 reader.)

- The English teacher devoted extensive time to helping learners deal with vocabulary encountered in texts. Many of the words included on vocabulary worksheets tended, however, to be low frequency words.

- The English teacher employed a largely undifferentiated approach in her teaching. During the periods of observation the pace of instruction (lesson pacing) was generally aligned to that of the slowest of her learners.

- Lack of engagement on the part of many learners contributed to disruptive behaviour and considerable time-wastage in English lessons. Few children managed to complete tasks in the time allotted.

- Mindful of the low levels of reading literacy of many of the learners, the English teacher had taken steps to provide some basic remedial help, focusing, for instance, on developing their phonemic awareness of English sounds. These efforts were hampered on the one hand by reluctance on the part of some parents to accept that their child may have had learning difficulties, and thus to accept also the desirability of seeking outside remedial assistance; and on the other, by time pressures related to the teacher having to meet the term-by-term assessment requirements stipulated by the DBE. A change in the school's timetabling arrangements between the first and second periods of observation resulted in a 20% cut in the time allocated to Grade 5 English lessons[39], which would have exacerbated the teacher's sense of being pressured for time.

- The teacher expressed reservations about the school's choice of English as its LoLT, but acknowledged that this situation was unlikely to change. She and her colleagues had therefore initiated a school-wide intervention strategy which would move the school away from what was essentially subtractive bilingualism towards an additive bilingual approach, thereby bringing Ashleigh Primary more into line with the intended bi-/multilingual ethos underpinning South Africa's 1997 LiEP.

5.3   Discussion of findings

The data reveal that, notwithstanding her ongoing commitment to strengthening her pedagogical content knowledge, Ms B was struggling to adjust her teaching to meet the English reading literacy needs of her learners.

A teacher in Ms B's position faces multiple challenges which – in combination - take on a 'negative synergy'[40]. Because so many of the Grade 5 children Ms B teaches come from

---

[39] It is interesting to note that, including the daily 30 minutes set aside for DEAR, Ashleigh Primary's 2010 time allocation per 10-day cycle across the different language skills marginally exceeded the suggested allocation in the NCS CAPS curriculum document for EHL. The total time allocated per 10-day cycle at Ashleigh Primary in 2010 was 12hours 20 minutes (6 hours 20 minutes of which being specifically designated as English lessons) ; the NCS CAPS EHL document suggests 12 hours for language skills, with a minimum teaching time specifically for EHL of 6 hours (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 14).

[40] After Scheerens and Bosker's phrase 'synergetic interpretation' which they used to describe how school effects can "work collectively … [to] overwhelm the learning environment [even though] any single factor may be inconsequential" (Palardy, 2008, p. 36-38).

socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, they are unable to bring from home literacy-rich experiences likely to augment the school's literacy development efforts. Because English is the school's chosen LoLT, Ms B is officially teaching English to her Grade 5s according to the English Home Language curriculum. This is a patently anomalous situation. Because English and isiXhosa are non-cognate languages, the transfer of linguistic knowledge and skills from one to the other is made more difficult. Because the children struggled with English, their levels of engagement with the tasks Ms B set for them were sub-optimal. Many of them became frustrated and lost focus, problematic behaviour broke out and valuable lesson time was lost. Because tasks were often left unfinished, few children were able to enjoy a sense of accomplishment. In the face of this Ms B revealed that she herself sometimes felt demotivated, most especially because alongside all of the above classroom-based challenges she faced, she was having to engage concurrently with a welter of new curricular and policy demands, some of which ran counter to her accustomed ways of organizing her teaching, and in respect of which the support she received from the DoE was, at best, uneven. Any one of the dynamics outlined here would not, on its own, pose an inevitable or insurmountable threat to a teacher's ability to provide an effective programme of English reading literacy. In combination and in interaction with each other, however, they work to deprive not only many of Ms B's learners, but also Ms B herself, of any real sense of self-efficacy.

In the introductory chapter (Section 1.5), it was noted that Ashleigh Primary is considerably better off (in terms of material and human resources) than the great majority of other schools in the Eastern Cape. The home circumstances of its learners are such, however, that their parents are exempt from paying the nominal annual school fee of R210,00. Palardy (2008) notes that "the social class composition of schools … may have the largest association with student achievement and learning of any school factor" (p. 22). Several studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between learners' SES and their levels of literacy achievement (amongst others Pretorius & Naude, 2002; Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Hart & Risley, 2003; Rothman, 2003; Hoff, 2005; Freebody, 2007; Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Caro, McDonald & Willms, 2009). The words used by Aikens and Barbarin to describe this correlation are "ubiquitous" and "stubbornly

persistent" (2008, p. 235). It is clear from a number of Ms B's comments that she felt that home circumstances for many of her learners - a lack of literacy support and a general lack of parental involvement –contributed to their poor literacy progress in school (Interview 2, Lines 615-622 [Appendix F]).

Ms B's Grade 5 learners' English reading comprehension profile echoed somewhat the broader patterns of the PIRLS 2006 findings for South Africa's Grades 4 and 5 learners (Howie et al., 2008). Her learners coped better with comprehension questions requiring direct retrieval. Questions requiring synthesis and/or inference were more challenging for them. Despite having more scaffolding from their teacher, and more time in which to do the comprehension tasks than would have been the case in a genuine PIRLS assessment, more than half of both Ms B's Grade 5 classes (64% and 54% respectively) scored below the 50% mark on these tests (see Tables 4 and 5, Section 4.3).   This profile tallies also with Fleisch's observation that a large percentage of South Africa's learners from lower down the SES ladder leave the primary school stage "without being able to read fluently in their school's instructional language" (2008, p. v); and in cross-national terms, with Chall and Jacob's observation that the 'slump' (most generally associated with Grade 4) that frequently occurs as children move out of the highly controlled and scaffolded contexts provided in the earlier (foundation phase) grades is more keenly felt by children from disadvantaged backgrounds (2003).

Professor Catherine Snow makes the point that "children with large oral language vocabularies are very unlikely to have problems learning to read" (2004, p. 7). Most learners acquiring literacy in their L1 are able to draw on a large oral vocabulary as well as a reasonably sound knowledge of syntactic structures in the process of learning their sound/letter relationships. Children starting their schooling at Ashleigh Primary, and at many other schools, cannot do this. From Interview 1 it is clear that Ms B felt that many of her Grade 5 learners' literacy development had been compromised by their not having started learning in their mother tongue. She noted in the interview that not only did many of them lack a good foundation in the very basics of reading literacy ("basic sounds, phonics"), but that there was also a degree of mother tongue interference in their pronunciation of English sounds ("they've got their own sounds in their minds …

from their backgrounds") (Lines 13-39 [Appendix F]). Ms B's points are borne out by August and Associates' claim that discrepancies between L1 and L2 sounds can cause difficulties (2003), and by Cunningham, Nathan and Schmidt Raher's observation that where there are differences in the respective orthographic depths of L1 and L2 (as is the case for English and isiXhosa) learners are likely to find it even more of a challenge to grasp sound/letter relationships when reading in the L2 (2011). Genesee (1979, cited by Cummins, 2005, p. 5) noted that such a challenge would be greater for non-cognate languages.

In Ms B's view, Ashleigh Primary's choice of English as LoLT compounded the negative effects of learners' SES circumstances. Because her Grade 5s were experiencing an essentially subtractive form of bilingualism (Lambert, 1974, cited in Baker, 2011), they had little or no access to any common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 2005) in their L1 from which to draw on in acquiring the L2. Collier (1995) makes the claim that the single "most significant student background variable is the amount of formal schooling students have received in their first language" (p. 4).

Not only did Ms B's learners have to *acquire* an L2, though; they simultaneously had to use this L2 to develop their basic literacy skills (foremost amongst these being reading literacy). Scarborough's diagram (2002, see Figure 1, Section 2.8) illustrates well the interaction between bottom-up recognition skills and top-down interpretation strategies that skilled reading requires. By Grade 5 it might be expected that the latter (top-down language comprehension abilities) would predominate. In this regard, however, Ms B expressed concern. Reminiscent of August and Associates' distinction between 'word reading' and 'word comprehension', and their observation that for L2 learners the former is more easily achieved than the latter (2003), Ms B (as noted in Chapter 4) rued the fact that while a number of her Grade 5s read "quite *fluently* … [many] don't *understand* what they're reading" [Ms B's emphases] (Interview 1, Lines 79-80 [Appendix F]).

As noted in Chapter 4, in her reading comprehension lessons Ms B sometimes started by modeling pronunciation and intonation by reading aloud to the Grade 5s. More often,

though, she would hand over the oral reading task to the learners themselves, who then took turns to read sections of the passage. While August and Associates identify repeated reading (with feedback) as a strategy for improving both fluency and comprehension (2003, p. 17), many reading experts regard a round robin style of oral reading as problematic. Wong-Fillmore, for example, noted that this kind of turn-taking works best in smaller groups; for larger classes there are too few turns per child, and learners tend to be attentive only until after their turn (1985, p. 32). This was certainly the case in the observed lessons. In Lesson 14, for instance, less than half the class got a turn.

Inattention was a marked feature of many of Ms B's observed lessons, and she expended considerable energy trying to keep her Grade 5s on task, with only limited success. As previously noted, she had expressed doubt at the wisdom of having the learners seated in groups, saying that she felt a more teacher-focused arrangement of the children's desks would have been preferable, not least because this would serve to cut down on children chatting amongst themselves instead of getting on with their work. All too frequently learners failed to complete tasks assigned to them. Ms B also indicated on more than one occasion that she had had to curtail her plans for a lesson because children were taking longer than she had expected to complete tasks, many of which involved vocabulary work, on which she placed particular emphasis.

Vocabulary knowledge - particularly CALP-type vocabulary - is central to making meaning of text encountered at school (Stanovich, 1986; Chall, 1987; Cummins, 1994; Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Stahl, 2003; Klingner, 2004; Waring & Nation, 2004), for, as Stahl (2003) notes, "knowledge of word meanings affects every aspect of language knowledge" (p. 241). Research shows a strong "reciprocal relationship" (Stanovich, 1986, p. 380) between growth in vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The percentage of words that readers need to recognize in a text in order to 'kick-start' such a reciprocal relationship is likely to be as high as 95-98% (Waring & Nation, 2004, pp. 12, 19). It is a good thing, therefore, that Ms B gave so much attention to building up her Grade 5 learners' vocabulary knowledge.

Unfortunately, however, teachers may not always have a clear sense of how to go about choosing what vocabulary to focus on. Considerable work has been done on developing guidelines. Notable amongst researchers who have contributed to this work are Professor Paul Nation and his associates (1990; 1994; 2001; 2008; Nation & Waring, 1997; Nation & Webb, 2011). Other useful sources of guidance are word frequency lists, such as those developed by the University of Essex's Psychology Department and by the dictionary arm of Longman. Both these sources were used in Chapter 4 in the analysis of data from Ms B's Grade 5 English lessons. They helped show that several words in the vocabulary building activities were low frequency words; i.e. words not centrally important to a Grade 5 child's second language development needs.

Nation (2001) makes the point that high frequency words account for about 80% of all written and spoken texts, and that consequently, "a relatively small amount of well-chosen vocabulary can allow learners to do a lot" (p. 11). "Well-chosen" is the operative term. Had more generically useful words been included on the vocabulary worksheets, the time Ms B's learners spent on dictionary work might have been better warranted. Longitudinal research by Hart and Risley (2003) shows that children from deprived backgrounds have significantly less cumulative verbal experience than the children of professional, middle-class parents. Hart and Risley estimated the cumulative difference to be as high as 30 million word exposures by age three. They found also a strong correlation between early exposure to verbal interactions and children's longer term language skill and vocabulary growth; a point echoed in Stone and Urquart's claim that "the language problems of students who enter school with poor or limited vocabulary only worsen over time" (2008, p. 5).

Murray writes that in her experience many English teachers find it difficult to pitch tasks at the right level, often choosing texts that are either too easy or too difficult, and not giving learners "enough scaffolding to enable them to complete tasks well" (2010, p. 3). Analysis of some of the texts chosen for reading comprehension activities (and on which the vocabulary building activities were based) suggests that Ms B's judgment as to appropriate levels of challenge for her learners improved between the first and second periods of observation. As Table 26 shows, measures of text readability are based

predominantly on 'assessing' word difficulty: totaling up how many words there are in a passage, the number of times a word appears in a passage, the average number of characters and syllables per word. Some readability measures draw attention too to complexity of sentence structure (as noted in Table 27, Section 4.8.2). While the validity of these readability measures should not be accepted without question, they could nonetheless be helpful initially in assessing readability levels of texts.

At least part of Ms B's problem in getting her class to complete the tasks she assigned them appears then to have lain in her choice of text. The range of abilities in her Grade 5 classes made it difficult to choose texts that would challenge and engage her learners, but *unless* tasks are appropriately matched to learners' levels of ability, learners will become bored and frustrated. Disruptive behaviour then becomes inevitable. Snow (2004) writes of the need to provide classroom activities that "promote active involvement with meaningful literacy" (p. 14). Snow's point has dialectical significance for Ms B's Grade 5s: *because* many of them failed to find their literacy activities meaningful, they failed too to become actively involved.

A second source of Ms B's problem in getting her learners to stay focused on their school work may lie in their limited capacity for self-regulation. This is seen as an important aspect of "cognitive competency" (Leong & Bodrova, 2006). Many children start school without a well-developed capacity for self-regulation (Leong & Brodova, 2006; Schunk, n.d.), and research indicates that this applies especially in the case of 'at risk' children who may face "cumulative and multiple stressors" in their lives (Raver & Knitzer, 2002, p. 5). Some of the stressors Raver and Knitzer identify include poverty, low levels of parental education, limited access to resources, substance abuse amongst family and community members, violence, and chronic illness. Ms B indicated that many of the Grade 5 children faced similar difficulties. One of the things Wong-Fillmore (1985) reported on in her investigation of effective L2 learning environments was the value of predictable routine: an 'automatising' of the more mundane regularities of lessons which served to free up cognitive space for new input. Quite independently of the point Wong-Fillmore makes here, for children who face multiple stresses in their lives outside the classroom, predictability inside the classroom may serve as an important de-stressor

which, in turn, might make it more likely that they are then able to build up a greater capacity for self-discipline (or self-regulation).

In terms of what was observed in the English lessons, and from Ms B's own comments during these lessons and in the interviews, it is plain that she did not believe she had yet succeeded in optimally meeting the reading literacy needs of her learners. Timperley (2011) introduces the term 'adaptive expertise' to examine some of the ways in which teaching can be made more "responsive to the specific needs of the students being taught" (p. 22). In the next section I reflect on some ideas which might act as small points of leverage whereby intermediate phase English language teachers might be helped to put their adaptive expertise toward the creation of more finely-tuned literacy learning environments.

5.4   Some possible ways forward

The preceding section highlights the systemic and interrelated nature of the challenges Ms B faced as she tried to develop her learners' English reading literacy. Anecdotal evidence from a number of other teachers attending INSET programmes makes it clear that Ms B's circumstances are by no means unique. Early on in the observation period, Ms B had revealed that in addition to at times feeling "demoralized", she also felt "overloaded" (Lesson 4, Line 53 [Appendix C4]). It is important therefore that any suggestions for how her circumstances might be mediated provide as good a potential return as possible relative to the amount of effort required in implementation.

The focus in the following sub-section falls on the classroom. Given, however, that Ms B is not an isolated case, mediation needs to come also via at least two other players in the educational arena: the Department of Basic Education, and institutions responsible for preparing teachers for the classroom (at both pre- and in-service levels). These are discussed in sub-sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 respectively.

5.4.1 In relation to the classroom …

In the concluding section of Chapter 1 I alluded to a discussion with my supervisor on how to report my data. I was concerned about the risk of portraying what I observed happening in Ms B's classes in 'deficit' terms when I knew full well she was a hard-

working, committed, and smart teacher who had quite simply found herself overwhelmed by her changed teaching conditions. The points listed below represent my effort at thinking through some of the things I might try to do were I in a teaching situation such as Ms B's.

- First and foremost I would strive for more carefully structured rituals and routines (after Wong-Fillmore, 1985) so that my lessons unfolded with more clearly marked openings, closings and transitions, as a means of trying to ensure a greater sense of order and a higher level of on-task attention (if not engagement) from my learners.
- Second I would try to break lesson tasks into smaller chunks, so that even the slowest of the learners could achieve closure on at least some tasks in any one lesson, and the brighter ones would be able to forge ahead and complete a greater number of tasks. In short, I would want to put in place a more differentiated form of teaching and learning.
- Third, I would try to provide learners with plenty of opportunities to hear and interact in carefully scaffolded and controlled ways with English text through, amongst other things, short dictation exercises, short scripted role plays, and lots of joint construction of written text where I first provided models, and the class then worked together and with me to produce and review texts of various types, before being expected to move on to the stage of independent construction (after Cope and Kalantzis's articulation of a curriculum cycle, 1993, p. 11).
- Fourth, given that the situation at a school such as Ashleigh Primary is not an 'immersion' one (as is the case, for example, with many of the genuinely bilingual schools described by writers such as Cummins) I would need to think of other ways to increase my learners' exposure to comprehensible input in English. One way I would do this would be by replacing the DEAR period with my reading aloud to the learners a range of carefully chosen texts – both fiction and non-fiction. In so doing, and in ways that would not intrude on the learners' chances for enjoyment of (and engagement with) what was being read to them, I would try to explicitly model some key reading strategies (predicting, reflecting on what I might already know about the topic, reflecting on what I might expect given the particular genre of the text,

making links between different parts of the text to try to draw inferences, stopping occasionally to monitor my comprehension by asking myself questions, and so on). I would hope to achieve some added advantages here: (a) induct my learners into the potential enjoyment of reading, and (b) expose them to the kinds of texts that would help them more generally to build up their stocks of general knowledge (after Hirsh's self-evident assertion that reading comprehension requires 'knowledge of the world' as well as 'knowledge of words' and (2003)).

- Fifth, I would try to establish a classroom library with sets of graded readers (possibly the *Rainbow Reading Series* from Cambridge University Press) which would afford the learners plenty of opportunities to 're-enact' and gain practice in the reading strategies modeled for them.

- Sixth, I would take care that chosen texts were at appropriate levels of difficulty. Given the range of abilities existing in any one class, these texts would need to be quite broadly based.

- Seventh, I would use brighter children as group leaders for certain tasks as a means of engendering a stronger culture of peer support amongst the learners.

- Eighth, I would try as far as practicably possible to give learners opportunities to use their L1s in productive ways in building up their English vocabulary. As Turnbull and Arnett (2002) note, L1 can, and should, be seen as a "resource instead of a hindrance"; a means of helping to make input "more salient" (p. 205). So, as new English words were encountered, for example, I would ask the children if any of them could share with us the L1 equivalents. I would also make sure there were some good quality bilingual dictionaries at our disposal, and I would encourage the children to maintain their own Vocabulary Books where they noted not only their English definitions, but also, where possible, home language equivalents of words encountered. In short, I would try to shift from a subtractive approach to bilingualism towards an additive one.

- Ninth, I would try to control the choice of English dictionary for my learners. Many dictionaries designed for younger learners provide definitions that are not especially appropriate for L2 learners.

- Tenth, in light of my SGB's choice of English as the school's LoLT, I would as far as possible continue to work with assessment standards outlined in the EHL curriculum documents to get my learners close to the requisite HL level. I would remain mindful, however, that, as the former Minister of Education, the late Professor Kader Asmal (South Africa, DoE, 2002c) anticipated, the curriculum in my school context would inevitably be somewhat "differently interpreted and enacted" (p. 1) as compared with, say, a former Model 'C' school context. To assist in this endeavour, I would draw on, amongst others, resources designed for EFAL learners, which more explicitly attend to L2 learners' language learning needs. I would try to locate a number of excellent EFAL text books (where the authors will have done a lot of the groundwork in terms of mapping out a year's coverage of curriculum requirements) to help me in this.

- Finally, as a very simple aid in helping myself and the learners with time management, I would have a large, prominently-displayed wall clock in the classroom (analogue, not digital), so that when I issued warnings such as "I'm going to give you 3 minutes", or "It's nearly break-time," these statements could be lent more tangible meaning.

Attention to the above-listed points may help teachers in positions similar to Ms B's towards the development of more systematic approaches to their literacy teaching, thereby helping avert the demoralizing and demotivating risks of what Chapman and Tunmer (2003) referred to as 'cascade(s)' of failures (p. 17).

5.4.2 In relation to the DBE …

The two policies that appear to have impacted most strongly on Ms B's teaching circumstances were firstly, South Africa's 1997 Language in Education Policy, and secondly, the NCS for the Languages Learning Area (South Africa. DoE, 2002c) (most recently superseded by the NCS Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents). These two policies are closely intertwined, for it is a school's decisions regarding the LiEP that determines whether English needs to be taught according to Home Language or First Additional Language curricular stipulations.

The difficulties that a school such as Ashleigh Primary has had to contend with in relation to the implementation of the LiEP indicate that the DBE (through its district officials) needs to provide more by way of ongoing guidance and support to principals, teachers, and members of schools' SGBs. The preamble to the LiEP document observed that South Africa's apartheid language-in-education policy had been "underpinned by racial and linguistic discrimination [which had] affected either the access of the learners to the education system or their success within it" (1997, p. 1). Notwithstanding its stated aim of countering "disadvantages resulting from … mismatches between home languages and languages of learning and teaching" (p. 2), the new LiEP has, through its over-emphasis on democratic values, quite simply contributed to a further exacerbation of racial and linguistic disadvantage and to a worsening of whatever mismatches there may be between the language(s) children bring to school and the languages in which they are required to do their learning. Ms B noted in her professional portfolio she felt sure Ashleigh Primary needed to "revisit its language policy" (November 2010), and, indeed, the school has instituted changes to try to better align its practices with principles of additive bilingualism.

The LiEP document notes that it "should be seen as part of a continuous process by which policy for language in education is being developed as part of a national language plan" (1997, p. 1). If, as this document implies, deliberations around South Africa's national language plan are still 'in process', there is hope that more can be done to deepen our understanding of the ramifications of the LiEP as it currently stands, and to make changes where necessary to ensure that schools and their teachers, and (perhaps even more importantly), parents, recognize the full implications of any decisions they make regarding a child's LoLT.

5.4.3 In relation to teacher education

More needs to be done to support teachers like Ms B. Part of this support can come via pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. As noted in Section 2.10, reading instruction has traditionally been perceived as primarily the domain of foundation phase teachers. However, this is a misperception. There needs to be ongoing

refinement of learners' reading literacy skills throughout school (and beyond into tertiary levels). Konza (2011) emphasizes the need for teachers "to become experts in reading instruction" (p. 7). Such expertise is especially important in a school such as Ashleigh Primary, where few, if any, learners have the advantage of coming from literacy-rich homes.

The plight of teachers in Ms B's situation is under-researched, and consequently we are insufficiently aware of what the issues are, except to note that few teachers are adequately prepared for managing such circumstances. Many of those involved in the design of intermediate phase teacher education programmes do not have a strong language or literacy education background and so are not always aware of what needs to be included in the curriculum for these teachers.

At the time Shulman coined the phrase 'pedagogical content knowledge' to describe the blend of content knowledge and knowledge of how to teach it, there was, he argued, something of a "blind spot" (1986, p. 7) towards this kind of specialist knowledge. He noted that the emphasis in many American teacher education programmes was towards more generic, skills-based aspects of pedagogy rather than towards a deepening of student teachers' subject knowledge. Interesting to note is the fact that it was roughly during this time of Shulman's writing that Ms B obtained her initial teaching qualification. In all probability Shulman would have leveled similar charges against South African teacher education programmes, including Ms B's one. More than two decades later it would seem that we have yet to fully resolve this issue. It is vital that teacher education institutions reflect on optimal ways of ensuring that - at the very least in relation to literacy - there is a deepening of their student teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. This applies at both pre-service and in-service programme levels.

5.5   Possibilities for future research

Any one of the ideas highlighted in Section 5.4.1 presents possibilities for interesting classroom-based research projects. These could perhaps be approached via the setting up of a participatory reading intervention project in which, with the help of teachers such as Ms B, some of these ideas were trialed.

Another aspect that I believe would make fascinating research relates to learners' metacognitive behaviours (or lack thereof) during reading comprehension activities. My impression during the periods of observation was that many of Ms B's learners were in a swirl of non- or under-achievement, and did not really understand what they were doing during reading lessons, or – more importantly – why they were doing it. Research on effective strategies for enhancing reading comprehension has highlighted the value of metacognition for monitoring one's comprehension of a text and for making decisions about adjusting one's reading strategies either to enhance comprehension or to address comprehension breakdowns.

Given that, from 2012, all intermediate phase EHL teachers are required to adhere to the curriculum requirements contained in the NCS CAPS documents, the following ideas for future research are informed by some of what is in the NCS CAPS EHL document.

The Grade 5 vocabulary targets suggested in the NCS CAPS Intermediate Phase English Home Language curriculum document are an oral vocabulary of 4500-5000 words and a reading vocabulary of 3500-4000 (new) words by Term 4 (South Africa. DBE, 2011, p. 33). Although I do not know how these vocabulary targets were arrived at, nor how their achievement/non-achievement might actually be measured, it would be worthwhile developing word lists which could assist English language teachers in their selection of words for vocabulary building activities. This could perhaps be done on the basis of a corpus derived from textbooks and other learning support materials across all of the Grade 5 subject areas.

The NCS CAPS EHL document (South Africa. DBE, 2011) notes that "the labels Home Language and First Additional Language refer to the proficiency levels at which the language is offered and not the native (Home) or acquired (as in the additional languages) language. … [thus] reference to Home Language should be understood to refer to the level and not the language itself" (p. 8). It would be valuable to explore optimal ways of bridging the EHL/EFAL dividing line to facilitate easier access to the EHL curriculum for children such as those attending Ashleigh Primary whose parents have opted for the 'straight-for-English' route.

A participatory action research exploration of strategies for implementing a genre- (or text-based) approach in the teaching of English language at intermediate phase level would be very interesting. In the NCS CAPS EHL document it is noted that a text-based approach "is informed by an understanding of how texts are constructed" (2011, p. 12). Although a useful summary of the key features of a range of text types is provided in the document (2011, pp. 27-31), my impression is that many language teachers are not yet familiar with what a text-based approach means in real terms.

It would be useful to monitor the practicability of the NCS CAPS intention that all schools across the country be locked into following the curriculum according to closely specified sequences and time-frames. It may be that this 'lock-step' principle will not work well across our differently-resourced (in both human and material terms) school sectors.

Finally, it is essential that more work be done at the interface between research on teachers' practices and research on learners' achievements (for example in relation to the ANAs). It is my impression that a great many intermediate phase teachers are in a situation where they are teaching children who have come through to them without having yet fully mastered learning objectives stipulated for the foundation phase. Hence, teachers such as Ms B, instead of being able to focus on teaching strategies around reading for meaning are still having to help their learners with the bottom-up strategies of basic word recognition (working on their phonological awareness and decoding skills).

5.6   Limitations of this case study research

Some of the limitations of this case study research were discussed in Section 3.8 of the methodology chapter. These were the fact of it being a very small-scale single-case investigation; the fact that prospects for generalization from case-study data are generally regarded as weak; and the fact that – due to circumstances outside my control - there were discontinuities in the data collection time frame.

A further limitation is that on reflection, I may have changed the way my research questions were formulated so that they were more explicitly open-ended and thereby better aligned with the qualitative intention of this piece of case study research.

Another of the limitations of this study relates to my skills as an observer. In a classroom of between 25 and 35 active (and easily distracted) Grade 5 learners it was not possible to keep tabs on everything that was going on. Although my main focus was Ms B and the strategies she used, given that many of these strategies included one-on-one interactions with different learners, my set of data is the poorer for having captured only a very few of these interactions. I also failed to keep a careful record of time usage during the lessons. My efforts in this direction were, at best, sporadic. I think I was also at times over-complacent about my ability to hold on to everything that happened in the lessons, thereby rendering some of my field notes rather sketchy.

The most complete record of a lesson was Lesson 14 which was videotaped. The facility this offered for going back and re-watching, re-analysing data was hugely valuable, but, because I did not want a single lesson to dominate the overall picture I presented of Ms B's interactions with her Grade 5 learners, I did not fully exploit the data richness of this single video recording. It does, however, remain a resource I could re-visit at some later stage.

I found it quite difficult sometimes to maintain the delicate balance between 'researcher': 'teacher observed' in my relationship with Ms B during the periods of observation. The relationship could not be a 'collegial' one as such, but, given my familiarity with the intermediate phase context, and the fact that I did not come to Ms B's classroom as a 'stranger', I at times found myself trespassing into a collegial zone, and also a zone in which Ms B looked to me for support and advice. It is not possible to judge to what extent, if any, this may have affected the validity of some of my data.

Finally, I very nearly succeeded in drowning myself in the sheer volume of research (and other) literature on reading literacy development. I found it extremely difficult to know when to tell myself that saturation point had arrived.

5.7   Closing comments

This case study investigation has documented the struggle of a teacher faced with significant changes to her established ways of knowing, and of operating. These changes to Ms B's professional environment were entirely outside her control.

It is important to recognize that circumstances such as those in which Ms B operates are a great deal tougher than, for example, the situation in former model-C schools. Such circumstances conspire to rob a teacher of much of her sense of being able to make a positive contribution towards the NCS (Grades R-12) CAPS goal of equipping learners "irrespective of their socio-economic background … with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society" (DBE, 2011, p. 4).

Reading literacy is an essential tool for traversing all the other areas of learning, and – as noted by Konza (2011) - we have now reached the point where there is "compelling consistency" on what the key components are of effective reading literacy teaching. All teachers, but perhaps most especially teachers working in circumstances such as those which exist at Ashleigh Primary, need empathetic guidance and support from the wider professional community to help them put these insights into effect. Without this input, the struggles of the Ms Bs will simply continue, and the aspirational tenor of South Africa's NCS documents will continue to ring hollow for the overwhelming majority of learners.

It is my hope that the portrayal of Ms B in this case study will at once render the respect and appreciation teachers such as Ms B are due for continuing to work hard under far from optimal circumstances, and at the same time alert those in positions of professional responsibility and/or authority of the need to put more effective support structures in place to assist such teachers in their work.

REFERENCES

Abadzi, H. (2006). *Efficient learning for the poor: Insights from the frontier of cognitive neuroscience.* Washing: The World Bank.

Abadzi, H. (2008). Efficient learning for the poor: New insights into literacy acquisition for children. *International Review of Education, 54,* 581-604.

Adams, M. J. (2010-2011). Advancing our students' language and literacy: The challenge of complex texts. *American Educator, 34*(4), 3-11, 53.

Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighbourhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(2), 235-251.

August, D. & Associates. (2003). *Supporting the development of English literacy in English Language Learners: Key issues and promising practice. Report No. 61.* Baltimore: Centre for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR).

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds). (2006). *Executive summary: Developing literacy in second-language learners: report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

August, D., Carlo, M., Dressler, C., & Snow, C. (2005). The critical role of vocabulary development for English Language Learners. *Learning Disabilities research & Practice, 20*(1), 50-57.

Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education* (5th edition).Bristol; Multilingual Matters.

Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: on the relative merits of search for generalization and study of single events. *Oxford Review of Education, 7*(1), 73-94.

Bassey, M. (1998, August) *Fuzzy generalization: An approach to building educational theory.* Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, The Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Retrieved February 25, 2012, from http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000801.htm

Bernstein, B (1964). Elaborated and restricted codes: Their social origins and some consequences. *American Anthropologist, 66*(6, part 2), 55-69.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Revised edition). Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bialystock, E., & Sharwood Smith, M. (1985). Interlanguage is not a state of mind: An evaluation of the construct for second-language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics, 6*(2), 101-117.

Bloch, C. (2002). A case study of Xhosa and English biliteracy in the foundation phase versus English as a 'medium of destruction'. *Perspectives in Education, 20*(1). 65-78.

Bodrova, E. & Leong, D. L. (2008). Developing self-regulation in kindergarten: Can we keep all the crickets in the basket? *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*, March 2008, 1-3. Retrieved November 30, 2012, from http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200803/BTJ_Primary_Interest.pdf

Boulton, D. (2003, September 5). The effects of learning to read on children's minds. (Interview with Dr Anne Cunningham, Director of the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education with the Graduate School of Education at Berkeley and the Historian of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading). Retrieved March 7, 2011, from http://www.childrenofthecode.org/interviews/cunningham.htm

Bush, T. (2002). Authenticity in research: Reliability, validity and triangulation. In A. R. J. Briggs & M. Coleman (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (2nd ed.) (pp. 91-105). London: Sage.

Caro, D.H., McDonald, J. T., & Willms, J. D. (2009). Achievement trajectories from childhood to adolescence. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *32*(3), 558-590.

Carrell, P. L. (1984). Schema theory and ESL reading: Classroom implications and applications. *The Modern Language Journal*, *68*(4), 332-343.

Chall, J. S. (1983). *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Chall, J. S. (1987). Two vocabularies for reading: Recognition and meaning. In M. G. McKeown & M. E. Curtis, (Eds), *The nature of vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 7-17). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chall, J. S. (1989). Learning to read: The great debate 20 years later: A response to 'Debunking the Great Phonics Myth. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *70*(7), 521-538.

Chall, J. S. (2000). *The academic achievement challenge: What really works in the classroom?* New York: Guilford Press.

Chall, J. S., & Jacobs, V. A. (2003). Poor children's fourth-grade slump. *All about adolescent literacy.* Retrieved November 9, 2011, from http://www.adlit.org/article/13995/

Chall, J. S., Jacobs, V. A. & Baldwin, L. E. (1990). *The reading crisis: Why poor children fall behind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chapman, J. W., & Tunmer, W. E. (2003). Reading difficulties, reading-related self-perceptions, and strategies for overcoming negative self-beliefs. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *19*(1), 5-24.

Chisholm, L. & Sujee, M. (2006). Tracking racial desegregation in South African schools. *Journal of Education*, *40*, 141-159.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K., & Morrison, K. R. B. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th edition). Milton Park, Oxon: Routledge.

Collier, V. (1995). Acquiring a second language for school. *Directions in Language & Education, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*, *1*(4). Retrieved September 23, 2001, from http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/directions/04.htm.

Cope, W., & Kalantzis, M. (1993). *The powers of literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing*. London: Falmer Press.

Cornbleth, C. (1985). Reconsidering Social Studies Curriculum. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 13*(2), 31-45.

Cornbleth, C. (2001). Climates of constraint/restraint of teachers and teaching. In W. B. Stanley, (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 73-95). Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 124-131.

Cummins, J. (1994). The acquisition of English as a second language. In K. Spangenberg-Urnschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (13th printing, 2005) (pp. 36-62). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Cummins, J. (2005, September). *Teaching for cross-language transfer in dual language education: Possibilities and pitfalls.* TESOL Symposium on Dual Language Education: Teaching and Learning Two Languages in the EFL setting, Bogazici Iniversity, Istanbul, Turkey. Retrieved October 7, 2011, from http://www.achievementseminars.com/seminar_series_2005_2006/readings/tesol.turkey.pdf

Cummins, J. (2009). Bilingual and immersion programs. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty, (Eds), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 161-181). Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Cummins, J. (n.d.). BICS and CALP. Retrieved August 13, 2010, from, http://iteachilearn.org/cummins/bicscalp.html

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. *American Educator*, Spring/Summer.

Cunningham, A., Nathan, R. G., & Schmidt Raher, K. (2011). Orthographic processing in models of word recognition. In M. L. Kamil, P. D. Pearson, E. B. Moje, & P. P. Afferbach (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Volume 4) (pp. 259-285). New York: Routledge.

De Klerk, V. (2002). Language issues in our schools: Whose voice counts? Part 1: The parents speak. *Perspectives in Education, 20*(1). 1-14.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good resarch guide for small-scale social research projects* (3rd edition). Berkshire: Mc Graw Hill, Open University Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd edition) (pp. 1-42). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring how texts work*. Roselle, N.S.W.: Primary English Teachers' Association.

Desai, Z. (1999). Enabling policies, disabling practices. *Per Linguam, 15*(1), 42-53.

Eskey, D. E. (1988). Holding in the bottom: An interactive approach to the language problems of second language problems. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, (pp. 93-100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eskey, D. E. (2005). Reading in a second language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.) *Handbook of research on second language teaching and learning* (pp. 563-580). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Eskey, D. E., & Grabe, (1988). Interactive models for second language reading: Perspectives on instruction. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, (pp. 223-238). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fleisch, B. (2008). *Primary education in crisis: Why South African schoolchildren underachieve in reading and mathematics*. Cape Town: Juta

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(2), 219-245.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th edition), pp. 301-316. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freebody, P. (2007). *Literacy education in school: Research perspectives from the past, for the future*. Australian Education Review: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Retrieved February, 6, 2012 from http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/AER52.pdf

Freire, P. (1991). The importance of the act of reading. In C. Mitchell & K. Weiler, (Eds.), *Rewriting literacy: Culture and the discourse of the other*, pp. 139-145. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books. Retrieved February 27, 2012, from http://hypergeertz.jku.at/GeertzTexts/Thick_Description.htm

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Goldenberg, C. & Friedlander, E. (2011). Reading instruction for English language learners. In *Encyclopaedia of Language and Literacy Development* (pp. 1-9). London, Ontario: Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network.

Goodman, K. S. (1967). Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. Journal of the Reading Specialist. 6, 126-136. Retrieved November 18, 2011, from https://uascentral.uas.alaska.edu/onlinelib/Fall-2007/ED674-JD1/Goodman_article.pdf

Grabe, W. (2004). Research on teaching reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *24*, 44-69.

Granville, S., Janks, H., Joseph, M., Mphahlele, M., Ramani, E., Reed, Y., & Watson, P. (1997). *English with or without g(u)ilt: A position paper on language in education policy for South Africa.* Paper presented at the English Teachers' Connect International Conference, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Green, S. (2002). Using an expectancy-value approach to examine teachers' motivational strategies. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *18*(8), 989-1005.

Haralambos, M., Holborn, M, and Heald, R. (2000). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives* (5th edition). London: Collins.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (2003). The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3. *American Educator*, *27*(1), 4-9. Retrieved February 4, 2012, from http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/8446968/1524504014/name/hart+%26+risley+2 003.pdf

Hartshorne, K. (1995). Language policy in African education: A background to the future. In R. Mesthrie (Ed.) *Language and social history: Studies in South African sociolinguistics* (pp. 206-318). Cape Town: David Philip.

Heugh, K. (2000a). *The case against bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa.* PRAESA Occasional Papers No. 6. Cape Town: PRAESA.

Heugh, K. (2000b). Editorial. *Perspectives in Education*, *20*(1). vii-x.

Heugh, K. (2000c). The case against bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, *20*(1). 171-196.

Hill, A. M. (2009). An investigation into reasons for underperformance in Literacy in Grades 3 and 6 in selected national quintiles 1, 2 & 3 schools in the Western Cape Education Department . *Education Papers and Reports*. Paper 4. Retrieved June 6, 2011, from, http://dk.cput.ac.za/ed_papers/4

Hirsch, E.D. (2003). Reading comprehension requires knowledge - of words and the world. *American Educator*, *27*(1), 10-13,16-22,28-29,48.

Hirsch, E.D. (2010-2011). Beyond comprehension: We have yet to adopt a common core curriculum that builds knowledge grade by grade - but we need to. *American Educator*, *34*(4), 30-36.

Hoff, E. (2005). How social contexts support and shape language development. *Developmental Review*, *26*, 55-88.

Hoff, E. (2009). *Language development* (4th ed.). Belmont, California: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Hofmeyr, J. (2000). *The emerging school landscape in post-apartheid South Africa.* Retrieved September 10, 2011, from http://www.sun.ac.za/if/Taakgroepe/iptg/hofmeyr.pdf

Hook, P. E. & Jones, S. D. (2002). The importance of automaticity and fluency for efficient reading comprehension. Reprinted from the International Dyslexia Association quarterly newsletter, *Perspectives*, Winter, 2002, vol. 28, no. 1, pages 9-14. Retrieved October 15, 2011, from http://www.resourceroom.net/readspell/2002_automaticity.asp

Howie, S. (2008). (Research in literacy). MEd(ELT) lecture session, August 13, 2008. Rhodes University, Education Department, Grahamstown.

Howie, S., Venter, E., van Staden, S., Zimmerman, L., Long, C. du Toit, C., Scherman, V. & Archer, E. (2008). *PIRLS 2006 Summary Report: South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, University of Pretoria.

Hungi, N., Makuwa, D., Ross, K., Saito, M., Dolata, S., van Cappelle, F., Paviot, L., & Vellien, J. (2010). *SAQMEC III project results: Pupil achievement levels in reading and mathematics* (Working Document No. 1). Retrieved June 9, 2011, from http://www.sacmeq.org/downloads/sacmeqIII/WD01_SACMEQ_III_ Results_Pupil_Achievement.pdf

Hunt, A., & Beglar, D. (2005). A framework for developing EFL reading vocabulary. *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 17(1), 23-59. Retrieved November 21, 2012, from http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/April2005/hunt/hunt.pdf

Iberg, J. R. (2001). Unconditional positive regard: Constituent activities. In J. D. Bozarth & P. Wilkins (Eds.), *Unconditional positive regard: Rogers' therapeutic conditions: Evolution, theory and practice* (Volume 3) (pp. 155-171). Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.

Interlanguage. (2011, October). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia*. Retrieved November 7, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org

Isaacs, D. (2010, January 6). SA's 'incomes-based' education system perpetuates inequality. *Business Day*, unpaged. Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=90738

Jackson, M. J. (2008). Evaluating a school as a context for supporting the development of English as an additional language. MEd(ELT) assignment, Rhodes University, Education Department, Grahamstown.

Kanjee, A., & Chudgar, A. (2009, November). *Accuracy of the poverty quintile system for classifying South African schools.* PowerPoint presentation made at the 2nd Monitoring and Evaluation Colloquium, Gauteng Department of Education, Sandton. Retrieved October 7, 2012, from http://www.hsrc.ac.za/research/output/outputDocuments/6124_Kanjee-Accuracyofpovertyquintile.pdf

Klinger, J. (2004). Assessing reading comprehension. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 29(4), 59-70.

Koda, K. (2007). Reading and language learning: Crosslinguistic constraints on second language reading development. *Language Learning,* 57, 1–44.

Konaré, B. (1994). Reading comprehension in large classes: A practical classroom procedure. *English Teaching Forum, 32*(4), 6-9.

Konza, D. (2011). Research into practice: Understanding the reading process. Government of South Australia: Department of Education and Children's Services. Retrieved December 22, 2012, from http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/literacy

Korzybski, A. (1931, December). A non-Aristotelian system and its necessity for rigour in Mathematics and Physics. Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society (Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science), New Orleans, Louisiana. (Reprinted in Korzybski, A. (1933). *Science and Sanity* (4th edition), pp. 747-761. Lakeville, Connecticut: The Institute of General Semantics.)

Krashen, S. D. (2009). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition* (Internet edition). Retrieved September 12, 2011, from http://sdkrashen.com/Principles_and_Practice/Principles_and_Practice.pdf

Kuhn, M. R. & Stahl, S. A. (n.d.). Fluency: A Review of Developmental and Remedial Practices. Retrieved June 1, 2011, from http://www.ciera.org/library/reports/inquiry-2/2-008/2-008.html

Langhan, D P. (1993). *The textbook as a source of difficulty in teaching and learning: A final report of the Threshold Project*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Language in Education Policy. (1997). Retrieved March 4, 2011, from http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=XpJ7gz4rPT0%3D&tabid=390&mid=1125

Leong, D. J. & Bodrova, E. (2006, December 22). Developing self-regulation: The Vygotskian view. *Academic Exchange Quarterly.* Retrieved November 30, 2012, from http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Developing+self-regulation:+the+Vygotskian+view.-a0159921038

Luckett, K. (1993). "National Additive Bilingualism": Towards the formulation of a language plan for South African schools. *Southern African Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *2*(1), 38-60.

Maskit D. (2011). Teachers' attitudes toward pedagogical changes during various stages of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(5), 851-860.

Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*, *62*(3), 279-300.

Maxwell, J. A. (2009). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods* (2nd ed.) (pp. 214-253). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

McKay, S. L., & Rubdy, R. (2009). The social contexts of language teaching. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 8-25). Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell.

McLaughlin, B., August, D., & Snow, C. E. (2000). *Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in English language learners* (Final performance report). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center.

McNeil, , L. (2012). Using talk to scaffold referential questions for English language learners. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *28*(3), 396-404.

Mikulecky, B. S. (2008). Teaching reading in a second language. Retrieved September8, 2011, from http://www.longmanusahome.com/images/stories/monographs/FINAL-LO%20RES-Mikulecky-Reading%20Monograph%20.pdf

Moloi, M. & Strauss, J. (2005). The SACMEQ II Project in South Africa: A study of the conditions of schooling and quality of education. Harare: SACMEQ.

Mullis, I. V. S., Martin, M. O., Kennedy, A. M., & Trong, K. L. (2011). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): 2011 writing item guidelines.* Boston: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

Murray, S. (2002). Democratic values, humanism and African language learning. *Perspectives in Education, 20*(1). 111-121.

Murray, S. (2010). *The role of feedback and assessment in language learning* (Core text). BEd(Honours) English Language Teaching elective, Rhodes University, Education Department, Grahamstown.

Murray, S. (2011a). The Matthew Effect: Why extensive reading is so important to literacy development. *Teaching English Today (A project of the English Academy of Southern Africa, sponsored by the Donaldson Trust), 1*(2), (unpaged).

Murray, S. (2011b). *Core text 1: Acquiring language and literacy.* Bachelor of Education (Honours) lecture handout, Rhodes University, Education Department, Grahamstown.

Murray, S. (2011c). *Core text 3:* Teaching literacy (reading, writing and viewing). Bachelor of Education (Honours) lecture handout, Rhodes University, Education Department, Grahamstown.

Musekwa, R.F., & Jijana, T. (2011, February 1). It's about square metreage, not language, say principals. *Grocott's Mail*, p. 1.

Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary.* New York: Newbury House.

Nation, I. S. P. (1994). *New ways in teaching vocabulary.* Alexandria, Va: TESOL.

Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P. (2008). *Teaching vocabulary: Strategies and techniques.* Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning.

Nation, P. & Waring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage and word lists. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 6-19). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, P., & Webb, S. (2011) *Researching and analysing vocabulary.* Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Opitz, M. E., & Rasinski, T. V. (2008) Goodbye Round Robin: 25 effective oral reading strategies. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Palardy, G. J. (2008). Differential school effects among low, middle, and high social class composition schools: A multiple group, multilevel latent growth curve analysis. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice, 19*(1), 21-49.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Penner-Wilger, M. (2008). *Reading fluency: A bridge from decoding to comprehension*. Ottawa: AutoSkill International.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – one's own. *Educational Researcher, 17*(7), pp. 17-21.

Pica, T. (1994). Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second-language learning conditions, processes and outcomes? (Review article). *Language Learning, 44*(3), 493-527.

Porter, A. C., & Smithson, J. L. (2001). *Defining, developing and using curriculum indicators* (CPRE Research Report Series RR-048). University of Pennsylvania: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Pretorius, E. J. & Machet, M. P. (2004). The socio-educational context of literacy accomplishment in disadvantaged schools: Lessons for reading in the early primary school years. *Journal for Language Teaching, 38*(1), 45-62.

Pretorius, E. J., & Currin, S. (2010). Do the rich get richer and the poor poorer? The effects of an intervention programme on reading in the home and school language in a high poverty multilingual context. *International Journal of Educational Development, 30,* 67–76.

Pretorius, E., & Naude, H. (2002). A culture in transition: Poor reading and writing ability among children in South African townships. *Early Child Development and Care, 172,* 439–449.

Probyn, M. (1998). *Teachers' reflections on learning and teaching through the medium of English as a second language*. Unpublished master's thesis, Oxford University, Oxford.

Probyn, M., Murray, S., Botha, L. Botya, P., Brooks, M. & Westphal, V. (2002). Minding the gaps: An investigation into language policy and practice in four Eastern Cape districts. *Perspectives in Education, 20*(1). 29-46.

Raver, C. C., & Knitzer, J. (2002). Ready to enter: What research tells policymakers about strategies to promote social and emotional school readiness among three- and four-year-old children. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

Rayner, K., Foorman, B. R., Perfetti, C. A., Pesetsky, D., & Seidenberg, M. S. (2001). How psychological science informs the teaching of reading. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 2*(2), 31-74.

Rees, D. (1997). *Reading developmental continuum.* Port Melbourne, Victoria: Rigby Heinemann.

Robertson, S-A. (2008). *Analysis of a teacher's questions.* MEd(ELT) research report, Rhodes University Education Department, Grahamstown.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupil's intellectual development.* New York: Rinehart and Winston.

Ross, N. J. (2001). The brainwork of language. *Modern English Teacher*, *10*(2), 5-9.

Rothman, S. (2003, April). The changing influence of socioeconomic status on student achievement: Recent evidence from Australia. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 21-25 April 2003. Retrieved November 14, 2012, from http://research.acer.edu.au/lsay_conference/3

Scarborough, H.S. (2002). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S.B. Neumann and D.K. Dickinson (Eds), *Handbook of early literacy research, Volume 1* (pp. 97-110). New York: Guilford Press.

Scholastic Red Teacher Resource. (2002). A look at the research Retrieved June 15, 2011, from http://www.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/ pdf/r/reading_bestpractices_assessment_red_c1_L02_tr_alookrsrch.pdf

Schunk, D. (n.d.). Self-regulated learning. Retrieved November 28, 2012, from http://www.education.com/reference/article/self-regulated-learning/

Serafini, F. (n.d.). *Round robin reading and other perils of reading education.* Retrieved November 23, 2012, from http://frankserafini.com/Handouts/Perils.htm

Shalem, Y., & Hoadley, U. (2009). The dual economy of schooling and teacher morale in South Africa. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 19(2), 119-134.

Shalem, Y., & Pendlebury, S. (Eds). *Reclaiming teaching: Critical issues in curriculum, pedagogy and learning.* Claremont, Cape Town: Juta.

Shoebottom, P. (n.d.). *Second language acquisition: Essential information.* Retrieved February 7, 2010, from, esl.fis.edu/teachers/support/cumin.htm

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, *15*(2), 4-14.

Silberstein, S. (1994). *Techniques and resources in teaching reading.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simpson, M. & Tuson, J. (2003). *Using observations in small scale research: A beginner's guide* (Revised edition). Edinburgh: The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow.

Skehan, P. (2001) Comprehension and production strategies in language earning. In C. N. Candlin & N. Mercer (Eds.), *English language in its social context: A reader* (pp. 75-89). London: Routledge.

Snow, C. E. (2004). What counts as literacy in early childhood? To appear in K. McCartney & D. Phillips (Eds.), *Handbook of early child development*. Oxford: Blackwell. Retrieved December 18, 2012, from http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~snow/CV/Publication%20PDFs/SNOWWhat%20c ounts%20as%20literacy%20in%20early%20childhood_final.pdf

South Africa. Department of Basic Education. (2009). *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

South Africa. Department of Basic Education. (2010a). *The status of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in South African public schools: A qualitative overview*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

South Africa. Department of Basic Education. (2010b). *Foundations for Learning: Intermediate phase assessment framework* (revised edition). Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum And Assessment Policy Statement: Grades 4-6: English Home Language*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2000). *A South African curriculum for the twenty first century: Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005*. Retrieved June 21, 2011, from http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/reports/education/curric2005/curric20 05.htm#contents

South Africa. Department of Education. (2002a). *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Languages English - Home Language*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2002b). *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Languages English – First Additional Language*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2002c). *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools), Overview*. Retrieved September 6, 2011, from http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JU1Y7NGqqmk%3d&tabi d=390&mid=1125

South Africa. Department of Education. (2002d). *Implementing inclusive education in South Africa: True stories we can learn from*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2003). *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes: Languages*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2008a). *Foundations for Learning Campaign: 2008-2011*. Government gazette no. 30880. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. Department of Education. (2008b). *National reading strategy*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

South Africa. President's Office. (1996). *South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.* Retrieved February 5, 2011, from http://www.info.gov.za/acts/1996/a84-96.pdf

Stahl, S. (n. d). Fluency: Instruction and assessment. Retrieved November 29, 2011, from *www.prel.org/programs/rel/fluency/Stahl.ppt*

Stahl, S. (2003). Vocabulary and readability: How knowing word meanings affects comprehension. *Topics in Language Disorders*, *23*(3), 241-247.

Stahl. S. (2004). What do we know about fluency? Findings of the National Reading Panel. In P. McCardle and V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research* (pp. 187-211). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Company.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *XXI*(4), 360-407.

Stanovich, K. E. (1993). Does reading make you smarter? Literacy and the development of verbal intelligence. In H. Reese (Ed), *Advances in child development and behaviour : Volume 24* (pp. 133-180). San Diego: Academic Press.

Stevens, C. (2002). Critical Pedagogy on the Web. Retrieved February 14, 2012, from http://mingo.info-science.uiowa.edu/~stevens/critped/page1.htm

Stone, B. J., & Urquart, V. (2008). *Remove limits to learning with systematic vocabulary instruction.* Denver: McREL.

Swain, M. and Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, *16*(3), 371-391.

Swanborn, P. (2010). *Case study research: What, why and how?* London: Sage.

Timperley, H. (2011). *Using student assessment for professional learning: Focusing on students' outcomes to identify teachers' needs* (Paper 21). Mebourne: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (State of Victoria, Australia)

Turnbull, M., & Arnett, K. (2002). Teachers' use of the target and first languages in second and foreign language classrooms. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *22*, 204-218.

Tyler, K. M., Boykin, A. W., & Walton, T. R. (2006). Cultural considerations in teachers' perceptions of student classroom behaviour and achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *22*(8), 998-1005.

UNISA. (n.d.). Family Literacy Project. Retrieved July 21, 2011, from http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=2133

Vally, S., Dolombisa, Y., & Porteus, K. (2002). Violence in South African schools. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *2*(1), 80-90.

Valsami, A. (n.d.) *Jeanne S. Chall: Reading expert and psychologist* (Obituary: Director of Communications, Harvard Graduate School of Education). The National Right to read Foundation, Strasburg, VA. Retrieved June 13, 2011, from http://www.nrrf.org/article_chall.11-99.htm

van der Berg, S. (2005). The schooling situation: Primary school performance is the key. *SA reconciliation, 3*(3), 2-3.

Van Maanen, J., Manning, P.K., & Miller, M.L. (1990) Editors' introduction. In H.F. Wolcott, *Writing up qualitative research: Qualitative research method series 20* (pp. 7-8). Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Van Staden, S., & Howie, S. J. (n.d.). South African teacher profiles and emerging teacher factors: The picture painted by PIRLS 2006. Retrieved June 13, 2011, from http://www.cepd.org.za/files/CEPD_TEP_Conf2008_VanStadenHowie.pdf

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Waring, R. & Nation, P. (2004). Second language learning and incidental vocabulary learning. *Angles on the English-speaking World*, *4*, 11-23.

Winter, G. (2000). A comparative discussion of the notion of 'validity' in qualitative and quantitative research. *The Qualitative Report* [On-line serial], *4*(3/4). Retrieved February 17, 2012, from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/winter.html

Wong-Fillmore, L. (1985) When does teacher talk work as input? In S.M. Gass & C.G. Madden (Eds), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 17-50). Boston, Mass.: Heinle & Heinle.

Wong-Fillmore, L., & Snow, C. E. (2000). *What teachers need to know about language* (Special Report). (Contract No. ED-99-CO-0008). U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Center for Applied Linguistics.

Yaris, K. (2011). *Weighing the options: Alternatives to round robin reading* (Literacy Builders' Blogspot). Retrieved November 23, 2012, from http://literacy-builders.blogspot.com/2011/03/weighing-options-alternatives-to-round.html

Zimmerman, L. (2010). *The influence of schooling conditions and teaching practices on curriculum implementation for Grade 4 reading literacy development*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

APPENDIX A: Permissions letters

A1: Letter to Principal

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Tel: (046) 603 8383/4 • Fax: (046) 622 8028

Friday, 30 October 2009

Principal: [school's name]

[Address]

Dear ....

Re **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I thank you very much for having agreed to allow me to carry out research in your school.

As indicated in early June this year when I first mooted with you the possibility of using the Grade 5 English lessons taught at your school for my research, I am doing a Master of Education degree in English Language Teaching [MEd(ELT)]. The research in your school will form the substance for my half-thesis.

Thank you for directing me to [Teacher's name]. As you know, I have now paid several visits to her Grade 5 English class. [Teacher's name] has been briefed as to the research area that I am focussing on in her classroom and has been most welcoming to me. She does know however, that if at any time she wishes to withdraw from the project that's entirely her prerogative. I do, of course, fervently hope that this circumstance will not arise!

When it comes to writing up the half-thesis I shall, of course, preserve the anonymity of both the school and the teacher concerned through the use of pseudonyms. No learners will be identified. Should you and/or [Teacher's name] be interested in reading the final product of this research I'll very gladly provide a copy of my half-thesis.

Thank you again, [Principal's Name], for your generosity in allowing me this access to your school. I really appreciate it.

My sincere regards

SALLY-ANN ROBERTSON

A2: Letter to the Grade 5 teacher

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Tel: (046) 603 8383/4 • Fax: (046) 622 8028

Friday, 30 October 2009

[Teacher's name]
Teacher: [School's name]
[Address]

Dear [Teacher's name]

Re **YOUR AGREEMENT TO ALLOW ME INTO YOUR CLASSROOM**

Thank you very much, [Teacher's name] for agreeing so readily to have me in your classroom, and for your willingness to thereby contribute to my MEd(ELT) half-thesis research. I'm most grateful to you.

I attach herewith a copy of the letter which I have given to your Principal in this regard.

If there is anything which you are unhappy or uncertain about regarding the way I am going about the research, please do tell me, and we can work around it. Please know also that if at any stage you wish to withdraw from the project that is entirely your prerogative.

My kindest regards

SALLY-ANN ROBERTSON

APPENDIX B: Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Sally-Ann Robertson is hereby given permission to observe the term 4 Grade 5 English lessons taught at [school's name].

I note that data from this classroom observation at the school, together with follow-up interviews with the Grade 5 teacher, [teacher's name], will contribute to the half-thesis which Mrs Robertson is required to submit as part of her Master of Education degree in English Language Teaching.

I have been assured that the anonymity of my school, my learners, and the teacher concerned will be preserved in Mrs Robertson's writing-up of her half-thesis.

Principal's signature: ………………………… **Date:** 30 October 2009

C1: Lesson 1

1 <u>**Thursday 15 October 2009**</u>

2
3 **(50 minute lesson)**
4

5
6 *On my arrival, Ms B meets me and ushers me into the grade 5 classroom. In this school each*
7 *grade has its own classroom; it is the teachers move. I am introduced.*
8
9 **T:** Grade 5s, this is Mrs Robertson. She will be visiting us for the next few weeks.
10 *Learners chorus a greeting, but otherwise show little sign of curiosity at my presence. Ms B*
11 *indicates I should sit at the teacher's desk at the back of the room.*
12
13 *The lesson begins with Ms B's instruction that the learners listen as she reads a passage to*
14 *them* **[Activity 1 Endangered Species and Extinction]**. *On completion Ms B asks:*
15
16 **T:** Any questions? Did you understand?
17 *No learners respond.*
18
19 *Ms B now distributes copies of the passage. She instructs learners to read through it on their*
20 *own.*
21
22 **T:** I'm going to time you. You've got 3 minutes.
23 *Ms B moves around the classroom, checking that learners stay on task and supporting*
24 *individual learners. After 7 minutes Ms B calls on some learners to read the passage out loud.*
25 *There are 2 cycles of reading through the passage, each cycle shared between 3 learners. The*
26 *first round of readers manages quite well (X + S + P). The second round appears to comprise*
27 *less able readers (J + C + K). Ms B corrects J's pronunciation of 'extinction'; C's with*
28 *'accelerated'; K is instructed to, " ... read louder."*
29
30 *While the reading aloud continues, Ms B starts to write on the chalkboard as follows:*
31 **Dictionary work**
32 **1. endangered**
33 **2. extinction**
34 **3. species**
35 **4. accelerated**
36 **5. environments**
37 **6. technology**
38 **7. destroyed**
39 **8. shelter**
40 **9. spawn**
41 **10. diseases**
42 **11. pollution**
43
44 **T:** I'm writing a few words on the board now.
45 *Ms B explains that they are going to underline these words in their copies of the passage.*
46

47 **T:** Let's first read through the list together.
48 *The class reads the words in chorus.*
49
50 *Ms B asks one of the children to hand out the dictionaries. These are a mix of inter alia the*
51 *Oxford Primary Dictionary, the Oxford Popular School Dictionary.*
52
53 *Ms B now gives them a worksheet* **[Activity 2 Dictionary work]** *in which they have to fill in*
54 *the meanings of 7 of the 11 words she had earlier written on the board:*
55   *1. endangered*
56   *2. extinction*
57   *3. species*
58   *4. accelerated*
59   *5. environment*
60   *6. pollution*
61   *7. spawn*
62 *The learners are instructed to check the meaning of these words. They are told they can work*
63 *with the person sitting next to them as there were not quite enough dictionaries to go round.*
64 *The learners appear to be quite focused as they work together on this task. There is, however,*
65 *quite a bit of noise leakage from the next door classroom. Ms B moves around the classroom*
66 *checking on learners' progress and assisting individual learners when asked. The learners*
67 *appear to be simply copying the dictionary definitions onto the worksheet.*
68
69 *Ms B comes to tell me that the dictionary activity is taking much longer than she anticipated.*
70 *She tells me she'd planned to go on to a writing activity,* "**but reading takes so long. They**
71 **can't distinguish between a verb and noun, so I tell them, "Go back and see if you**
72 **can work it out from the context.***"*
73 *Restlessness is starting to set in. Some of the children are wandering around the classroom. Ms*
74 *B instructs them to go and sit down.*
75
76 *Ms B instructs them to start finishing their work off*
77
78 **T:** It's nearly break-time.
79 *Ms B comes to tell me,* "**They've got to be kept busy.***" She then asks the children to hand in*
80 *their worksheet and put the passage into their flip files. The children drift out.*

C2: Lesson 2 (Briefing to Ms B, plus her report-back)

UPSIDE-DOWN MICE ACTIVITY

[Thursday, October 15, 2009

Dear [teacher's name]

re **ROALD DAHL COMPREHENSION EXERCISE**

Many thanks for agreeing to let your Grade 5 learners do this exercise. I'm looking forward to seeing how they cope with it.

I'll do the initial marking and then I would like to spend time discussing with you your impressions of how they did before we actually give them back their exercise papers for their portfolios.

Just so that the experience of writing this comprehension exercise is not too different from the kind of comprehension activities you normally do with them, I would like you to 'administer' it in *exactly* the same way as you would normally do for a comprehension activity … i.e. I would like you, please, to feel absolutely free to use your own professional judgment here as to how to proceed. I don't want you to give your learners any sense of anxiety that this is something 'out of the ordinary'; something that comes from me; something that they need to feel threatened by in any way. As far as possible I want them to feel that it's just a normal part of your English teaching programme. Thank you!

For the purposes, though, of my own research, can I ask you please to keep as detailed a written record[41] as you can of exactly how things went. This should include things like:
 ➤ what instructions you gave them;
 ➤ what support (if any) you needed to give them;
 ➤ how long it took for them to complete the exercise;
 ➤ your impressions of their responses to the exercise (did they seem to enjoy it? did they seem to find the Dahl story amusing/confusing/challenging? did they seem in any way 'put out' by the text and/or questions? and so on.) : I'd appreciate it if you would please make a note of any reactions from them that you notice as you/they do the exercise;
 ➤ your own impressions as to the appropriateness of the task in relation to your perceptions of their English language ability levels etc.
 ➤ ….. and so on.

We will then take up some of these points in greater depth in our follow-up discussion.

Many thanks, [Teacher's name]

---

[41] See overleaf.

MS B's WRITTEN REPORT ON THE ROALD DAHL COMPREHENSION EXERCISE:

Comprehension exercise:
Passages were given out to learners. Teacher read through the passage. Learners followed.
I gave a few learners the opportunity to read the passage aloud while classmates followed.
I asked if there were any 'difficult' words or if they (the learners) did not understand some of the words.
Some of the questions:
1. What does Roald Dahl mean?
2. What does multiplied mean?
3. mousetraps
4. baited
5. tremendous

I asked the class if they could come up with an explanation for each of these questions. We took one question at a time.
I did not have to give them these answers but guided.
One of the 'stronger' learners felt that it was silly to ask – What does Roald Dahl mean?
I explained that it was an unusual name and we don't hear it as much as Vuyo, Akhona etc.
We then tackled the questions on the answer sheet.
I read through the questions and explained how they should answer the questions, e.g. by choosing the correct answer from the list or answering the questions, e.g. 4, 6 & 7.
They used a full 50 minute period to complete but a few of them needed extra time but handed it in at the end of the school day.
Learners were also given the chance to read the passage on their own before attempting the questions.
A few learners were confused with the story – they could not make sense of it. Only my strong readers seemed to enjoy the story and said it was funny. I also noticed that a few learners not only struggled to read the passage but also struggled to answer the questions and circled random answers it seemed.
Both the passage and the answer sheet's text size could be larger. I noticed some learners skipped a line when asked to read aloud. Some of them used their finger or a ruler to follow the text.

C3: Lesson 3

1

2

3 **(50 minute lesson)**

4

5

6 *As I make my way to the teacher's desk at the back of the classroom, Ms B remarks, "***It would***
7 ***be so nice to stay in my own classroom.****"*
8 *It takes several minutes to get the children settled. Ms B returns the children's marked*
9 *dictionary work activity. Noise continues. Ms B asks the children to take out from their flip*
10 *files the passage they used on Thursday. Ms B calls on L to start reading.*

11

12 **T:** I just want recap. Okay. Can we close our pencil cases; close our books. We need to settle
13 down now. 'X', what are you looking for?
14 *Nine minutes of lesson time have passed, and some children are still trying to find the passage.*

15

16 **T:** Okay ...
17 *A lot of noise spillage continues from the next door classroom. There's also still lots of shuffling*
18 *noise from the Grade 5s. The child's who's reading is virtually inaudible even though she is just*
19 *2m from where I am sitting. Ms B calls on a 2nd child, then a 3rd and then a 4th to read. This*
20 *child struggles so, that Ms B calls on a 5th child.*

21

22 **T:** A, can you help 'X'?
23 *The child reads.*

24

25 **T:** Okay. Thank you.
26 *Ms B reminds the children that she asked them to underline certain words in the passage.*

27

28 **T:** One of the words was 'endangered'. Now, I'm going to ask A if she can give us an explanation.
29 N, stop talking! N, are you listening?"

30

31 *L:* [*A reads her definition*] A type of animal or plant that might soon not be around.

32

33 **T:** [*Ms B confirms this.*] A species in danger of extinction
34 *Ms B turns to another child.*

35

36 **T:** O, what did you write?

37

38 L: ... becoming extinct.

39

40 **T:** That's the meaning in the dictionary. Did anyone get anything else?

41

42 L: [*Another child says something (inaudible).*]

43

44 **T:** That's the same.
45 *Ms B moves the children on to the next word: 'species'.*

46

47 L: plants or animals that are very similar

48

49 **T:** What species do we belong to? C?

50
51 L: Monkeys
52
53 L: Baboon
54
55 **T:** No! N?
56
57 L: Mammals
58
59 **T:** Why do you say we are mammals?
60 *No response is forthcoming.*
61
62 **T:** … our babies … we breast feed them. Okay. We *are* mammals but we belong to the human
63 species. Now we come to a very long word. T – 'accelerated'.
64 *The child says something [inaudible to me].*
65
66 **T:** Increasing speed. Okay. Thank you. 'Environment', J?
67 *No response initially. Ms B moves on.*
68
69 **T:** V? 'pollution'?
70 *J now gives a definition for 'environment'. The child's response is inaudible to me but Ms B*
71 *appears satisfied. V cannot provide a definition for 'pollution'.*
72
73 **T:** Okay. I think you need to help her with that one.
74 *The children's responses are inaudible to me.*
75
76 **T:** Okay, now the last one: 'spawn'.
77 *The children's responses are inaudible to me.*
78
79 **T:** Now I'm going to give you a piece of paper and I want you to write ten sentences using at
80 least 5 of the words. Now we have to remember certain things when we write …
81 *Ms B moves and writes as follows on the chalkboard:*
82 **The pronoun I is always a capital letter no matter what.**
83 *Ms B gets them to read this together, and then continues writing on the chalkboard:*
84 **A sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.**
85 *She then writes:*
86 **?   Question mark**
87 **" "   Inverted commas or speech marks.**
88
89 **T:** Do you still remember those?
90 *She then writes:*
91 **Other punctuation marks**
92 **? ! " -----" , : ;**
93 *Ms B hands out A5 sheets of lined paper.*
94
95 **T:** I just want to see if you can write sentences about endangered animals and extinction. You
96 can do that okay? Okay. Let's go through this again. I want everyone to listen. You are going to
97 write a paragraph of 10 sentences. Your heading is going to be 'Endangered species'. Stop
98 talking! Remember to write your name on the paper so I know it's yours. Okay? Stop talking!
99 *The children are quite restless for the next 3 minutes, but do then settle. The teacher moves*
100 *around stopping beside individual learners. She breaks off from talking to a child.*

147

101
102 **T:** J! What are you discussing? Do we number our sentences when we write a paragraph?
103
104 Ls: [*chorus*] No!
105
106 **T:** Okay. You don't need a date. Just start writing your paragraph.
107 *Ms B then continues to move around to the children. There is lots of one-on-one interaction.*
108 *Children at other tables do not give the impression that they are fully focused on the task. The*
109 *teacher cautions them.*
110
111 **T:** Quieten down!
112 *Noise levels and restlessness start rising.*
113
114 **T:** Ssshhh!
115 *Ms B comes across to talk to me. She explains, "My next exercise is I want them to write a*
116 *postcard, but I know this is going to take a few days." She then notices a child in the adjacent*
117 *table.*
118
119 **T:** All this time and you've only written one sentence!
120 *Ms B brings one child's efforts to show me. It is incomprehensible. She comments to me on the*
121 *value of special needs facilities. She comments also on the difference between Xhosa and*
122 *Afrikaans-speaking children. She then turns her attention back to the children.*
123
124 **T:** If you haven't finished you will hand in tomorrow. Promise?
125
126 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes!
127
128 **T:** You are going to use this to write postcards.
129 *The bell rings. The children leave. It's mid-morning break time.*
130
131 Ms B stays to talk to me. She remarks on the value of the local university's remedial teaching.
132 She talks of the problem of automatic passing. She comments on that fact that this is the final
133 term which means that content coverage as such is slowing done and there's not so much
134 teaching because time is needed to collect marks to satisfy the new system's requirement for
135 continuous assessment.

C4: Lesson 4

2

3   **(50 minute lesson)**

4

5   *No initial greeting. Ms B begins with a reminder to the Grade 5s that she had not yet received*
6   *their work. There is lots of noise of the children chatting amongst themselves as Ms B enquires*
7   *of individuals as to the whereabouts of their work.*
8   *Ms B asks the children to settle down.*

9

10   **T:** When you wrote your paragraphs did you remember 'I' with a capital letter?
11   *Some of the children chorus, "Yes!"*

12

13   **T:** When you start a sentence did you use a capital letter?
14   *Children chorus, "Yes!"*

15

16   **T:** Okay. I'm giving you a few minutes to finish.
17   *Some of the children are still not settled.*

18

19   **T:** Are we here to play? Ten minutes and you've taken nothing out!
20   *Ms B and then hands back the work done by those few children who did hand in the previous*
21   *day. She gives these children one-on-one feedback while the majority of the other children*
22   *continue to do nothing but chat amongst themselves. Ms B moves around the class checking*
23   *and reprimanding those who did not do their homework and well as marking a few children's*
24   *work as they handed it in to her. This is interrupted by reprimands to those children not*
25   *getting on with their work although many seem largely impervious to this as they continue*
26   *fooling around and chatting. Very few children are actually busy.*
27   *Ms B comes to show me the muddled writing done by the learner she'd drawn my attention to*
28   *the previous day. The Xhosa-speaking JP teacher had said that there was no sign of Xhosa*
29   *sounds or meaning embedded in the child's writing. She said she'd then asked the child to*
30   *explain what she'd written but the child replied that she'd forgotten what she'd written. Ms B*
31   *remarked on her frustration that, "the new system does not have a net to help such children".*
32   *She explained that this child was not very talkative either, so she couldn't do oral work, and*
33   *she could not read either. She remarked that this was very sad. She said it was very*
34   *frustrating that the children did not do their work, " ... and I know even if they have it for*
35   homework again this afternoon they won't do it."
36   *Ms B is still collecting in papers, watching and checking on the progress of others. There is lots*
37   *of cheerful chatting but no real focus on the task. Ms B continues moving around the room,*
38   *giving one-on-one attention to individual children.*

39

40   **T:** This is taking a lot of time. You're wasting a lot of time.
41   *I glance through the paragraphs that Ms B's shown me that she's collected in thus. They*
42   *suggest very little engagement with the task. Those that did obviously try to do extra work on*
43   *their paragraphs seem to have done simple copying from their sources.*
44   *The bell rings for second break.*

45

46   **T:** Those that are finished can go. The rest must stay in and finish their work.
47   *A few children remain behind, but most drift off outside.*

48

49   Ms B asks me what I think about OBE. She expresses concern about the teaching load on
50   teachers. She remarks that the parents *want* English. She expresses concern about the seating
51   arrangement required by OBE which just facilitates chatting between children. She expresses
52   the view that it would be better if children faced the front and worked with maybe just one
53   friend. She says she felt demoralized and overloaded. She says she needs more constructively
54   critical support from advisory teachers, explaining that in her case, her advisory teacher was just
55   very pleased with everything she did.

C5: Lesson 5

2
3 **(40 minute lesson)**
4
5
6 **T:** I want to talk to you about your paragraphs.
7 *Ms B then expresses her concern at the failure of many of them to write 'I' as a capital letter*
8 *and their random use of full stops. She then introduces them to the third activity for the unit*
9 *which is to write a postcard to a friend expressing concern for endangered species. Ms B*
10 *returns the children's paragraphs and hands out pre-printed postcard sheets. She instructs the*
11 *children to write their names on their sheet, and then breaks off …*
12
13 **T:** What are you doing there?
14 *Inaudible response from the child concerned.*
15
16 **T:** Stop that! Now the space on the postcard is much smaller so you obviously can't write
17 everything from your paragraph so you can change it a bit. Start 'Dear … whatever'.
18 *A child hands her his late submission paragraph. Ms B marks this while two children continue*
19 *handing out the postcard sheet.*
20
21 **T:** If you have any questions just ask me. Has everyone got one of these? Is anyone absent?
22 *Quite a bit of chatting amongst various children continues. No one is writing.*
23
24 **T:** 'X', what's your problem? Why aren't you writing?
25 *Ms B says the name of another child, "Y!" in a warning tone, and then continues …*
26
27 **T:** Start with your friend's address there. Sssshhh! Ssshh! 'X'! How many times must I call your
28 name? Don't you have work to do?
29 *Ms B continues moving around the classroom, sitting alongside individual children checking*
30 *on their progress. She breaks off as she notices a child not doing his work*
31
32 **T:** 'C'! Where's your book? Write there! 'X'! What's your problem? 'K' is still having a
33 conversation! 'K'!"
34 *It is difficult to observe what Ms B is doing in the one-on-one exchanges.*
35 *Ms B is still marking late submissions. She breaks off to make a general comment.*
36
37 **T:** Listen! You write your friend's name, the street address and the code.
38 *Ms B then notices the way one child has started her postcard greeting.*
39
40 **T:** She's your friend and you call her 'Miss'!?
41 *I notice that the group nearest me is speaking in isiXhosa amongst themselves. I do not get a*
42 *sense that their discussion is focused on the task – they are looking at one of their group*
43 *member's library cards. The boys in the group seem to be teasing her about something. There*
44 *is very little apparent focus from the children on the task. At best it's sporadic. Ms B addresses*
45 *a child who's walking across the room.*
46
47 **T:** Why are you out of your place?

48 The child makes no immediate move to return. Ms B moves to the chalkboard, saying "We live in
49 Upper[42] Street"; she writes (and underlines the capital letters):
50 **<u>U</u>pper <u>S</u>treet**
51 Ms B draws attention to the capital letters, and then continues …
52
53 **T:** We live in Hilltown[43].
54 *Ms B writes this on the board:*
55 **<u>H</u>illtown**
56 *She then chides the children …*
57
58 **T:** Everyone seems to forget how to write it. And then our code.
59 *Ms B writes the postal code on the board:*
60 **5555[44]**
61
62 **T:** Okay, I think you should stop talking now and do your work.
63 *Ms B is marking another late submission. She returns it to the child concerned and spends*
64 *time pointing out errors. She breaks off to call out to another child …*
65
66 **T:** L! How far are you? L! You're not writing!
67 *Many other children are not focusing on the task either. Noise and shouted reprimands from*
68 *the next door teacher spill in from the adjacent classroom. Ms B instructs …*
69
70 **T:** Stop talking!
71 *Ms B moves to another desk, marking another late submission. She breaks off to reprimand a*
72 *child across the room …*
73
74 **T:** C!
75 *There is a lot of restlessness and fiddling with their schoolbags amongst the children. Ms B*
76 *notices one girl who seems distressed about something.*
77
78 **T:** What's going on with you?
79 *The child wipes away the tear rolling down her cheek, says nothing and continues writing. Ms*
80 *B moves away.*
81 *Another adult enters the classroom and collects a child from the same table. The child returns a*
82 *minute later, and Ms B then addresses him …*
83
84 **T:** You haven't started writing *any* sentences! What have you been doing the whole time?
85 Ms B continues moving from desk to desk checking on children's progress. She then announces
86 …
87
88 **T:** I've got homework for you. It's quite easy and fun – a word search.
89 *This is handed out.*
90
91 **T:** I want those postcards before you go. Whether you're finished or not, I'm taking them in.
92 This [the WordSearch] is for homework, okay?

---

[42] Not the real name.
[43] Not the real name.

[44] Not the real postal code.

93   *Ms B asks a child to collect in the postcards that have been finished. Another child draws*
94   *attention to the error in the WordSearch heading.*
95
96   **T:** Anyone notice that? You can just take the first 'i' out, okay?
97   *The lesson is supposed to have ended at 10h55 but the bell only rings at 11h00.*
98
99   **T:** Okay, listen! 'T' is collecting those small paragraphs and 'A' is collecting the postcard. Okay? I
100 want it before the end of the day. Okay?
101 *The children chorus, "Yes!". They leave the class.*
102
103 Ms B tells me that they enjoy the WordSearch, "***There's no thinking. Just circles.***" I ask her
104 about a DEAR notice. She explains it's an acronym the school uses, meaning, "Drop Everything
105 And Read".

C6: Lesson 6
1   **Wednesday 22 October 2009**

2
3   **(50 minute lesson)**
4
___

5
6   *Ms B puts up a picture on the board.*
7   **T:** Now what do you see in this picture?

8
9   **L:** It's a person
10   *Ms B writes 'person' on the board.*

11
12   **T:** What's she wearing?

13
14   **Ls:** (*some children offer answers*) A t-shirt / Jeans

15
16   **T:** I want more specific details.

17
18   **Ls:** (*some children offer answers*) A <u>yellow</u> t-shirt/Blue jeans/Funky clothes
19   *Ms B uses pink chalk to write the descriptive words. As the children make each offer Ms B*
20   *writes it on the board.*

21
22   **Ls:** Curly hair/ Rectangle box/ bottle/ brown medicine / A smiling girl

23
24   **T:** <u>Smiling</u>. I'm glad someone saw she's <u>smiling</u>! Is the girl further away or closer than the
25   medicine?

26
27   **Ls:** (*some children offer the answer*)*Further*

28
29   **T:** Is the girl is sitting?
30   *Some children nod, but do not answer out loud.*

31
32   **T:** Where's she from?

33
34   **Ls:** (*some children offer v*arious suggestions) Egyptian /Nigerian / South African /
35   Zimbabwean / American

36
37   **T:** We are actually describing what we see and all those words I wrote in pink we call *adjectives.*
38   *Not all of the children are paying attention. Ms B breaks off to remonstrate.*

39
40   **T:** I don't want that noise! We're only going to discuss our pictures – not the soccer, not what
41   you did yesterday. I want you to look at the shape of things, the age of things. Are they happy?
42   Are they sad? Or are they serious? Their emotions.
43   *Ms B hands each group a picture. While the children start discussing the pictures they've been*
44   *given she writes the following list of words on the board:*
45   **Colour**
46   **Size**
47   **Shape**
48   **Distance**

49   **Feelings**
50   **Nationality**
51   **Quantity**
52   **Material**
53   **Age**
54
55   *Ms B then gives the children some examples of the kinds of things she wants them to look for.*
56
57   **T:** Colour - "Red, blue, yellow, white"
58   Size – "Tall, short, big, medium, skinny"
59   Shape – "square, rectangle like a flag, triangle, oval like an egg or a rugby ball… Is that all you
60   are going to look out for? "
61   Distance – "Longer, hair short, far, high, low"
62   Feelings – "He looks worried, he looks concerned, he's very serious.
63   *Ms B indicates one group's picture.*
64
65   **T:** Yours – they're smiling, they seem very happy and content.
66   *Not all the children are paying attention. Ms B calls them to order.*
67
68   **T:** Can I have your attention for a minute?
69   *Ms B points again to the categories she's written on the board.*
70
71   **T:** These help us to describe our pictures. Material – Cloth, wood, paper … That's material,
72   okay? Age – Old, young, very old, okay?
73   *Ms B then moves off to work with some individual groups that have asked for help.*
74
75   **T:** You can't *describe* it? What can we see? Okay. I'm going to issue each group with a blank
76   page. I'm going to give you some Pritt for your next activity.
77   *The children seem to be completely engaged with the activity. Ms B is called on by another*
78   *group. After seeing to them Ms B continues:*
79
80   **T:** Okay. Choose a scribe in your group – a person who's going to write and someone who's
81   going to report back. 'L' did you hear what I said? I'm giving each group a Pritt and I want it
82   back at the end of the period, okay? And you can take out your coloured pencils. Okay! Listen
83   up! You can cut out part of your picture and paste it. Listen! Listen! You should listen when I
84   talk! Paste it on your paper and describe. Happy. Happy girl.
85   *Ms B moves around to individual groups. The group nearest where I am sitting comprises 3*
86   *boys and 3 girls. The boys are totally uninvolved. The girls do all the work. Ms B approaches*
87   *the group.*
88
89   **T:** 'T' what can you say about the picture?
90
91   **L:** Ice cold
92
93   **T:** Yes, it's ice cold.
94   *This same girl pretends to take a bite out of the cut out hamburger. Ms B moves to another*
95   *group. A boy from another group comes to ask about the list on the board. Ms B moves to his*
96   *group to help. Ms B removes the original picture off the board and asks one of the girls to clean*
97   *the board.*
98
99   **T:** Okay …

155

100   *Ms B breaks off to address one of the groups (all girls) …*
101
102   **T:** Why aren't you pasting your picture? I want to collect in the Pritt.
103   *The children aren't finished, however.*
104
105   **T:** Okay. Now I want you to tell me what your group came up with … I'm giving you 2 more
106   minutes. Okay! Can I get your attention? Let's all sit down now. Right! 'X' is going to come
107   forward and he's going to describe what's in the picture.
108   *A boy comes up and speaks but it's inaudible [to me, at least].*
109
110   **T:** Okay. Some people were talking. Can you repeat?
111   *I child's response is still inaudible.*
112
113   **T:** Well done. Okay! Next group.
114
115   **L:** *(A girl goes up and describes the picture) It's an old wooden square cupboard and the door*
116   *is closed on this cupboard.*
117
118   **T:** Next group. Let's listen! Louder! Louder!
119   *The child cannot be heard so Ms B repeats for the benefit of the rest of the class.*
120
121   **T:** She's happy. You say she's rectangular. Why would you say that? Okay. Thank you, 'X'. Okay.
122   Next group.
123   *A girl representing the next group comes up, but what she says is also inaudible.*
124
125   **T:** Okay. Did you get that? They are African citizens. The girl is wearing a green shirt.
126   *The next group is called on. Again, the child who comes up is inaudible.*
127
128   **T:** Next group. Who's coming? Come! Little louder! I can't hear.
129   *The last group delivers their inaudible description.*
130
131   **T:** Okay. Now if we had to write just one sentence to describe what you see there how would you
132   describe that? Use your imaginations. For example, 'X' said he needs another coffee because he
133   looks very worried. I want you to use your imaginations. I want you to use describing words.
134   Okay. Maybe …."
135   *Ms B writes on the board:* **The serious man is driving his new Audi to work**.
136
137   **T:** Do we have any adjectives there? Can you identify them?
138   *A child makes a suggestion.*
139
140   **T:** Yes. 'serious' and 'new'. Next picture. Can we say 'The old wooden cupboard belongs to my
141   grandmother'?
142   *Ms B writes this on the board:* **The old wooden cupboard belongs to my grandmother.**
143
144   **T:** Okay. Okay. 'T' can you tell us what the adjectives are?
145   *The child answers [but again I cannot hear what she says].*
146
147   **T:** Yes, 'wooden' is. The other one?
148   *The response is inaudible.*
149
150   *Ms B hands out Activity 4.*

156

151
152 **T:** Okay. Can we go through Activity 4?
153 *Ms B reads through the sheet …*
154
155 **T:** The words in the darker print are our adjectives. Are you listening?
156 *Ms B reads Sentence No. 1* : Dinosaurs are extinct animals.
157
158 **T:** What I want you to do is just to underline or circle the adjectives. You're not listening here!
159 You're continually talking! Can you read the adjectives? Can you read the sentences? Read.
160 Choose the correct adjectives and write it in there. Do you understand? What do you have to do?
161 *There is no response from the learners. The lesson ends and the children leave for their break-*
162 *time.*

C7: Lesson 7

1 $\boxed{\text{Friday 23 October 2009}}$

2
3 **(45 minute lesson)**
4
5 _____

6 *Ms B tells me that this is going to be a reading lesson. The children are going to read a drama*
7 *that she wrote some years ago. She starts handing out copies of the drama script to the*
8 *children.*
9
10 **T:** You should start reading once you get your handout. Is 'J' absent today? Sssshhh, 'L'! Okay.
11 We are going to read this drama. I'm going to get some people to read this drama. Then I'm
12 going to put you in groups can you can practise. 'X' be our narrator, 'L' our donkey *[laughter]*,
13 'N' the flea and you our snake, and you are Goat." So, well … just follow on the page. And you
14 know I wrote this drama all by myself a few years ago. Where's the narrator? Okay. If you see
15 something in brackets what must you do? Can you snort?"
16 *Ms B breaks off to go to the next door classroom to quieten down this class. In her absence I*
17 *observe the Grade 5 children becoming quite lively themselves. Ms B returns to get the reading*
18 *process underway, but the selected children's contributions are all but inaudible to me. Ms B*
19 *helps them with the words …*
20
21 **T:** <u>wallow</u> <u>dirty</u> places …
22 *The children's continue reading their parts.*
23
24 **T:** Can you read a little louder. I don't know if I'm going deaf or what but I can't hear you. All the
25 animals must read. We are the opposition, okay? Give cruelty a rest. Now, Sheep, Cow etc. must
26 read. Where is Flea, Snake, Cow and …? You must read this together. Where is Frog, Pig, Goat?
27 Come, Guys! Read together.
28 *The characters' reading is so quiet as to be all but inaudible.*
29
30 **T:** Okay, Narrator!
31 *The narrator reads her part. The other selected readers make their way through the text with*
32 *frequent intervention from Ms B: <u>herd</u> She corrects them on a number of words, inter alia,*
33 *<u>hard</u> … <u>totally</u> squashed …. A <u>suitable</u> … Thank you. …racist … say boss'<u>s</u> … okay … boss's*
34 *dustbins …. <u>Far</u> … <u>stray</u> … <u>nerves</u> … <u>against</u> …. <u>mongrels</u> …*
35
36 **T:** You know what a mongrel is?
37 *The children nod. Ms B correct their pronunciations, for example, … venom … me … my … boil*
38 *…. <u>petty</u> …. She notices a typographical error in the drama script.*
39
40 **T:** Okay, I left the word out there. Can you just change that please …. <u>on</u> special. Okay, 'X'. Go
41 on.
42 *'J' (Goat) cannot pronounce 'slaughtered, but Ms B does not interfere, she just watches*
43 *carefully. The other children whisper amongst themselves. She does then help with a word he's*
44 *struggling with.*
45
46 **T:** <u>'oppressed'</u>. Okay. Now what I want you to do please … we'll do it this way.
47 *Ms B counts out 8 children.*
48

49   **T:** I don't have much room inside but Sinzani is going to be the leader and I want you to go
50   outside and practise. I'll give you 5 minutes. I'll come and check on you.
51   *Ms B counts out another two groups.*
52
53   **T:** The third group has too many children. Some of you can share the roles. No! You're not going
54   out. You can stay in class here.
55   *Ms B appoints one child the leader of the group. The child appointed looks very pleased, and*
56   *asks her group members to choose their roles. Ms B stays with this group and assists when*
57   *they cannot read.*
58
59   *Ms B then goes out to check on the outside groups. The remaining children start arguing about*
60   *who has which role, but then settle down.*
61
62   *Ms B returns. As she listens to one of the inside groups she asks the children a question.*
63
64   **T:** Who's the narrator?
65   *The reading continues briefly with Ms B offering corrections: for example, …. <u>complain</u> …*
66   *<u>hair</u> …   The bell rings. Ms B addresses the remaining children in the class:*
67
68   **T:** Now listen! Listen! I know you're going to throw this away so write your name and put it in
69   your flip file. We'll go on tomorrow, okay?
70
71   The children leave and Ms B comes to me. She explains that the children must understand the
72   text before they can get the gist of it. I remark that some of them are struggling to pronounce the
73   words. She tells me this difficulty varies from year to year.

C8: Lesson 8

2

3   **(50 minute lesson)**

4

5   _____

6   *Ms B begins by handing back the children's work on adjectives and on the WordSearch. She*
7   *tells me as she passes the table that they did well on - and enjoyed – the WordSearch.*

8

9   **T:** Okay. Settle down!
10   *Various members of the class help to hand out the marked work. Ms B then asks the children to*
11   *call out their marks.*

12

13   **T:** Please, when I've got your mark, just put it in your portfolio, okay? Some of you don't have
14   marks. Some papers had no name on them.
15   *A child tells her something.*

16

17   **T:** 'X' … his mother put the work in *her* portfolio. All sorts of excuses, hey! That's a new one!
18   *The children now proceed to call out their marks. There is no sign of apparent understanding*
19   *of what their mark meant, although when one child called out his mark (1), the rest of the class*
20   *did make silent gestures of shock and amusement.*
21   *Ms B is still getting in marks. She instructs the handers-out to put the work of absent children*
22   *in the cupboard. She suggests that the rainy weather may explain their absence.*

23

24   **T:** Grade 5s we continue with our drama we started on Friday. Okay. Just before we get into our
25   groups, if there's a word that you find difficult please underline it so that I can help you because
26   I want to assess your reading. Can I give you just a few minutes to read through it. No talking
27   please.
28   *Ms B gives me a copy of the reading rubric [entitled 'Reading Drama'] she's going to use to*
29   *assess the children.   She then turns her attention back to the lesson.*

30

31   **T:** I don't know if we'll have all the animals in the group but then someone from another group
32   can read. Before you start I'm going to assess if you understand or try to understand what you're
33   reading. I'm also going to ask you about the characters and what you think about the story, and
34   if you're *really* paying attention (staying on task). Okay.

35

36   *The first group is called up to stand in front of the chalkboard. Ms B sits at a learners' desk*
37   *directly across the room from them.*

38

39   **T:** Now I need you to be quiet, okay? I need you to be quiet.
40   *The children in the first group proceed to read their parts with some prompting in some cases*
41   *from fellow group members. Ms B stops them.*

42

43   **T:** Tell me this group. Did you even go read this? Because you're reading without expression.
44   How can you do a drama without expression? What would you do if you were on the stage? You
45   must read loud so that people in the audience can hear you.
46   *The children begin again.*

47

48   **T:** I can't hear you. In a play you must read out loud.

49   *Ms B demonstrates the parts of Donkey and Flea and then continues ...*
50
51   **T:** Come! Let's try again. How do I assess you if I can't hear you? Read a little louder.
52   *The children try again a little more loudly but still without any characterization.*
53   *The first group is still reading. The other children are quite quietly behaved. There are just a*
54   *few patches of restlessness and inattention, but in general they are following the text on their*
55   *copies of the drama. The first group gets to the end.*
56
57   **T:** Okay. Thank you. I just want to ask the group a few questions. I want each one to tell me *who*
58   are the characters in the drama. 'X'?
59
60   *'X' names some characters.*
61
62   **T:** 'Y'? 'Z', can you help here?
63   *'Z' names some more characters.*
64
65   **T:** 'O'? Can you tell me how Chicken felt during the story?
66   *There is no response.*
67
68   **T:** Did you read the whole drama? Did you read at the weekend?
69   *One child says he only read his part.*
70
71   **T:** So you don't know the whole story? That's a problem. 'N' can you tell me how chicken felt?
72   Happy? Sad? Worried? Concerned? She was not happy because the other animals were eating
73   her. Now. Frog and Snake. How do they feel? How are they feeling about the place where they
74   live?
75   *There is an array of embarrassed facial expressions and body language.*
76
77   **T:** Are they happy? Why aren't they happy?
78   *Silence from the group members.*
79
80   **T:** Okay! I don't think you read at home. I'll just have to assess you again otherwise you'll all just
81   get Level 1s. Come sit down.
82   *The 2nd group moves into position. They begin to read through the text using very little by way*
83   *of dramatic inflection. They are more audible than the first group. Ms B interrupts ...*
84
85   **T:** 'A' did you read at home?
86   *'A' nods.*
87
88   **T:** Are you *sure*? You can't even read that one line now!
89   *The group continues with interpolations from Ms B every so often to correct their*
90   *pronunciation. She asks another of the group members:*
91
92   **T:** 'X' did you read at home over the weekend?
93   *'X' replies, "Yes, I did." [Some children in this group could barely read a word. Ms B had to*
94   *coach every word. Others, though, read fluently.] They reach the end of the text.*
95
96   **T:** Okay, thank you. 'X', can you mention a few characters from the drama?
97   *The child gives two names.*
98
99   **T:** Okay. 'B' can you add a few more characters?

100   *The child responds well. Ms B then turns to the rest of the group.*
101
102   **T:** Did you listen to what she said? Okay. Thank you. Okay. The other question I want to ask:
103   How did Frog feel? Can anyone from the group tell me?
104   *No response is forthcoming.*
105
106   **T:** I'm not giving you any marks now because I'm not happy with what I see. Can you tell me
107   what happened in the story? What is the drama all about? Who are these people? A group of
108   animals?
109   *No response from the children.*
110
111   **T:** Okay. Sit down. I need to talk to the whole class.
112   *The group members return to their desks.*
113
114   **T:** I saw a very poor performance. I asked you to read over the weekend so that you can
115   familiarize yourselves with the words on the paper. You're still struggling with very basic words.
116   I'm going to give you another chance tomorrow. You need to show that you understand.
117   *The bell rings and the children leave the classroom.*
118
119   In our post-lesson conversation Ms B expressed frustration at the children's poor reading
120   abilities. She pointed out that they could not even pronounce the simplest words – e.g. '"wash' …
121   an *everyday* word". Also they "do not *understand* what they are reading"; they cannot "read
122   between the lines". I asked her to comment on the difference between English Home Language
123   and English First Additional Language. Ms B described herself as "a lone voice" re the school's
124   decision to go for English Home Language. She spoke of her son (in Grade 7 at a local former
125   Model 'C' school) who's in the top 4 of his class. Even though English is not the family's home
126   language, she gave him a text *rich* environment which Ms B believes explains his success. She
127   spoke of the teaching/admin/extra activities load and mentioned that she had spent the entire
128   Saturday of the previous weekend at a workshop, and all of the previous Wednesday afternoon
129   at a meeting. Ms B mentioned that she really valued my presence because I could *see*; I could
130   understand what she faced. "Others do not see."

C9: Lesson 9

(45 minute lesson)

I arrive to find the school extremely noisy with lots of unruly behavior going on. Ms B explains that this is because 2 staff members are away today. We get to the classroom where the Grade 5s are waiting.

T: Okay.
She waits for silence, before continuing.

T: Right! 'Y's' group said they are ready for us so let's listen to their reading." [*This is the same 2nd group from the previous day.]* 'Y's' group line up in front of the chalkboard.
Ms B instructs them to move some desks to make more space for themselves.

T: Okay. Can you settle down now. We continue from where we left off.
The children are not yet fully settled.

T: Okay. I don't have to tell you to keep quiet while the others are reading. Okay? Okay, you can start.
There's still a lot of chatter.

T: Sssshh! I need to listen.
Ms B goes to sit at the same learner's desk she used the previous day. One of the boys in the group is really struggling through his part. The children next to him whisper help. The rest of the class is very restless.

T: Sssshh!
She then stops the group before they are finished the text.

T: Okay. Thank you. Can the next group come up?
She does not put any questions to the 2nd group. The members of the 2nd group move off joking amongst themselves. The 3rd group shuffles up to stand in front of the chalkboard. They begin to read through the text with almost no expression in their voices. [There is a lot of noise spilling into the classroom from outside.] The 3rd group appears to be rather more serious and less hesitant. They read slightly more fluently too, although Ms B does stop them momentarily:

T: We can't hear!
It is in fact very hard for me to hear their reading and I don't imagine that the children are hearing much either.] Ms B corrects twice: <u>totally</u> ... <u>suck</u> ... . She lets the 3rd group go without putting any questions to them.

T: Thank you. The next group. Make it snappy. Come! Come, come, come. May we go?
This 4th group reads fast and quite fluently.

T: Okay. Thank you. If we had more time I'd like to work on how you speak.
She demonstrates a very flat way of speaking and then asks:

49
50 **T:** How do you think Snake would talk? Would snake talk [*uses a flat monotone*]? Okay. I'm
51 going to give you a few questions that I need you to answer based on the play.
52 *She hands out a set of printed questions.*
53
54 **T:** Please don't forget to put you names on your paper. The 2ⁿᵈ question's very easy – where did
55 the animals meet. Question 3 is very simple. You just need to fill in the blanks etcetera right up
56 to Question 10. If you don't manage to finish it, please finish it at home.
57 *The children seem quite focused on the task. There is no messing around. Ms B walks around.*
58 *[She comes to tell me that the children are supposed to get a cooked meal today but the cleaner*
59 *is away. She implies that this is a fairly regular post-weekend pattern. She tells me the*
60 *Principle is in Port Elizabeth for a meeting, and says she herself has a meeting of language*
61 *teachers that afternoon at [name's a local township school]. She implies that these meetings*
62 *are sometimes a waste of time:* They just want us to be there to listen. You know, they're
63 microwaving us with the new policies.
64 *A child asks for her help.*
65 T: No. You can read through it yourself. You know. No explanations.
66 *Ms B cautions one child who is not on task, then continues to move around looking, but not*
67 *intruding on what the children are writing. She comes to tell me that because the Principle is*
68 *away she has to go and ring the bell (except that the bell is missing and she's worried that if*
69 *she rings the siren,* "The children will think it's the end of the day!"). *She's called out to see a*
70 *visitor. Some children start chatting in her absence. Others continue on the task. It is 13h10*
71 *and still no bell has rung. Ms B returns and tells the children they can go.*

C10: Lesson 10

(45 minute lesson)

The bell is still missing. Children from different classes are milling. [Ms B tells me that the meeting yesterday afternoon was very short. It was about ANA assessment which forms part of continuous assessment.] There is lots of noise. The lesson eventually begins at 11h05 (10 minutes behind schedule).

T: Grade 5 this is a short period, so settle down.
The children quieten down.

T: Okay. Can you take out now the comprehension of yesterday? C, can you settle *down* please. Thank you
There is lots of shuffling.

T: Where's your questions and answers, X?
It emerges that this particular child was absent the previous day.

T: C! Were you at school yesterday?
C nods.

T: So where's your paper?
Without following through on this Ms B then addresses the class a a whole.

T: I just want to find out. Can I ask you a question? Did you find this comprehension difficult? Put up your hands if you found it difficult. Don't be shy.
No hands go up.

T: It was easy? Okay. I'm going to ask S to take in your papers and then we're going to work through it together. I don't want you filling answers in.
S collects in the papers.

T: Okay, then. I need you to pay attention. First one – name the characters in the play. Can you do that?
A chorus of names is called out by the children.
T:
Okay. Thank you. And now, where did these animals meet? On a -----?
The children call out the answer.

T: Question 3   the animals keep *what* from our yards?
Inaudible offerings come from the children. Ms B then starts directing questions to individual children.

T: J, who did Flea complain about?

L: Frog

165

49
50 *Ms B asks for confirmation.*
51
52 **T:** About *Frog*?
53 *Ms B calls on the rest of the class.*
54
55 **T:** Do you agree with her?
56
57 **Ls:** [*chorus*] *Yes!*
58
59 *Ms B then continues.*
60
61 **T:** Okay. Question 5. What do you think … means? Can you imagine what that looks like? Can
62 you see? Questions 6.1?
63
64 **Ls:** [*several of the children chorus*] Venom!
65
66 *Ms B reads Question 6.2 and then calls on one child to answer.*
67
68 **T:** N?
69
70 **L:** [*The child's answer is inaudible.*]
71
72 **T:** Hey?
73
74 **L:** It makes you hungry.
75
76 **T:** I don't agree with that!
77 *Ms B moves on to Question 7.*
78
79 **T:** How do you think Chicken felt?
80
81 **L:** [*A child answers*] Unhappy.
82
83 **T:** Unhappy? Why? Why was she unhappy?
84
85 **L:** [*Another child offers a suggestion*] Disappointed.
86
87 **T:** "Disappointed. That's also okay. But *why*?
88
89 **L:** [*A child offers a suggestion*] Because people kill chickens and eat them.
90
91 **T:** Yes. People kill chickens and eat them. But what else? They're either eating her or taking
92 away her eggs. Okay. J is going to answer the next question [8].
93
94 **L:** [*J ventures an answer (inaudible).*]
95
96 **T:** You can't just give me one word answers. You must explain why. They're building houses.
97 And they're polluting the dams. And then I wanted you to write a short summary of the play. I'm
98 going to look at it when I mark it. Now. Did you enjoy it?
99 *There's an ambivalent response from some children. Ms B continues …*

100

101   **T:** Now who was your favourite character in the play? It depends from person to person.

102   *A few suggestions are offered. Ms B then moves on.*

103

104   **T:** Now today we're going to look a little bit further at adjectives. Now we said Snake felt angry.

105   *Ms B writes on the board:*

106   **angry**

107   *And then writes:*

108   **Snake was angry.**

109

110   **T:** Now Frog feels worse than Snake. Frog feels *angrier* because they're polluting the rivers and

111   chopping down the trees from there. Now, how did chicken feel because they're killing her and

112   taking her eggs. Now, a few weeks ago we actually had this – what do we call this? Degrees of ---

113   --------? *Comparison.* They always have 3 levels.

114   *Ms B writes the following list of word on the board:*

115   **big**

116   **fat**

117   **tall**

118   **beautiful**

119   **good**

120   **bad**

121   *Ms B draws two more columns, writing 'Comparative' at the top of the second column.*

122

123   **T:** We call this one Comparative.

124   *Ms B then starts writing in the 3ʳᵈ column's heading.*

125

126   **T:** … and this one Superlative.

127   *Ms B calls on the children to help her fill in the first 3 words in 'superlative' column.*

128

129   **T:** Now what was the rule that we followed when we did comparatives?

130   *There is silence from the children. Ms B then asks individual children to come up and write in*

131   *the missing words. They manage 'fattest' and 'tallest'.*

132

	Comparative	Superlative
big	**bigger**	**biggest**
fat		**fattest**
tall		**tallest**
beautiful		
good		
bad		

133

134   **T:** Then we have 'beautiful'. 'Z' can you fill this one in?

135   *The child comes up and writes:*

136   **beautifuller   beautifully**

137

138   **T:** No.

139   *Miss B rubs this out.*

140

141   **T:** Who can help 'Z' there? Anyone? K?

142   *K comes up and writes in minute writing with her hand over her mouth. [I could not see what*

143   *she'd written.]*

144	
145	**T:** Okay. That's wrong. We can say 'A' is 'beautiful' but 'B' is 'more beautiful' and 'C' is the *most*
146	beautiful' girl in the world. Okay? Okay. 'L' – 'good'.
147	*L comes up and studies the columns in search of inspiration. She starts to write '**go**....' And*
148	*then stops.*
149	
150	**T:** Okay. Who can help L?
151	*A child offers.*
152	
153	**T:** J wants to help her.
154	*J comes up and writes in the correct answer '**better**'.*
155	
156	**T:** Yes! Good! 'better'. And N, can you do the last one?
157	*N comes up and fills in the third column '**badst**'. Another child comes up unbidden and rubs it*
158	*out and writes '**best**'.*
159	
160	**T:** Okay. Now we come to the last one. K, can you do it?
161	*K comes up and writes in the third (superlative) column: '**worst**'.*
162	
163	**T:** Good! Who can finish it?
164	*Another child comes up and writes '**worse**'.*
165	
166	**T:** Thank you! Lovely! Now can we just read through these?
167	
168	
169	**Ls:** [*chorus their way through the list*]
170	
171	**T:** Okay. I'm going to write a short exercise on the board. I want you to write in your exercise
172	book, okay?
173	
174	*Ms B rubs off the columns and writes:*
175	**Degrees of comparison**
176	**1. Athi is the (cheeky) boy in the class.**
177	**2. Vuyo is (small) than him.**
178	**3. Picking on Athi was the (bad) thing she ever done.**
179	4. **Betty was the (pretty) girl in the class.**
180	
181	**T:** I don't think you're going to get done if you're still chatting about it. Can you just read
182	through those?
183	*The children read through the sentences in a chorus.*
184	
185	**T:** Okay. You need to change the words in brackets, okay?
186	The bell goes but no-one reacts.
187	
188	**T:** Okay. You must just take down the sentences.
189	*While the children are writing Ms B starts going through the comprehension tests and hands*
190	*back to those not finished.*
191	
192	**T:** X, you haven't finished your work. I can't mark it. Finish it and I'll take it in tomorrow, okay?
193	The children are still busy. It's short break time. As they finish, individual children leave.

C11: Lesson 11

Thursday 29 October 2009

2
3 **(45 minute lesson)**
4

5
6 *Things seem to be running a bit late.*
7
8 **T:** I need the comprehension you did the other day. Some of you never gave it in. In fact the
9 majority of you never gave it in. I need it now. I'll give you a few minutes to complete yesterday's
10 exercise because it was 5 minutes only.
11 *Some children continue to mill around. Others chat and laugh.*
12
13 **T:** I know it's late in the day but you still have to work!
14 *There is lots of noise. Two or three children continue to wander around. Ms B moves from one*
15 *child to another checking on their progress.*
16
17 **T:** Okay. For those people who are done – can't leave you behind.
18 *Ms B collects a folder of new tasks.*
19
20 **T:** You have two more minutes.
21 *Ms B asks one of the children who has finished to hand out exercise sheet.*
22
23 **T:** Okay. You are going to get 2 pages and I'm going to send the stapler around so you can staple
24 them together.
25 *The children continue to be restless.*
26
27 **T:** Alright. I want to show you how I want them stapled together. This page first, then the other.
28 Let's just ..... [*she trails off, looking vexed*] ... I need your attention. I can see you're very loose
29 now. Look at me! X! What was the first sentence?
30
31 **L:** Athi is the (cheeky) boy in the class.
32
33 **T:** Obviously that's incorrect.
34 *Ms B writes on the chalkboard:*
35 **Athi is the <u>cheekiest</u> boy.**
36
37 **T:** Okay. Second sentence. Y?
38 *Y is not paying attention.*
39
40 **T:** No! You're not doing anything. You're not part of the class at all. And to crown it all ... . 'N'?
41 Sentence No 2?
42
43 **L:** *The child reads his answer all but inaudibly. Ms B repeats his answer.*
44
45 **T:** Vuyo is (small) than him. Vuyo is <u>smaller</u> ... How do you spell 'smaller'?
46
47 **L:** *The child spells it out, again virtually inaudibly.*

48

T: Good!" [spells it out]... s-m-a-l-l-e-r. The 3ʳᵈ sentence. D?

50

L: *D says something, but it's inaudible.*

52

T: I can't hear. Oh! Were absent yesterday. L? What was the 3ʳᵈ sentence?
A big noise is erupting from the next door classroom.

55

T: I think there's a fight next door.
Ms B gestures to a child ...

58

T: Tell Mrs. H she must check the Grade 6s.
The child does nothing. Ms B asks another boy to read the third sentence. He cannot.

61

T: [*gesturing to one of the girls*] Okay. Can *you* read it?

63

L: [*The girl is successful.*] Picking on Athi was the <u>worst</u> thing she ever done.

65

T: And the last one. Can you do that, W?

67

L: *Betty was the prettiest girl in the class.*

69

T: Okay. Thank you. Okay. I want you to look at your handout. Okay. So we know that adjectives
of one syllable we add '-er' or '-est'. So .... [*she breaks off*]. What is C's story? He's not listening
at all. Okay. Let's look at the word 'small'. Are you listening? Are you listening? Okay. Let's have
a look at this word 'small'. That is one syllable; a short word, okay? So if you're going to compare
A with B, we say A is 'smaller' than B. But if we say he's the 'smallest' in the class, we add '–est'.
So, an example of this word would be 'nice'. Don't add '-e' because there's already an 'e' there,
okay? Have you got that? So, let's just go through the examples here.
The children read through them together.

78

T: Okay. Do you all understand? Is there anyone who doesn't understand? If I gave you a test
could you do it? Okay. Let's look at the next page. Words of 2 syllables or adjectives.
Ms B reads the rules off the sheet, and then continues ...

82

T: Okay. An example of that would be 'happy'. That 'y' changes to an 'i' and you add '-er'. Okay,
can we just go through the examples there? 'A'! Stop talking!
The children read through the examples in chorus.

86

T: Okay. And then we have adjectives of 3 or more syllables, and there you use 'more' or 'most'.
Some of you wrote 'beautifuller'/ That's wrong. And then you have irregular adjectives. These
you just have to learn off by heart. For example, 'good', 'better', 'best'. Okay. Now the first
exercise there I want you to circle the slower animal.
Ms B seems to suspect that not everyone has followed this.

92

T: Okay. Must I explain that again?

94

Ls: [*The children chorus*] No!

96

T: You understand it?

98

99   **Ls:** [[*The children chorus*] Yes!

100

101   **T:** Now the next exercise. What is the comparison 'more ....'? Okay. It's *comparative.* Okay. I'm
102   going to leave you to go through that on your own. I'll just read through the questions.
103   *Ms B reads through Questions 1 to 8.*

104

105   **T:** There! I want you to fill in the superlative.
106   *Ms B then reads through the next set of 8 questions. [There is noise spillage from the next door*
107   *classes. Ms B asks one of the children to close the door but it's no sooner closed than it's opened*
108   *again. It's the school principal. The principal says,* "Excuse me, Ma'am. I just want the levels
109   children to come to me when they're finished."]
110   **T:** Okay. You've got a few minutes to finish that.
111   *Ms B sits at one of the children's desks to fix the stapler. She gets up and cleans off the*
112   *chalkboard. She walks around observing children at work. The bell rings. The children do not*
113   *react. They continue quietly with their work. Ms B comes to talk to me. She remarks,* "**I've got**
114   **marking for Africa! I've got no poetry or drama books so I have to rely on the**
115   **internet or old textbooks.**" *She turns back to the children ...*

116

117   **T:** People! I still haven't got these in [comprehensions]. I need them for marking. Okay. It's
118   home time. You can pack up now. Okay, Grade 5? And now ... close your eyes.

119

120   **Ls:** [*The children close their eyes and put their hands together in prayer. After the prayer they*
121   *say:*] Good Afternoon, Teachers. Good Afternoon, Friends*," and leave the classroom.*

C12: Lesson 12

(50 minute lesson)

T: Okay, right! Now, Grade 5s, I need you to listen carefully now. More than 2 weeks ago you had a dialogue to do. Who has not finished their dialogue yet?
There is a show of hands (more than half the class).

T: And then the questions on the animal meeting. I've marked who's handed in and those people who haven't handed in …. [*she reads a list of 15 children's names*] And then yesterday's exercise – about 18 of you haven't handed in. C's sitting like he's at the beach – not worried about handing anything in. C! You owe me.
Several children come up to Ms B to talk about missing work. Ms B comes to apologise to me. I assure her this sort of 'book-keeping' is an inevitable part of all classrooms. Children begin to crowd around Ms B.

T: No! No! No! Sit down there. I'm still waiting for my papers – my dialogue.
A child starts searching for his paper in his portfolio.

T: You think it's in there? It's not in there. That's where we put our finished work.
Ms B comes to tell me that all of next week (2-6 November) the children will be writing their ANA papers (Annual National Assessment) which have been made past of CASS, "**Normal lessons will be affected. They may not happen at all.**" *She turns her attention back to the children.*

T: C! Are you busy? Just sit down and do your work.
The child obliges. *Ms B continues her telling to me about the ANA assessment. Some children are still walking around.*

T: Tell me. Have you got your paper? I don't like children walking up and down in my class. C! Complete your writing. I had to waste a whole period standing behind you begging you to finish your work. I want to start marking this. I need to get exam papers ready for next week.
Ms B moves around from child to child checking on their progress, The class settles. Ms B is able to collect in some completed papers. A parent knocks and comes in to fetch her child. She has a quick word with Ms B. Ms B comes back to express her frustration to me. She throws up her hands and says, "**Another reading lesson down the drain!**"

T: X! Finish your work.
Another parent comes into the classroom to see her child. Ms B makes an example of this child by announcing, "I want P to finish his work. He's walking up and down all the time." P and his mother have a quick conversation. The mother hands him his lunch pack, thanks Ms B and leaves. One child finishes her work.

T: I'll give you something to read so long.
She hands the girl a printed sheet. Ms B notices another child messing about. She remonstrates.

49   **T:** Z, I'm going to phone your mother and inform her that you just don't want to work.
50   *Two girls sitting together are finished the work and have been given a printed sheet to read.*
51   *One of the girls reads sotto voce while the other follows. They chat quietly when the reading is*
52   *done. [A loud shouting reprimand is heard from the teacher in the next door class.] The Grade*
53   *5s are now working quite quietly. Ms B is walking around checking and assisting when called*
54   *upon. She comes to tell me that so far only 4 children have completed their work. Ms B*
55   *continues to move around checking but much chatting is starting up amongst learners. The 4*
56   *finished children (all girls!) appear to be fully engaged with their reading task: reading to*
57   *each other, following in their texts, talking about it. Ms B continues to monitor individual*
58   *children, urging them to get on with the task, but the chat level is rising. Ms B chides them.*
59

60   **T:** Sssshhh! Z, why aren't you doing your work?
61   *She goes to stand over Z. She hands the new reading task to a 5th child a boy, newly arrived,*
62   *she tells me, from Zimbabwe, "***He reads quite well; not fluently, but he understands.***"*
63   *She then tells me about another child whose family is from Nigeria who is doing quite well too.*
64   *She then issues a warning to stragglers.*
65

66   **T:** You're staying in at break to finish your work.
67   *The children appeared largely unmoved. A child comes to tell Ms B something.*
68

69   **T:** M says he can't do his work because the others are making him laugh.
70   *Ms B comes to speak to me about her daughter aged 5, who attends a pre-school. She mentions*
71   *the kinds of pre-literacy activities done at this pre-school ("Annie Apple" / "Clever Cat" etc. and*
72   *says, "***Somehow or other our children*** [at Sandstone Primary] **are exposed to letters***
73   **much too late. Somehow when they come from the township they don't see letters***
74   **even though they're all around us.***"] She then reminds the children that she expects 3*
75   *pages from them, the dialogue; the animal comprehension and the degrees of comparison.*
76

77   **T:** Those who are finished can go and enjoy their break. Others can stay and finish their work.
78   *Twenty of the 35 children leave. I notice again that most often when the children speak to each*
79   *other they use Xhosa. For example, 2 boys now come up to put their work in the 'Completed*
80   *Work' folder on Ms B's desk. They tick it off themselves. Two others discuss (in Xhosa) where*
81   *the ticks should go.*
82

83   Ms B tells me that there's little point in my coming to class the next week, or – in fact –
84   thereafter. Next week the children are writing their ANA tests and then it'll be the exams. I ask if
85   I can come anyway. She says that would be fine but that she'd not be with the Grade 5s, she'd be
86   invigilating her own class.
87

88   **Monday 2 November 2009** I visit the school, making my way directly to the Grade 5 room.
89   The desks have been rearranged so that they all face forward and the children are completely
90   silent, working on their ANA papers. I do not stay.

| 1 | **LESSON THIRTEEN** | **15 October 2010** |

2 **[90 minute lesson** (08h30-10h00)**]**
3 25 children + 1 (who came late) (9 others are apparently missing because of transport problems)
4
5 Text: The Dressmaker (PIRLS 2001 comprehension test)
6

7
8 *Ms B hands out papers.*
9
10 T: Okay – I'll give you a few minutes to read it quietly and then we'll read it through together.
11 *Silence as children begin to read through passage silently.*
12
13 T: Since everyone has done reading, let's go to page one.
14 *Ms B starts to read the passage out loud.*
15 *Ms B hands over the reading to a learner.*
16
17 T: B, will you continue for us.
18 *Learner reads. Ms B gently corrects a few mispronunciations.*
19
20 T: You're rushing now, B. Thank you. Well tried, but you're rushing a bit too much.
21 *Ms B indicates to another child to take over.*
22
23 T: Thank you.
24 *Child stops. Ms B invites next reader.*
25
26 T: A?
27 *Child reads.*
28
29 T: Thank you.
30 *Child stops. Ms B invites next reader:*
31
32 T: F?
33 *Child reads. Ms B corrects pronunciation*
34
35 T: 'Sewing', hey.
36 *Child read again.*
37
38 T: Thank you. We need a boy to read. X?
39 *This child is much more hesitant in his reading.*
40
41 T: Thank you.
42 *Child stops. Ms B invites next reader.*
43
44 T: V?
45 *Next child follows with his finger as he reads. Ms B moves to the white board and writes: **sew***
46 ***sewed.***
47
48 T: Okay, I think everyone is struggling with this word.

174

49 *The children chant: "sew sewed".*

50

51 T: **Sewed** … this is the past tense. Okay. Can you just take the passage and underline any words
52 that you don't understand. I've asked S to bring the dictionaries. If there are any words that you
53 don't understand, look them up.
54 *The children begin to go through the text on their own.*

55

56 T: I see everyone's underling 'anxious'. I'll give you a sweet if you find it in the dictionary and tell
57 me what it means.
58 *Ms B writes **anxious** on the whiteboard. Half the children's hands go up. A child starts to give*
59 *his answer. Ms B interrupts.*

60

61 T: No! It's not 'axious', it's a<u>nx</u>-us.
62 *There's a lot of buzz.*

63

64 T: Okay, you don't need to get excited. Settle down! B, can you give us the meaning? The rest of
65 you listen and tell me if he's right.
66 *Ms B writes the child's suggestions on the whiteboard: **worried, nervous, eager**.*

67

68 T: Can anyone, can anyone give us a sentence?
69 *A child offers a sentence.*

70

71 T: 'F said she felt anxious yesterday.' That's good. ' K said when I went on stage I felt anxious.'
72 Okay. Let's move on. Are there any other words that you didn't understand, because later on we
73 have to answer the questions from the passage?
74 *Ms B moves from one group to another checking on the children's actions. There is a low level*
75 *buzz of talk.*

76

77 T: Okay. T says she doesn't understand the word 'content'. Did you look it up?
78 *Child's response not visible.*

79

80 T: X says she's also having trouble. Did you look it up?
81 *The children all seem to be consulting the dictionaries.*

82

83 T: Okay. D asked me what that means: 'Totio'. It's the name of a person. It's a common name
84 there
85 *Ms B returns to the meaning of 'content'. Another child indicates that he's found the word in his*
86 *dictionary.*

87

88 T: Okay. He's going to give us the meaning of 'content'.
89 *The child reads out*: 'something that's in a container'.

90

91 T: Okay. I don't think that is what they mean in the passage because you can't put the customers
92 in a container.
93 *Another child offers a response: happy.*

94

95 T: Yes. Okay. Let's answer the questions. Okay – listen. We call this 'multiple choice'. There's a
96 question and then four possible answers and only one is right so you can't answer two.
97 *Ms B writes*
98 **a.**
99 **b.**

100	**c.**
101	**d.**
102	*on the board.*
103	
104	T: Okay. Let's read through all the questions and then you can answer them in your own time.
105	*Ms B reads through all the questions and possible answers up to Question 7.*
106	
107	T: Okay. I think we should stop there and then just try to answer 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and then just take
108	it from there. Quietly do your work now on your own. Don't forget to write your name and
109	surname on the front of the paper.
110	*Ms B notices a child without a pencil.*
111	
112	T: Where's your pencil, S? You're wasting time.
113	*The children get on with the task. Ms B circulates, keeping check.*
114	
115	T: Okay. Can we continue reading the questions. B – do you want to read Question 7 for us?
116	*The child reads the question.*
117	
118	T: Okay. Do you want to read the answers – possible answers? T, Number 8. Just read the
119	question.
120	*The child reads the question.*
121	
122	T: Number 9 – can you read Number 9? [*gesturing to another child*].
123	*The child reads the question, but quite inaudibly.*
124	
125	T: Okay – can you read a bit louder for us? Number 10?
126	*The child reads the next question.*
127	
128	T: Number 11. B?
129	*The child reads the question.*
130	
131	T: Okay, A. Number 12?
132	*The child reads the question.*
133	
134	T: Okay. And the possible answers?
135	*The child reads the possible answers for the question.*
136	
137	T: Okay. Number 13. J?
138	*The child reads the question.*
139	
140	T: Okay. So some of the questions you have to really think carefully before your answer. Some of
141	the answers are there. Make sure you answer all the questions.
142	*The children settle down to writing their answers to the questions. Ms B circulates, checking on*
143	*how the children are progressing and making sure they keep to the task.*
144	*Ms B comes to sit with me at the desk where I'm stationed, and comments,* "**The difference**
145	**between this group and last year's group is that they really enjoy reading. They**
146	**really struggle with names though. It throws them. It's ridiculous that this is**
147	**English Home Language. I have to teach phonics in Grade 5.**"
148	*A child comes up to ask Ms B about one of the questions.*
149	*A second child comes up and asks about Question 12. As the child's returns to her desk Ms B*
150	*remarks to me,* "**She's a Nigerian. She reads VERY fluently.**"

151 *Another child comes up and tells Ms B, "I don't understand this" [referring to Question 13]. Ms*
152 *B sends him back to his desk.*
153 *The class is getting restless and a bit rowdy.*
154 *Another child comes up to ask for help. Ms B listens and then sends her back to her desk.*
155 *A mother and child then arrive in the classroom. The mother explains that they are late*
156 *because the child had to be taken to the doctor. The child is sent to her desk with a copy of the*
157 *test. Ms B later tells me that this particular child suffers terribly from allergies.*
158 *Ms B starts to collect the papers of those who have finished. The noise level has risen. [14*
159 *papers handed in thus far.]*
160
161 T: Once you're done, just take out a book and read while we're waiting for the others.
162 I want my dictionaries back.
163 *Ms B starts collecting in the dictionaries. The children start settling again. By now 22 have*
164 *handed in their test papers. There is quite a lot of chattering going on. Most of those finished*
165 *have now collected a Sunshine Book from the collection on Ms B's desk. They return frequently*
166 *to select a fresh book. There is an ongoing underlying, but not obtrusive, buzz of chatter.*
167 *Ms B circulates, observing the children at their reading, but not intruding. By now 25 of the*
168 *children have handed in their test papers (i.e. all of those who were there at the start of the*
169 *lesson). Only the little girl who came late is still busy on her test, but her table group members*
170 *are quite restless, and she's clearly distracted by them.*
171
172 T: Okay. It is nearly break time.
173 *Ms B brings things to a close and the children eventually all leave the classroom to go to break.*

C14: Lesson 14

1	**LESSON FOURTEEN**

1 **LESSON FOURTEEN**   **22 October 2010**

2 **[65 minute lesson** (11h45-12h50)**]**
3
4 35 children
5
6 [RLK VIDEO-TAPING]
7 READING LESSON
8 Text: Going to Timbuktu
9
10 Ls: [*chorus*] Good morning, Teachers.
11
12 *In addition to my colleague who is operating the video camera and myself, Ms B has invited 2*
13 *of her colleagues to observe her lesson.*
14
15 T: Okay. We have a few visitors in class today, so behave really well, hey. Last week – you can sit
16 down [T*he children were still standing. They now sit down*.] – last week we read about an
17 ancient story – in China. Do you remember?
18
19 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.
20
21 T: Okay. Now this week we're going to come closer to home – to a place in Africa.
22 *Ms B moves to map of Africa on left-hand classroom wall.*
23
24 T: And I want you all to look at the map of Africa here. And I'm going to ask someone that's
25 sitting close by if they can see Mali.
26
27 Ls: [*chorus*] Mali.
28
29 T: Come show us where Mali is?
30 *One of the children stands up and points out Mali on the map.*
31
32 T: Right! It's in North West Africa. Okay? I'm going to read a story of one of the towns in Mali
33 and it's called Timbuktu. Can you say that?
34
35 Ls: [*chorus*] Timbuktu.
36
37 T: Okay. Now firstly I want to show you a few pictures of what we're going to read about. Okay.
38 And there are many objects that you don't know of now, but you will meet as we go along.
39 *Ms B puts an A3 sheet of paper on chalkboard at front of classroom with some pictures on it*
40 *relating to what they are to read.*
41
42 T: Can everybody see this?
43
44 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.
45

46 T: [*cautioning a child*] Z - can you pay attention, okay?   And there are pictures here of the city
47 of Timbuktu that you can see later on as well, okay? But firstly, we'll have to read about that. I'm
48 going to give you a text now called 'Going to Timbuktu'.
49 *Ms B starts handing out the text* **[see Appendix D]** *and calls on some learners to help her.*
50
51 T: You can start reading immediately, okay? [*Copies of the text are passed around, and*
52 *individual children begin their silent reading of it.*] Okay. I want to bring your attention again
53 to these pictures [*takes A3 poster off the board and holds it up*]. And what I want you to do as
54 we go along – as we go along in the passage of the story that we are reading, I want you to see if
55 you recognise any of these in the story. Okay? Can everybody see okay?
56 *Ms B takes the picture round to the various desks giving each group a quick chance to look at*
57 *the pictures, repeating her instruction to each group. While she does so, other children appear*
58 *to be getting on with their silent reading of the text.*
59
60 T: F, can you see here? I want you to see if you recognise any of the objects in the passage. Okay?
61
62 *The child starts to identify something in the pictures but is stopped.*
63
64 T: Not yet, F. I don't want to know yet. Okay. As we read along – I want you to see if you
65 recognise any of these pictures that you have read about.
66 *Ms B continues to show individual groups the poster, reiterating her instructions. She then*
67 *returns to the front of the classroom.*
68
69 T: I'm going to leave this on the board
70 *Ms B sticks the poster back up on the board.*
71
72 T: Okay. I'm going to start reading for you now and you can follow on your page.
73 *Ms B reads through the text, walking around the classroom as she does so.*
74
75 T: Did you enjoy the story?
76
77 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.
78
79 T: Okay. R **[1]**, will you start reading for us again?
80 *The child begins to read. She stumbles very occasionally, but self-corrects. After*
81 **approximately 1 minute 30** *seconds Ms B stops her.*
82
83 T: Thank you. [*indicates to another child to take over*] A **[2]**.
84 *The second child reads. It is not completely audible from across the room. After*
85 **approximately 42 seconds***, Ms B stops him.*
86
87 T: Thank you.
88 *Ms B reads the next few words of the passage, and then indicates to another child to take over*
89
90 T: "After many weeks …", H **[3]**
91 *The child reads. Ms B corrects her twice ('*midday*', instead of 'mee-day'; '*these'*, instead of*
92 '*this'). After* **approximately 36 seconds***, Ms B stops her, and indicates to another child to*
93 *take over.*
94
95 T: Thank you. J **[4]**? Can you continue? "Adam hurried back …"

179

96   *The child reads. She seems to struggle; Ms B corrects her in a number of places. After*
97   ***approximately 54 seconds*** *Ms B stops her, and indicates to another child to take over.*
98
99   T: Thank you. W**[5]** .
The next child reads. She seems quite fluent, having trouble only with the word 'astrolabe,
101   *which Ms B helps her with. After* ***approximately 40 seconds*** *Ms B stops her, and indicates*
102   *to another child to go back to the beginning of the passage and start over.*
103
104   T: X **[6]**can you start again for us?
The child returns to the beginning of the passage and reads. Ms B speaks over her to caution a
106   *child at another desk.*
107
108   T: Are you following on your page there?
109   *Child carries on reading. Ms B corrects her once* ('Sahara desert'*). The child is quite fluent.*
110   *After* ***approximately 35 seconds*** *Ms B stops her, and indicates to the next child to take*
111   *over.*
112
113   T: Thank you. B**[7]** , will you read for us?
114   *B reads fluently, making just a couple of self-corrections. She uses her finger to keep her place*
115   *as she reads. After* ***approximately 30 seconds*** *Ms B stops her, and indicates to the next*
116   *child to take over.*
117
118   T: Thank you. S **[8]** can you read for us?
119
120   *S reads. After* ***approximately 38 seconds*** *Ms B stops him, and indicates to the next child to*
121   *take over.*
122
123   T: Good. Thank you. K **[9]**?
124   *K reads. He stumbles over 'these'.*
125
126   T: ... 'these' ... *these* they exchanged ..."
127   *He stumbles a number of times further, including over 'shells' (which Ms B corrects). After*
128   ***approximately one minute*** *Ms B indicates to the next child to take over.*
129
130   T: A **[10]**?
131   *A reads for the next* ***33 seconds*** *.He stumbles on 'mathematician'.*
132
133   T: 'mathematician'
134   *He mispronounces 'astrolabe' (says it as 'astrolab-e').*
135
136   T: The word is 'astrolabe', A.
137   *A reads for* ***a further 8 seconds*** *before Ms B indicates to the next child to take over.*
138
139   T: Thank you. K **[11]**?
140   *K reads. Stumbles on* 'ad-ven-ture'. *After* ***approximately 33 seconds*** *Ms B stops her, and*
141   *indicates to the next child to take over.*
142
143   T: Thank you. Thank you K. L **[12]** , can you read?
144   *This child is very hesitant. He reads one word at a time. Ms B corrects him frequently.* Many
145   stories/ ad-ven-tures/ load/ TimBUCK/holes . *He does some self-correcting. Ms B moves*
146   *across to the left side of the classroom as Lulukane continues to read hesitantly. After*

147 ***approximately 1 minute and 45 seconds*** *Ms B stops him and indicates to the next child to*
148 *take over.*
149
150 T: Thank you. M **[13]**?
151 *M begins to read. Ms B cuts in.*
152
153 T: Can you read a little louder and you're rushing. We can't hear what you're reading.
154 *M begins reading again. She does so quite fluently. After **approximately 36 seconds** Ms B*
155 *stops her, and indicates to the next child to take over.*
156
157 T: Thank you. B **[14]**?
158 *B reads. Stumbles on* 'cowrie shells'. *After **approximately 20 seconds** Ms B stops him, and*
159 *indicates to the next child to take over.*
160
161 T: Thank you. X **[15]**can you read?
162 *X reads. Ms B corrects him on the words* 'came' *and* 'astrolabe'. *As he's reading there's a lot of*
163 *noise spilling in from outside. After **approximately 52 seconds** Ms B stops him.*
164
165 T: Thank you very much. Our next exercise – I want you to underline any words that you do not
166 understand- that you don't know the meaning of. So take your pencil and just underline the
167 word. I just want to quiet the class next door, okay?
168 *Ms B goes out to quieten learners in the neighbouring classroom. The Grade 5 learners*
169 *continue with their reading of the text silently, searching for unknown words, some are*
170 *scrolling down the text using their rulers. Ms B returns. Dictionaries are handed out*
171
172 T: Are there any words that you're dying to ask me? I want to give you a vocabulary exercise.
173 *A worksheet entitled 'Vocabulary is fun. Let's do dictionary work'* [**see Appendix D**] *is*
174 *handed out.*
175
176 T: Do you understand what you have to do?
177 *Ms B asks a child to repeat the instructions. The child does so.*
178
179 T: Okay. So you do understand!
180 *Ms B moves from one set of desks to another, assisting learners. Most of the children are forced*
181 *to work in pairs by virtue of there not being enough dictionaries to go round, but they remain*
182 *as individuals. They wait for their turn to use the dictionary to find out what a particular*
183 *word means. One child asks what the meaning is of 'astrolabe'*[45]
184
185 T: Okay. Well. Let's first see if it's in this [*indicating the child's dictionary*].
186 *A child asks Ms B for help. She cannot find traders.*
187
188 T: Yes. It's the same thing. It's one trader, many traders.
189 *Ms B moves to another group. She notices the very short (c.4cm) pencil one of the children here*
190 *is using.*

---

[45] "An **astrolabe** (Greek: ἀστρολάβον *astrolabon*, "star-taker" is a historical astronomical instrument used by astronomers, navigators, and astrologers. Its many uses include locating and predicting the positions of the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars; determining local time given local latitude and vice-versa; surveying; triangulation; and to cast horoscopes. They were used in Classical Antiquity and through the Islamic Golden Age and the European Middle Ages and Renaissance for all these purposes." [Definition accessed December 3, 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrolabe]

191
192 T: And that pencil? Huh? Don't you have a proper pencil?
193 *The child sitting next to her explains that she only has one of those thick pens. Ms B moves to*
194 *next pair. She notices what one child has written as his first definition, and corrects him.*
195
196 T: Traders ARE people, not traders IS …
197 *Ms B moves to another group. One child cannot find the word 'excites'.*
198
199 T: They all belong to the same family those words – excite/ excitedly/ excites …
200 *Another child asks for help finding 'trader' .*
201
202 T: P asks what does 'trade' mean. Now the person who does that is a …? A TRADER.
203 *It is not easy to pick up on all the exchanges between Ms B and the various learners whose*
204 *desks she visits, so what follows is an incomplete record of some of the exchanges.*
205 • *Ms B sits with a pair to look at the word 'excited'.*
206 • *Ms B moves to another pair. They are still working on the first word (traders).*
207 • *Ms B moves on to another child who is worried because he cannot find the word 'excited' in*
208 *the dictionary.*
209 • *There are a few hands up of children awaiting Ms B's help.*
210
211 T: [*Addressing a child who cannot find the word 'excited'*] How far are you?
212 *Ms B sits beside the child. She guides him towards the correct location in his dictionary.*
213
214 T: Go back. [*The child turns back a page*] Somewhere here. [*Ms B gestures with her pen*
215 *towards a particular column on the page*]
216 *There's ongoing - muted- discussion which appears to be completely task-focussed.*
217
218 T: Sssssssssssssh! Not so loud!
219 *Having found the word ('excited') , the child is still battling to work out its meaning.*
220
221 T: Think about going to the beach. So how does that feel?
222
223 L: You want time to go by fast.
224
225 T: Okay! You want time to go fast. You feel excited and enthusiastic. You can't wait for
226 something. Excited.
227 *Ms B moves away to attend to another group.*
228
229 T: Z – how far are you?
230 *The child is still trying to figure out the meaning of the first word: 'traders'.*
231
232 T: Do you see a word that resem- [*Ms B rephrases*] ummm … that nearly looks like that one?
233 [*The child points to a word*] Okay. That resembles that one, isn't it? Okay. What is that word?
234
235 L: Trade
236
237 T: Now if you read what the meaning is, what is it?
238
239 L: [*Child reads out the dictionary entry*] "buy, sell or exchange things".
240

241　T: Okay. To buy, to sell, or to exchange things. Now a person who buys, sells or exchange is
242　called a ....?
243
244　L: trade
245
246　T: A TRAD<u>ER</u>. Okay?
247
248　L: A trader
249
250　T: Okay. When you do it, it's called 'trade'; but the person's called a trader. So there you have
251　your answer, okay? But here we have MANY traders. So, are we just going to say a person, or are
252　we ....?
253
254　L: traders
255
256　T: PEOPLE that buys, sells or exchange. Okay?
257　*Ms B moves to the next group. The exchange is inaudible. A child across the room has her hand*
258　*up. Ms B moves to attend to this group, and then continues moving around, checking,*
259　*correcting, assisting. She instructs one of the children to fetch a second dictionary.*
260
261　T: So you can go ahead, not wait for A.
262　*Although some hands are raised, most of the children continue to focus on the task.*
263
264　T: Sssssssssssssh! Not so loud!
265　*Ms B's attention falls on how one particular child is tackling the task.*
266
267　T: Are you skipping a few words there? Both of you? Are you going to come back to those later?
268　*The child explains that he will come back to the earlier words later.*
269
270　T: Why do you do that? Are some easier than others?
271　*The child starts to respond, but Ms B cuts in.*
272
273　T: No. Just asking!
274　*Ms B moves to another desk group. She then comes to where I am sitting and makes an aside*
275　*to me,* **"This is taking longer than I thought. Because my thinking was to work on**
276　**the vocabulary and then move on to the comprehension. Because I've got a little**
277　**comprehension to go with this."** *About 52 minutes of lesson time have now passed. She*
278　*then continues with her checking of individual learner's progress and offering assistance*
279　*where necessary.*
280
281　T: Did anyone complete their work yet? It's taking SO long.
282　*Ms B waits a minute longer, and then moves to the front to Ms B's table and gathers together*
283　*some flashcards.*
284
285　T: Okay, can you put your pencils down, please? Quickly. I'll give you a little time in our next
286　lesson to complete that exercise. I think most of you have completed the first 5 words, right?
287
288　Ls: [*chorus*] Yes
289
290　T: Put your pencils down and close your dictionaries. Okay, now. I want you to report back on
291　the meanings of the words that you found in the dictionary, okay? Right - the first one – the first

292 word that you had was 'traders'. [*Ms B sticks flashcard 'traders' on board.*] Okay? 'traders'. I'll
293 ask A at the back to give us the meaning of the word and you must please listen to find out if he's
294 right or wrong.
295
296 L: [*Child reads his answer.*] Someone who buys and sells things in trade.
297
298 T: Okay. Someone who buys and sells, or they trade or they exchange. Do you agree?
299
300 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes
301
302 T: Did anyone have a different meaning? [*A child indicates that she did. Ms B invites her to*
303 *share this.*] B? *The child's response is not fully audible, but it seems that she indicates that her*
304 *answer was not that much different from what had already been offered.*
305
306 T:Not very much.
307
308 L: [*The child gives her definition.*]
309
310 T: [*Ms B then reiterates it.*] People that sell or exchange. The word is 'TRADERS', okay? So we
311 say it's <u>people</u> - one person, many people.
312 *Ms B moves to the front to write the definition on the whiteboard alongside the* **traders**
313 *flashcard. She reads it out as she writes:* **People that sells or exchange goods**.
314
315 T: And in the story we read about traders, okay – what is our next word?
316
317 Ls: [*chorus*] 'excited'.
318
319 T: 'excited'. Now, I have all these words on the table here [*indicating the vocabulary flashcards*
320 *which she has laid out on her desk*] and I'll ask A to come choose 'excited' and she'll put it up on
321 the board [*child sticks the 'excited' flashcard up on the board*] and I'll ask D to give us the
322 meaning.
323
324 L: Causing a feeling or reaction
325
326 T: ... causing a feeling or reaction -
327
328 Ls: [*Many learners now say their definitions out loud but this simply comes across as*
329 *murmuring.*]
330
331 T: Any other meanings?
332
333 L: To excite someone is to make them eager and enthusiastic about something.
334
335 T: Yes. That is 'excited' though. Close. What is your meaning, T?
336
337 L: The same.
338
339 T: The same.
340 *Ms B moves around to see and/or listen to what various of the children have written. There is*
341 *a lot of murmuring going on as various children read out their definitions.*
342

343 T: Okay. X, what do you have?

344

345 L: something that excites you [*rest of response not audible*]

346

347 T: Something that *excites* you. What *else,* A?

348

349 L: [*Child's response is not audible.*]

350

351 T: M, what do you have?

352

353 L: The thought of [*inaudible*] excited them.

354

355 T: Excuse me?

356

357 L: The thought of [*inaudible*] excited them.

358

359 T: Okay. That's an example of the word 'excited'. Do you KNOW what the meaning is of
360 'excited'? If I had to say tomorrow I'm bringing chocolate cake for everyone, would you be
361 excited?

362

363 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.

364

365 T: Do you like chocolate cake?
366 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.

367

368 T: What if you don't like chocolate cake? Would you be 'excited'?

369

370 Ls: [*chorus*] No.

371

372 T: Okay. I'm going to ask F what did she write down, please.

373

374 L: I wrote [*inaudible*].

375

376 T: She says it's a feeling of being – feeling - she says number one [*Ms B writes* '**feeling** –' *on the*
377 *white board alongside the* excites *flashcard*] and that feeling is eager or en-thu-si-as-tic [*as*
378 *she's speaking, Ms B adds* '**eager or enthusiastic**' *to the definition on the white board*]. Okay.
379 F – you did write that down, hey?

380

381 L: [*child indicates her agreement*]

382

383 T: Am I right?

384

385 Ls: [*chorus*] Yes.

386

387 T: Okay. The next one is 'science' – 'science'. J, find the word 'science' and put it up on the
388 board.
389 *The child finds the flashcard and puts it up on the board. Ms B moves towards a child and*
390 *addresses her.*

391

392 T: Can you tell us the meaning of that?

393

394 L: [*Child's response is not audible.*]

395
396 T: [*Ms B turns away to chide another child*] Ssssshhh. Stop talking!
397 L: [*Child starts again*]The study of the physical world by means of observation and exploration.
398 T: 'exploration'? What's that?

399
400 L: [*Learner then corrects her choice of word, offering an alternative*]'experiment'

401
402 T: 'experiment'. You want me to write that up on the board?

403
404 L: [*indicates no*]

405
406 T: No?! [*laughs, and then asks to read what the child has written down*] Let me see. [*Reads out
407 what the child has written*] The study of the physical world -. Anyone else have a different
408 meaning?

409
410 L: [*Another child reads what she has written.*] Science is the study of objects and what is
411 happening [*rest of her response is not audible*]

412
413 T: Okay. Anyone else?

414
415 Ls: [*some murmured offerings made by various learners that are not audible*]

416
417 T: [*cuts in*] You're all saying the same thing, hey? It's not different. Okay. You study science
418 here at school, isn't it?

419
420 Ls: [*murmured agreement*] Yes.

421
422 T: Okay. Mr Q is your science teacher [*she gestures towards one of the two colleagues she's
423 invited to observe the lesson*]. Now what are you studying?

424
425 Ls: [*murmured responses not audible*]

426
427 T: Studying plants

428
429 Ls: [*further murmured responses not audible*]

430
431 T: Animals

432
433 Ls: [*further murmured responses not audible*]

434
435 T: Energy - that's right. What else?

436
437 Ls: [*further murmured responses not audible*]

438
439 T: Chemistry

440
441 Ls: [*further murmured responses not audible*]

442
443 T: So that is 'science'. Did you have to look it up in the dictionary? Hey? Or did you think it's
444 something else? [*She writes on the whiteboard alongside the* **science** *flashcard* '**study of**

445 **nature through experiments and observations**'] – observations. The next one is
446 'scientist'. [*She asks one of the children to put up the relevant flashcard.*] While A is putting that
447 up, T, are you going to try?

449 L: [*Child shakes her head.*]

451 T: Not?! [*Another child offers to share his definition.*]

453 L: Someone -

455 T: [*Ms B raises a hand towards another group, indicating that they are disturbing the child
456 speaking*] Sssssssssshhh.

458 L: [*Learner begins again.*] Someone who studies science is a scientist

460 T: Yes. Okay. I think you all agree. Somebody that studies science. Is that right? And is an expert
461 in that field. [*She writes on the whiteboard alongside the* $\boxed{scientist}$ *flashcard* '**someone that
462 studies science and who is an expert in that field**']. Now - number 5: 'adventures' -
463 'adventures' [*Several hands are raised. Ms B asks a boy if he would like to put up the relevant
464 flashcard.*]

466 T: X – do you want to put that up?

468 *The child grins and leaps over the back of his seat to go and put up the 'adventures' flashcard.*
469 *Many hands remain raised.*

471 T: Okay, B help us with that one - 'adventures'.

473 L: [*Child's response is not audible.*]

475 T: That's an adventure? She says when you go on a trip that's an adventure.

477 L: [*Another child offers a definition that's not fully audible.*]

479 T: An adventure – something useful or helpful. Do you agree with her?

481 Ls: [*chorus*] No!

483 T: Can you help her with the right answer?

485 L: [Next *child's offering is not audible but appears from Ms B's reaction to be closer to the
486 correct meaning.*]

488 T: An exciting experience or a dangerous experience. Okay. [*Ms B then asks the child to write
489 her definition up on the whiteboard.*] Do you want to write that one on the board? You can take
490 your paper along.

492 *The child goes to the board and copies alongside the* $\boxed{adventures}$ *flashcard the definition she
493 had written on her answer sheet. Ms B stands next to her, eraser in hand, making small
494 corrections to what the child is writing. It is a fairly slow process. It takes the child nearly 2*

495 *minutes (1 minute 51 seconds) to write everything out. Ms B moves away from her to glance at*
496 *what other children have written but then returns.*
497
498 T: Thank you. Exciting and interesting. And sometimes it can be risky too, hey? [*Ms B adds the*
499 *word 'risky' to the end of the child's written definition*.] 'Risky' meaning 'not too safe', okay?
500 Now I have to ask you to give the dictionaries back because they never come back to school. So
501 just put them together in the middle [*indicating the middle of their various desk groupings*].
502 Put your pages of Timbuktu and your dictionary work in your flip-file, and we'll continue when I
503 see you again.

APPENDIX D: Texts used in reading comprehension activities

Lessons 1, 3, 4 and 5: Endangered species and extinction

<u>**Activity 1**</u>

<u>**Endangered Species and Extinction**</u>

Endangered species are plants and animals that are in immediate danger of extinction.

Extinction is a normal process. It usually happens over thousands of years because of changes in climate. Now the rate of extinction has accelerated because the world's environments are changing faster.

Too many people on earth and the advance of technology mean that the forests and fields where the animals live are being destroyed. The animals then have no food or shelter.

Man also threatens animals by hunting them to make money.

Whales became endangered when they were hunted for their meat and oil. The rhinoceros was killed for its horn. Codfish have become endangered because of over-fishing and heating of the sea as a result of global warming which has reduced the fish's ability to spawn. Diseases and pollution also cause animals to become endangered.

Laws are now being passed to protect animals and their environment and breeding programmes introduced to increase their numbers.

Lesson 2: The Upside-Down Mice

The Upside-Down Mice
by Roald Dahl

Once upon a time there lived an old man of 87 whose name was Labon. All his life he had been a quiet and peaceful person. He was very poor and very happy.

When Labon discovered that he had mice in his house, it did not bother him much at first. But the mice multiplied. They began to bother him. They kept on multiplying and finally there came a time when even he could stand it no longer.

"This is too much," he said. "This really is going a bit too far." He hobbled out of the house down the road to a shop where he bought some mousetraps, a piece of cheese and some glue.

When he got home, he put the glue on the underneath of the mousetraps and stuck them to the ceiling. Then he baited them carefully with pieces of cheese and set them to go off.

That night when the mice came out of their holes and saw the mousetraps on the ceiling, they thought it was a tremendous joke. They walked around on the floor, nudging each other and pointing up with their front paws and roaring with laughter. After all, it was pretty silly, mousetraps on the ceiling.

When Labon came down the next morning and saw that there were no mice caught in the traps, he smiled but said nothing.

He took a chair and put glue on the bottom of its legs and stuck it upside-down to the ceiling, near the mousetraps. He did the same with the table, the television set and the lamp. He took everything that was on the floor and stuck it upside-down on the ceiling. He even put a little carpet up there.

Upside Down Mice 13

190
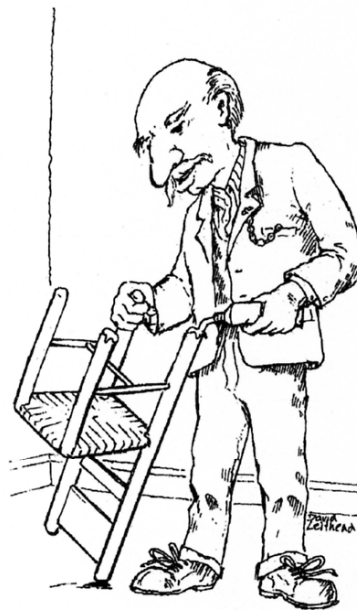
The next night when the mice came out of their holes they were still joking and laughing about what they had seen the night before. But now, when they looked up at the ceiling, they stopped laughing very suddenly.

"Good gracious me!" cried one. "Look up there! There's the floor!"

"Heavens above!" shouted another. "We must be standing on the ceiling!"

"I'm beginning to feel a little giddy," said another.

"All the blood's going to my head," said another.

"This is terrible!" said a very senior mouse with long whiskers. "This is really terrible! We must do something about it at once!"

"I shall faint if I have to stand on my head any longer!" shouted a young mouse.

"Me too!"

"I can't stand it!"

"Save us! Do something, somebody, quick!"

They were getting hysterical now. "I know what we'll do," said the very senior mouse. "We'll all stand on our heads, then we'll be the right way up."

Obediently, they all stood on their heads, and after a long time, one by one they fainted from a rush of blood to their brains.

When Labon came down the next morning the floor was littered with mice. Quickly he gathered them up and popped them all in a basket.

So the thing to remember is this: whenever the world seems to be terribly upside-down, make sure you keep your feet firmly on the ground.

14   **Upside Down Mice**

191
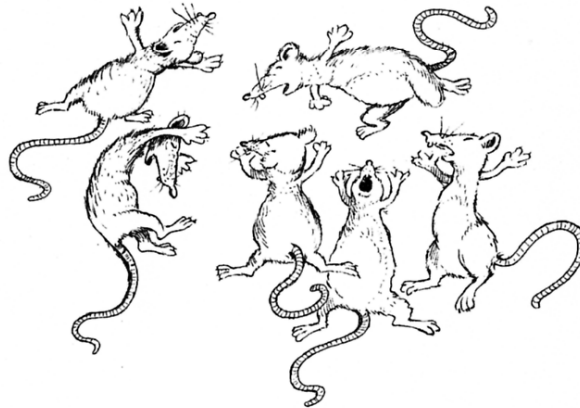
Lessons 7, 8, 9 and 10: The Animal Meeting (plus assessment rubric)

THE ANIMAL MEETING

NARRATOR: Animals meet on a field out of town. They are talking about the new South Africa. These are the animals at the meeting.

DONKEY: I am Donkey. I pull heavy carts from Mountain Drive to Mandela Street.

FLEA: I am part of your household, because I live on dogs and cats, but some people hate me as I bring germs into their houses.

GOAT: I am Goat. From me you get meat and milk.

SNAKE: I am snake. Because I do not grow tall I am often misunderstood. My only weapon made me an enemy of all.

PIG: (Snort) I am Pig. I like to wallow in dirty places.

SHEEP: I am Sheep. I fill your tummy with good meat and make you warm at night.

DOG: (Woof, woof) I am Dog. I am your guard. I keep thieves away from your yards.

CHICKEN: I am Chicken (cluck, cluck) A favourite dish of every block. From me you get tasty chicken stock.

CAT: (Miaau, miaau) I am Cat. I keep rats and mice away from your house.

FROG: I am Frog. (croak) I am being killed by boys because I make a noise.

COW: I am Cow. From me you get milk, cream, butter and meat.

THE ANIMALS SLOWLY STAND UP

ALL ANIMALS: We are the oppressed . Give cruelty a rest.

SHEEP, COW, DOG & DONKEY: Taken from the wild, tamed now we are being maimed.

FROG, SNAKE, CAT & CHICKEN: Struggling for survival, mankind needs
                                   revival.

FLEA, PIG & GOAT: From us they can learn about protecting the young.
                            Our mothers are our pride and not treated like dung.

NARRATOR: Donkey is asked by dog to open the meeting with a prayer.

DOG: Bra, Donkey, will you please open the meeting with a wonderful prayer.

DONKEY: Thank you Father for tonight, that You saved us. Help us with our
              problems and please help us to find solutions. Amen.

NARRATOR: There is no agenda and anyone can talk first. Cat wants to start
                 an action committee. Pig seconds. Donkey is chosen as a
                 chairman, Cow the secretary and Pig is treasurer.

DONKEY: The meeting is open. Who wants to talk?

FLEA: I want to complain about the new animals who moved into our suburbs.
          The dog's hair are hard and there are too many fleas on one dog. We
          are totally squashed. I have to struggle to find a suitable place to suck.

DOG: (Woof) I agree with Flea. The ugly stray dogs who moved into our area
          are real mixed breeds. I don't want to sound racist, but they do not
          wash regularly. They are always scrounging for food in my boss'
          dustbins.

CAT: (Not too shy) Miaau, Things cannot go on like this, just look at my body.
          (She lifts her skirt) My beautiful fur is bitten off by that ugly stray dogs.
          Oh my nerves! My nerves!

COW: (Looking very content with a broad smile) Moo, I don't know about my
          brother, Mr Chairman, but as far as I'm concerned life is far better in the
          new South Africa. The grass on this side of town is much greener than
          Joza's. And I don't think the dogs are such a problem. Most of them are
          chained or behind high walls.

DONKEY: (Serious) I agree with Cow, but I want to bring it under the
              attention of the meeting that the dogs who moved to town with us
              makes a big noise at night. I can't sleep. We have to take action

against the mongrels.

PIG: (Who sat the whole time and who was not interested in the meeting lifts
        his head with a loud snor) I miss those muddy streets in the old location,
        but we have to do something to those dogs.

SNAKE: (Ready to fight- with a hissing voice) Just tell me where those dogs
          are. I'll use my venom on them.

FROG: (Excited) Yes, do go. Then you'll forget about me.

SNAKE: (Hissing to Frog) I feel like swallowing you.

DONKEY: Order! Animals, order! Order snake!

SNAKE: I am sorry, but Frog makes my blood boil.

FROG: Snake and I must actually stand together. The two legged animals are
        chopping off our trees and bushes to build the mud and stick houses.
        Some of them are polluting our rivers and dams, with bottles and other
        rubbish.

SNAKE: Yes, I agree. We can hardly live there.

CHICKEN: Those are petty issues! What about us! Thousands of us are
          slaughtered everyday. The two legged animals are eating chickens
          more and more. And to crown it all, they are now even eating our
          heads and feet- calling it "walkey talkey's".

CAT: (Mischieviously) And I heard that the chickens are special at Shoprite and
        Checkers this week.

CHICKEN: (cluck! cluck!) There is no peace and love in the new South Africa,
          because I have to run from those terrible dogs everyday too. My
          eggs are taken from me. Where will it all end?

SHEEP & COW: (Together) I want to say something too.

DONKEY: I'll give Sheep a chance to talk.

SHEEP: I feel very unhappy that the two legged animals do not care where they

slaughter us. There is just no control over the mass murders of my kind. We are being killed in the backyards in the new suburbs.

COW: Yes, just the other night I heard Pig's cousins' screaming across the road. It's a shame, a crying shame.

GOAT: I have to agree with Sheep and Cow. Our lives have become really cheap. I can be slaughtered any day now. I heard my boss' son is returning from the bush next week. A big feast will be held. I hope and pray that they will have a fish-braai.

SNAKE & FROG: And we thought we have problems.

CHICKEN: What is the way forward? What is our plan of action?

(The animals shout)

GOAT: Let's toyi-toyi!

THE ANIMALS LEAP INTO A DANCE

COW: Let's march to Bisho!

SHEEP: Let's strike!

PIG: What can we do? What can we say? We are oppressed!

DONKEY: All we can hope for is that the two legged animals will stop with their cruelty towards us.

CHICKEN: Yes, yes.....I agree.

DONKEY: Thank you very much for your contribution. Our next meeting will be a toyi-toyi in front of the walls of the two-legged animals' home.
Till next time. Goodnight!

THE ANIMALS RAISE UP FROM WHERE THEY ARE SITTING.
STANDING IN A SEMI CIRCLE. THEY START SINGING -
'WE ALL STAND TOGETHER"

Reading : Reading Drama

Teacher Name:

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Tries to understand	Stops reading when it doesn't make sense and reads parts again. Looks up words s/he doesn't know.	Stops reading when it doesn't make sense and tries to use strategies to get through the tricky spots or to figure out new words.	Stops reading when it doesn't makes sense and asks for assistance.	Gives up entirely OR plows on without trying to understand the story.
Thinks about the characters	Student describes how different characters might have felt at different points in the story and points out some pictures or words to support his interpretation without being asked.	Student describes how different characters might have felt at different points in the story, but does not provide support for the interpretation unless asked.	Student describes how different characters might have felt at different points in the story, but does NOT provide good support for the interpretation, even when asked	Student cannot describe how different characters might have felt at different points in the story.
Thinks about the story/article	Student accurately describes what has happened in the story and tries to predict "what will happen next."	Student accurately describes what has happened in the story.	Student accurately describes most of what happened in the story.	Student has difficulty re-telling the story.
Stays on task	Student reads the entire period. This may be independent reading or done with adult or peer assistance, as assigned.	Student reads almost all (80% or more) of the period.	Student reads some (50% or more) of the time.	Student wastes a lot of reading time.

Date Created: **Oct 23, 2009**

Lesson 13: The Dressmaker

APPENDIX B

PIRLS Example Passage and Items

• Reading for Literary Experience •

The Dressmaker
by
Henning Mankell

When Sofia arrived at Totio's hut he was already out of bed and sitting outside the hut on the wooden bench by the sewing machine. Sofia felt anxious. Maybe he had changed his mind?

When she came up to him, he nodded at her and made room on the bench so that she could sit down. Neither of them said anything. Sofia looked over to Totio, who seemed to be lost in thought. The sewing machine was covered by its brown, wooden hood. The sound of Fernanda's snoring could be heard from within the hut.

"The day when life becomes different always comes," Totio said suddenly. "You know it'll happen, but it takes you by surprise anyway." He bent over the table and removed the wooden hood from the sewing machine. Then he passed his hand over its shiny surface.

"For the last thirty-five years I've been using this machine," he said. "I don't know how many miles of thread have wound through the needle, and in and out of trousers, dresses, shirts and caps."

63

Sofia could hear that Totio was sad. She thought that it must be hard to grow old and not be able to work any more.

Totio bent down and picked up something which had been lying under the bench. Then he gave it to Sofia. It was a sign made out of hard, white cardboard. On the sign, somebody had written in block letters "Dressmaker's Workshop: Sofia Alface."

Sofia noticed that her heart was beating harder. She started to smile with joy. It was true then. She would take over the machine and the hut. Tomorrow.

"Remember that customers who are content will come back," said Totio. "Unhappy customers will only come once, and then never return. When you arrive tomorrow, this sign will be hanging there. In the morning, my sign will be gone. And we will be gone, Fernanda and I. The hut is yours. And the sewing machine. And all the customers."

"There are so many things I still need to learn," Sofia said.

"This is also true of me," Totio answered. "You never know everything there is to know."

The snoring from within the hut stopped, and Fernanda soon came out.

"I think you should know that it was Fernanda's idea," said Totio. "When I felt that my eyes couldn't see anymore, I said that I would sell the sewing machine. But Fernanda thought it better that you be the dressmaker, sending us money now and then."

Fernanda had sat down on the bench. Sofia was sandwiched between her and Totio.

"A sewing machine is meant for sewing," Fernanda said. "You shouldn't sell it."

"I don't know how to thank you," Sofia said softly.

"All you have to do is sew," said Fernanda.

64

Sofia stayed at Totio and Fernanda's house all day. She helped them pack their things.

Early the next day, they would leave. They would travel for many days to the faraway Mueda, where they had once lived.

During the day, many people from the village came to say goodbye. All the time, Totio talked about what a clever dressmaker Sofia was. He told them they should come to her when something needed to be sewed or mended.

Late in the afternoon they bade farewell. Fernanda patted Sofia on the cheek. Totio shook hands with her with his wrinkled but strong hand. His hand held hers for a long time.

Sofia walked home knowing she would miss Totio and Fernanda very much. But she also knew she would think of them every time she used the sewing machine that waited quietly under its brown, wooden hood.

65
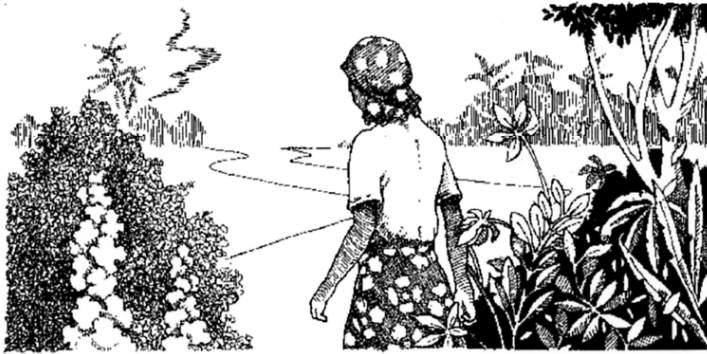
Lesson 14: Going to Timbuktu

Going to Timbuktu

Adam was twelve when his parents died. He went to live with his uncle and aunt. His family were all workers in a salt mine in the hot Sahara desert.

One day Adam's uncle said, "The traders are here, and I am going to sell you to them. We need the money, and you will have a better life with them. It's hard work in the salt mine."

Adam was sad to leave his family, but he was also excited. The traders carried goods all over Africa. He had heard many stories about their adventures. They set off early one morning. Adam helped to load the camels. The traders were traveling south to Timbuktu, the most famous city of the time.

The journey was long. Adam had many tasks. He gave the camels food, he collected water at the water holes, he made food for his masters and he learnt to put up tents at night. Adam's favourite thing was to watch the traders use the astrolabe to mark the position of the stars and work out the way to go. It is easy to get lost in the desert. Adam wanted to learn to use it too.

After many weeks in the desert, the walls and buildings of Timbuktu rose in the distance across the flat sands. The camels moved faster. They entered the gates of the city at midday. At the busy market, the traders took out perfumes, cloth, salt and – most valuable of all – beautiful books. These they exchanged for gold, kola nuts, ostrich feathers and cowrie shells, which were used as money. Adam hurried back and forth carrying goods.

There was plenty to see and do in Timbuktu. There were grand houses where the rich traders lived. There were many scholars, writers, mathematicians and scientists. The people of Timbuktu loved to learn and study.

As the years went by, Adam became a trader too. He learnt to use the astrolabe and made many journeys across the desert. When he had made enough money, he went to live in Timbuktu. There he collected many books.

Lessons 1, 3, 4 and 5: Vocabulary worksheet for 'Endangered species …' text

<u>Activity 2</u>

<u>Dictionary work</u>
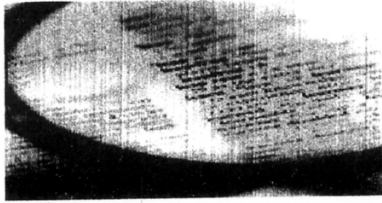
Read the passage again then look up the meanings of the following words in a dictionary:

1. Endangered

   _____
   _____

2. Extinction

   _____
   _____

3. Species

   _____
   _____

4. accelerated

   _____
   _____

5. environment

   _____
   _____

6. pollution

   _____
   _____

7. spawn

   _____

Lesson 10: Comprehension worksheet for 'The Animal Meeting' text

Name: _____

Grade 5   The Animal Meeting   Date: _____

Answer the following questions based on the drama.

1. Write down the characters in the play _____

    _____

    _____

2. Where did the animals meet?

    _____

3. Dog keeps _____ from our yards.

4. Who did flea complain about?

    _____

5. What do you think scrounging means? "They are always scrounging for food in my
    boss' dustbins." _____

6. Choose the correct answer:

    6.1 Snake's only weapon is

    tail   venom   horns

    6.2 Snake said: "I am sorry but Frog makes my blood boil!" In your own words write
    down what you think "makes my blood boil" mean.

    _____

    _____

7. Write down how you think chicken feels in the play.

    _____

8. How does snake and frog feel about their home? _____

    _____

9. Write a short summary of what happened in the play. _____

    _____

    _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. Did you enjoy the play? _____ Why?

_____

11. Who is your favourite character in the play?

_____

Lesson 14: Vocabulary worksheet for 'Going to Timbuktu' text

Vocabulary is fun, let's do some Dictionary work

Find the meanings of the following words:

1. traders:

2. excited:

3. science :

4. scientist:

5. adventures:

6. astrolabe:

7. travelling:

8. scholars:

9. desert:

10. mathematicians:

Interview 1: 30 October 2009 (13h12-14h03)

1 **S-AR:** Ms B, my focus is on language acquisition; but my main focus is on
2 engaging with written text – with reading – and how you are trying to
3 develop the reading skills of your Grade 5s. That's my main focus.
4
5 **Ms B:** OK
6
7 **S-AR:** But, you know, one doesn't always know exactly what to look for, so
8 I'm just generally observing what's happening in your class, and I want now
9 your views on various things. First of all, your views on how you think
10 children should learn their English … your ideas about how best they can
11 learn their English …
12
13 **Ms B:** Seeing that our school is an English-medium school – if I can put it
14 that way - they start with English from Grade 1. Obviously we have all these
15 arguments that children should start to learn in their mother tongue for the
16 first 4 years, but unfortunately that's not the case at our school. I would
17 think my expectation would be, you know, when I get them in the
18 intermediate phase (it's my first year teaching Grade 4s after 10 or 12 years)
19 but I still have the same problem, even when I get the Grade 5s, like I did in
20 previous years. They *can't* read. The majority of them *can't* read. So I
21 always have this expectation when they come to me to at least to know the
22 *basics* in reading and writing. And that's sadly lacking in the majority of the
23 learners with us even by Grade 5. *How* they should learn to read is … I
24 think, maybe in the lower grades, focus more on phonics, on sounds.
25 Because what I've observed is when I take a few of them aside and try to
26 teach them and … [*Ms B breaks off to mention some other files that she*
27 *wants to show me*] … I teach them the basic sounds, phonics, like: This is
28 'a', 'b'. When they come to the 'u' instead of saying /ʌ/ they say /ʊ/. Now
29 obviously when you're reading you will find when they sound out the words,
30 they've got their own sounds in their minds and …
31
32 **S-AR:** What do you mean 'own sounds'?
33
34 **Ms B:** Maybe from their backgrounds …
35
36 **S-AR:** OK …
37
38 **Ms B:** I don't know if that *is* the problem. That's what I could observe in
39 many of them. They make up their *own* as they go along.
40
41 **S-AR:** Now are you talking about your Grade 4s or about the babies?
42
43 **Ms B:** I'm talking about my Grade 4s and 5s. I don't teach the babies at all.
44

S-AR: So then what do you do when you're faced with this situation?

Ms B: Apart from complaining [laughs] … I try to also to – and now I haven't been doing it this term because I'm pressed for time. I mean, the exams are supposed to start! But what I usually do is I try to develop exercises for those words. It's fine to do that. But the Department *demands* certain things from us, certain tasks – like a comprehension, like a written task, a dialogue - so we can't really deviate from that. Although I can give an exercise to go practise at home or whatever, they don't. Sometimes they don't even do those easy exercises. But the Department demands from the kids, you know: they need to do a dialogue, a list, they need to write this and that and the other … I can't remember all of them now …

S-AR: Is this the Eastern Cape DoE?

Ms B: Yes - it's a policy document …

S-AR: It's not to do with the Curriculum as such?

Ms B: It's *got* to do with the Curriculum, I suppose, but there are certain tasks that … there are 8 tasks in the Intermediate (Senior phase). Now one task will maybe comprise out of the language exercise – oral, reading, a written exercise … four or five different exercises will make one task. Each term has two tasks – the other one is probably the tests …

S-AR: So now the *reading* …. How – if you were to say, "My biggest problem is 'X' or 'Y' in terms of speaking or reading or writing or – well the 'skills' …" Where would you put your biggest emphasis?

Ms B: It would be reading because it forms the basis of *everything* else.

S-AR: OK.

Ms B: They can't read. And they can't … and even if they read … some of them *can* read, they *can* recognise words, and they read quite *fluently* some of them. But then they don't *understand* what they're reading …

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: …. that's something else I've picked up.

S-AR: We've talked about that. What do you think is the reason for their not understanding?

Ms B: It could be they're not learning in their mother tongue. They've never learned *how* to understand.

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: They can't read between the lines. They … you know … that type of thing.

96
97 **S-AR:** Mmm … So what do you think you could try to do? Well … what *do*
98 you try to do?

99
100 **Ms B:** I try to give them more and more exercises, even if it doesn't count
101 for any marks, you know [laughs] … and ask them questions all the time:
102 "What do you think about this and that and the other?" Obviously their
103 general knowledge is also, I think, very limited, so they can't – what can I
104 say – make like inferences, or something like that, when I speak about
105 something. Like the one question I asked them, "Which species do we
106 belong to?" They said, "Monkeys." You know! That type of thing! Ja! Maybe
107 it's because they don't read much. They're not exposed to the language that
108 much as well.

109
110 **S-AR:** So, what effect does this have on their language … *your* role as a
111 teacher and *their* learning of language in Grade 5?

112
113 **Ms B:** *My* role. Sometimes I wonder about that! Apart from teaching, you
114 know … you see that the progress isn't what it should be. You have to stop
115 and try to start again. Sometimes I just go sit next to one of them and try to
116 explain what I tried with the lesson or whatever. I think also the lack of
117 parental involvement makes it difficult …

118
119 **S-AR:** Mmm …

120
121 **Ms B:** … for them. I'm not quite sure if there's an answer on how to do it. I
122 don't know if I'll have all the answers … *ever*!

123
124 **S-AR:** Well, I'm coming in now at what's really the end of the year. I
125 mean, next week you start your tests and your exams. Of your class – what's
126 it … about 36 children? … how many would you say come up to your
127 expectations?

128
129 **Ms B:** Hmmm … very few. Very few. I can think of probably … [She lists
130 the names of 4 learners] … and a few others. At the most 10. The others are
131 …. on different levels.

132
133 **S-AR:** Is this different from *before*?

134
135 **Ms B:** Umm … here and there. Here and there. But, I think … that's
136 probably the trend in all the classes. That is how it goes. We have a few
137 that's really excelling and can cope with the work. I can't really say excel,
138 but they *cope* with the curriculum. Two or three will really *stand out* in the
139 class. They're in the minority. Maybe that *is* our society. And then the rest –
140 it's just dragged on with the previous grade to the next grade.

141
142 **S-AR:** OK. Now, can you just talk a little bit about your scheme for what
143 you would *like* to do in any week? I notice from sitting in that a lot of your
144 time is spent trying to get them to do what they should have done already!
145 But if that weren't the reality, how would you plan a unit of work, or for a
146 term? I mean … do you have a routine that you follow in any way?

147

148   **Ms B:** Are you trying to ask me, "Where do I start usually"?

149

150   **S-AR:** No, I'm trying to think about - Ummm - like I've watched you with
151   this extinct species - you started with a reading passage and then you -

152

153   **Ms B:** ... vocabulary ...

154

155   **S-AR:** Do you have a weekly pattern that you follow ....?

156

157   **Ms B:** Yes - I try to follow a *fortnightly* pattern in that fashion. Because it
158   takes so long.

159

160   **S-AR:** Mmm.

161

162   **Ms B:** So I'll start with vocabulary or glossary or something like that, you
163   know ... the words. I try to encourage them to look up in a dictionary what
164   the words mean, to make sense. I also try to do that. [Mentions the
165   computer in the Grade 7 classroom, plus the fact that technology doesn't
166   always work that well.] From there we go on to a passage. Obviously
167   interact more with the words and sounding out different words, because we
168   still have to do that (even in Grade 7!). Then after that, once I know that
169   they've grasped the idea of the passage ...

170

171   **S-AR:** You're talking now across grades?

172

173   **Ms B:** Yes. Ja ... because it's difficult to .... It also depends on that class.
174   Some of them are *very* quiet and they don't want to volunteer a answer or

175

176   **S-AR:** You mean the Grade 5s?

177

178   **Ms B:** Yes. Like I say, it depends. Some classes I can work very nicely with.
179   Like Grade 6s, they're a easy class. But Grade 5s again, as you can see, they
180   don't like volunteering answers or reading or whatever. So I have to start
181   *asking* them. Well, after the reading I'll go onto a comprehension exercise,
182   and obviously then base my language exercises on whatever is in the
183   passage. And sometimes I have to design that myself because not all the
184   textbooks have had the things I use that I have in my file. But I develop all
185   the time.

186

187   **S-AR:** Mmm.

188

189   **Ms B:** When I see some things and then I have to find another exercise or
190   whatever. If I find that an exercise, for example that one on adjectives,
191   didn't work all that well, then I'll try to do another the next week or
192   whatever.

193

194   **S-AR:** Now Grade 5 ... the reason I chose it is because in the old system it
195   was really that year of transition from mother tongue to English or
196   Afrikaans. Do you think Grade 5 is still in any way a transition year?

197

198 **Ms B:** I've never taught at a school where it was in transition … I was
199 always at … before I was at a … if I can call it … a homogeneous school
200 where it was only Afrikaans, and so there was never that transition.

202 **S-AR:** If you reflect on the differences between Grade 4 and 5 does
203 anything come to mind?

205 **Ms B:** The Grade 4s are very much more still in foundation phase when
206 they start Grade 4 and it takes two to three terms for them to start grasping
207 it's not only one teacher with three learning areas. There's different people
208 coming and teaching different learning areas. It takes them *a while* to
209 adjust to that. Because sometimes I still go in there and say, "Take out your
210 English books," and like half an hour later you still find somebody busying
211 themselves with whatever they are busy with.

213 **S-AR:** Mmm.

215 **Ms B:** The Grade 5s on the other hand - here and there - you still have
216 those learners that … they can't focus on whatever it is. Not only in English,
217 I suppose. Probably in the other learning areas as well. But to a lesser
218 extent, I think.

220 **S-AR:** So, in the context of this school, it's not really a transitional grade
221 at all?

223 **Ms B:** No. Yes, not really.

225 **S-AR:** Can you tell me a little bit about the history of the language choice
226 in this school?

228 **Ms B:** When I started here about thirteen years ago I think English as the
229 home language, the language of learning and teaching, was just
230 implemented. Because I remember the Grade 7s going up were the last ones
231 doing Afrikaans.

233 **S-AR:** When was this again?

235 **Ms B:** That was about thirteen/fourteen years ago.

237 **S-AR:** OK.

239 **Ms B:** I think it was just about the time of democracy but it was
240 predominantly Afrikaans- speaking before that.

242 **S-AR:** And then the process whereby you came to the choice of English
243 home language?

245 **Ms B:** I wasn't at the school at that time, but from what I've learned was so
246 many learners from the township came here and they like … Afrikaans was
247 like even a bigger problem than English. So the school switched to English
248 starting from the lower grades.

249

250 **S-AR:** Would you be willing to comment on how you see that choice …
251 whether you think it was a good choice (retrospectively) or not?

252

253 **Ms B:** I think the parents were in favour of their children being taught in
254 English. Whether it was a good choice …. I have my reservations. Because I
255 read a lot, and I go onto the internet, reading about language problems. I
256 once read – I can't remember the site now, I just Googled it in - and it came
257 up with the Hispanics that had similar problems with their learning because
258 they're not learning in their mother tongue in America. So I saw our school
259 in the very same light as the Hispanics. And the person commenting said
260 that it's important that learners are taught in their mother tongue for the
261 first four years and maybe after that they can go to another language …. say
262 English then.

263

264 **S-AR:** Mmm.

265

266 **Ms B:** Now maybe it would have been more beneficial for the learners. I
267 don't see how far they get. Some of them just exit at Grade 9 because of this
268 language problem.

269

270 **S-AR:** Mmm. Well, just walking around the school, and even in the off
271 times in the lessons, those children are not …

272

273 **Ms B:** … communicating in English *whatsoever*.

274

275 **S-AR:** No. No. They're completely Xhosa-speaking …

276

277 **Ms B:** And even if they come up to you they only – with the exception of
278 the few that are quite fluent in English – they'll come and uh, "Can I go to
279 the toilet?" That's basically *it*. The limit of having a conversation with the
280 teacher. Very limited. And even oral. If you have to ask them to come and
281 speak about a topic, that's your [Ms B whispers] *quietest* period! When they
282 *can* talk, they wouldn't like to talk! [laughs]

283

284 **S-AR:** Mmm. Mmm. Ja, Ms B. It's quite a problem. If you look at the
285 outcomes that the curriculum is asking you to have achieved by the end of
286 Grade 5, perhaps most especially the reading outcomes, how would you
287 describe the status of your learners relative to those outcomes now as we sit
288 in the fourth term?

289

290 **Ms B:** Most of them didn't achieve what they should have achieved. Ja.
291 But if you look at what the Department demands from them this term, they
292 had to read for example the oral, the dialogue, the play they did. And
293 obviously you can't really award group marks. You have to listen to each
294 one reading. And it's here and there where a reader stood out.

295

296 **S-AR:** Mmm.

297

298 **Ms B:** And I mean, you were there in the class.

299

300   **S-AR:** Mmm.

302   **Ms B:** You know what they're like. And I used a rubric to assess them. You
303   could make your own conclusions.

305   **S-AR:** How does this affect you as a teacher?

307   **Ms B:** I think my morale is sometimes very low [laughs]. You know! There
308   are times that you are *so* tired and weary, and you don't know what/ which
309   approach to use next. What do I do?

311   **S-AR:** Mmm.

313   **Ms B:** I *wish* there could be a button that I could press on the computer
314   that could give me all these answers. What to do next! Something like that!
315   Ja! But it makes me despondent.

317   **S-AR:** Mmm.

319   **Ms B:** I do feel disheartened.

321   **S-AR:** Is this different from your previous teaching – this sense of
322   disheartenment?

324   **Ms B:** Ummm. My previous school that I taught at, like I said, it was
325   predominantly Afrikaans; children learning in their mother tongue. Here
326   and there you had learners with dyslexia, and this problem or that problem.
327   They could *read*.

329   **S-AR:** Mmm

331   **Ms B:** And unless *they* didn't want to achieve, I think at the end of the day,
332   they achieved. I was teaching in [names a South African city]. It was quite a
333   big school. They had five classes of each grade. But. Ja! I think I must have
334   achieved with what we teachers set out to achieve.

336   **S-AR:** Now, have you always taught language?

338   **Ms B:** I've always taught language and a bit of maths.

340   **S-AR:** So language is your … you specialized in it at college?

342   **Ms B:** Not really. It was just I ended up teaching language when I started
343   out. I did Afrikaans for my fourth year and English as a second language.
344   And then people just asked me, and OK, you make the best of it. And that's
345   how I guess I came to teach it as a subject.

347   **S-AR:** And in terms of in-service training, have you done any language
348   teaching courses, or anything of that sort?

350   **Ms B:** Yes. I did the course of [names a teacher education institution].

351
352 **S-AR:** Mmm.

353
354 **Ms B:** That 'Learning' and 'Get reading right'.

355
356 **S-AR:** When was this?

357
358 **Ms B:** It was last year and I think the year before that. It was both in last
359 year I was there.

360
361 **S-AR:** And were these workshops ...

362
363 **Ms B:** Yes ...

364
365 **S-AR:** ... or an actual course?

366
367 **Ms B:** No, it wasn't a course. It was workshops. And then Reading Camp,
368 and things like that. And READ.

369
370 **S-AR:** And do you feel that this gave you some greater sense of how to
371 handle this?

372
373 **Ms B:** Yes. I *think* so. But then when you come back to this school and it's
374 trying to deal with the curriculum ... and you can't only do reading, because
375 you need to do writing, and you need to do language study as well, and so
376 sometimes ... all of that just goes lost as well.

377
378 **S-AR:** Mmm.

379
380 **Ms B:** But it's good to have an idea of how to cope with that problem that
381 you have.

382
383 **S-AR:** Mmm.

384
385 **Ms B:** But I *do* think that you need help from outside.

386
387 **S-AR:** Mmm.

388
389 **Ms B:** I think, you know, if those learners can be taken out of the class and
390 just be taught the basics of reading, it would make my job much easier.

391
392 **S-AR:** OK. Just thinking back now ... can you think of any lesson or unit in
393 the course of this current Grade 5 year in the language classroom that's
394 been a *real* success?

395
396 **Ms B:** [silent]

397
398 **S-AR:** That you've experienced as a success?

399
400 **Ms B:** I'm trying to think now. I can't think of one.

401

S-AR: ... or even *moments* that have been affirming of what you're trying to do?

Ms B: Ja. There *are* those moments when, you know, learners are quite excited. They did their homework. And you mark it. Sometimes I try to mark it in class, you know, to give it back to them. And they've really *achieved* something. Or like whilst I was walking and checking their homework just now, one girl showed me a book she'd read. It's one of the library books.

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: It's things like that, you know, really shows me that they are trying. Because she really struggles to read and she showed she can complete this book. And I told her, "OK. You tell me on Monday what happened in the story." So, you know, it's times like that that really warms your heart. OK ... at least I'm doing *something* right, even if it only touches a few of them. Maybe next year, touch a few more. [Laughs]

S-AR: Can you give me some other concrete memories? I love that the story about the child who's read the book. Can you think of any other concrete memories of things that have happened that you can describe?

Ms B: Well. You know "C"? He doesn't do his work. He always has an answer for everything! And I gave them a summary to do. I know it's quite difficult for them to write a summary. You know we have to take things and condense it, condense facts and that. And he actually wrote a summary and he asked me even to read it to the class. But it wasn't a very good summary [laughs] but *at least* he tried. Ja! So, you know, things like that. "S" is always very very excited to do her work and to share it with her group; as well as "A". But then they're really excited about *school*.

S-AR: Those are those little girls?

Ms B: Ja.

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: "I" struggles a lot but he always tries to do ... he always shows me, "I've just done this," or that. So those things really stand out. But they *have* learning problems and there *are* learning barriers. Apart from the fact that they can't read I think they do have other barriers as well.

S-AR: When you say 'they', how many children have you got in mind there like that?

Ms B: Roughly about 10.

S-AR: Ten out of 36 children?

Ms B: I'm talking about *serious* learning problems.

453

454 **S-AR:** Do you think that's an abnormal percentage of a class? Is it
455 something unique to this school?

456

457 **Ms B:** I think it's .... No, I don't think it's abnormal for the school. We *have*
458 problems like that ... umm ... where there's like learning problems in class.
459 I'm thinking of my Grade 7 class at the moment. There's also probably ten
460 which has learning problems. Six of them disrupt the class *all* the time. The
461 others have learning problems, but they are quiet.

462

463 **S-AR:** Mmm.

464

465 **Ms B:** They've *been* assessed by a psychologist, but you can think, "But,
466 what do we do *after* that?" We are sitting with reports. But parents
467 stigmatize special schools *so* much. They say their kids are not crazy. So,
468 you know, we sit with that problem.

469

470 **S-AR:** And what about other schools in town? Do they see you as a refuge,
471 or do other schools have that problem?

472

473 **Ms B:** I'm not sure about other schools. Maybe they have that problem. I
474 haven't spoken to them. But from what I can take from what the parents tell
475 me, they want their kids here because they feel they going to be taught
476 better than what's happening in the township. Whether this is true or not, I
477 don't know. But that is what parents tell me.

478

479 **S-AR:** Mmm.

480

481 **Ms B:** Now. I don't know whether that's true or not but I don't know
482 what's happening in the township schools. But ... they see our school as a
483 better school with better education here. But I don't think the problem is at
484 school; or at *those* schools. It's with their children.

485

486 **S-AR:** Mmm.

487

488 **Ms B:** If they accept that, you know ... maybe the children could have been
489 helped a long time ago.

490

491 **S-AR:** So what are they doing ... just not believing it when ...?

492

493 **Ms B:** Some of them ... Ja. "He's trying" That's what they say when we
494 report to them, you know. "He's trying. He's at least trying."

495

496 **S-AR:** Mmm.

497

498 **Ms B:** But ... Ja! It's difficult. And when – like in Grade 7 – they are *so* far
499 gone, so lost already by that stage, they don't even want to go to the
500 psychologist again.

501

502 **S-AR:** Mmm.

503

504   **Ms B:** … for remedial work … or whatever …

505

506   **S-AR:** Mmm.

507

508   **Ms B:** It's sad. Because they're just pushed through the system.

509

510   **S-AR:** Mmm. [Reflective pause] Is there anything you can tell me more
511   about your handling of teaching reading texts – not *teaching* reading, but
512   *developing* reading skills with your Grade 5s?

513

514   **Ms B:** Let me think.

515

516   **S-AR:** I mean you said today, for example, "That's another reading lesson
517   down the drain."

518

519   **Ms B:** Mmm.

520

521   **S-AR:** When you do reading lessons, what kinds of skills do you try to
522   focus on?

523

524   **Ms B:** Skills? What type of skills?

525

526   **S-AR:** Well … is it like … word- recognition, pronunciation, going through
527   to – I think you once described it as 'reading between the lines'.

528

529   **Ms B:** Ja.

530

531   **S-AR:** You've obviously got those at the back of your head.

532

533   **Ms B:** Ja. Fluency, and …

534

535   **S-AR:** Ja. So that's what I mean by 'skills'. How do you *try* to develop
536   those skills?

537

538   **Ms B:** Ummm. … If I should take you through a reading lesson … Ja. Like I
539   said, we start with word recognition. Umm … I'll take the words from the
540   passage. "Let's pronounce them. Do you know what it means? Are there any
541   words that are difficult?" You know, that type of thing.

542

543   **S-AR:** Mmm.

544

545   **Ms B:** "Do you know how to pronounce that word?" Ummm. I then go on
546   to reading. And sometimes I leave them to make their mistakes. Especially
547   at the beginning of the year. Just for once. And maybe they'll go back to that
548   word.

549

550   **S-AR:** Mmm.

551

552   **Ms B:** And then after that I'll rectify it. Because then maybe they don't like
553   being stopped just there. Ummm. [Learner comes in to press school's end-
554   of-day siren button.] So I'll leave them to read the sentence, and then

555 afterwards I'll tell them, "Just go back to that word. *That's* how you
556 pronounce it." Ummm. Fluency. Many of them come to me and they still
557 read with their finger.
558
559 **S-AR:** Mmm.
560
561 **Ms B:** I also leave them for a while and then I'll tell them, "Now, try to
562 read without your finger." I don't know if it's a way of ... comforting to them
563 ...
564
565 **S-AR:** Mmm.
566
567 **Ms B:** ... themselves or whatever, but they read with their finger, and it's
568 very slow. So – you know - to promote fluency, I'll ask them to take away ...
569 or the ruler, or something like that.
570
571 **S-AR:** Mmm.
572
573 **Ms B:** So. Those are the basic skills that I try. Some of them still haven't
574 mastered those skills at this time.
575
576 **S-AR:** And then? [pause] So we've got word recognition, and
577 pronunciation, and fluency. Then you do comprehension a lot.
578
579 **Ms B:** Yes.
580
581 **S-AR:** Now you set a very nice comprehension test on that little drama
582 that you wrote.
583
584 **Ms B:** Mmm.
585
586 **S-AR:** Can you take me through the kinds of things that you were looking
587 for? The kinds of evidence of skill that you were looking ... ?
588
589 **Ms B:** OK. I'll start with questions like ... where the answer is *obvious*. Or
590 where they have to fill in a missing word. Then I'll also ask questions where
591 they can *choose* the correct word.
592
593 **S-AR:** Mmm.
594
595 **Ms B:** Ummm. After that, I'll ask them – Ummm ...I can't recall all of them
596 [laughs], but I'll try! But I'll also ask them, "What do *you* think about that?"
597
598 **S-AR:** Mmm.
599
600 **Ms B:** Umm ... where they'll have to come up with their own answers. You
601 know. That type of thing.
602
603 **S-AR:** Mmm.
604
605 **Ms B:** I can't recall all of them at the moment. But I *do* in that trend.

606
607 **S-AR:** OK. So you have a kind of …

608
609 **Ms B:** Yes. … different levels …

610
611 **Ms B:** Yes.

612
613 **S-AR:** … of demand …

614
615 **Ms B:** Ja. Like, you know, from a concrete level to where they have to start
616 thinking. And I have to be honest. Where they have to start thinking that's
617 where it goes wrong … because - like I say - they can't really read between
618 the lines.

619
620 **S-AR:** Mmm.

621
622 **Ms B:** Something must be *there*, because otherwise they won't be able to
623 answer the question.

624
625 **S-AR:** Mmm. Shall we call it a day and pick up some other things later?

626
627 **Ms B:** OK.
  1

Interview 2: 4 August 2011 (14h18-15h45)

1   **S-AR:** So, in terms of your lesson design, what were you hoping to achieve?
2   And why did you choose the text you chose?
3

4   **Ms B:** I found the text interesting because I was looking at – um -lessons –
5   um - or rather texts from – you know - stories from the past. So I was looking
6   at Ancient China, Egypt, - and then I came across this lesson from Timbuktu.
7   'Cos you know - we rarely look at Egypt when we look at stories from Africa -
8

9   **S-AR:** Mmm -
10

11 **Ms B:** - so I found that one interesting and it was also on the level of the
12 children
13

14 **S-AR:** Mmm -
15

16 **Ms B:** - um - I looked at the activities - 'cos I usually start with vocabulary
17 because their vocabulary needs a lot of attention -
18

19 **S-AR:** Mmm-
20

21 **Ms B:** - so I start with that. You can see- um - in this lesson it took almost 2
22 periods – um - just to - you know -consolidate the words; and even after that I
23 probably took two more lessons - you know - um - just so that they could
24 understand the words - you see – because obviously that wasn't enough.
25

26 **S-AR:** Mmm-
27

28 **Ms B:** Even if they look the words up in the dictionary, it doesn't mean that
29 they understand what those words mean.
30

31 **S-AR:** Yeah -
32

33 **Ms B:** So that is – um -probably the only reason why I chose the text.
34

35 **S-AR:** Okay. Okay. And then in terms of introducing it, you had – you had -
36 those pictures –
37

38 **Ms B:** Uhum.
39

40 **S-AR:** Were those pictures from the text or - ?
41

42 **Ms B:** From the text, ja.
43

44 **S-AR:** Okay.
45

46 **Ms B:** From the same textbook, ja.
47

S-AR: Mmm, Okay. And then how did you plan to use those pictures, because apart from the first time -

Ms B: Yes

S-AR: When I was watching it was just at the beginning? What were your plans for that?

Ms B: Yes. I wanted them - you know - and I didn't get a chance to use it in the first lesson - for them – you know - like the astrolabe –

S-AR: Mmm

Ms B: there was a picture of the astrolabe and I wanted them to find out which one of these things that they see on the picture – what object there would probably be the one they see it describes the astrolabe -

S-AR: Uhuh

Ms B: Because obviously it says there something that shows direction, and if you look at all the objects in the picture, which one do they think - because nothing was labelled there -

S-AR: Mmm-

Ms B: And in the end I wanted them to label the pictures as well, but that also came at a later stage in the lesson -

S-AR: Okay. And anything else from this front section? You introduced the topic. You got them to look at it on the map. Then you showed them the pictures. Okay. Okay. And then you put the pictures up. Okay. So that's your introduction. And then in your second section (it looks very short but it's not actually short, and it was you reading through the passage -

Ms B: Ja.

S-AR: Is this your standard pattern – to read through it yourself?

Ms B: Sometimes I read it - I do model reading. Other times I ask some of the learners to read, ja.

S-AR: Okay.

Ms B: Sometimes I do silent reading - although I can't really gauge whether they really read or if they're just gazing at the book, you know.

S-AR: So when you say you do model reading what do you mean by 'model reading'?

Ms B: I try to use intonation, um - fluency, you know, -

99   **S-AR:** Okay -

100

101 **Ms B:** - things like that.

102

103 **S-AR:** Okay. Because I noticed in those other lessons (which I've been
104 dragging out for far too long of course) that is quite a good pattern that you
105 follow.

106

107 **Ms B:** Ja -

108

109 **S-AR:** - that you read through it yourself and then -

110

111 **Ms B:** Ja.

112

113 **S-AR:** Okay. Umm …

114

115 **Ms B:** I try to do that, because I think sometimes they don't really know how
116 to pronounce certain words, especially if it's new - um - vocabulary

117

118 **S-AR:** Okay.

119

120 **Ms B:** Um I think they struggle with certain words and – you know - just to
121 introduce them and make them feel more comfortable, more confident with the
122 text.
123 **S-AR:** And you say with the vocabulary – if it's new vocabulary – you read
124 first, and then deal with the vocabulary. Is that your standard pattern?

125

126 **Ms B:** I try to do that sometimes, yes. And sometimes we work with the
127 vocabulary again – it all depends, ja.

128

129 **S-AR:** Okay, okay. And then you got them to read and I've got some
130 questions. Then you got the children – you went round the room – and you
131 went through the passage several times so there was a lot of opportunity for
132 repeated reading

133

134 **Ms B:** Mmmm

135

136 **S-AR:** Um – why do you get them – what are you doing when you're getting
137 those children to read? What's in your head when you're getting them to do
138 that?

139

140 **Ms B:** I think I want to gauge whether they can read - um - um- and
141 consolidating the reading, you know.

142

143 **S-AR:** Okay.

144

145 **Ms B:** Um – 'cos reading's really a problem at my school and through that,
146 Sally-Ann, I feel that um um they are really progressing. You can see progress
147 at the end of the year.

148

149 **S-AR:** You're talking specifically of Grade 5?

150
151 **Ms B:** Throughout.

152
153 **S-AR:** Okay.

154
155 **Ms B:** Throughout.

156
157 **S-AR:** And what do you put that down to – that improvement?

158
159 **Ms B:** Um - the fact that they're reading all the time.

160
161 **S-AR:** Mmm

162
163 **Ms B:** Every lesson I try to do some reading - whether it's a grammar lesson
164 we do some reading.

165
166 **S-AR:** So now, I was trying to remember - you told me that there'd been a
167 change – because when I came when you were still in the old building – you
168 worked, I thing - was it a 9 day or a 10 day cycle?

169
170 **Ms B:** Ten day cycle, yes.

171
172 **S-AR:** And you met the children every single day?

173
174 **Ms B:** For a smaller period of time.

175
176 **S-AR:** Okay. Okay. So now the plan is - how often do you see them for
177 English?

178
179 **Ms B:** I see them every second day for a double period.

180
181 **S-AR:** So it works on - just help me through the cycle -

182
183 **Ms B:** So I see them – um -

184
185 **S-AR:** How many days cycle?

186
187 **Ms B:** It's also 10 days.

188
189 **S-AR:** Still 10 days?

190
191 **Ms B:** Ja. I see them every second day say for nearly two hours every day.

192
193 **S-AR:** So in that cycle some weeks you'll have them for 2 days?

194
195 **Ms B:** Sometimes.

196
197 **S-AR:** Some weeks it'll be for 3 days? And a double period is for how much
198 time?

199
200 **Ms B:** For nearly 2 hours.

201

202 **S-AR:** Okay.

203

204 **Ms B:** Ja.

205

206 **S-AR:** And apart from you, what else do they do – what other language work
207 do they do?

208

209 **Ms B:** Mmm

210

211 **S-AR:** What do they – what do you call it – what's the terminology - the
212 second language for them.

213

214 **Ms B:** First additional

215

216 **S-AR:** First additional language

217

218 **Ms B:** First additional – Afrikaans and Xhosa

219

220 **S-AR:** And do they choose or does everybody do

221

222 **Ms B:** They do both

223

224 **S-AR:** So every child does three languages

225

226 **Ms B:** Yes

227

228 **S-AR:** - with English as the home language?

229

230 **Ms B:** Yes

231

232 **S-AR:** Home language?

233

234 **Ms B:** Home language, yes [*laughter*]

235

236 **S-AR:** So now when you're choosing the children to read – I mean you – what
237 you have about 35 children in the class, how do you choose which ones to
238 choose each day? Each lesson?

239

240 **Ms B:** Um – I have a classlist -

241

242 **S-AR:** Okay.

243

244 **Ms B:** Ja and then I sort of just go randomly

245

246 **S-AR:** Mmm

247

248 **Ms B:** But I also tick off sometimes – and sometimes I just gaze and I see –
249 okay – Sally-Ann hasn't read for a while -

250

251 **S-AR:** Okay. And when a child like – for example – let's go back in to Ancient
252 history – I don't even know if I got their names right in my transcriptions – I
253 don't think I did – I started out having child 1, child 2 and it got too
254 complicated – um – so now when you choose this first child to read [*pointing*
255 *to child's name on transcript*] what are you looking for as that child reads?
256
257 **Ms B:** Probably pronunciation
258
259 **S-AR:** Okay
260
261 **Ms B:** Fluency – intonation – um –you know all those different facets in
262 English
263
264 **S-AR:** Mmm
265
266 **Ms B:** Um reading – word recognition, uh – they can you know – evidence of
267 phonemic awareness, and things like that I try to look at all those things and
268 correct them – and sometimes they self-correct -
269
270 **S-AR:** I noticed there was a lot of self-correcting
271
272 **Ms B:** Yes. Ja.
273
274 **S-AR:** The self correcting – do you - are there some children that do more
275 self-correcting than others? And if there are, what do you think makes them
276 self-correct?
277
278 **Ms B:** I think some of them - them – um – ja; some of them do that more
279 than others. I think - um -I've realised it's children that likes reading – they are
280 the ones that if they are done with their work they'll take out a book and read
281 instead of making a noise [*Laughs*] You know. It's probably just they have a
282 better sense of word recognition, I think.
283
284 **S-AR:** Mmm, okay.
285
286 **Ms B:** And they're also be the ones that will – if their friends – you know,
287 struggle to read, they'll [*acts out a nudge on the elbow*] and try to help them
288 with the words.
289
290 **S-AR:** I noticed that a couple of times where the others tried to help.
291
292 **Ms B:** Ja.
293
294 **S-AR:** Um. And if a child's really struggling then what do you do?
295
296 **Ms B:** Well – um – [*names one of her learners*] doesn't need this a lot but I
297 help them with – um - [*indicating the exercise book she's brought to show me*
298 *of one of her current Grade 5 learners*] these are some of our reading lessons
299 that we did – like the one's called 'Friends' and I give them these word lists
300
301 **S-AR:** Okay

302

303   **Ms B:** And we'll just test them.

304

305   **S-AR:** Okay

306

307   **Ms B:** Like a spelling test – first ten words today, the next ten the following
308   day – also like I said [*learner*] -

309

310   **S-AR:** This is a child this year, hey?

311

312   **Ms B:** Ja. She's a current child, and even with this type of words, some of
313   them need more of these.

314

315   **S-AR:** Mmm, mmm. Now – there're gaps here [*indicating spaces left at the
316   ends of word list columns*] - can you – do they have their own vocabulary
317   books at all?

318

319   **Ms B:** Ja – I try to do that as well and we have diaries, where I try to help
320   them with their writing and all that

321

322   **S-AR:** Mmm

323

324   **Ms B:** You know – I just let them write whether they make mistakes or what

325

326   **S-AR:** It's a very nice little book – busy child

327

328   **Ms B:** Yes – she loves writing letters to me [*laughter*]

329

330   **S-AR:** Okay – so we've gone through – and when you're doing that – what
331   assessing are you doing? Um I mean are you doing any formal assessing of the
332   individual readers in any way?

333

334   **Ms B:** Maybe not in this particular lesson

335

336   **S-AR:** Okay.

337

338   **Ms B:** Not in this specific lesson, but there are times when I'll do a formal
339   assessment

340

341   **S-AR:** Okay.

342

343   **Ms B:** Ja.

344

345   **S-AR:** So this lesson was essentially – its purpose was – what?

346

347   **Ms B:** Teaching them vocabulary.

348

349   **S-AR:** Okay.

350

351   **Ms B:** Ja.

352

353   **S-AR:** So the focus was on vocabulary?

354

355   **Ms B:** Ja.

356

357   **S-AR:** Okay. Now then moving on then to the next section, you've got the
358   children – they've all done their reading and some of them were better than
359   others – some of them were very fluent – and then you got to the vocabulary
360   section of your lesson – now your - this whole little unit of work, where did it
361   come from? – the reading and the vocab thing and the WordSearch

362

363   **Ms B:** Where did I get it from?

364

365   **S-AR:** Ja.

366

367   **Ms B:** It's from one of the textbooks that I use.

368

369   **S-AR:** Okay.

370

371   **Ms B:** Ja.

372

373   **S-AR:** So do you have one textbook that you use mainly or how do you design
374   your year?

375

376   **Ms B:** I take it from here, there, everywhere, um – I took the reading piece for
377   the text from the textbook. All the other things I designed myself, like the
378   vocabulary, I typed it out, the WordSearch I did from the internet and stuff
379   like, so, like I say I

380

381   **S-AR:** So you generate your own Word Searches?

382

383   **Ms B:** Ja

384

385   **S-AR:** You're clever [*laughter*]

386

387   **Ms B:** Ja.

388

389   **S-AR:** Is there any reason why you decided that you won't use a textbook –
390   well, that you don't use one particular textbook?

391

392   **Ms B:** Um – that would satisfy my needs? [*laughter*] Here and there's – you
393   know – I'll find a theme that I really like -

394

395   **S-AR:** Okay

396

397   **Ms B:** And then I'll use it

398

399   **S-AR:** Okay

400

401   **Ms B:** But not all the time.

402

403   **S-AR:** So you'll go into the textbook for the topic that it's covering?

404
405 **Ms B:** Yes

406
407 **S-AR:** Okay, okay

408
409 **Ms B:**   But – like- for extension activities and so on I'll use my own um
410 resources.

411
412 **S-AR:** Mmm. And from one year to the next – it changes?

413
414 **Ms B:** It changes

415
416 **S-AR:** Okay.
417 **Ms B:** I try to find out how my class is – and – um – you know, sometimes
418 they're babyish and I feel that they are – I put a little more – little things that
419 they can colour in – or whatever

420
421 **S-AR:** Mmm

422
423 **Ms B:** You know, you change as you go along

424
425 **S-AR:** Ja, okay. Mm. Okay. So then they're done their reading and now we're
426 going into – this vocabulary exercise was linked to the text from the book that
427 you used

428
429 **Ms B:** Yes.

430
431 **S-AR:** Okay. So the words were chosen, based on the text, not on what you
432 picked up from the children?

433
434 **Ms B:** The words?

435
436 **S-AR:** The words that you included in that vocabulary activity -

437
438 **Ms B:** Yes- everything was based on the text.

439
440 **S-AR:** Okay

441
442 **Ms B:** I - ja – ja – everything was based on the text.

443
444 **S-AR:** So I've put a question here – what was your rationale for doing this
445 worksheet – you said that the lesson was vocabulary development

446
447 **Ms B:** Uhhmm [*agreement*]

448
449 **S-AR:** No – in this one you had them with their dictionaries – umm – how do
450 you – I mean – that set of – your box of dictionaries – how did you choose that
451 particular – I mean – I think there're three different kinds of dictionaries in
452 there – hey, am I right?

453
454 **Ms B:** Ja.

455

S-AR: How did you come to have that particular collection of dictionaries?

456

457

Ms B: They were sponsored with the school

458

459

S-AR: Okay

460

461

Ms B: I didn't have any say in it [*laughs*] – if I could choose my own I would probably have others – um – more geared at younger children maybe, print a little bigger and so on

462

463

464

465

S-AR: Mmm.

466

467

Ms B: You know, but ja those are the one I

468

469

S-AR: So you didn't have a choice

470

471

Ms B: No.

472

473

S-AR: - on the dictionary? And apart from using dictionaries, what other strategies do you use for helping them develop their vocab?

474

475

476

Ms B: Mostly I explain to them.

477

478

S-AR: Mmm.

479

480

Ms B: You know -

481

482

S-AR: You're their walking dictionary!

483

484

Ms B: Ja – I try to explain to them – um – if I have my computer with me, I'll show – I'll use that – you know, but other than that -

485

486

487

S-AR: What you'll google a word?

488

489

Ms B: Ja. And you can hear what it sounds like um and so on

490

491

S-AR: Mmm. And then they took so long. They were so slow with this dictionary thing, and I noticed some of them they didn't find it easy to find the word in the dictionary.

492

493

494

495

Ms B: That's the other thing. It took me – probably – 4 periods to teach them how to use a dictionary -

496

497

498

S-AR: Mmm

499

500

Ms B: - keeping in mind I showed it to them when they were in Grade 4 too. You know, just as an introduction? Obviously in Grade 4 they're still in foundation phase mode so they don't – you know – their fingers are dumb, I think or something [*laughs*]

501

502

503

504

505

506 **S-AR:** Mmm

508 **Ms B:** And I did it again in Grade 5 –

510 **S-AR:** Mmm

512 **Ms B:** - so that is probably just practising again um I know they struggle a lot
513 using the dictionary.

515 **S-AR:** Why do you think they struggle?

517 **Ms B:** I don't know. Maybe they just don't know their alphabet well enough. I
518 don't know. They struggle. Even this year's Grade 5s – it's a nightmare when it
519 comes to dictionary work. And I mean it's a skill that they must learn.

521 **S-AR:** Ja. Ja, ja. So what do you do to try to help them?

523 **Ms B:** I just um you know - practise, practise, practice and – by Grade 7 it
524 goes better.

526 **S-AR:** Okay. Okay. So we got very slowly – slowly – through about five words,
527 as I recall (I mean I know it is ancient history to you – um – so I know it's
528 quite hard for you to remember, um but the one thing I noticed was that the
529 children were quite restless – a lot of them were not paying attention -

531 **Ms B:** Mmm.

533 **S-AR:** - to what was going on and they were easily distracted. Is this a big
534 problem for you?

536 **Ms B:** I do find it annoying, yes.

538 **S-AR:** Mmm.

540 **Ms B:** You know you'll find – but I think the problem with the kids that can't
541 learn -

543 **S-AR:** Mmm.

545 **Ms B:** - they have that problem that they can't sit still and they find it boring
546 to work – you know – it's – they're not engaged enough

548 **S-AR:** Mmm.

550 **Ms B:** And maybe it's above their level or whatever.

552 **S-AR:** Mmm. Okay. And what do you do with this. I mean you've got those
553 children. What do you do?

555 **Ms B:** Ja, I suppose I have to design something – you know – on their level –
556 which I don't usually do. Not usually. But you know you try, but - you know –

557	on the other hand – Sally-Ann, the problem is you have to comply with the
558	curriculum and do things for Grade 5
559	
560	**S-AR:** Mmm.
561	
562	**Ms B:** That's the problem.
563	
564	**S-AR:** Okay. So, doing things for Grade 5 – I was looking at the Foundations
565	for Learning and the milestones – do you abide – I mean are you tied into that
566	in the school, or - ?
567	
568	**Ms B:** Ja, we work with that yes.
569	
570	**S-AR:** Okay. And what would you say about your children? How many of
571	them – on average – do you feel happy that they've met those milestones to
572	some degree?
573	
574	**Ms B:** No [*with emphasis*] – not at all.
575	
576	**S-AR:** You don't feel happy at all, or they don't meet them? [*laughter*]
577	
578	**Ms B:** Many of them don't meet those milestones.
579	
580	**S-AR:** And then?
581	
582	**Ms B:** You know, um – you know the whole issue of having to move the
583	learners on and things like that, so – you know your hands are cut off in the
584	end, and also um like even if you give them a Level 2 they still pass.
585	
586	**S-AR:** Mmm. They still pass, according to whom?
587	
588	**Ms B:** The Department of Education.
589	
590	**S-AR:** Oh, okay.
591	
592	**Ms B:** Only Level 1 is a fail, you know.
593	
594	**S-AR:** Okay. And you're not allowed to hold them back? You're allowed to
595	hold them back, what is it, one -
596	
597	**Ms B:** Once in a -
598	
599	**S-AR:** - the phase?
600	
601	**Ms B:** - phase. Ja. And sometimes those learners were held back already in
602	Grade 4.
603	
604	**S-AR:** So you can't -
605	
606	**Ms B:** No.
607	

608   **S-AR:** Mmm. And what do you think their problem is?

610   **Ms B:** I can think of many factors, you know, maybe socially, parental
611   involvement -

613   **S-AR:** Mmm.

615   **Ms B:** You know – maybe parental involvement that lacks; living with old
616   [*with emphasis*] grandparents; can't help them with reading and writing; the
617   language issue – language barriers -

619   **S-AR:** I want to talk some more about that later.

621   **Ms B:** Mmm. I suppose that's the big issue. The whole thing that – you know,
622   um – they don't have that support, the literacy support in the environment -

624   **S-AR:** Mmm.

626   **Ms B:** I spose um many issues.

628   **S-AR:** Mmm.

630   **Ms B:** And – you know – they just don't have um that work ethic of doing
631   homework.

633   **S-AR:** Mmm.

635   **Ms B:** It's nothing to come back to school tomorrow without any homework
636   done.

638   **S-AR:** Do you give them homework, most – after every lesson that you have
639   with them? Do they have homework usually?

641   **Ms B:** We give them homework. All the teachers give them homework. And
642   it's the biggest fight, because they don't [*with emphasis*] do their homework. I
643   won't say all of them

645   **S-AR:** Mmm.

647   **Ms B:** - but many.

649   **S-AR:** Mmm. And the pace at which they work? Because noticing that a lot of
650   the children – it's not the majority – but a lot of the children are not focusing
651   on the task. Um and then it takes longer than you expect. Is that a pattern?

653   **Ms B:** Probably in the lower grades – like in Grades 4 and 5, but you can – I
654   suppose in Grade 7 – I don't know, somehow we just work better with the
655   Grade 7s. I dunno – that's just something I have – like – you know – you give
656   them something to do and they'll work. I don't know if it's because they want to
657   go on to high school, or whatever, or maybe they're just more mature by that
658   stage -

659

S-AR: Mmm.

661

Ms B: They're more in control of the English language too, you know, and
they have that responsibility of doing homework. And with the little ones – I
mean – the poor Grade 4s are so [*with emphasis*] confused. You know – they
have the three learning areas, and then they come to Grade 4 and they have ten
learning areas and then the three languages that they still have to do -

667

S-AR: Mmm.

669

Ms B: It's paper work. And they're just totally, totally confused.

671

S-AR: Mmm.

673

Ms B: And I can say the same for the Grade 5s. It's just like a year ahead of
them -

676

S-AR: Mmm.

678

Ms B: And I think it's just too much work for them.

680

S-AR: Mmm. Now, in these lessons I notice that when they're talking amongst
themselves, they're not speaking English.

683

Ms B: Ja.

685

S-AR: Um – how much English do they speak – even when they get to Grade
7?

688

Ms B: I don't think they speak English with one another unless it's um some
of them from a different race group or someone from a different country, or
whatever, that cannot speak their home language

692

S-AR: Mmm.

694

Ms B: Ja.

696

S-AR: I want to come back and speak to you about that – the fact that the
school officially is an English home language school – I want to talk some more
about that, but if we just stick with this thing – um – this fact that they often
take longer than you expect, and you can't complete a task – like you had a lot
of things that you wanted to get out of your Timbuktu lesson – what – how
does this impact on your plan of -

703

Ms B: - planning

705

S-AR: work?

707

Ms B: That's always the case that it drags out and drags out and um and then
I have to cut here and there, you know. My tests get postponed [*laughs*] Ja –
it's always happens, especially, like I say, with the Grades 4s and 5s and

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: - sometimes even the Grade 6s too.

S-AR: Mmm. Mmm. And what – I mean – is there anything you can do to sort
that out apart from what you do- cutting back on what you expect of them?

Ms B: Maybe I should just keep my lessons shorter [*laughs*] – I don't know! I
don't know.um – ja – I must work on that.

S-AR: And how does it affect the child who's like – one of these more
conscientious [*indicating a child from the current year's exercise book she'd
brought so that I could see the full set of planned work for the Timbuktu
topic.*]

Ms B: She reads all the time.

S-AR: She reads. What? She will finish her task, and then

Ms B: Well. I give them extra activities.

S-AR: Okay.

Ms B: Because they're about 4 or 5 in the class and they'll do extra activities,
and things like that.

S-AR: Mmm. Okay.

Ms B: And she likes writing poems and things like that.

S-AR: Well – I wouldn't have met her, hey?

Ms B: No. She was probably in Grade 3 then.

S-AR: Okay. And then we come to the final thing where you're starting to – so
you stopped making them go through the worksheet, and then you had the
final closing as checking up on what they – may if you can just tell me why you
do that. What was in your head as you got to that final stage?

Ms B: I just wanted to draw everyone in and see if everyone had the words uh
that they looked up right, if everyone had a clear understanding of the meaning

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: And obviously – like sometimes they would look up the words – you
know sometimes in a dictionary the word doesn't give you that clear a meaning

758 of the word. Um. What I actually – you know – my thinking was um also using
759 these words like in sentences
760
761 **S-AR:** Mmm
762
763 **Ms B:** I never got to do that at all, but, I did it this year. You know, like, well
764 they didn't write it too – we just did in the class in groups – you know, like they
765 folded pages like that [*demonstrates*] and they had to write words so that they
766 could fill the meanings like in sentences and put it up on the board and use
767 those words like in sentences building …
768
769 **S-AR:** Mmm.
770
771 **Ms B:** … because they struggle with sentence building. I have a major, major
772 problem with sentence building too.
773
774 **S-AR:** What's the problem? Their vocab, or -
775
776 **Ms B:** Yes – it's – they'll write – like for example, they'll write a paragraph,
777 it'll be like one long sentence from beginning to end, no punctuation, it's like
778 and – and – and – they will just – you know they can't um put their thoughts
779 together like – you know – it's just like one long- they'll talk about the sun and
780 then the beach just now and – it just doesn't make any sense.
781
782 **S-AR:** And they don't – what is the word? – cohesion, coherence - what is the
783 word?
784
785 **Ms B:** That's the word.
786
787 **S-AR:** To get, and to organise their ideas.
788
789 **Ms B:** Ja – they can't organise their ideas.
790
791 **S-AR:** Okay.
792
793 **Ms B:** And it's that lack of – is it a lack of reading – or reading enough? Or is
794 it just because it's not their mother tongue? And if it's not your mother tongue,
795 you can think in your own language and just translate it, you know.
796
797 **S-AR:** Mmm. I don't know. I've never been in the position of being to be
798 outside of -
799
800 **Ms B:** But that's what I do. I can think in my mother tongue and just translate
801 it into English.
802
803 **S-AR:** Mmm. I think it's not knowing categories of ideas, I don't know.
804 [*silence*] But you didn't get there – you got as far as flash cards.
805
806 **Ms B:** Ja – and that's when our time was up, hey?
807
808 **S-AR:** Ja. How long is a double lesson, roughly?

809

810   **Ms B:** One period is about 55 minutes.

811

812   **S-AR:** About 55 minutes – so now I was watching you from ¼ to eleven – I
813   stopped being able to fill in my time here when I was doing the transcribing

814

815   **Ms B:** It's 50 to 55 minutes.

816

817   **S-AR:** So this would have been one hour and ten minutes roughly -

818

819   **Ms B:** Ja.

820

821   **S-AR:** That we were with them? Um Ja. Okay. Ja I stopped writing the times
822   in. It's not very useful. I think you must learn from me [*laughter*] it's hard to
823   keep all these things in your head, and do them all properly! Okay. So now –
824   one of the questions I've got here – you've shown me what you've done with
825   this new group, and obviously you were able to exploit that Timbuktu task
826   much more richly? Did you manage to get back to this at all after I'd observed
827   that lesson? There was something. I was going to come back, and then you said,
828   "No." I can't remember the details but I thing some testing.

829

830   **Ms B:** Ja. ANAs. But I finished with them as well. I went through the whole
831   sequence with them.

832

833   **S-AR:** The same as what's in this book [*indicating a child from the current
834   year's exercise book she'd brought so that I could see the full set of planned
835   work for the Timbuktu topic*]? Can we move away from the Timbuktu lesson
836   and just close off some questions that I still have? In a sense we've covered
837   most of them. I've asked how much time's allocated to each week, and we've
838   talked about that, and it's organised into these 2 slots per week or 3 slots per
839   week on a 10-day cycle?

840

841   **Ms B:** Ja.

842

843   **S-AR:** Now in your cycle – your 10-day cycle – that would be 5 slots, hey, per
844   10 days?

845

846   **Ms B:** I don't have my timetable here. Can I just make sure, and I can e-mail
847   you.

848

849   **S-AR:** Ja, sure.

850

851   **Ms B:** I just don't want to give you incorrect information now.

852

853   **S-AR:** Okay. But it's roughly 5 double periods per 10-day cycle?
854   5 double periods, ja.

855

856   **S-AR:** And do you – how do you use those slots – do you have a particular
857   pattern for using them?

858

859   **Ms B:** Well I go according to um what I have to cover

860

861 **S-AR:** Mmm

862

863 **Ms B:** You know? I also use – you know, the Provincial Guidelines to see
864 what I have to do for the term – obviously it's you know – written out what we
865 have to do

866

867 **S-AR:** Which provincial Guidelines are those so I can look it up?

868

869 **Ms B:** The blue – um

870

871 **S-AR:** The Blue one [*laughter*]

872

873 **Ms B:** Thin Blue Book [*laughs*]

874

875 **S-AR:** Provincial Guidelines … where could I find a copy of that?

876

877 **Ms B:** I've got one in my drawer in my classroom [*laughs*] I was just working
878 out of it just now.

879

880 **S-AR:** It's a thin blue book.

881

882 **Ms B:** Yes. It's a thin blue book. I think it's only here in [*name of town*] – I
883 mean – in the Eastern Cape.

884

885 **S-AR:** So it's an East Cape -

886

887 **Ms B:** Ja

888

889 **S-AR:** Provincial guidelines. Maybe I can, or maybe [names a colleague] will
890 know what those are.

891

892 **Ms B:** Ja.

893

894 **S-AR:** Okay, so

895

896 **Ms B:** I can copy it for you as well if you want.

897

898 **S-AR:** That's very sweet of you. Thank you. So what do those guidelines say?

899

900 **Ms B:** You know it just shows you what you have to do for – say – for
901 example English Home Language

902

903 **S-AR:** Mmm

904

905 **Ms B:** Um say for example – they have to write a paragraph – how many
906 words – you know the paragraph or the report

907

908 **S-AR:** Mmm

909

910 **Ms B:** How many words it should have. And um if you have to give them
911 marks how many marks there should be. So obviously it tells you what you
912 should do for the term and it then gives - say it's oral reading – prepared or
913 unprepared reading – whatever. It lists all the various things for the term.
914
915 **S-AR:** Okay. So it's for the term. It doesn't give you a cycle across weeks of the
916 term?
917
918 **Ms B:** No. That's why I say I keep that in mind when I plan my things so
919
920 **S-AR:** So it's leading you to the assessment tasks?
921
922 **Ms B:** Yes.
923
924 **S-AR:** Okay. Um Okay. And then in terms of your own conception of how to
925 teach your English lessons, do you have a pattern that you follow?
926
927 **Ms B:** Well I always try to include – obviously I start with oral reading.
928
929 **S-AR:** Okay -
930
931 **Ms B:** I include writing. Um [*pause*]
932
933 **S-AR:** Reading/ Writing/ Listening / Speaking?
934
935 **Ms B:** I do all those. I do all those. I wrote it down somewhere – um –
936 comprehension [*laughs*]
937
938 **S-AR:** Okay.
939
940 **Ms B:** You know, after reading obviously comprehension; grammar, of
941 course; then I try to work it out like that.
942
943 **S-AR:** And do you have specific comprehension lessons and grammar lessons,
944 or do you tend to let the text drive?
945
946 **Ms B:** Ja the text – Yes, I use my text to dictate whatever comprehension or
947 grammar I do, yes.
948
949 **S-AR:** Um …
950
951 **Ms B:** Sometimes I'll use a different – um – say for example – grammar
952 activity, just to consolidate the idea. Just – you know – just for exercise
953 purposes -
954
955 **S-AR:** Mmm
956
957 **Ms B:** And I'll use another after I've used that text. You know the one I used
958 for the text. If I can see they don't really understand – you know – what the
959 verb – ja, and I can't get anything more out of the text, you know, then I'll use
960 some more grammar activities from other sources

961

962 **S-AR:** Okay. And this whole – we've talked about parental involvement, and
963 you say you have problems with that? [*Ms B nods*] And I've asked you about
964 textbooks. [*nods*] And I've asked you about homework. [*nods*] And your
965 materials, you say you collect yourself? Can you tell me a bit more about how
966 you interact – well – as a school, with the curriculum, when you've got children
967 who are officially studying English Home Language, but they're not English
968 Home Language users? In a sense that decision was forced on the school by the
969 parents' choice, hey, is that so?

970

971 **Ms B:** And I feel it was FORCED on me [*laughs*] um – I think it was forced on
972 us [....] to a certain extent. Because I felt that our school should be first
973 additional – English First Additional – because our learners are NOT home
974 language speakers but when we took up our schedules one year they advised us
975 that the school should have a home language, and then – you know – the
976 teachers didn't feel that it could be Xhosa because then we didn't have it as an
977 official language at school and the LoLT was then English.

978

979 **S-AR:** Mmm

980

981 **Ms B:** Then we were actually forced to um change it to home language but in
982 my view the learners- you know it's just not right to say English is the home
983 language there but its officially you know it's OFFICIALLY

984

985 **S-AR:** So now in terms of the Curriculum document, for example, how do you
986 find that your teaching marries in with the requirements of that English Home
987 Language curriculum?

988

989 **Ms B:** I use it because it's required for me to use it but um when I look at
990 activities I know my kids won't be able to master it. I just know. So I'll go a peg
991 down and rather use text books more on their level

992

993 **S-AR:** When you say – what textbooks would those be?

994

995 **Ms B:** For First Additional Language

996

997 **S-AR:** First Additional language textbooks?

998

999 **Ms B:** Yes.

1000

1001 **S-AR:** Okay.

1002

1003 **Ms B:** I'll look at Keys for English. I'll look at Day by Day. You know, like I
1004 say, I use a variety of books. Um. Spot On. Whatever. Like I say, I'll go on the
1005 internet and look for things there. I'll design my own. Whatever. But I know
1006 what the ability is, and I CANNOT use home language textbooks.

1007

1008 **S-AR:** Mmm. Okay. Now you said you were forced to do the English Home
1009 Language and it was a variety of circumstances -

1010

1011 **Ms B:** Ja.

1012

1013 **S-AR:** It was parents. It was the Department's advice. And it was the teachers
1014 themselves who are not speakers of the home language of the children. Is there
1015 any follow up? Does anybody check that this school is officially registered as an
1016 English Home Language school?

1017
1018 **Ms B:** No. No.

1019
1020 **S-AR:** - but it's not meeting any of the -

1021
1022 **Ms B:** I think there are *many* schools like this around here um the language
1023 problem in South Africa is a big problem

1024
1025 **S-AR:** So there's no [making quotation mark gesture] "policeman" who's
1026 coming and saying – Look you're sposed to be doing this curriculum, but I
1027 don't see these learning outcomes being –

1028
1029 **Ms B:** Well, I spoke to my Subject Adviser, and I explained it to her, but then
1030 she also felt that we should rather keep it as English Home language, not
1031 change it.

1032
1033 **S-AR:** Is it your subject adviser in the department?

1034
1035 **Ms B:** The Department of Education, yes. For various reasons she felt that it's
1036 better.

1037
1038 **S-AR:** And there's no legislation that's going to come and say that you're not
1039 following the rules?

1040
1041 **Ms B:** No, I don't think so. No.

1042
1043 **S-AR:** And what support does she give you – the subject adviser?

1044
1045 **Ms B:** She comes round quite often. I have a good relationship with her.

1046
1047 **S-AR:** Okay. There's just two more sets of questions. The first one is I notice
1048 with the new school building, the system hasn't changed – that the children
1049 still move – I mean the children stay, and the teachers move

1050
1051 **Ms B:** Ja.

1052
1053 **S-AR:** And you said – I don't know if it was in one of the lessons or in when I
1054 interviewed you before that you really would have loved to have your own
1055 classroom. [*teacher nods*] Why do you think the school doesn't have like
1056 subject-based classrooms?

1057
1058 **Ms B:** Well – um – there's probably their reasons, but I must tell you, I have
1059 my own English class now [*smiles*] – since this term, ja.

1060
1061 **S-AR:** Oh really. That's very nice.

1062

1063   **Ms B:** Yes. Since this term. The AV class was allocated to me.

1064

1065   **S-AR:** Okay.

1066

1067   **Ms B:** Because we have 8 classrooms, and – you know – the class the
1068   principle used as the office

1069

1070   **S-AR:** Yes yes – I know -

1071

1072   **Ms B:** Was vacated when she went into her own office so I'm using that, so
1073   the learners come to me for English which is fine. So I have all my textbooks
1074   there and I can leave them there and know when they come and ja – we have
1075   lots of fun there.

1076

1077   **S-AR:** And have you found that that's -

1078

1079   **Ms B:** That suits me, hey! Because like I say I HATED moving up and down –
1080   like I had to move my -

1081

1082   **S-AR:** Box of books

1083

1084   **Ms B:** Yes. Exactly! And I lose some of it along the way or I lose my class list
1085   that I assessed their reading and I can scream, you know [*laughs*]. You Know?
1086   That type of things. Um. It's MUCH better for me.

1087

1088   **S-AR:** That's very nice.

1089

1090   **Ms B:** Yes.

1091

1092   **S-AR:** And are you the only teacher who's got that lucky

1093

1094   **Ms B:** Yes. I'm the only one.

1095

1096   **S-AR:** Mmm. Oh! I am pleased to hear that.

1097

1098   **Ms B:** Ja. Ja.

1099

1100   **S-AR:** Because I used to worry about you. How have you changed your
1101   appearance of your room? Because I mean when I came into the old building it
1102   was Mr [*science teacher*]'s room

1103

1104   **Ms B:** Ja.

1105

1106   **S-AR:** But there were all sorts of different kinds of posters and what not. Have
1107   you been able to -

1108

1109   **Ms B:** I'm slowly starting to put up all my things because my English things
1110   were in all the other classes so I'm actually feeling – bad – to go and take them
1111   off now! But Ja. I'm slowly staring to beautify my class now!

1112

1113   **S-AR:** That's very nice. You say it's just from this term?

1114
1115   **Ms B:** Ja. Just the other day. From the other day.
1116
1117   **S-AR:** That's fantastic. I'm so pleased to hear that.
1118
1119   **Ms B:** -a week or two ago -
1120
1121   **S-AR:** And in terms of the school library, has it got back up and running?
1122
1123   **Ms B:** Um – the library's bare. I'm still looking for donations for books – um
1124   – if you have any connections, please tell me [*laughs*] I'm looking for books –
1125   ja – for the library
1126
1127   **S-AR:** So do you run the library?
1128
1129   **Ms B:** NO! It's just that I'm interested in having books and the school, but if
1130   I'm not going to start something I don't know who's going to.
1131
1132   **S-AR:** And the last question is bringing it right round to the thing that I'm
1133   particularly looking at, and we did talk about this earlier, because you said in
1134   one of your earlier interviews that you were not in your initial training – you
1135   were not actually an English teacher as such -
1136
1137   **Ms B:** No.
1138
1139   **S-AR:** You were – Afrikaans was your specialism. But you'd taken over the
1140   English -
1141
1142   **Ms B:** Ja.
1143
1144   **S-AR:** Now, I've got a couple of questions. The one is um the role of you as a
1145   Grade 4, 5, 6, 7 teacher and the problem of the children's reading – how well
1146   you feel you are equipped to be a teacher of reading at the intermediate phase
1147   which you said you didn't expect to have to do.
1148
1149   **Ms B:** Ja.
1150
1151   **S-AR:** And what support you get from either the school or the department to
1152   help you with the fact that many of the children are not up to grade level
1153   reading. So – if we take that back into the two questions – how well equipped
1154   do you feel as an individual to take on the reading teacher role?
1155
1156   **Ms B:** Okay. Um. I think um my initial training probably wasn't in English
1157   language teaching but I upgraded myself so far that I've started doing my
1158   Masters in English language teaching to inform my own self, and my practice –
1159   um – I've learned a lot. I mean since the last time you interviewed me up till
1160   now
1161
1162   **S-AR:** Ja – I know - a lot of things have happened -
1163

Ms B: A LOT of things have happened. I think I've opened up so much more
and I'm seeing my practice through new eyes and you know I think any English
teacher should do a masters [*laughs*] [names her university supervisor] should
hear me now! But really – it's it's – you learn SO much more um I've always um
- when I spoke to [names another university lecturer] once because [university
supervisor] told me I should go speak to her just before I fell ill – um – you
know when I was still busy with my proposal - I haven't finished it yet because
I fell ill in the meantime - -um - you know I told her that I've been teaching for
20 years, and for eighteen of those twenty years I've been studying part time –
you know, furthering my studies, because you know I did a teachers' course at
the college and then I did HDE and I did a – you know – whatever – eventually
I did an honours degree, and I'm doing a masters degree now. I did ACE(ICT) -
just to inform myself and I feel I've really equipped myself – um – I've always
loved to read, and like my children are all at English schools although my
husband and myself are from Afrikaans backgrounds and they're doing very
well. My son is in the top 5 at [Name's son's school] in his grade. So there
reason why he's in an English class I've surrounded him with literacy from a
very young age. I think I'm doing something right there.

S-AR: Mmm

Ms B: With the kids at school um I've been given a – a major task, and – um
– although I sometimes feel – you know – why do I still bother, you know –
you know you get that feeling when you struggle and struggle and the kids just
don't seem to be able to read at the end of the grade, you sometimes see it at
the end of that phase or you know when they're in senior phase. You know you
really see them – they just - suddenly all the things - it's all there

S-AR: -fall into place -

Ms B: IT's all there, and – um – when one of the colleagues said – like this
one girl – um – M – her name's M – when she was called in for an interview at
[name *of local private school*] for a scholarship, and they said, "She *struggled*
in foundation phase. How could she go?" She's one of our brightest pupils now!
So you know everything just started falling into place for her right at the end of
her school career – I mean, primary school career.

S-AR: Mmm.

Ms B: So right at the end sometimes it just works out for some learners. For
others it doesn't. I don't know if I'm answering the question! What was the
question?

S-AR: No – the question was: You as a teacher of reading, um – how well you
felt you were equipped to do – to take on this challenge.

Ms B: Ja. Yes- like I say – ja – I try to upgrade myself and to better myself in
that position, and -

S-AR: So, in terms of yourself as a teacher of – as a reading teacher – which
you don't expect to have – I think intermediate phase teachers assume that

1215 children can read – can you talk about yourself as a teacher of reading – what
1216 have you gained over the years through experience or through all this extra
1217 study that you've done? - Or are you drawing back on your initial training – um
1218 – that you were able transfer the Afrikaans reading thing into the English,
1219
1220 **Ms B:** [*pause*]
1221
1222 **S-AR:** or – how does it work?
1223
1224 **Ms B:** No. I think I am learning all the time. Initial training plays a big role in
1225 your life I suppose – it always does um but I think as I go along all the new
1226 things you learn also plays a role new things – like what I've learned in the
1227 Masters course, and what I've read um like I have my little girl in Grade 1 now
1228 and what I see in her is what I've read in – like in the research. You know, that
1229 um the starting to read phase you know that emergent reading
1230
1231 **S-AR:** Mmm
1232
1233 **Ms B:** And things like that. And I see it in my Grade 4 learners as well
1234
1235 **S-AR:** Mmm.
1236
1237 **Ms B:** You know, so I can compare a lot of things, and what I should do, and
1238 whatever.
1239
1240 **S-AR:** Mmm.
1241
1242 **Ms B:** Sometimes she struggles with sight words. She has a problem with
1243 sight words, and I suppose practising all that and like – okay – I should do this
1244 with the Grade 4s as well.
1245
1246 **S-AR:** Mmm. Mmm.
1247
1248 **Ms B:** So Ja – I think – current learning is important [*laughs*]
1249
1250 **S-AR:** And the Department support for you? We've mentioned your subject
1251 adviser.
1252
1253 **Ms B:** Ja. She's okay. Like I say, she's a nice person um. I went to a workshop
1254 the other day at [*names a local township school*] - Avusa – um – something to
1255 do with newspapers – using newspapers in a literacy class. There'll probably be
1256 CAPS training sometime.
1257
1258 **S-AR:** Ja, I'm sure.
1259
1260 **Ms B:** But usually those um trainings are also "microwaved" – they read from
1261 a paper, and - I dunno – it was like that with OBE, with RNC.
1262
1263 **S-AR:** How do you feel about CAPS?
1264

1265 **Ms B:** I don't know that much about it so I can't really say about it. I asked
1266 my subject adviser about it and she said, "Ah – it's the same like – um - NCS",
1267 so I don't know.
1268
1269 **S-AR:** Mmm. It is quite similar but it's much more locked in - what you do
1270 when, is my impression. We'll wait and see.
1271
1272 **Ms B:** Mmm. She was at my school and I just asked her about it and she was
1273 saying that LOs are still there, it's just hidden somewhere and [*laughs*] I don't
1274 know – let's see what it's all about.
1275
1276 **S-AR:** I notice with your Grade 5s that you had that box of – I don't know who
1277 - those little books – they had books on the weather and on
1278
1279 **Ms B:** Oh, okay yes the READ books, yes.
1280
1281 **S-AR:** But the kids just seemed to go through it like – and they weren't really
1282 reading and I'm wondering if it's because they didn't find them interesting.
1283
1284 **Ms B:** Or SO used to it already.
1285
1286 **S-AR:** Okay. Okay.
1287
1288 **Ms B:** It could be that as well.
1289
1290 **S-AR:** Mmm.
1291
1292 **Ms B:** Because we have the Drop everything and read – the DEAR – period in
1293 the morning
1294
1295 **S-AR:** Do you still have that?
1296
1297 **Ms B:** Yes, we do. We're still going on with it although [*the Principal*] said the
1298 other day, "You know – like [*names two colleagues*] - they're always late in the
1299 morning!". These two … teachers, and then when they do come to school they'll
1300 go visit all the other teachers and their class like making a noise
1301
1302 **S-AR:** **-** and it interferes with DEAR -
1303
1304 **Ms B:** Because now when I go call them out of their class- especially this term
1305 when since I had my own class – classroom then I'll go call them they go like,
1306 "Yes!!". People – because they'll go and like just talk – [names two colleagues] -
1307 and like their classes just make a noise. [Names another colleague] the other
1308 day she said you know nothing's happening during the READ period, but it's
1309 only those two teachers. All the other classes are dead quiet – you can hear a
1310 pin drop in their classrooms, and everyone's reading.