

**A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words: A Case Study of Grade 10 English Language
Educators Teaching Visual Literacy**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to better understand teacher's beliefs about visual literacy and to explore how their beliefs influence their teaching practice. In order to investigate this, a case study was conducted that comprised of lesson observations and semi-structured interviews with two secondary school English home language educators. The backdrop to the research was the implementation of the new national curriculum for grade 10. The participants, though well educated and experienced teachers, felt their training had been inadequate in the area of teaching visual literacy and although they acknowledged the importance of visual literacy, it seemed to have a fairly low priority in their actual teaching practice. In particular, very little attention was given to the production of multimodal texts by learners. The reason for this low priority may be related to the requirements of the formal assessment programme as well as limited lesson time in which to cover an extensive curriculum. The research findings would seem to suggest a need for in-service training in this area as well as access to suitable learning support materials and teacher resources.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AS – Assessment Standard

C2005 – Curriculum 2005

FET – Further Education and Training

GET – General Education and Training

LLC – Language, Literacy and Communication

LO – Learning Outcome

LOLT – Language of Learning and Teaching

LSM – Learning Support Materials

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, LYN ANN LEASK-SMITH, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree in any other university. Where I have drawn on the words or ideas of others, these have been acknowledged using complete references according to Department Guidelines.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce my research, which aims to investigate teachers' beliefs about visual literacy and how these beliefs influence their teaching practice. I begin by contextualising the research within the field of visual literacy; then I give a description of the research site and finally I explain my motivation for doing this research as well as my research goal. In conclusion I present a brief overview of the thesis chapters.

1.2. Context of the study

Before the implementation of the new Outcomes Based Curriculum, which currently governs the education system in South Africa, the syllabuses for languages were specific to each province as well as to each racial group:

Since independence in 1994, South Africa has a single national Department of Education (DE) and integrated provincial departments that are accountable to it. The nine provincial departments now include the departments of the former so-called homelands, many of which were the main providers of rural education, as well as the separate education departments formerly organised in terms of race. While the government's policy of redress continues to effect change, forty-five years of unequal distribution of material and human resources as well as separate curricula and examinations have created huge disparities.

(Prinsloo & Janks, 2002:21)

The area now known as Gauteng was part of the "Transvaal" province and was thus governed by the Transvaal Education Department Curriculum. In "white" government schools, which have often transformed into so-called "model C" schools, the former Transvaal "English first language" syllabus included film study up to Standard 10. It is this syllabus (with amendments) that was in use from 1979 – 2005 until the National Curriculum (NCS) for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase was implemented for the first time in 2006 for grade 10 (Formerly Standard 8). Prinsloo & Janks explain:

In 1996, the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 58 of 1995) approved the establishment of a single, integrated, outcomes-based National Qualifications Framework and the State embarked on a process of curriculum re-visioning that would effect a significant break with the past. *Curriculum 2005 (C2005)*, an outcomes-based curriculum for General Education (R to Grade 9) was approved in 1997 and phased implementation began in 1998...The *Revised National Curriculum Statement* published in 2002, which included clarity and accessibility among its principles, is designed to be more teacher-friendly.

(Prinsloo & Janks, 2002:21)

Ballot (in Prinsloo, 1991) reports how in the former syllabus film study was predominantly emphasised over other visual media, particularly in Matric where a set-work film was examined. While 'film study' has formed part of the curriculum for over 25 years in some schools, the new national curriculum takes a different and broader view of what 'visual literacy' entails.

The NCS maintains that: "well developed reading and viewing skills are central for learning across the curriculum, as well as for full participation in society and the world of work". In particular, the learning outcomes for languages encourage a critical approach to viewing "visual" and "multi-media" texts. Although critical engagement with visuals (particularly with film) may already be familiar to some English language teachers in Gauteng, perhaps relatively new is the inclusion of multi-media texts and an emphasis on the study of a wider range of visual texts (examples given in the curriculum guidelines include computer graphics, models, drawings and paintings as well as the more traditional film images, photos and cartoons). The expectation that learners are able to produce their own 'multi-modal' texts may also be a new learning outcome for some teachers and learners.

However there seems to be little guidance for teachers on how to implement visual literacy teaching in the new curriculum. In reviewing Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which governed grades R-9 until 2006, Heather Moore reports that:

I would argue, however, that the way that it [visual literacy] has been included does not appear to be consistent, and that the curriculum's description of visual literacy is frustratingly vague and nondescript... The almost casual manner in which visual literacy has been included in the curriculum leaves teachers and materials planners with a vague sense that visual literacy should be made use of, but with no real understanding of how to implement this kind of competence.

(Moore, 2001:40)

In grades R-9, the General Education and Training (GET) phase, English language studies fall under the subject area "Language, Literacy and Communication" (LLC) whereas in the FET phase (grades 10-12), the subject is termed "English home language" if it is taken at what was formerly known as "First language" level.

In an international context, Unsworth (2001) also reports that:

The teaching of the 'multiliteracies' [which includes visual literacy] ... has to date received very little attention in school curricula. Kress (1995b) has lamented the lack of such a 'futures' orientated perspective in the national curriculum in the United Kingdom and Lemke has reflected similar concerns in the United States (1998a). In Australia some state and national curriculum documents address visual literacy in the teaching of English...A great deal of work at the interface of theory and practice in this area remains to be done...

(Unsworth, 2001:71)

Bearing in mind that the NCS was being implemented for the first time in 2006, my research investigated at how the NCS for English home language addressed visual literacy in grade 10 and how two teachers were attempting to implement teaching visual literacy at this level.

1.3. Research site

The study took place at an English medium former "Model C" High School in Pretoria. Pupils at the school were drawn from families who worked in the surrounding industrial area or in the city centre, most of them commuting from outlying areas via bus or taxi. This school made an interesting site for language education study because although the learners were examined on the level of "English Home Language", for the majority of learners and educators it was in fact, at best, an "Additional Language". This placed the educators and learners in a challenging position and might provide data of interest to other schools in a similar situation.

The school's Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) was English, and the policy of the school was to conduct all official meetings and publish all official documents in English. Teachers and learners were also encouraged to use English at all times in the classroom, but in practice a lot of Setswana was used both by learners and educators, as this was the predominating vernacular. Each of the 11 official languages had a body of mother tongue speakers represented at the school and some of the pupils had either an unofficial South African language or foreign language as their home language. The self reported linguistic profile of the "Home Languages" of the 950 learners at the start of this research was 43% Setswana, 14% Sepedi and 12% Sesotho (all falling within the Sesotho group of languages) with the rest of the official and foreign languages making up the remaining 31%. According to some of the staff who collected this data during the annual survey, the term "Home Language" proved problematic. Pupils could only choose a single language, although their family might in fact be multilingual, and some pupils said that they did not in fact speak

"pure" versions of the languages listed, but an amalgamated variety that was the lingua franca of the township. However this data was still useful as a rough guide to the linguistic profile of learners at the school.

The school was well resourced – each teacher had his or her own classroom with facilities such as an overhead projector, chalkboard and display boards. There was a stationery cupboard with various materials for teachers and photocopy facilities were available. In addition staff computers with internet access were also accessible and equipment such as a data projector could be booked by staff for use in their lessons. All the English classrooms had televisions and video machines as well as CD/tape players. The school had a library and each teaching subject also had its own teaching and learning materials room as well as an annual budget with which to purchase additional equipment and resources.

The research participants were well qualified and experienced teachers, both holding a Bachelor of Pedagogics degree as well as an Honours degree in a language related field. Both participants also had over twenty years of teaching experience, although the first participant was new to teaching at the school while the second participant had taught there for some years. The method of teaching English at the school was the so called “lock step” approach. All the classes in a particular grade covered the same material at a similar pace. One teacher was in charge of each grade: this involved setting the teaching pace as well as preparation of lessons and the assessment programme. An in-house work book was used as the main teaching material, and revised where necessary at the end of each year in time for the following year’s programme.

1.4. Research goal and motivation

Visual literacy is a component of language teaching which I find fascinating, but also one that was challenging to master as it was not emphasised in my own education and training. I found that when I began teaching, learning materials that focused on this area were scarce, especially resources that were grounded in a South African context. I also found it very difficult to take a critical approach to visual media, because my belief was that “seeing is believing”, and that visuals were at some level self-explanatory. I suspected that these difficulties were not mine alone; therefore an assumption that underpinned my investigation was that “visual literacy” was being taught with an "analytical" rather than "critical" approach in some, or perhaps even many, English Language classrooms. There also seemed to be a need for research into teaching visual literacy:

While there has been considerable discussion about the changing landscape of communication and the need for new literacy practices, little research has been done into how teachers are engaging with these 'new literacies' or 'multiliteracies'.

(McDougall, 2004:12)

As well as other forms of literacy, I see visual literacy as a vital part of language education in the twenty first century, especially as visual media and multimedia become more and more predominant. Given the changing curriculum and new views of what it means to be "literate" in a digital age, my research aimed to focus on exploring teachers' beliefs about, and practices of, teaching visual literacy.

My research goal was to better understand teachers' beliefs about visual literacy and to begin to explore how their beliefs influence their teaching practice. In order to investigate this, I used a case study that comprised of lesson observations and interviews in which I attempted to unravel at least part of the rationale that underpins two teachers' thinking and teaching in this area. I was also interested to find out if the participants felt that the changing curriculum had any bearing on their beliefs and practices, as the backdrop to their lessons was the NCS which was being implemented for the first time in Grade 10 in 2006. In undertaking this research it was my belief that visual literacy was probably not a priority for language teachers and that not much critical engagement with visuals was taking place.

My research was interpretive and qualitative in approach. The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand "the subjective world of human experience...to get inside the person and understand from within" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001:36). Underpinning this interpretive approach is a constructivist philosophy that assumes that shared social experiences are interpreted by individuals to create reality. In undertaking this research I sought to understand how the participants viewed, experienced and expressed their beliefs about visual literacy teaching by referring to quotes from their interviews and observations from their lessons to try and "get inside" the participants and "understand from within".

1.5. Chapter topic outlines

This chapter has attempted to contextualise my research by giving the general background to the research, describing the research site and outlining my research goals and motivation for undertaking the research. Chapter 2, the literature review, attempts to highlight key concepts and issues that are relevant to teaching visual literacy as well as providing a critique of visual literacy in the NCS for English home language. Chapter 3, the methodology chapter, outlines the research methods employed in reaching my research goal through lesson

observations and semi-structured interviews. Chapter 4 presents the research findings and discusses them in relation to the theory and research outlined in the literature review. The last chapter concludes by summarising the results of the research, discussing its limitations, suggesting how it might have value and offering some practical suggestions based on the findings. I also reflect on the research process and give some possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore briefly what might be understood by the term “visual literacy” by giving an overview of some theories about this area of study. A critique of visual literacy in the NCS for English home language at grade 10 level then follows, which leads on to a discussion of some of the influences on the actual practice of teaching visual literacy. In conclusion the relevance of visual literacy as a focus for English language educators is suggested. In my literature review I attempt to go some way in answering the following questions:

1. What do we understand by the term “visual literacy”?
2. a) What does the NCS for English Home Language demand in terms of visual literacy?
b) Are the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards that deal with visual literacy reflected in the formal assessment programme?
3. What are some of the pertinent contextual issues that might impact on visual literacy teaching for English Language Educators?
4. Why is it useful or important to become “visually literate”?

The following sections aim to provide answers to these questions.

2.2. Towards an understanding of the term “visual literacy”

In order to understand what we mean by “visual literacy” it is helpful to situate the idea in the broader notion of “literacy” and to draw some parallels between the acquisition and learning of “verbal” literacy and that of a more image-based kind of literacy.

What it means to “be literate” is difficult to define, and has been the subject of much scholarly debate. This may in part be due to the changing nature of what we understand by the idea of “being literate”, which has varied widely over time and in society, from as simple as being able to write one’s name to as complex as being familiar with literature. Even the notion of “being” literate has been debated. It has been suggested that it may be more

appropriate to see literacy as a process rather than a state, and to talk of “becoming” rather than “being” literate (Unsworth, 2001:8). This could have interesting implications for teachers. If literacy is a progressive process it implies that all learners, no matter how capable or how weak, have some possibility of improving their existing capacities. By contrast, the practice of assessment almost demands a benchmarking system to determine whether or not a learner is, or is not, deemed to “be” literate.

Another relatively new notion that has been presented in recent times considers “literacy” as including various different types of literacy or “multiple literacies”, also termed “**multiliteracies**”. Some of these new literacies are termed: “*information literacy*”, “*technology literacy*”, “*media literacy*”, “*graphicacy*”, and the subject of this research, “*visual literacy*”. From this comes the idea of a “**literacy repertoire**” (Gee, 1989:27) which suggests that literacy has many facets, and that one can add additional “literacies” to one’s existing repertoire. Considering literacy in this way may be helpful to teachers, as it breaks down a perhaps hitherto “monolithic” notion of literacy, and may allow educators to focus on knowledge and skills specific to specialist spheres of literacy.

As well as different types of literacy, Tyner (1998:61) discusses how literacy may be seen to exist at different levels. Based on research into audio-visual training by Edgar Dale (1946), she suggests that on the most basic level, literacy may be thought to mean an understanding of the literal meaning of communication, but it can also include a more creative and inferential level of interaction which “reads between the lines”. On an even higher level, an ability for critical or evaluating response implies a certain “critical literacy” which means “reading beyond the lines” (Tyner, 1998:61).

In the context of multilingual education where many students are learning through an additional language, perhaps this concept of “levels” can be likened to the idea of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) proposed in Cummins (1986) model of language proficiency. Although the validity of this model is debated by linguists, it is suggested that learners of an additional language first learn the language at a basic level that allows interpersonal communication and then progress to a more abstract or “academic” ability as their proficiency grows. One has to be able to read the lines before being able to, as Tyner suggests, read “between” and “beyond” them. Perhaps this model may also apply to the “language” of visual material, with the ability to critically evaluate the visual material growing from the ability to technically analyse it.

What constitutes a “**text**” has also changed substantially over time. Christie and Misson (1998:8) explain that the term “text” has Latin roots and is based on a metaphor of weaving. They suggest that texts are in fact defined by their ability to cohere or “hang together”. In recent years, the idea of a “text” has extended to include visual texts. This would imply that there is some sort of structure that governs or “weaves together” visual texts in order to create a meaningful whole. McDougall (2004:7) suggests: “Images are texts in the sense that they are based on codes that need to be understood.” Being able to understand the structures, or codes, that make visual texts “hang together” would give viewers a way of successfully interpreting visual texts and I would suggest that it is a teacher’s role to make these conventions explicit. Kress (2002:16) suggests that to the “current generation” the texts that wield power are most often those found on “screens”, such as television, theatre and computer screens, which are all predominantly visual in nature.

Texts can be likened to a crystallised societal form of “conversation”, and powerful texts become a kind of social repository of shared understanding. It is this social aspect of texts that has given rise to the theories of **critical literacy**. In her work on critical literacy education, Hilary Janks (2000:176) exposes how language is powerful and that it has the means of “maintaining and reproducing relations of domination” within society. This means that texts can maintain the authority of powerful groups and also work to subjugate those who are not powerful. By exposing the way texts maintain power relationships, critical literacy hopes to make people question the validity of those power structures and enable them to become active in challenging them. In discussing critical literacy it is also important to make mention of the notion of “**Discourse**”. Gee (1989:18) explains that Discourse is:

...a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or “social network”.

(Gee, 1989:18)

Language forms part of Discourse, and Janks (2000) sees the importance of educators in providing access to dominant Discourses without maintaining their dominance, as well as promoting the language and literacies of all students. This means that all Discourses should be considered valuable, those of the powerful as well as those of the groups who are considered unimportant by the powerful groups.

In terms of visual literacy, certain images may become powerful representations of the values and beliefs of a society, in particular those values and beliefs held by the dominant

class. For example, the photograph of Hector Pieterse being carried in the arms of another scholar during the 1976 uprising on 16 June has become an iconic representation of the bloody struggle for equal education by black youth. This image may be seen as empowering, as it shows how the voice of the underprivileged minority is eventually heard. However it is also indicative of the brutal violence inflicted by the government at that time and presents an image of a black child as a victim, which is certainly not empowering to black youth. Another example which illustrates the powerful nature of images is the depictions of Jacob Zuma by the well known cartoonist Zapiro. His cartoons have caused outrage as well as laughter by representing Mr Zuma with a shower over his head after his court statement that suggested that a shower could prevent HIV infection. These cartoons have exposed the politician to ridicule and have perhaps reduced his social standing. Whether or not these images should be published has since become the subject of a court case, and also fueled debates over freedom of the press. These examples show how images have become part of the social discourse, or shared “societal conversation”. Being able to understand and participate in this “Discourse” gives people access to power in the sense that they can be active participants in society rather than ignorant (and ignored) bystanders.

In a multi-lingual and multi-cultural classroom setting, inclusivity and equity are important issues. Gee (1989) differentiates between “primary discourse” and “secondary discourse”. In an educational context, the “primary discourse” can be seen as the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that a learner brings to the classroom and the “secondary discourse” as the norms and ideas of the educational environment. The extent to which a learner is able to participate in the classroom is determined by his or her ability to participate in the “secondary discourse” with the knowledge and skills brought there by his or her “primary discourse”.

Pippa Stein (2000:335) sees the use of image based media as an important tool for promoting inclusivity and equity, and points to the usefulness of including projects that “require multiple forms of representation, of which language is only one”. She suggests that pedagogies which include various types of communication (including the visual) allow teachers to incorporate and draw on “the rich variety of representational resources that each student brings to the classroom.” In Gee’s terms, teachers can harness a diversity of primary discourses to contribute to the secondary discourse of the classroom, thus including as well as empowering all learners by allowing everyone to contribute, even if their discourse is not the dominant one. In so doing teachers may be able to “harness the multiplicity of semiotic

systems across diverse cultural locations to challenge and change existing Discourses.” (Janks, 2000:177).

Put more simply, visual media can be used as a resource to include learners as it may be a form of communication that is more accessible than verbal texts, especially in a multilingual classroom setting. Also, by allowing learners to communicate their ideas in ways other than verbal text alone, it may allow them more opportunities to be part of the Discourse of the classroom.

Kaestle (1991:272) comments: “whether literacy is liberating or constraining depends in part on whether it is used as *an instrument* [my emphasis] of conformity or creativity” (cited in Tyner, 1998:18). In this metaphor literacy is seen as a tool, and educators have the responsibility to help learners become proficient in using the various literacy tools at their disposal. Giving learners access to various literacy tools is a challenging responsibility because, as an expanding variety of communication technologies become available, they influence literacy practices and protocols. As well as more traditional text formats, educators need to help learners gain control of these new textual forms. Electronic media, which enables texts to be composed and “navigated” in different ways, has greatly influenced our ways of interacting with contemporary texts. Kress (1997:42) suggests a move to “the world as shown” and new ways of “reading” texts in different “media landscapes” where different logic and ways of “reading” may apply. He suggests that contemporary texts can be seen as having different and multiple “**modes**” (communication forms) that together compose “**multimodal**” texts.

Unsworth (2001:105-106) sees it as the responsibility of teachers to “scaffold” and “support” interactive work with these multimodal texts. Working with examples of school textbooks, he suggests that the spatial orientation of images follows a pattern that must be made explicit when “reading” texts which include multiple modes. These procedures and strategies for “reading” or engaging with texts are termed “**reading paths**”.

However, Kress (2002:163-165) problematises the idea of a single “logical” reading path in multimodal texts. He observes that “reading paths in many new pages are open”, meaning that there is more than one possible way of “reading” the text. An example of “open” reading paths is in texts from the world of digital media – although these are not common classroom materials. A web page is often designed as a mosaic of visuals and written information from which the reader can choose to “navigate” to various other pages in any order.

Some examples of multimodal texts that typically form the subject of study in the secondary school English home language classroom are advertisements, cartoons and propaganda posters. In each of these texts there is a message conveyed both by the writing, (the written mode) and by the images (the visual mode). In some cases the visual mode reinforces what is presented in the written mode of the text, but in contemporary texts it would also seem that each “mode” also has a specialised function.

For example, in the case of an advertisement, the visual may serve to catch the attention of the viewer or provide a scene which appeals to the emotions in some way. The accompanying text may then reinforce the idea conveyed by the image, but may also serve to provide more detailed information about the product or service which is not conveyed by the image. Another example is that of cartoons, where the written mode usually conveys dialogue and the visual mode the characters’ reactions. A useful approach to studying these texts may be to deconstruct the various modes within multimodal texts in order to understand the distinctive characteristics and purposes of each, and to better understand how each mode may be a carrier of differentiated meanings. These different purposes are termed “**functional specialisation**” by Kress (2002:156). Understanding the functional specialisation of various modes may then allow some insight into the “**design**” (construction) of multimodal texts.

While each form of media in multimodal texts may have a specialised communicative function, images in themselves can also be seen to have various functions. Drawing on the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), Unsworth (2001:72), creates a “**visual grammar**” that is extrapolated from **systemic functional linguistics**. He proposes that images can be seen as simultaneously fulfilling the following **functions**:

Ideational or representational function – constructing events, participants, objects and circumstances

Interpersonal or interactive function – suggesting relationships between the viewer and what is viewed

Textual or compositional function – showing the relative emphasis of elements making up the image

He suggests that it may be helpful to educators to use this framework as a meta-language with which to discuss visual images, and emphasises the fact that images can represent both a “material” reality as well as a “social” one. This means that images do not

merely represent people, objects and scenes in a neutral manner (our “material reality”) as the idiom “seeing is believing” suggests. Instead there is a certain amount of interpretation by the creator of the image. The type of shot and angle through which an image is viewed and what is included and excluded in the picture (among other elements) can have a profound effect on the viewer’s understanding and interpretation of what is seen (the “social reality”). This “social reality” also relates to the subject of critical literacy, mentioned previously.

The idea of a “**visual grammar**” is also taken up by Anne Bamford in her Visual Literacy White Paper. She suggests that images have a “**syntax**” and “**semantics**” – the syntax being “the pictorial structure and organisation” (including for example, shapes, lines and colours) and the semantics “the way the images relate more broadly to issues in the world to gain meaning.” (Bamford, 2003:3-4).

Having a meta-language or visual grammar with which to discuss images is useful in an educational context as it helps to make explicit the ways in which we can de-code as well as produce multimodal texts, and furthermore suggests a framework for critiquing them.

That a meta-language or visual grammar is a helpful pedagogical tool assumes the need for explicit instruction when it comes to de-coding images. Bamford (2003:5) suggests that “to some extent visual literacy skills develop automatically with little input required from teachers” yet she also includes a caution from Ausburn (1978:288): “the superficiality of pupils’ comprehension of much of what they view, suggests that the higher order visual literacy skills do not develop unless they are identified and “taught””. Perhaps this apparent contradiction points to the distinction made by some educators and linguists between “**acquisition**” and “**learning**”. Gee (1989:90) sees “acquisition” as subconscious; a process of exposure and a product of “meaningful interaction in natural settings” whereas “learning” is a “conscious knowledge gained through teaching” which involves explanation and analysis. Both types may occur in a classroom setting, with “acquisition” being a less formal means of gaining knowledge and skills than “learning”. McDougall emphasises the need for formal instruction as an addition to the exposure that learners may experience in their everyday lives:

The whole concept of multiliteracies may be daunting and uncertain, but there is no escaping the fact that our communication practices are moving more to multimodal, multimedia formats and we cannot assume that young people have some kind of ‘innate’ ability to master these modes of communication without needing any assistance or guidance.

(McDougall, 2004:23)

This opinion is supported by Atkins, who also points to the need for learning how to critically engage with visual material:

It should not be assumed that a preference for visual entertainment equates to a superior understanding of visual information... It is arguable that consumption occurs predominantly at a passive, not a critical, level... unless they have had some previous experience or education that has attempted to show them how to do this.

(Atkins, 2006:29)

While there is consensus on the need for explicit instruction in the field of visual literacy, what is actually meant by the term “visual literacy” is fraught with controversy, as the next section explains.

2.3 Towards a definition of visual literacy

This section aims to try and summarise what we mean when we talk about “visual literacy” in an educational context and to broadly outline some of the skills involved in helping learners to become “visually literate”. It would seem that teachers find it difficult to understand what is meant by “visual literacy” because it has not typically been part of their professional training and there is little guidance available in the form of teaching resources and learning support materials. In his research into visual literacy teaching at a rural school Mbelani reported that:

Even though this action research project was concerned with one teacher (myself) it came out in the analysis and discussion in chapter four that other teachers who had taught my Grade 10 A learners in Grades 7-9 did not have the visual language necessary to teach the learners visual literacy... The evidence supports the view that the teachers who learners encountered in Grades 7-9 did not have a formal understanding of visual literacy. Moreover, in my experience of attending workshops intended to implement the new curriculum, and even facilitating some of them, I realised that the training was by and large generic and very little was done to introduce teachers to the new subject matter in the NCS, such as visual literacy.

(Mbelani, 2007:86)

Teachers are not alone in finding the idea of ‘visual literacy’ confusing. Atkins explains how, because of its application in a wide range of fields, such as art, philosophy, linguistics and psychology as well as education:

Visual Literacy seems to have been plagued from its beginning by something akin to an identity crisis...[this can be attributed to] the difficulty of reaching a widely shared definition of visual literacy to the diverse range of disciplines that have contributed to its conception.

(Atkins, 2006:26)

The diversity of ideas surrounding what “visual literacy” means makes a complete definition of what it means to become “visually literate” problematic, but for the purposes of research some have attempted a working proposition. While she acknowledges that visual media each have characteristic forms and skills to learn, Ellen Sims hazards an “operational definition” of visual literacy based on research by Brill, Kim and Branch (2000):

A group of acquired competencies for interpreting and composing visible messages. A visually literate person is able to a) discriminate, and make sense of visible objects as part of visual acuity, b) create static and dynamic visible objects effectively in a defined space, c) comprehend and appreciate the visual testaments of others, and d) conjure objects in the mind’s eye.

(Sims, 2002:2)

For the context of classroom based research, this is a somewhat unwieldy definition.

Although it embraces the idea of “competencies” for interpreting and composing messages, what constitutes a “visible” message? Would the “visible” part of a message equate to the “visual mode” alone or encompass the relationship between this mode and other modes that compose a multimodal text? The ability to create “visible objects” both static and dynamic is also quite a broad requirement and no mention is specifically made of the ability to critically engage with visuals. Bamford (2003) suggests a definition of visual literacy which is perhaps more helpful in a classroom context and she includes gestures, objects, signs and symbols in her classification of visual types of communication. The following is an abbreviated version of her proposition:

Visual literacy involves developing the set of skills needed to be able to interpret the content of visual images, examine the social impact of those images and to discuss purpose, audience and ownership...In addition students need to be aware of the manipulative uses and ideological implications of images. Visual literacy also involves making judgements of the accuracy, validity and worth of images.

(Bamford, 2003:1)

This definition seems to encompass a broad view of visual literacy - it points to the breadth and depth of understanding required for learners to become visually literate and addresses the social aspect of communication, although it does not elaborate on multi-modality and the potential for complementary functions of verbal and visual “modes”.

McDougall's (2004) classification of visual literacy into different "**mindsets**" is a helpful way to navigate the maze of ideas and definitions surrounding the subject. She suggests that ideas about visual literacy can be categorised into three broad approaches to understanding images which she terms "**structural**", "**sociocultural**" and "**cognitive**" mindsets. The "cognitive" approach is more closely related to the fields of psychology and neurology, and so will not be dealt with here in any detail. Of particular interest to educators are the "structural" and "socio-cultural" mindsets.

The "structural" mindset likens "visual literacy" to language, drawing comparisons to "syntax" and "semantics" and suggesting terms such as a "visual grammar". McDougall (2004) explains how this approach can be seen as "technical" in that it concentrates on analysing the components ("building blocks") and techniques used in constructing images in order to better understand them:

One way of analysing the visual structure is to draw upon communication concepts. This subset is concerned with the visual codes and conventions that operate to generate meaning. Authors working in this context may refer to traditional models of communication where the relationship among the author of the text, the viewer of the text and the text itself is often highlighted...The concepts of 'genre', 'audience' and 'purpose' are often emphasised in such discussions.

(McDougall, 2004:28)

By contrast the "socio-cultural" mindset embraces the social context of images and includes the idea of images as representing certain ideologies:

Therefore, the critical and cultural aspects of 'multiliteracies' may be regarded as closely related to each other, since both highlight the constructed nature of imagery, thereby challenging 'value free' interpretations. A structural analysis might be described as assisting in the understanding of *how* images are constructed, by giving the skills needed to recognise and produce visual codes. A sociocultural analysis, on the other hand, might be thought of as one that examines *why* images have been constructed in the ways they have, always keeping in mind the ideological and contextual considerations that affect the image-making process.

(McDougall, 2004:39)

The discussion of visual literacy theories in the previous section has effectively touched on both these "mindsets". In terms of Tyner's (1998) levels, "reading between the lines" could be equated to a structural approach and "reading beyond the lines" a sociocultural one. Janks (2000) and Stein (2000) focus particularly on the sociocultural nature of images in their attention to critical literacy. Unsworth's (2001) *Textual or compositional function* relates to the sociocultural approach and his *Ideational or representational function* to the structural.

Similarly Bamford's (2003) *syntax* addresses the structural, and her *semantics* the sociocultural approach.

McDougall advocates a 'holistic' methodology that takes into account both the structural and the sociocultural. She also emphasises that for a truly holistic approach to visual literacy teaching, it is not only the interpretation of visual materials that is important but also their production:

Learning about structural aspects of visual literacy can provide a good foundation in the negotiation of visual texts. There are many ways in which this may be approached, but studies that use a communication, aesthetics/design, graphic and/or technical approach are useful springboards. However, the structural aspects should not be understood in isolation, or considered universal in their application...I would advocate that the teaching of visual literacy must also encourage an engagement with imagery that embraces structural and sociocultural skills and understandings. To help facilitate a holistic approach to visual literacy, it is also important that students are actively engaged in producing as well as interpreting visual texts, and gain experience with a variety of genres and media.

(McDougall, 2004:54)

The following section gives an overview of what the Outcomes Based NCS for grade 10 English Home Language demands in terms of visual literacy and comments on the extent to which "visual literacy" is prioritised and promoted in the curriculum. It also examines the approach to visual literacy that is taken by the NCS in terms of McDougall's (2004) "mindsets".

2.4. An overview of visual literacy in the grade 10 English home language curriculum

McDougall (2004:107) explains how curricula have a dual function. They are partly public documents that state the aims and ideals of an education system, but they also have a functional role in that they have to be implemented in actual classroom contexts. There is often a gap between "the rhetoric" and "the reality". The following section aims to explore how the NCS refers to visual literacy in the grade 10 English home language subject area and how these ideas might translate into actual classroom practice.

The NCS explains the values, knowledge and skills that it expects learners to hold, know and demonstrate by giving a detailed list, known as "assessment standards" (AS's) for each subject area. These AS's are grouped thematically into "Learning Outcomes" (LO's) in order to provide a framework for teaching and learning. English Home Language in the FET (Further Education and Training, Grade 10-12) phase has four LO's, namely: "Speaking and Listening", "Reading and Viewing", "Writing and Presenting" and "Language".

As was explained in chapter 1, the LO's for English home language in the FET phase build on the outcomes for LLC in the GET phase. The cohort of learners who were in grade 10 in 2006, when NCS was implemented for the first time, had been educated thus far in the C2005 curriculum. Moore (2001) comments on how C2005 addressed visual literacy in the GET phase:

In LLC, the visual mode is treated like a tool of textual analysis to be applied to certain kinds of "texts". While LLC is comfortable with the analogy of "reading" a diagram, a map, a movie or a cartoon, the visual mode has a productive component that does not fit as easily into the analogy of "writing". To deal with this, the productive component is labelled "expressive" and shifted to its traditional place in A&C [Arts and Culture]... When serving an expressive function, the curriculum documents appear to legitimize a learner's production of visual communication, but only in the realm of "the arts", because visual productiveness does not easily fit into a language Learning Area.

(Moore, 2001:45)

She points out how visual literacy was not defined with sufficient clarity in C2005 and that “a preoccupation with the language-like aspects of visual literacy have resulted in an incoherent approach to the subject” (2001:57). The NCS attempts to redress this “incoherent” approach, but as the following discussion will show, it still has some way to go in presenting a cohesive understanding of visual literacy that can be implemented effectively in the language classroom.

The learning outcomes in the FET phase that one would predominantly expect to deal with visual literacy are those involving “Reading and Viewing” (the interpretation of images) and “writing and presenting” (the production of multimodal texts). However some mention is made of visually related skills in the first learning outcome (**LO1**) entitled: “**Listening and Speaking**”. One of the AS's for this LO is that:

- The learner is able to incorporate audio, visual and audio-visual aids such as charts, posters, photographs, images, music, sound and electronic media.

Although it is not made explicit, this statement might imply that learners should be able to produce some of these media – in particular charts and posters, although it is possible that they may use already made versions too. However the prescribed assessment criteria for prepared speeches (see appendix 1) does not make mention of the learner's ability to produce or use visual aids, so in my experience the skill of using visual aids is not actually a priority for teachers.

Learning Outcome 2 (LO2) for the FET band is entitled “**Reading and Viewing**” and this outcome states that "The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts". The scope and purpose statement of this LO suggests that “learners use a wide range of reading and viewing strategies...depending on the nature of the text”. This implies that learners should be encouraged to interact with many types of media, but what is meant by “viewing strategies” is not entirely clear. In my understanding this means that learners should be enabled to understand the logic and “reading path” appropriate for decoding different texts, as well as being able to critique them in a critical manner. There are three AS’s that deal with visual literacy that fall under LO2:

- The learner is able to explain the meaning of a wide range of written, visual, audio, and audio-visual texts

In my understanding, “explain the meaning” would suggest McDougall’s (2004) “sociocultural” mindset and would involve a critical look at the ideologies implied in visual texts, although this statement is fairly vague, so it could also include an explanation of the “structural” components of images. Interestingly the only multimodal text listed here are “audio-visual” texts.

- The learner is able to interpret and evaluate familiar graphic texts

The terms “interpret” and “evaluate” presumably correlate to a “structural” type of explanation of these graphic texts. I would expect that this means that learners should be taught how to “transcode” information from the visual to the written form, in other words to explain in words what is represented by the graphic text, and also to have some understanding of the purpose and validity of the information that is graphically represented.

I am unsure what is meant by “familiar” in this description though. Who determines what is “familiar” to learners - the educator? This could mean that choice of texts is very much dependent on context, with well resourced schools presumably expecting more of their learners than those in less privileged environments, a notion which does not seem very democratic.

Without specific examples, I also think it might be difficult for educators to recognize the term “graphic” as a reference to a kind of diagrammatic representation. McDougall explains what might be understood by the term “graphic”:

Graphics, in its broadest sense, can refer to “a prepared form of a visual message” (Saunders, 1994:184). In this structural context, however, I refer to the graphic communication described by Rakes (1999), in which there is a logical connection among ideas, but the image does not resemble the object it represents. Therefore, diagrams, graphs, maps, flowcharts and the like, as well as abstract symbols such as those that feature on road signs and in airports, all represent ‘graphic’ communication.

(McDougall, 2004:34-35)

In terms of assessment, the final language examinations at Matric level used to typically include some of the graphic texts described above, although in recent years there has been a shift in focus to predominantly advertisements and cartoons in the “visual literacy” questions of the examination.

- **In visual, audio and multi-media texts:** The learner is able to identify and explain message and theme and how they contribute to the text and explain the use of visual, audio and audio-visual techniques such as the use of colour, dialogue, music, sound, lighting, editing, framing, camera techniques, camera movement, composition, foregrounding and back grounding.

It would seem this AS positions visual literacy in terms of literature as the terms “message” and “theme” have literary connotations to language teachers. The listing of techniques and the verbs “identify” and “explain”, suggest a strictly “structural” approach to visuals rather than a “sociocultural” one and the choice of “techniques” that are exemplified predominantly tend to suggest the medium of film. It would seem that this AS harks back to “film study” in the previous education system – a supposition that is supported when one considers that film is examined in the formal assessment programme as the “fourth literary genre” in addition to the novel, the play and poetry.

Learning Outcome 3 (LO3) is entitled “**Writing and Presenting**” and in describing its purpose and scope the NCS states: “The aim is to produce competent, versatile writers who will be able to use their skills to develop appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes.” It is interesting to note that in the NCS, “visual” and “multi-media” text production is included in the language curriculum, unlike in the former C2005 where

Moore (2001) reports a split between “viewing” and “producing” these texts. Presumably the term “presenting” used here is suggestive of the visual mode. However it is telling that the statement of scope wishes to produce *writers* as opposed to designers or producers of these texts.

- The learner is able to identify and explain types of texts to be produced such as imaginative, informational, creative, transactional, multi-media

Although the production of various types of texts is suggested in this statement, in actual practice a great deal of emphasis is placed on writing, as the assessment rubric for “transactional texts” suggests (see appendix 2). It is also interesting to note that the learner must “identify” and “explain” rather than “produce” these texts, although the AS falls under the outcome of “writing and presenting”.

- The learner is able to convert selected information from one form to another, such as from a graph to a paragraph form

This AS seems to be similar to the “familiar graphic texts” mentioned previously as it also proposes “transcoding” of information. In this description only the “conversion” is highlighted though, not the ability to “interpret” or “evaluate”.

- The learner is able to develop coherent ideas and organise these by using techniques such as mind-maps, diagrams, lists of key words, flow-charts;

Although this is perhaps more in the realm of “information literacy”, there is a certain visual element involved in drawing diagrams and mind-maps.

- The learner is able to use a selection of visual and design elements.

This assessment standard is rather vague; it is unclear what is meant by “a selection”. A more detailed example would have been helpful. It is also unclear how these elements should be evaluated, as they are not included in the assessment rubric for “transactional texts” (see appendix 2).

- The learner is able to present a final draft paying attention to appropriate style such as a neatly presented text or a striking, colourful poster.

It is interesting that although the rest of the AS's tended to focus mainly on written texts, here a poster is exemplified. Although a poster is mentioned, to me the word "draft" suggests a writing process rather than a design process. "Appropriate style" is defined in this example as a "neat text" or a "striking" and "colourful" poster. The juxtaposition of "text" and "poster" suggests that a poster is not a text, and considering "style" in terms of "neatness" is strange.

My research findings bear out the fact that teachers find it quite difficult to gain a coherent understanding of visual literacy from these AS's and also find it problematic to implement these ideals. The AS's that deal with visual literacy are fragmented and vague, and while "critical evaluation" and "production of multi-media texts" are espoused in the LO scope descriptions, these do not seem to be effectively included in the AS's. It would seem that the approach to visual literacy outlined in the NCS is largely "structural" rather than "sociocultural" and tends to be quite similar to the approach taken to "film study" in the previous syllabus.

Perhaps because of the lack of clarity in the NCS, *The Learning Programme Guidelines for Languages* was published in January 2008 to give detailed guidance to educators about how to go about implementing the NCS in their classrooms. This document was published after I had collected my data, so unfortunately I did not have an opportunity to sound out the participants' opinion on it. The document states (2008:9) that the word text includes "**audio-visual and multimedia texts** [original emphasis] such as posters, advertisements, radio and television programmes..." It goes on to explain that educators should take a "text-based approach" to the study of these texts and describes the approach:

It involves reading, viewing and analysing texts to understand how they are produced and how they impact on their audience. It also involves producing different kinds of texts for particular audiences and purposes.

(Learning Programme Guidelines for Languages, 2008:9)

The following are extracts of instructions to teachers from the document that deal specifically with visual literacy:

LO1: Listening and Speaking

- Teachers should stimulate oral participation by using written, oral and multimedia texts, such as radio and television programmes and photographs.

Here the aim of using visual and multimedia texts appears to be to “stimulate participation” rather than to model the use of audio-visual or to critically discuss the texts.

LO2: Reading and Viewing

- Viewing implies engagement with the visual aspects of texts, such as pictures, symbols, graphs, cartoons, comic strips, posters and advertisements, and is an aspect often neglected in language teaching. Critical viewing is important in a world driven by multimedia and visual stimuli.

Although this instruction emphasises “engagement” and “critical viewing” it does not elaborate on how teachers should go about doing this.

LO3: Writing and Presenting

- The writing process is described and it is stipulated that learners should brainstorm ideas, using for example mindmaps, flow charts or lists.

Although the importance of “producing different kinds of texts” is mentioned in the explanation of a “text based approach”, no mention is made of it in the LO3 section, other than this reference to “the writing process” which *stipulates* a planning phase.

It is interesting that while the instructions for LO1 suggest that teachers should use multimedia texts to “stimulate participation” it does not explicitly state that teachers should explain to learners how to use visual media in their own oral presentations. The commentary on LO2 acknowledges that visual media is “an aspect often neglected in language teaching” but also does not go into detail about how teachers can help learners “engage with the visual aspects of texts” and become critical viewers. Although a definition of visual literacy is given (Learning Programme Guidelines for Languages, 2008:22) as “the ability to understand *and produce* [my own emphasis] visual texts such as pictures, photographs, films and cartoons” the production of multimedia texts seems to be given very little attention in LO3, which only

stipulates using a graphic layout in the planning stage of essay writing. A list of the various types and features of essays follows the LO3 instructions, implying that this kind of writing takes pride of place in the implementation of “writing and presenting”. No mention is made of the production of multimedia texts.

In my opinion, the reason that visual literacy is “an aspect often neglected in language teaching” is as a result of the biased nature of assessment tasks towards more traditional forms of literacy. For example, a part of the NCS that is used as a basis for language assessment is the *Competence Descriptions for Grade 10*. A “meritorious” learner is exemplified (NCS, 2008:58) by outlining descriptors of high achievement in each of the LO’s. In this description, no visual literacy skills are explicitly mentioned. This type of learner would score 60% -79% (this is the top mark illustrated, no mention is made of 80%-100% and it contradicts the ratings in the *Subject Assessment Guidelines for Languages*).

A detailed look at the *Subject Assessment Guidelines for Languages*, published in January 2008, also demonstrates a similar inclination to potentially discount visual literacy. The formal assessment programme for Grade 10 awards 75% of the final year mark to the end of year examinations. This examination is made up of four papers: Language in context, Literature, Writing and Oral tasks.

The language paper awards some marks to awareness of design in section C (2008:9): “Learners should identify and explain the impact of techniques such as the use of font types and sizes, headings and captions, etc.” But this hardly matches up to the lofty aims described in the NCS.

The writing paper awards half its marks to the production of “transactional texts” but it would seem that marks are awarded mainly for written texts, as the only examples given from a lengthy list that have the potential for the inclusion of some kind of multimedia design are magazine and newspaper articles in the “longer text” section, and advertisements, flyers and posters in the “shorter text” section, which counts the least. The transactional writing assessment rubric (see appendix 2) also ignores the visual design element of texts.

Although there is an oral “examination paper”, in fact the prescribed oral tasks done during the year are all counted twice; they are included in the portfolio, and then the same oral marks are used again as an examination mark, which makes it difficult to calculate the exact contribution of these tasks to the overall end of year mark. In the oral examination paper, 10 out of 50 marks are for a speaking task (which could include use of visual aids) and 20 for a “response to literature” task, where film study is listed as a possible literature genre

option. (This seems to continue the rationale of the previous syllabus which situates film as a form of literature to be studied.) It is only in these two tasks that there is potential for the use of multimedia texts by learners themselves – though the prepared oral assessment rubric currently in use does not actually give much credit specifically to this skill (see appendix 1). The listening task, which counts 10 marks, might also be based on a visual text.

Thus in total, 70 marks out of the 300 examination marks might include some aspects of visual literacy or no aspects of visual literacy could be included at all. The portfolio counts only 25% and it is reduced from a total of 700 marks, gleaned from 15 tasks, 4 of which are the oral tasks already mentioned. If teachers are really passionate about promoting the design of multimedia texts, 90 out of 700 portfolio marks might involve the production of multimedia material by learners, or none at all, if the teacher so decides.

Although the NCS ostensibly values visual literacy and the inclusion of a wide range of texts as part of language studies, it would seem that the formal assessment programme continues to value alphabetic over visual literacy in the way it is designed. The title of this research “A picture’s worth a thousand words” hints at this tension between the different literacies:

Therefore, the previously accepted binaries of ‘legitimate’ communication versus creative expression, of alphabetic versus visual literacy, need to be challenged. This poststructural perspective is also implied in Kress’s emphasis on the power relations and dominant ideologies that characterise the process of literacy reform. He acknowledges that there may be considerable resistance to a ‘new’ literacy based on visual design, since such a change may be viewed as a threat to certain dominant groups that prefer to hold fast to the idea that verbal literacy dominates (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

(McDougall, 2004:114)

Another possible reason for this mismatch between the formal assessment programme (with its potential exclusion of multimedia texts) and the NCS might be to avoid disadvantaging ill equipped schools. However this argument is a dangerous one, as it further excludes disadvantaged learners from fully participating in discourse which involves multimedia texts. Presumably even under resourced schools do have access to texts such as magazines, advertisements and newspapers all of which are examples of multimodal texts. Mbelani (2007) conducted research into visual literacy in an under resourced school. He describes his teaching context:

The high school in which I teach is located in a rural village in the Butterworth District of the Eastern Cape... The school was connected to electricity in 1994 and has two televisions, two VCR's, a DVD Combo and an overhead projector.

(Mbelani, 2007:4)

While acknowledging resources to be problematic, with some forward planning he was able to teach his class effectively about visual literacy in advertisements none-the-less.

Kress (1997:46) suggests, "The goal for the new literacy curriculum must be competence in design, that is, competence in the innovative use of available resources for making meaning in relation to the designer's intentions." Whether educators are able and willing to implement this goal, as well as those of the NCS, may be dependent to some extent on contextual and affective factors. The following section outlines factors that may be relevant to visual literacy education.

2.5. A sketch of contextual factors that may influence teaching visual literacy

In her research into the implementation of visual literacy in the new Australian primary school curriculum, McDougall (2004) comments that:

Statements about visual literacy in policy documents may represent a challenge to teachers at a number of levels. Unless teachers are prepared to put this curriculum reform into practice, the concept of visual literacy, as conceived by policy-makers at least, will remain curriculum rhetoric rather than classroom practice. In order to understand better teachers' engagements with visual literacy, it is necessary to consider the various and complex contextual factors that affect the way in which teachers address reform.

(McDougall 2004:72)

This section briefly touches on a few affective influences that may have some bearing on the teaching of visual literacy, specifically those involving teachers' attitudes, beliefs and motivation. I have included this section in order to briefly illustrate that the teaching and learning of any type of literacy is influenced by a wide range of factors beyond the curriculum alone. I feel that much of McDougall's (2004) research into the impact of curriculum change on Australian teachers resonates with my own experiences, so in this section I include a number of quotes from her findings.

i) The impact of teachers' beliefs, training and experience on teaching practice

The importance of research on how teachers' beliefs impact their choice of teaching methodology is emphasised in Borg (1989) who reports that:

In the last 15 years educational research has provided ample support for the assertion that teachers' classroom practices are determined to a substantial degree by their personal pedagogical belief systems.

(Borg, 1998:9)

Goodwyn (1998:81) foresaw the multi-faceted and rapidly changing nature of our new reading environments and explains the necessity of reading texts in relation to each other. However he cites multiple research evidence that suggests that literature teachers in a British context: "are still deeply ambivalent and deeply unsure about work related to media texts" (1998:81). This ambivalence and uncertainty may be as a result of lack of experience and training on the part of teachers in "showing" learners how to critically engage with and produce multi-modal texts. Mbelani (2007) relates how his own educational experiences made it difficult to teach visual literacy himself:

Visual literacy was not included in the syllabus for English Second Language before the introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in 1998. Thus teachers who came out of the apartheid education system did not experience visual literacy either as learners or as teacher trainees.

(Mbelani, 2007:85)

This problem of teachers' feeling constrained by their own schooling is borne out by Prinsloo (2004) in her study of language curriculums during South Africa's apartheid era:

Schooled in a particular system, those who then become teachers generally do not challenge the naturalised status of the literacy practices they have acquired and in this way they impact on future teaching and learning scenarios...That teachers are frequently resistant to changing their implicit models of what counts as teaching has been variously documented. Lortie (1975) has described this as the 'apprenticeship of observation' wherein implicit models of teaching and teacher behaviour are internalised. While there might be a sense that certain literacy practices are outmoded and have been superseded, in practice they are remarkably resilient. This points to the relevance of an overview of the literacy practices that precede and inform current practices.

(Prinsloo, 2004:81-82)

As Prinsloo (2004) points out, it is likely to take much more than a change in curriculum to influence teachers' deeply held beliefs about literacy practices and teaching methodologies. Teachers need to be motivated as well as trained to engender in them a paradigm shift or change in "mindset".

In his research into teaching visual literacy in a rural South African context Mbelani (2007:3) relates how a Matric examination question that was difficult for his learners, as well as him, to answer motivated him to make an effort to educate himself about visual literacy.

This experience points to the role of formal assessment in motivating change, a topic that is dealt with in the next section.

ii) The “washback effect” of assessment and exams

Although ideally educators should be mindful of the curriculum as a whole and should aim to encourage broad understanding and skills in learners, in reality I think that the pressures of assessment tend to direct the course of study to some extent, especially since the formal assessment programme for the FET band is quite prescriptive in terms of the type and number of tasks that must be completed. Therefore I feel that the material covered and the approach taken by educators is heavily swayed, in particular by the end of year examinations, which count 75% of the learners’ final marks. The portfolio assessment tasks which contribute the remaining 25% may also dictate teachers’ aims. As learners in the FET phase must achieve a final year mark of 40% in their home language in order to be promoted to the following grade, language educators in particular are faced with a weighty responsibility. They must ensure that the learners in their charge achieve adequately in the areas that are heavily tested through the formal assessment programme – perhaps sometimes to the detriment of other equally important knowledge and skills. Thus visual literacy may be forced to take a back seat to other aspects of literacy, and teachers’ priorities may actually be prescribed by the assessment programme that must be implemented. This is borne out by McDougall (2004), who points to the power of the curriculum in determining what kind of knowledge and skills are “privileged”:

The written curriculum, or syllabus, then, is a kind of document that sets out the changing map of the terrain (Goodson, 1988). It represents “the visible, public and changing testimony of selected rationales and legitimating rhetorics of schooling” (Goodson, 1988:16). Certain kinds of subjects and knowledge are privileged or disadvantaged in our society via curriculum documents (Goodson, 1988).

(McDougall, 2004:106)

Similarly, Prinsloo (2004) explains how examinations are “a technology of power” which has the capacity to shape what is valued in the educational system:

The examination has been argued to be a powerful technology of power that operates within educational institutions and that has implications far beyond the moment of their enactment (e.g. Foucault above (1977), Meadmore (1997)) and the effects of which are felt prior to the event and long afterwards. For years before reaching both the final year of schooling and the moment of scrutiny effected by the final school examinations, what has been termed the 'washback' effect of examinations (Howatt, 1984) impacts on teaching and learning. The power of such examinations lies also in its role as a gate keeping mechanism – those who succeed under these conditions are deemed expert and this ensures the persistence of such practices.

(Prinsloo, 2004:81)

This suggests that it is as much the assessment of knowledge and skills as the curriculum itself that has the power to drive educational transformation. The following section outlines some of the difficulties involved in implementing a curriculum change.

iii) Curriculum change and ensuing frustrations

Since I began teaching in 2000 I have experienced constant change to the curriculum, the assessment programme, methods of recording and reporting and also a certain formalisation of ways of interacting with the education department and colleagues. Change has not always meant progress. With each change has also come the necessity for various “training programmes”, almost always haphazard and of low quality, with no formal accreditation. As a result I have often felt a degree of fatigue and frustration with what sometimes seems like a chaotic and unhelpful education system. It would appear that other teachers have had a similarly de-motivating experience – an extreme illustration of this point of view is from *The Educational Journal* (2007:1):

OBE has produced not noble outcomes but an ignominious mess in our schools. In practice OBE has been showed up as a flawed system wholly inappropriate in terms of the needs of post-apartheid South Africa.

(Kies, 2007:1)

As a result of persistent change, anything new is often viewed with wariness and weariness by those who remain in the teaching profession. I would suggest that some educators feel an aversion to anything that requires a new or different approach, as they are fatigued by years of “transformation”. Visual literacy and the changing face of media may fall into this category:

The concept of teacher ‘burn-out’ in the face of persistent and unrealistic educational reform is widely documented ... [which creates a] sense of “exhaustion and hostility” felt by many teachers because of overwhelming demands.

(McDougall 2004:77)

Harreveld's (2002) metaphor of teachers as "brokers" of change is appropriated by McDougall (2004:76) to explain how teachers may feel caught in the middle of curriculum change. On the one hand the national education department is attempting to "sell" the new curriculum and on the other, learners and parents have to "buy" these changes. To continue the commercial metaphor, teachers need to feel a sense of "ownership" before they are effectively motivated to implement changes. In other words, teachers themselves have to be convinced of the value and benefits of changing their methodology and their approach to teaching visual literacy.

2.6. The relevance of visual literacy study to the English language curriculum

Wray (1997) asks the question "What use is literacy?" and concludes that as society becomes increasingly dependent on texts as "carriers of social Discourse", so access to texts becomes access to Discourse . Although his question is perhaps contextualised in the idea of verbal texts, the idea also extends to multi-modal texts that have become the norm in recent times. Developing "literacy" in general, as well as visual literacy in particular, can therefore be seen as an issue of access - a political issue as much as an educational one. However, Tyner (1998:32) reminds us that although it may be a commonly held belief, "numerous historical examples contradict the notion that literacy is directly tied to economic and social development, individual moral fortitude, citizenship and other social responsibilities". It is perhaps then naive to assume that producing individuals who are literate necessarily means that they will be able to find employment or are intellectually emancipated, but certainly those who are not literate will find it difficult to find skilled employment and are more likely to become victims of manipulation.

Bamford (2003:5) suggests that understanding images is "a vital necessity" and that as educators our aim is "to create students who have a sense of aesthetic openness, but are also critically aware of the capacity of images to manipulate." Hart also sees active engagement by learners with "new media" as vital:

We need both skills and understanding in visual and aural communication... when we are able to evaluate media messages with confidence and respond critically to them... [then we are] more likely to become autonomous rather than automatons.

(Hart, 1991:1)

Perhaps then the use of literacy, and more specifically “visual literacy” might be to encourage critical and creative viewers and producers (rather than re-producers) of multi-modal texts. Teaching visual literacy may enable students to extend their literacy repertoires and allow them to engage in a wider variety of social discourse. Further research into and discussion of the subject of “visual literacy” might go some way in aiding educators in the pursuit of this aim.

2.7. Conclusion

The literature review chapter has attempted to sketch out some of the current thinking about what it means to become “visually literate” and to frame the theory in terms of McDougall’s (2004) “structural” and “sociocultural” mindsets. Using these ideas I then outlined and commented on how the NCS for English home language deals with this area of study. In addition I drew attention to contextual factors that may influence educators in their thoughts, beliefs and practices in order to illustrate the complexity of issues involved in the practice of literacy education. Finally I suggested why visual literacy is a valuable part of the language curriculum.

The methodology chapter that follows outlines the approach I have taken to reaching my research goal of better understanding teacher's beliefs about visual literacy and exploring how their beliefs influence their teaching practice.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by explaining the rationale behind using a case study and outlines the approach taken to this research project. The justification for choice of participants is then given, followed by an explanation of the research tools that were used and a description of the process of data analysis and interpretation. Issues of validity are then addressed as well as ethical considerations. In conclusion the limitations of the research are indicated.

3.2. The case study approach

Bassey (2000:28) explains that case studies present a detailed and "rich" account of experiences in a natural context from which interpretations can be put forward. He describes the value of educational case studies as allowing educators to enrich their thinking and discourse and to refine their practice. Since the focus of this research is on understanding teachers' beliefs, conceptions and their related teaching practices, a case study method which focuses in detail on the experiences of two teachers seemed appropriate.

This research is interpretive and qualitative in approach. The interpretative paradigm seeks to understand "the subjective world of human experience...to get inside the person and understand from within" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001:36). Underpinning this interpretive approach is a constructivist philosophy that assumes that shared social experiences are interpreted by individuals to create reality:

The postmodern position emphasises the constructed and perspectival nature of research and knowledge. It contends that concepts such as 'data', 'reality' and 'facts' cannot rise above their location in space and time (Lyotard, 1984, Scheurich,1997).

(McDougall, 2004:123)

As far as possible I have used quotes from the interviews with teachers so that their voices can be heard. In this way I hope to make apparent the "constructed and perspectival" nature of the research.

3.3. Sampling

I made use of purposeful and convenience sampling in conducting my research. Patton (1990, cited in Merriam, 2001:61) explains the value of using "purposeful sampling":

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling.

(Patton, 1990, cited in Merriam, 2001:61)

Although I approached the participants partly as a matter of convenience because I know them as colleagues, I also purposefully chose them because they were experienced teachers, and I thought that they would be fluent and co-operative informants. A further motivation for choosing the participants was that each had had a very different educational experience to my own – one participant was educated through the former “House of Delegates” education system and the other through a mission school for black learners. I was interested in their experiences of visual literacy exposure during their own education, and to find out how it might have influenced their teaching practice.

3.4. Research tools

The process that was followed was one of observing participants' visual literacy lessons and then conducting interviews with the participants about their lessons. This process sought to gain insight into the beliefs and understanding of visual literacy and the resultant teaching practices of the participants.

With verbal permission from the principal and the teachers who participated, a 40 minute visual literacy lesson given by each participant was observed. In order to gain some insight into their visual literacy teaching practices and to make links both in the interviews and in my data analysis, my observation notes described the physical setting of the lesson (specifically what visual materials were on display in the classroom, with photographs forming part of the notes) and gave detailed descriptions of the interactions between the educator and learners and the activities that took place (see appendix 3 and appendix 5). During the lesson, I also gathered samples of learning support materials that were used in order to further illustrate teaching practices (see appendix 4 and appendix 6 for examples).

Interviews were later conducted to elaborate on the lesson observations. With verbal permission from the participants, these interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed (see appendix 8 and appendix 9). The quality criteria for interviews suggested by Cohen et al (2001: 881) to ensure rich data, was taken into account when designing and conducting the interviews. Interviews were chosen as the most appropriate tool for generating data in this

research as they allowed the participants to give detailed expression to their thoughts and beliefs about the subject of visual literacy.

The first two parts of the interview were structured but open-ended in order to ascertain the participants' training, experience and beliefs about teaching visual literacy as well as their conception of the aims of the NCS with regards to visual literacy (see appendix 7 for the interview schedule). The first part focused particularly on the participants' own education and training experiences and the second on their beliefs about and understanding of "visual literacy". The third part was more loosely structured and specifically focused on the lesson observed, using observation notes from each participant's lesson for stimulated recall. The aim of the third part was to encourage the teachers to explain their teaching methodologies during the observed lesson. This third part of the interviews sought to probe the teachers' conceptions in more depth and to relate their thoughts and beliefs to concrete experience.

In order to put the participants at ease, I invited them to choose the interview setting before the interviews took place and I also briefly ran through the structure and focus of the questions in order to give them an idea of what the interview would involve. I began the interview with relatively more structured questions about their personal history so that the participants could begin by answering relatively undemanding questions and would hopefully become more relaxed as the interview continued. As the interview progressed the questions were often guided by participant responses and, as far as possible, further questions that asked for clarification or elaboration were used in order to gain a "rich" and detailed account. During the interviews the lesson observation notes, NCS and proposed interview schedule were on hand to guide the discussion where relevant.

My initial intention was to schedule two interview sessions, the first dealing with the semi-structured section about educational experiences and teaching practice and the second interview dealing with a discussion of the actual lesson after an observation. However conducting even a single interview proved to be extremely difficult, as the participants - though willing - did not easily find the necessary time available. I eventually decided rather to conduct one lengthy interview at the first available opportunity after observing a lesson. I think this decision jeopardised my results though as my data tended to be "thin" rather than "rich".

I was an observer-as-participant since I am known to the teachers at the school, and I had hoped my friendly relationship with the teachers would minimise the impact of my observations, though I assumed my presence would no doubt have had some effect. I found

that my role of "observer" was somewhat problematic as the participants wanted to use the lesson observation as part of their annual teacher assessment. Effectively I think I became more than a mere observer, as I was compelled also to evaluate their lesson as part of a peer review team. I was not entirely comfortable with this arrangement as it meant that the lesson I observed was possibly specially prepared rather than a "normal" lesson, but this arrangement seemed to suit the teachers, so it was agreed. It did in fact have an impact on some of my research results as one of the participants seem to feel that the interview was an evaluation of her competence as a teacher, and was defensive when I began to ask her about the NCS. I also think that being an evaluator of the lessons affected my attitude to the data, I slipped into the role of evaluator rather than more "objective" observer.

3.5. Data analysis and interpretation

McMillan and Schumacher describe qualitative analysis as:

A systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest.

(McMillan and Schumacher , 2001:462)

However, they explain that depending on the research purpose, philosophy and methodology employed by the researcher, qualitative data analysis can vary widely. Thus it is important to exercise a reasonably clear and consistent process in order to illustrate how the data points to particular interpretations. In order to do this the data collected from lesson observation notes, learning support material samples and interview transcriptions was analysed and interpreted following the procedure suggested by Hycner (1985) cited in Cohen et al (2001:285). This procedure involves the analysis of data to form "units of meaning" that can then be clustered and summarised to form themes, and the themes used to eventually form a composite summary that suggests an interpretation of the data. Themes were established using colour coding to organise and select information from the data. Themes arose from pre-defined categories (determined by the interview schedule and literature review) as well as recurring issues and topics that emerged from the data.

Findings are presented under the following themes:

1. Influence of teachers' own education and training on their understanding of "visual literacy"
2. Teachers' beliefs about and understanding of the concept "visual literacy"

3. Teachers' understanding of NCS requirements
4. Impact of education, training, beliefs and curriculum on teaching methodology
5. Teacher's ideas about teaching and learning visual literacy in the future

The discussion of the findings uses examples from the data collected as well as the literature reviewed in order to synthesise, make inferences and draw conclusions.

3.6. Validity

Validity can be considered the degree to which research descriptions, interpretations and theoretical conclusions correlate to the social reality under investigation. Maxwell (1992:285-295) presents a typology of validity that he suggests should be taken into consideration when undertaking qualitative research: *descriptive validity*; *interpretative validity* and *theoretical validity*.

In order to ensure the *descriptive validity* of the research, the participants who were interviewed were given an opportunity to check and edit the lesson observation notes as well as to comment on them during the interview. As far as possible verbatim accounts from lesson observations and interviews are also used to allow for accurate descriptions.

To ensure *interpretative validity*, the second part of the interviews sought to confirm observations and interpretations, and the observation notes as well as transcriptions of the interviews are available as appendices to the research so that interpretation and analysis can be checked against the original data.

As well as the aforementioned member checking and participant review, triangulation of data from multiple sources (detailed observation notes and photographs, document analysis of samples of learning support materials and interview transcription data) is used to confirm *theoretical validity*.

3.7. Ethical considerations

The ethical values of *respect for persons*, *respect for truth* and *respect for democratic values* as outlined by Bassey (1995:15), Ely (1991:93-94) and Eisner & Peshkin (1990) must underpin every aspect of research. Cohen et al (2001: 50) explain the necessity of informed consent and co-operation that protects and respects the rights of participants. In order to ensure that participants felt informed and respected, the principal of the school as well as the participants were asked for permission to conduct lesson observations and follow up interviews, and the nature and purpose of the research was carefully explained. Participants

were also informed that they had the option to withdraw from the research. Furthermore, participants were given copies of lesson observation notes and that they were able to edit and were asked after the interview if they felt there was anything they were uncomfortable about that they wished to be excluded. Permission to photograph classrooms and make audio recordings of interviews was also requested before recordings took place. To ensure privacy and anonymity, pseudonyms have been used.

3.8. Limitations

The constructed nature of the interviews and my inexperience as a researcher had an impact on the quality and validity of data that were gathered:

Who I am as a person will frame the choices that I make along my research journey and will influence the research outcomes: When we delineate what we intend to study, when we adopt a particular theoretical position, when we ask certain kinds of questions rather than others, when we analyse and make sense of findings in one way rather than another, when we present our findings in a particular kind of text: all this is part of constructing a researchable world. (Usher, 1996b: 34)

(Usher, 1996, cited in McDougall, 2004:125)

During the interviews I did not sufficiently consider the impact of power relationships between the participants and myself and at times I asked leading questions or framed questions with my own comments and ideas about visual literacy teaching.

The first participant was a black, Setswana speaking teacher communicating through English, to me - a white, English speaking researcher who she perhaps perceived to be in a powerful position, although I had discounted this by considering us to be peers. She might have felt coerced into the interview; although at the time I perceived her participation to be voluntary. As I noted earlier, it seemed that the teacher thought the interview was an evaluation of her competence as a teacher possibly because the lesson I had observed had also been used as part of a peer review programme.

Hammersley argues that: what people say in interviews is closely attuned to the local context, and is driven by a preoccupation with self-presentation and/or with persuasion of others, rather than being concerned primarily with presenting facts about the world or about the informant him or herself. (Hammersley, 2003: 120)

(Hammerley, 2003, cited in McDougall, 2004:131)

In a different way the relationship between the second participant and myself also influenced the interview more than I had anticipated. Because we had worked together closely for a number of years, we fell into our role of peers discussing lessons. At times the

interview became a conversation; I found it difficult to hold back on my own views and draw out more of her views because it seemed she expected me to respond in turn after she had made a comment. I also lost sight of my interview schedule, partly because I thought our “conversation” may lead to interesting insights that I may not have elicited through my pre-defined questions. I learned however, that my inexperience led the data into what McDougall (2004:132) terms “obscurities” rather than adding “creative layers of understanding”:

Such research moments may be described as examples of the “uncanny openings” described by Stronach and MacLure (1997:5), in that they may lead to further obscurities, but also hold the promise of adding fresh and creative layers to understandings of the issues at hand.

(McDougall, 2004:132)

I also think my discussion and analysis tended to use the interview schedule as a framework for analysis rather than allowing themes to emerge from the data, a discourse analysis approach would have been more helpful.

The small scale of the research also limits the possibility of generalising from the study; however it seeks to give a rich description and interpretation of the teacher's beliefs, practices and experiences of teaching visual literacy and in so doing hopes to augment discourse around the subject.

3.9. Conclusion

This methodology chapter attempted an explanation and justification of the research methods and tools used to meet the purposes and goals of better understanding teacher's beliefs about visual literacy and how their beliefs influence their teaching practice. The following chapter presents the findings of this research and discusses them in relation to the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter aims to report on and discuss the research results using quotes from the interviews and references to the lesson observation notes, and relating these to concepts presented in the literature review section. The report is divided into five sections. Firstly, the participants own education and teacher training experiences are reviewed with reference to how these impacted on their understanding of “visual literacy”. Secondly, the participants’ understanding of the term “visual literacy” is discussed, and their ideas are compared to definitions suggested in the literature review. Thirdly, the understanding the participants have of the NCS is probed, with brief reference also to the assessment programme being implemented in grade 10. The impact of these various factors (their own education, their understanding of “visual literacy” and their knowledge of NCS requirements) on their teaching methodology is then suggested, with specific links to the actual lesson that was observed as concrete evidence of their teaching methodology. In the last section, I consider some of the participants’ thoughts on visual literacy teaching and learning in the future.

4.2. Influence of participants’ education on their understanding of “visual literacy”

This section outlines the educational experiences of the two research participants, using their own words as far as possible to give a rich account of their perceptions of being exposed to visual literacy at secondary and tertiary education levels. In conclusion their views are summarised and contrasted. The reason for my focussing on their own educational experiences is my belief that their conceptions of what visual literacy entails, as well as their teaching methodology, may have been influenced to an extent by the way they themselves were instructed. Prinsloo (2004) investigated the literacy histories of South Africans by deconstructing the racialised language curriculums and examinations used prior to 1994. She found that the “first” language English curriculum involved a close reading of a variety of texts and had a strong literary emphasis – these skills providing a good foundation for critical, media and visual literacies. The second participant in my research was educated through the “House of Delegates” curriculum, which was strongly influenced by the English first language curriculum for white learners.

The kinds of literacies in each site are determined to a great extent by the particular histories that inform the current sets of practices. On the one hand English [first language] was informed primarily by developments in the United Kingdom. Consequently, in the examinations we are able to discern the workings of a cultural heritage approach to literature and texts while personal growth versions of literacy practices inform the kind of writing topics, where the individual's self-expression is validated as is their reasoned response to texts. The amount of reading required in the examinations is considerable and the range of texts is broadened to include media texts, specifically newspapers, advertisements and cartoons.

(Prinsloo, 2004: 94-95)

By contrast the English “second” language and African languages curricula, intended for black learners, provided a weak foundation for critical, media and visual literacies because of their approach to teaching and learning languages as well as the constrictive nature of texts used. The first participant was educated through the English second language curriculum and the Setswana curriculum (a parallel to the Zulu curriculum in Prinsloo’s research):

Finally, the Zulu subject is constituted in a more ethnic and parochial world. The 'worlding' of the examination papers relates a romantic and nostalgic view of tribal life on the one hand and the hardships of contemporary life, marriage, etc. on the other. The roles proposed in the writing exercises call for a rehearsal of being beholden and recounting unfortunate experiences that relate to poverty. This is a confined world where the expansion of texts has been only to include Christian tracts rather than any critical thinking – thus proposing a subaltern parochial subject distant from the social and global mobility and self-confident English subject and disengaged from the national destiny that inscribes the Afrikaans subject.

(Prinsloo, 2004: 95)

The first participant’s home language was Setswana. She was educated at both Primary and Secondary school levels at a Catholic mission school for black learners. She continued from there to complete a Bachelor of Pedagogics degree, followed by an Honours degree in English Literature. At the time of the interview she was in the process of completing a part time Higher Education Diploma through a distance education university. Her teaching subjects include English, Afrikaans and Setswana. I use the pseudonym Mrs Mosweu to refer to this participant.

Her strongest recollections of “visual literacy” at school level are of Biblical studies. She describes how:

I was definitely exposed to visual literacy especially as far Biblical Studies is concerned because it was a Catholic school. Mostly in Biblical Studies they used to give us pictures so that we can write or briefly comment based on those pictures.

This example was also mentioned again at a later point in the interview, it seemed to have made a strong impression on her. She also considered that it was in this subject that she was most exposed to visual material, and reported that, “I have to be honest with you Biblical Studies in most instances...” was where discussions of visual material took place. In describing her Biblical studies lessons in more detail she explains that “the focus was on having to trace the history” in the biblical scenes.

When commenting on visual aids or media used in other lessons, Mrs Mosweu also describes how, “Only posters and textbooks [were used] by that time, it was a long time ago”, and that, “They [teachers] normally used to bring blank charts and draw some pictures based on the specific lesson.” From these lessons, “The most familiar poster that I can think of was of a human body.” She also recalls her experiences of “General Science” (which included Biology and Physical Science) textbooks and lessons:

General science textbooks had lots of pictures with a lot of visual literacy on them. In most instances they'll tell you, look at that picture and fill in – you'll definitely get a picture with numberings on it, then you have to think and figure out, this can be this, this can be this before the teacher can get involved and help.

In terms of designing visually based projects, for example posters or charts, she reported that it was only in General Science that learners were expected to produce visual texts:

Only in General Science ... We had to draw the bean seed and stuff, picture of, of the bean. We had to draw... We had to bring the actual beans to classroom and afterwards they'll tell you will you please draw the bean that you have next to you and then having to label it – this is called this, - that is called that. There were also diagrams in the textbooks as well then afterwards we had to compare... It was very much helpful – because having to look at something, having to be familiar with something – we used to eat beans at home, having to take them to the classroom again and draw. That's something that you were familiar with.

However, on further questioning she also recalled a newspaper project that involved layout and design skills, and was proud of the product which is still kept in her school's library:

I remember a laying out of a newspaper, it was a really long time ago, somewhere around 1985, I was in grade 11 by then, we had to design the outer cover of the newspaper, yes, it must have a headline, yes, the catchy one of course, each headline yes, and draw some pictures that will go hand in hand with that, footnotes, and the date and stuff, how that actual newspaper must look like... We had instructions how to do it. Yes, what is it that can draw your attention having to want to buy that newspaper. Yes, questions like that... It was a group one [project]. We did that as a group. In each group there were like going to be specific people who focused on sports section of a newspaper, advertisement, the news in general, the newspaper and stuff like that. Then afterwards we had to combine it. And they are still in the [school name] library.

When questioned about the inclusion of audio-visual materials in her teacher training, Mrs Mosweu mentioned using visuals from the study manual. Some of the lesson preparation by student teachers demanded using pictures from the manual as stimulus for a lesson. She related an example of using a portrait of Nelson Mandela as an introduction to teaching his biography, “Long Walk to Freedom”, with the portrait being used as a starting point for oral discussion in order to allow the teacher some insight into learners’ prior knowledge:

For my junior degree, when I was doing English, we used to make use of posters from the from the study manual, from the study manual, yah. There used to be lots of posters there – then whatever lesson that you were going to prepare whatever – it must be based on that picture. And how would you come up with the questions as far as learners are concerned – why, what you expect your learners to answer, or formulate your own questions according to the levels of questions, level 1 question 2 based on that. Based on those pictures there [referring to pictures of Robben Island and Nelson Mandela]... They were introduction to the novel... having to determine pre-knowledge based on that particular face of Nelson Mandela, what is it that they know about this person before they can start the, study the actual text... you have to start discussing orally, what is it that you see on that picture, what can you say about that particular person, Nelson Mandela, what information can you give as based on that picture.

On being asked about whether she felt that this training was useful for her actual teaching practice, and whether any of her coursework preparation proved useful in her own classroom, Mrs Mosweu seemed to focus most particularly on the value of pictures as a stimulus for creative essay writing. She emphasised in particular the value of pictures as a concrete, rather than abstract, focus for discussion and therefore their ability to induce a response, even from introverted learners:

Take for instance I give you an essay based on this particular picture – where would you start, what will be your starting point, what will be your introduction, the body of your essay ... I gave them two pictures and what would you say if you get a question like – write a descriptive essay based on this picture or a narrative essay based on this picture...

They were very much able to write and most learners chose that particular type of essay [in the writing exam]...

It [the essays] worked out nicely, they’re [pictures as a resource] very much helpful, I wish all the subjects could be like that, having to write based on something that you looking at. And you definitely can reach up to even those learners who are introverts – they express themselves very clearly.

In terms of designing multi-media or visual texts at tertiary level, it would seem that exposure to this came predominantly in her technology education course, where she was engaged in designing a poster that presented a bottle opener of her own conception. Through the design process she realised that she was able to be creative and draw, a skill previously hidden. However it would seem that in this project the focus was rather on the designed item itself, not on the poster design. Students were not expected to give an oral presentation of their poster, using it as a visual aid; it was a “written” assignment only.

According to Mrs Mosweu, it would appear that specific training that dealt with detailed analysis and critique of images in particular, was not a specific focus in her recent teacher training diploma. However the importance of visual literacy was emphasised:

It [visual literacy] wasn't covered very much widely, it was just a limited portion, like how to do about dealing with visual literacy... The little portion was emphasizing the fact that visual literacy is of utmost importance... how to analyse the pictures, no, it wasn't dealt with in detail.

In my observation, it would seem that the Mrs Mosweu, though highly educated, had had relatively little explicit instruction that expected her critical engagement with visual media, despite her very recent training. She seemed to view “visual literacy” mainly as the ability to describe and create narratives or discussion from pictures, or as relating pictures to narratives (such as novels). This is interesting, as the clearest recollection she has of her own schooling was of being expected to relate biblical stories from pictorial and artistic representations. She also seems to have had little opportunity for creating multi-media texts herself, perhaps partly because she did not regard herself as a “hands on” person. This corresponds closely to Prinsloo’s (2004) research mentioned at the beginning of this section.

The second participant’s home language was English. She was educated in the then Natal province in the former “House of Delegates” school system for learners of Indian descent. She then completed a Bachelor of Pedagogics degree, specialising in English and Afrikaans teaching. She subsequently also completed an Honours Degree in Linguistics, although this is not mentioned in the interview. I use the pseudonym Mrs Reddy to refer to this participant.

Mrs Reddy recollected that “at the time that I went to school, well it sounds ancient, that there wasn’t visual literacy as such” and this was certainly borne out in all three different secondary schools that she attended:

...in none of those schools had we studied visual literacy... It wasn't part of the syllabus. Nor did we study critical analysis. So it was just pure academic syllabus, well, academic in the sense that lots of theory, novel, play...

But at that time, this was in the 80s... they were starting it as projects in certain schools and in [husband's] school at [place name] Private... they always used to produce a fairly high level of academic excellence in those schools, that they'd started with it there.

However she was exposed to visual aids in lessons, and like the first participant, associates diagrams and charts with Science and Biology lessons. She remembers there being

“lots of visuals around” especially in her Science and Biology textbooks. But it would seem that the use of visual aids was more likely if the teacher was young and enthusiastic:

I remember, I think I can distinctly remember my Biology class, there was very young lady who started teaching. We always used to have a hoot because she was very young and (inaudible). And I remembered the Biology classroom very well, lots of posters... Biology. I mean she was new and she was very fervent about what she was doing, and yah - she would try and she'd explain, and I think some of the boys were like our boys, and you know they derail...

She recalls films shown at the end of term for entertainment, but they were not included as part of lessons, perhaps as the school she attended was “not one of those [privileged schools]”:

No - if we ever watched a programme, it was like ex, you know, ok we are having, it's the end of the term. And then everybody pays R5 something and you watch a movie on the cinema projector... But not for study purposes... We did not have media equipment, I mean audiovisual equipment [in classrooms]... Privileged schools, we definitely didn't have such equipment. Even audio recordings... I can't remember anybody playing audio recordings to us. I would have remembered.

In terms of producing visual texts, Mrs Reddy mentioned drawing graphs and like Mrs Mosweu, she predominantly remembered labelling biology diagrams.

We weren't OBE-orientated yet so we wouldn't have had much poster work. But in Biology yes we did have to draw diagrams. In Science you had to draw (inaudible) diagrams as well.

She describes her tertiary training as “heavily theoretical” and commented that she found the opportunities for actual teaching practice limited:

And then you have English methods and Afrikaans methods and then it was all book work from the various styles of teaching, and then the psychology of teaching and you know, Didactics etc. So that's, that was only in the final year... And we didn't touch media.

She related an example of using OHP (overhead projector) transparencies as visual aids in her teaching practice lessons, and occasionally “charts”, but it would seem that her own training did not really extend to discussion or instruction on the layout or design of these as far as she can recall, and she repeated her frustration at the lack of practical help that teachers in training received during their course of study:

O, if, if you were going to a lesson on verbs, for example, it was ideal if you did draw up a chart. I suppose that would be visual... So if you going to teach poetry for example, it would be nice if you could put down main ideas, theme, and all of that stuff on a chart, ok and OHP transparencies where always you could put your questions down...But in the fourth year with the teaching methodology which was also very theory bound, ok, I can't recall distinctly if they said, this is how or what, what should be on your trans... or how you should write out a good transparency, you know like, the print must be large enough to see. It could've been done, and I do not distinctly remember that, but I know the overall feeling at the end of the course was that it was not practical enough for us, because when you went into the classroom and, it was totally different, what you had to do in the classroom. The little teaching stuff - we did was very different from what we'd been sitting there, just, having to listen to, and wasn't quite related to what we had to come back to do.

She also explained that at that time, media equipment on which to play film was not readily available, although she vaguely recalls an activity in which teachers had to “make up our own slides”:

We didn't use film because, of course, the technology, we didn't have the...equipment to use film. We could use slides but that was a very long drawn out process. I remember if I'm not mistaken I'm not sure if we actually did the slide lesson or some kind of activity where we had to make up our own slides. Somewhere along the edges of my memory there seems to be something that we might have actually gone through the process and it would have been part of the media (inaudible) actually went through the slide process...

When considering their own educational experiences, which may seem fairly similar, Mrs Mosweu felt that “I was definitely exposed to visual literacy” whereas Mrs Reddy expressed the opposite view: “I wouldn't say we were introduced to too much visual literacy”. Their very different opinions may possibly be a result, not only of differing education systems and techniques, but also of their conception of what “visual literacy” entails.

4.3. Teachers' beliefs about and understanding of the concept “visual literacy”

The following section explores the participants' understanding of the term “visual literacy”, if they see “visual literacy” as a valuable literacy and to what extent “visual literacy” is a priority in their own classrooms. It also examines what skills they consider to be important in acquiring this form of literacy and how they go about developing these skills in learners. Finally, the extent and type of multimodal texts produced by learners as part of the grade 10 English home language course is discussed.

When asked to define, or merely respond to the term “visual literacy”, Mrs Mosweu emphasised the ability to “decode” pictures, or give a response to a picture, and perhaps even implied the ability to respond creatively:

What can you say about what you looking at, what can you detect from what you seeing at the moment, that's my feeling about it. You look at something, you come up with your own views based on that particular thing you looking at.

This “definition” is perhaps in line with her previous explanations of her own education which seemed to lay emphasis on relating Biblical narratives in response to religious iconography. It also seems to resonate with her own teaching practice, as she repeatedly exemplified using pictures as an introduction to literature, or as stimulus for creative writing, both of these having a strongly narrative slant.

In defining visual literacy, Mrs Reddy gave a fairly detailed account, explaining that it would involve “reading in another manner” and gave examples of various visual and multimedia texts that might form part of a study in this area. Her phrasing suggests a constructivist orientation of “making meaning”:

It's reading in another manner and it's symbols of another sort very much more picture-oriented, and what meaning we create from that. And of course it's not only film, it's the cartoons that we study nowadays... it's actually reading charts and posters, and would newspaper reading also qualify, making sense, because it's made up of words and pictures. So that's what I would think visual literacy, literacy obviously would be able to effectively translate or make meaning from, from symbols other than your writing, your conventional writing systems.

Considering the strongly literary bias of her own education, it is interesting that she perceived visual literacy as “reading in another manner”. It would seem that to some extent she saw this form of literacy as being a study of texts, with contemporary texts including a pictorial component that also needed to be “read” along with the written. In some sense it may also imply that visual literacy is an addition to one's repertoire, a concept that was proposed by Gee (1989), as she explains that it is a way of understanding “symbols other than...writing”, an addition to understanding “conventional writing systems”. She also conveys a sense of visuals as a “symbolic system”, which might suggest that a methodical approach, which deconstructs and examines the “system” in order to understand it may be effective, as Unsworth's (2001) and Bamford's (2003) systemic approaches advocate.

At this point it may be helpful to reconsider the explanation offered by Bamford (2003:1) that was discussed in the literature review section. Bamford's (2003) definition highlighted that visual literacy was a set of skills that enabled interpretation of images; that “the social impact” and “ideology” of images should be considered and that “accuracy, validity and worth” of images should be evaluated. This definition gives a much more critical slant to the definition of visual literacy, which was not emphasised by either of the

participants. The participants' views of visual literacy would fall into McDougall's (2004) "structural" rather than her "sociocultural" mindset.

In judging the value of visual literacy as part of English language teaching, Mrs Mosweu considered how pictures were able to provide a concrete focus of discussion, allowing learners who struggle to grasp more abstract concepts an opportunity to participate – again with specific reference to creative writing and class discussions. To her, the value of visuals in the classroom seemed to be as a tool for encouraging learner participation and including "weaker learners", a theme that was reiterated at various points in the interview:

It is, I think it's a very important part of language teaching because in most instances most of the learners, they do struggle especially when given a specific topic as far as writing is concerned, focus on those, then they struggle to come up with ideas. But when they're looking at something it's very much easy especially the things that they're familiar with, the things that according to them seemed not to be important but when looking at the particular picture they start oh I remember seeing this somewhere, but I can come up with this. And then you get so int.. very much interesting input from the learners. .. Yes, it's very much helpful because it gets learners to be engaged in what you are doing. They definitely become part of the lesson....they get involved, yes a lot, all of them want to participate [in the lesson]...Visual literacy helps them a lot, yes. Doing visual literacy helps. Even weaker learners to can, you know, achieve, yes.

Mrs Reddy considered the value of visual literacy teaching as a means for language teachers to address more contemporary forms of communication. She perceived that there was in fact a "need" to teach learners "to make sense of the various special media" that had developed recently and that contemporary society was now "more visual" than it had been:

Looking at the fact that we are so visual, I think we're more visual nowadays... But there's such an emphasis on television, media of all sorts, computer graphics, posters, etc. we seem to have more of that than we probably did and maybe...there's a greater need now than there seems to be before, to make sense of the various special media. And therefore I think it's important, it has to be an important component of the syllabus. And I'm wondering if we do enough justice to it?
Ok it is important because of what we're exposed to, television, computer images and very much, I think an increased number of, of posters, outdoor, outdoor advertising
We can't ignore it and say it's not happening because the kids probably spend more time before their television than they're ever going to do before a book
We'd like for them to read, they must read, but we can't ignore what they are exposing themselves to most of the time.

This idea echoes that of Wray (1997), who suggested the importance of giving learners access to "social discourse", thus enabling them to participate more fully in society.

Despite acknowledging its value, Mrs Reddy felt that visual literacy was not a high priority in her own classroom. The reasons she gave for this were that teaching “language structures” was a higher priority in her school context and that syllabus and time were also serious constraints in the FET phase. She felt that the NCS in the FET phase was “driving” teachers back to a previous era that was focussed heavily on writing:

We spend a lot of time doing basic language (inaudible word). We do touch on, on, on visual literacy. I think we spend a substantial amount of time, not over much, but enough time on introducing them in grade 9 to visual literacy, and they enjoy it tremendously, we do know that. And I think it’s because of the need of the school that we don’t probably spend as much time as we should. But then even the syllabus doesn’t allow for that much time for visual literacy teaching as well. And OBE actually, and OBE and FET, I know OBE gives it more time, but FET? Because we seem to be driven more the other way, back to the way things were what, 10 years ago, where we more... writing-based? And to be writing-based then you need writing skills, but we’re not necessarily only writing essays about that which (inaudible) descriptive, but we are also writing on visual literacy...

This tension between teaching alphabetic literacy versus visual literacy is an issue that is highlighted by Kress (1996, cited in McDougall, 2004). At a later point in the interview, it was also interesting to note the relative value placed on writing over visuals, reportedly by the learners, but also perhaps by the Mrs Reddy:

So I don’t perhaps think that they might take it as seriously as perhaps literature study because literature study is book work. And somehow looking at our cultures, book learning is important. ...And once again when something is written down, it’s important.

Both participants valued visual literacy, but for very different reasons. Mrs Mosweu saw it as a teaching tool, an aid to making abstract ideas more concrete and a means to generate interest and enthusiasm, whereas Mrs Reddy acknowledged that learners enjoyed visual literacy “tremendously”, but felt that its real value was in enabling learners to “make sense” of a world that was increasingly visually orientated in its communication choices. Later in the interview Mrs Reddy also emphasised that it was important that learners were not “fooled” by images, which suggests her more critical approach to visual literacy teaching.

When questioned on their views about the most important visual literacy skill for learners to develop, both participants emphasised “analytical skills”. When asked to outline her specific process or technique for approaching the analysis of pictures, Mrs Mosweu seemed rather vague, referring briefly to the “backdrop” of a picture, and did not elaborate when asked about visual vocabulary:

I think they develop a skill of having to analyse something. Analytical skills. They can look at that and analyse it...ok, this is can be the backdrop, this is the (inaudible). Yes the analytical skills.

However, in an earlier interview question about “what to look for in pictures”, she elaborated to some extent, listing “layout, colours, design, background and writing forms [fonts]” as elements on which to focus when commenting on a picture, and presumably had in mind a multi-media text as “writing forms” were included in the list. It would seem that although she saw specific visual elements as important aspects, she did not have a specific strategy or “reading path” that formed a cohesive basis for analysis. Outlining her strategy for “what to look for in pictures” she explained:

To look for in the pictures they have to look at, they have to definitely discuss the layout, the colours, the design, the background, and the colours, whether that picture is colourful or what - and in most instances pictures go hand in hand with the forms of the writing. What’s read... yes, surrounding that picture, what is it that you can see, yes, the writing, the different types of forms and stuff.

Although Mrs Mosweu had some idea of the visual vocabulary or “meta language” of visual literacy, she did not really have a firm grasp of these concepts.

Mrs Reddy also found it difficult to define a particular skill that she thought key to developing visual literacy, but her thoughts seemed to centre on the analysis and interpretation of the various elements of multimedia texts, and her language use showed a familiarity with the terminology or “meta-language” of graphic texts:

Um, if you start off with the grade 9s, um, with the syllabus and , and we go through those basic skills of how to analyse a particular frame , we are doing that unconsciously except what we’re doing there is we’re giving it names.... for example, the skill of interpreting a poster, the skill of interpreting a web page. But that’s made up of writing, it’s made up of colour, graphics. So making sense of it.....So looking at the composition of it and then making sense of it.

Because she had a strong grasp of the “meta language” of visual literacy, she was able to discuss her views on the subject in some detail and her fluent use of visual literacy terminology also reflects understanding of the field.

Bamford (2003) and Unsworth (2001) point to the value of a “meta language” in discussing visuals, and their suggestions for a “visual grammar” would seem to have great utility value in the language classroom. Judging from their explanations it would seem that Bamford’s (2003) “syntax” of images was a primary focus in Mrs Reddy’s type of analysis,

with possibly less emphasis on the “semantics”. The “material reality and “representational function” proposed by Unsworth (2001) seemed to be the focus for Mrs Mosweu.

Theorists involved in the study of visual literacy emphasise the production of visual texts as a key part of visual literacy, as was noted in the definition suggested by Sims (2002). In addition, this skill is also one of the assessment standards in the NCS for FET. It would seem that in practice though, the design of multimodal texts by learners was relatively rare, and one very seldom addressed by the participants in their teaching of the FET phase.

Mrs Reddy found it quite difficult to understand what I meant by teaching learners about “layout and design” of texts. She recalled various transactional pieces of writing that were included in the learners’ grade 10 assessment portfolio, but it would seem that only one involved perhaps some degree of “creative” or “visual” design elements. Teaching “layout” seemed to her often more about teaching conventions for solely written texts:

What else do we design? In grade 10 they’re not called upon to design anything in that (inaudible), unless of course. Oh yes, the invitation...

Later, in commenting on designing “multimedia” texts, her initial thoughts were that it would entail “computer-related skills”, but on further reflection she also considered a project of advertisement design undertaken a few years previously with the grade 9 group. Apparently the advertisement design project had proved difficult and not very successful:

[In grade 9] they had to design advertisements and they struggled. And all of them came back doing almost the same. There was, for children who watch so much of TV there was very.. of course, that’s why there was so little creativity. And no, no depth.
...I don’t know whose failing that would be. I think it could be our failing because you can’t just ask them to design something of this sort that they haven’t been really, really helped along and taught that. So I don’t think it’s truly their own fault, I think it could be a failing on our part. And in that exercise we have like what, a few days.

In considering how the problem could be remedied, she suggested that more explicit instruction seemed necessary. It would seem that to her the distinction between “learning” and “acquisition” as explicated by Gee (1989) was accurate - “learning” was necessary for success in design; the knowledge was not merely “acquired” through exposure to texts. Going back to her example of designing advertisements, she explained that the ability to analyse an advertisement did not necessarily enable learners to generate an advertisement of their own:

In as much as I'd like to explore advertisements for one whole term, because I don't think we really do justice, fine. If you, we, we can teach them the basis of the AIDA principle...But to see it in operation? To ask them to design a text and to use those principles, we don't have the time for that. We do analyse advertisements but how much of analysis actually will enable you to create one? So I don't think we actually do that, we don't have the time.

...I think they [analysis and design] would be as well [separate skills]. You might find somebody who's very great at analyzing it, but who might not be able to put one together. I, I think that's, that might be so. And I'm sure they're people very good at analyzing and putting one together.

She recognised that teaching learners how to design multimedia texts should be a priority "because that is the way the world is moving," but in so saying also admitted that she felt that she was "limited by syllabus constraints" as well as by lack of class time in which to do the skill justice.

In describing a lesson that involved learners producing their own visual texts, the example given by Mrs Mosweu was a group work poster presentation. Her example relates more closely to information than visual literacy, but it has a component of visual display.

The posters she described were used as visual aids in oral feedback to the class about a literary character. They were designed as keywords surrounding a central point, often called a "mindmap" by teachers. Although Mrs Mosweu suggested that these posters were "designed specifically", in my observation, confirmed by Mrs Mosweu, "they just make arrows", the only design aspect seemed to be arrows linking keywords to the title in the middle of the poster. There was no real visual suggestion of cohesion of ideas with "flow charting", ranking by number, or links between sub-ordinate and main levels of information, for example with "bulleted" lists under a heading.

Despite their relatively unsophisticated design, Mrs Mosweu reported that using these posters engaged the learners to a remarkable degree and also aided the quality of their oral presentations. According to her, having their posters displayed on the classroom walls was also a strong motivating factor. She explained that she gave the grade 10 learners guidelines about what was expected in this project, but it seemed that these were perhaps focussed on the content rather than layout of the posters because when I asked her to explain, she reported:

I just give them guidelines...This is what I expect you to come up with. A specific group you have to focus on this particular character because we have read the book. Yes, focus on Be, think about the type of person Be is, then come up with character sketches on a poster.

Mrs Reddy reported that in her experience, although learners used group work poster presentations for informal feedback discussions, she felt that they were not au fait with designing and using visual aids as part of their formal oral presentations, citing “a host of factors” such as lack of emphasis on the part of teachers, and on the part of learners a lack of motivation, incentive and preparation time:

No, although we say, you know, when we actually introduce the oral ‘please use any visual aid’. Maybe we don’t reinforce the idea strongly enough and therefore they do not do it, I don’t know?
...Or maybe it’s too much effort, you know, I’ve got to draw out the OHP, the transparency, and I’ve got to design a chart. Maybe we just don’t say ‘please use a visual aid’...
Possibly, don’t...it’s possibly how, well, I think there’s, look there’s a whole lot of things here. One is, it could be apathy. And I think my bit unruly students wouldn’t ‘ve known how to design and to use it. And they probably don’t see the benefit of using it as well. So there, so, so there very many issues as to why they possibly don’t use it, and it’s time consuming for them to actually think of the material, because besides learn..., writing your speech, writing your speech and learning it, now you’ve got to have another piece of work related to this speech. So it, it, yah, I think it’s a host of factors that actually...

It would seem a lot more explicit direction to educators is needed before Learning Outcome 3, which has as its aim “to produce competent, versatile writers who will be able to use their skills to develop appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes” can be achieved. According to the participants, the production of multimodal texts in English home language at the grade 10 level appeared to be limited to group work “posters” (which were actually not really “designed” or “visual image” based) and one invitation. In addition to the problem of time constraints, this may also be a result of the relatively low priority placed on this skill when it came to the formal assessment programme, as was discussed in chapter 2. The following section addresses the role of the NCS in guiding the participants at more length.

4.4. Teachers’ understanding of NCS requirements

The section that follows considers the extent to which the participants were familiar with the English home language FET outcomes related to visual literacy and how (if at all) the change in curriculum had affected their approach to teaching visual literacy.

Mrs Mosweu did not seem to have an understanding of NCS terminology. In discussion of specific LO’s and AS’s relating to visual literacy at the end of the interview, she seemed a bit confused and her answers were brief and often either a repetition of the question posed, or a verbatim reading of notes I had jotted down in the margin of the NCS document that I showed her during the interview. At first she did not recognise the term

“outcome” as NCS terminology and when asked about the specific “learning outcome” that her grade 10 visual literacy lesson addressed she answered “reasoning and thinking” which is not one of the four FET LO’s (although it is one of the grade 7-9 outcomes). She then added “reading and viewing” and also “speaking”, but did not elaborate. It often happens that language lessons achieve multiple outcomes, so naming merely one is not always appropriate; however, it seems that sometimes teachers use the terminology without real in-depth understanding of its implications.

Commenting on whether her teaching method may have changed since the introduction of OBE, Mrs Mosweu suggested that it had:

It has. It has changed a lot because it’s learner-centred, it’s no longer having to be teacher-centred whereby a teacher must definitely spoon feed the learners or give them 100% information. Learners’ ideas and opinions are to be taken into consideration and it’s an “each one, teach one” situation, it’s a two-way process and it makes it very interesting... Since OBE came I can tell you most of the lessons are based on that mode (inaudible) even the projects, learners have to come up with posters and stuff.

This idea of learner-centredness is certainly borne out in her repeated references to her concerns about learners’ participating and including learners with a range of language ability. When talking about visual literacy in the NCS, she went back to the example of the Nelson Mandela picture, mentioned in the first part of the interview, and also gave an example from the study manual of visuals from a “natural disasters” themed section of work, which seemed to exemplify how pictures could be used as LSM’s. She said that it had “helped a lot” to see these examples and that “I’ve been using similar ideas because, that’s where creativity comes in”. However she again repeated the same example, also mentioned earlier, of using the picture as stimulus for creative essay writing, which possibly suggests that the examples of pictures or visual media for LSM’s given in the study manual might have been somewhat limited. Her earlier comment, that visual literacy was merely “a small portion” of her teacher training may also be relevant here, as it would seem that the manual did not extend to a detailed or critical analysis of the pictures, as she commented earlier. Her ideas on “critical viewing” were similar to those already mentioned, and she seemed to understand the term “critical” as synonymous with “analytical”:

Critical view? That’s where the analytical skill comes in. Yes. Critically look at that picture and come up with your own ideas, -yes. What can you say...

In our discussion of the NCS, Mrs Reddy acknowledged that she was aware of visual literacy as an aspect covered by the AS's, but had not studied the document in detail and was not able to recall specifics:

I know very well that there's many assessments standards to do with visual literacy. I would not be able to quote them to you...

Curiously, in the film study lesson that I observed she said that the LO that she was specifically attempting to address in her lesson was LO 3 (Writing and Presenting) and then "reading and viewing" was added after that as only a secondary focus:

Writing and presenting would be when they actually do answer those questions and then if we do, and then of course they get time to, they present verbally. And if there's group work, like if we ever do character sketch, and I don't believe we've actually gone as far as to do group work in film study as such, there hasn't been that much time. Then there's always presenting, but presentation and written work, presentation in feedback, in classes of...

She linked the idea of "critical viewing" with the ability to analyse, but explained that it entailed being resistant to manipulation by the media. In her perception the ability to analyse visuals, "look at it intelligently" enabled learners "to read beyond that", or engage critically with them. It seems that she had had some success in developing this awareness among her learners when responding to television and film, particularly advertisements. In commenting on the extent to which learners were encouraged to engage critically with visuals, she felt that this was addressed to a reasonable degree in her own teaching, but "maybe not as extensively as this [AS] would require":

[Critical viewing] is to look at it intelligently. And not just look at the picture and be fooled by a picture, so to read beyond that, that there is a message, that there is a reason. Or this picture and not that picture, for the size of this and for this colour. So it is actually to stop and to think and to analyse. Do we all do that? But I must say it's actually made me become more critical in the way I view anything...So you can't just look at things on the surface and accept everything at face value, which I think what youngsters do when they look at any ad. Even when you're watching television or you're watching um, the movie. And have you not had kids come back and tell you 'but Mam, I see it differently'? Look we do try this [engage critically] and, yes I think we try, especially in advertising and in cartoon analysis. And even in film study. I think we do try. We may not do all of it but we do try and we touch, and we look at how language works and of course we're looking at more connotation than literal meanings. Images, definitely. I think we do. Maybe not as extensively as this would require

Her explanation makes an interesting link to the notion of "levels" suggested by Tyner (1998:61). Her expressions in fact echo his idea of "reading beyond" and metaphorically

suggest that there are “things on the surface” which are underpinned by ideology at a deeper “level”.

Mrs Reddy felt that her general approach to teaching had changed over the years as a result of her teaching context rather than as a result of the changing curriculum. The school where she taught worked on a “lock step” programme (all classes in a grade covered the same material at a similar pace), so preparation and assessment for each grade was done by one teacher and distributed to others who taught that grade. Although this may seem restrictive, it seemed to encourage collegiality and sharing of ideas and also perhaps saved time:

...When starting out teaching] you pretty much were on your own, you had to go and look up something, and I don't remember actually going and looking up anything beyond what I knew my teachers had done. ...if you look at other schools, you're very much on your own. And I think our structure is, lends itself very nicely to us doing probably more, or, or experimenting a little bit more than one otherwise would have on one's own, and then [in other schools] one had to draw up all one's prep for three grades...

She felt that engaging with other educators had inspired the growth of her own methodology through a sense of team work and inspiration, as previously she had felt it difficult to attempt different styles of teaching, and had perhaps fallen into a rut of teaching in the way she herself had been taught. The value of collegiality and professional support is highlighted by Nias (1987) who found that: “Teachers benefit from being involved in discussion groups of both a formal and an informal nature” (cited in McDougall, 2004:284).

Although discussion of the NCS document revealed that neither participant had a really firm grasp of its specific details, their explanations and reflections indicated that they had absorbed a certain amount of the ethos and approach to language teaching that was suggested by policy documents and that their beliefs and practices had changed and developed with their teaching experiences.

4.5. Impact of education, training, beliefs and curriculum on teaching methodology

This penultimate section attempts to unravel the rationale behind the participants' approach to teaching visual literacy. It relates their methodology to their own educational experiences, their understanding of what “visual literacy” entails and their knowledge of the FET outcomes that concern visual literacy. As well as considering their general approach to visual literacy, reference is made to a particular visual literacy lesson of theirs that I had observed.

Mrs Mosweu's lesson was based on analysing a novel cover. Her lesson was an introduction to the literary study of the novel and included an overview of the geographical and historical background to the story (see appendix 3 for lesson observation notes and a photograph of the novel cover). The LSM's that she used were not designed by her, they were part of the learners' workbook (see appendix 4 for a reproduction of the pages from the learners' workbook that were used).

In our interview about her lesson, Mrs Mosweu reported that "the outcome I got from learners" was the biggest influence on her approach to teaching visual literacy in the way that she did, specifically because it made her see "this visual literacy thing, it's of utmost importance". The successful impact of using visuals in her lessons is a recurrent theme in the interview, as is the ability of visuals to provide a concrete (rather than abstract) basis for discussion, allowing the inclusion of learners with limited language ability. Again, in the last part of the interview, when she was probed about the value of teaching visual literacy, she considered creative writing based on pictures as the crux of the matter:

That is why I, even when I teach an essay I don't ignore having to use it to refer to visual literacy, even the questions, I make it a point, they get something that, you know it makes them think a little bit and they can definitely criticize and come up with.

I think visual literacy is of utmost importance as far as I am concerned because learners definitely become very much creative having to write something based on what they looking at. They are very helpful.

This strongly relates to her own experience of writing about religious pictures at the Catholic mission school she attended and also the exemplars in the teacher training study manual, which seemed to suggest using pictures as a stimulus for creative writing. Her comments on the type of visual aids she used in her lessons also seemed to be quite similar to some of the experiences she recalls from her own secondary school education, in particular the use of "blank charts", chart paper on which key words were recorded, which is a typical approach to teaching English as a "second" or additional language:

Yes. I remember, I remember using blank charts in the classroom...

I use OHP also, yes especially when coming to the maps, having to draw in detail, as far as having to identify a specific place, yes, in a map...

Information based on the specific type of the lesson... I write on the board and I also use posters, especially information that learners need, not forget.

The lesson I observed proved an interesting basis for discussion of the Mrs Mosweu's approach to visual literacy in an actual lesson. It was perhaps particularly apt that the lesson was based on a novel cover, considering the narrative emphasis that the participant seemed to place on visual literacy. I was interested to note that it was the enthusiastic participation on the part of learners that seemed to her to be a sign of the lesson's success, as this aspect was repeatedly mentioned in our prior discussion of the value of visual literacy, as well as having the biggest influence on her methodology. On her reason for using the novel cover as an introduction to literature study, she explained:

To engage them into what I'll be doing. To make them curious, wanting to know more. 'Why is Mam doing this? Maybe the book is about that..', and fortunately enough they were definitely giving me exactly... what I was looking for. Yah, yah it was achieved.

Before the lesson, learners were expected to do some research into the Khoi-San culture, and the teacher felt that having gained this prior knowledge was a useful tool for understanding both the novel cover and the novel itself. In our discussion the teacher summarised and described her lesson in an almost narrative style:

I wanted them to start figuring out what actually, what can we expect from the cover, from the cover yes. Because we had to also analyse that particular question, what do you think of this, why do we have this picture of this person here. The answers that I got were, it's a women, it's Be, we think that's the main character, of which it was true. And why is the writing like that? Capital B? "Be" can be the name of a person. Look at how that person looks like. Look at the hair. She can be from the Hottentots, like the bushmen. And what can you tell me about the background. Man, look at the dry trees behind the cover, behind the (inaudible) itself, and you know, they were very much creative. Having to look at the colours, the type of beads and all of that, yes. The bushmen are very much creative, they definitely use beads a lot and stuff like that, they were, and that was actually what was definitely going to happen in the novel itself. Yes.

I think her summary perhaps recalled ideas from her second grade 10 class as well as the lesson I observed, as some of her recollections were not part of my observation. It would seem that the focus of the lesson was much more related to intimating what would occur in the novel rather than developing layout and design analysis skills. Commenting on her perceptions of learners' ability to analyse visuals independently, it seemed that their level of participation determined her views of their ability:

They contributed, they can, they can they can analyse. They just need a little bit of guidance but when coming to analyse something I think they can do it.

However in the lesson I observed, only a few learners actually gave their ideas, and those responses though perceptive, were relatively brief. When asked about her use of the worksheet in the lesson, which was part of the learners' textbook, she explained that:

I think the worksheets they act as a guideline. You being a teacher have to be a little bit innovative so that the lesson can be very much interesting.

In reflecting on the lesson, the only change she felt necessary was adding additional information to her "spider diagrams":

Having to let them give me more input to add on our spider..., on our spider diagrams so that when they get to write in paragraphs or whatever then they'll be able to come up with inputs...

The lesson given by Mrs Reddy tended to focus mainly on terminology and analysis (see appendix 5 for lesson observation notes). She had designed the worksheet used in the lesson herself (see appendix 6 for a reproduction of the worksheet used in the lesson).

The lesson centred on the opening sequence to the film "Notting Hill" and analysed the effects of various filmic techniques used in the sequence. The sequence viewed was a montage of photographs and film clips of the main character's life and portrayed her as a gracious celebrity. The class had already watched the entire film and then watched the first sequence again for specific information. The lesson centred substantially on defining terminology and watching for an example of the technique that had been defined. There was also some degree of generalising the ideas under discussion from this specific film to other films. The questions that the learners were expected to answer focussed on the advantages of montage as a filmic technique, the functions of the soundtrack and how shots and angles may influence the portrayal of the character.

The overall approach to the film was that of studying a type of literary genre as plot, character and theme were emphasised as much as visual aspects, possibly a reflection on the participant's own strong literary background. Furthermore the film was to be examined in the November literature paper as a "fourth genre" in addition to the novel, the play and poetry. In part of the lesson the teacher emphasised that the work being covered was examinable, also suggesting that this gave it a high priority.

Mrs Reddy felt that study guides about film had had the greatest impact on her approach to teaching "visual literacy", which she equated to film study in responding to this

question. She commented on her first experiences of teaching film study and related how she had found the process “daunting” because she had had to first learn about the subject matter herself before she could prepare to teach it. She felt that her approach had subsequently improved and become “more structured” with experience.

Because it had seemed “accessible”, she had relied predominantly on the “MacRat” study guide (a locally published teaching resource developed by teachers for teachers, sold directly to schools) which she adapted for her teaching context. She had also scrutinized past examination papers in order to prepare to teach, which points once more to the role of assessment in guiding learning programmes:

It was daunting. I had to do a lot of reading in advance, more so than one would, you know for any ordinary lesson, because I literally had to know now, what am I teaching. Firstly why am I teaching it, and what am I teaching... so I literally was scurrying around looking for stuff to help me to prepare for that, because you can't go into a Matric exam class and not know what you're teaching. So I had to very much, and I must say, since then and now I think, I think I've improved, maybe not as much as would like to, but I think I'm more structured, and I think also learnt much because I literally had to know before I taught...what I'd done was I'd actually gotten a whole lot of, of paper looking at how other people had done it, and then decided this works for us... And then I had to find for me what was best, and first I had to break it down for myself. But it's not just for my understanding, it's how I'm going to communicate it to somebody who's totally new to this as well. Um, yah, so I think the MacRat guides did help quite a lot... I'm sure there are other guides but the MacRat because it was accessible...

Asked about the guiding principles behind the design of the LSM's that she had used in the lesson that I had observed, she explained that they were also largely influenced by the study guides she had referenced and were geared to addressing the level that learners were capable of understanding in grade 10. The material built on what learners already knew from grade 9 and challenged them to enhance their skills and knowledge, but was perhaps a “watered down version” of the study guide in order to avoid making the work too complex:

...And looking at what aspects are, would be emphasized and what, what were the main, what, what should we emphasize in visual literacy for grade 10, because we had to build on what we had in grade 9, and, and what would be challenging enough for them, and how do we develop on what we have...I more or less identified what the target areas were, like we had to do plot and then there were plot questions, but that you can do with any medium, novel, etc. and then based on the composition itself, I think that for me was the...challenging part. You can set questions on theme, or you can direct study on theme and direct study on character. But now you have to couple it with what is on screen itself. So that was a bit more challenging, and then I actually looked at other examples, (inaudible) did it this way, I could borrow that and adapt it slightly and do it this way. Like the montage, for example. So I watch (inaudible) other montages and did other questions, and then said, ok, this works here. What does the montage do? So I had to know what those elements were... [we use a] watered-down version, which of course is necessary with students because you can't go and feed them something that's too complex. ... [In film study] we're literally looking at the composition of frames. But we don't only look at frames do we, because we look at the plot, we still do theme and character. But still linked to, especially where the theme and character's concerned, linked to the composition of those frames. And, and, and those scenes, those montages, etc...

Her comments about the LSM's and her approach to film study teaching reveal her own strongly literary training as well as the emphasis by the English home language assessment programme on film as a literary genre. The "target areas" that were the focus of film study were what "you can do with any medium [for example the] novel" but the difference was that "now you have to couple it with what is on the screen itself".

In commenting on her perceptions of the learners' ability to analyse visuals, Mrs Reddy felt that their visual literacy skills developed gradually throughout their secondary school career which reflects Unsworth's (2001) idea of "becoming literate". She outlined the film study programme at the school in some detail, explaining that she felt that the activities and tasks in each grade were matched to the learners' abilities in each grade, culminating in Matric where they are expected to write a "literary" or "filmic" essay on the set work film "Strictly Ballroom":

And then we'd go onto the literary essay, hopefully by then they're a bit more mature to actually handle the literary essay which I think they're going to be hard put to handle in grade 9 and in grade 10 looking at the fact that these are largely second language learners who are studying first language. So maybe that's why it's [the learning programme] been structured so. I don't think I'd change it too much right now because looking at ability levels, because we do have the literary essays only in the senior grade and we do see a marked difference in the literary essay that a grade 10 child might attempt to write and one that a grade 11 child at the end of the year or a grade 12 child might write.

At grade 10 level, she felt that the internally set formal examinations were not "a very good guide to go by" in determining learners' understanding of visual literacy as they did not demand very much application of knowledge and instead tested "what we teach", which was presumably an understanding of definitions and terminology. This reference to the examinations again suggests the power of assessment to drive teaching practices:

You know, I don't know whether our exams are a very good guide to go by, because um, we test on what we teach, and generally they manage to pass the question. Pass would be what, forty, fifty percent. There would be the odd few who'd excel because they, they've studied and they seem to understand better. But it's no great shakes as such...And it depends on how much you get them to adapt what they've learned and apply it, and I'm afraid we don't have too many application questions. So as a result they pass the question, the result is a pass.

Although in our discussion of her lesson, Mrs Reddy tended to see "film study" as synonymous with "visual literacy" elsewhere in the interview she outlined a variety of areas in which visual literacy was addressed in the language curriculum, suggesting that her understanding of what visual literacy entails went beyond merely the film study section of work:

Then we study cartoon analysis, and that is of course to make sense of cartoons... Newspaper. We study posters. Do we actually, propaganda... Propaganda posters. We do have advertising in detail don't we, and we start that, hopefully we should start in grade 9 and then that is actually making sense of advertisements, reading more meaning in a different way obviously. Looking at how the written message relates to and, in some cases enhance, your graphics...in grade 11 we did interpreting graphs. That wasn't easy for me... Yah, I'm wondering if I also wasn't very strong there. You know. And I did sense that perhaps. And we did it over a short period of time...

Even though she was able to enumerate a wide range of visual literacy lessons that she had presented and had a broad and detailed understanding of the process of visual literacy education that took place throughout the secondary school syllabus, it would seem that Mrs Reddy was not very confident about her ability to address this form of literacy effectively and sufficiently, as the last part of the above quote: "I'm wondering if I also wasn't very strong there" again suggests. This reflexive approach to her teaching was evidenced at various points in the interview. Her overriding feeling seemed to be one of being inadequate to the task, mainly due to time and syllabus constraints.

Both pointed to "analysis" as a key skill, but it would seem that the procedure and purpose of visual analysis was understood in a substantially different light by each participant.

Mrs Mosweu saw visual literacy predominantly as an ability to describe and respond creatively to pictures and valued this form of literacy as a means to enthuse and include learners. Her conceptions about visual literacy may stem from her own school experiences of "Biblical studies" (where she was expected to understand religious images in terms of the narrative they conveyed) as well as her teacher training which exemplified using pictures as stimuli for discussion and writing tasks.

Mrs Reddy saw visual literacy as "reading in another manner", which may be reflective of the literary emphasis of her own education, and considered its value as giving access to contemporary multimodal texts which increasingly include pictorial components. Her idea of interpreting visual texts involved a systematic decoding of meaning and understanding of their construction which may stem from her "self education" through study guides. Although her understanding also extended to the need for critical analysis, the lesson I observed was heavily focused on terminology and techniques rather than critique.

Their understanding of and approaches to visual literacy may be reflective of their own literacy histories, as reported by Prinsloo (2004) at the beginning of this chapter.

At various points in the interview, the role of assessment in determining what teachers taught and their relative prioritisation of knowledge and skills became apparent, especially in terms of formal external assessment. Mrs Mosweu gave a reason for teaching visual literacy in grade 10 as preparing learners for examination in the following grades:

So, so that when they get to, to grade 11, grade 12 also whereby they'll definitely get questions based on visual literacy in detail, they'll, they'll be able to, to do better.

And this sentiment was echoed in some respects by Mrs Reddy, who had also mentioned examining past exam papers as part of her preparation to teach visual literacy for the first time:

We do not teach cartoon analysis in grade 10 but I think now looking at the FET syllabus and their demands and the assessment standards that we have to include cartoon analysis, and it seems to be one of the prerequisites for the exam paper that we might have to...

These comments point to the strong role of assessment in driving educational change, which seemed to be even stronger than influences of curriculum and policy. In particular I feel that in addition to demanding more critical reflection on visuals, the formal assessment programme might be able to go some way in encouraging the production of multimedia texts by learners, which is currently not the case.

4.6. Teaching and learning visual literacy in the future

The conclusion to this chapter adds a few “last words” from the participants about how they might like to see themselves teaching visual literacy in the future.

Mrs Mosweu saw the need for encouraging a more critical approach to texts in her lessons:

No we don't do a lot of that [consider bias and prejudice in texts]. (inaudible) To criticize, yes, important... We need to do, crit, to criticize...

In looking to the future, Mrs Reddy strongly emphasised the need for in-service teacher training about visual literacy, perhaps because of the lack of training she had had herself:

....but the problem here is I think with like so many other subjects, if your teachers are not qualified to teach it [visual literacy/film study] then you can't do justice to it. And so, and like we had to learn how to teach it. That means that we can be taught by, or, or we can undergo courses to actually improve our teaching...all of them [teachers] will be in the same situation that we are where you are going to have to be self taught [with regards visual literacy/film study]...And then I just think that if there was any union worth its salt or any education department worth its salt that they should actually look at filling in the gaps and, and that is gap...So the training of your teachers, you can't expect this to happen if your teaching staff are not trained, and I think I could do with, with a course in it.

I have certainly benefitted from additional training and research into the subject of visual literacy, but like Mrs Reddy I feel that it has largely been self-motivated. Like Mrs Mosweu I have also perceived the need for more critical engagement with visuals which is something I felt was lacking in my own teaching practice. The concluding chapter that follows gives some practical suggestions about how I think these issues could be addressed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In my concluding remarks I summarise the findings of this research project and give some recommendations. I then suggest the potential value of this research and reflect on how the research process has affected my growth as a researcher. In conclusion I suggest a future research direction.

5.2. Overview of key findings

There is a disjunction between the approach to visual literacy teaching and learning that is stated in the broad aims of the NCS for English home language in the FET phase and the AS's that detail how these ideals should be implemented. The broad aims of the NCS suggest a "sociocultural" approach to visual literacy, but the AS's detail a more "structural" understanding of visuals.

The two English home language teachers who were interviewed about their beliefs and practices of visual literacy teaching, though both experienced and well educated, felt their training had been inadequate in the area of visual literacy. Their understanding of visual literacy and approach to teaching had been shaped to some degree by their own literacy histories. Although they acknowledged the importance of visual literacy and appreciated how lessons involving visual media were interesting and stimulating for learners, it seemed to have a lower priority in practice than teaching more traditional literacies. Design of multimedia texts was certainly not a priority – although this ability is emphasised by researchers and theorists in their attempts to define what it means to become "visually literate". Perhaps the reason for the low priority that is given to visual literacy may be related to the formal assessment programme as well as limited lesson time in which to cover an extensive curriculum.

5.3. Recommendations based on research findings

Although the NCS for FET does deal with visual literacy in its LO's, and states as one of its aims the production of "competent, versatile writers who will be able to use their skills to develop appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes" it would seem that this aim is not being achieved in practice.

In my opinion, policy makers in the National Education Department could be more explicit in their expectations of how visual literacy can be taught and how teachers can facilitate learners' production of multimodal texts. This might need to be facilitated through encouraging and supporting teachers who are willing to be trained rather than imposing blanket mandatory "training sessions" on all schools, for example by offering educational loans. I also think it important that teachers are given a "voice" and opportunities to give feedback to policy makers about the curriculum:

It has been shown that individual teachers have a responsibility to address educational reform, including a commitment to professional learning and being involved in policy-making. However, they should not be expected to do so without the backing of the broader educational structure or system in which they work.

(McDougall, 2004:283)

A more integrated, "holistic" approach to literacy also needs to be fostered where alphabetic literacy is integrated with other literacies, including visual literacy. This view is expressed by Australian teachers in McDougall's (2004) research:

...visually oriented activities can enhance more traditional literacies rather than competing with them for space in the curriculum.

(McDougall, 2004:313)

That teachers need to be equipped to teach visual literacy through in-service training and access to suitable LSM is also apparent. I would support the recommendations by Prinsloo & Janks (2002) that in-service training should be university based in order to ensure suitable scope and depth of understanding of what teaching visual literacy entails:

First, the teachers currently in the schools are already constituted as different kinds of literate subjects, as shown by Prinsloo's (2002) research. The in-service teacher education needed to implement this curriculum has to go beyond orientation to OBE. The Review Committee concluded that the training that was provided for teachers on *C2005* tended to focus on terminology rather than on how and what to teach in an outcomes based framework. As a result, there appears to be limited transfer to classroom practice (Review Committee, 2000, p. 61).

The Review Committee strongly recommended the provision of university-based in service courses for teacher orientation, training and support and it stressed the need to focus on deepening content knowledge in the different learning areas. Prinsloo's work suggests that these courses would need to change teachers' own literacy practices, if we expect them to produce critically literate learners. Our experience leads us to conclude that this is unlikely to happen as a result of a single in-service course.

(Prinsloo&Janks, 2002:36)

Also mentioned above in Prinsloo & Janks (2002) is the need for a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs as well as their subject knowledge. Teachers need to be self-motivated to keep up with professional reading and also willing to change their methodology. Perhaps teachers themselves also need to be encouraged to design their own multimodal LSM's in order to gain insight into visual literacy. McDougall (2004) confirms the value of motivated educational practitioners who value professional learning:

Therefore, one of the challenges for these teachers will be to balance their various professional and personal commitments so that they are able to participate in the professional learning that is implied by the visual literacy initiative. This means finding the time, energy and motivation to attend organised professional development sessions, as well as making a commitment to keep up to date with professional reading.

(McDougall, 2004:274)

Finally the need for more critical engagement with visual texts was also evident from the lesson observations as well as the interviews, and I would point to assessment in leading the way forward. If examinations, particularly matriculation examinations, demand a greater critical engagement with visuals, this skill would be seen to be of higher priority by teachers and learners. If some multi-media texts were a mandatory component in the writing portfolio, it is also likely their production would become of greater consequence. Once again, training and suitable LSM 's that facilitate a critical approach to visual literacy would also greatly assist teachers and learners in acquiring this skill.

5.4. Potential value of the research

My research goal was to explore teachers' beliefs about and understanding of visual literacy and how this impacts on their teaching methodology. In so doing I have drawn attention to some of the dilemmas faced by teachers in negotiating a changing curriculum, as well as how teachers can be assisted in their professional development. Part of my research also involved an examination of how the NCS for FET refers to visual literacy – I hope my comments on this have indicated the need for education policy to be accessible to teachers and how teachers need to be supported in their understanding and implementation of the curriculum statement.

5.5. Personal reflection on the research process

During the course of my study I have realised the complexity and “messiness” of conducting research. Before I began my own research I had a rather linear view of the process, but I have come to realise the inter-connectedness and cyclical nature of reviewing

existing research and theories, designing methodology and analysing data. I have also experienced how difficult it is to obtain “rich” data from which to undertake analysis.

I have learned too about the degree to which contextual factors influence qualitative research, particularly the relationships between participants and researcher, as is reflected in my discussion of research limitations in chapter 3.

In conducting the research I feel that I was also somewhat unsympathetic – I understood “being critical” to mean “being judgemental”. The following quotes by McDougall (2004) that I read only after completing my discussion and analysis reminded me of the human element in curriculum design and its implementation by teachers:

My focus, therefore, is not to point out teachers’ inadequacies, but rather to gain an understanding of how they are coping with just one of many new issues on the educational agenda.

(McDougall, 2004:23)

I had to remind myself of the complex and demanding nature of policy-making. For example, it is easy to be critical of the way that curriculum documents are written, but not so easy to produce viable alternatives.

(McDougall, 2004:323)

Through this research I have come to have a better grasp of what it means to be “critical” - that it involves an appreciation of the “constructedness” of human experiences as well as an understanding of the power relationships and “discourses” at play in society.

5.6. Future research directions

My research focused on the implementation of visual literacy teaching and learning in the FET phase and can be seen as an addition to Moore’s (2001) research into visual literacy teaching in the GET phase. My research site was a well resourced, urban school and can be seen as a counterpoint to Mbelani’s (2007) study which has an under resourced, rural school as its context. I have pointed to the role of assessment in shaping change, so one research direction which might serve to further understand visual literacy teaching and learning in South African schools is an analysis of how the NCS Matriculation examination papers, being implemented for the first time in 2008, deal with visual literacy.

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6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Prepared Speech Assessment Criteria

CRITERIA FOR ORAL ASSESSMENT

While the criteria outlined below are intended as a broad guideline to the assessment of each of the components for the language's oral syllabuses, the placement of a candidate in a symbol category depends **primarily** on the teacher's overall impression of the candidate's **ability to communicate**. When assessing candidates in the various categories below, cognisance must be taken of the extent to which candidates have demonstrated the attainment of the Critical Outcomes

CATEGORY	%	SPEECH: PREPARED
OUTSTANDING A 18 - 20	90 - 100 10% 9%	Content: Brilliantly crafted in terms of structure and style. Outstanding research. Sparkling, refreshing originality. Displays unusual insight and maturity. Outstanding use of language. Inspiring. Presentation: Shows remarkable confidence and poise. Perfect audibility, voice control and body language. Outstanding audience contact. Confident effective use of notes. <i>Genius, brilliant in all respects, Original, flawless</i>
EXCELLENT A 16 - 17	80 - 89 8% 8%	Content: Very well crafted, excellently researched effort. Highly original. Insightful and mature. Excellent use of language. Presentation: Displays a high degree of confidence and poise. Excellent audibility, voice control and body language. Highly effective audience contact. Confident use of notes. <i>Brilliant in content, length, effectiveness. Original.</i>
VERY GOOD B 14 - 15	70 - 79 7% 7%	Content: Well-crafted, well-researched effort. Evidence of originality and insight. Very good use of language. Presentation: Shows sufficient confidence and poise. Very good audibility, voice control and body language. Effective audience contact. Uses notes effectively. <i>Excellent, original, confident</i>
GOOD C 12 - 13	60 - 69 6% 6%	Content: Sufficient evidence of research. Adequate attention to structure and style. Interesting, shows evidence of insight. Good use of language. Presentation: A competent speaker. Good audibility, voice control and body language. More than adequate audience contact is maintained. Good use of notes. <i>Interesting, slightly weary</i>
AVERAGE D 10 - 11	50 - 59 5% 5%	Content: Some evidence of research. Insufficient attention to structure, style and language usage. Has some interest value but lacks insight. Presentation: Capable but shows some lapses in audibility and voice control. Audience contact adequate but may be broken through frequent reference to notes. <i>Average. Good but short-long. Interesting but flawed</i>
BELOW AVERAGE E 8 - 9	40 - 49 4% 4%	Content: Little evidence of research. Minimal attention to structure, style and language usage. Uninteresting and lacking insight. Presentation: Does not maintain sufficient audience contact. Note-bound. Not always audible. Ineffective voice control and body language. <i>Uninteresting, occasional grammar mistakes. Obviously copied from source</i>
POOR F 7	34 - 39 3% 3%	Content: Preparation inadequate. Message not clearly communicated. Fairly use of language. Presentation: Poor audibility, voice control and body language. Little audience contact if at all. Note-bound. <i>Dull, weak, rambling, annoying grammar mistakes</i>
WEAK G & H 6 - 6	53 and below 2% 1% 0%	Content: Message poorly constructed. Makes little sense. Many errors in language usage. Presentation: Virtually inaudible. Voice control and body language non-existent. No attempt to make audience contact. Totally note-bound. <i>Fail: unprepared, disturbing, unclear</i>

Breakdown of Mark Distribution for Prepared Speech	
Control of English	3
Delivery	3
Accent	3
Effectiveness/Originality	1
Preparation	8

Appendix 3: Lesson Observation Notes – Participant 1 (Mrs Mosweu)

Lesson Topic: Introduction to the Novel “Song of Be”/ Visual Literacy

Context: Start of novel study section in second term, introductory lesson although learners have already read the novel on their own.

Classroom Setting [each teacher has her own classroom]: Two old posters about spelling/grammar rules above notice board, a poster advertising “Narnia” film on one section of notice board, a few book covers pinned on centre section of notice board.

Visual Resources Used: Novel Covers, Reproduction of covers in learners’ workbook (workbooks are compilations of LSM put together by the teachers at the school), Chalk board, Map of Namibia in workbook, Dictionaries

Transcript/Observation Notes:

Learners entered the class in a quiet and orderly manner. They stand next to desks and greet the teacher. Learners on substitution enter quietly and are seated.

Dictionaries and copies of the novel on available as resources for use in the classroom.

[Learners who do not have sturdy school bags are not allowed to take books home, they are loaned novels for use during class time.]

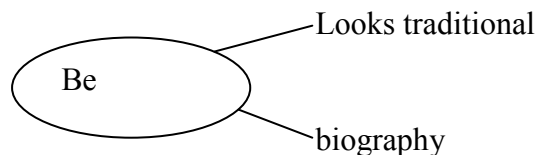
The page number to refer to in Learner’s workbooks is written on the board and mentioned verbally. Learners are told to look at their book covers as well as the one reproduced in the book. They are told to examine it and comment on what they see.

Learner comment: “She [the character portrayed on the book cover called “Be”] looks traditional.”

Teacher comment to the class: “Do you agree?”

Class responds: “Yes”.

Teacher draws spider diagram on the board with key words to describe “Be”:



Teacher asks learners to examine the book cover and say why they think the character portrayed on the cover is “Be”. Learner explains that she is female and the main character in the novel.

Teacher asks class to explain the title of the novel. Teacher discusses title of novel and explains it is a “biography” as it is a “song” about her life.

The type of writing used for the title, the “font” is discussed. The novel cover in the workbook specifically is examined.

Teacher asks: “How is it written?”

Learners answer: “In big letters, capital letters, to emphasize her name.”
“It looks like the words have been carved out of stone”

Teacher asks: “What does this suggest?”

Learner answers: “Most of them [the Xhosi-San] wrote messages to each other on rocks.”

Teacher asks/comments: “What feeling do you get? Is it modernised? American? No, it has an African feel – suggests the novel is written in Africa. Are we together grade 10’s? The title is just plain on the other – suggests it is based on a serious topic.”

Teacher asks/comments: "What do you think can be the theme of the novel?"

Learner responds: The theme could be about this tribe, the Xhoi-San.

Teacher asks: What about the bushmen tribe? Can you elaborate?

Learner responds: "The transition from the old ways of the bushmen to the modernised world."

Teacher: "The theme of growing up and the fact that Be is caught up between two worlds, that is the traditional and the modern world -"

Teacher: "What clues do you get about the setting of the novel? Focus on the person Be.

Learner: "She looks sad?"

Teacher: "What tells you that?"

Learner: "She is not smiling."

Teacher: "Comment about the mouth part. The mouth is turned down." [accompanied by gesture to indicate mouth turning down]."

Learner: "You can see the feeling of sadness in her eyes."

Teacher: "What is she staring at?"

Learner: "The view".

Teacher: "What makes her look at the view?"

Learner: "She is thinking about her conditions."

Learner: "Since one of the themes is that she is caught between two worlds, perhaps she is looking at the modern world and is concerned about leaving the traditional world?"

Teacher: "She is looking at the observer. She is worried."

Teacher: "You did a pre-reading activity about the bushmen tribe, collecting background information about them."

Teacher: "Look at her hair."

Learner: "It is dry, curly and hard."

Teacher: "It looks dry. Why is that?"

Learner: "They don't use chemicals. They believe in keeping their hair natural."

Teacher: "What about the area?"

Learner: "Hot and dry"

Teacher: "What about the beads. It shows...? What does that tell you? What about the beads?"

Learner: "It is part of their traditions."

Learner: "Because of her traditional beliefs, they have meaning."

Learner: "Every culture has a way of dressing up, their way of dressing up.

Teacher: "Look at her face. What about her skin tone?"

[Two disruptive learners have to be sent to sit with another teacher. The other learners have to examine the cover while this disciplinary issue is dealt with. Disruptive learners are treated courteously and asked to please leave their novels as they go with the class prefect to the neighbouring teacher.]

Teacher asks: "Please comment."

Learner: "Her skin tone, jaw line and cheek bones resemble the Xhoi-San."

Learner: "The skin colour is light. A lot of them are light in skin colour."

Teacher: "Can you make character judgements based on the picture? You have done this saying she looks sad."

[The teacher recapitulates points already mentioned.]

Teacher: "What does the picture say about her relationship with [her] culture? She is proud of her culture! This is important."

Teacher: “Look at the map on page 218- to see where Namibia is, the geography of Namibia. Where can we get Namibia?”

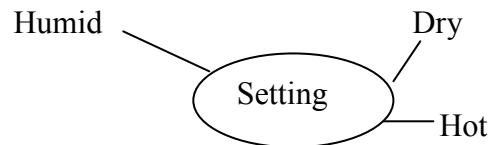
Learner: “West of Botswana.”

Teacher: “What is it famous for? A desert? Called?”

Class: “Kalahari”.

Teacher: “How is the desert?”

Teacher begins a second spider diagram about setting/desert:



Learners: “Hot”, “Dry”, “Humid”.

Teacher: “What is it presently called? Incidents took place before or after independence?”

Learners: “Before” “After” [Some confusion]

Teacher: “Why do you say before?”

Learner: “The capital city”

Teacher: “Are you familiar with those cities?”

[tells learners to look at the map repeatedly as the discussion progresses]

Learners: ”Yes” “No” “Some of them”

Teacher: “Is the desert still there? What is it called?”

[There seems to be some confusion among the learners about this]

Teacher: “Yes! History does not fade away. Looking at the map – that is the desert. Do you see Namibia next to Avambo? On the one side? On the other side? These incidents happened before. The Xhoi-San were scattered all over. It is now reclaimed, the land.”

Teacher asks a learner to start reading from the book. A short passage is read.

Teacher : “When we look at the South African flag what is it we get?”

Learner: The shield has words beneath it from the Xhoi-San language.

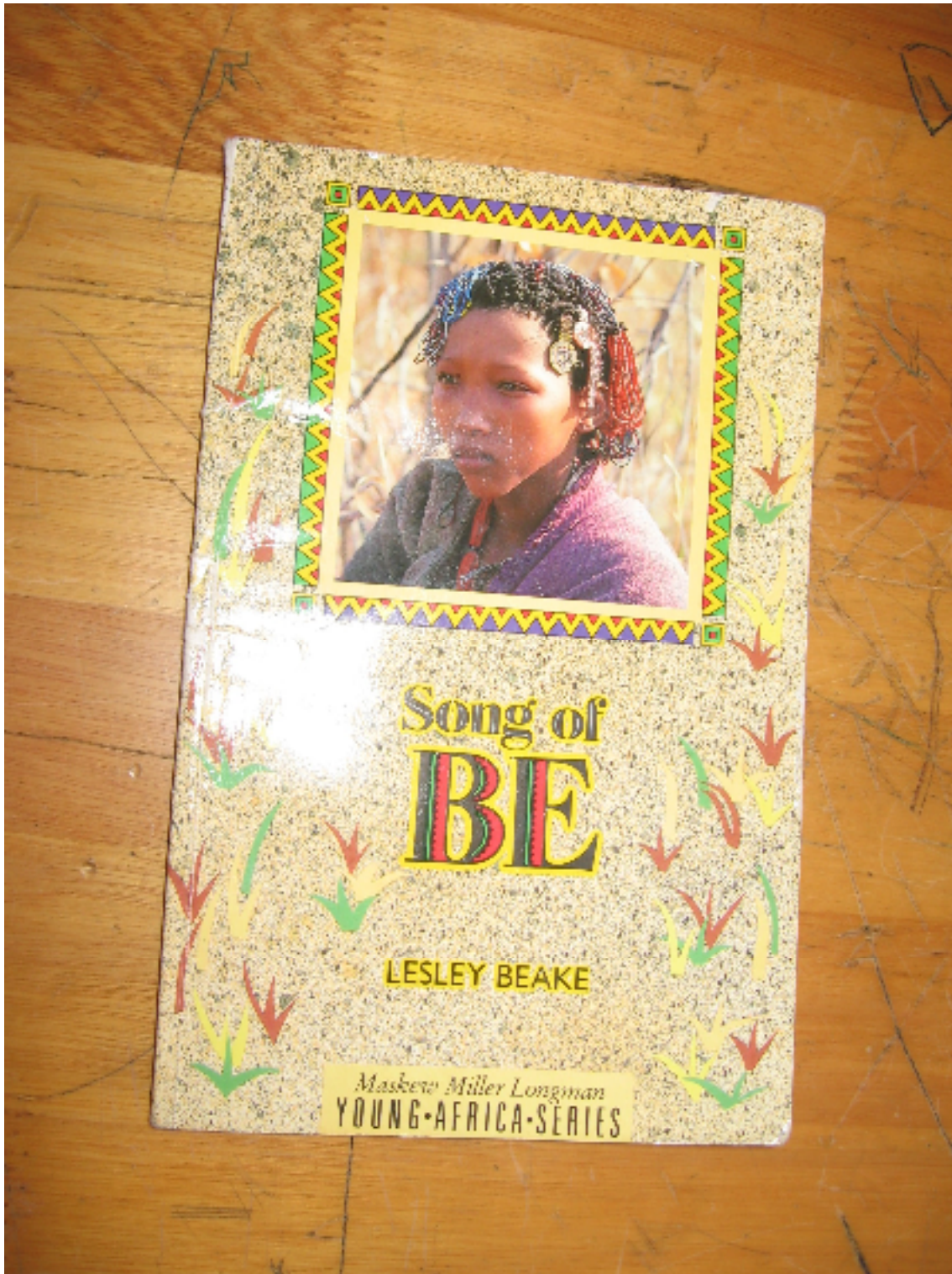
Various learners read short sections from the novel text and after each, themes and implications are discussed, centering around cultural practices, norms and values of the Xhoi-San.

Humour is linked to cultural practice in this discussion. Dictionaries are used to look up the word “humour”. Learner gives definition of humour as: “The ability to amuse people. To see things in an amusing, funny way. Not always being serious about everything.”

Teacher: “Where does bushmen humour come from? They dance around the fire, wearing traditional clothes, sit around the fire, listen to stories. They are proud of their culture and follow their traditions.”

Be’s poem is read and the first few lines discussed.

Photograph of the novel cover under discussion



Appendix 4: Learning Support Material – Participant 1 (Mrs Mosweu)

SONG OF BE

LESLEY BEAKE

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

BOOK COVER

1. Examine the cover of this edition of "Song of Be" and answer the questions.

Does the typeface (type of writing / font) tell you anything about the novel?

What clues do we get about the setting of the novel from the picture and the font?

Can you make any judgements on what the main character is like based on her depiction on the cover?

The legend at the top of the page reads: *Crochit between two changing worlds, where does Be belong?*

What themes do you think may be explored based on this legend?

What are the connotations of the title? You can deduce from the title that the main character's name is "Be". What would the "song" be about?



Look at your edition of the novel, or a partner's, if it has a different cover. Do the above exercise again. Then answer the following questions.

Do you have more information? Did your answers change at all?

It is not serious if your predictions concerning the novel are inaccurate. What matters more is that you look at the novel critically and actively so that it becomes an adventure and not just a chore! When you do any activities, look at your own point of view, question it and demand answers from yourself. When you start to do this you are on the road to critical and insightful reading of the text that will also help you grow as a reader and a person.

2. Read the following article on the history of Namibia to help put the novel in context.

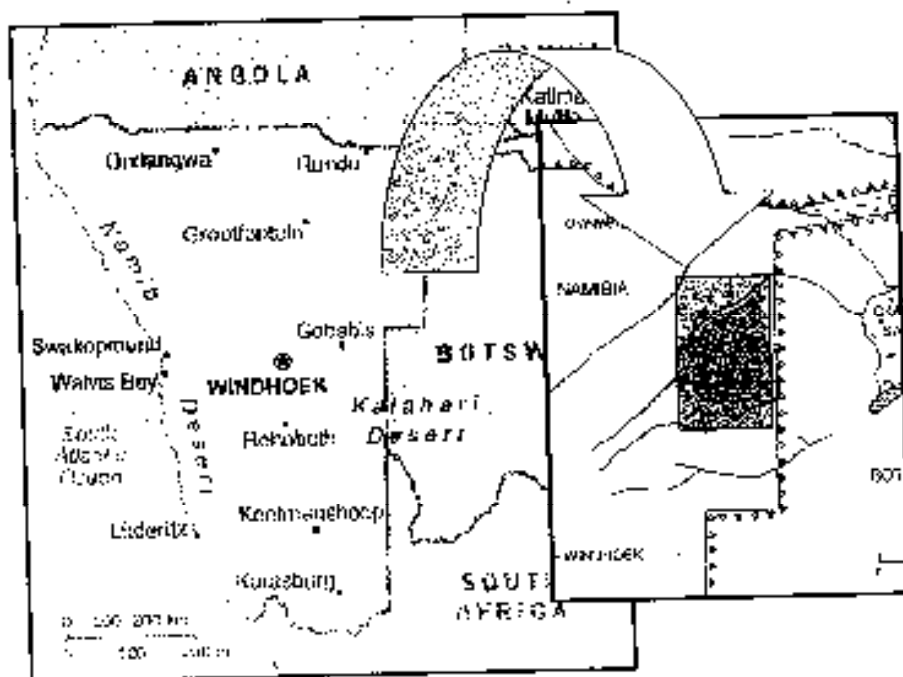
A BRIEF HISTORY OF NAMIBIA

THE GEOGRAPHY OF NAMIBIA

Namibia has four main geographical regions: the arid and barren Namib Desert, which runs along the entire Atlantic coast with widths of from 80–130 km, an extensive central plateau that averages c. 1,100 m in elevation; the western fringes of the Kalahari Desert in the east; and an alluvial plain in the north that includes the Eposha Pan, a large salt marsh. The highest point is Brandberg Mt. (2,561 m), situated in the western part of the central plateau. In addition to the capital, other towns include Keetmanshoop, Tsumeb, Lüderitz, Gobabis, and Otjiwarongo.

Namibia has an ethnically diverse population that includes the Bantu-speaking Ovambo, Kwanjo, and Herero; various Nama (see *Kuikhoi*) groups; the Damara; San (Bushmen); and whites of South African, German, and British descent. English is the official language, but most of the population speaks Afrikaans. About 80% of the population is Christian, and the rest follow traditional beliefs.

The constitution is patterned somewhat after that of the United States and provides for a multiparty system with a president and a bicameral legislature consisting of a 72-member national assembly and a 26-seat national council. Namibia is divided into 13 administrative districts.



Area where "Song of Be" takes place

EARLY HISTORY AND COLONIALISM

The earliest inhabitants of Namibia were San hunters and gatherers who lived there as early as 2,000 years ago. By 500 A.D., Nama herders had entered the region; they have left early records of their activities in the form of cave paintings. The Herero people settled in the western and northern areas of Namibia around 1600. The Ovambo migrated into Namibia after about 1800.

Diego Cam and Bartholomew Dias, both Portuguese navigators, landed on the coast in the early 15th cent. Portuguese and Dutch expeditions explored the coastal regions, and in the late 18th cent. Dutch and British captains laid claim to parts of the coast. These claims, however, were disallowed by their governments. In the 18th cent., English missionaries arrived, and they were followed by German missionaries in the 1840s. Britain annexed Walvis Bay in 1878. The Bremen trading firm of F. A. E. Lüderitz gained a cession of land at Angra Pequena (now Lüderitz) in 1883, and in 1884 the German government under Otto von Bismarck proclaimed a protectorate over this area, to which the rest of South West Africa (Ger. *Süd-West Afrika*) was soon added.

Conflicts between the indigenous population and the Europeans, mainly over control of land, led to outbreaks of violence in the 1890s, which worsened in the 1900s. In 1903 the Nama began a revolt, joined by the Herero in 1904. The Germans pursued an uncompromising military campaign that by 1908 had resulted in the death of about 54,000 Herero (out of a total Herero population of about 70,000), many of whom were driven into the Kalahari Desert, where they perished; 30,000 others also died in the revolt. In 1908 diamonds were discovered near Lüderitz, and a large influx of Europeans began.

During World War I the country was occupied (1915) by South African forces, and after the war South Africa began (1920) to administer it as a C-type mandate under the League of Nations. In 1921–22 the Bondelzwaris, a small Nama group, revolted against South African rule, but they were crushed by South African forces employing airpower. After the founding of the United Nations in 1945, South Africa, unlike the other League of Nations mandates, refused to surrender its mandate and place South West Africa under the UN trusteeship system.

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

In 1960, Ethiopia and Liberia (both of which had been members of the League of Nations) initiated proceedings in the International Court of Justice to have the mandate declared as bring in force and to have South Africa charged with failing to fulfil the terms of the mandate. The court ruled in 1966 that Ethiopia and Liberia had not established a legal right or interest enabling them to bring the case. In frustration at this decision, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), operating in exile, undertook small-scale guerrilla warfare in South West Africa.

The UN General Assembly in 1975 passed a resolution terminating the mandate, and in 1978 it resolved that the country be known as Namibia. The International Court of Justice reaffirmed (1971) the General Assembly's resolution, but the South African

government maintained that the United Nations had no authority over South West Africa, and it proceeded with plans for establishing ten African homelands (Bantustans) in the country and lobbying it more closely to South Africa.

South Africa's attempt to repress political opposition was met with SWAPO's extensive boycott of the Bantustan elections in Ovambo land in 1973. South Africa held a constitutional conference (the Turnhalle Conference) in 1975 and delayed deciding Namibia's status. Responding to threats from the world community, the government promised Namibian independence by the end of 1978.

In 1977, the government adopted a new constitution that upheld apartheid policies, restricted SWAPO participation in politics, and sought to continue South African control over foreign affairs after independence. SWAPO and other opposition groups effectively waged guerilla warfare, gaining control of areas in the north. A UN resolution in 1978 called for a cease-fire and UN-monitored elections. South Africa balked at elections, tearing a SWAPO-led Namibian government.

Under a 1988 agreement brokered by the United States, the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola was linked with the implementation of the UN plan in Namibia. UN-supervised elections were held in 1989; SWAPO won a majority of the parliamentary seats, and party leader Sam Nujoma was elected president. A constitution was adopted in February 1990, and Namibia became independent on 21 March 1990.

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"Song of Da" takes place in the period just before the first elections in Namibia. This is the political background to a story that works on both a personal and larger level as it is about a young girl trying to find her place in society and about a displaced people (the bushmen) who are trying to find their rightful place in society without giving up their heritage.

3. LISTENING COMPREHENSION

THE BUSHMEN OF NAMIBIA

Your teacher will read you a passage about the bushmen of Namibia. You will listen to the passage once for a general understanding of the passage. Then your teacher will read through the questions with you. With your questions in front of you, you will listen to the passage for a second time. This time you will listen for the specific details that are required to answer the questions. **AT NO POINT MAY YOU TAKE NOTES.** When your teacher has finished reading the comprehension for the second time, you will be given ten minutes to answer the questions, in absolute silence.

Appendix 5: Lesson Observation Notes – Participant 2 (Mrs Reddy)

Lesson Topic: “Nottinghill” Film Study

Context: Nottinghill Film Study, class has already watched film and reviewed film theory (see theory worksheet). End of curriculum, last section of work before exams. Originally scheduled for mid-year, but postponed.

Classroom Setting:

Classroom setting is rich in visual stimulus material (see photographs). Classroom has posters of “Cradle of Humankind Map”, diagram about Egyptian society, book covers pinned up, cartoon illustration of Macbeth, Photographs of famous poets, “X-Kit” study guide advertisement that uses alphabet to list advantages of using the guide, map of Africa, photos of the “Globe” theatre and diagram of “A day at the globe”, newspaper articles, timeline of Macbeth and his ancestors, Roman numerals explained as numbers, poster about how to layout a bibliography.

Visual Resources Used: Worksheets in learners workbooks

Television/Video of film

OHP memo to film questions

Chalkboard

Transcript/Observation Notes:

Learners have vis lit notes and questions, theory of film has been taught, film watched, close study sequences are study in more detail.

Yesterday the class did plot and character introduction worksheet, short summary of plot (see worksheet 1). Read questions on worksheet (w/s) 2 and 3 for homework, so know what to look for, watch 5 minutes of clip, answer 10 minutes, review answers.

Instructions given prior to viewing so that learners know what to attend to.

Watched opening sequence of film (opening credits).

Learners have questions in workbook.

This is second viewing, already watched the whole film. After viewing learners write answers to workbook questions. Teacher says they must write full answers, no blanks, in exercise books. Teacher has to remind some learners to write answers and pay attention.

Teacher says questions are specific to that part of the film, do not require a full viewing.

Teacher re-plays opening sequence, says “this aspect” was discussed yesterday. 5 minutes given before marking answers. Teacher walks around, checks and supervises as learners work. Moves learner back to his seat at front of class.

Learner asks: “What are credits?”

Teacher answers, “All the writing that appears, the actors’ and director’s names, those are credits”.

Film plays in background again while learners work. Teacher checks that class has completed answering. OHP memo answers used as visual aid to marking questions. Teacher asks learners to give their answers before displaying the memo answer.

Teacher stops film while memo checking is done. Teacher says learners must mark own work. Motivational speech – tells learners this is part of study programme, revision for exams. They must treat the work as important and not “slack off”.

Teacher reminds class she showed example of cutting to continuity yesterday (editing techniques discussed the previous day). Discusses **question 1.1**. This example is a *montage*. Teacher explains how it shows Anna Scott's rise to success over a period of time. Teacher shows example again, explains that it is a series of shots showing her rise to stardom. Explains that there are examples of *dissolves* too, but entire sequence taken together is a montage. Repeats idea, showing sequence again: "The famous Anna Scott, the beautiful Anna Scott, see at different stages doing different things, in each one she is the star. See the dissolving...but the entire collection of shots...a montage."

Teacher reads: "**Question 1.2**: What are the advantages of this technique?"
Learner answers, "It gives a lot of information in a short space of time".
Teacher agrees. Answers in addition that are not on OHP already are written on the board. Teacher asks for another advantage. Clarifies that the question refers to any montage, not just this one, when a learner suggests that "it shows she is a main character."
Teacher tells the learners to check their theory notes – that a montage advances the plot. Gives example that in this film there are not a number of sequences showing her career development – just one sequence. This is a short way to give a lot of information in a short space of time and mostly does this to advance the plot.

Question 2.1 discussed.

Teacher re-caps concept of a *voice over*. It is the announcer or T.V. presenter. Teacher asks learners: "Can you see the person? No?", explains there is a voice over while there are pictures in a montage. Then teacher asks, "What is the function [of the voice over]?" Explains it serves the purpose of an introduction. There is some debate about setting. Teacher explains this is a documentary part with a "TV presenter" talking about Anna Scott's career.

Question 2.2 asks about soundtrack/music functions.

Teacher explains that *lyrics* are extremely significant. Re-caps what "lyrics" means. Teacher asks again about function. Learner answers, "it creates mood". Teacher says the answer is not specific enough, the learner must describe the mood. Encourages the learners to be more specific and discusses "mood words". Teacher shows OHP answer and explains that the soundtrack introduces themes. Reminds learners to be specific about types of love when discussing themes. Teacher recaps the meaning of *genre*.

After lesson learner asks teacher about lyrics, "Do these narrate?" and teacher clarifies what is meant by "narration". Another learner checks on the meanings of "montage" and "cutting to continuity", and what the difference is.

Nottinghill

Grade 10 Film Study

Worksheet 1

1. Which *genre* does the film fall into?
Romantic Comedy
2. Comment on the title of the film.
Nottinghill is a small town in England - this place becomes significant because of the love affair between an everyman and a movie star.
3. In which country does the film take place?
England
4. a) List the main characters in the film.
Anna Scott (movie star), Anna's boyfriend, William Thacker (bookstore owner), Spike (Will's roommate), Mark (bookstore clerk), Honey (Will's sister), William's friends - Max, his wife and Bernie.
b) Which character did you relate/feel closest to?
Why?
5. Summarise the plot in no more than 100 words.
A few coincidental meetings between a movie star(Anna Scott) and a bookstore owner(William Thacker) lead to them becoming attracted to each other. However various obstacles have to be overcome before both realise the true nature of their feelings. William, who is encumbered by his eccentric roommate(Spike) and cheered on by his loyal friends, eventually wins the heart and hand of Anna after a mad dash to declare his love for her.

Worksheet 2: Sequence One

1. a) Which editing technique is used here?
Montage
b) What are the advantages of using this technique?
-Lots of information can be given in a short time - the montage skims through Anna's successes in a sequence of shots.
-The film /plot can be sped up.

- 2.1 What are the functions of :
- a) the voice-over at the beginning of the sequence?
It introduces the viewers to Anna Scott, it refers to her name, her profession and her success, it indicates that she is famous.
- b) the soundtrack/music?
-it supports the visual effects, arouses our expectations of the character; introduces the themes of celebrity life and love, and establishes the genre.
- 2.2 Are these sound techniques synchronous or non-synchronous?
Non-synchronous
Why?
We don't see the speaker or the singer.
- 3.1 To which character are we introduced in this sequence?
Anna Scott.
- 3.2 Examine the camera shots and angles used and explain what they portray about this character.
A series of close-ups and medium close-ups are used to show us her facial expression/emotions. The angles used are eye-level and low angle.
The eye-level angles would show her to be likeable, friendly, and beautiful. The low angle shots indicate her dedication as an actress, they reveal her glorying/pleasure in her success and they show her acknowledging her audiences' adulation. Her grace and charm are emphasised.
4. What technique is used to present the credits on screen?
They are superimposed on the screen.

Worksheet Three: Sequence Two

1. After the first sequence, the scene dissolves to a medium close-up shot of William Thacker. Thereafter the camera zooms out to create an establishing shot which is generally used at the beginning of sequences and important scenes. This is a long shot taken at a high angle. The aim/purpose of using such a shot is to: a) help distinguish between scenes and b) to help orientate the viewer in terms of time and space.

Appendix 7: Interview Schedule

PART I: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND TRAINING

Primary and High School Experience

1. Where did you go to school? How would you briefly describe your exposure to visual literacy and design skills at school?
2. Were posters, textbooks or audio-visuals aids used in lessons? If so, can you recall any examples of how this was done?
3. At school did you ever have lessons or discussions that looked at or discussed pictures, diagrams or films? If so, in what subjects?
4. Did you do any art or design subjects at school?
5. Did you do any designing of different kinds in any of your subjects? Can you think of any examples of projects?
6. Did your teachers ever discuss how to do the design or layout texts? Can you recall any examples?

Tertiary Study and Teacher Training

7. How were you trained to become a teacher?
8. Did your tertiary studies include use of posters, textbooks or audio-visual aids in lectures or practicals? Can you recall examples?
9. Did your teacher training (or any other tertiary training) focus on developing visual literacy or design skills? If so, can you give examples...
10. Did any of your studies involve critical discussions of visuals or layout and design? Diagrams, maps, graphs...can you give examples?
11. Did any of your tertiary training involve designing texts? Posters, Power point, projects...

PART II: TEACHING PRACTICE

12. What do you understand by the term “visual literacy”?
13. Would you say vis lit is a priority in your teaching? Why or why not?
14. Do you think it is important for learners to develop “visual literacy”? If so, why and in what way?
15. What elements of visual literacy and design you think are most important for learners to develop?
16. Can you give me some examples of how you use of pictures, diagrams or film as teaching aids or learning material in your own lessons?
17. Do you ever discuss visual elements or the layout and design of texts with your learners? For example the layout of written texts? Are learners expected to design visual/multi-media texts? (e.g. posters for orals)
18. Has your teaching approach (method) changed significantly since the introduction of OBE? How is it similar or different?
19. Are you familiar with the NCS learning outcomes and assessment standards that deal with **visual literacy and design**? Could you comment on what you understand the curriculum statement means by “critical viewing” and learning to “design” multi-media texts? Are these outcomes incorporated into your lessons? Why or why not?
20. How do you see yourself as an English teacher fulfilling the visual literacy and design learning outcomes in your own classroom?
21. What would you say has had the most influence on developing your teaching practice in terms of visual literacy?

PART III : DISCUSSION OF LESSON

Participant 1 (Mrs Mosweu)

1. **Contextualisation:** Where in the novel study section was this class? Has the class already read the book?
2. Dictionaries were provided for each learner. Are these always available during lessons? Are the learners able to use dictionaries easily? Have they ever been taught about the layout of a dictionary?
3. Why did you choose to introduce the novel by discussing the novel's cover?
4. Why did you go about explaining the book cover design as you did? Was there any particular sequence you were using?
5. What visual literacy/design skills were you particularly focusing on in this lesson, if vis lit was a focus?
6. Do you think learners were easily able to analyse the cover or did they need a lot of guidance? Can you explain how much insight or skill you think they have in visual literacy/layout and design at this point in grade 10?
7. Do you find mind maps/spider diagrams during your lessons helps the learners? Why or how is this visual aid useful? Is this a regular feature of your lessons?
8. Do you think this lesson was effective in helping learners develop knowledge and skills in visual literacy and design?
9. Can you comment on the learning outcomes that were the focus of this lesson?
10. If you were to present this lesson again, would you do anything differently? Can you explain...
11. Comment on the LTSM/lesson design: What are your feelings about teaching material from the workbook? Have you designed your own learning support material or taught a vis lit programme before? Can you tell me about it... **DISCUSS HIGHLIGHTED POINTS ON NCS**

Participant 2 (Mrs Reddy)

1. Why is Film Study at the end of the grade 10 year's study? Is the placement of his module at the end significant? In 2007 planning is it also at the end?
2. Why do you have such a lot of visual stimulus in the classroom? Are these used as teaching aids? Where did she source all this material?
3. Do you often use OHP? Specifically for memo? Is this more helpful than verbal discussion? Why?
4. Could you comment on designing these film study worksheets and putting together the programme? What concepts are seen as important? What order is used to present these ideas? How does it fit in in the context of grade 8, 9, 11 and 12? Is there a clear progression?
5. What LO's are being addressed in film study?
6. Are other vis lit skills addressed in grade 10 programme?
7. Do learners require a lot of supervision in vis lit work? Is it relatively more difficult or easier than other sections of work?
8. Do learners find it easy to pick up the terminology/jargon? Is this jargon used in other parts of the English course too?
9. Do you think that vis lit is seen as important or relatively unimportant by learners? Why is this the case?
10. How did learners fare in the final exam paper last year in this section?
11. Do you think that the grade 10 course successfully covers the LO's relating to vis lit? Can you comment on what you perceive as the "success" or otherwise of teaching and learning these skills. **DISCUSS HIGHLIGHTED POINTS ON NCS**

Appendix 8: Transcription of Interview – Participant 1 (Mrs Mosweu)

Questions posed by the interviewer are in bold text and the participant responses follow

Ask you about is your primary and high school experiences at school. Can you tell me a bit about where you went to school and during your schooling what sort of visual literacy exposure that you had?

I went to [school name] Primary School in [place name], it's a Catholic school. At high school I went to [school name] High School. It's also in [place name] it's also a Catholic school. I was definitely exposed to visual literacy especially as far Biblical Studies is concerned because it was a Catholic school. Mostly in Biblical Studies they used to give us pictures so that we can write or briefly comment based on those pictures.

And were there any other sort of posters or textbooks or audiovisuals you used in [school name]?

Only posters and textbooks by that time, it was a long time ago.

What sort of posters and textbooks?

Posters based on the lessons. They normally used to bring blank charts and draw some pictures based on the specific lesson.

Was that for all subjects?

For all the subjects, in most instances.

Did you do subjects like biology or those and did they use diagrams?

I did biology also and science I did biology. By that time it was called general science

Oh, general science.

Yes, general science

And did you ever have posters of the anatomy or I don't know the plant or whatever, was that part of the (inaudible)?

Yes. The most familiar poster that I can think of was of a human body.

Oh, yes, that's interesting. Were the posters part of like integrated into part of your lesson or were they sort of for the learners to look at while lessons were going on? Did the teacher use it as an aid to the lesson?

They were used as an aid to the lesson.

Ah, that's quite interesting. Textbooks? Did you have a lot of text or textbooks with diagrams, pictures or vis lit?

General science textbooks had lots of pictures with a lot of visual literacy on them. In most instances they'll tell you, look at that picture and fill in – you'll definitely get a picture with numberings on it, then you have to think and figure out, this can be this, this can be this before the teacher can get involved and help..

Tell you what the (inaudible) are.

Yes.

Did you ever have specific lessons that were looking at a picture or a diagram or a form and were specifically discussing or focused on discussing the form or the picture or what the diagram...?

I have to be honest with you Biblical Studies in most instances...

Was that it?

That was it.

Looking carefully at those pictures they gave you...

Looking carefully at those, yes, yes – and the history of Jesus and tracing his disciples. You know in most instances they can even bring us films to, yes, to show us so that we can get to know the life history of Jesus from long time ago, from birth up until the crucifixion and stuff like this.

And when you looked at the pictures, what specific parts or what were you looking at in the pictures, of the Biblical scenes or whatever – what was the focus?

The focus was on having to trace the history.

So looking it from a historical rather than an art sort of way?

Yes. Looking at it from historical background, yah.

Oh nice, that's very interesting. Did you ever do any designing of posters or charts or diagrams in any of your subjects?

Only in General Science. Yes, only in general science. We had to draw the bean seed and stuff, picture of, of the bean. We had to draw...

And did you draw it from an actual bean? Or was it like biological...

We had to bring the actual beans to classroom and afterwards they'll tell you will you please draw the bean that you have next to you and then having to label it – this is called this, that is called that and stuff.

Oh, ok, and then were there also diagrams in the textbooks as well?

There were also diagrams in the textbooks as well then afterwards we had to compare...

What you drew...

What you drew and the one in the textbook together with the actual one that you brought from home.

Oh that's..., and did you find that helpful?

It was very much helpful – because having to look at something, having to be familiar with something – we used to eat beans at home, having to take them to the classroom again and draw. That's something that you were famous with. Yes. Familiar with.

Did you ever do any sort of art-related subjects where you looked at paintings – or that sort of more artistic drawings? Was that part of the subjects you took?

Unfortunately no. no artist.

And when you did, when you looked at the Biblical pictures did you have to give a written response or do like actual projects based on the pictures or was it more verbal discussion?

We had to give the response based on those pictures – what did you see, then we had to respond, what happened on the specific scene. Yes.

And writing?

Writing. Yes. We had to respond in writing.

Was it like a test style where there were specific questions or did you write a paragraph or essay response?

Both. Yes, contextual and also, yes, a paragraph based on that pictures.

And then the other question I wanted to ask also about the school level is – did your teachers ever discuss with you how to do design or layout of texts or posters, for example like laying out a newspaper or laying out a letter or if you doing diagrams how diagrams must be laid out? Was that...

I remember a laying out of a newspaper, it was a really long time ago, somewhere around 1985, I was in grade 11 by then, we had to design the outer cover of the newspaper, yes, it must have a headline, yes, the catchy

one of course, each headline yes, and draw some pictures that will go hand in hand with that, footnotes, and the date and stuff, how that actual newspaper must look like.

Did you look at an example of a newspaper or did you have sort of instructions of how to do it?

We had instructions how to do it. Yes, what is it that can draw your attention having to want to buy that newspaper. Yes, questions like that.

And was it an individual project or did you do it in a group?

It was a group one. We did that as a group. In each group there were like going to be specific people who focused on sports section of a newspaper, advertisement, the news in general, the newspaper and stuff like that. Then afterwards we had to combine it. And they are still in the [school name] library.

Really, oh that's amazing. That sounds really interesting. Did you have like a specific type of newspaper that you were doing, for example was it supposed to be like a popular newspaper or a sports newspaper or was there like a genre?

A specific one. If you were going to focus on sports that's...

You did that...?

Yes, sport. If you were going to focus on any other news it will be, yes (inaudible)

And then moving on now to your teacher training – can you tell me a little bit about how you trained to become a teacher?

I went to [name] University first. I started doing BA PEd, it was called BA PEd by that time, yes, and then I had to move onto [University name] to complete my junior degree. Yes and I also did my Honours in English with [name] University and I went to [University name] also for my PGCE, Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

Is that what you are currently completing now?

Yes.

Ok. And your teaching subjects?

English, Setswana and Afrikaans.

Oh and Afrikaans as well?

Yes I majored in languages. I'm a language person.

So you really are a specialist hey?

And interesting to add on that I also did linguistics.

Oh, oh wow, ok so you've actually really specialized in doing languages.

Languages.

When you were doing the various studies as your, part of your degree and your teaching diploma and your Honours degree, were there things like posters and textbooks and audiovisuals as part of those lectures or lessons?

Yes. For my junior degree when I was doing English, we used to make use of posters from the from the study manual, from the study manual yah. There used to be lots of posters there – then whatever lesson that you were going to prepare whatever – it must be based on that picture. And how would you come up with the questions as far as learners are concerned – why, what you expect your learners to answer, or formulate your own questions according to the levels of questions, level 1 question 2 based on that. Based on those pictures there.

And what did the pictures in the posters look like? What was, what information was on there?

Mostly they were based on Long Walk to Freedom, the background information of Mandela, yes.

Were they picture types or...

Picture types of Mandela's face, and maybe Robben Island.

And you used that as the beginning...

Used that as the beginning, yes, as the starting point and then you come up...

And was there any writing or information included on the posters or was it mainly visual picture type?

Visual picture type only – you had to come up with the...

Your own...

the lesson based on those pictures, yah.

And was it lessons that were sort of introduction to the novel or did they go throughout the novel, or how did it fit into the teaching of the novel?

They were introduction to the novel

Ok, So sort of get learners thinking..

Yes, the background, having to determine pre-knowledge based on that particular face of Nelson Mandela, what is it that they know about this person before they can start the, study the actual text

And how did that poster work in the classroom – would you imagine giving out the poster to each child or is there one poster that the teacher uses or how does it like get used?

The teacher has to make some photocopies and hand them out to learners.

So each child gets their own picture to work on...

Exactly, then you have to start discussing orally, what is it that you see on that picture, what can you say about that particular person, Nelson Mandela, what information can you give as based on that picture.

And did you ever do any, I mean did you ever teach any of those lessons that you prepared during your training, did you get it into a classroom?

Yes. I remember, I remember using blank charts in the classroom. And giving them an example. Take for instance I give you an essay based on this particular picture – where would you start, what will be your starting point, what will be your introduction, the body of your essay and whatever. in writing, yes, I remember telling my G9s if you come across and as – they wrote an essay based on 2 pictures in June this year. Yes I gave them 2 pictures and what would you say if you get a question like – write a descriptive essay based on this picture or a narrative essay based on this picture.

And do you have a specific, like strategy of how to look at pictures and what to look for in the pictures?

To look for in the pictures they have to look at, they have to definitely discuss the layout, the colours, the design, the background, and the colours, whether that picture is colourful or what.. and in most instances pictures go hand in hand with the forms of the writing. What's read... yes, surrounding that picture, what is it that you can see, yes, the writing, the different types of forms and stuff.

So when they're going to write an essay they look as all of those aspects?

They look at all of those as...yes.

Oh, that's interesting. How did the essays work out when you did it on your teaching prac? Did they, were they able to write well about the picture?

I think visual literacy is of utmost importance as far as I am concerned because learners definitely become very much creative having to write something based on what they looking at. They are very helpful.

Ok, so it worked out nicely?

It worked out nicely, they're very much helpful, I wish all the subjects could be like that, having to write based on something that you looking at. And you definitely can reach up to even those learners who are introverts – they express themselves very clearly.

Oh that's interesting, so they were able to write...

They were very much able to write and most learners chose that particular type of essay.

Do you think that the picture essay worked out better than like for example basing the essay on a quotation or something like that?

Picture essays work out..

Better..

...much better. Yes, they think, you know widely, from different angles. Yes.

Ok that's quite interesting. Were any of your courses that you did in your degree or your teacher training specifically focused on developing your visual literacy skills. Were there any sort of modules or sections of work that were specifically aimed at teaching you how to teach visual literacy?

Yes, but it wasn't covered very much widely, it was just a limited portion, like how to do about dealing with visual literacy.

What.. Can you remember sort of what they said in that little portion, or what the lectures or the training involved?

The little portion was emphasizing the fact that visual literacy is of utmost importance.

Ok, so that didn't teach you how to analyze a picture or anything?

It can how to analyse the pictures and no, it wasn't dealt with in detail.

..tail, ok yah I also didn't have it dealt with in detail so I'm interested if other institutions do that. And then did any of your studies involve you in discussions of visuals or layout, for example when you were doing your teacher training I know you've mentioned a bit about looking at the pictures but were there diagrams or maps or graphs or anything that you had a specific training session on analysing something visual?

No unfortunately not.

Not so much? And did you ever have to present something that was a sort of visual text like a poster or a Powerpoint presentation?

Yes, a poster. Like at the moment I am busy doing technology. It requires a lot of drawings and stuff, yes, art, yes, I have to design tools and stuff and present, put it in my portfolio file and hand it in as part of my assignment.

Did they teach you how to design a poster or what the design sort of criteria are for putting together something, or do you have to come up with that yourself?

You have to come up with it yourself. You have to be creative.

And have you handed... have you got feedback on an assignment you've done?

I am still busy with that.

You still...

I covered that part of having to come up with designs and stuff, yes and posters.

And what have you kind of learnt or what have you realized through doing those assignments? Is there anything that's come up that's new or different for you?

Creativity – I didn't know that I can manage to draw, according to me, I viewed myself as not being a hands-on person, but I managed, that I can come about with different examples of bottle openers, different shapes of bottle openers. Then I had to come up with three and identify the one I think the elderly people will be glad to use. The one that I think that it wouldn't even demand a lot of strength because of the elderly people will be able to use it, and the cost and stuff based on that, why I say the particular one I've chosen is cheaper, why do I say it's one that can be easily utilized.

And what did you use to inspire you to design the bottle opener? How did you, how do you even go about knowing what to do?

I had to go and get and buy myself different ones

Oh and look at examples of ones...

I had to go and buy different ones and use them and come up with this one. I can use this one to open different types of bottles because it does have this and that. This one is only limited for different types of bottles and stuff like that. Yah, it is interesting having...

And then you have to present it as a poster?

As a poster, yes.

Do you get sort of criteria or a list of things the poster has to have? How do they mark your poster presentation when you hand in your assignment?

They give you the rubric.

Oh ok, and what sort of...

They look at the design, design of that particular bottle opener, and affordability, yes, and whether that type of bottle opener is cheaper or expensive.. yes and how available will that be.

So it is more based on the design of the bottle opener that the actual poster itself?

Bottle opener, on the actual poster itself. But on the very poster I must have 3 different types, signs.

But it doesn't matter how you put your poster together?

It doesn't matter how you... yes, it doesn't matter

Oh, I see so your marks are not for the poster, it's for the stuff on the poster?

No it's stuff that's, the stuff on the poster.

Oh, ok, and do you, are you going to present it to the class or do you just hand it in?

No I'm just going to hand it in, my portfolio.

The 2nd part I wanted to ask you a bit just is about your own views about teaching visual literacy. So I thought it would be nice to start off asking you what, if you had to try and give a definition or define what visual literacy is, I know it's a difficult question, but what would you think of if, if I said visual literacy?

What can you say about what you looking at, what can you detect from what you seeing at the moment, that's my feeling about it. You look at something, you come up with your own views based on that particular thing you looking at.

Hmm, interesting. Do you think that visual literacy is a priority or an important part of your language teaching?

It is, I think it's a very important part of language teaching because in most instances most of the learners, they do struggle especially when given a specific topic as far as writing is concerned, focus on those, then they struggle to come up with ideas. But when they're looking at something it's very much easy especially the things that they're familiar with, the things that according to them seemed not to be important but when looking at the particular picture they start oh I remember seeing this somewhere, but I can come up with this. And then you get so int... very much interesting input from the learners. You definitely learn a lot, yes, from, from the learners' viewpoints. You learn a lot.

If you think, oh, this is sort of a related question, but do you think it's important, which you've said you think it's important for them to learn visual literacy skills, In what way do you think they do develop those visual literacy skills, how, I don't know, it's also an odd question, but how do you think they are able to interpret pictures or what is the process they go through from sort of walking into the classroom and then understanding the picture. Is there some sort of guideline for understanding pictures that you are able to help them with?

I think they develop a skill of having to analyse something. Analytical skills. They can look at that and analyse it. Ok, this is can be the backdrop, this is the (inaudible). Yes the analytical skills.

Do you teach them sort of vocabulary like background and foreground and middle and centre and..?

We definitely do especially in Grde10. Yes

And does that help them with analysis of the picture?

It does help yes. You have to look at the background, you don't just start and talk, yes, about some other things yes.

Oh that's interesting. What do you think the most important elements of visual literacy or design is for learners to develop, so what do you think are the most important visual literacy skills?

Analytical skills.

You think the analysis...

Yah, an analysis.

Ok. Can you give me some examples of how you use pictures or diagrams or form or any kind of visual aids in your own lessons, so just in your general English teaching...

Take for example I use that cover page of "Song of Be", that's the literature book that the grade10s are using. They had to start having to analyse the title and then the, the pers..., the picture itself of that. What can they tell me about having to look at that particular person called "Be".

I saw also that you used mind maps on the board and you use them for character sketches.

Exactly and... Yes.

Is that often something you use in your other lessons as well?

Yes, it's very much helpful because it gets learners to be engaged in what you are doing. They definitely become part of the lesson.

Do you use your chalk board or overhead projector or things like that also for visual aids while you're teaching?

I use OHP also, yes especially when coming to the maps, having to draw in detail, as far as having to identify a specific place, yes, in a map.

And your other teaching, what sort of things do you write on the board or put up on the overhead?

Information based on the specific type of the lesson... I write on the board and I also use posters, especially information that learners need, not forget.

Oh ok, do you think it helps to see it?

It helps, it helps a lot having to display the own work, their own contribution on the walls. It does help a lot.

And what sort of things do they do when they make those posters for the walls? Can you think of examples of projects that they've done that you've stuck up on the wall?

Yes, they did character sketches of Harry Potter and Grade 9s, they did that, they're stuck as I've told you on the walls there, the Grade 10s did character sketches also, "Song of Be", they're stuck on the walls.

And do they do the posters well?

Very well, ooh very well and they get involved, yes a lot, all of them want to participate, it's a..

It's a group project?

A group project, yes.

And do they explain their posters?

Afterwards they have to come and give us feedback. Yes.

And are they able to explain well, does the poster help them better than if they didn't have the poster?

Better, better.

Do you explain to them how to do the poster or do they already seem to know kind of how to layout and design a poster in their groups?

I just give them the guidelines. Yes.

What do you use?

This is what I expect you to come up with. A specific group you have to focus on this particular character because we have read the book. Yes, focus on Be, think about the type of person Be is, then come up with character sketches on a poster.

Do you tell them that they must list the information or make it a spider or do they do that themselves?

They do the spider. Yes. I first give them an example on the board. Think about when writing an essay you start with a mindmap then even for the poster please make a spider...

Ok and they do it like a mindmap...

They do it like a mindmap. And then when coming to give us presentation whoever was taking notes for that particular group as they were discussing have to definitely dwell with characters virtues in detail because the mindmap is just to guide us. Yes. Maybe this person was compassionate but on that other piece of paper they have to elaborate

Give the reasons?

...with the, with the quote why do they say this particular person is like that.

And are their mindmaps kind of, they just put down information as they think of it or is it sort of grouped or designed specifically?

It is designed specifically. They don't just group them, they, it's designed specifically.

It's designed specifically, ok. Do they write like numbers on it or something for order?

No they just make arrows.

Ok arrows from the middle...

...and give the different points. Yes.

Oh, have you ever had any lessons where you actually look at layout and designs of texts, for example, a layout of a poster or a layout of for example a newspaper article, something. Do you ever have lessons where you spend time looking specifically at how some text has been laid out or how it has been designed?
With the Grade 10s we did the outer cover of the book. Yes.

Yes, that's right. And do you... this is now slightly different type of question but, do you think your teaching method or your way of teaching has changed a lot since OBE has come?

It has. It has changed a lot because it's learner-centred, it's no longer having to be teacher-centred whereby a teacher must definitely spoon feed the learners or give them 100% information. Learners' ideas and opinions are to be taken into consideration and it's an "each one teach one" situation, it's a two-way process and it makes it very interesting.

Ok, and have you found yourself more focused on, for example, making posters and doing visual stuff since the OBE approach has come in or is that something you already did before OBE?

Since OBE came I can tell you most of the lessons are based on that mode?(inaudible) even the projects, learners have to come up with posters and stuff.

So that's more the case now?

Yah, it's more the case now.

When you were doing "Harry Potter" [in the grade 9 syllabus] did you do the Quidditch poster? How did that go?

They did the Quidditch poster also. It went very well. It went very well.

And were they able to design posters effectively?

They were able to... effectively. They were able to. Even the weaker learners, they managed to do it perfectly because they are familiar with. Yes. I remember asking the, do you ever go to stadiums, do you ever watch games, do you ever do this, and what makes you interested having to go buy that ticket and go watch the game and stuff like that. Then I got different ideas from different learners, everybody wanted to answer me, what catches your eye with that advert, when you look at that advert, having to tell you about a specific game that will take place at a certain stadium and stuff like that, then they'll definitely come up with slogans: this is the one that caught my eye "come one, come all", "you snooze, you lose", you know, they were very much (inaudible), then I was like oh, then that's when I had to start introducing that, after having read the book, yes.

And did you also discuss things like colour and pictures and all of that?

Exactly, colour, picture. I gave them the rubric. Yes, and remember your poster must include statements, catchy statements...

Oh catchy statements...

Statements, yes, and that the type of language that you going to use also is very much important, and the design also, that poster that includes colour and stuff. Yes, there was a mark for that also. Yes.

Oh, interesting. Did you do the myth project with the Grade8s last year?

Last year, yes I did.

And they also did a poster if I'm not mistaken, or did they?

Yes, they, I remember, they did a poster. (inaudible)

And did that also work quite well?

It, it worked very much well. They get so involved, they get so engaged in that particular activity, especially when they have to come up with something they, they, I think they spent most of the time having to come up with an excellent piece and that's very quite interesting.

Interesting.

Then you will be able to can come to see their talents, their hidden talents. Yes.

Yes, (inaudible) Coming out of there. And then I also wanted to ask if you have ever gone through the NCS document and looked specifically at the visual literacy parts of it? Have you had a, have you ever looked at not the junior bit, the FET, the top phase, have you ever been through those other analysis (unclear)?

Yes, I do have a certificate.

Oh ok, so you've done the FET?

I did the FET, I have a certificate with [name] University.

Yes? And did you, and are you quite familiar with all the stuff that deals with visual literacy, is it something that stood out for you, or not so much?

In the, in the type of training, the RNCS FET training that I had the manuals that they gave us, they only specified about, the disasters, the tsunami,

Yes?

Yes, they focused on the pictures of the tsunami, yes. Hurricane Katrina, yes.

So there was an exercise on the picture? Ok.

There, there was an exercise on the pictures, and also the Nelson Mandela one, yes. By that that time when he was released from prison, yes.

Ah, I haven't seen that before, ok.

Yah, I do have that type of manuals...

And were they examples of lessons for languages? Oh, I see.

They were examples of lessons for languages. How would you use this particular picture. Yes. You can just take that particular picture, based on disaster situation and just put it there and ask learners, give it a title and write an essay, yes.

Oh, I see. And has it helped you in your own teaching, seeing that, has that sort of translated into your own lessons or not so much?

It has helped a lot.

Ok. Have you used similar ideas yourself?

I, I've been using similar ideas because, that's where creativity comes in. Yah.

Oh, that sounded good. And then when the, the, one of the curriculum statements says that we supposed to teach children to be critical viewers and that they must learn to design multimedia texts. Do you think that that comes through in lessons that you do?

It definitely does. That is why I talked about creativity, that's where it comes in, yes.

And critical viewing?

Critical view? That's where the analytical skill come in. Yes.

Oh, ok.

Critically look at that picture and come up with your own ideas, yes. What can you say...

And designing multimedia texts, is that something that...

Having to design posters does help also.

Yes, absolutely, I agree. How do you think as the English teacher that you manage to fulfill the visual literacy learning outcomes in your own classroom?

I think I've managed to can even reach out to the learners who were not yet coping what was actually happening.

Do you think that doing the visual literacy helps them to understand better?

Visual literacy helps them a lot, yes. Doing visual literacy helps. Even weaker learners to can, you know, achieve, yes.

Oh, ok. What do you think would have, has had the most influencing on developing your teaching of visual literacy? If you think of your training and your experiences, what do you think's been the biggest influence on your approach to teaching visual literacy?

The biggest influence?

Yes. What has made you think the way you do about visual literacy teaching, do you think.

I think the outcome that I got from learners.

Oh ok.

The outcome that I received. Then definitely make me see that this visual literacy thing, it's of utmost importance. Yes, yes.

Oh, ok. So more the experience of teaching it than in your own training or experience?

The experience of teaching it, yes, exactly, the experience of teaching it from the outcome that I received from the learners. (inaudible)

Was that when you first started teaching or has it been over the years or when, when did you have that "ah ha" experience that this really works?

In 2002. Yes.

Oh, ok, so sort of recentish?

Yah. That is why I, even when I teach an essay I don't ignore having to use it to refer to visual literacy, even the questions, I make it a point, they get something that, you know it makes then think a little bit and they can definitely criticize and come up with, I also learn a lot from that. Yah I also learn a lot from that.

Oh, ok. Oh that's interesting. The last part is looking specifically at that lesson that I came to watch of yours. I just wanted to ask you a few questions to kind of place it in my mind. One of them I wanted to ask you is: when you did the book cover was that the start of the novel study or had they already read the novel before looked at it?

Not yet.

Not yet? It was an introductory lesson?

I wanted them to start figuring out what actually, what can we expect from the cover, from the cover yes.

Because we had to also analyse that particular question, what do you think of this, why do we have this picture of this person here. The answers that I got were, it's a women, it's Be, we think that's the main character, of which it was true. And why is the writing like that? Capital B? "Be" can be the name of a person. Look at how

that person looks like. Look at the hair. She can be from the Hottentots, like the bushmen. And what can you tell me about the background. Man, look at the dry trees behind the cover, behind the (inaudible) itself, and you know, they were very much creative. Having to look at the colours, the type of beads and all of that, yes. The bushmen are very much creative, they definitely use beads a lot and stuff like that, they were, and that was actually what was definitely going to happen in the novel itself. Yes.

And did it link well with the novel?

It did.

It did?

It did. It did. It linked very well. And fortunately beforehand, before I could even start with the analysis of that outer cover, I told them, my dear kids, you go home over the weekend and go and make research. Come up with the background information based on the Khoi or the San.

And did they do that?

They did.

Yes?

They did. They went out to get information. Mam, the bushmen are hunter gatherers. Mam, they likes dancing around the fire and that was actually happening about that. They do have a sense of being, a sense of unity and that was actually what's happening in the book itself. Yes. And they're started now because that independent... that's actually at the end of the book what happened.

The book is based in Botswana?

Based in Namibia.

In Namibia.

Yes.

Ok, I've not read it before. So that background information...

That background, it helped a lot and that book cover, it helped a lot. We started the novel having them, the learners had information about what we expect in that, and it was very much interesting, because they started to go and research about the bushmen and then they came back. And now read about it... Oh yes Mam, And how it's...

And it links to what they know already

What they know already.

Oh that's (inaudible)

Do it very well.

Also just another visual aid that you were using were dictionaries during the lesson and I was going to ask you, are the kids quite good at using the dictionary? Do they understand sort of the layout and how the pages work in the dictionary or is it something that they still developing?

They're still developing that. There are only few who are familiar about having to use the dictionary, yes.

Do you ever do dictionary layout-type lesson as part of any of your English courses?

We did that last year.

Oh yes?

Grade 8s. Yes.

With the Grade 8s.

With the Grade 8s. Yes. We did that last year.

And what sort of...

It was like, it was not actually part of the, of the lesson. I was just like, when we had to do the spelling test and stuff like that. Afterwards I was like, who doesn't know how to use a dictionary? You know.

And were a lot of cases (inaudible)...

No. Few of them.

Only a few of them?

Few.

And then did you explain to them how the layout works?

Yes. And then how do we come about having to get the specific word you looking for, the meaning of the specific word you looking for, we have to search for the alphabet, and how do we do it and stuff. Because they didn't even have a clue, some of them.

Oh sure. And so now most of them are able to use dictionaries?

And I think, yes, and I think that dictionary work also must be included in our lessons. Must be part of that.

That's helpful.

It's helpful.

Also was going to ask you why you decided to do the introduction to the novel using the book cover? Was there any specific idea that you thought the book....

To engage them into what I'll be doing. To make them curious, wanting to know more. 'Why is Mam doing this? Maybe the book is about that..', and fortunately enough they were definitely giving me exactly...

Exactly what you were looking for, ah, excellent.

Yes, what I was looking for. Yah, yah it was achieved.

Do you think that the learners were easily able to analyse the cover or do you think they needed a lot of guidance and help and, in the analysis of the cover or in looking at it?

I would give them 70% for that, yah, they were very much involved.

And are they able to do it on their own or do they need a lot of help and questions from you? Do you have to kind of guide them in looking at the cover or are they able to just look at a cover and analyse it on their own?

To be frank and honest my learners were very much active in that, in that lesson.

So you think they can actually do it on their own quite a bit, just need a little bit...

They contributed, they can, they can they can analyse. They just need a little bit of guidance but when coming to analyse something I think they can do it.

They already know how to do it. Ok. We already discussed the mi., the spider diagrams and mindmaps and you said you did use them often. Do you think that the lesson helped the children develop some visual literacy and design ideas and skills?

It did.

As well as insight into the novel?

Insight. Yah.

Have you ever done design of book covers as project or something like that in any of your classes?

Unfortunately not.

Not yah. If you were going to present the lesson again was there anything that you would do differently?

I think having to focus again on the spider diagrams

Oh yes?

Yah, having to let them give me more input to add on our spider.., on our spider diagrams so that when they get to write in paragraphs or whatever then they'll be able to come up with inputs,

More info, yah ok,

More information.

Were there any specific learning outcomes that were the focus of the lesson or what was your main aim?

Reasoning and thinking. Yah.

Reasoning and thinking, ok.

And reading and viewing also.

Oh ok.

Yes. Thinking and reasoning and then viewing also and speaking...

Yes and incorporating...

Incorporating, yes.

Different things. And then the last thing is sort of an odd question. I know that our strategy is teaching from a sort of workbook or specific lessons that have already been prepared. What are your feelings about teaching through a worksheet, a workbook, and doing sort of worksheets that are pre-prepared for the Grade. Is it something that you enjoy doing or does it...

I think the worksheets they act as a guideline. You being a teacher have to be a little bit innovative so that the lesson can be very much interesting. Yah.

And have you ever done your own designing of materials for teaching lessons? Has that been part of your teaching experience or teaching pracs, actually developing the worksheets or developing the learning programs that you use?

Unfortunately I didn't.

Not, ok.

But we did the, the work schedules. Yes.

Yes. But not the actual class work material?

But not the actual classwork material.

Ok. Would that be something that you would be interested in doing or do you prefer to work from existing workbooks and textbooks?

I think that will be something very much interesting to cover with new ideas, yah.

Is it something of interest?

Yah.

Cos some people think, agh, it's just re-inventing the wheel and it's just doing over, if you've got a book, just use the book, but..

No, no.

I just wanted to also briefly, if I may, just use a few more minutes of your time. I was highlighting some of the things in the assessment standards for grade 10 that I found interesting or that just sort of stood out

to me. One of them here in the listening and speaking skills, they said one of the assessment standards is that learners can incorporate appropriate audiovisual aids such as charts, posters, photographs. Do you think that you do that?

It will definitely help.

Yes?

It will definitely help. And having to start with our mindmaps and stuff. It will definitely help.

So they do actually do that, that in the classroom? It is something you cover?

They do actually do that. Yah, in the classroom, they do it in the classroom.

The other one is, it says that learn...this is under the reading and viewing, learners should be able to interpret and evaluate familiar graphic text. I was wondering what do you understand by, what is a familiar graphic text?

Maybe the ones that they are familiar with, I don't know?

What sort of the texts do you think that the learners are familiar with?

Maybe the type of text that, from the movies and stuff? Yah?

Ok? So, like film?

Like film, yes.

Yah? Are there any other graphic texts that you think we should be teaching in grade 10?

(inaudible answer)

And then another it says. Explain how languages and images may reflect and shape values and attitudes. Identify and explain socio-cultural and political views, attitudes and beliefs, such as attitudes towards gender, class, power. Do you think that's something that we do with the grade 10s?

With the grade 10's?

Bias and prejudice, specifically in visual texts, do you think that's something that we do a lot of?

No we don't do a lot of that. (inaudible)

Cos that was my feeling=. I don't know if you agree, I think we tend to analyse but I don't think we tend to...

To criticize, yes, important...

Criticize. So I was wondering if you felt that also, or if you think you are critical?

We need to do, crit, to criticize...

When you were doing "Song of Be" did you look at sort of the cultural values...?

Background, yes, yes.

And whether they were valid or not? But not so much in the visual, more in the novel itself?

More in the novel itself. Yah.

Ok, so this is covered but perhaps not so much in the picture form?

Covered, but not so much in the picture form.

Ok. And then writing and presenting. It said that learners should be able to identify and explain types of texts...(break in tape turning over)...size, designing text and producing multimedia type of texts?

In grade 8, 9 and 10 no.

Not so much?

Not so much.

Why do you think that's the case? Do you think, or do you think we should be doing that?

I think that's, we have to study from the lower grades,

Ok

So, so that when they get to, to grade 11, grade 12 also whereby they'll definitely get questions based on visual literacy in detail, they'll, they'll be able to, to do better

To analyse?

To analyse better

Ok. And why do you think it is that we've sort of moved away from getting them to do kind of more design and layouts in their texts? Is there you know, for example, we don't get them to design, say book covers or whatever as projects so much in English?

Maybe it's because of how they curriculum has been designed.

Ok?

It doesn't demand a lot of that

The portfolio?

Only few ... sections demand that

That. Ok. And then the last thing I wanted, also, this is under the section of writing and presenting. One of the...learners should be able to use a selection of visual and design elements? What do you understand by that?

Selection...selection depending on... from which...(inaudible), selection of designs?

Yes, of design, of visual and design elements. So in writing and representing they, the learners should be able to, in their writing and presenting they, the learners should be able to in their writing and presenting use a selection if visual and design elements. It's not clear to me...

It's not clear...

I was just wondering what, if you understand what, what, what is a selection, what does that actually mean? You got any ideas?

(inaudible)

Do you think that they do use visual and design elements in their work?

Sometimes, not...depending on what was expected of them.

Ok. I think that's it. Thank you so much for your time...

Appendix 9: Transcription of Interview – Participant 2 (Mrs Reddy)

Questions posed by the interviewer are in bold text and the participant responses follow

Primary school and high school experiences. First of all, where you went to school at primary school and high school and then briefly what your exposure to visual literacy was at school yourself?

Now you must remember that at the time that I went to school, well it sounds ancient, that there wasn't visual literacy as such. But if, if, to start off in the order that you want, primary school it was [school name] then it was [school name] Primary, that was in grade 8, because I think [school name] went up to grade 7 which is standard 5. Then the standard 6 was done at [name] School, which was pretty, I went far, as in maybe 15 minutes walk. And then I moved in grade 9, I moved to a high school closer to home, and that was [name] High. But I didn't stop there, then I moved once more, we, we came to [suburb] and then, we went to [suburb] and I went to [school name] Secondary. But in none of those schools had we studied visual literacy.

That wasn't part of any of the syllabus...

It wasn't part of the syllabus. Nor did we study critical analysis. So it was just pure academic syllabus, well, academic in the sense that lots of theory, novel, play,

Quite literature-based?

Very strong literature base. From grade 8 onwards I can remember it was very strong literature base. So, strong poetry components, strong novel, can't remember what play we would have studied in grade 8 and 9 but there I think I moved around a bit too much there. But from grade 10, 11 and 12 it was very much, your 20 poems or your 16 in grade 10 and grade 11 and your 20 in Matric, and your novels, I did Hardy in Matric,

Shoo,

And "Tale of Two Cities" in (inaudible) 11 I think, yah I can't remember grade 10. And, and Macbeth in grade 11 and Lear in grade 12. No visual literacy. But at that time, this was in the 80s, would have been 80, 82, they were starting it as projects in certain schools and in [husband's] school at [place name] Private/bywhich??? That they always used to produce a fairly high level of academic excellence in those schools, that they'd started with it there. But we had not had the privilege of actually....

Did you do any advertising as part of language study?

Advertising, yes we did, but we had..

Not so much the visual, yah?

But we had, not much. I can also tell you we didn't do much language study and we didn't, and I suppose advertising would fall under language study

Yes, language, yes..

Because in grade 10 and 11 we had this male teacher who didn't teach much. I distinctly remember him teaching when there was a visit by somebody. But we found it very hilarious, his teaching you know. He loved teaching lit, literature because literature you can just, you can just go on without... yah. And language teaching, there wasn't much language teaching in grade 10 at the (inaudible) that I came in. In grade 10 we had a lady, she was the HoD so we did try to cover some language. But still we didn't actually, I don't recall studying advertising that we teach to kids.

Not...

We probably just glanced at it and it doesn't stick out in my memory, the AIDA Principle doesn't even stand out until I started teaching. So no, I wouldn't say we were introduced to too much of...

Visual literacy... at all.

Actually (inaudible) visual literacy. And what else would qualify as visual literacy?

I was going to ask you if there were posters or textbooks of audiovisuals used in any of your lessons, not necessarily English?

Yes, textbooks, yes, posters, transparencies.

Was there any analysis or sort of detailed teaching based on a poster or a diagram or some sort of visual material in any of the other subjects?

Lyn I can't remember in English, definitely it would have it would stand out. But in Biology obviously I think the diagram, the diagrammatic representation of lifecycles, etc. I would, the chart of the body structures, that would also be visual literacy. Yes, in Science and Biology, for sure. Accounting, no. it was pretty much straightforward book work. Maths was the same, book work. English, Afrikaans, pretty well straightforward. So in Biology and Science, yes.

It would have been included... Were there any lessons that specifically focused on how the layout of the poster or how the design of the diagram worked in, for example, Biology or Science? Were you taught how to layout a diagram for example?

Would labeling a diagram be part of..

Yes, and, yes, labeling or drawing...

Yes, because then, drawing, yes. You'd have to draw body parts and part of insects. Yes.

Ok. So there was a sort of, how to do a Biology diagram types of lessons.

Yes. There would be that. Yah.

And did the teachers use sort of visual aids like posters or models or overheads in those subjects?

Yes. Very much so. I remember, I think I can distinctly remember my Biology class, there was very young lady who started teaching. We always used to have a hoot because she was very young and (inaudible). And I remembered the Biology classroom very well, lots of posters. And in Science, yes. We had a very, I must say, a very lazy teacher. And he used to sit and say, 'It's hot today people' and take out his handkerchief, mop his face, 'turn to page so and so...' but it, it, there were lots of visuals

Posters?

Lots of visuals around... And...

And then the textbooks themselves?

Yes. Yah. There had to be if I remember, because... yah, especially of the experiments and science, atoms, etc. which we also did in Biology. And which we... yes...

And was it ever explicitly explained how the diagrams...

No, not in science.

Oh, ok.

Not in science because of Mr. [name] I distinctly remember him, probably dead by now.(inudible) Biology. I mean she was new and she was very fervent about what she was doing, and yah. Doing.. she would try and she'd explain, and I think some of the boys were like our boys, and you know they derail.. so..

The lesson very quickly... Was there film, did you ever watch films, either documentary or fictional-type films as part of your school...?

No, if we ever watched a program it was like ex, you know, ok we are having, it's the end of the term. And then everybody pays 5 Rands or something and you watch a movie on the cinema projector.

So it's more like an entertainment.. Yes ok.

Yes. But not for study purposes.

Yes.

I can't even remember in my other subjects whether we'd watch something, Accounting, Afrikaans, English, no, definitely not. We did not have media equipment, I mean audiovisual equipment.

Yes. So probably...

We were not one of those...

Privileged schools that would have...

Privileged schools, we definitely didn't have such equipment. Even audio recordings, Lyn, I can't remember anybody playing audio recordings to us. I would have remembered.

Yes I'm sure.

Can't remember that.

Did you do any designing in any of your subjects at school, for example, drawing of diagrams or graphs or posters or anything like that?

Well graphs would be your basic graphs (inaudible), yes.

Yes.

We weren't OBE-orientated yet so we wouldn't have had much poster work. But in Biology yes we did have to draw diagrams. In Science you had to draw (inaudible) diagrams as well.

Oh, ok and mindmap type of things and that sort of stuff?

No mindmap was not something that we used.

So it was more...

Planning was literally draft...

More like point form or drafting sort of stuff...

Point form and drafting. I, I even have examples of my Matric work and I've got a nice plan. It's all in my composition book. I've got a plan written out fully, I got point form planning, not for all of the pieces of writing, and then you've got your final (inaudible) answer.

Did you ever have specific lessons where you looked at design or layout of a text, for example, like a newspaper article, and how the newspaper's laid out, or...?

No, the newspaper module was not something that we ever did. (inaudible)

...ever did. And you didn't look at visuals compared to more written textual information, not, not included?

No, we didn't. Nu uh. Not at all.

Your teacher or training or tertiary studies, can you tell me a little bit about how you trained to become a teacher, or what, what...?

It was very theoretical.

Yes?

And one of my big grouses is that was so heavily theoretical. It was all the ideal situations of how to become a teacher, of how to be a teacher. And then we complained grossly about that because it was very, very unfair. And then when our first year we went on teaching practice, and I think of the first year it might have been like 2 to 3 weeks, yes. And in the second, second year it might have been a bit longer then, 3 or 4 weeks, and then your last, in my third year I think it was also there.., 3, 3 weeks or so. It didn't go more than 3 weeks of TP of T, TP as we used to call it, and that was the only time that we could practice practical teaching. The rest was very theory bound.

What, did you do a B.Ed. degree or a B.A. followed by an Education...?

No, it was actually a teaching degree, it was a Bachelor of Pedagogics,

It was a teaching degree, ok.

Which I think the University [name] , offered it only, as far as I know.

Yes.

So it was literally a teaching degree.

Teaching degree. Ok.

But in the first three years it was English 1, Afrikaans 1, History, Psychology, and, I can't remember what else I did.

But the, what are your teaching...

Education...

What are your teaching methods or which, which teaching course is..?

That's, that actually came in your last year.

Oh your last year you specialize, ok.

And then you have English methods and Afrikaans methods and then it was all book work from the various styles of teaching, and then the psychology of teaching and you know, Didactics etc. so that's, that was only in the final year.

Did you specialize in language teaching?

I did. Yah..

Obviously English, and you said Afrikaans...

Obviously English, and Afrikaans we (inaudible)

Ok.

And we didn't touch media.

At all?

No.

In none of your teaching courses?

Maybe.., No.

Did the, any of the courses use visual aids or posters or those sort of texts as part of the course work or did you work from textbook-type...?

There were textbooks, but I'm... in Afrikaans methodology, no, no. I think the only visual aid would have been (inaudible)

Ok. And what would've been on typically on an OHP transparency, just note..., texts, written...?

That's something written on what your lecturer would actually say.

Ok...

This is what 20 odd years ago, is it, no 18 years ago.

18, shoo. And were you ever expected to do poster designs or that sort of thing yourself or produce visual or teaching aid materials?

We were expected to produce teaching aid materials.

Can you think of anything, example of something that you...?

O, if, if you were going to a lesson on verbs, for example, it was ideal if you did draw up a chart. I suppose that would be visual.

Yes.

And you know the categories of verbs. But then again, we did not learn categories of verbs like we would teach the second language students. So if you going to teach poetry for example, it would be nice if you could put down main ideas, theme, and all of that stuff on a chart, ok and OHP transparencies where always you could put your questions down, because at this time you must remember there were no computers that we had access to, at University we did, but many of us were not computer literate. No, it wasn't something that was common, where there was a need, I wished they'd pushed us there. And we could type of course, we had typewriters, and you could type up your transparencies or you could write them out and we used to write them out.

Not... were you ever taught how to do the design or layout of your materials...

What you need..., a good

What is a good transparency or what is a good chart or poster?

I suppose we were, Lyn, you know I, I'm, I think we must have. I can't remember distinctly. I also think that in my first and second year we were pretty much at sea because we weren't told those things. Because you see we didn't have teaching methodology in your first and second and your third year. So although you did go on your three years of teaching practice you pretty much were on your own, you had to go and look up something, and I don't remember actually going and looking up anything beyond what I knew my teachers had done. So that wasn't a very good thing in itself now that I look back on it. But in the fourth year with the teaching methodology which was also very theory bound, ok, I can't recall distinctly if they said, this is how or what, what should be on your trans.. or how you should write out a good transparency,, you know like, the print must be large enough to see. It could've been done, and I do not distinctly remember that, but I know the overall feeling at the end of the course was that it was not practical enough for us, because when you went into the classroom and, it was totally different, what you had to do in the classroom. The little teaching stuff we did was very different from what we'd been sitting there, just, having to listen to, and wasn't quite related to what we had to come back to do.

Ok...

So , yah, I, I must say I didn't find it helpful.

This is perhaps a bit of repetition but did you have any discussions, critical discussions of visual or layout or maps or graphs or anything like that, when you actually sat and analysed how the, the design was put together, or the layout?

You know Lyn, that could have been one of the criteria for the teaching itself, probably what visual aids you did use, and whether they were effective. So that must have been certain (?)

Yes, but it doesn't stand out...

For example..., no, it doesn't. For example I mean, we didn't use film because, of course, the technology, we didn't have the..

The equipment... yes...

Equipment to use film. We could use slides but that was a very long drawn out process. I remember if I'm not mistaken I'm not sure if we actually did the slide lesson or some kind of activity where we had to make up our own slides. Somewhere along the edges of my memory there seems to be something that we might have actually gone through the process and it would have been part of the media (inaudible) actually went through the slide process...

Process...You mentioned as part of media. Did you have a media studies course or...?

Lyn, I know we used to use the media quite extensively.

Was it a media centre or was it..?

It was a media centre. I'm just trying to remember why we did that. It was largely in our fourth year. And I think that's really where I've done that slide...

Slide, yes...

The developing of pictures etc. I can't remember what aspect of work it precisely would've been. But I know that we had used the media [centre] quite extensively in that year. It could possibly be related to some kind of teaching.

The second part I want to ask you about is your own teaching practice and your ideas about visual literacy, starting off with what you understand by the term visual literacy, so how would you define visual literacy or explain what that means?

It's, it's reading in another manner and it's symbols of another sort very much more picture-oriented, and what meaning we create from that. And of course it's not only film, it's the cartoons that we study nowadays. And then now that you actually remind me, and I didn't even think of it, it's actually reading charts and posters, and would newspaper reading also qualify, making sense, because it's made up of words and pictures. So that's what I would think visual literacy, literacy obviously would be able to effectively translate or make meaning from, from symbols other than your writing, your conventional writing systems. That's what I would (inaudible)

Would you say that visual literacy is quite a priority area in your own teaching, language teaching?

To be frank, no. Not to be (inaudible)

And why would you say not?

We spend a lot of time doing basic language (inaudible word). We do touch on, on, on visual literacy. I think we spend a substantial amount of time, not over much, but enough time on introducing them in grade 9 to visual literacy, and they enjoy it tremendously, we do know that. And I think it's because of the need of the school that we don't probably spend as much time as we should. But then even the syllabus doesn't allow for that much time for visual literacy teaching as well.

Why would you say that?

Or am I mistaken?

No, no, I'm just interested in your perception.

If you've got the language structures that you need to teach and then cartoon analysis, advertising forms part of that. And then (inaudible word) forms part of that. And then if you look at the amount of time that that would take, would it be like a term's work, roughly..

Mmm, yes, yes...

A quarter. So that would be a sizeable amount of time.

Yes. Quite possibly.

And OBE actually, and OBE and FET, I know OBE gives it more time, but FET? Because we seem to be driven more the other way, back to the way things were what, 10 years ago, where we more...

Yes. More... yes...?

...writing-based? And to be writing-based then you need writing skills, but we're not necessarily only writing essays about that which (inaudible) descriptive, but we also writing on visual literacy...

Literacy, yes...

That's what we do here.

Would you say layout and designs are part of the writing or the portfolio work that is assessed? Is that significant part of assessment?

Layout and design. If you speak about layout, are you speaking about layout in what sense? Laying out of (inaudible word)

Of texts of any sort, yes.

Texts...writing texts?

Yes.

If I take for example a transactional on a letter, layout is a format...

Yes, a part of it.

Yes. It's necessary. So we teach that. If we teaching diary entries, is that not layout?

It is. It is.

Would also interpreting the structure of a paper, an exam paper, would it not also be layout?

Yes, yes absolutely.

So aren't we without specifically saying that we teaching layout, aren't we then teaching layout?

We teaching... absolutely.

If I say to the child, 'please put the date down.' Is it something as simple as..

I would say so. I think that's...

On a very (inaudible) simple...

Included. Yes. I think that's included in layout cause it's making sense of how a text hangs together and works...

Yes, yah.

In the way the text is designed. It's not just one solid chunk of writing, there is a element of designing the text...

(inaudible word) meaning isn't it?

Yes. And, and it gives a certain interpretation or understanding to the writing. So I would say that does, it is included...

And we are teaching it although we were not saying 'this is specifically the layout', but I think (inaudible)

Yes. It is included. Do you think that it's important for learners to develop, develop visual literacy skills...?

Yes.

And, and what specific skills, or in what way do you think they need to be taught about visual literacy?

Ok. Looking at the fact that we are so visual, I think we more visual nowadays (unclear), but we've not always been visual, I don't know (unclear). But there's such an emphasis on television, media of all sorts, computer graphics, posters, etc. we seem to have more of that than we probably did and maybe, I don't know if there was a greater need, there's a greater need now than there seems to be before, to make sense of the various special media. And therefore I think it's important, it has to be an important component of the syllabus. And I'm wondering if we do enough justice to it?

What specific elements of visual literacy design do you think are the most important for learners to develop, if you had to prioritise which visual literacy skill are most important for them to learn, what would you think are the top visual literacy skills?

Skills? Example...

Or aspects of visual literacy that you would hope they had, or what visual interpretation skills would you think are import, particularly important?

Um, if you start off with the grade 9s, um, with the syllabus and , and we go through those basic skills of how to analyse a particular frame , we are doing that unconsciously except what we're doing there is we're giving it names.

Perhaps I'm also not phrasing the question very clearly but, you know...

I, I, I'm thinking of what skill, Lyn, the skill of interpreting pictures, what other skill would there be?

Yes, well, yes I suppose that, that's what it boils down to.

Skill, I'm trying to define a skill..

If, if you send a child out and you say this child is visually literate...

Literate...

What does that look like or what would you consider being visually literate?

Ok. Um, for example, the skill of interpreting a poster. The skill of interpreting a web page. But that's made up of writing, it's made up of colour, graphics. So making sense of it.

That's...

So reading colour, for example, which we do.

Yes, that would make somebody able to cope with visual and ...

Yes. So looking at the composition of it and then making sense of it.

Sense of it... That makes sense to me. Can you give me some examples of how you use pictures or diagrams or films or visual material in your own lessons?

Ok. Film study. There we're literally looking at the composition of frames. But we don't only look at frames do we, because we look at the plot, we still do theme and character. But still linked to, especially where the theme and character's concerned, linked to the composition of those frames. And, and, and those scenes, those montages, etc . and what else? Well we do use the OHP, but that's across the board, so that is in a sense using visual literacy. Then we study cartoon analysis, and that is of course to make sense of cartoons,

Cartoon-style...

Newspaper. We study posters. Do we actually, propaganda.

Yes, propaganda posters, yah.

Propaganda posters. We do have advertising in detail don't we, and we start that, hopefully we should start in grade 9 and then that is actually making sense of advertisements, reading more meaning in a different way obviously. Looking at how the written message relates to and, in some cases enhance, your graphics.

Graphics, absolutely. And do you use posters or mindmaps or charts in any of your lessons?

Yes. Except the world map I'm trying to think of which other charts

Other charts...

That I use. You know 'there's, there's Alabama' or whatever or, or 'there's New Mexico' (inaudible)

Ok, do you point out things on the map?

Yes. yah. And, um, charts. No I must say I don't use many charts in my teaching.

You have taught graphs and the interpreting of graphs though?

Yes I did it (inaudible). We didn't do that last year but the year before,

Before, yes,

in grade 11 we did interpreting graphs. That wasn't easy for me.

Ok, is that an area they struggled with?

Yah, I'm wondering if I also wasn't very strong there. You know. And I did sense that perhaps. And we did it over a short period of time. So for (inaudible)

Yes, it has always been sort of squashed in, really.

Yah, but that's important, looking at the amount of statistics that's thrown at us through the media nowadays (inaudible). We did graphs,

Do you look at...

Visual media, film

Film, yes. Do you look at ever, they, they look at things like book covers or...?

Yes, we did

Um, blurbs and that sort of thing?

Especially in "Song of Be" we covered, remember there's an activity on where we analyse the cover and, and we looked for the meaning in it, and it's not just on the surface and it's open to so much of interpretation (inaudible). So what else, Lyn?

That's what I can think of offhand. Do you find yourself using a lot of visual materials as you teach yourself, as sort of teaching aids or teaching materials?

Except the OHP, textbooks, well not... a textbook...

But that the workbook, ok...

In-house workbook.

Those are the main, main things (inaudible)?

Yes, yah. I know you very good at, and you draw such lovely pictures, and I really,

Thank you.

I think that's excellent because it make a better impact. I think the impact is, is in some cases better. And for those who are watch...

Visually-orientated?

Yes, I think that's very (inaudible) of you

I think I do it because I am visually-orientated so it makes sense of it myself and then it possibly helps them...

Yes, it does help. And I think it helps to summarize ideas as well.

Yes. Yes.

I promise when I have time I'm going to try that.

You do also character sketches where the children produce mindmaps or chart things themselves?

Yes they do.

And are they quite...?

Would that be part of visual literacy too?

I, I would think so.

Ok.

Are they quite well able to make up a chart and explain it sensibly do you think? Are they au fait with using visual aids themselves, the learners?

Gosh, they're used to group work, I can say that. And I think in the English department they're actually used to working, you know when (inaudible) those workstations...

In those work...

that they produce there. And of course in grade 9 where they had to literally draw characters.

Oh yes they draw little pictures of the Harry Potter characters.

Yes. Yah. So that was, that, well that was an individual task, it wasn't groupwork. But yes drawing up, I mean we've done it in Matric, I think we tend to use it for

All the grades...

lots of our characters and themes because it works nicely. And yes, yah. If you consider, I wouldn't consider, I didn't think of it as visual literacy

think of it... visual literacy. But that could...

because they drawing up, they, they, they actually designing setting up on charts.

A poster or a chart, yes that explains the information graphically. Are there any projects that learners are expected to design visual or multimedia texts? Is that something that they're expected to do?

The Harry Potter (inaudible word) Harry Potter posters

Yes, poster, the Quidditch poster.

The Quidditch poster.

Yes.

What else do we design? In grade 10 they not called upon to design anything in that (inaudible), unless of course. Oh yes, the invitation.

Oh ok, they do in Romeo and Juliet, invitation.

The Romeo and Juliet invitation. Is that not part of..

Yes that would also I think be included as...

And then in grade 10 if we do the newspaper module and then they're asked to layout their own newspaper.

Ok, so they do layout and design of a newspaper?

Which is the end result of what, three or four weeks of work. But we haven't done that in a few years because it's too lengthy.

Ok.

And in grade 11 do we ask them to draw? I don't think so, we haven't this year I know. An obituary, the layout?

Yah, they do that.

But then that would come down to writing. Then that's the letter to the editor that we'd done, the obituary that we'd done, the diary which we do practically every year. (inaudible)

So it's the layout, yes (inaudible)

Yah. But... they've not been asked to draw any posters in grade 11 and 12.

And when they do their orals do they ever use visual aids as part of the oral tasks?

Too few to mention. I think in Matric, I think it was two children. [learner's name]?

Yes

Did she (inaudible)..

She did, she used a swimming one

No, although we say, you know, when we actually introduce the oral 'please use any visual aid'. Maybe we don't reinforce the idea strongly enough and therefore they do not do it, I don't know?

It's not maybe emphasized.

Or maybe it's too much effort, you know, I've got to draw out the OHP, the transparency, and I've got to design a chart. Maybe we just don't say 'please use a visual aid'.

Yes. Do you think it's a problem of access for the children, that they don't have access to it, or they don't see examples of it used, or do you think it's more is it that they don't know how to use visual aids or that they don't want to?

Possibly, don't... it's possibly how, well, I think there's, look there's a whole lot of things here. One is, it could be apathy. And I think my bit unruly students wouldn't've known how to design and to use it. And they probably don't see the benefit of using it as well. So there, so, so there very many issues as to why they possibly don't use it, and it's time consuming for them to actually think of the material, because besides learn.., writing your speech, writing your speech and learning it, now you've got to have another piece of work related to this speech. So it, it, yah, I think it's a host of factors that actually...

Various things.... Sort of, slightly different tack now. Do you think your teaching approach or method has changed quite a lot since the introduction of OBE? Have you become more visually orientated since OBE began, began, or...?

Yes I think so, because, why, we've been forced to

Ok. Can you think of examples of where you can see your own approach to teaching change?

What the (inaudible)

Or, or... that...

Yah. But you know what, it's largely the [school name] syllabus.

Ok. Is it, has it encouraged you to be, become more visual?

Yes. Because if you look at, because if you look at other schools, you're very much on your own.

Ok, so you think the, they way it's structured here is...

And I think our structure is, lends itself very nicely to us doing probably more, or, or experimenting a little bit more than one otherwise would have on one's own, and then one had to draw up all one's prep for three grades..

Ok.

You know...

So the relief of...

So, and the fact that, yes, it was. I mean, when I came in here we had just started visual literacy and then in grade 9 (inaudible) with 'The Witness'

Yes.

And that was the first, no, that was the second time we taught, because the first time we taught it it was teaching (inaudible)

Is that was [school name] the first time you taught visual literacy?

Yes. Visual literacy. And that was not even in the first ten years of my teaching.

Shoo. And how, how did you respond to having to teach visual literacy? Was it something...

It was daunting...

Did you pick it up easily or...?

It was daunting. I had to do a lot of reading in advance, more so than one would, you know for any ordinary lesson, because I literally had to know now, what am I teaching. Firstly why am I teaching it,

Yes

And what am I teaching, it was "Shakespeare in Love"

Oh, ok.

And fortunately I had the MacRat guide,

Yes.

so I literally was scurrying around looking for stuff to help me to prepare for that, because you can't go into a matric exam class and not know what you're teaching. So I had to very much, and I must say, since then and now I think, I think I've improved, maybe not as much I as would like to, but I think I'm more structured, and I think also learnt much because I literally had to know before I taught.

Knowing you designed the "Notting Hill" program for the grade 10s, was that also quite a challenge or had you found it easier after teaching 'Shakespeare in Love' to apply the same ideas?

No it wasn't because I was still learning then. And, and, and what I'd done was I'd actually gotten a whole lot of, of paper looking at how other people had done it, and then decided this works for us.

Oh, ok.

Or this works for me and us.

Yes. Yes. Yes...

And looking at what aspects are, would be emphasized and what, what were the main, what, what should we emphasize in visual literacy for grade 10, because we had to build on what we had in grade 9, and, and what would be challenging enough for them, and how do we develop on what we have, and so I actually looked at a lot of other guides, I know the "MacRat" guide was fairly helpful in that. And I looked at other modules on film study as well to help me design my own.

And what were your guiding principles in the design? What sort of, what conclusion did you come to after looking at all the other guides and previous work?

Ooh, that's a big question.

Yes.

Ok. Um, I more or less identified what the target areas were, like we had to do plot and then there were plot questions, but that you can do with any medium, novel, etc. and then based on the composition itself, I think that for me was the

Was the key...

Was the challenging part. You can set questions on theme, or you can direct study on theme and direct study on character. But now you have to couple it with what is on screen itself. So that was a bit more challenging, and then I actually looked at other examples, (inaudible) did it this way, I could borrow that and adapt it slightly and do it this way. Like the montage, for example. So I watch (inaudible) other montages and did other questions, and then said, ok, this works here. What does the montage do? So I had to know what those elements were...

Were and the translate it to the specific film...?

And how they worked, yah. So for me, I had to know that. And it became clear.

Ok.

It was a lot of work

Yes.

It was interesting though.

Yes.

Maybe (inaudible) was doing at that time actually.

I also wanted to ask you if you had spent time looking at the NCS document and the learning outcomes and if you had specifically noticed the assessment criteria or assessment standards that referred to visual literacy? Had you, had visual literacy as a, an element of the curriculum stood out for you?

No.

No, not so much?

Do you know why? Purely because I did not study it intensely.

Yes.

But I know it's there.

Yes.

I know very well that there's many assessments standards to do with visual literacy. I would not be able to quote them to you.. Yah.

To name them yes, but to noticed where they are. One of the statements talk about teaching learners to be critical viewers. Can you tell me what you would understand by that?

Ok. If, if you were looking, if you looking at advertising and that is being the view (inaudible) example, is that [other person interruption]

Critical viewer, what, or teaching children to view something critically. What do you understand by that term?

Is to look at it intelligently. And not just look at the picture and be fooled by a picture, so to read beyond that, that there is a message, that there is a reason. Or this picture and not that picture, for the size of this and for this colour. So it is actually to stop and to think and to analyse. Do we all do that? But I must say it's actually made me become more critical in the way I view anything.

Yes.

It's terrible when you're watching a movie.

Yes. Absolutely. You have to pick it apart.

So you can't just look at things on the surface and accept everything at face value, which I think what youngsters do when they look at any ad. Even when you're watching television or you're watching um, the movie. And have you not had kids come back and tell you 'but Mam, I see it differently'?

After they've got those...

I wonder if we take away the fun?

I don't think so. I think you get a deeper appreciation sometimes by noticing the skill of how it's done as well.

I admire the (??? Inaudible)

Yes. It's not just haphazard, and this is how it turned out is actually carefully designed to have that effect.

Yes. Yes.

Um, also one of them, one of the assessment um standards is that learners should be able to design multimedia texts. Do you think that's something that we address, particularly in the grade 10 syllabus?

I don't think we... what would be a multimedia text? Would it be for example, what if we asked them to set up web page, which of course they don't have the skills for because there's multiple skills involved. It's not only merely saying which words and pictures go in, but there's a whole lot of other technical computer-related skills. Would that constitute a multimedia..?

It would yes.

Would, would designing an advertisement then be?

Absolutely. Do you think that we enable them to not only critique an existing text, but design their own?

Looking at the theory they should ideally be able to, but it's not as simple as that Lyn. We had that a few years ago, did we, were you here for the grade 9s when we did that water module in the...

No I wasn't here that year.

It was the end of the year with the CTA.

Yes.

And they had to design advertisements and they struggled.

Shoo.

And all of them came back doing almost the same. There was, for for children who watch so much of TV there was very... of course, that's why there was so little creativity. And no, no depth.

So they may be able to critique something that's been presented to them but when it comes to actually generating the text, you think it's not a skill they...

No they can't. No. I, and I don't know whose failing that would be. I think it could be our failing because you can't just ask them to design something of this sort that they haven't been really really helped along and taught

that. So I don't think it's truly their own fault, I think it could be a failing on our part. And in that exercise we have like what, a few days.

Do you think it should be a priority for us as language teachers?

I think so. Yes because that is the way the world is moving.

Also...

Yes it is part of language (inaudible), communication.

Yes. Another sort of similar question. How do you as an English teacher see yourself fulfilling visual literacy and design learning in your own classroom?

Lyn, I'm limited by syllabus constraints.

Can you elaborate?

In as much as I'd like to explore advertisements for one whole term, because I don't think we really do justice, fine. If you, we, we can teach them the basis of the AIDA principle. But to see it in operation? To ask them to design a text and to use those principles, we don't have the time for that. We do analyse advertisements but how much of analysis actually will enable you to create one? So I don't think we actually do that, we don't have the time.

Do you think they're separate, separate skills?

I think they would be as well. You might find somebody who's very great at analyzing it, but who might not be able to put one together. I, I think that's, that might be so. And I'm sure there people very good at analyzing and putting one together.

Um, also this is quite a broad question, but, what would you say has had the most influence in developing your teaching practice in terms of visual literacy. What has guided your approach to visual literacy or your ideas about visual literacy. If you had to say, sort of major influences, or a major influence?

Well when I first started teaching it was major necessity. I had to know what, and understand what I was talking about. And "MacRat" guides were helpful I must say, they were very helpful.

Were they the, would you say the major influence that helped you?

Yah. And I, I'm sure there are other guides but the "MacRat" because it was accessible. And I think I've seen it in the guide, we did used to subscribe to it there and then we hadn't had it but then we requested because it was actually really good. And they helped tremendously. I'm sure that's not the be all and end all...

Yes, but it was a big help...

I, I'm sure it's, it's much more interesting than, than, than this watered-down version, which of course is necessary with students because you can't go and feed them something that's too complex. That, I think the "MacRat" guide had a great, it was a big help.

Yes. And you also mentioned the, the way that things are done specifically at [school name].

Yes.

Did that also...

That was motivating.

Did that also influence your approach to teaching visual literacy?

Yah. It did. Um, but you know we each teach...

Yes, in our own, in our own way...

As we can teach.

Yes.

And then I had to find for me what was best, and first I had to break it down for myself. But it's not just for my understanding, it's how I'm going to communicate it to somebody who's totally new to this as well. Um, yah, so I think the "MacRat" guides did help quite a lot. I don't remember of any person that I engaged in discussion on this issue, no, there wasn't. I mean, we've spoken, and um [name], yes, [name] was a bit more clued up than all of us were.

Absolutely.

Perhaps because she'd been exposed to and she seems to have a nat... I think you are. You're just naturally are curious and you then, then tend to pursue a little bit more about it than me (inaudible) so that would've been helpful (inaudible)

Um, I first of all wanted to ask you a bit about the positioning of the film study module in the grade 10 syllabus. Is there a significant, or a reason why it's at the end of the syllabus or at the end of the year or?

I think for one reason it's, the students actually find it a bit lighter. And so psychologically it's actually a good way to end off the term. But that's not of course the only reason. And it's a fairly short module, I mean we normally manage in three to four weeks. I think normally its three weeks that we actually do that. And, and I think the other reason, and I don't know if whether we've actually said this, is that we don't normally do film study at grade 11

Ok, yes.

And then we do it at the end. If we have to do it for the Matric syllabus then we'd normally do it t the end of the year. So...

Similar with grade (inaudible)...

It might actually, yes. And then in some cases like last year's grade 11s did not do film study at all. So the last they did film study was at the end of grade 10 and then we do it then in Matric as well.

Matric...

So it's a kind of pacing, you know from your grade 9.

Ok, grade 9, yes...

I mean that's the way you can look at it. I don't know whether we actually look at the development of a certain skill or a certain ability level. I don't think we've taken that into consideration when we've actually put the film study in the last quarter itself. Um, because we do build on what we've done in grade 9, we scan through very quickly. And then there new terms like we were discussing yesterday, index and icon and all of that stuff. So there isn't really a valid academic reason for that.

It just works out more conveniently? Which also brings me to the next question about how the grade 10 film study or visual literacy fits in the context of the rest of the grades. Can you comment on sort of the progression from grade 8 to grade 12 of what happens in each grade?

Ok, yah, well if you look at grade 8 we don't do film study at all. And I know we've been, have we spoken sometimes about maybe introducing it at a very basic level. And then in grade 9 we start, and then you still find that some of them, ok, they seem to, to grasp the basic skills of saying, oh, which angle and which shot, they seem to do fairly nicely at that if we look at our tests. And that seems to be as far as they go. But when you go to more in-depth searching questions and ask them to actually analyse composition with respect to angle and

shot then they just seem to fall down flat. Maybe it's too many words, don't know. And, but they can say what angle if they learn it and, yah, I think that's borne out by the tests that they can do that. And then in grade 10 we build a little bit more on that. We reinforce the basics very quickly and then we go on to synchronous sound, we introduce concepts of synchronous sound, more details where composition is concerned. I think we do colour and lighting a little bit more detail and yah, that's basically what we do there. And I think in grade 10 we also touch on character and theme a little bit more in-depth than we would have in grade 9, we don't do that in grade 9. Furthermore in grade 9 we do not have a formal, formal assessment in the sense of an exam. I mean class tests...

But it is examined at grade 10...?

Yes, yah. Class tests are standardized tests none-the-less, but we do not ask them to look at a still and analyse a still and look at the concepts that we've studied and explain those concepts. But in grade 10 we do that.

And then in grade 11 or 12?

And then of course we expect them to know the basics but we still go through the basics in grade 11 or 12 when we doing it and then it's actually a bit more abstract in certain cases, if you think about "Strictly Ballroom", some of those questions, ok, and lots of them cannot answer them. And then we'd go onto the literary essay, hopefully by then they're a bit more mature to actually handle the literary essay which I think they're going to be hard put to handle in grade 9 and in grade 10 looking at the fact that these are largely second language learners who are studying first language. So maybe that's why it's been structured so. I don't think I'd change it too much right now because looking at ability levels, because we do have the literary essays only in the senior grade and we do see a marked difference in the literary essay that a grade 10 child might attempt to write and one that a grade 11 child at the end of the year or a grade 12 child might write.

(inaudible) Absolutely. Also which brings me to the exams at the end of the year or the grade 10s. If you think of their performance on the visual literacy section, how did they fair in the exams?

You know, I don't know whether our exams are a very good guide to go by, because um, we test on what we teach, and generally they manage to pass the question. Pass would be what, forty, fifty percent. There would be the odd few who'd excel because they, they've studied and they seem to understand better. But it's no great shakes as such.

Do they do better in visual literacy than in, for example, language or other literature studies, or is it sort of similar to their performance in the other areas?

I'd say it's similar to their performance in literature..

Ok...

Not in language

Ok...

Not in comp, well comprehension is a totally different skill altogether. If I'm thinking about last year's performance on average, and once again it depends on the level of questions in your paper. And it depends on how much you get them to adapt what they've learned and apply it, and I'm afraid we don't have too many application questions. So as a result they pass the question, the result is a pass.

But it's more learning and remembering definitions and that sort of thing...?

Yes. Yah. So perhaps in the sense, to answer that question, maybe it aids them, because they know they going to get this theory and then they might tend to do better than perhaps they would do in an ordinary literature question if you looking at that piece perhaps.

Yes, ok, that makes sense. Um, are there other visual literacy skills addressed in the grade 10 program that come to mind, besides film study itself?

There is advertising

Ok...

Yah,

Do you look at the visual aspects of ad, advertising when you do that module, yah?

We do, yah. We do not teach cartoon analysis in grade 10 but I think now looking at the FET syllabus and their demands and the assessment standards that we have to include cartoon analysis, and it seems to be one of the prerequisites for the exam paper that we might have to,

To address...?

that we will have to teach the techniques of cartoon analysis, yah

in grade 10 as well. Also related to the, the sort of learners' ability, do they find it quite easy to pick up the terminology and jargon of visual literacy?

Going by the grade 9s, they did seem to.

And grade, in grade 10?

Grade 10s, it's actually a bit more complex for them and um, yah, I think it's purely because they do not apply themselves.

And do they, does that jargon get used in other aspects of the work or is it more focused specifically on the film study?

We do transfer to cartoon analysis

Yes, as well?

We do.

Yes...

I think even to advertising we actually analysing a, a poster or an advertisement we could, yes.

And do you think relative to other, I think we might have covered this already, but, um, is it relatively easier or more difficult, do they require a lot more supervision doing visual literacy work compared to other sections, for example, language or literature study or would you say they're all of a similar level of difficulty?

No I think visual literacy is, is in some sense enjoyable

Ok, more...

Enjoyable. Does enjoyable make it then a bit easier? Not necessarily.

Not...

Not with the grade 10s if you are going to analyse questions on theme and character in conjunction with the composition.

But they have a tendency to engage or enjoy it a bit more?

Uh huh. Actually they do engage in more discussion

Ok...

And I suppose

Maybe that assists their learning or their progress?

Yah, I think so, yah.

Do you think that they see visual literacy as important or relatively unimportant? What do you think their perception of that section of work...?

It's hard to say. I think they don't take it as seriously as they should because the whole concept of, we're watching a movie

Ok it's more entertainment than academic study?

Yes. Yes. And since we don't have to apply this on a daily basis, yes we should be aware of it, but we don't have to apply it on a daily basis. I mean when we're watching a movie we can just chill and veg out and not really wonder why this lighting is used, you know for example. So I don't perhaps think that they might take it as seriously as perhaps literature study because literature study is book work. And somehow looking at our cultures, book learning is important.

Interesting. Um, also just more on visual aids. I noticed you have a lot of visual aids in the classroom, posters and book covers and cartoons and what not. Um, do you use them as teaching aids in your lesson?

Um, not often. I must say to be very frank, no, not often.

They're more reference for the children?

They more, they are. And some of them were not even put up by myself.

Ok...

I just added to them. They're interesting to look at and I know that some of the kids actually go to the back and they browse. I've got these posters on learning aids and, and the Strictly Ballroom thing that [name] had put up. So they actually go and look at it and I notice now that the Macbeth pictures are becoming more relevant because yesterday somebody said 'but Mam, see the dagger', I said 'yes, you know, I actually forgot about the dagger'

Yes...

Yes. And I, I could've referred to it in my literature lesson and said 'see, dagger, this is visual' and I think for the child who reads, who is probably more visual that would be more useful.

So and...

So that's very helpful, yah I must remember my pictures that are on the wall. Yah.

Pictures. Um also another visual aid I noticed that you used is you, er, your er overhead transparencies specifically for memos and discussion of the memos. Do you find that it's more helpful having a visual aid and written up memos rather than just verbal discussion?

Yes, absolutely, yes. Because I, I think sometimes listening is just not enough. And there are of course children who, who, who, what is the word, who learn in, in, who have different ways of learning then perhaps two, it's actually hearing and it's sight, so two senses

Senses actually assist them?

Do help. Yah.

And in understanding?

It does. And then you're also forcing them to look at the spelling, not that they necessarily would learn it, but you can point out, and it's more structures. And once again when something is written down, it's important.

Oh ok. So they give, they have this perception that it...

So then we'll write it down, you know and, but of course it's just, it's not merely just copying from that Lyn, you know that.

Yes. Discussion and explanation...

You've literally got to discuss and explain what's on that. So just speaking about it, I mean I've done that. But it's not as helpful. And then you find that if a child is going to study and he's written down memo answers, and then you'd find that some of these answers are coming back in some of the questions, so he has had something to refer to or study (inaudible) as well.

Um, when you were doing specifically film study were there particular learning outcomes that you were attempting to address?

Yes, what um, the learning outcome where, agh, what is it, learning outcome 3

For reading and viewing?

And yes, there's that, and there's learning outcome 2 as well.

That is...

I can't tell you myself (inaudible). Yah also yah, reading and viewing is 2

and writing and presenting is 3

Yes. Writing and presenting would be when they actually do answer those questions and then if we do, and then of course they get time to, they present verbally. And if there's group work, like if we ever do character sketch, and I don't believe actually gone as far as to do group work in film study as such, there hasn't been that much time. Then there's always presenting, but presentation and written work, presentation in feedback, in classes of..., yah

and we were discussing yesterday how they used those charts...

yes

mindmap charts...

yah

as part of their presentation...

uh huh.

I wanted to ask you a few things specifically about the curric, curriculum, just kind of your views or your understanding of what some of these criterias are. In the LO1 listening and speaking outcome for grade 10, one of the assessments standards says that learners should be able to incorporate appropriate audiovisual, audiovisual aids such as charts, posters, photographs, images, music, sound and electronic media. Do you think that that is something that we address in our lessons? Do you think the children are succeeding in that outcome?

No. no. Aside from, aside from the cartoon analysis and the advertisement and then doing film study, we don't necessarily ask them to produce such texts.

Texts...

And then we don't have the time to do such production. And there's a lot more skills than what we teach that would be needed for the production of those

Those, materials...

Yes, we don't really do that.

Do that so much...Also one of the learning outcomes, this is under reading and viewing, says that learners should be able to interpret, interpret and evaluate familiar graphic texts. And I was just also wondering what would understand by familiar?

That which they see on a constant basis. So, which, graphic would be film, visual

Visual I would think so...

So would it be posters, would it be then stills, shots, advertisements, cartoons

Yes.

Ok

That makes sense.

And that is what we try to help them to do, don't we?

Yes. I think so.

So that's what it would be.

Also something that's interesting to me, also under the same reading and viewing category, it said learners should be explained how language and images may reflect and shape values and attitudes. And we should, learners should be able to identify and explain socio-cultural and political values, attitudes and beliefs such as towards gender class. Do you think that is something that we typically address in a visual sense?

Not. Look we do try this and, yes I think we try, especially in advertising and in cartoon analysis. And even in film study. I think we do try. We may not do all of it but we do try and we touch, and we look at how language works and of course we're looking at more connotation than literal meanings. Images, definitely. I think we do. Maybe not as extensively as this would require

Yes.

But yes we do try. Once again I'm just going to use the excuse of time constraints.

No but it's, it's truly a valid one.

That's, to be a field of study on its own altogether.

Absolutely. Another which or, this now comes under the LO3 writing and presenting...

Ok

(inaudible) yeah, it says,

Yah (inaudible)

Yes, that learners in their writing and presenting should be able to identify and explain types of text to be produced such as imaginative information or creating transactional multimedia texts and they should be able to decide on and apply the appropriate style when (inaudible) format of text...Is that something that (inaudible)?

I don't think we do that. I really, we, we want them here, if we, if we have to break this down, we want them to be able to identify

Yes...

Ok, so you can identify that this is an advertisement and this is a frame from a cartoon and this is a still from a film and this is a poster that one might see out in the streets and etc. So we can, we do ask them to be able to identify

To identify...

Explain, yes we do that,

But perhaps not so much produced?

but to be produced, no, we don't do too much of production I'm afraid.

Yah. And then the last one, this is still under the LO3 writing and presenting outcome. It says that learners should use a selection of visual and design elements in their writing and presenting. I just wondered what you understood by a selection

Across the board, multimedia

Yah, yes?

Is that the term multimedia?

It could be.

Would it be your written out, you know, your formal texts?

Formal texts?

Then it would be the few visual media that we, is it few that we (inaudible) I think we're not too bad, I mean

Yes, I, I was thinking we have mentioned various ones, but I was just curious because to me it's a rather, a vague term...

It's, it's vague, yah. And, and what are design elements? Would that be posters, adverts etc?

I would think so. Or possibly formatting...

Do we use it, we use it for analysis,

Analysis...

But we don't produce it

Produce it...

I suppose we should. But once again it's time constraints.

Constraints, Yes. If you think of the portfolio requirements for grade 10s, do any of the assessment tasks that have to be included in the portfolio emphasize design or visual aspects, is it part of the formal assessment programme would you say?

It would actually come under the writing tasks wouldn't it?

Ok. So how would they (inaudible)?

And then it would be, ok, you've got your essays, then you've got your media (inaudible) which

Transactional?

would be transactional, and then your shorter tasks. I know we've used the invitation, that would be design **be design, yes indeed...**

If we'd asked them to design their own advertisements using the skills that they should have learnt, the basics, then that would be design as well. I suppose that would constitute a short piece?

Yes, of transactional writing.

If we asked them to ask their own mini film, no but I don't think that's part, that is not part of it, no

Yes, no, no, no...

Then I would ask for multimedia texts, multimedia would actually be perhaps a radio advert or a television advert or maybe shoot a short film. I don't think our syllabus actually caters for that. However I suppose if we had to do it I wonder what they'd say to that? But it doesn't really. Am I reading that wrongly?

I'm just wondering if it fits into any of the categories.

Look it's creative writing

Writing yes...

And then it's transactional

Transactional writing yes,

And then your short pieces, yah which is...

So perhaps it might fit into that transactional category as well as into the language exam section, we were saying about cartoon analysis and you were going to (inaudible)

Where you analyse.

Analysis...

Yah, yah.

And in the...

And that is language-based.

Language, Yes. And in the literature section is film study considered a genre that must be studied or is it an optional addition, is it?

I think it, it seems to be an option

Is it a Fourth genre (inaudible)

It, it is the fourth genre. They, they do give you the option, because of course with not all schools being privileged not to have our equipment and maybe not having access to what, I, yah, you know it would be difficult so therefore...

Yes so it can be short stories or film.

or film, yah

So it would fall into those various categories?

yes. And we've not done short stories because we can do film.

Yes. And do you think it's more beneficial to do film than short stories?

I think it is

Yes?

Because I'm looking at it realistically on a day to day basis, that is what so many children expose themselves to for two or three hours a day, so yes it's relevant. And then, yes, short stories are sli, are different, but there are similar elements in your novel and in your short story and even if you're going to study a play there are similar elements, they're not the same but they, yes I think it's valuable, increasingly.

Thank you.

I just wish everybody could do that. I think it's very interesting.

(BREAK IN TAPE)

This is terrible. Ok it is important because of what we're exposed to, television, computer images and very much, I think an increased number of, of posters, outdoor, outdoor advertising

Absolutely...

And yes but the problem here is I think with like so many other subjects, if your teachers are not qualified to teach it then you can't do justice to it. and so, and like we had to learn how to teach it. That means that we can be taught by, or, or we can undergo courses to actually improve our teaching.

Teaching. Would you say that, if you look at the English staff as a whole, would you say they're well equipped to teach visual literacy?

No. I don't think any of us have done, I'm not sure if [name] has, we need to ask her, but I think all of them will be in the same situation that we are where you are going to have to be self taught.

Right.

And then I just think that if there was any union worth its salt or any education department worth its salt that they should actually look at filling in the gaps and, and that is gap.

In teacher training specifically?

It's a part of key learning.

Yes.

And I think that's very, very important.

Needs to be addressed?

We can't ignore it and say it's not happening because the kids probably spend more time before their television than they're ever going to do before a book

Yes.

Or with a book should I say...

Would you say our syllabus or approach to teaching is outdated or do you think it is still relevant to what learners (inaudible)?

I think we've tried to make it relevant. We have tried to make it relevant and realistic. Where language is concerned, we're still using the old traditional methods of, and it seems to work, it does work, and um no, I think we've tried to make it relevant here at [school name]. I just think that the GDE has not kept pace with the education departments around the (inaudible - place?) We'd like for them to read, they must read, but we can't ignore what they are exposing themselves to most of the time. And what about SMS texts? I'm not condoning that but I'm saying that's what they do. And all these messaging systems etc.

Yes.

They're exposed more to that than to an actual form of text. So we have to address those things, although I don't know what the language is, a big ongoing debate about SMS language. I still don't think that we can condone that kind of language. Not even for practicalities. So the training of your teacher, you can't expect this to happen if your teaching staff are not trained, and I think I could do with, with a course in it.

Absolutely.

I really think so.

Cos, I think it is possible to study yourself and to figure out what's going on, but you also need access to those resources in order to study and time and the motivation.

Yes, yah, yes. And somebody else who studied how this could be taught

Yes.

And you can of course decide from there, use what's valuable for you and your students from there. I think it would actually be valuable.

Great.

Is there a particular course or part of a teaching course anywhere, I mean you did yours fairly recently on visual literacy?

Visual literacy. Well, when I did my HDE training one of the, that was in 1999, we had to do a project on a film study, but it was more self study. One had to kind of find a film and make up a, a learning program based on the film.

Oh ok.

But there was no specific help given. You had to figure out how to do that yourself.

On, on suggestions, oh

Using your, your skills and your insight yourself.

Well I think as a teacher you can do that

Yes.

But you would benefit from discussion...

Absolutely. And then I think...

And from other sources.

In more recent times if I think of the English language teaching Masters we've done a lot of Powerpoint presentations and looked at what makes an effective presentation. So I think that has also pushed sort of the understanding of how visuals work. And I think perhaps things like having the Smartboards and how um data projectors have also brought in a visual element that perhaps wasn't there five or six years ago.

No that you speak about Powerpoint presentations and they all, I mean that's common isn't it? Is that part of an English syllabus? It seems to me that it could actually become part of an English syllabus?

It could.

Not just the technique of how to do it but literally setting up...

The presentations yes...

Ok, um, the computer skill itself, that's something else and that would imply that your students would have to be computer literate to actually set up presentations.

But it would be quite a valuable...

I think so

Addition to their...

Because isn't that need nowadays out in the corporate world?

I would say so. I would think so.

(inaudible) but then teachers would also have to be computer literate as well.

Absolutely. And I suppose one other constraint that occurs to me is having the computer equipment for the learners to work on in order to produce...

Yes, once again, accessibility,

And while we do have it it's not really I don't think really accessible and there are not enough machines for the size of class that we have, so...

But maybe in the future...

It could be possible

Wonder whether that would be though?

Well if we get more Smartboards it might also mean...

Are you talking about individual Smartboards?

Per classroom

Or per classroom? Yes, that might also facilitate presentations by both the teachers and learners, to do that...

Yes, yes and, and so they have the opportunity to, I mean if a child wants to do a Powerpoint presentation for a speech, that would, that is a presentation...

Presentation yes. And I suppose they can do the same thing with overheads or charts but I think there's perhaps a different dynamic to the Powerpoint because it's more animated and I don't know, it's, the actual program suggests certain design elements that maybe you don't get if you just...

And that is part of visual literacy

Literacy, yes.

So there'll be, there'll be multiple LO's there and assessment standards and (inaudible??)

Yes. So I think there are perhaps low tech and high tech approaches to doing the same thing but perhaps we need to equip children for more high tech environment than they have...

And that's the corporate world actually. And perhaps they say, but how many of us end up in the corporate world, it's a, a small, small minority.

Yes.

But as you said there's other ways of doing it.