

**Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Metacognitive Instruction for
English Second Language (ESL) Learners in the FET Band**

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate whether metacognitive instruction could be used to improve the reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking English Second Language (ESL) learners in the FET phase. The metacognitive instruction encompassed increasing the learners' metacognitive awareness, equipping them with metacognitive reading strategies and facilitating the transfer of these strategies to content subjects such as Life Sciences and Geography. The Vygotskian sociocultural theory that accounts for the roles of social, cultural, and historical contexts in comprehending text during academic reading tasks provided an appropriate theoretical framework for conducting the research. The study was comprised of one cycle of action research, framed within a paradigm of praxis. It took place in a high school in a disadvantaged community in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. A qualitative methodology allowed for in-depth insight into the metacognitive habits of ESL learners through various forms of data collection. Eight participants in Grade 10, ranging between 16 and 19 years of age, took part in the study. Their reading comprehension abilities varied, as did their English proficiency.

The data were presented as collected in the phases of the action research cycle and summed up in three data processes. Each data set was embedded in the chronological timeline of the study's progress and discussed in light thereof. Three broad themes were derived from the data, using qualitative content analysis. The data revealed that metacognitive instruction can improve the English reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking learners. This was reflected in both the quantitative and qualitative data sets. The quantitative data were used descriptively and interpreted qualitatively, in line with the qualitative methodology. The results of the study indicated that before metacognitive instruction can be successful, language proficiency, basic linguistic skills, and mental representations are crucial. The findings showed that mind mapping and constructing mental representations of the text are two effective metacognitive reading strategies that are easily transferable across the curriculum. They also revealed the strong link between culture and reading practices amongst different population groups. Cultural understandings of concepts such as respect and authority had a profound influence on the learners' considerations of what it means to learn, read and understand.

Key words: English Second Language, reading, reading comprehension, metacognition, metacognitive reading strategies, sociocultural theory, action research.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het ten doel gehad om te bepaal of metakognitiewe onderrig aangewend kan word ter verbetering van leesbegrip by Xhosasprekende leerders wat Engels Tweede Taal (ETT) in die fase verdere onderwys en opleiding (VOO) neem. Metakognitiewe onderrig het behels om die leerders se metakognitiewe bewustheid te verhoog, hulle dan met metakognitiewe leesstrategieë toe te rus, en hulle laastens daardie strategieë na inhoudsvakke soos Lewenswetenskappe en Geografie te laat oordra. Vygotsky se sosiokulturele teorie het 'n toepaslike teoretiese raamwerk gebied vir die navorsing, wat die rol van sosiale, kulturele en historiese kontekste in teksbegrip gedurende akademiese leestake in ag geneem het. Die studie het uit een siklus aksienavorsing binne 'n praktiese paradigma bestaan. Dit is in 'n hoërskool in 'n benadeelde gemeenskap in die provinsie Wes-Kaap, Suid-Afrika, onderneem. 'n Kwalitatiewe metodologie het deur middel van verskeie vorme van data-insameling diepe insig in die metakognitiewe gewoontes van ETT-leerders gebied. Altesaam agt graad 10-leerders van tussen 16 en 19 jaar, met wisselende leesbegripvermoëns én vaardigheid in Engels, het deelgeneem.

Die data is aangebied soos dit in die fases van die aksienavorsingsiklus ingesamel is, en is in drie dataprocesse saamgevat. Elke datastel is op die chronologiese vorderingstydlyn van die studie geplaas en teen daardie agtergrond bespreek. Drie algemene temas is met behulp van kwalitatiewe inhoudsontleding uit die data afgelei. Die data het getoon dat metakognitiewe onderrig wél Xhosasprekende leerders se leesbegrip in Engels kan verbeter. Dit het uit sowel die kwantitatiewe as kwalitatiewe datastelle geblyk. In pas met die kwalitatiewe metodologie, is die kwantitatiewe data beskrywend aangewend en kwalitatief vertolk. Die studie het beklemtoon dat taalbedrewenheid, basiese taalvaardighede en geestesvoorstellings noodsaaklik is vir suksesvolle metakognitiewe onderrig. Die bevindinge toon dat konsepkaarte ("mind mapping") en die konstruksie van geestesvoorstellings van die teks twee doeltreffende metakognitiewe leesstrategieë is wat maklik op die hele kurrikulum toegepas kan word. Die studie het ook 'n sterk verband tussen kultuur en leespraktyke onder verskillende groeperinge uitgewys. Die kulturele begrip van konsepte soos respek en gesag het 'n diepgaande invloed gehad op wat die leerders onder 'leer', 'lees' en 'begryp' verstaan het.

Trefwoorde: Engels Tweede Taal, lees, leesbegrip, metakognisie, metakognitiewe leesstrategieë, sosiokulturele teorie, aksienavorsing

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I would like to thank the NRF for kindly funding this study, without which it would not have been possible.

DEDICATION

To the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I pray that You will use this research to help the many children that You're so passionate about.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH INQUIRY

1.1. Motivation for the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the enhancement of reading comprehension through metacognitive instruction of English Second Language (ESL) learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The study was thus concerned with identifying various teaching skills that may improve the reading comprehension of Grade 10 ESL learners in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), English. It took place in a government school in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Authors of previous literacy studies have consistently stressed the need for further reading comprehension instruction in content-rich subjects, which are common in the FET phase (Knipper & Duggan, 2006; Pressley, 2002). A possible solution to the observed weakness in this area is suggested in a study by Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), who showed that the reading comprehension of learners improves with the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies involving metacognitive learning, as the relationship between metacognition and effective learning cannot be negated. Therefore, in this study, metacognitive instruction was used to improve the reading comprehension of the learners.

Language proficiency, especially home language proficiency, has a profound effect on reading comprehension. ESL learners, both internationally and locally, are disadvantaged as most of their schooling occurs in English and not in their home language. For example, a study by Crystal (1997) records that an estimated 700 million children worldwide are taught through English at school even though it is neither their mother-tongue language nor used within the school environment. Locally, language education, and the role of language in post-1994 South African education, has undergone many changes as educational dispensations have changed over time (Galyam & Le Grange, 2003; RSA Department of Education, 2002). Before 1994, “languages in South Africa did not enjoy the same status” (RSA Department of Education, 2007, p. 13); African languages were seen as inferior to English and Afrikaans, which were specially promoted through language teaching, culture, and traditions. Currently, in 2013, the majority of South African learners are still not taught in their home languages, despite the post-1994 emphasis placed on improving mother-tongue language competence amongst black learners (RSA Department of Education, 2002; RSA Department of Education, 2011b). One reason for this is that ESL learners in South Africa have been affected by the long-term effects of apartheid and the policy changes since 1994. However, based on their findings, many researchers suggest that by improving mother-tongue written literacy skills, reading and comprehension should improve as well (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, Humbach, & Javorsky, 2008).

Language proficiency has a direct effect on reading and reading comprehension. Various national policies are aimed at addressing these challenges and ensuring that African languages enjoy the same status as English and Afrikaans, even in educational institutions where English is used as the LoLT. The South African Bill of Rights (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996), the National Education Policy Act (1996), the White Paper 6 for Special Needs Education (2001), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2007, and, more recently, the South African Bill of Languages (2011) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2011 have all addressed these challenges on policy level. As a result of these policies, teachers and educational institutions are expected to provide ESL learners with support to ensure that they become proficient in English and to minimise the effects of learning through a second language (RSA Department of Education, 2007). This is in line with the goals of the NCS for Grades 10-12 (2007), which states that learners entering the FET band should have mastered the skills of speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing, presenting, and using linguistic structures and conventions in order to tackle more complex texts. An understanding of these texts facilitates critical awareness and improves reading and writing in the learners' home languages. Similarly, these learners are expected to be proficient in their First Additional Language (FAL) at a level close to that of their home language. An additive multilingualism approach is endorsed by the state for this purpose. The CAPS for Grades 10-12 describes additive multilingualism as what happens when an additional language and the home language are learnt concurrently: "In an additive multilingual programme, the home language is strengthened and affirmed while any further language learned is seen as adding value" (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 85), as is the case with the English language in the present study. Furthermore, the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) recognises that South Africa's cultural diversity includes language as a valuable national asset and thus promotes multilingualism in national education (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004).

Although it would be beneficial to South African learners, additive multilingualism is often not offered where schools operate autonomously. Home language instruction, from the first four years (Grade 1 to 4) of formal education, is encouraged by the Department of Education but not enforced, with the result that many South African learners do not become proficient in their home language or in English. In each school, the governing body of a school is responsible for determining the language policy and the LoLT. Policy documents provide positive guidelines and milestones for advancing additive multilingualism: the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) specifies that all learners must have a minimum of one official language as a subject in Grades 1 and 2, but from Grade 3 onwards, learners must have their LoLT and a minimum of one additional language as a subject (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004). Because of the influence that reading and writing have on academic achievement, the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R–9 (2002) states that both bilingualism *and* biliteracy must be developed so that learners' home languages can form a sound foundation to support the acquisition of the LoLT (Matjila & Pretorius,

2004). Up until now (that is, 2013), approaches to language learning have been developed to help FET phase learners achieve proficiency in both their home language and in the LoLT.

This trend continues as, according to the most recent curriculum document, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011), language learning in South Africa includes all 11 official languages. Each language is a mother tongue to a population group in South African society. However, many schools only offer one or two of the languages as subjects, and thus the majority of learners do not have the option of learning in their mother tongues. In reality, many learners are still unable to communicate well in English by Grade 10 (RSA Department of Education, 2011b), let alone read and make meaning from print (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004). These FET phase learners therefore need sufficient support to enhance their English proficiency and reading comprehension so that they are able to meet the requirements for matriculation as well as prosper in tertiary education and the working world. According to the NCS for Grade 10-12 (2007, p. 22), Grade 10 learners should already have the knowledge, skills, and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) of a home language and a First Additional Language (FAL) with “a high degree of accuracy and appropriateness” when facing a variety of texts and contexts. Some studies (Cummins, 1981; Roseberry-McKibben & Brice, 2000) have shown that knowledge and skills developed in the mother-tongue language are transferred to form a linguistic foundation for advancing second language proficiency. Furthermore, Carrell (1991) found that second language reading ability is heavily dependent on first language reading ability but is predominantly dependent on second language proficiency. Despite the central role that language proficiency plays in reading comprehension, many other extrinsic factors influence learners’ basic literacy development.

Based on known statistics, it seems unlikely that all isiXhosa-speaking South African ESL learners will develop first language (isiXhosa), second language (English) proficiency or sound reading practices (Matjila & Pretorius, 2004). Certain researchers (Coetzee, 2008; Matjila & Pretorius, 2004) have reported that, in South African high schools, most Grade 8 learners entering high school have deficient reading skills, regardless of whether they read in their mother tongue or in English. In summary, as Pretorius and Mampuru (2007, p. 56) note, after a longitudinal study about reading in developing countries, “the quality of an education system depends vitally on access to books” and many children are expected to gain literacy skills without books, which is like trying to play soccer without a ball—both impossible and meaningless. Literacy education is a complex, long-term process and thus requires research which is deep and thoughtful, especially in the South African context. The project described in this thesis was aimed at contributing in this regard, and while it could not help improve the learners’ mother-tongue proficiency in isiXhosa, it is hoped that it provided the necessary support to the learners to improve their English language proficiency, along with their reading comprehension.

1.2. Reading and Comprehension

Language, reading, and reading comprehension are dynamic, interdependent areas of literacy development. For example, language proficiency determines reading fluency and comprehension, while reading increases vocabulary knowledge, which, in turn, improves comprehension. Therefore, in this section, reading comprehension is discussed in the context of language development.

Pretorius and Lephala (2011, p. 2) state that “language is the vehicle through which and in which reading is done, but in whatever language children do their schooling, reading needs to be a central school activity; it needs to be taught well and it needs to be meaningful.” Furthermore, reading is said to be a highly complex phenomenon involving many cognitive-linguistic skills and socially embedded knowledge and processes (Pretorius, 2010). It starts in early childhood and stretches right through into adulthood as vocabulary expansion continues throughout an individual's life. Reading has four main components: decoding, comprehension, response, and metalinguistic or metacognitive knowledge. These four components operate within the individual context of the reader—meaning the reader's perceptions, response to the text, values and attitudes, past experiences, and family and community life all influence the reading process (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011).

As a result, reading is influenced by a web of factors, many beyond a child's control. ESL learners must learn to process phonemes, speech, and sound while reading, in order to make meaning. In addition to these, the culture associated with English also influences the ESL learners' comprehension. To a Xhosa child, English as a language is not embedded within the familiar values and social norms of his¹ mother tongue, isiXhosa (Fleisch, 2008). Nel (2011) worries that English, as the LoLT, creates tension for the learners as they are placed in a language environment that is dominated by the culture associated with the English language but which differs markedly from their personal cultural backgrounds. As previously discussed, many South African learners can be considered poor readers, with alarming linguistic deficits in both their first and second languages. However, Pretorius and Lephala (2011) point out that from study results such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2006) that ranked South African learners last of all the participating countries, it is evident that South African learners have difficulty reading, regardless of the language in which they read. The underlying causes, such as poor language proficiency and a lack of resources, differ in every learner's situation, but there are common challenges present in many ESL learners' contexts. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

¹ Throughout this thesis, I made use of masculine pronouns such as “he”, “him”, and “his” when discussing ‘the general learner’. These masculine terms denote both the masculine and feminine unless specified by contextual clues.

Carrell (1991, p. 160), in accordance with Johnston (1984), considers reading comprehension to be a “complex behaviour” that makes use of various cognitive strategies in order to attain meaning. Comprehension (understanding the text and then making meaning from it) can be regarded as the purpose of reading. There are many different views on what comprehension comprises and different theories on how comprehension functions, but, as in reading, a few common components are crucial to comprehension (Gunning, 2008). Gunning (2008) considers these to be reasoning, attention, background knowledge, and surface features, such as writing style, text length, and decoding skills. Johnston (1984) notes that comprehension also has a cognitive aspect to it, in that the reader has to evaluate, integrate, and transfer knowledge as he reads. These can be considered metacognitive skills. On account of the direct link between excellent comprehensive skills and the metacognitive factors necessary for successful reading, metacognitive instruction provides a way of enhancing learners’ comprehension abilities. Dickinson, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2010, p. 307) emphasise that “language is an entrenched, slowly acquired, and highly complex ability that includes multiple component skills and is related to semantic knowledge another slow-developing competence that is associated with long-term reading comprehension.” Reading comprehension therefore needs deliberate instruction and practice. The effects of culture and the process of language learning all influence the development of comprehension: if learners have a poor primary school foundation, with inadequate literacy skills, they may not progress from decoding to reading while extracting meaning from text.

1.3. Metacognition

Metacognition in reading is defined by Cantrell and Carter (2009, p. 197) as “the extent to which a reader is aware and in control of his mental processes when interacting with text” or as Flavell (1979) and Hacker, Dunlosky, and Graesser (2009) say, it is “cognition about one’s own cognitive processes”. As Cantrell and Carter (2009) observe, there are two aspects to metacognition: awareness and control of cognitive processes. Metacognitive awareness can be divided into two subcomponents: 1) knowing that all people experience cognition (known as theory of mind) and 2) being aware of one’s own cognitive processes in relation to other people and to tasks. Similarly, control can also be divided into two subcomponents: 1) monitoring the effectiveness of cognitive processes and 2) regulating cognitive processes to improve their effectiveness. In this study, my aim was to help the Grade 10 learners become aware of their cognitive processes while reading (developing metacognitive awareness) and then to control these processes (evaluating their effectiveness while reading). The latter was taught during metacognitive training along with language instruction, if that became necessary.

The comprehension skills of adolescent second language learners have been relatively unexplored. Much research has been conducted about literacy development during primary school but relatively few of these studies have focused on adolescent literacy development and reading comprehension (Pressley, 2000). Consequently, very little is known about the beneficial strategies

that adolescent learners use to comprehend text (Cantrell & Carter, 2009). Previous studies (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, & Kurita, 1989) seeking to improve adolescent reading comprehension have been focused on the comprehension strategies used by successful readers. While traditional interventions often emphasised learners' mastery of basic skills, such as decoding, recent studies of comprehension have been rooted in cognitive research. It has subsequently been found that successful readers make conscious use of metacognitive strategies while reading to construct meaning from texts (Baker & Brown, 1984; Cantrell & Carter, 2009, Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Garner, 1987; Pressley, 2000). In this study, the focus is not on comprehension strategies *per se* but on the development of metacognition, that is, the regulation and control of thinking processes during reading. Thus, strategies were used as tools aimed at promoting the development of metacognition. Previous studies demonstrating the benefits of metacognitive instruction prove that such instruction would be especially helpful for ESL learners learning to read and reading in a second language (Block, 1992).

Given the low levels of literacy amongst South African learners, metacognitive training for reading comprehension provides a means of attaining higher reading comprehension levels and reading performance (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1996). Recent reading comprehension research has shown the value of explicit, structured instruction of metacognitive strategies, enabling learners to accomplish reading tasks effectively (Cantrell & Carter, 2009). For toddlers and pre-school children, the development of a theory of mind is the precursor to the development of metacognitive awareness or knowledge about the world and reality (Williams & Atkins, 2009). Once a child has developed a theory of mind, he possesses the necessary hardware to begin developing cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Importantly, language is intricately involved in the development of theory of mind. The more a child is exposed to metacognitive terms such as 'know' or 'believe', the faster his theory of mind develops (Milligan, Astington, & Dack, 2007). This process is bidirectional (Williams & Atkins, 2009). Thus, theory of mind and language form the building blocks for the development of cognitive and metacognitive functions in later life. Metacognitive strategies that can boost this process are an important part of instruction during primary schooling. Thus, to provide the adequate support that ESL learners need to accomplish learning tasks, adequate metacognitive training is needed to enhance language proficiency, reading, and reading comprehension in the study participants' FAL, that is, English.

1.4. Problem Statement and Research Questions

Previously, studies on ESL learners' reading have been conducted in relatively affluent communities in developed countries. Many of these studies on biliteracy were concentrated on investigating languages that have well-established traditions of both reading and writing (Pretorius & Currin, 2010), such as English and Hebrew (Geva, Wade-Woolley, & Shany, 1997), English and French (Geva & Clifton, 1994), or English and Dutch (Van Gelderen, Schoonen, Stoel, De Gloppe

& Hulstijn, 2007). However, in developing countries like South Africa, where there is neither one dominant language nor culture, home language proficiency and literacy skills need to be closely examined (Pretorius, 2010; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). As already mentioned, language proficiency and literacy skills are important components of reading and reading comprehension. The enhancement of ESL learners' reading comprehension is often dependent on home language and second language proficiency. Van Gelderen et al. (2007, p. 488) observe that "language-specific types of knowledge, such as vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge, have substantial effects on [home language] and [second language] reading comprehension." Moreover, explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies to enhance reading comprehension also relies on learners' language proficiency and on transcending traditional, often cultural, ways of understanding and thinking. Although language proficiency is not solely sufficient for improving reading comprehension, it forms a significant part of a person's reading comprehension skills (Pretorius, 2000). Importantly, researchers and teachers must consider that adolescents are in the process of developing their home language proficiency and thus components like vocabulary, grammar, and reading speed need to be considered within the development context (Van Gelderen et al., 2007).

The low literacy levels in South Africa have been reported in numerous studies. In addition, research has also revealed poor levels of reading comprehension as part of the literacy crisis in South Africa (Pretorius, 2010). For example, local studies, such as that of Strauss (1995), show 30% comprehension levels in Grade 6 learners, despite their good decoding skills. In addition, Pretorius (2002) reports that not only were ESL learners' comprehension levels low but their vocabulary levels and English proficiency levels were also low. Furthermore, national and international studies reflect the crisis in South African literacy. For example, the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) cross-national study of Grade 4s in South Africa in 1999 found their literacy levels to be at 48.1% (Coetzee, 2008; Fleisch, 2008) and in the 2006 international Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), South African children ranked last amongst all 40 participating countries. Such statistics at primary school level warrant alarm because, within the FET band, 75% of information that high school learners are expected to access is contained in textbooks rather than transmitted orally (Hugo, 1991). In addition, many black South African ESL learners who come from poor-print environments see reading as a chore and seldom read for pleasure (Mol & Bus, 2011). The majority of South African ESL (especially isiXhosa-speaking) learners seem doubly disadvantaged, with possible weak literacy foundations from primary school and an oral linguistic emphasis derived from their oral culture.

Thus, many factors need deep consideration when examining the reading comprehension of black ESL learners in South Africa. However, metacognitive training provides a proven foothold from which to start addressing this issue. More importantly, it provides a starting point for high school learners with poor literacy foundations who are learning in their second language. From Van Gelderen et al.'s (2007) study, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension of Grade 8 to

10 learners can be determined by their metacognitive knowledge. This knowledge forms part of both home language and second language reading development but does not function as “carrier of cross-language transfer of [home language] reading strategies” (Van Gelderen et al., 2007, p. 487). Thus, it is necessary that learners are taught metacognitive strategies to facilitate this transfer and enhance their reading development, both in their first and second languages. Many researchers endorse the explicit instruction of metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension, which benefits both skilled and non-skilled readers (Concannon-Gibney & McCarthy, 2012; Eilers & Pinkley, 2006; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). Interestingly, Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) note that children who lag behind their peers in Grade 1 reading but are able to catch up by Grade 3 or 5 seem to have a positive trajectory for future reading development. The South African Department of Education (2002) expects all first and second language learners to acquire language proficiency levels, including CALP skills, that enable them to think and learn effectively in all school subjects while accessing subject content in English (Landsberg, Kruger, & Swart, 2009). The aim of this study is to aid in that acquisition process.

I experienced these abovementioned difficulties, first hand, when working in a local high school as part of a module assignment in my Honour’s degree year. I met with four Grade 8 learners over eight weeks to provide reading support for their specific reading barriers. All four learners had serious barriers to learning and needed extensive support. The Grade 8 learners displayed no awareness of their metacognitive processes. Once the learners encountered difficulties in their reading, they either stopped reading or skipped over the challenging word(s). As a result, their reading comprehension was severely affected. Furthermore, the learners did not seem aware of how to overcome their comprehension difficulties. Through interviews with the learners and the Grade 8 grade head and by classroom observations, I learnt of the many context-based difficulties that hindered their reading comprehension. Some such difficulties included disruptions in schooling; late exposure to English, the LoLT; a limited English vocabulary; limited opportunities to practice speaking English, both colloquially and academically; limited exposure to print despite library facilities; mother-tongue instruction with dual English instruction; infrequent code-switching; and rote learning of content without comprehension.

The aforementioned difficulties were case specific, but as I began informal classroom observations, I became aware that these challenges were applicable to many of approximately 1400 learners attending the high school. Most of the children in the school had come from rural schools in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and had moved to the Western Cape to complete high school. In the rural schools of the Eastern Cape, the four Grade 8 learners had received mother-tongue instruction up until Grade 6 and had not switched over to second language instruction (English as the LoLT) in Grade 4, as prescribed by the state. As a result, most of the students had only been exposed to English in Grade 7, when attending schools in the Western Cape. The lack of exposure to English was a severe disadvantage to the learners and, understandably, they had limited English vocabulary. Although they could read fluently, text

comprehension was not apparent. This is worrying as many researchers (Carrell, 1989a; Fasheh, 1995; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Mbise, 1993; Pretorius, 2000; Saville-Troike, 1984) consider reading comprehension to be the most important learning tool for second language learners in academic contexts. Pretorius (2000) rightly states that there are also very few expository texts in African languages. This may be a result of the fact that many African languages, and especially isiXhosa, are predominantly oral languages. Lastly, English reading comprehension for isiXhosa learners may be influenced by many factors. These factors are beyond the scope of this study but include the influence of culture on language use, the role of reading in language communities, the role of oral storytelling in a language community, differences in language systems, and the role of culturally-embedded language in identity formation for individual learners (Pascoe & Smouse, 2012).

In light of the above, this study was aimed at addressing the following main research question:

Can metacognitive instruction be used to improve the English reading comprehension of ESL learners?

As well as the following sub-questions:

- Do learners demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading? What evidence is there of this?
- What types of metacognitive skills and/or strategies are most effective during reading with the goal of improving English reading comprehension?
- If reading comprehension is improved, does the improvement have an effect on other content subject results, that is, in what ways does transfer take place?

1.5. The Research Plan

To address these questions successfully, a research plan was developed and followed to guide the inquiry. The research plan consisted of five structured stages, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). These stages helped to give shape and direction to the study. First, the research plan will be discussed, including the theoretical lens which informed and guided all stages of the research endeavour (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Vygotsky's sociocultural approach will be briefly explained.

Second, I will introduce myself as the researcher and discuss issues of relevance in the context of this study, such as social categories, cultural identity, and the role of language in identity formation. Third, a brief description of the research design will be given. Finally, clarification of key terms will be provided to ensure that the reader is able to accurately comprehend all necessary terms used in the study.

1.5.1. Phase 1: The theoretical framework for the inquiry

As mentioned previously, the Vygotskian sociocultural approach formed the conceptual framework or theoretical lens for this study. Thus, all concepts and collected data were reviewed and interpreted through this lens. Certain general principles underpin Vygotsky's work and therefore undergird the sociocultural approach. One of the principles is that learning and development originate socially. The social context forms part of the learning activity as the learner interacts within relationships with others (Oswald, 2010). Also central to the sociocultural approach is the principle that "human learning and development take place in cultural and social contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems and can be best investigated within their historical development" (Oswald, 2010, p. 9). Vygotsky believed that children should be active learners in their quest for knowledge. He posited that children learn through the social negotiation of meaning stemming from interaction with others (Cilliers, 2011). This interaction includes mediation with a "more knowledgeable other" and takes place through psychological and cultural tools such as graphic organisers or language. Vygotsky claimed that learning activities should pique the child's interest and should be aimed "just above [the child's] current level of competence" (Jaramillo, 1996, p.135). Here, he referred to the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 40), that is, "what a child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 87). Thus, a child is not to be characterised by his age or intelligence quotient score but rather by his potential for learning (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003).

Furthermore, the ZPD is controlled by an internalisation/externalisation mechanism (Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotskian theory posits that individual and social learning processes are not separate but interdependent. All learning can thus be seen as psychological functions that appear twice in the learning and development process of a child—first during the interaction between people (interpsychological) and second when internalised on an individual level (intrapyschological) (Oswald, 2010). Vygotskian theory emphasises the constituent role that social relationships and context play in a learning activity, as has been noted above (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). Thus, a person's cognitive development can only be understood within his cultural and historical settings where he actively participates through face-to-face interactions and language (Oswald, 2010). With relevance to this study, reading and the transfer of metacognitive skills both first require the internalisation of verbal thought and strategies in order to externalise and apply the learned knowledge and skills (Cilliers, 2011; Yau, 2010). External actions as part of mediated social activities are internalised by the child as knowledge and skills and become his inner cognitive tools that he uses to think and learn (Kozulin et al., 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Essentially, Vygotsky's belief in human understanding and cognition as social and cultural phenomena and not

as individual phenomena undergirded his theoretical stance (Kozulin et al., 2003). He believed that learning should 'pull' development, working from the outside in (Cilliers, 2011). Instruction should therefore pull development by preceding it and activating psychological functions in the ZPD, making instruction a source of development itself (Vygotsky, 1987). In the same way, metacognitive instruction can enhance children's cognition and therefore increase their learning potential, which should pull their development (Cilliers, 2011).

Mediation is another way to help a child learn within his ZPD and increase his learning. Vygotsky claimed that children do not often interact directly with the environment; their interaction is mediated either through a human intermediary or through psychological or symbolic tools. Examples of such tools include language, writing, graphic organisers, numbers, formulae, and symbols (Kozulin, 2003). The development of children's higher cognitive functions therefore depends on their mastery and internalisation of these tools in order to form their own psychological tools and master their cognitive functions, such as memory and reflection (Kozulin 1998; Kozulin 2003; Oswald, 2010). However, it is important to note that each culture has its own esteemed set of psychological tools, of which literacy forms one of the most powerful tools for any group of people (Oswald, 2010; Woolfolk, 2010). Therefore, the use and function of symbolic tools must be taught systematically and learners should be explicitly instructed about when and where to use tools. Language should be acquired through systematic instruction in the same way as domain knowledge. This is important because tools do not have meaning outside of their intended cultural context. Children need to be taught strategies to deal with subject matter before they are taught the subject content.

In addition, Vygotsky advocated teaching for development using mediation which necessitates the use of 'scaffolding'. Scaffolding is changing the level of support to suit the cognitive potential of the child. Over the course of a teaching session, a more skilled person adjusts the amount of guidance to fit the child's potential level of performance. More support is offered when a child is having difficulty with a particular task and, over time, less support is provided as the child makes gains on the task. Scaffolding is the provision of support from a teacher or peer that helps learners to move through their ZPD (Ashman & Conway, 1997). It is the provision of "temporary, adjustable support" (Ashman & Conway, 1997, p. 97) to develop and extend the learners' skills, for example, activating learners' prior knowledge about the content matter being studied. As the learners improve, this supportive collaboration between the teacher and learner should be gradually withdrawn to encourage the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the individual learner (Ashman & Conway, 1997). In addition, Watson (2000) notes that effective learning occurs when reflection and control of mental processes are the outcome of instruction, including the generalisation of knowledge and skills from the original context to other situations. These aspects reflect metacognitive self-regulatory skills in the form of evaluation, monitoring, and transfer respectively.

In conclusion, the need to analyse and change current practices with the use of metacognition in relation to reading comprehension in our schools was evident. The concepts of mediation, the ZPD, internalisation, and scaffolding in the sociocultural approach proved useful as part of the theoretical approach for this study. The sociocultural approach provided a good foundation from which to view these practices and allowed one to understand the emphasis that Vygotsky placed on language as a tool (Roth & Lee, 2007).

1.5.2. Phase 2: Introducing the researcher

“Wait ma’m wait ... [A deep frown spread across his usually jovial face] ... I want to understand this. Are you saying...?” (N, from a school in the Western Cape)

This brief flash of determined, active learning was the motivating factor for this study. Uttered in the last week of my work at an impoverished high school by a learner who had been the joker throughout the intervention phase of a previous study, it caught my attention and got me thinking about what I hoped for these learners. My concern was not just for these learners but for the isiXhosa-speaking ESL learners that I had gone to school with, the ones whom I had taught as a Life Sciences teacher, and those whom I stood facing as a new learning support teacher. Something had to be done to help them and I wanted to be a part of that solution. I had spent many hours doing preparation for the session, with reflection sheets that formed part of the Reflective Journal Assessment. These reflection questions forced me to consider certain aspects of my intervention activities: What had worked well during the lesson? What had not worked? What aspects of my strategy would I adapt or change for the following lesson? How was my perception of the learners changed with each lesson?

These questions elicited a personal conviction of the often unconscious neglect of my own metacognitive habits, and I, in turn, wished rich and extensive metacognitive habits for my students. I began to wonder whether N (quoted above) questioned himself when he read in English: “Do I understand what I am reading? Does it makes sense?” or “I don’t understand what I am reading, what can I do about it?” Having spent time with these learners, watching them grapple with English reading material and asking them many questions about their learning and reading comprehension, I knew that this was not the case and that I had to do something to equip them.

As mentioned above, the motivation for and desire to see this research through was rooted in very real experiences with four isiXhosa-speaking South African learners who formed but a drop in the ocean of the 87.5% isiXhosa-speaking people who originate from the Eastern Cape and looked for a better quality of life in the Western Cape (Green, Parker, Deacon & Hall, 2011). These experiences formed the catalyst for this project, which was aimed at enhancing the children’s reading comprehension and their learning across the curriculum. I have included this personal recollection to communicate to the reader how the research questions for this study originated as well as how I positioned myself in relation to the research questions.

Furthermore, these experiences reminded me that I was situated within a particular cultural and historical context. I could not view this study from an objective perspective as I, the researcher, form part of the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The subjectivity that accompanies all human experience cannot be banished from research and I was therefore aware that my values, beliefs, perceptions, and past experiences accompanied me into the research context. I occupied the same world as the phenomenon being studied (Morehouse, 2012). Research, then, is not value-free and the researcher must carefully navigate the ethical and political considerations of his work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Morehouse, 2012). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), I could not disregard the subjectivity of my activity and had to acknowledge that I viewed the world and studied phenomena from a subjective viewpoint. Similarly, from a Vygotskian sociocultural position, the preconceived ideas and understanding rooted in my cultural and historical background “influenced what [I] thought was worth enquiring about, the questions [I] asked in research or practice, the type of questions that made sense to [me] and [my] interpretations of the findings as a researcher” (Thrift & Amundson, 2005, p. 14), that is, they formed a subjective lens through which I viewed all the study aspects.

My subjective perspective of the world and the studied phenomenon mean it was necessary to acknowledge any differences in ethnicity, race, and nationalism. Given the complicated and hurtful legacy of apartheid in this country, it was necessary for me to reflect on the social categories possibly operating within the research process. In South Africa, “black” is used to refer to people with dark skin, often people who would have been oppressed under the apartheid regime. However, this term, simply denoting skin colour, does not convey the nuances that exist in culture, language, dress, or religious practices of the many dark-skinned individuals in this country. In South Africa, the largest race group is “black” but black individuals originate from different tribes, such as the *amaXhosa* or *amaZulu* people, that rarely have much in common besides language commonalities and shared geographical spaces. Although, in most countries, culture-bound conceptualisations of race and ethnicity are unacceptable, it is necessary to point out these distinctions in light of this study’s South African context (Banton, 2011). As Banton (2011, p. 187) notes “to be culture-free ... research will have to uncover determinants that underlie the consciousness of the individuals involved.” He believes that the “recognition that certain others are different is expressed in the use of a proper name” and in the case of this study, the recognition of the uniqueness of the study participants will be acknowledged through the use of “isiXhosa-speaking”, “isiXhosa”, “Xhosa” and “Xhosa culture”. According to Gutierrez (2002), avoiding the use of social categories as labels for a culture’s practices or processes is often difficult. This is especially true in South Africa where there is a variety of cultures, languages, and religions present in any given area at one time. In such a situation, social categories such as “white”, “coloured”, “black”, “English”, “Afrikaans”, or “Xhosa” often form building blocks of individual identity and assert individuality in a diverse society. Thus, in this study, the aforementioned categorical labels were used strategically to indicate additional context for the reader and not disassociation or contempt

on my part. With these terms, I aimed to acknowledge and respect our differences but to transcend them as traditional labels and use them rather as descriptive terms. In addition, it was important to note that these social categories are not static but shift as society and individuals interact and change (Banton, 2011).

Alsup (2004) claims that a researcher practicing self-reflexivity, a metacognitive skill, makes his social and cultural positions known in relation to the participants and contexts under scrutiny of the study and thus, as Willis (2007) points out, increases the trustworthiness of the study. In light of this, I wanted to clearly communicate my positioning at the beginning of this study and to be cognisant of it throughout the research process.

Against such a background, it was necessary for me to position myself and my research participants culturally and historically. I was raised in the democratic South Africa as a white female. My parents formed part of the privileged white minority under the previous regime. The privileges that they enjoyed during that time have benefitted me even though apartheid is no longer in operation. One of the most valuable privileges has been access to a quality education, from pre-primary school through to tertiary level at university. Similarly, my research participants have also grown up in the new democracy; however, they have not had the opportunities that I have had. Their parents and grandparents would have been oppressed as “non-white” under the previous government on the grounds of certain phenotypic criteria and deprived of basic resources, education, and dignity, to name but a few. This heritage of lack has influenced the adolescent learners, who, even though they have the right to vote as adults, still struggle on a daily basis with financial provision, a lack of basic resources, and education. It was evident that the consequences of the previous political dispensation were still actively being played out in the children’s lives. Perhaps, the greatest evidence of this was the impoverished community where the target school is situated. From the lack of resources at the school to the surrounding informal structures or “shacks” used as homes, every aspect of township life spoke of profound dearth. Bearing all this in mind, research aimed at understanding individuals’ lived experiences and working towards social change seemed the correct way forward.

1.5.3. Phase 3, 4 and 5: The research design

This section will provide a brief summary of the research design used to investigate how to enhance the reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking high school learners through metacognition, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 4. The last three phases, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), will include details about the research paradigm, the chosen research design, the research methodology, data collection and analysis methods, and finally, the data interpretation and discussion.

A research design that would allow the collection of meaningful data reflecting the realities of English reading comprehension among isiXhosa-speaking learners was needed. For this purpose,

an action research approach was chosen in order to provide a well-rounded description of the research problem. However, given the extent of the educational difficulties that Xhosa learners face on a daily basis, a mere description of the problem seemed unacceptable without an intervention. I chose action research as my research design because it allowed me to explore the reading comprehension of ESL learners in detail and provided the means of staging an intervention to satisfy my desire to be 'solution-focused', as discussed in Section 1.5.2. This action research was embedded in a paradigm of praxis. Praxis describes the cyclical interaction of action and reflection. A researcher working from within this paradigm first acts and then reflects on his action before acting again. In this way, he is constantly seeking to act in more meaningful ways, based on the outcomes of his last action (O'Brien, 1998). The 'paradigm of praxis' and 'action research' therefore complement each other as both are based on action and reflection. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Action research can be described as cyclic, with action and critical reflection taking place in turn. There are four stages in an action research cycle: the planning phase, the action phase, the observation phase and the reflection phase (Costello, 2003). This study consisted of one cycle only, owing to time constraints, but a problem identification phase was introduced before the planning phase. Thus the research sequence was as follows: problem identification, planning, action, observation, and reflection.

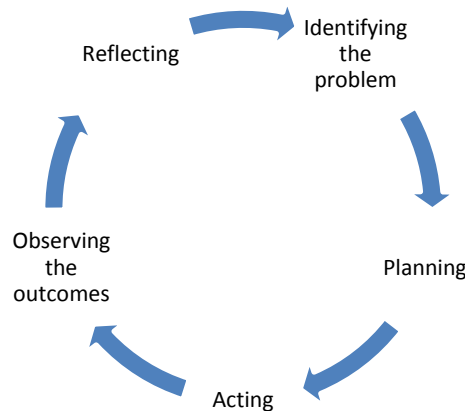


Figure 1.1: The action research cycle.

Action research relies on careful observation, meticulous recording of data, and collating of multiple data sources to 'quantify' subjective reality. It provided the responsiveness and flexibility needed for this study with its emergent design. Action research also dovetails with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the social, cultural, and historical aspects of human development (Dick, 1993; Reason & Bradbury, 2008), and so formed part of a framework for the study's intervention. In this way, it was hoped, this project would contribute to the body of knowledge on Grade 10 ESL learners' reading comprehension.

A qualitative methodology was applied in this research project. Qualitative research, in the interpretative paradigm, is aimed at understanding human experience. It is focused on how people ascribe meaning to their individual and social experiences and what that meaning is. Qualitative researchers believe that meaning cannot be divorced from its context without ceasing to be meaningful. As a result of this, qualitative researchers choose to study a phenomenon within its context. Therefore, researchers often immerse themselves in the context of study and experience its embedded realities. Importantly, qualitative researchers do not possess fixed conceptualisations or intentioned results when entering the context of study but rather allow themes and questions to emerge and change as they interact, making the qualitative data analysis process “a highly intuitive activity” (Krauss, 2005, p. 764).

In this study, qualitative data was collected by means of contact sessions, a focus group interview, dialogue journals, a reflective journal, a metacognitive awareness test, and a comprehension test. During the focus group interview, I attempted to understand whether any change takes place in the ESL learners’ metacognitive activity when they read in English. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 887) view focus groups as situations which allow “many kinds of everyday speech acts that are part and parcel of unmarked social life”. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) concur, noting that focus groups provide researchers with important insights and strategies to understand better the research subjects’ experiences. Focus groups allow people to view their subjective experiences objectively and thus develop an awareness of self, which is often a precursor for change. In the context of this study, the metacognitive awareness reinforced during focus groups may help learners to reflect on their reading experiences and use the metacognitive skills they have learnt to enhance their English reading experiences. Importantly, focus groups can also provide ‘safe spaces’ that research participants use to develop and nurture their ‘voices’. In addition, because participants often interact with each other, focus groups decrease the influence of the researcher in directing conversation and interaction (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). In summary, focus groups “[capture] people’s responses in real space and time in the context of face-to-face interactions and ... strategically [focus the researcher’s] interview prompts based on themes that are generated in these ... interactions” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 899).

Similarly, dialogue journals also allow learners to develop their personal voices. Liao and Wong (2008) list improved English vocabulary, intrinsic motivation, and reflective awareness amongst the benefits of this practice. The learners in Liao and Wong’s study indicated that the use of dialogue journals assisted them in promoting and furthering their self-understanding and self-growth and in allowing them to mature through sharing (and gaining feedback about) their thoughts, feelings, and self-perceptions, as well as prompting them to reflect on the activities and practices in their daily lives. I hoped that the learners in this study would experience similar benefits, and therefore the learners’ dialogue journals and my reflective journal both served as rich data sources for this project.

Last, the metacognitive awareness test and reading comprehension test were used to ascertain the learners' levels of metacognitive awareness, metacognitive activity, and reading comprehension, both before and after the intervention. These tests will be discussed in detail in Section 4.4.1.3. The collection of rich qualitative data and an exploratory intervention were possible through an action research cycle, framed within a paradigm of praxis, which puts theory into action (Ball & Wells, 2006). The table below provides a general outline of the action research cycle:

Table 1.1: The Research Plan

THE RESEARCH PLAN	
Phase name	Phase description
Problem identification	<p>Step 1 - Identify participant learners (Consent and assent forms)</p> <p>Step 2 – Reading comprehension test and Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSİ) (Dialogue journals distributed to learners in first contact session. My reflective journaling began from the first contact session).</p>
Plan	<p>Step 3 – Analysing informal test results (From Step 2: Test and MARSİ)</p> <p>Step 4 – Informal questionnaire</p> <p>Step 5 – Prepared materials for contact sessions</p> <p>Step 6 – Getting to know children and building trust relationships (Continuous process including dialogue journal content)</p>
Action (Intervention)	<p>Step 7 – Revision of foundation reading skills (Letter-sound relationships, phonemes, decoding, syntax, blending, co-articulation)</p> <p>Step 8 – Reading for meaning: recipe</p> <p>Step 9 – Metacognitive training with metacognitive reading strategies</p>
Observation of outcomes	<p>Step 10 – Preliminary data analysis (Included my journal and learners' journals)</p>
Reflection	<p>Step 11 – Reading comprehension test and MARSİ</p> <p>Step 12 – Focus group interview</p>

Each phase has certain steps in it that needed to be completed before the next phase can begin. First, in the problem identification phase, learners were identified by certain selection criteria as possible participants. These learners were identified by the Learning Support teacher, who is familiar with each learner's English proficiency and their general academic progress (Detailed selection criteria for the intervention participants will be discussed in Chapter 3). The learners were then informally tested using a reading comprehension test. The reading comprehension test

consisted of a text selected from a Grade 11 textbook and of questions targeting the three components of reading comprehension: literal understanding, anaphoric inferencing, and general inferencing as identified by Pretorius (2012). This allowed me to identify the areas in which they needed support. Given the cultural and linguistic differences between the learners and me, it was essential to build relationships with each individual learner and to gain their trust throughout the research cycle. Part of this was done through informal activities, such as baking. All such tasks required learners to read, comprehend, and make meaning from the text, for example, in order to produce an edible product from a recipe. The learners then worked on an informal questionnaire containing several questions probing the metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading. The questions were loosely guided by the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARS), developed by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002). This index assesses a learner's metacognitive awareness of his reading strategy use. The tests and questionnaire provided sufficient data about the learners in order to plan a successful intervention in the action phase.

Second, the planning phase in the action research cycle involved analysing the data collected during the problem identification phase and then compiling the material for the contact sessions. Third, the focus in the action phase was on infusing all the activities with purpose, to emphasise 'reading for meaning' and improving the learners' reading comprehension by integrating the whole language approach and the phonological approach (Dednam, 2005).

Fourth, throughout this process, I collected data and analysed it so that adequate planning could take place between contact sessions. This included reflecting on the learners' dialogue journals and the reflective writing in my journal. Thus, the reflection session after every contact session informed the planning phase for the next contact session (Dick, 1993). In this way, I had the flexibility to adapt to the learners' needs on a weekly basis. The final data analysis took place during this fourth phase as well.

Last, the reflection phase was research intensive. I conducted a final focus group interview that gave the learners an opportunity to reflect on the whole research cycle as well as each individual phase. As Willis (2007) notes, people are best understood within reality as it is viewed from their perspectives, that is, their subjective realities. Therefore, in order to understand the learners' socially and historically situated experiences of English reading as well as possible, it was necessary for me to "understand the lived experiences" of the learners (Creswell, 2003, Willis, 2007, p. 7). The dialogue journals also formed a valuable source of information in the outcomes phase. I assessed whether the learners' general literacy skills had improved, whether their reading comprehension in English had been enhanced, and whether they had developed metacognitive awareness while reading. Then, all remaining data was collected and analysed using qualitative content analysis and written up for the final thesis document (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). Bisman (2002) warns of the differences between reality and people's perceived, subjective

realities. The action research process provided multiple opportunities and varied sources for data collection and allowed me to triangulate information sources to assess these differences (Dick, 1993) thus playing a crucial role in ensuring validity of data. In summary, in response to a paucity of research about metacognition amongst isiXhosa mother-tongue speakers, the action research cycle allowed me, the researcher, to gain further insight into this phenomenon.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe four areas of ethical dilemma commonly faced during educational research: informed consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy. Burgess (1989) also includes research sponsorship, research relations, and data dissemination as posing possible ethical problems. Many widely accepted ethical principles were applicable to this study, along with the validity and reliability concerns for qualitative work. The ethical considerations as well as validity and reliability concerns for this study will be discussed in detail in Section 4.6.

1.6. Clarification of Literary Key Concepts

1.6.1. Metacognition

Metacognition in educational contexts has become prominent recently. The concept was first used by Flavell (1976) and Brown (1975), who described it as “knowing about one’s cognitive or intellectual abilities and [having] control over this application” (Cilliers, 2011, p. 14). Many educational experts and practitioners acknowledge that there seems to be some missing element in our current education systems and the evidence strongly points to metacognition (Butterfield, 2012; Gourgey, 2002; Hartman, 2002, Yore & Treagust, 2006), which can simply be described as “cognition about cognition” or “thinking about thinking” (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 270). In essence, metacognition consists of two parts: awareness about one’s thinking and control of one’s thinking (Williams & Atkins, 2009). It involves three types of metacognitive knowledge: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and self-regulatory knowledge. In light of this, metacognition can be seen as the deliberate and purposeful application of these knowledge types to accomplish goals and solve general and specific problems (Woolfolk, 2010). Metacognition is the higher order cognition used to monitor and regulate cognitive processes, using executive control processes such as rehearsal and organisation (Woolfolk, 2010). When these executive control processes regulate one’s thinking and learning, three essential skills allow one to do this: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Planning involves deciding how much time to give a task, where to begin and how to proceed in an organised manner, what strategies to use, how much attention one should pay to detail, and so on. Monitoring involves checking one’s progress while involved in the task, whether adaptation is necessary, whether the short-term and long-term goals are being met, amongst other aspects. Evaluating involves making “judgments about the processes and outcomes of thinking and learning” (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 270). These three skills give rise to self-regulatory knowledge, and therefore, sometimes metacognition is also called *self-regulation* (Butterfield, 2012).

Much has been written about the benefits of metacognitive instruction and self-regulated learners. Metacognition has been applied to many subject areas, including Science. However, this study will be focused on metacognition in the subject of English Language and language learning, specifically English as First Additional Language (FAL) in this case.

1.6.2. Transfer

Transfer is the “application of knowledge and strategies from one context to another across contexts” (Malan, 2011). Transfer and metacognition are closely linked as children who are able to operate metacognitively are often also capable of using their metacognitive skills to transfer knowledge and skills from one context to another. Malan (2011) has identified six types of transfer, which can be grouped into three pairs. The first pair is low and high road transfer. Low road transfer is the spontaneous, automatic transfer of highly practiced skills, which requires no reflective thinking. High road transfer is the conscious application of abstract knowledge or strategies to a new situation. This type of transfer does not happen automatically but needs to be taught. Thus, explicit instruction on transfer, as well as metacognition, is needed at school level. The second pair is near and far transfer. Near transfer occurs when skills are applied in new ways that are similar to the original situation, such as learning to type on a keyboard when one is familiar with a typewriter. Far transfer occurs when skills are used in a far-removed context. Salomon and Perkins (1989) proposed that there are two types of far transfer, that is, low road and high road transfer, as discussed above. Last, vertical transfer and lateral transfer form the third pair. Lateral transfer is the generalisation of knowledge or skills to a new situation but one which is not more complex than the initial situation, whereas vertical transfer happens when complex skills are more easily learnt because of simpler skills learned previously. Vertical transfer feeds strongly into social constructivism and the ZPD. Children are able to learn much more quickly if they can link the new knowledge to prior knowledge. Once this has happened, a child can move more quickly and easily into the ZPD, where real learning and development takes place.

1.6.3. ESL learners

English Second Language (ESL) learners can be described as “learners whose primary language is not English, yet who live in places where English has some sort of special status or public availability” (Nel, 2011, p. 169). In South Africa, many ESL learners do not have English as a second language; it is often a third or fourth language (Nel, 2011). However, having English as the predominant LoLT in South African schools forces many ESL learners to adopt English as their second language so that they are able to achieve academic success at school and function in society beyond. Specifically for this study, the term *ESL learners* will refer to mother-tongue isiXhosa speakers who were raised in the Xhosa culture. Many intrinsic and extrinsic factors form barriers to learning for this particular population group, not least of which is learning in a second language. The term *ESL learner* can be used to describe a person of any cultural, linguistic, or

national background, who is learning in English as a second language, but in this study, this term will only apply to the research participants and their specific contexts and experiences of English language learning.

1.6.4. FET phase/band

Previous education systems have classed schools as either *primary* or *high* schools. However, in the current educational dispensation, schooling has been divided up into different phases or bands. This is in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is an integrated framework that describes the integration of education and training and provides “learners [with] access to and progression through and between different pathways” (Mokgalane, Vally, & Greenstein, 1996, p. 248) and is comprised of different phases. The Further Education and Training (FET) phase, with children in Grade 10, 11 and 12, forms one of these phases. Most of the learning in these three grades is meant to be cumulative, with the previous grade forming a foundation for the following grade’s increasingly complex subject content; however, this phase of schooling is not compulsory. Children are legally allowed to leave school in Grade 9, at the end of the General Education Training (GET) phase, or on the completion of Grade 12 in the final year of the FET phase. The learners in this study were all FET-phase learners, and what they learn in Grade 10 and 11 will influence their chances of completing Grade 12 successfully.

1.6.5. The adolescent learner

1.6.5.1. Overview

The term *adolescent* was coined in the early 1900s by G. Stanley Hall in his paper titled “Adolescence: its psychology and its relations to anthropology, sex crime, religion and education” (Fatusi & Hindin, 2010). It was as a result of this article that the industrialised world recognised adolescents as a separate but vulnerable group in society (Knopf & Gordon, 1997). According to UNICEF's Progress for Children report (2012), of the 1.2 billion adolescents on our planet, 90% live in developing countries. Adolescents are classified as those people between the ages of 10 and 19 years old. Adolescence is a transition phase between childhood and adulthood and is accompanied by physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and economic changes (Fatusi & Hindin, 2010; UNICEF, 2012). All children experience this transition from childhood to adulthood but their experiences of it differ greatly. Adolescence is marked by the onset of puberty, when secondary sexual characteristics appear, and with the increase in reproductive hormone levels, adolescents often establish sexual relationships. In African cultures, young men are expected to be knowledgeable about sex, whereas young women are considered ‘feminine’ if they are associated with sexual naivety and chastity (Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses, & Seekings, 2010). However, research within traditional African communities in rural areas has found that adulthood is associated with notions of virility and fertility and thus adolescents often willingly conceive in order

to establish their independence through adopting adult roles. Sexual partners may be status symbols among peers and an attempt at independence and adulthood (Bray et al., 2010).

1.6.5.2. The changing adolescent brain and its effect on thought and language learning

To understand the cognitive aspects of adolescence and language learning, it is necessary to look briefly at the brain's structure and functions. The brain consists of soft tissue covered with large folds that divide it into roughly four lobes in each hemisphere: the frontal lobe, the parietal lobe, the temporal lobe, and the occipital lobe (Sousa, 2011). The frontal lobe is responsible for thinking and planning. It maintains executive control through monitoring higher-order thinking, applying problem-solving strategies, and regulating the emotional responses of the limbic system. The working memory is also located here. The left temporal lobe deals with speech, sound, and certain parts of long-term memory. The parietal lobe is concerned with orientation, calculations, and certain types of recognition, while the occipital lobe processes visual information (Sousa, 2011). These can be seen in Figure 1.2 below (sourced from Breedlove, Watson, & Rosenzweig, 2010, Fig. 2.12):

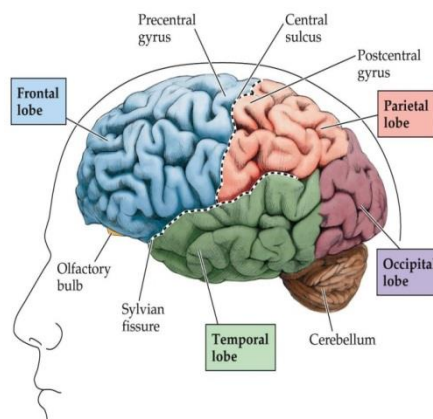


Figure 1.2: Lobes of the brain.

Adolescence is a time of profound change for the brain. Brain scans by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), used in a longitudinal study during the 1990s of over a 100 adolescents, show that the human brain undergoes extensive remodelling and reorganisation between the ages of 12 and 25 years old (Dobbs, 2011). Most of this change happens in the form of synaptic pruning, where neural synapses in the cortex are eliminated to make the conduction of neurotransmissions faster and more efficient. Children at the age of 6 years have a brain that represents 90% of its adult form even though the brain goes through a maturation process during adolescence and into an individual's early twenties. The maturation process consists of two steps that occur simultaneously. Firstly, neural axons are covered in a layer of insulating white fat called myelin, which speeds transmission. Neural myelination is considered to be equivalent to neural maturation. The areas responsible for primary functions like motor and sensory skills mature first, followed by the "higher-

order association areas” (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008, p. 114). The motor and sensory regions are myelinated in childhood while the frontal lobes are myelinated during adolescence. Figure 1.3 below shows the myelinated neuron with the myelin layers (shown in green) wrapped around the neuron’s axon (sourced from Susuki, 2010, p. 59).

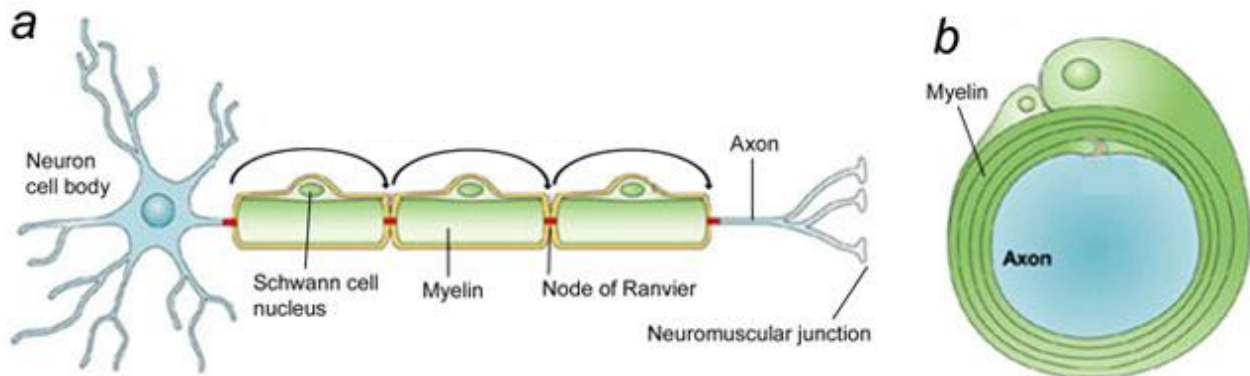


Figure 1.3: a) A myelinated neuron, b) A cross section of a neuron with the myelin sheath

Secondly, when myelination occurs, further synapses are inhibited and excess synapses are pruned, that is, the brain’s volume decreases during the maturation process (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). The areas close to the brain stem, which are responsible for “older and behaviourally basic functions, such as vision, movement, and fundamental processing” (Dobbs, 2011, p. 3), undergo synaptic pruning first before the slower-to-mature and more complex neural areas in the front. This means that the delayed myelination of the frontal lobes allows greater flexibility in the adolescent’s cognitive activities as axon branches and dendrites synapse to form new neural pathways. In the context of this study, the research participants, as adolescent learners, were more likely to internalise the metacognitive instruction. This was because their brains had not yet undergone the maturation process. Thus, their increased capacity for learning put them at an advantage and possibly allowed. During childhood, the brain forms millions of neural pathways as it learns new things. Pathways that are used often are reinforced while others die back and are “unlearned” (Blakemore, 2009), that is, the more axon branches present, the greater the potential for synapsing and therefore the greater the potential for learning. Thus, the delay of this myelination process is crucial for the building of new neural pathways because myelination inhibits the growth of new axon branches. Once myelination takes place, transmission of neural impulses is faster. Interestingly, most language learning is done within the first 13 years of life and is consolidated during myelination. This is beneficial for mother-tongue languages but makes acquiring a second language in high school quite a challenge (Dobbs, 2011).

As myelination takes place, the links between development, learning, and cognitive control improve as the streamlining and strengthening of neural connections between the prefrontal lobes and the subcortical regions takes place (Casey et al., 2008). The prefrontal lobes house the higher order cognitive abilities such as decision making and regulation of cognition (Casey et al., 2008). The

fine-tuning of neural network connections has implications for language learning as, for example, synaptic pruning regulates sound categorisation in babies. Learning a mother-tongue language requires the speaker to categorise all the sounds that constitute a language. A baby's neural sensory areas can initially distinguish between all speech sounds, but after the first 12 months, the baby's brain only distinguishes between sounds that he has been exposed to. This is because sound organisation is determined by the baby's immediate environment in his first year of life. Synaptic pruning and neural network strengthening are responsible for this sound organisation (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006).

As Fatusi and Hindin (2010) have noted, adolescents are vulnerable and therefore, I, as the researcher, needed to be deliberately conscious of the Grade 10 learners' changing emotions, needs, and thoughts. In addition, because they lived in a developing country, it was necessary for me to read literature pertaining specifically to their experience of adolescence, while noting the effects of Westernisation, modern technology, and telecommunication on their lives and language learning.

1.7. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has provided a broad overview of each aspect of the study. The motivation and prominent concepts in the literature review have been introduced. The problem statement was presented with the research questions and sub-questions. I then briefly discussed the research plan and clarified certain re-occurring concepts before commenting on my use of masculine terms throughout the study. Chapters 2 and 3 will present a discussion on the position of this study within the literature consulted on the research topic. Chapter 3 will also provide a discussion about the study's theoretical framework and metacognition.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: TO KNOW THAT I DON'T KNOW

2.1. Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the next two chapters will deal with the literature related to the topic of this study, namely metacognition as it is demonstrated by the Grade 10 ESL learners' use of reading comprehension strategies. It aims to give the reader a broad understanding of the study context, as well as the complexities that had to be navigated during the intervention phase. As indicated before, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe five structured stages for the research plan and first was that the research plan be discussed. The second stage consists of forming a theoretical lens which informs and guides all stages of the research endeavour (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). A theoretical framework helps place a research project within the greater research enterprise and provides the reader with an idea of the researcher's contribution to his specific knowledge domain. It also 'prepares the way', backed by the voices of previous researchers that help the researcher to argue with confidence and authority (Henning et al., 2004). In the sections that follow, Vygotsky's sociocultural approach will be the lens through which the development of metacognition in reading comprehension is viewed.

2.2. Vygotskian Theory and the Sociocultural Approach

2.2.1. Background information

Vygotsky's work became popular in the West, many years after his death, when it was translated from Russian into English. Educational professionals and researchers alike have found the scope of his work, which spanned only 10 years of his short life, to be immense (Gredler, 2005). In his early years as a psychologist, Vygotsky believed that psychology should be a unified social science concerned with developing human abilities and providing explanations for the formation of human behaviours (Gredler, 2005; Joravsky, 1989; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). He "defined the broad focus of his theory as explaining the qualitative changes that account for the emergence of higher psychological (cognitive) functions at the levels of both the human species (phylogeny) and the individual (ontogeny)" (Gredler, 2005, p. 306). Vygotsky entered the psychology field when the debate about the relationship between culture and individual development had just begun. Some of the issues included in the debate were how culture influences the individual, whether different cultures are tied to different forms of thinking, and whether different cultures can be ranked on a continuum from "primitive" to "advanced" (Gredler, 2005, p. 306). As Vygotsky set about answering these questions, he developed a plethora of writings that covered cultural signs and symbol systems, the development of higher cognitive functions, and the relationship between thought and speech. Before he died, Vygotsky had produced a theory that traversed the disciplines

of the social sciences, humanities, and historical sciences, integrating a broad range of ideas and incorporating all that he had learnt as a clinician working with special-needs children and their parents (Gredler, 2005). A discussion of Vygotsky's ideas will follow.

2.2.2. Main ideas in Vygotsky's work

Vygotsky developed six streams of theory during his life's work. The sociocultural approach was employed in this study, which, according to Daniels (2008), is one of Vygotsky's theoretical streams. In addition to the main streams, other themes are common to all six of Vygotsky's theoretical streams. The themes are mediation, the development of elementary to higher psychological functions, *scaffolding* (Vygotsky used the Russian word for "assistance"), the zone of proximal development (ZPD), and the development of language. The themes above will not be discussed as separate topics but will be discussed from a sociocultural perspective, noting their relevance and implications. For the purpose of this study, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory will be explored as a theoretical framework most appropriate for the study's purpose as it includes Vygotsky's views on socially constructed knowledge and identity, the development of thought, acquisition of language, and the ways in which a child learns and develops.

In essence, Vygotsky believed that human activity takes place within a cultural context, is mediated by language and other symbol systems, and is best understood in a historical context. As a result, he saw human development as increasing interdependence, where socially shared activities were transformed into processes internalised in the individual person (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Through close examination of Vygotsky's work, three main themes are clearly visible. These are 1) the social origins of individual development, 2) semiotic mediation, and 3) genetic analysis (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Firstly, the social origins or sources of development can be clearly seen in a child from an early age, that is, children are dependent on their caregivers from birth, not only for love, nourishment, and protection but also for interpretation of the world around them and their experience of it. The child's development process thus commences in early childhood, when the social interaction between caregiver and child is interpreted by the adult and transmitted to the child, who then internalises it, driving his development. Vygotsky described this as the law of genetic development: every mental function of the child appears twice, first interpsychologically during social interaction between people and then intrapsychologically within the child as "all higher psychological functions are internalised relationships of the social kind, and constitute the social structure of the personality" (Valsiner, 1987, p. 67). In this way, social interactions form the source of the child's individual development.

Secondly, when people interact with one another or their environments, they make use of semiotic mediators in the form of language or other symbol systems. These mediators form the link between the interpsychological level and the intrapsychological level and are also crucial to understanding

the co-construction of knowledge. Vygotsky believed that these mediators and psychological tools mediate social and individual functioning.

Vygotsky proposed that tools are prominent in the mediation process. According to Head and O'Neill (1999, p. 123), mediation can be defined as

a process in which an adult ... places him/herself between the child and the environment in order to control and influence the type, number and frequency of stimuli to which the child is subjected, and to help [the child] interpret those stimuli in a way that improves [his] understanding of the world." Mediation is therefore a method of ensuring that the child gleans more from the learning experience through social interaction than what would have been possible through direct learning. Vygotsky also proposed that higher cognitive processes can be mediated through tools.

John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) suggest that tools can be grouped into two categories: physical tools and psychological tools. Physical tools directed at nature only have an indirect influence on mental activities through communal symbolic forms, such as counting on one's fingers or tying knots to act as memory cues. They are used in the external world. For example, among some population groups, economic circumstances dictate that a child work with his parents as part of the labour force. In this way, the child works in conjunction with adults and picks up necessary skills through participation. In contrast, psychological tools are directed internally and acquired through activity. They mediate an individual's personal psychological processes. Psychological tools are not manufactured by the individual. Rather, they are communal in origin and appropriated by the individual during communal activity, after which they are internalised and used to transform and support individual mental functioning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

One example of such a tool is language. Language as a psychological tool functions as a communal tool but is also a product of sociocultural change (its formational setting). Sociocultural change produces different cultural tools. Cultural tools are formed and shaped in specific cultural and historical settings. These tools are then mastered by the individual and used to transform his own mental functioning. Overall, human mental functioning is mediated by cultural and psychological tools (Wertsch, 1994). Mediational tools then carry "sociocultural patterns and knowledge" (Wertsch 1994, p. 204). Children's ways of behaving and thinking are derivative of the "culturally patterned environment" created by the people who surround them, an environment that includes language and other symbol systems (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 193). Thirdly, in the words of Warschauer (1997), "[f]rom genetic analysis we understand the futility of seeing literacy as an isolated event. Rather a proper understanding of the emergence of literacy has to take into account broad social, cultural, and historic trends related to the significance and reading and writing for human cognition and communication."

2.2.3. Sociocultural theory

The sociocultural approach forms part of Vygotsky's prolific writings and emphasises "the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). Vygotsky believed that cognition, or learning, arises from participation in social activities, where the activities are mediated (Smolcic, 2009). Johnston (2006) further suggests that the individual's consciousness is shaped by specific social activities that include physical and psychological tools. Vygotsky advocated that sociocultural factors were the primary determinants in the development of higher order cognitive abilities, such as voluntary attention, logical thinking, intentional memory, and problem-solving abilities (Turuk, 2008). Therefore, learning can only be understood in its social context as the sociocultural theory places great emphasis on social mediation (Smolcic, 2009). It claims that learning and language acquisition both require the learner's engagement in socially mediated activities. This includes second language acquisition. As Turuk (2008, p. 244) states, "[sociocultural theory] advocates learning, including [second language] acquisition, as a semiotic process where participation in socially mediated activities is essential." In addition, instruction, aimed at the learner's ZPD, is considered crucial to second language development and should be part of collaboration between teacher and learner (Turuk, 2008).

Some basic tenets in the sociocultural theory are discussed below.

2.2.3.1. The development of thought

The first tenet is that the human mind is mediated by tools which humans use to make sense of themselves and the world around them. According to Lantolf (2000), Vygotsky claimed that humans do not interact with the world directly but use artefacts that are created by other humans under specific cultural and historical conditions. As a result, these artefacts also have cultural features in their makeup, exert an influence on the user, and are modified with each passing generation to meet that generation's specific needs. Language is one such artefact. Any person's first encounter with such an artefact is usually during childhood, while interacting with his parents through his home language. Parents often convey culture and social norms through language. Through this interaction, internalisation takes place, so the child first acquires knowledge through social interaction (interpsychological) and then assimilates the knowledge and transforms it with his personal values (intrapsychological). The process at schools is the same: children transform what the teacher models as they internalise it (Turuk, 2008). Vygotsky believed that consciousness, arising from and developing during social interactions, was the link between a person's knowledge and his behaviour. Furthermore, Lantolf and Appel (1994) state that this understanding of consciousness is incorporated into the concept of metacognition.

2.2.3.2. Education and values

The second tenet is that education is not value-free but is rather underpinned by a set of societal beliefs. These beliefs and values are often conveyed through explicit and implicit messages taught in the classroom. Some would argue that a genuine education is one that teaches values, provides knowledge, and produces well-rounded holistic citizens capable of caring for themselves and others while contributing to the economy. This is in line with Lin (2001, p. 24), who notes that metacognitive instruction research is concerned with student development and therefore, “[s]tudents' academic achievement and strategies for learning are taken seriously, but so is their ability to create a role for themselves in a community, where they build friendships, contribute to the values of the community, and involve themselves in its academic, social, and civic activities.” In the context of this study, I assumed that ‘educating’ the learners would result in a collision of worldviews, that is, between European and African worldviews. Education in English is founded upon societal beliefs (values) that are significantly anglicised when compared to traditional African cultures. For example, the custom of sending adolescent Xhosa boys to initiation schools has a direct impact on their schooling and is not something that our anglicised schooling system has managed to accept well up until now.

In addition to acknowledging the effect of values, sociocultural theory also views learning as holistic. Williams and Burden (1997) claim that the theory advocates teaching concepts in their complexity, not dumbing them down to skill sets and basic facts. The learner should make meaning rather than learning a discrete set of skills in a unit of study. Sociocultural theory endorses this type of learning whereby children develop the skills and strategies necessary for becoming active learners, ensuring that learning is relevant to the individual and that the individual grows and develops as a whole being through education (Turuk, 2008; Williams & Burden, 1997).

2.2.3.3. Learning together with others

The third tenet focuses on learning arising “not through interaction but in interaction” (Turuk, 2008, p. 248). The learner is therefore an active meaning-maker, engaged in problem solving during the interplay between teachers, learners, and other role players such as the text and, indirectly, the text’s author. Social interaction acts as a mediator of learning, during which the child first experiences successful learning in partnership with a more advanced ‘other’ and then internalises the task in order to perform it individually at a later stage. In this way, social interaction acts as a mediator during learning. Furthermore, the theory states that successful learning results when children’s learning is supported by a more knowledgeable other as they perform new tasks (Turuk, 2008). This is pointed out by Kozulin (2002), who emphasises the critical role that parents, teachers, and community members play in determining how and what children are exposed to as part of their learning experiences.

2.2.3.4. The zone of proximal development

Fourth, learning and instruction facilitate the development of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This was defined by Vygotsky as “the distance between the child’s actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 60). The ZPD is a measure of a child’s potential to learn as opposed to the child’s actual learning (McCown, Driscoll & Roop, 1996). When interacting with his environment and others, the child stimulates numerous internal development processes that are only able to operate during interaction. Once these processes have been internalised, they form part of the child’s independent individual growth. The ZPD also serves as the region in which internalisation takes place, that is, where knowledge transitions from the interpsychological plane to the intrapsychological plane (Turuk, 2008). In addition, the ZPD is formed by both development and instruction, that is, as biological factors and forms of instruction are both instrumental in shaping the ZPD. However, Vygotsky did advocate that good instruction should lead development, ‘pulling’ it. According to Shayer (2003), ‘good’ instruction targets developing functions and not developed ones. Therefore, by working interactively with learners, teachers are able to determine in what areas the learner requires assistance by first identifying his ZPD and then planning good instruction that will ‘pull’ his development processes (Turuk, 2008). As a result, identifying the learners’ ZPDs formed the starting point for this study’s intervention. According to Williams and Burden (1997), as the learner develops, he becomes more proficient in his second language. In this development process, the ZPD can be seen as a higher level of understanding in the learner’s language acquisition. Therefore, working from the learners’ ZPDs, I encouraged them to use the language socially with more proficient ESL speakers so that, as they became more aware of the linguistic features of English, their overall mastery of English improved. The sociocultural theory proposes that an awareness of the structure and function of language develops as learners use it socially (Turuk, 2008).

2.2.3.5. Mediation and scaffolding

The fifth concept, central to the sociocultural theory, is the concept of mediation. Mediation takes place in two ways, both through social interactions and through tools such as language (Kozulin, 2002). According to Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985), language helps children function within and move through their ZPDs. He defined mediation as the role played by more capable others in shaping and selecting the learners’ learning experiences. Kozulin (2002) identifies two categories of mediators: human and symbolic. These two types each have a different function. According to him, human mediation focuses on enhancing the learner’s performance, while symbolic mediation is geared towards bringing change in the learner’s performance. However, both types of mediation aim at changing the learner’s individual mental functioning (Turuk, 2008). In relation to this study, I

hoped to act as a mediating tool so that the learners could extend their ZPDs through enhancing their cognitive functioning in order to improve their linguistic capabilities.

With regard to mediation and language acquisition, it is also necessary to discuss scaffolding. *Scaffolding* is a process in which the skilled partner continuously adjusts the amount of support (through speech, skills or techniques) given to the unskilled partner. The unskilled partner thus acquires and extends his current level of knowledge/skill to a level of advanced competency (McCown, Driscoll & Roop, 1996; Turuk, 2008). Competency results when the learner “internalise[s] the problem-solving processes” (Turuk, 2008, p. 252). For this to happen, the needs of the unskilled partner need to be known to the skilled partner. Often, teachers function as the skilled partner but peer-to-peer scaffolding has also proved effective. However, this is usually in cases where a more skilled learner models his learning to a less skilled learner (Turuk, 2008). The goal of scaffolding is thus the transfer of responsibility onto the learner and when that occurs, the scaffolding is dismantled (Turuk, 2008). When teachers concentrate on teaching a fixed skill set without engaging learners’ cognitive capacity, which Vygotsky termed *fossilisation*, Kennedy (1997) and Kubota (1998) argue that learners’ thinking becomes restricted and they are unable to handle tasks that require complex thinking. Therefore the argument for teaching for meaning construction implies that learners take ownership of what they are learning by adding personal meaning and values while assimilating, internalising, and integrating it (their new learning) with their prior knowledge. This is termed *true learning* according to sociocultural theory, where the learner actively transforms his world instead of conforming to it (Donato, 1994). In addition, Shayer (2003) suggests that when learners collaborate and interact, they create a collective ZPD from which all the individuals can then draw. In such a group situation, learners actually support one another’s learning by interacting. Turuk (2008) goes on to say that it is during the negotiation and co-construction of meaning that internalisation takes place in such a situation.

2.2.4. Sociocultural theory and metacognition

According to Cross (2010), metacognition as part of language learning has been traditionally discussed from a cognitivist perspective, derived from Flavell’s (1976) and Wenden’s (1998) work. Cross (2010) claims that second-language learners develop their metacognitive awareness through and in dialogue with one another and notes that there is a paucity of studies about language learners’ metacognitive awareness from a sociocultural approach. Vygotsky’s (1978) interest in human development led to his work about consciousness and the mind, which he saw as socially constituted and mediated. He investigated the development of interdependent higher mental functions as constitutive of human consciousness. Moreover, Vygotsky claimed that control and regulation both formed the foundation of these higher functions and furthered their development. The higher cognitive functions are, however, furthered and transformed within social activity. Thus, Cross (2010) and Lehtonen (2000) found that metacognitive awareness develops during dialogue between language learners, with both first and second languages functioning as

mediating tools, and the resultant awareness promoting regulatory behaviour. In conclusion, metacognition is highly valued in sociocultural theory. Not only does it promote and foster the development of self-directed, lifelong learners but it is also concerned with holistic growth (Williams & Burden, 1997).

2.3. Metacognition

The goal of this study is to ensure that learners not only function well cognitively but that they improve their cognition during reading through metacognitive instruction. In order for learners to achieve government's expectations for their language learning, they need to develop their metacognitive abilities as the Department of Basic Education (RSA, 2011b) expects independent analytical thinkers who are able to transfer their learning to a variety of different contexts. This can be achieved if learners are adequately instructed in the use of metacognitive strategies, as Woolfolk (2010, p. 269) explains: "Understanding involves appropriately transforming and using knowledge, skills and ideas." However, because this study's metacognitive goals were couched within reading comprehension, any knowledge, skills, and ideas that are discussed will be integrated with reading comprehension.

2.3.1. Metacognition: Definition and components

To explain metacognition in the context of reading comprehension, I will sketch a simple scenario involving a high school learner reading an English text. It is an expository text that discusses the USA's planned invasion of Syria after the chemical attacks on Syrian civilians by the government under President Assad. The expository text mentions that the large stores of shale gas present in Syria could be a motivating factor for the planned invasion. The learner is required to read through the text and then write an argumentative essay detailing the benefits and the drawbacks of such an invasion. He is in class with 30 other learners and a knowledgeable History teacher.

I will now define metacognition and discuss some of the related theory and then integrate it with reading comprehension through the sketched scenario. Hacker (1998) developed the most widely used definition of metacognition. He believed that "metacognition includes both knowledge of one's knowledge, processes, cognitive and affective states, and the ability to consciously and deliberately monitor and regulate one's knowledge, process, and cognitive and affective states" (Hacker, 1998, p. 11). Hacker's definition can be summed up by the following definition. Metacognition is usually defined as cognition about one's own cognition and includes two aspects: knowledge about one's mental processes and the control and regulation of those processes. The first aspect can be reduced to two parts: the knowledge that all people have different mental processes and the awareness of one's own cognition in relation to tasks and other people. In light of the first aspect, the boy will need to be aware that the author of the text, his teacher, and his peers all process the text that he is reading differently. The learner's awareness of his own cognition in relation to tasks means that he should be conscious of his mental processes when

completing school work, homework activities, school assignments, and projects. If the learner should need to complete tasks in collaboration with others, he will also need to be aware of their cognition. For example, during group work, he will need to be aware of his group members' thoughts, ideas, and understanding of a given task, or when writing a book review, he will need to try and integrate what the text's author was trying to communicate and what his teacher expects of him. Other examples of being conscious of other people's cognition include receiving notes from friends or listening to orals. Being metacognitively aware in these situations will help him become an effective group member, a skilled listener, and a discerning reader.

The second aspect of metacognition can be divided into the monitoring of one's own cognition and the regulation of that cognition to increase effectiveness (Williams & Atkins, 2009). The boy should ask himself questions such as "Do I understand the text? What parts should I revise? What is applicable to the argument in my essay?" While regulating his cognition, he should ask questions that help him determine whether he is meeting his reading goals: "Have I answered the essay question accurately and adequately? Do I need to strengthen my argument anywhere?" That means the monitoring and regulation of cognition on the learner's part would involve checking whether he understands the argument developing in the text and whether he understands what is required of him. The two aspects of metacognition are summed up in the diagram, Figure 2.1, below:

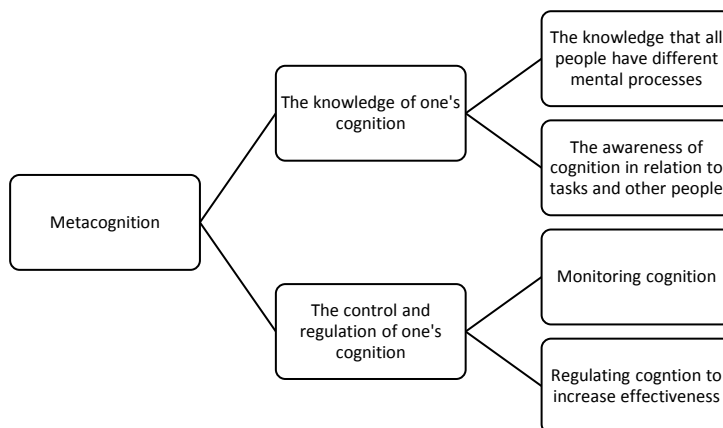


Figure 2.1: Components of metacognition.

Flavell's (1976) concept of metacognition can be seen as composed of two components: knowledge and skills. Various authors have reduced the concept into further subcomponents but all of these can be summed up by 'knowledge and skills' (Butterfield, 2012).

Metacognitive knowledge incorporates declarative "knowing that" knowledge, procedural "knowing how" knowledge and conditional (or self-regulatory) "knowing when" knowledge (Khonamri & Kojidi, 2011, p. 100). Continuing with the sketched scenario above, declarative knowledge is about knowing what resources, prior knowledge, skills, and strategies to use (using a dictionary or the

internet, asking friends' or teachers' questions, rereading or summarising the text). Procedural knowledge involves knowing how to use those skills and strategies (the boy would need to select strategies that would help him extract the nuanced argument of the text. He would probably use summarising and paraphrasing to formulate his argument in his essay). Lastly, conditional knowledge is knowing when and how to apply one's knowledge, skills, and strategies (Butterfield, 2012; Oakley, 2011; Woolfolk, 2010). According to Flavell (1979) and Balcikanli (2011), these three knowledge types can be summed up as person, task, and strategy knowledge, respectively. Metacognition involves applying these knowledge types to problem solving and attaining goals when tasks are not too difficult but lead one to work within the ZPD (Woolfolk, 2010). In the scenario situation, it would be the History teacher's responsibility to ensure that the writing task led the learners into their ZPDs and then expanded their zones. Embedded in all this is metacognitive awareness, which determines metacognition, as one first needs to be aware of what one does and the reasons for one's actions before analysing, refining, and adapting them (Butterfield, 2012). Metacognitive awareness will be discussed in Section 2.3.2 below.

Furthermore, Cooper and Sandi-Urena (2009) and Desoete (2008) claim that metacognition involves three mental processes: planning, monitoring, and evaluation. These are also thought of as metacognitive skills. Woolfolk (2010) says that planning involves time management skills, gathering resources, employing skills and strategies, and deciding on a sequence for task execution. Monitoring follows as the learner checks whether his strategies are working or not, what he can do to improve his understanding, and what he has not understood. According to Khonamri and Kojidi (2011), monitoring can be understood in terms of two separate goals: first, assessing one's progress towards a cognitive goal, and second, the regulation of that progress through the use of appropriate strategies. If the boy was successful at monitoring, as defined by the authors, he would then evaluate his thinking and learning in the task process and outcome. The interaction between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive skills can best be explained in diagrammatic form as seen in Figure 2.3 below (Butterfield, 2012, p. 57):

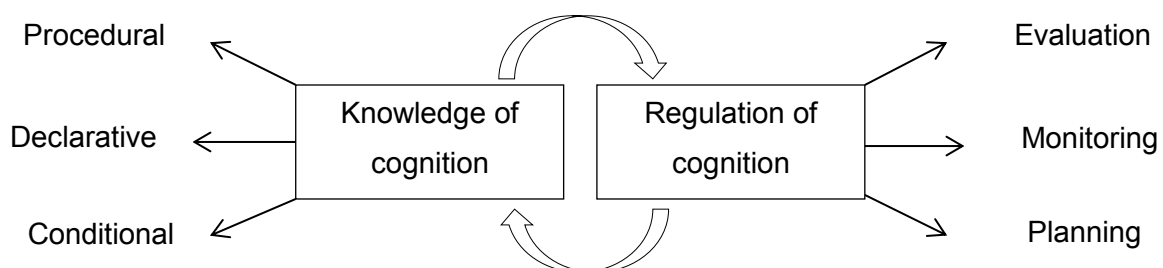


Figure 2.2: The relationship between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation.

Woolfolk (2010, p. 287) relates metacognition to schemata and prior knowledge by looking at how experts operate: "They have a large store of ... if-then schemas about what action to take in

various situations. Experts' rich store of knowledge is well elaborated and well-practiced so that it is easy to retrieve from long-term memory when needed." Experts also look for patterns or trends in given information, analyse problems extensively and at a deep level, maintain an increased amount of information in their working and long-term memories, and consistently monitor their progress. Similarly, many classroom tasks can be completed without conscious effort on the boy's part, but as tasks become more difficult, the boy may consciously employ metacognitive strategies. Such a strategy would involve executive control processes "such as selective attention, rehearsal, elaboration, and organization that influence encoding, storage, and the retrieval of information in memory" (Woolfolk, 2010, p. 270). Brenna's (1995) study of young children who were developmentally advanced showed that these children no longer used phonological cues as the primary strategy for comprehension breakdown but relied on semantic, syntactic, and phonological cues. They also employed metacognitive strategies based on self-knowledge, text-knowledge, and task knowledge.

Therefore, analysis, problem solving, and reasoning should be emphasised across the curriculum so that learners become critical thinkers and develop problem-solving schemata that reach beyond surface features (Woolfolk, 2010). Metacognitive abilities develop at approximately age 5 and continue throughout a child's school career with the correct exposure and instruction. However, once children move through adolescence and become adults, they should be operating as experts in their metacognitive abilities in order to cope with the demands of the FET phase and working life, not to mention the joys and challenges of family life, friendships, and relationships. As Malan (2011) notes, improved thinking skills usually lead to improved decisions as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) can improve through metacognitive training. In this study, metacognition was viewed only as a means of improving reading comprehension and the learners' academic performance, and I have therefore not included the complexity of Flavell's concept of self-regulated learning (SRL).

On a practical note, teaching metacognition with regards to reading comprehension involves metacognitive reading strategies. Metacognitive reading strategies can be classed as surface-level strategies or deep-level strategies (Alexander 2005/2006). Surface-level strategies are those that involve access to the text (e.g. rereading, changing reading speed), whereas deep-level strategies involve personalising or transforming the text (e.g. creating mental images called situational models, discussed in Section 2.7, or questioning the author). Mohktari and Reichard (2002) compiled an index of known metacognitive reading strategies categorised by function and not by cognitive demand. Three types of strategies were identified: global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies. First, global strategies include activating prior knowledge, making predictions, previewing text, and analysing text structure and context clues to aid comprehension. Second, problem-solving strategies include adjusting reading speed, rereading, reading aloud, reflecting, mental visualising, and using contextual clues to deduce the meaning of unknown words. Third, support strategies include underlining, note taking, paraphrasing, self-questioning, and group discussion (Cantrell & Carter, 2009). Alexander (2005/2006) notes that

poorer readers make frequent use of surface-level strategies but as their language proficiency and strategy use improves, they employ greater numbers of deep-level strategies. Accordingly, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) classify their identified support strategies as surface-level and their global and problem-solving strategies as deep-level. Furthermore, “deeper cognitive processing” is possible when content knowledge expands and learning competency improves (Cantrell & Carter, 2009, p. 199). When this takes place, learners rely less on surface-level strategies and engage actively with the text, using deep-level strategies. Metacognitive skills and strategies will be incorporated as part of the intervention to increase learners’ metacognitive awareness and methods of support for improving their English reading comprehension. Throughout the dissertation, I will therefore refer to *metacognition* or *metacognitive instruction*, which includes metacognitive awareness, skills, and strategies.

Eilers and Pinkley (2006) are of the opinion that poor readers need explicit instruction in specific reading comprehension strategies that can be applied across the curriculum to address surface level processing of texts. This is particularly important for poor readers, whose reading comprehension has been shown to improve from such strategies. The authors also emphasise how important these reading strategies are for ESL learners who are then able to “process information deeply, and monitor their understanding” (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006, p. 275). Research shows that many learners, in general, demonstrate limited metacognitive abilities (Connerly, 2006; Lipman, 1993; Manning & Glasner, 1996). McKeown and Beck (2009) identify a variety of problems linked to metacognitive comprehension monitoring for learners in various age groups. Some of these problems, they claim, range from pre-primary school children right through to students at tertiary institutions. Thus, strategy instruction from teachers and usage by the learners could help to address this deficit in learners’ education. Importantly, Houtveen and Van de Grift, (2007) warn that the strategies must be integrated and cannot be used in isolation. The teacher should explain each reading strategy in detail and should include how and when to use the reading strategy. Such explanations provide the learner with metacognitive information about the strategy, which is crucial, as the learners’ understanding is based on being able to internalise and apply his new knowledge, skills, or ideas (Woolfolk, 2010). However, Williams and Atkins (2009) warn teachers specifically that the goal of teaching metacognitive strategies is the activation of comprehension and not a focus on strategy instruction, that is, children should engage with the text and not spend their time remembering how to implement specific strategies.

2.3.2. Metacognitive awareness

Metacognitive awareness is said to be the knowledge of one’s own and others’ cognition or, in Hacker’s (1998, p. 11) words, it is the “knowledge of one’s knowledge, processes, cognitive and affective states”. It is therefore the first aspect of metacognition. In accordance with Flavell’s (1976) definition, Balcikanli (2011, p. 1316) defines metacognitive awareness as “being aware of one’s own knowledge, processes, cognitive and affective states as well as of [the] regulation of those

states". Hacker, Dunlosky, and Graesser (2009) maintained that metacognitive awareness occurs in three parts. The first is "thinking of what one knows (metacognitive knowledge)", the second is "thinking of what one is currently doing (metacognitive skill)" and the third is "thinking of what one's current cognitive or affective state is (metacognitive experience)" (Balcikanli, 2011, p. 1315). With these three parts in place, one can begin implementing a metacognitive strategy. In this study, much of the intervention was geared towards making the learners metacognitively aware so that the acquisition and implementation of metacognitive skills and strategies were faster and easier. As Balcikanli (2011) notes, metacognitive awareness is considered a crucial component of learning, including successful language learning. It was therefore important that the learners were instructed in the practice of metacognitive awareness so that their acquisition and use of English would be better.

The goal of metacognitive training is to form "habits of mind", according to Lin (2001, p. 37). This is only possible when learners are first aware of their cognition before they can regulate and control it. This is in accordance with Carrell's (1989b) view: that a reader must be aware of his limitations and the demands of the task before being able to address it. To put it differently, declarative knowledge must precede procedural knowledge, that is, a strategy or skill must be known before it can be used and evaluated. Furthermore, Khonamri and Kojidi (2011) consider metacognitive awareness to be a type of declarative knowledge. I thus had to focus on metacognitive awareness before I could begin teaching the learners about metacognitive strategies.

Metacognitive awareness and metacognitive control of cognition are interdependent and have a reciprocal relationship. Khonamri and Kojidi (2011, p. 101) sum this up as follows:

In these two aspects, one's understanding of his/her cognitive abilities and processes, the abilities of others and the task situation will influence the strategies s/he uses in overseeing and monitoring learning. In turn, his/her experience and ability to act as an executive in planning, monitoring, checking, and modifying strategies will contribute to his/her knowledge about cognition and what contributes to success or failure on intellectual tasks.

According to Block (1992), these skills are most important for second language speakers, who are inclined to encounter many linguistic difficulties and gaps in their comprehension. In Khonamri and Kojidi's (2011) study, the more metacognitively aware the research participants were of their reading strategies, the better their comprehension monitoring became. This proves, then, that a learner must first have the declarative knowledge about a strategy before he can have the procedural knowledge of how a strategy would be useful for improving his comprehension monitoring (Baker & Brown, 1984). If the learner were a less skilled reader, he would most likely rely heavily on the decoding process and neglect meaning-making. This is often because the meaning of sentences is lost as learners translate sentences word for word. However, this is not the case with skilled readers, who attempt to read holistically by linking sentence meanings to understand at paragraph level and build a situational model of the text in its entirety (Khonamri & Kojidi, 2011). The habits of skilled readers served as an inspiration for the study's intervention

activities. Based on the positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and successful comprehension monitoring, it is necessary to look at the implications for teaching on this topic.

2.3.2.1. Metacognitive awareness in the classroom

In the classroom, metacognitive awareness about reading comprehension can be thought of as learners knowing whether they understand what they have read or not. One way in which teachers can help learners become metacognitively aware is by encouraging them to change their reading speeds and to direct attention levels according to what they perceive the difficulty of the text to be (Flippo & Lecheler, 1987). The level of difficulty will depend on the number of unfamiliar words, the inferences, the sentence length, the author's writing style, and the concept density (Flippo & Lecheler, 1987). The goal of teaching metacognitive reading strategies is for learners to become "strategic thinkers by helping them focus on the ways [in which] they process information" (Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy [TEAL], 2012, p.1).

2.3.2.2. Modelling and prompting

To foster higher order cognitive processes in learners, teachers need to first be metacognitively active themselves. Brown (1987, p.65) points out that metacognitive awareness is the root of metacognitive activity that is reflected in the learner's "either effective use or overt description" of the declarative knowledge he possesses. Schraw and Moshman (1995) add that the 'understanding of knowledge' is used to regulate cognitive control processes, that is, teachers need to be aware of their cognitive processes and then regulate them with that awareness. This process should form part of deliberate instruction in the classroom as modelling is one of the primary ways that learners foster higher order cognitive processes (Nickerson, Perkins, & Smith, 1985; Zohar, 1999). This is in accordance with Lin's (2001) view in which learners need to be coached in metacognitive thinking through specifically designed activities. The first step for teachers in teaching metacognitive awareness is to give the learners an idea of what such awareness looks like practically. This usually takes place in the form of verbalising self-questioning techniques and modelling the application of such questions (TEAL, 2012). The verbalisation of questions can be considered to be a 'think aloud' strategy. The teacher must encourage learners to consistently ask themselves questions about their personal understandings of the text. Once this is in place, they can be coached to ask "What can I do about my comprehension 'gaps'?" Most importantly, the teacher should model why metacognitive awareness is important. In all, the importance of the teacher's role in the development of learners' metacognitive awareness is irrefutable.

Previously, metacognitive knowledge instruction at schools has focused on two knowledge types: 1) knowledge in a specific domain, and 2) knowledge about self-as-learner (Lin, 2001). Lin (2001) proposes that teachers create social environments that encourage metacognitive thinking and integrate metacognitive strategy instruction into everyday situations, that is, teachers should instruct for both knowledge types. Blakey and Spence (1990) suggest ways in which a classroom

can become a metacognitive environment. The authors believe that the classroom must be a place where learners are aware of their thinking and can practice thinking strategies. They also emphasise that learners should be included in the role of planning and ongoing evaluation. Most importantly, Blakey and Spence (1990) claim that teachers should be increasing the learners' procedural knowledge by focusing learners' attention on how to accomplish various tasks. The authors believe that through such a process, learners will transfer their metacognitive strategies and thus improve their learning. In the sphere of reading comprehension, teachers should model which metacognitive strategies skilled readers use to navigate through a text and which strategies allow skilled readers to read with the intent of learning about themselves and their environments (Blakey & Spence, 1990).

Learners in Bielaczyc, Pirolli, and Brown's (1995) study said that they valued explicit group discussions about metacognitive strategies. They also reported that first-hand experience made them more skilled strategy users and allowed them to identify the gaps in their understanding more quickly. In my study, explicit group discussions were used frequently as the learners enjoyed discussing the strategies with the help of code-switching that ensured all the learners understood what was being taught. In addition, prompting formed a large part of such discussions. Lin (2001) promotes prompting as another method that teachers can employ to teach metacognitive strategies. Prompting can form part of modelling as children come to realise what kinds of questions they should be asking or where they should be directing their thoughts and attention. The questions that are generated through prompting are usually "critical metacognitive questions" that aid in building a situational model of the text in the learning task by helping them identify conflicting information and causing "extensive inference generation" (Lin, 2001, p. 27). The importance, for comprehension, of questioning and inferencing is discussed in Sections 3.2.2.3 and 3.3.1 below.

2.3.3. Metacognitive strategy instruction

In some areas of literature, there seems to be confusion about what can be defined as a strategy. Most researchers make use of individual definitions for the term *strategy* and work from that premise (McKeown & Beck, 2009). Cantrell and Carter (2009, p. 197) define *skills* as "unconscious ... automatic procedures" whereas *strategies* are cognitive procedures that are employed for problem solving or to extract deeper meaning from the text. Strategy instruction has been claimed by some observers to be highly effective (Cantrell & Carter, 2009; Cornford, 2004; Guterman, 2003). The available literature about metacognitive reading strategy instruction is extensive and encompasses studies that used defined strategy sets, strategy combinations, and single strategies. In general, multiple strategy use is now favoured over single strategies, but the use of defined strategy sets stems from Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campione's (1983) study of metacognition. The National Reading Panel (2000), which summarises this literature, also identifies several strategies that have proved most effective for improving reading comprehension

performance. These are “comprehension monitoring, co-operative learning, graphic and semantic organisers, question answering, question generation, story structure and summarisation” (McKeown & Beck, 2009, p. 11). Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2013) add that prediction is an essential component of successful comprehension. They propose that reading learners should use text clues and their prior knowledge to forecast what will happen in the story or what the text will contain. Then, as the reader reads, he should confirm his predictions or revise them through adjusting or rejecting them.

McKeown and Beck (2009) point out the increasing concern regarding the possibility that strategy instruction may be counterproductive in the classroom. Certain researchers (McKeown & Beck, 2009; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Sinatra, Brown, & Reynolds, 2002; Winograd & Johnston, 1987) caution that strategy instruction may encourage learners to put undue emphasis on the process of using a particular strategy in place of comprehending and making meaning. Previous studies by McKeown and Beck (2009) used the questioning-the-author (QtA) approach to comprehension. These researchers focused on meaning-making through coherence via connections. They maintain that the implementation of some strategies might detract from attending to the text and thus argue strongly for text-based discussions in classroom instruction. In addition, they claim that open discussions that are facilitated by types of strategies, such as QtA, produce a greater number of connections between concepts and thus improve comprehension much more than method-focused instruction. McNamara and Magliano (2009, p. 60) have studied reading processes and reading strategies for many years. They have found reading strategies to be “crucial to comprehension under challenging circumstances” and therefore endorse the use of metacognitive strategies, such as self-explanation as both a diagnostic tool for poor comprehension and an indicator for further reading support. They stress that metacognitive awareness during the reading process should inform the reader about his progress, his insufficient comprehension levels, and whether he is unlikely to reach his reading goals. The essence of self-explanation requires that the reader be aware of his comprehension processes. Self-explanation therefore both requires and initiates metacognitive thinking. Think-aloud techniques and self-explanation allow one to obtain a glimpse of mental comprehension processes, which are transient and dynamic. They remain so because reading is directed by individual reading goals, the reader’s perceived relevance of the context of the text, and the linguistic complexity of the text (McNamara & Magliano, 2009). It is important to note that well-known researchers such as McNamara and Magliano (2009) encountered difficulties with actually measuring metacognition in their research, just as Pretorius and Lephalala (2011) encountered with reading comprehension. Their findings naturally had implications for this study, which I attempted to address by triangulating many data sources in order to give me a better indication of changes in the learners’ metacognition and reading comprehension levels.

2.3.4. Implications for teaching

As discussed in 2.3.2.2, the best way for teachers to teach a metacognitive strategy is to model it. Pressley and Woloshyn (1995) advise teachers to use a few guidelines when teaching metacognitive strategies. First, they recommend that teachers teach a few strategies at a time through modelling and explanations. The instruction should be intensive and extensive and clear up any misunderstandings through re-modelling or re-explanation. Second, the modelling should also show learners when and where to use the strategies. Third, teachers should encourage learners to monitor and reflect on their strategy use by encouraging reflective processing over speed processing. In addition, small-group instruction has been shown to improve both reading comprehension strategies and comprehension levels and could be used in conjunction with the guidelines above (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006). This was pertinent to this study as FET phase learners often do not receive direct, intensive instruction in spheres like vocabulary development, language proficiency, oral reading fluency, and comprehension at high school level (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, & Ling, 2010). According to government policy, these skills should all have been mastered in the GET phase. However, this is often not the case and was not the case in this research project. Finally, to recapitulate, McKeown and Beck (2009) argue that the process of meaning-making remains superior to the strategy implementation and argue strongly for text-based discussions in classroom instruction. These researchers focused on meaning-making through coherence via connections. The authors add that open discussions which are facilitated by types of strategies, such as the question-the-author (QtA) approach, produce a greater number of connections between concepts and thus improve comprehension far more than method-focused instruction.

2.4. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided detailed explorations of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning, in which language functions both a psychological and cultural tool. Metacognition, metacognitive awareness, modelling, prompting and the implications for teaching were then discussed. In the next chapter, an overview of South Africa's literacy and an exploration of the concepts of reading and comprehension will be presented in detail.

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: FUNDA, UFUNDE²

3.1. Introduction

This chapter forms the second portion of the literature review. After a discussion about South Africa's educational policy, which influenced the Grade 10s learning experiences in English, reading and comprehension will be explored in depth. This chapter will also include statistics about the state of reading comprehension in South Africa, and I will attempt to describe the learning conditions of most isiXhosa-speaking learners.

3.1.1. South African educational policy and statistics

In the work of Paulo Freire (1970), education systems were seen as mechanisms for entrenching the hegemony of the powerful and wealthy citizens. Similarly, Dale (2009) asserts that education systems have been the key to nation building efforts and economic development for some time. Through education, societies re-establish and redefine their national identities, attempt to address their social problems, and strengthen their economies. The previous apartheid government used education in this way too, and therefore, one cannot look at education in South Africa without first considering the legacy of Bantu education.

The Bantu Education Act in 1953 had a profound impact on the quality of life for many people in South Africa. The enforced, inferior education and oppression of "non-whites" was endorsed by the apartheid government. This was clearly demonstrated in a speech by Dr. H.F. Verwoerd in 1954, in which he announced that black African people were only fit for labour, had no place in the "European community" and were thus not worthy of a quality education as it would have been of no use to them (Mokhaba, 2004, p. 25). Botha (2002, p. 362) describes the education system at the time as "characterized by ... unequal educational opportunities, irrelevant curricula, inadequate finances and facilities, shortage of educational materials, [an] enrolment explosion and inadequately qualified teaching staff". The "non-whites" followed a very different curriculum from the "white" population. Accordingly, schools in traditionally non-white areas were severely under-resourced and employed teachers with inferior or no teaching qualifications. However, in the white schools, children received quality education from professional teachers and had a wealth of resources for extended learning and support. Soudien and Baxen (1997, p. 458) record that "[e]ducation was central to the discursive process of racial and cultural segregation in the old South Africa", and therefore an educational change was central to dismantling apartheid's presence in the country.

² An isiXhosa phrase "You read, you learn". In isiXhosa, the word "*funda*" means both 'read' and 'learn'. The Xhosa culture recognises that learning and reading go hand-in-hand.

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, the African National Congress came into power and implemented a new education system as an immediate need, which, it claimed, would not perpetuate the injustices of the past. Obviously, the disparities described above have had long-lasting consequences on the role and perception of education's value in South Africa. Many Xhosa children come from families where the value of education is not embedded in the community's cultural capital (Bray et al., 2010). To the older generations, education seemed irrelevant in comparison to the struggle for basic human rights, such as freedom of movement and speech, running water, electricity, and so forth. As a result, many young black men and women left school to join the anti-apartheid movement. Those who remained in schools were not empowered through their education to build new lives for themselves when the new democratic government came into power under former president Nelson Mandela (Mokhaba, 2004).

In light of this history, much of South Africa's educational policy has aimed to address the effects of Bantu education. In 1997, outcomes-based education (OBE) was introduced to redress the damage done by apartheid. It was, however, reviewed in 2000 as its implementation proved problematic. This review produced the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 policy documents published in 2002. Then in 2009, these two documents were again reviewed and combined to produce the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-12. This document "builds on the previous curriculum but also updates it and aims to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis" (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 4). Learning and teaching in South African high schools is now guided by the National Curriculum Statement Grades for R-12, which is comprised of three policy documents: the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for each school subject, a national policy document detailing the programme and promotion requirements for Grades R to 12, and the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011a, p. 8). This new curriculum will be phased in over a period of 3 years. The phasing in began in 2012 and will be completed in 2014. The CAPS forms the basis for the Minister of Basic Education to determine the outcomes, standards, and procedures of assessment for learners in public and independent schools. It also replaces many of the previous policy documents released by government, such as Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and the Standard Assessment Guidelines (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011a, p. 3).

3.1.2. Educational policy and language

The CAPS document provides teachers with details about instruction times for first and second languages. The document states that as a child progresses through his school career, the amount of time dedicated to home language learning should decrease steadily from approximately 10 hours per week in Foundation Phase to four and a half hours per week in the FET phase. However, the language learning time for the child's First Additional Language (FAL) should be

increased from naught hours in Foundation Phase to four and a half hours in the FET phase (Department of Basic Education, 2011b). In some South African schools, these hours are not adhered to for a number of reasons. In some instances, the teachers themselves are English language learners (ELL) and do not have the vocabulary or linguistic skills to converse with and instruct learners for lengthy periods (Hugo & Nieman, 2010). On the other hand, the 'Straight for English' approach is preferred by non-English-speaking parents, who perceive English speakers to be advantaged through their ability to converse in English, as opposed to indigenous African languages. Thus, many ESL learners begin their learning in English, a language in which they are not literate. This is compounded by the fact that they are unable to transfer linguistic abilities from their home language as they are not given the chance to develop sufficient mother-tongue proficiency that would facilitate skill transfer (Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005).

Previously, the Department of Basic Education (2011b) promoted a model of language learning called *additive multilingualism*, whereby learners acquire languages in addition to their home language. Most schools offer one or two languages at home-language level. In the policy document, "home language" denotes proficiency level and not the mother-tongue language acquired by learners in their early childhood years (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 8). The Education Department has specific target skills stipulated in the CAPS English FAL document. With the study's intervention process in mind, it was necessary to investigate the government's expectations for additional language learning first so that the research could be pitched at the correct level for the learners. At FET level, instruction in the home language emphasises the reading and writing skills in order to equip learners for tertiary studies and the working world. Furthermore, learners are also expected to have mastered both interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic skills to enable "learning across the curriculum" (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 7). Similarly, government expects proficient interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic skills by Grade 10 in the FAL.

In South Africa, education in one's language of choice is a human right. The White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (RSA Department of Education, 2001) draws on the South African Bill of Rights (1996, Chapter 2), which states that all children are entitled to receive education in any language of their preference, whether it is official or not, in public educational institutions where this is practicable. This is especially pertinent to ESL learners as they, in countries that are as culturally diverse as South Africa, often experience language as a barrier to learning and are thus in need of support for learning. The South African Languages Bill (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 7) therefore aims to "accelerate the development and promotion of African languages" as a response to the challenges faced by government and various organisations with regard to language diversity in South Africa. The White Paper 6 further states that all children are capable of learning and require support as language proficiency is essential to learning and acts as the medium of learning across the curriculum (RSA Department of Education, 2007). Language is thus "a tool for thought and communication ... learning to use language effectively enables learners to

think and acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others and to manage their world” (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 7). Although the vital role of language in education is recognised in South Africa through policy, implementing that policy has proved difficult.

These difficulties are often evident early on in the educational process. For example, Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) state that, in South Africa, core reading development is neglected at primary school level. Mothibeli (2005) concurs with this observation, noting that a Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study in 2002 found that only 36.7% of South African Grade 6 learners were attaining basic levels of reading mastery. Similarly, in 2006, the PIRLS study ranked South African Grade 4 and 5 learners as last out of the 40 participating countries, where 78% of the Grade 5 learners failed to achieve the minimum benchmarks for reading (Mullis, Martin, & Kennedy, 2007; Van Staden & Howie, 2008). Furthermore, Cleghorn and Rollnick (2002) note that research results on language-in-education and bilingual education are not being implemented in education policies nor are they included in teacher education programmes. This was recognised as problematic by educators and government alike. Therefore, the implementation of the White Paper 6 for Special Needs Education (RSA Department of Education, 2001) was aimed at ensuring that educational institutions, educational systems, and teaching and learning practices meet the needs of all learners. Furthermore, South African learners also differ with regards to ethnicity, gender, age, home language, culture, socioeconomic status, and disabilities. The low literacy levels described in the aforementioned studies suggest that learners begin reading poorly and continue on a “poor reading trajectory” (Pretorius & Currin, 2010, p. 67). The finding of these authors does not reflect well on the comprehension of written text by South African learners.

In a national evaluation conducted in 2005, the Department of Education found that Grade 6 learners obtained a national mean of 38% for English literacy. The PIRLS study conducted later in 2006 showed that South African children “have reading problems irrespective of the language in which they read”, which is indicative of a national reading crisis (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011, p. 1). One of the greatest indicators of this is that only 12% of the Grade 4s, from various cultural backgrounds, in the survey were able to answer literal comprehension questions, questions requiring extraction of explicitly stated facts from the text (Howie, Venter, & van Staden, 2008). In the case of English second language learners, Grade 4 is also the year in which a second language becomes their LoLT. Thus, it is expected that they should struggle a bit with reading in a language that they have barely begun to use at school.

Bray et al. (2010) describe the difference in schooling outcomes based on racial differences, which is most often linked to socio-economic status. In their book, the authors note that academically strong learners in poor neighbourhoods are not even on par ‘skill-wise’ with academically weak learners in wealthy neighbourhoods. Schools in poor neighbourhoods are often characterised by a

lack of materials, demotivated and disinterested teachers, and rebellion and ill-discipline among learners. Such teaching conditions often result in delays and rushed content delivery as teachers try to “cram” content instruction into shorter time frames to ensure that they finish the planned syllabi. This however leaves many of the weaker learners “stranded far behind” (Bray et al., 2010, p. 44). Consequently, many of these children do not have a clear understanding of how to achieve their educational goals. In addition, they are unable to receive advice at home about achieving, as their (often uninformed or illiterate) parents are unable to advise them. In the home context, children value three types of support. Firstly, they value someone with whom to discuss the challenges of schooling. Secondly, they value advice and support with their homework, and thirdly, they value encouragement to persevere towards their educational goals. These three factors largely determine motivation and performance amongst learners and may be absent in the case of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Bray et al., 2010).

3.1.3. Linguistic development at school

Language has various interrelated components: phonology (knowledge of phonemes/speech sounds), morphology (word formation), syntax (sentence formation), semantics (word and sentence meaning), prosody (intonation and rhythm of speech), and pragmatics, which involves the effective use of language such as knowing how to take turns in conversation, using the correct tone and terms of politeness, and so on (Gunning, 2008; National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2003). Acquiring a second language requires that a language learner master these components in his second language too but even more so when he is expected to learn through a second language.

A home language is defined as “the language first acquired by learners” (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 8). Thus, the terms ‘Home Language’ and ‘First Additional Language’ are now used “to refer to proficiency levels at which the language is offered [at schools] and not the native ... or acquired ... language” (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 8). To clarify, in black schools, English is added as a First Additional Language but also acts as the LoLT. Therefore, the children who participated in this study are described as ESL learners because they are learning in English in addition to their mother tongue. With the development of language proficiency of Home Language status, learners are expected to demonstrate a mastery of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic skills, which are general curriculum learning skills. In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, learners should continue strengthening their basic linguistic skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Learners are also expected to reason and think at this level in their First Additional Language (FAL) or the LoLT to develop their cognitive academic skills for studying content subjects (such as Science and Life Sciences) in English (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b). Moreover, Nel (2011) states that a person is considered proficient in a second language when he can display cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Thus, learners in the Intermediate and Senior Phases should be working

towards first and second language proficiency—interpersonal communicative skills and basic cognitive academic skills—in order to cope with the demands of FET-phase content subjects. The CAPS (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b) concurs, stating that learners are expected to apply pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies to aid their comprehension and interpretation of various texts and that these skills should be automatic as they form part of the requirements for subsequent educational phases.

3.1.4. Parents, resources, and language acquisition

An important factor in linguistic development is parental talk, both in quality and quantity. Parental talk has a direct influence on future language development, cognitive development, as well as academic success at school. This is because parental talk expands a child's vocabulary and exposes him to unknown words, explanations, descriptions, and complex sentence structure. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) explain this using Vygotsky's sociocultural approach: joint activities between parents and children expose the child to crucial knowledge and new ways of interacting with others and their environments. The child takes the modelled action or knowledge and internalises them to form part of his own action and knowledge. In a study by Hart and Risley (1995) about the quality and quantity of parental talk, less talkative families' parental talk was aimed at controlling children's behaviour and, in some cases, children heard fewer than 500 words and received fewer than four affirmations in an hour. In more talkative families, children at age 4 have heard over 50 million words, as opposed to 10 million in less talkative families, and have received 800 000 affirmations, as opposed to 80 000. These types of differences are correlated to socioeconomic status but cannot be considered causative (Gunning, 2008). Reading ability is still determined by language development.

Many learners in South Africa are taught and assessed in English, which in many cases is their second, third, or even fourth language (Nel, 2011). Less than 1% of South African children speak English as a home language (Fleisch, 2008). As discussed previously, in Section 3.1.4, parental choice plays a considerable role in the aforementioned statistic. English is preferred by many parents as it is perceived to be prestigious and universal and to lead to a successful education and subsequent career (Nel, 2011). Therefore, many black parents choose to send their children to English schools or opt for the 'straight for English' approach. This early move away from home language instruction leaves learners deficient in the necessary linguistic and cognitive knowledge and skills needed at school (Fleisch, 2008, p. 98). As a result, many black children are only exposed to English in their school environment and do not receive enough support or practice to become proficient English communicators (Nel, 2009).

Conveying a concept in a child's home language is often a simple task. However, it can be more difficult to convey a concept in English as the task is complicated by the child first needing to learn the necessary vocabulary or jargon. Thus, it should be noted that the transfer of linguistic skills

from home language to second language is not automatic (Nel, 2011). According to Hawkins et al. (2010, p. 60), “fluency is a crucial factor for the development of reading comprehension.” Less fluent learners are less likely to comprehend reading material, which worsens at high school level where learners are expected to master large amounts of reading material in a variety of subjects (Hawkins et al., 2010). LaBerge and Samuels (1974) note that less fluent readers use cognitive resources for decoding and therefore fewer resources are available during comprehension. Diaz-Rico (2008) acknowledges that the biggest obstacle that ESL learners encounter to reading comprehension is vocabulary because a word can only be read and understood once it is known. Hence, it would seem that South African ESL learners would benefit profoundly from using metacognitive skills in conjunction with vocabulary expansion and development in their home languages and in English.

Many researchers doing studies in Africa have assumed that learners have adequate first language literacy levels and thus have only assessed skill transfer towards improving second language proficiency (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002). However, this is often not the case for several reasons. First, there is generally a lack of materials in African languages, and as a result of this, English materials are usually selected (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002). Wafawarowa (2000) also makes a pertinent point: only 27% of South African schools have libraries. Second, the language policies of schools endorsing approaches like ‘straight for English’ can produce learners with higher literacy levels in their second language than in their mother tongue. In many Xhosa schools, English is perceived as superior to traditional African languages (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). Third, although many Xhosa children are taught to read in an African language, it may not be their mother tongue as there are many different dialects within different regions (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). Environmental and socioeconomic factors also affect these learners. The majority of previously disadvantaged schools continue struggling without basic resources such as electricity, running water, desks, and textbooks, and face external factors such as overcrowding and poverty (Mokhaba, 2004). This last point is especially true of schools in rural areas.

3.2. Reading

Education’s primary aim is to provide people with the tools to make meaning out of the world around them. Reading is one of these tools. As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, Vygotskian tools such as language mediate between reality and the individual. Language as a psychological tool also mediates higher cognitive processes and functions as a communal tool. It is communal in origin and appropriated by the individual during communal activity, after which it is internalised and used to transform and support individual mental functioning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Reading, as language processing, then serves as one of the psychological tools that mediate a learner’s cognitive activity. Pike, Compain, and Mumper (1997, p. 24) define reading as “an interactive process in which readers use information from the printed text along with what is in their heads to construct meaning in a given situational context.” It is important to note, however, that each reader

ascribes individual meaning to the text. The images and meaning ascribed to the text content is unique because each reader has unique thoughts, experiences, and background that shape the meaning-making process. Reading should also be seen as a social process whereby an author is able to influence the reader's knowledge and motivation levels and unite people in common activities as they share their understanding of the text. Reading is also an interactive process in which the reader's comprehension is determined by his own comprehension level, writing style, the author's communication of ideas, and the reading context. The text is filtered through cognitive processes like memory, perception, attention, and ascribing meaning (Dednam, 2005).

Learning to read is a process that begins in early childhood and stretches across most of a person's school career in various stages (Ekwall & Shanker, 1989). Even though meaning-making is central to reading from the start, three dimensions in the reading process are mastered at different stages in a child's life. These are form, function, and pragmatics (Landsberg, Kruger, & Nel, 2005). Form involves identifying words and sentences through phonemes and letter-sound relationships. This usually happens between pre-primary and Grade 1. From Grade 1 to Grade 4, children are usually concerned with function. This dimension involves the analysis of the text on many levels: decoding, phoneme analysis and structural analysis, comprehension, inferencing, and evaluation. In these lower primary grades, children are learning to read. Once the child is able to understand and appreciate the ideas being communicated through the text content, the focus of his reading activity becomes comprehension with the goal of *reading to learn*. The child is then concerned with things like vocabulary expansion, learning, and mastering study skills in the pragmatics phase (Dednam, 2005; Gunning, 2008; Landsberg et al., 2005).

3.2.1. Bottom-up or top-down?

In this section, I will present the three approaches to reading instruction: the bottom-up approach, the top-down approach, and the interactionist approach (Dreyer, 2011). The following descriptions of the approaches might appear reductionist but are not intended to simplify a concept as complex as reading instruction. This simplification was done specifically to highlight the different foci of the approaches. No teacher can follow one approach exclusively in practice as meaning-making is the foundation and goal of reading. Teachers usually use these approaches in varying combinations, depending on their view of reading and the needs of their learners.

Owing to the differences in approaches, primary school reading instruction is a contentious issue. Teachers who subscribe to the bottom-up approach primarily focus on children's sub-skills, such as phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, and decoding. This means that children start the reading process by becoming familiar with the names and shapes of the alphabetic letters. They then learn simple and complex letter sound-relationships such as vowel and consonant combinations. In this way, phonics forms the building blocks for complex sentence and paragraph construction. This approach requires that teachers have an accurate sense of what skills their

learners have mastered and what skills they lack and need to instruct directly in the case of missing skills (Carnine, Silbert, & Kame'enui, 1990). The motivation behind this approach is to break a complex process down into its simpler components (Gunning, 2008).

In contrast, the top-down approach is thought to be a more rounded approach to teaching reading. It is sometimes called the 'whole language approach'. Teachers who follow this philosophical approach believe that learning to read is similar to language acquisition; that is, learning to read is thought to be a more natural process when learners integrate and use their prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge to make sense of written text. Thus, when reading a sentence, a learner will make use of context clues in the text and in his background knowledge and will decode unknown words. In this approach, learners are encouraged to consider the whole text when reading. Similarly, following this approach, comprehension is not taught explicitly by teachers but learners are thought to benefit from discussions about 'high-quality literature' or expository texts, whereby they improve their understanding (Gunning, 2008).

However, for ESL learners at high school level, it is necessary to use a combination of these two approaches in order to address, adequately, the learners' needs for foundational reading skills, such as decoding, and also for relevancy and meaning construction. Therefore, in this study, I made use of the third approach, which John-Steiner, Panofsky, and Smith (1994) assert complements work in the fields of language and cognitive development. The third approach to reading can be viewed as a combination of the two preceding approaches and is called the interactionist approach. Teachers who subscribe to this approach mix skills instruction with a holistic, meaningful approach to reading. One of the foundational assumptions of this approach is that language develops socially. This is informed by the work of Vygotsky (John-Steiner, Panofsky, & Smith, 1994). Chapman (2000) elaborates by adding that children acquire language socially in two ways. First, new learning emerges from past learned behaviours. These can be gestures, word use, or sentence structure. Second, new forms of communication arise to express meaning and show intent, which are already part of the child's repertoire (Chapman, 2000).

Furthermore, John-Steiner, Panofsky, and Smith (1994) explain the interactionist approach from a Vygotskian sociocultural approach. The authors claim that developments in research and Vygotskian theory are integrated to form four basic assumptions that guide language teaching and learning in this approach:

- i. First, there has been a move from structural models of language learning to functional models. Researchers using these new models emphasise communicative intent and functional representations within language because linguistic mastery is achieved through generative social interaction. Therefore, language should be viewed from a social and functional perspective because a child's language develops through its function in his familial and social lives and, consequently, current researchers study language for its meaning, use, and structure in that context.

- ii. Second, Vygotsky's law of genetic development holds for language learning specifically. Language moves from being interpsychological to intrapsychological and is affected by social and individual factors. One such factor now considered highly influential is culture. Human learning and development is a result of the dynamic interaction of these factors.
- iii. Third, language as a "culturally situated practice" (John-Steiner et al., 1994, p. 3) allows one to investigate human knowledge and activity, which are always historically and culturally bound.
- iv. Last, interactionist teachers monitor the way developmental processes change over time and do not only consider the products of learning. This view and action research fit well together as they both emphasise change over time within a cultural context (John-Steiner et al., 1994).

Marie Clay's Reading Recovery is an example of such an interactionist approach. The Reading Recovery programme was introduced on a national scale in New Zealand in the 1980s. Many first-world countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Denmark also adopted it thereafter. Reading Recovery addresses phonological awareness, word recognition and decoding, visual perception of written language, structural analysis, and phrasing. The programme was motivated by the belief that early detection and intervention can be beneficial when learners' achievements in Grade 1 have been shown to accurately predict success in their school careers and lives (National Reading Panel, 2000). The programme targets Grade 1 learners who are at risk of failure in learning to read. They receive 30 minute sessions for as long as needed before they are 'discontinued'. The teacher interacts extensively with the learner during these sessions while he overcomes reading obstacles. In this way, reading and language acquisition become social activities for the child. Most subsequent research into the success of the programme has shown that the targeted Grade 1s continue to benefit from their involvement in the programme years later (Wilson & Daviss, 1994). Reading skills are first taught explicitly in a systematic manner but are not over emphasised so that the reading process does not appear fragmented (Gunning, 2008). Therefore, the types of skills that are taught are in response to the learners' needs, that is, skills which they use during reading and writing in relation to real life.

3.2.2. The development of a reader

According to Landsberg et al. (2005) and Pretorius (2002), reading has two essential components: decoding and comprehension. Decoding involves identifying words, while comprehension involves understanding words and the ideas that they convey. These two components are used in different degrees as a child moves from Grade 1 through to Grade 12 and beyond. These components operate within the individual context of the reader and, therefore, the reader's perceptions; response to the text, values, attitudes, past experiences, family, and community life all influence the reading process (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). In the lower grades, much of the child's effort is

focused on decoding, but as the child grows, he begins to rely heavily on his comprehension skills and uses decoding to expand his vocabulary (Landsberg et al., 2005).

In their publication on neuropsychology, Sesma, Mahone, Levine, Eason, and Cutting (2009) mention that decoding has been a good determinant of successful reading comprehension for a number of decades. When children struggle to manipulate the sound structure of a language and grasp the letter-sound relationships of phonemes, they often have difficulty comprehending what they have read later on. Successful decoding is therefore a crucial step in successful comprehension. Most importantly though, meaning-making remains the goal of comprehension as it is no use to learners if they can decode but cannot ascribe meaning to the decoded words.

Several skills are crucial to the development of reading at primary school level: a) phonological awareness, b) understanding the alphabetic principle, c) decoding, d) oral reading fluency, and e) vocabulary expansion (Gunning, 2008). Therefore, when learning-support teachers address the needs of high school children, they first ensure that these skills are firmly in place so that a well-founded foundation is built for the emergence of higher order skills such as evaluation, summarisation, and inferencing.

Phonological awareness (as part of the larger phonological processing skill) involves the ability to break words up into individual letter sounds, called phonemes, and to recognise rhyming sounds amongst others. A phoneme is “the smallest unit of sound that distinguishes one word from another”, or can be described as “individual speech sounds” (Gunning, 2008, p. 123). Savin (1972) is of the opinion that children who do not grasp how to read after Grade 1 have failed at the level of reducing syllables into phonemes. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) also note that developing phonemic awareness is difficult for most children, and if this is true for mother-tongue speakers, how much more so for second language learners. There are two factors, amongst others, that make developing phonemic awareness difficult. The first is metalinguistic awareness, which can be a problem because ESL learners often lack an awareness of language as an external object during reading. The second is co-articulation as they struggle to blend sounds when articulating words. This helps children perceive words as whole units and not as combinations of separate sounds. Some authors are of the opinion that phonological awareness is the best predicting factor of reading acquisition and it performs this function across cultures (Commissaire, Duncan, & Casalis, 2011; Goswami, 1999; McBride-Chang & Kail, 2002). However, Goswami (1999) argues that phonological awareness only predicts reading skill according to the orthography and phonology of the target language, while McBride-Chang and Kail (2002) claim that phonological awareness still predicts reading performance for both first and second language orthographies. Despite the arguments, phonological awareness remains an important step in the acquisition of a second language. Subsequent to developing phonological awareness, children develop syllable awareness in the process of learning to read (McBride-Chang & Kail, 2002).

A second important overlapping phase in language acquisition is to *understand the alphabetic principle*, where letters and letter combinations are used to represent the speech sounds in a language. Phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle are usually taught from a very young age but this does not ensure that children internalise the knowledge (McBride-Chang & Kail, 2002). Children who learn these systems need to become familiar with the symbol sequence as well as the form and sound associated with each letter. This is an exciting stage in a child's reading development as he begins to realise that sounds and letters are connected, which is an integral part of his spelling development (Gunning, 2008). According to Apel (2011, p. 592), a child's orthographic knowledge "represents the information that is stored in [his] memory that tells [him] how to represent spoken language in written form". Apel posits that the alphabetic principle forms part of a child's orthographic knowledge while incorporating so much more, as shown below in Figure 3.1.

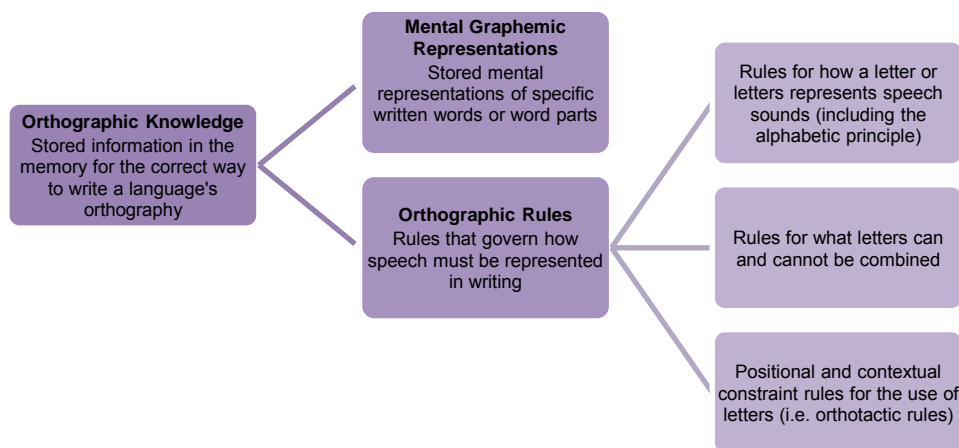


Figure 3.1: Orthographic knowledge and its components (Apel, 2011, p. 595).

As can be seen from the figure above, the pronunciation of words, as dictated by their spelling, is a factor in a child's learning-to-read process. Orthographic knowledge is therefore a contributing factor to literacy development, and phonemic orthography needs to be taken into consideration when a child learns to decode (Apel, 2011). According to Commissaire et al. (2011, p. 61), "orthographic processing skills have been shown to contribute to reading both within and across languages and in a bidirectional manner from [a learner's first language to his second language and vice versa]". This is especially true of isiXhosa-speaking learners who are acquiring English as a second language. On a more technical linguistic level, it is important to note that the phonemic orthographies of language systems differ. Phonemic orthography refers to the ratio between letters and the sounds that they represent. Languages such as Latin, Finnish, Spanish, and Italian generally have a one-to-one ratio between single letters and their speech sounds. This makes language learning easier as the language's spelling system is straightforward, that is, a child can predict the spelling of a word from its pronunciation and vice versa (orthographic rules—see Figure 3.1 above). In this way, a child develops his orthographic knowledge. In contrast to languages with straightforward orthographies, languages such as English and French have more complex

phonemic orthographies and therefore their alphabetic principles are also complex. In other words, the spelling system for English is not as straightforward as that of isiXhosa. The English orthography is termed 'opaque' by linguists, meaning that decoding involves additional processes above a direct translation of spelling to pronunciation (Kahn-Horwitz, Schwartz, & Share, 2011; Spencer, 2007). During English language learning, letter-sound relationships are the first step in the automatic recognition of many orthographic patterns that make English words graphemically complex for both mother-tongue and English language learners. As Kahn-Horwitz et al. (2011, p. 140) explain, "English word recognition is complex [because] both syllabic and morphological knowledge is necessary for decoding multi-syllabic content words of Greek and Latin origin [which are part of the English language]." In addition, many English words vary with regard to their pronunciation, that is, they are phonemically irregular and, as mentioned before, syllabic awareness develops after phonemic awareness. Thus, for English language learners, mastery of decoding and spelling includes understanding the

complex syllabic structure of English, which facilitates pronunciation of multiple vowel combinations (e.g. closed syllables with short vowel sounds such as, run, fun, up) and phonemic exceptions such as 'put' where the /u/ does not have a short sound despite the syllable being closed. (Kahn-Horwitz et al., 2011, p. 140)

This in turn affects an ESL child's pronunciation of words and therefore his oral reading fluency rate and comprehension. When an isiXhosa-speaking child encounters English phonemes that are not represented in his mother-tongue language, the phonemes are likely to be mispronounced and misspelled during reading and writing. From their study, Kahn-Horwitz et al. (2011)

recognised that English poses extraordinary difficulties for the young child learning to read and write in English [first language] (Davis & Bryant, 2006). This is even more so in the case of [an ESL learner] and these difficulties appear to be directly rooted in the complexity of the orthography. (p. 140)

Learning to read is a dynamic process whereby children move back and forth between decoding, inferencing, drawing on their prior knowledge, and adapting and refining their mental images of the text (discussed further in Section 3.3.1).

In light of the proficiency challenges facing South African ESL learners in both their home and second languages, it is unlikely that they will develop sound reading practices or strategies. This is partially due to their limited mother-tongue proficiency that prevents them from developing general linguistic skills that can be transferred to English. Consequently, they remain at a disadvantage and struggle to develop grade-appropriate reading abilities. This is a cause for concern, as a study by Eilers and Pinkley (2006) shows explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies should begin early during reading development; that is, it should begin in primary school. However, because of the differences in isiXhosa and English language systems, this does not often happen as the language systems influence how children are taught to read and how they learn to read. In many primary schools, decoding skills are considered important but are taught "in a superficial [and] decontextualized ... manner" (Pretorius & Currin, 2010, p. 68). Children typically repeat lists

of syllables and high frequency words in oral chorus from the blackboard following the teacher's instruction. This is a common occurrence because "these syllables form the building blocks of words in the African languages (which are syllabic, agglutinating languages)" (Pretorius & Currin, 2010, p. 68). Moreover, many township schools are print-poor environments, with no storybooks or graded readers available in African languages. Thus, a culture of reading geared towards learning is not modelled for the learners nor is reading for enjoyment. Macdonald (1990) and Strauss (1995) agree that this type of reading results in learners who are typically 'sound-centred readers', who are laboriously taught to decode print but where little attention is given to the meaning of text or text comprehension. In the senior primary phase, learners encounter expository texts in many of their content subjects (Devine, 1988). The meaning of these texts is often beyond their reach as learners can decode words but cannot attach any meaning to them in either their first or second languages. Thus, reading as a learning tool is never properly developed in either language.

In many schools, once primary school children have learnt to decode, it is assumed that they can comprehend what is being read as well. However, early literacy development in primary schools should prepare learners for senior GET phase and FET phase, where connections between code, text content, and language structure are crucial for understanding. Learners in Senior and FET phases begin to encounter larger varieties of expository texts in their content subjects (Dickinson, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010). There is no time to struggle with decoding when learners need to be strengthening their integration and comprehension skills in the higher grades. At high school level, the aim of metacognitive strategy instruction should be greater comprehension, without adding to the cognitive burden on the working memory; that is, the strategy should become an automatic skill (Williams & Atkins, 2009). However, as a result of inadequate primary school instruction, high school learners are often unable to decode English words in the text and therefore cannot make sense of the text. The text just becomes a "string of seemingly disconnected sounds" as Dickinson et al. (2010, p. 305) state. What is more, FET phase learners with existing reading problems do not receive additional support because of factors such as time constraints, FET phase teachers' lack of training or reluctance to teach basic reading skills (Hawkins, Hale, Sheeley, & Ling, 2010). Furthermore, in these schools, it is common practice for teachers to emphasise the comprehension of a particular text as important instead of teaching learners the skills to help them comprehend all text (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006).

When learners view reading as a chore, this attitude often stems from early schooling. It has been reported that ESL learners' decreasing involvement in reading-related activities are as a result of unrewarding and challenging early reading experiences (Dreyer, 2011). In the case of ESL learners, the LoLT can act as a barrier to learning, making reading and learning difficult and frustrating (Landsberg et al., 2005). Learners with a history of frustrating reading experiences often fail to become independent readers as they age (Dreyer, 2011). They generally have reading speeds that hamper comprehension as a result of lack of appropriate reading material, lack of exposure to print, and poor decoding skills (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). A number of studies

(LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti, 1985; Stanovich, 1980) have noted, in the words of Cunningham and Stanovich (1997, p. 934), that “slow, capacity-draining word recognition processes require cognitive resources that should be allocated to higher level processes of text integration and comprehension” and “thus reading for meaning is hindered, unrewarding reading experiences multiply, and practice is avoided or merely tolerated without real cognitive involvement”.

Reading failure is the greatest cause of academic failure (Ergül, 2012). A study by Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) shows that the oral reading rate in Grade 1 can be used to predict comprehension abilities and vocabulary in Grade 11. Many reading difficulties can be identified by assessing the reading levels of learners. This type of assessment looks at word recognition and comprehension. There are three levels of reading, as shown in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: The Three Levels of Reading

Independent level	Instruction level	Frustration level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word recognition accuracy: 98-100% • Comprehension: 90-100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word recognition accuracy: 95-98 % • Comprehension: 70-89% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word recognition accuracy: 95% and less • Comprehension: 70% and less

At the independent level, the child is able to read unaided with ease. He is able to read academic material and recreational resources. At the instruction level, the reading material presents a challenge to the learner but he is able to recognise the majority of the words and so grasp the gist of the text. However, at frustration level, the learner’s word recognition rate is low and therefore his comprehension abilities are severely challenged (Donne, 2011). Landsberg et al. (2005) add that the frustration level has a few symptoms that make it easily recognisable: the learner’s reading is inaudible and his intonation is incorrect; he reads a-rhythmically word-by-word using his finger as a pointer; he articulates the words but with no audible sound (sub-vocalisation), lip reads and moves his head from side-to-side; he often asks for help or refuses to read completely and shows little interest in the text and appears tired.

The frustration level is often clearly evident in South African high schools where ESL is used as a LoLT and learners struggle to engage cognitively with texts. Black learners in previously disadvantaged schools most often move from a background of mother-tongue, narrative-grounded reading experiences that are often few and far between to an ‘extensive expository English text-based curriculum’ in the FET phase. These learners are also often hopelessly unaware of the deficiencies in their education (Pretorius, 2002). Classroom-based reading instruction is problematic in these schools as the differences between the home language and English language systems influence how the learners perceive reading. Despite all this, many studies have found that another influence affects the reading development of many black South African learners,

called the 'Matthew effect' (Mol & Bus, 2011; Pretorius, 2010; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007; Stanovich, 1986). Stanovich (1986) noticed that a reciprocal relationship exists between reading comprehension and exposure to print, which can be described as the "cumulative advantage phenomenon" or the "rich-get-richer" Matthew effect (Pretorius, 2010, p. 350). The Matthew effect is said to happen when the reading gap between skilled and unskilled readers widens with time; the good readers become increasingly skilled at reading and comprehending, while the poor readers fall further and further behind and are unable to catch up. The Matthew effect in South African learners' reading can be clearly seen from the poor results that the learners achieved in the local, national and international studies discussed in Section 2.3. This downward spiral must be addressed as soon as possible as it has cumulative effects during a child's school career; that is, the reading gap widens with the progression of the learner's school career (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Pretorius & Currin, 2010).

Lastly, *vocabulary expansion* starts at an early age. Reading is considered one of the most important learning tools in both first and second language acquisition. Importantly, reading is often the sole means by which second language learners can thrive outside the classroom. However, in order for children to read independently, their vocabularies need to be broad enough, incorporating at least 3000 word-families³ or 5000 individual words (Hirsch & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1992; Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011). Later studies show "increasing comprehension with increasing vocabulary coverage" (Schmitt et al., 2011, p. 27) but with vocabulary coverage demanding 8000 to 9000 word families. Nation (2006) postulates that a learner with the knowledge of at least 8000 word-families will know 34660 individual word forms, enabling the reading of a wide variety of texts. However, research done by Laufer in 1992 seems to indicate that high school English second language (ESL) and English foreign language (EFL) learners often only possess a vocabulary of between 1000 and 4000 word families. Because of the limitations of the aforementioned studies, these statistics must be viewed tentatively, but they do point to the possible vocabulary challenges facing current ESL learners. However, from the study of Schmitt et al. (2011), it is evident that a fairly linear relationship exists between vocabulary coverage and reading comprehension—stated differently, as vocabulary coverage increases, so does reading comprehension.

3.2.2.1. BICS and CALP

In the FET phase, South African learners are not only expected to have mastered their second language, English, in terms of proficiency but they are expected to operate using the language as a LoLT (RSA Department of Basic Education, 2011b). This stresses the need for *academic* language proficiency. In this regard, two terms have been defined to express these different demands. They are 'basic interpersonal communication skills' (BICS) and 'cognitive academic language proficiency' (CALP), introduced by Cummins (1987).

³ A word family is comprised of a root word, its inflections that are tense-based, and other derivations.

Nel (2011, p. 169) defines BICS as

the ability to communicate about everyday things when one speaks to family, friends and others in their daily situations. This context provides clues such as facial expressions, pictures and objects which help with comprehension, and the person thus does not only rely on language in order to gain/construct meaning.

Rothenberg and Fisher (2007, p. 4) define CALP as “academic language which is needed in a school situation for academic tasks such as reading where abstract tasks are involved and the learner is dependent on language to make meaning. Here very little context or clues are provided.” This study aimed at improving both the English BICS and the CALP of the isiXhosa-speaking ESL learners.

Given that CALP is an essential type of proficiency for the schooling context, it is necessary to explore in what way academic tasks are classed and what levels of language proficiency and cognitive ability are needed to complete these tasks. Cummins (1980, 1981) devised a sliding scale model to categorise different academic tasks. In Figure 3.2 below, the tasks range in difficulty on two continua: from cognitively demanding to cognitively undemanding and from context-embedded to context-reduced. Context-embedded tasks provide many external cues to help in determining the meaning of the task, while context-reduced tasks only provide linguistic cues (Baker, 2006). As is apparent, any task that falls within the cognitively demanding/context-reduced quadrant will be difficult for learners and especially for ESL learners. As depicted in Figure 3.2 below, content subjects, reading, and writing all fall within the cognitively demanding/context-reduced quadrant:

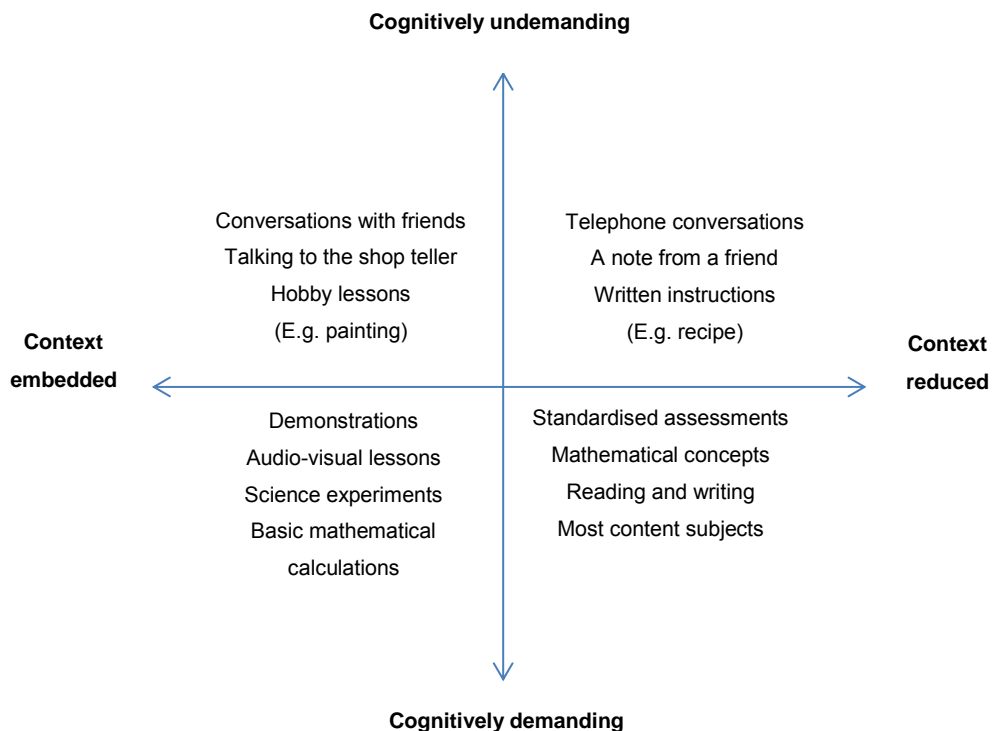


Figure 3.2: BICS/CALP continuum (adapted from University of Colorado, 2013).

As an expert on bilinguals and English second-language learners, Cummins (1980, 1981) developed his common underlying proficiency (CUP) model, depicted in Figure 3.3 below. The model shows that bilingualism can be represented in the form of two icebergs with their separate peaks above the surface. This symbolises that the first and second language of a bilingual learner are visibly different in conversation (external appearance) but that internally, they are fused and “operate through the same central processing system” (Baker, 2001, p.165). This conceptual model describes the processing of acquired languages.

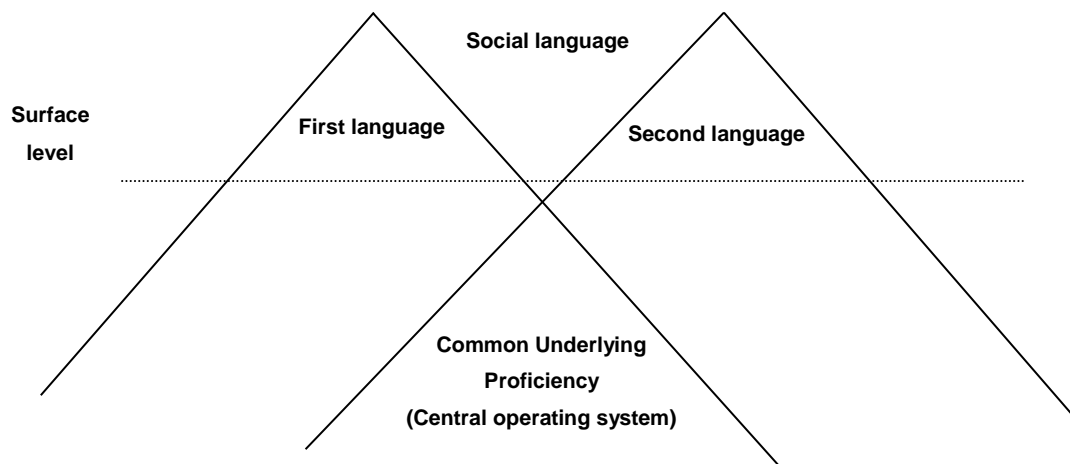


Figure 3.3: Cummins' common underlying proficiency (CUP) model (Baker, 2001, p. 165).

Since the majority of South African children grow up in multilingual contexts, this model for learning is important for five reasons:

- i. First, the central operating system is responsible for processing thoughts that are expressed through reading, writing, and during listening, in whatever language this may happen. In bilingual children, the central processing system forms one integrated source of language.
- ii. Second, all people have the capacity to learn numerous languages. This is because languages are able to be stored in the working and long-term memories.
- iii. Third, information processing skills and academic achievement are possible whether learners are monolingual or bi-/multilingual. This includes cognitive functioning, but Baker (2001) cautions that, in the case of bilingualism, both languages need to be well developed should the reader want to benefit from transferring competencies from one language to another.
- iv. Fourth, as implied by the point above, the learner needs to be proficient in the LoLT so that he is able to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom content. He should not be using his cognitive resources to process language at this point.
- v. Fifth, in line with the justification above, if a child operates in a second language that is poorly developed, “the quality and quantity of what he learns from complex curriculum

materials and what [he] produce[s] in oral and written form may be relatively weak and impoverished” (Baker, 2001, p. 166). Therefore, when a child is unable to function optimally in any language, his cognitive functioning and academic performance may be adversely affected (Baker, 2001).

The transfer of linguistic and cognitive elements from one language to another is a complex process. Pavlenko (2005) has introduced the concept of *linguistic relativity* to try to account for this complexity. This is an elaboration of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic determinism, where “differences among languages cause differences in the thoughts of their speakers [and] thus, thought is the functional equivalent of language” (Facone, Kearns, Kopp, & Watson, 2000, p. 1). This theory proposes that speakers of different languages have different cognitive systems and these systems influence how the world is perceived (Sternberg, 1999). According to Pinker (1994), an expert on language and the mind, the implications of this hypothesis are drastic. He notes that if reality is not centred in the world but is imposed by culture and language, then reality itself can be challenged. In this study, I am not concerned with the perceptions of reality but with language learning, cognition, and reading comprehension and will therefore walk a tightrope between these two views. I acknowledge that language and culture affect individuals’ perceptions of reality but am also aware of the vast amount of literature demonstrating that first language proficiency can enhance and complement second language acquisition and use. A spokesperson for the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation [Norad] (2009, p. 10) emphasises that, regardless of which language is being acquired, all language learners need many hours of practice to “develop concept formation and cognitive development.... I will add that African children are paradoxically left with low conceptual competence both in local (endogenous) and foreign (exogenous) languages.”

3.2.2.2. Metacognitive strategy instruction and question generation

One way of improving African children’s low levels of perceptual competence is through metacognitive strategy instruction, which goes hand-in-hand with question generation. The education crisis in South Africa has brought early reading instruction into focus as an area of primary concern (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). This is because many South African children can neither read nor decode fluently (Williams & Atkins, 2009). Metacognitive reading strategy instruction has been proposed as a solution to this problem (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley, 2005). Metacognitive reading strategies are more appropriate for high school learners who are able to decode and read fluently. Comprehension problems at high school level require metacognitive reading strategies that can be used to repair learners’ faulty comprehension. In the words of Williams and Atkins (2009, p. 26),

Skills are those competencies that a reader brings to the text, such as decoding or inferencing abilities. Ideally, a reader has the skills that allow all the processes necessary for comprehension to work in concert, quickly and effortlessly, without reaching conscious awareness.... In some reading situations, comprehension is

quickly repaired and strategies go by unnoticed; other situations require deliberate effort.

According to the authors, the goal of early metacognitive reading strategy instruction is for children to internalise the strategies and perform them subconsciously while reading, that is, a strategy will become a skill with practice. Glaubman, Glaubman, and Ofir (1997) suggest that metacognitive reading strategy instruction be paired with question generation. Metacognitive reading strategy instruction allows the internalisation of the strategies, which in turn produces self-directed, regulated learners able to transfer the strategy use to new situations.

Question generation is considered to be “a powerful metacognitive” activity that fosters individuals’ comprehension (Gavelek & Raphael, 1985, p. 114). Otero (2009, p. 47) elaborates, saying that “questioning activity involves metacognitive monitoring, controlling, and specifically regulating comprehension by looking for information relevant to a reader’s comprehension goal”. Graesser, McMahan, and Johnson (1994) identify four types of questions that accompany general conversation. These questions apply to reading comprehension as the reader starts his conversation with the text. The questions 1) address knowledge deficits, 2) monitor common ground, 3) co-ordinate social action, and 4) control conversation and attention. In addition, Graesser and McMahan (1993) identify the same stages for question generation but add ‘social editing’ as the final stage. According to Dillon (1990), the initial stage of question formulation finds the questioner in a state of confusion, which then drives articulation of the question.

3.2.2.3. Question generation and mental models

Question generation is a metacognitive reading strategy and has been identified by Dymock and Nicholson (2010) as an essential skill. Question generation helps the learner form a situational model of the text that he has read. This, in reading comprehension, is not an explicit representation of the text but rather a representation of what the text is describing and includes the reader’s prior knowledge. Situational models are discussed further in Section 3.3 below. When attempting comprehension, readers generate questions when encountering obstacles to the formation of a situational model. Obstacles specific to comprehension usually come in two forms: text-based questions and knowledge-based questions. Text-based questions arise from and are about the text; that is, they are related to a text-based representation level of the discourse. The questions generated in this type of representation involve word definitions or paragraph inferences related to the text as a whole representation (Otero, 2009). In contrast, knowledge-based questions are related to the situational model-based representation level of the discourse. Here, the reader makes reference to the meaning of words or sentences and includes “entities (objects, processes) not mentioned in the text but retrieved from the reader’s knowledge base” (Otero, 2009, p. 51).

Situational model-based representations require the learner to search the text for clues and understanding in order to build an accurate representation of the text—searching, in this case, means asking questions. When the reader finds that his representation is hampered by knowledge

deficits, he begins asking questions. Ram (1991) attempts to explain the search for understanding by identifying four types of knowledge questions that correspond to four types of knowledge deficits. The first type of question arises from textual analysis. Second, the reader produces 'memory' questions when he asks questions that require him to note similarities and then to link text concepts to his existing mental schemas and form generalisations. Third, 'explanation' questions arise when the reader tries to find motivational or causal explanations for events in the text. Fourth, when the reader tries to identify issues of personal relevance, he asks 'relevance' questions (Otero, 2009).

Finally, question generation in the reading context seems to be dictated by what the reader sees as an acceptable mental representation of the text and what his reading goals are (Otero, 2009). In the FET phase, reading goals and obstacles can prove trying when attempting to comprehend a complex poem or a scientific explanation of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) transformation in the body. Sometimes, there is a paucity of questions amongst learners who are reading difficult material. Otero (2009) puts this down to learners demonstrating that "they did not know what they should know to know further" (Miyake & Norman, 1979, p.363).

3.2.2.4. Relating situational models and questioning to Vygotsky

Vygotsky believed that there are two types of concepts, scientific and spontaneous (or everyday), which are interdependent and influence each other reciprocally (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Temina-Kingsolver, 2008). Scientific knowledge is knowledge that a child gains through deliberate instruction, while spontaneous knowledge is knowledge that a child picks up through his interactions with other people and his environment. It is not deliberately taught. The developmental paths that these two types of knowledge follow begin in reverse directions and meet in the middle. Spontaneous knowledge serves as scaffolding for scientific knowledge, whereas scientific knowledge helps make meaning of everyday events. The key differences between these two concept types are summed up in Table 3.2 (sourced from Temina-Kingsolver, 2008, p. 1) below:

Table 3.2: The Differences between Scientific and Spontaneous Knowledge

Scientific concepts	Spontaneous (everyday) knowledge
Are presented as a system of interrelated ideas	Is never introduced to a child in a systematic fashion or explicitly connected with other related concepts
Originate in deliberate instruction, i.e. are explicitly introduced by a teacher at school	Originates in everyday life, i.e. is acquired by the child outside of the context of explicit instruction
Develop from “top to bottom”: from a verbal explanation to concrete everyday phenomena	Develops from “bottom to top”: from the child’s experience to generalizations and abstractions
Cover the most essential aspects of an area of knowledge and extend the meaning of everyday thinking	Provides the basis for the development of scientific concepts

In the context of questioning, there is a vast difference between the critical thinking (Vygotsky’s scientific concepts) and everyday thinking (spontaneous concepts). Because of this, questions from these domains differ as well.

The goal of science is to achieve maximum predictive and explanatory power based on a minimum number of premises. Scientific comprehension criteria require rigorous deductions of observed phenomena for these basic premises. In contrast, everyday thinking is typically fragmented and does not demand precise knowledge or long inference chains from a few basic principles. (Otero, 2009, p.56)

ESL children who cannot even form mental representations of what they are reading seem to fail on both levels, both on an everyday level (in the area of meaning-making) and on an academic level (on gaining scientific knowledge). The barrier that comprehension forms to their learning, their lack of knowledge about the language, and their ‘not knowing what to know’ all mean that questions cannot be generated because the basic meaning of words cannot be grasped to form any sort of representation.

Therefore, Kendeou, Van den Broek, White, and Lynch’s (2007) study findings strongly support the argument for explicit early comprehension instruction as comprehension skills learned at pre-school level contribute to later comprehension skills. The researchers found that these skills develop separately from decoding, inferencing, and other foundational reading skills, and therefore, young children should be taught comprehension skills while learning to read. In this research project, metacognitive reading strategy instruction was used as a means of improving the Grade 10 learners’ comprehension skills. In general, both younger and older children can benefit from being taught a repertoire of strategies and knowing when and how to integrate and apply them to reading

tasks (Williams & Atkins, 2009). Gunning (2008) and Klapwijk (2011) both found that children are able to handle literal comprehension questions with ease but struggle with inference questions. This leads to the next important topic, comprehension. Meaning can be constructed if learners understand what they are reading.

3.3. Comprehension

The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) defines reading comprehension “as the extraction and construction of information through the involvement and interaction with a text” (Williams & Atkins, 2009, p. 26). Pretorius (2002, p. 91) expands their definition as follows: “Comprehension ... refers to the overall understanding process whereby meaning is constructed within sentence units, between adjacent sentences, and across larger units of text to the meaning of the text as a whole.” According to Houtveen and Van de Grift (2007), studies that have aimed at improving reading comprehension have demonstrated that the learners involved benefitted following the interventions. The authors also strongly advocate that “reading comprehension is taught rather than caught” (Houtveen & Van de Grift, 2007, p. 174). Gunning (2008) includes the reader and the context in which the text is being read in his definition. He claims that enhancing comprehension depends on the interaction between the text, the reader, and the context. Texts may vary in genre, writing style, purpose, and linguistic complexity; readers vary with regard to their prior knowledge, background experiences, their attitudes towards reading, and the reading strategies they make use of; and context refers to when, where, and the reason for reading. For example, a child may be reading an exam paper, a mother may be frantically looking for advice online for burns on her toddler, a doctor may be reading titration dilutions for a drip, or a teacher may be reading, after hours, to gain information about handling a difficult learner.

The process of comprehension is usually understood through two different theories. The first is the schema theory and the second is the situation model theory (Gunning, 2008). The schema theory is based on the concept of *schemata* (singular: schema) where knowledge of concepts and experiences is organised into abstract mental networks. New knowledge is integrated into these network units and made sense of in the context of what is already known (Anderson, Spiro, & Montague, 1984). Schemata may be broad (e.g. the ocean) or specific (e.g. crustaceans), and include people, places, things or events (Gunning, 2008), and reading processes such as decoding, problem solving, and summarising (Klapwijk, 2011). The concept of schemata was introduced by Piaget in 1926 but later expanded by Anderson, an educational psychologist (Little & Box, 2011). As a result of Anderson’s observation that learners who struggle with reading usually have insufficient prior knowledge of the topic presented, teachers use schema theory to bridge old and new knowledge. As mentioned in Section 2.3.3, prediction as a metacognitive reading strategy would help to bridge old and new knowledge as learners confirm or revise their learning from the text, based on what they read and on their prior knowledge. This is especially true in the case of cross-cultural instruction and weaker academic learners (Anderson, Spiro, & Montague, 1984).

McVee, Dunsmore, and Gavelek (2005, p. 536) claim that schema knowledge is “transactionally linked to culturally organised experience”. Therefore, reading comprehension must be examined at the level where literacy processes, cognitive functioning, and the social and cultural lives of children intersect. Although individuals make meaning through organising knowledge in schemata, their knowledge is interpreted through and organised by social and cultural influences. The importance of social factors is often underemphasised in schema theory, but as McVee et al. (2005, p. 541) reason, “schemas are cultural historical constructions that emerge only within the individual through transactions with others.” The knowledge in the schema is embedded in the sociocultural environment and remains tied to the practices, tools, and artefacts that operate within it. This explanation clarifies the link between the sociocultural approach and schema theory.

Furthermore, in the South African context, learners’ schemata are usually very different and so texts need to be chosen carefully to account for learners’ multilingual and multicultural diversity (Klapwijk, 2011). Every individual’s schemata are different, with some being more developed and content rich than others. According to Tracey and Morrow (2006) and Klapwijk (2011), the number of schemata, based on general knowledge and the organisation of these schemata, can account for many differences in the reading comprehension of different learners. The underlying reasoning is that prior knowledge forms a framework in which the understanding and integration of new knowledge can take place. These networks also help the learner make connections between ideas (Little & Box, 2011) through the assimilation of additional information and the accommodation of new information or ideas (Gunning, 2008). For this reason, many strategies are used to aid the development of learners’ schemata. Graphic organisers such as semantic and concept mapping can be used as pre- and post-reading strategies to increase the amount of prior knowledge about specific topics, to increase the links made between concepts, and to help children organise their knowledge visually. These also strengthen retention and memory of new ideas (Little & Box, 2011).

The second, or situational model, is based on the work of Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) and Kintsch (1998). According to Gordon and Hanauer (1995, p. 300), text processing is “the ability to construct a coherent internal representation of the spatio-temporal relations described in the text”. Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978) and Kintsch (1998) propose that a reader builds three mental representations of a text while processing the text: a perceptual representation using what the words looked like on the page; a linguistic representation using propositions to map sentence links and the discourse (sometimes referred to as a text-based representation), and a semantic representation that describes the meaning of the text formed through inferences with prior knowledge and organised into a schema (i.e. a situational model). In both the second and third presentations, the reader starts building a schema of the text using the propositions that hold the textual argument or discussion together (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Schemas and situational models will both be used as goals and as means of improving reading comprehension in this study. Text processing happens before comprehension but the situational representation can be considered to go beyond the literal meaning of the discourse because it embodies inferences, instantiations, and references

that are not explicitly mentioned in the text (Johnson-Laird, 1983). According to Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), a situational model incorporates the events, actions, persons, and the general situation that a text describes.

Typically, studies about reading comprehension have set about discovering the habits and strategies of good readers. This may be because they give learners and teachers valuable information about the readers' cognitive processes during reading (Cekiso, 2012). Houtveen and Van de Grift (2007) list a few habits of good readers that are strikingly metacognitive. The following are general habits that have been identified and do not represent a complete list: readers should a) be active; b) should look at typographical aids such as the format and organisation of the text; c) should use, compare, and integrate their prior knowledge; d) should read selectively; e) should continue making predictions; f) should constantly evaluate, monitor, and revise their understanding and the ascribed meanings; and g) should tackle unfamiliar words or concepts and read critically to identify inconsistencies or gaps in their understanding.

Keenan and Meenan's (2012) study on the accuracy of diagnosing comprehension deficits using comprehension tests provides additional information about good readers' comprehension skills. According to the authors, decoding and working memory capacity mainly determine comprehension. Keenan and Meenan (2012, p. 3) note that decoding is an essential part of comprehending "because identifying words is so central to grasping the meaning of a text." Decoding requires learners to grasp that there is a relationship between sounds and the phonemes that they represent. If learners do not understand this, they tend to carry comprehension deficits throughout their school careers (Sesma et al., 2009). Similarly, *oral reading fluency* (ORF) is crucial to comprehension. ORF can be described as "the ability to read words quickly and accurately either in isolation or in text" (Sesma et al., 2009, p. 232). When ORF is poor, the cognitive demands on the working memory increase sharply. This applies especially to older children who read to learn by making their way through content-heavy subjects. As shown in Figure 3.2, reading at high school level often takes place in cognitively demanding circumstances that have context-reduced texts. The majority of the learners in this study were reading at frustration level, where their general word recognition rate was high but there was no meaning attached to the recognisable words and therefore their comprehension abilities were impaired (Donne, 2011).

Thus, it goes without saying that "[r]eading comprehension is inherently more complex than single word reading, with demands that go beyond basic phonological decoding and word identification and include higher order cognitive processing of meaning conveyed through sentences and paragraphs" (Sesma et al., 2009, p. 242). Therefore, higher executive functions need to be considered when exploring comprehension: working memory, inferencing, and comprehension monitoring. According to Swanson, Howard, and Sáez (2007), working memory capacity plays a role in comprehension as learners need to track while they read in order to construct situational

models. When a learner reads through long passages of text or navigates his way through complex linguistic structures, his working memory takes strain in holding information in the short-term memory in order to track the developing ideas or arguments. In other words, he needs to concentrate harder, pay more attention to the text's meaning, and will usually employ higher cognitive functions to compensate for his working memory (Sesma et al., 2009).

Baddeley (1992) highlights two components from his model of working memory as being particularly necessary for reading comprehension—the phonological or articulatory loop (a temporary storage system for brief maintenance of verbal information) and the central executive (which oversees active manipulation of information in immediate memory and retrieval of information from long-term semantic memory). (Sesma et al., 2009, p. 242)

This is pertinent to older children, who are required to read through large volumes of text. They have usually automatised the decoding process to a greater extent than younger learners and so they have the capacity for reading comprehension. Sesma et al. (2009) have also stressed the role of executive functions in reading comprehension. Such functions include planning, organising, monitoring, and critical analysis. These are all metacognitive skills. In Sesma et al.'s (2009) study of a group of 60 learners, aged nine to 15 years, the researchers found that executive metacognitive functions accounted for the 63% variance in reading comprehension results. Sesma et al. (2009), in accordance with Denckla (1989), define executive functions as higher order cognitive skills that produce self-directed learning behaviour, which includes conscious manipulation of information in the working memory, planning and executing sequential tasks, and determining the structural framework from details. Children who read fluently without comprehending usually have not developed the metacognitive functions to make meaning from the text.

3.3.1. Inferencing

Children who can read fluently but do not comprehend often cannot see the links between sentences or ideas in the text; that is, they have not learnt to infer meaning. Kispal (2008) defines inferencing as arriving at the implicit information by combining explicit information mentioned in the text. Inferencing can be simple or complex. When simple, it involves using pronouns, articles and determiners in place of proper nouns, but when complex, the reader draws on his background knowledge, distils the overarching implicit message from the text, or analyses why the author has chosen a certain vocabulary or style of writing. There are many different types of inferencing, which all serve to make meaning from the text, as depicted in Table 3.3 below (sourced from Kispal 2008, p. 2):

Table 3.3: Different Types of Inferences

Inference name	Description
Coherence inferences (text-connecting or intersentential inferences)	<p>These maintain textual integrity.</p> <p>For example, in the sentence <i>Peter begged his mother to let him go to the party</i>, the reader would have to realise that the pronouns 'his' and 'him' refer to Peter to fully understand the meaning of the sentence.</p> <p>There are two different types:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cohesive devices (pronoun resolution) i.e. Anaphora "...it generally involves cross-referencing between synonyms or between pronouns and their referents..." (Kispsal, 2008, p. 9). 2. Knowledge-based inferences: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Temporal b) Spatial c) Emotional
Elaborative inferences (gap-filling inferences)	<p>These enrich the mental representation of the text.</p> <p>For example, <i>Katy dropped the vase. She ran for the dustpan and brush to sweep up the pieces</i>. The reader would have to draw upon life experience and general knowledge to realise that the vase broke to supply the connection between these sentences.</p>
Local inferences	<p>These create a coherent representation at the local level of sentences and paragraphs. This class of inferences includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coherence inferences (described above). 2. "Case structure role assignments", e.g. <i>Dan stood his bike against the tree</i>. The reader needs to realise that the tree is assigned to a location role. 3. Some "antecedent causal" inferences, e.g. <i>He rushed off, leaving his bike unchained</i>. The reader would need to infer that Dan was in a hurry and left his bicycle vulnerable to theft.
Global inferences	<p>These create a coherent representation covering the whole text. The reader needs to infer overarching ideas about the theme, main point or moral of a text by drawing on local pieces of information.</p>
On-line inferences	Inferences drawn automatically during reading.
Off-line inferences	Inferences drawn strategically after reading.

Inferencing, as a topic, is contentious and is continually a matter of debate (Kispsal, 2008). Researchers have been unable to agree on the range of inference types and how active the reader is in learning to inference. Researchers in this field tend to align their views with either a constructionist view on inferencing by Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso (1994) or the minimalist

view proposed by McKoon and Ratcliff (1992). The constructionist view claims that the reader strives for coherence and meaning throughout the reading process by building a situation model, using as many inferences as possible. In contrast, the minimalistic view proposes that the reader only makes inferences based on information that is explicitly stated and readily available and he does not strive to create a situation model during the reading process (Kispaal, 2008). This study is aligned with the constructionist view because, first, I view meaning-making as both the foundation and goal of reading; second, Vygotsky believed that learners use their prior knowledge to learn and assimilate new knowledge into their existing schemas of prior knowledge; and last, the transfer of skills from the first language to the second language can be seen as a type of inferencing; that is, learners make inferences about the new language context and then draw on their prior linguistic knowledge and apply that to make meaning of the target language.

Thus, I considered the work by Graesser et al. (1994) and Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) as pertinent sources of information. These authors made different lists of inference types. Graesser, Singer and Trabasso's list "emphasise[d] the focus of the inference (character, theme, instrument), whereas Pressley [and Afflerbach]'s list catalogues the processes (confirming, concluding, relating)" (Kispaal, 2008, p. 16). In order to achieve the aims of this research project, both focus- and process-based types of inferencing were used, framed by the constructionist view. This was done so that inferencing could be viewed as part of the learners' meaning-making process. The constructionist view therefore implicitly allowed for the use of metacognitive and linguistic instruction, which formed the crux of this study's intervention phase; that is, process-based inferences are aligned with metacognitive strategies while focus-based inferences support linguistic development. Furthermore, Long, Seely, Oppy, and Golding (1996) found that good readers use inference more than others and apply their prior knowledge to complete elaborative and global inferences (see Table 3.3). As this study's research question was centred on improving reading comprehension, the literature about the inferencing habits of good readers provided guidelines for achieving success in the intervention.

3.3.2. The role of working memory in comprehension

As mentioned in Section 3.3, higher executive functions need to be considered when exploring comprehension. Working memory is one such function and plays a role in comprehension as learners need to track while they read in order to construct situational models (Swanson, Howard, & Sáez, 2007). Working memory has been mentioned numerous times with regard to comprehension because it plays a vital role in explaining how the reader makes inferences in accordance with the constructionist view. According to Graesser et al. (1994), the reader's working memory is used multiple times to make one inference. The size of a learner's working memory for comprehension is linked to his language proficiency. Thus, a learner's working memory may be smaller when learning in his second language if he is not very proficient.

The inferencing process begins with the reader using deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two propositions in the text. The conclusion forms the third proposition but is actually the inference or “mediating idea” that links the initial propositions (Kispaal, 2008, p. 17). This happens with the reader first searching for information in the working and long-term memories (knowledge-based inferences), then searching other references or rereading the text (text-connecting inferences), then reactivating the first two propositions in the working memory, and finally, checking that the inference “adequately explains and agrees with the two premises held in the working memory” (Kispaal, 2008, p. 17). This process is taxing to the working memory. Moreover, if the reader has to make inferences based on new knowledge, the load on the working memory increases as it has to acquire and hold information from multiple sources. If the reader’s working memory is good, information is integrated faster and reading is easier (Kispaal, 2008).

3.3.3. The role of background knowledge

The two theories, situational model theory and schema theory, discussed in Section 3.3, are also helpful in the explanation of background knowledge in reading comprehension. These two viewpoints influence what researchers believe about the employment of background knowledge in the inferencing process. In Section 3.3.1, the inferencing process was discussed and retrieving information from the long-term memory was named as the first step. However, this retrieval process differs depending on the theoretical viewpoint that one embraces. The definition used here for background or prior knowledge (borrowed from Kispaal, 2008, p. 18), is

[signifying] more than just the whole of a reader’s life experience (personal and vicarious), world knowledge and all previous reading. It also denotes previous representations of earlier parts of the current text—encoded and stored in long term memory—to which all subsequent parts of text can be related.

This definition of background knowledge was chosen because a reader is continuously concerned with meaning-making. To make meaning with inferences, a reader draws from his culture, previous life experiences, reference materials, and the text.

The situational model theory should be understood as a bottom-up theory of reading. Graesser et al.’s (1994) work follows this approach. It is founded on the assumption that the reader makes intersentential inferences, whereby the meaning of the current sentence is linked to the meaning of the previous and subsequent sentences. Each sentence forms the basis of a premise, which is then linked to other premises by inferences. In this way, the reader builds up a situational model of the text by working (reading) systematically through consecutive paragraphs. The reader then forms a network of ideas, which includes prior knowledge, to represent the text that he has read.

On the other hand, the schema theory is considered a top-down approach to reading and can be likened to ripples in a pond. The reader’s prior knowledge and life experiences are organised into large complex structures with relational links between information units. As mentioned in Section 3.3, the schemata are organised within and interpreted through social and cultural norms. This is

an important point for ESL learners, who transfer all of the cultural inferences with their mother-tongue comprehension skills when tackling an English text and striving for understanding. During reading, a statement may trigger the activation of part of a schema and the resultant stimulation of the whole schema ensures that reasonable inferences are made (Kispal, 2008). This is considered a top-down approach because higher order thinking and ideas influence how and what inferences are made after the whole schema has been activated. Importantly, both models require background knowledge as an essential component for inferencing. It stands to reason then that the more diverse the experiences and knowledge that a child is exposed to, the more inferences he can make that are of a better quality (Kispal, 2008).

One large component of good inferencing is the ability to spot and tackle inconsistencies. Many researchers have found that good readers are virtually intolerant of inconsistencies in their understanding of different texts (Cain & Oakhill, 2004; Cataldo & Oakhill, 2000). Good readers are skilled at monitoring (a metacognitive process) their comprehension and work consistently at resolving inconsistencies before reading further. Kispal (2008, p. 17) sums up the importance of background knowledge in the following way:

Studies demonstrate that access to world knowledge can be obligatory in the sense that a text cannot be completely understood without it.... This includes information about the real world referents of words, properties attributed to objects and knowledge about the situation.

The way that knowledge is encoded in the reader's long-term memory affects the reader's retrieval of it as well as how it is related to other information in the schema and how often it is reactivated. Finally, inferencing is dependent on a reader's vocabulary; that is, words need to be known before they can activate schemata or can be used to represent an inference (Cromley & Azevedo, 2007).

Finally, background knowledge, as part of inferencing, forms part of a child's metacognitive repertoire. In order to use prior knowledge, the child must know about his knowledge, how to apply it effectively, and be aware of which knowledge is suitable for learning tasks (Butterfield, 2012). In this study, the enablement of learners was a priority and took place by instructing them in a high status language and equipping them with metacognitive skills and strategies that they were unlikely to develop on their own (Butterfield, 2012).

3.3.4. The role of culture

In many cases, when an author is trying to communicate meaning through his writing, he assumes that the reader has similar schemata to his knowledge networks. He assumes that through inferencing, the reader will take the implicit and make it explicit, using his background knowledge for elaborative and global inferences (see Table 3.3). However, when the reader is from another culture and linguistic background, this is often not the case. Meaning-making in these situations is impaired or simply does not take place. As Li and Munby (1996, p. 200) note, "the major problem in academic reading will simply be the gap between what they know and what the native speakers

know in relation to the language and the content of the text written.” This is often because the author and the reader do not share schemata and because readers have different levels of proficiency. Narvaez (2002, p. 160) points out that “[l]ow domain knowledge prevent[s] readers from forming an adequate mental model, which [leads] to erroneous elaborations and inferences.” The reader’s culture influences the inferences that he makes subconsciously as the cultural assumptions that he brings to the text can be vastly different from those of the author in terms of moral judgments, idioms, and general knowledge. Narvaez (2002) suggests that this obstacle to instruction be overcome by the use of scaffolding and not by only using texts that are culturally relevant to ESL learners. Furthermore, Carrell’s (1989a) study demonstrates that when ESL learners monitor their reading comprehension, it improves their reading performance. The author also notes that ESL readers with “better English proficiency favoured global processes (e.g., those having to do with background knowledge, text gist, and textual organisation), whereas the less proficient readers used more localised processes (e.g., those having to do with word meaning, sentence syntax, and text details)” (Li & Munby, 1996, p. 201).

3.4. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has tried to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of reading and comprehension. As suggested by the literature on the topic, metacognitive instruction has been shown to improve reading comprehension in second language learners. Therefore in the next chapter, I will discuss the research design and research methodology that informed the intervention whereby I attempted to alter the learners’ mental processes in order to improve their English reading comprehension.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction: Aligning the Aim with the Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate whether metacognitive training could improve the English reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking learners in the FET phase through a Vygotskian framework of learning and language acquisition. I made use of action research as a research design because the emergent nature of action research seemed appropriate for exploring the research questions and context.

A vast majority of the publications on research about reading comprehension and metacognition are strongly focused on metacognitive strategies (Cantrell & Carter, 2009). However, based on the emerging needs of the ESL learners discussed generally in Section 2.3, it was apparent that both skills and strategies would prove beneficial to learners' academic lives. Thus, in this study, metacognitive training comprised, of skills and strategies, was employed to enhance learners' reading comprehension. Cantrell and Carter (2009, p. 199) define skills as "automatic, unconscious procedures". In contrast, strategies are procedures that are consciously employed in the reading process, which may be before, during, or after reading the text. The study therefore was not aimed at increasing the body of knowledge on metacognitive reading strategies but at testing whether learners could employ and use metacognitive strategies in order to convert explicit strategies into implicit skills, which could then influence their academic performance across the curriculum through transfer. Furthermore, in accordance with Gredler's (2011) caution about the possible misconception of Vygotsky's work (see Section 2.2.3), the study was aimed at identifying the learners' individual ZPDs and working from within each ZPD towards an expanded learning capacity in each child, through metacognitive instruction.

The resultant main research question was

Can metacognitive instruction be used to improve the English reading comprehension of ESL learners in the FET band?

and the following sub-questions were

- Do learners demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading? What evidence is there of this?
- What types of metacognitive skills and/or strategies are most effective during reading with the goal of improving English reading comprehension?
- If reading comprehension is improved, does the improvement have an effect on other content subject results; that is, in what ways does transfer take place?

As indicated before, in Section 2.2.3, this study was framed within the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky. Action research dovetails well with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the social, cultural, and historical aspects of human development (Dick, 1993; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Action research takes place in real-world contexts, wherein the social, cultural, and historical backgrounds of the research participants form part of the research setting. Qualitative research, as a genre and as the methodology employed in this research study, provided a method of carefully exploring and marrying the complexities of intrapersonal and interpersonal processes of metacognition, learning, and language learning, as well as sociocultural and socioeconomic realities that affect ESL learners.

4.2. Research Paradigm

This research was framed within a paradigm of praxis. A paradigm can be defined as “a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Willis, 2007, p. 8). When conducting research, the entire framework is applied to practice; that is, the underlying philosophy of science makes assumptions that influence interdependent issues such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology. ‘Praxis’ as a concept is usually found deeply rooted in participatory action research (PAR) that has a focus on political and ideological empowerment. In this paradigm, research appears more ‘intimate’ as the relationship between the researcher and the participants is closer, with frequent encounters in which knowledge is generated (Reason & Rowan, 1981). PAR is often used when researchers want to make systemic, transformative changes to societies or specific communities through collaboration with a problem-solving mind set. Unlike orthodox research, action researchers are interested in sustainability and equipping people with new knowledge and skills from the research findings that will allow them to continue as agents of change after the research process is complete (Hills & Mullet, 2000). However, this study only made use of this paradigm of praxis in terms of action and reflection (Butterfield, 2012). Given the time constraints, it was not possible to aim at the systemic, sustainable change of a community. It is to be hoped that the changes in the learners’ English reading comprehension were sustainable with the passing of time. O’Brien’s definition (1998, p. 11) conveys praxis succinctly: “that knowledge as derived from practice, and practice informed by knowledge, in an on-going process, is a cornerstone of action research”, as depicted in Figure 4.1 below:



Figure 4.1: Praxis—Action and reflection

According to Hills and Mullet (2000), the paradigm's methodologies are considered more appropriate than those of other paradigms when working with contextualised human participants. Even though the data collected by this study were qualitative, the interpretative paradigm is epistemologically inadequate to deal with action research (O'Brien, 1998). Praxis is considered to be the most appropriate paradigm for action research as it emphasises the contribution of research participants and seeks to initiate change (Adendorff, 2007). In comparison, the interpretative paradigm does not necessarily include an action orientation. In addressing the learners' needs, this study was an example of research in action. Smith (1999) provides an understanding of praxis that supports research in action in that, as one visualises an end goal, one's course of action and aims change in order to achieve that goal. This approach to research provided the flexibility needed for the emergent nature of action research through cycles of action and change. In the following section, I provide a detailed description of action research, framed within a paradigm of praxis, as the research design.

4.3. Research Design

4.3.1. Setting the scene: The first attempt in 2012

This section details the findings of an exploratory first attempt at a mixed methodology study conducted on the 20th, 21st and 25th of September 2012. I was granted permission to work with four Grade 11 classes that totalled 93 learners. I carefully explained to the learners that the purpose of the research was to help me develop better tests for my research in 2013. I administered two tests to each class. These tests were not meant as assessment exercises for the learners but for me to test the validity of the tests involved. The first was a reading comprehension test for 50 marks, to be completed in 80 minutes. The second, called the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARS), refer to Addendum A, was a questionnaire of 30 Likert scale-type questions, to be completed in 40 minutes. I considered conducting a study using mixed methodology but found that the learners' responses in both tests did not reflect valid answers. I also ascertained that a prolonged intervention would provide more valid and reliable data and allow me the opportunity to stage an intervention. As a result of these initial findings, the past research design and test instruments seemed unfeasible. It was necessary to increase the qualitative component in the research design as a large scale quantitative data collection may have proved problematic.

The exploratory study proved to be informative and helped to shape the methodology and direction of this study. It also produced background information about the learners' reading comprehension and the research site that shaped my choice in research design. Even though the collected data could not be used in a formal study, they provided partial insight into the state of South Africa's education system at grassroots level. I continued to refine my design for the remainder of 2012,

bearing these insights in mind, in the hope of producing a study that could contribute in some way to the enhancement of isiXhosa learners' reading comprehension.

4.3.2. Action research as the research design

Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) guideline for research offers a coherent way of discussing the interrelated nature of the research paradigm, research design, and methodology. It also provides me, as the researcher, with a viewing guideline of the research participants, research setting, and the data collection.

As stated in Section 1.5.3, action research can be described as cyclic, with action and reflection taking place one after another. Dick (1993) describes it as a research methodology that aims to fulfil both action and research as research objectives. This definition allows the approach to encompass a wide variety of research methods and interventions. At times, the main goal of a research project is action, where increased understanding on the participants' part constitutes the research aim (O'Brien, 1998). However, in other projects, research forms the primary goal of the research and action is a by-product (Dick, 2000). In this study, research and action formed dual aims and the intervention served as the action component designed to bring about change. According to Dick (2000), four features are usually associated with action research: it is cyclic, participative, qualitative (but not limited to this), and lastly, it is reflective. Importantly, action research's responsiveness and emergent nature sets it apart from other approaches. The cyclic nature of the research allowed me to respond to the emerging needs of the research participants but also to challenge and refine my understanding of the findings. Dick (2000) proposes that this be done by critically reflecting on each action, the resultant data, its interpretation, and the research methods used. O'Brien (1998) emphasises three other aspects that set action research apart from conventional research: action researchers tackle real-life problems in real-life situations and acknowledge that objectivity is not possible and thus clearly state their biases. This was covered in Section 1.5.2.

This study consisted of one action research cycle. The most well-known action research cycle is that of Carr and Kemmis (1986), with four stages in each cycle: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Together, these form one 'major' cycle. Each phase is not a separate step but is set within the action and reflection process, and therefore, there are 'micro-cycles' of action and reflection in each phase (Dick, 2000). The research sequence for this study was as follows: problem identification, planning, action, observation, and reflection, in accordance with Susman's (1983) model. As stated previously, each phase required activity (action and reflection) within itself. It was thus a dynamic process. This is shown in Figure 4.2 below:

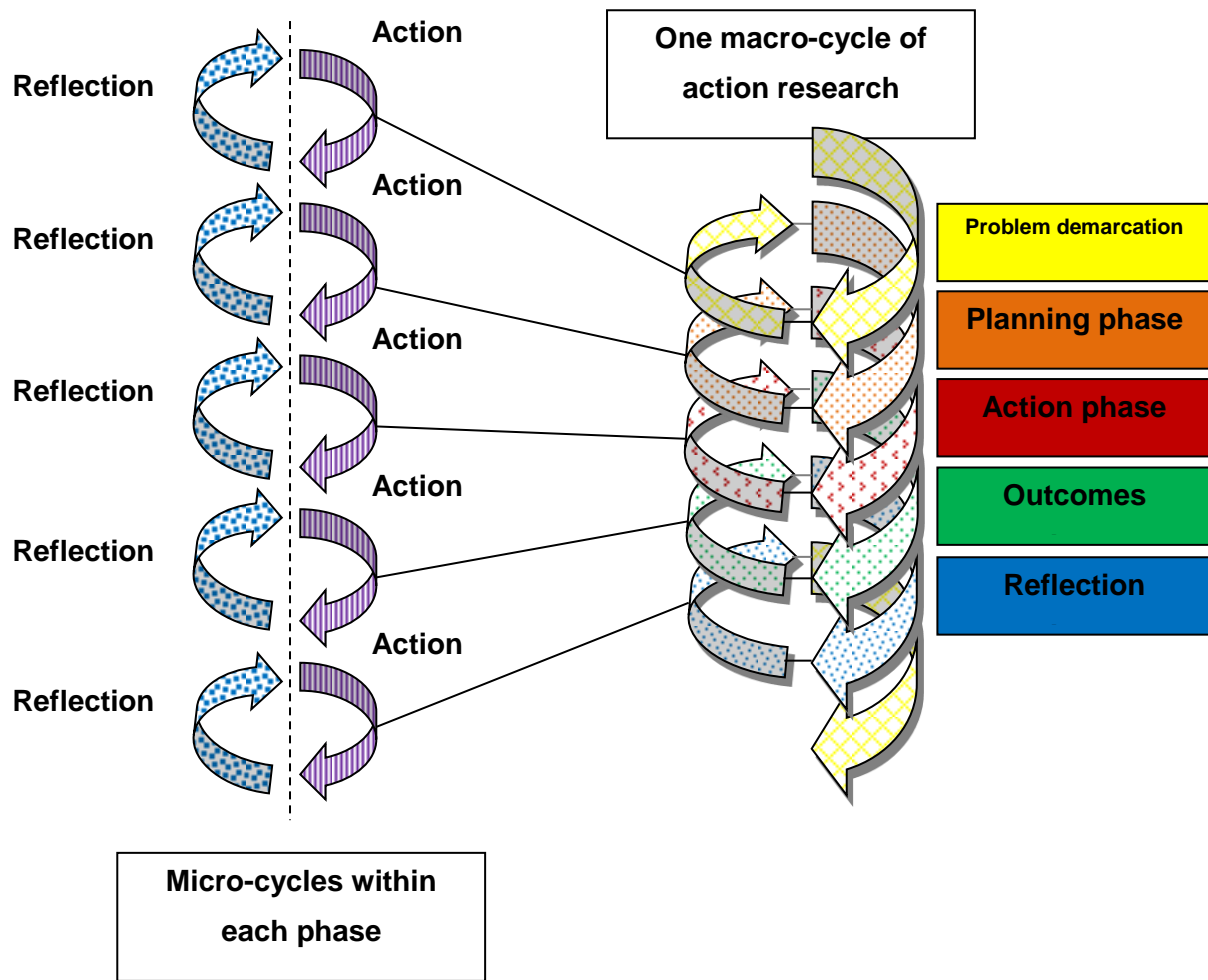


Figure 4.2: The micro-cycles of action and reflection in the five-phase macro-cycle.

Action research provided a design that was both flexible and responsive for intervention purposes (Dick, 1993). It was also appropriate where circumstances were ambiguous (O'Brien, 2001) as was the case in this study, where the language, culture, and the research site were 'unchartered waters' and the results of the data collection phase could not be predicted. Moreover, action research is often used in communities where a holistic change or greater understanding is urgently needed, which made it even more suitable for this study. O'Brien (2001, p. 1) is of the opinion that when people undertake action research, "theory informs practice and practice refines theory in a continuous transformation.... In any setting, people's actions are based on implicitly held assumptions, theories, and hypotheses. [Thus], [e]very observed result enhances theory."

Lienert (2002) asserts that action research usually employs a qualitative methodology. Researchers collect qualitative data in the form of stories that are imbued with cultural and additional detail: "It is generally agreed that more traditional approaches cannot achieve the insights that come from people's experiences" (Lienert, 2002, p. 4). Action researchers are thus usually engaged with people's experiences and stories but, unlike in ethnographic or phenomenological research, it was the reflection on these experiences to advance change that formed one of the aims of this study. Such reflection is a metacognitive skill as it is the foundation of monitoring and evaluation. The emergent nature of action research data is thus more pertinent

for determining learners' needs than the exploratory approach, in regard to understanding human experience. According to Zuber-Skerritt (2001), action research remains a rigorous form of research as it is "systematic, rigorous in its methodology and use of methods so that it can be scrutinised, and it is always made public" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001, p. 18).

Furthermore, the collection of rich qualitative data and an intervention were possible through an action research cycle framed within a paradigm of praxis, which put theory into action (Ball & Wells, 2006). Table 4.1 below provides a general outline of the action research cycle, including the intervention phase employed in this study (refer to Table 1.1).

Table 4.1: The Research Plan with Timeline

THE RESEARCH PLAN		
Timeline	Phase name	Phase description
April 2013	1. Problem identification	Step 1 - Identify participant learners (Consent and assent forms) Step 2 – Reading comprehension test and MARSII (Dialogue journals distributed to learners in first contact session. My reflective journaling began from first contact session)
May-June 2013	2. Plan	Step 3 – Analysing informal test results (From Step 2: Test and MARSII) Step 4 – Informal questionnaire Step 5 – Prepared materials for contact sessions Step 6 – Getting to know children (Built trust relationships – continuous process included dialogue journals' content)
June – August 2013	3. Action (Intervention)	Step 7 – Revision of foundation reading skills (Letter-sound relationships, phonemes and syntax etc.) Step 8 – Reading for meaning: recipe Step 9 – Metacognitive training with metacognitive reading strategies
July (school holiday) and September 2013	4. Observation of outcomes	Step 10 – Preliminary data analysis (Included my journal and learners' journals)
August – September 2013	5. Reflection	Step 11 – Reading comprehension test and MARSII Step 12 – Focus group interview

The intervention phase aimed to answer the research questions mentioned in Section 4.1. Throughout this phase, I emphasised that the goal of reading is meaning-making. The data

collected from Step 2 in Phase 1 provided me with a clear indication of the learners' needs regarding English reading comprehension. If the learners needed to revise the basic principles of the English language system, I focused on letter-sound relationships and phonemes (which influence pronunciation and therefore word recognition) and syntax (which dictates the quality of their written work and therefore plays a role in their academic achievement). I used the results of Step 2 to identify and/or adapted existing metacognitive strategies to scaffold their learning. While specific strategies were taught, metacognitive skills were also modelled and reinforced throughout the research process. An example of a metacognitive strategy is *questioning*. Hartman (2002) proposes that learners can be taught to self-question and then use this skill in different real-world situations. When faced with a task, learners should ask themselves, "How does this relate to what I already know?", which uses prior knowledge as scaffolding, or "What am I specifically being asked to do?" and planning the steps needed in order to produce the correct result. In this example, a metacognitive strategy, once internalised, becomes a metacognitive skill.

4.4. Research Methodology

4.4.1. Qualitative research

According to Zuber-Skerritt (2001), a researcher's philosophical assumptions determine his research methods, especially when he has a clear position within an epistemological framework. Given that this study was clearly positioned in the paradigm of praxis, with action research as the research design, qualitative data were collected. I worked from a stance of reflecting on human experiences to identify certain needs and therefore to effect change through action.

In essence, qualitative researchers are concerned with studying phenomena in their natural settings and interpreting phenomena through the meanings ascribed to them by the people involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research makes use of a variety of research methods, such as interviews, case studies, personal stories and experiences, artefacts, cultural practices, and texts that represent meanings in people's lives. These methods all give the researcher a different viewpoint of the phenomena being studied and provide a well-rounded understanding of an often complex reality. Using a combination of different methods allows the researcher to use "different techniques of representation and interpretation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 p. 4). Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4) state that "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand." This use of multiple methods allows the researcher to obtain in-depth, interconnected representations of the studied phenomena, which are considered part of a socially-constructed reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this study, I made use of most of these qualitative methods of data collection in order to capture the lived realities of the learners' experiences in English reading comprehension. Qualitative methods provide the flexibility a researcher needs when working with human participants in their contexts (Dick, 2000). While working with teenagers

from a different cultural and linguistic background, it was important that I was able to adapt my data collection methods to their changing needs and the transient states of the research setting, that is, school holidays, power outages, service protests, and natural disasters such as fires. Qualitative researchers are interested in studying phenomena in their natural settings and discovering the meanings ascribed to those phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Given the complexity of the learners' lives and the history of education in South Africa, the understanding and perception of learning in English is not straightforward to most black learners. The English language is plagued by a history of colonisation and oppression but is also viewed at a language of opportunity and status (discussed in Section 3.1.4).

Research can be divided into broad categories. Each category represents a paradigm that shapes the subsequent research methodology and interpretation of results through its foundational beliefs and assumptions. For the purpose of this study, I only considered a qualitative research methodology. When research is conducted using qualitative methods, the data that are produced are qualitative in nature—full of “thick, rich descriptions” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 273) that focus on the “subjective understanding of [the observed] subjects” (Connole, 1993, p. 22). In this study's data, the learners' experiences surrounding English reading comprehension were described using dense, in-depth descriptions, exploring both their understanding of metacognitive awareness and their experiences as English learners. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that drive research in the social sciences are unique. The underlying ontological assumption in qualitative research is that no single reality exists; instead, there are multiple realities as each person views the world differently through their own perceptions and experiences (Trochim, 2000). For this reason, each learner's perceptions and experiences needed to be explored in order to build one of several accurate representations of English reading comprehension amongst ESL learners. Another important factor to be kept in mind is that research will be biased through the researcher's individual perceptions as he is part of the research process. Krauss (2005, p. 760) states that “in general, qualitative research is based on a relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality.” Ontology is relative and constructivist because, as Guba (1990, p. 27) notes, “realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.” The goal of qualitative research is thus to understand the ‘realities’ uncovered by the research process within their specific contexts (Willis, 2007).

Just as reality is assumed to be constructed, incoming information is processed and altered, producing distinctive knowledge that colours one's subjective reality. Thus, the meaning gleaned from new knowledge is developed through cognition as the knowledge is constructed (Lythcott & Duschl, 1990). As discussed previously, Vygotsky believed that the teacher cannot separate learning from the learner's background where knowledge is filtered through his cultural, historical and social background, and prior knowledge. This approach influences how data was collected: meaning cannot be divorced from its context without ceasing to be meaningful, and so qualitative

researchers believe that it is best to study a phenomenon in its context. Therefore, knowledge is often constructed in qualitative research by researchers immersing themselves within the context of study and experiencing its embedded realities. As Oswald (2010) notes, qualitative researchers should not possess fixed conceptualisations or intentioned results when entering the context of study but rather allow themes and questions to emerge and change as they interact, making the qualitative data analysis process “a highly intuitive activity” (Krauss, 2005, p. 764). In some cases, the new meaning emerging from this process is able to alter perspectives of reality and corresponding actions (Krauss, 2005). Therefore, data analysis is concerned with acquiring ‘social knowledge’—the ontological and epistemological assumptions shape the methodological practices when the researcher, immersed in the subject of interest, aims to understand phenomena in their contexts. This entails that the qualitative researcher remain open-minded, sensitive, and empathetic when recording the participants’ responses, regardless of personal views or preconceived ideas (Creswell, 1994). This allows him to grasp, as far as possible, the participant’s point of view. As the researcher, I needed to remain reflexive and adaptable and acknowledge that I formed part of the research process and influenced its progress. In addition, Krauss (2005, p. 765) emphasises the need for flexibility in the research design, data collection, and analysis in order “to gain deep understanding and valid representation of the participants’ viewpoints.”

4.4.2. Research setting

The nature of research, with its research questions and specific methodology, informs the researcher’s decisions when choosing a research site (Oswald, 2010). In South Africa, mother-tongue isiXhosa-speaking learners are usually found in specific geographical areas, based on the Group Areas Act of 1950 during the apartheid regime, where people were segregated on the basis of skin colour. This Act still indirectly influences where many people dwell to this day (Mokhaba, 2004). For this study, I sought a community of Xhosa people in which the majority of the learners were ESL learners.

According to Wassenaar (2006), it is essential that researchers establish good relationships through open communication with those at the research site and the expression of clear expectations. Fortunately for me, I had previously spent considerable time at the school during a practical component of a university module. The school caters for both male and female learners in the Winelands region of the Western Cape in South Africa. The school strives towards the ideals of inclusive education, as stated in the White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (RSA Department of Education, 2001) and advocates that education is the key to success for all learners. At the school, English is viewed as a FAL but is used as the LoLT for assessment. Learners are offered the choice of a variety of subjects and extramural activities through various organisations that work in the school on a continuous basis. Some examples of these include sports programmes, extra lessons in mathematics and physics, and extra English lessons with university students.

The township surrounding the school was established in 1940 and a school started in one of the township houses. Later, a site was identified and a school was built. Over time, an increasing number of learners enrolled and the primary school expanded to include Intermediate phase and FET phase learners by adding one new grade every year. The number of enrolled learners continued to grow and the space eventually became limited. Therefore, a second high school was founded in 2008 (the research site) and was one of two schools in the community catering for learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

At the time of this study, 1007 learners, with 29 teachers, were enrolled at the school. The learners were all from similar sociocultural backgrounds and most lived in the township surrounding the school. Learners could often be seen walking to and from school during the day. A high percentage of community members were unemployed, and the resultant poverty was evident in many aspects, such as housing and access to running water and electricity. Also, typical of 'township life', there were numerous shebeens and many school staff members were alarmed by the recent increase in the use of methamphetamine ("tik") amongst the learners and its unwelcome presence on school premises. In addition, marijuana had long been part of boredom alleviation amongst community members. Violence and promiscuity, fuelled by alcohol and substance abuse, were everyday concerns for the learners. Fortunately, within the last year, the school has been fenced. This addition has changed the atmosphere of the school to one of safety and peace. Previously, there had been a general sense of fear as undesired adults had entered the school unannounced. Consequently, many staff members were wary of staying in the school building after teaching time and many promptly left with the last bell. There had also been a large amount of vandalism and theft but the situation has improved. The school grounds were considered an access-controlled area at the time of the study. Previously, many learners left school at the first lunch break or bunked lessons; however, three caretakers were employed to supervise learners' entry and exit times after the school was fenced.

Many of the learners were temporary residents in the township as the influx of children from the Eastern Cape was high. Many children are sent by their families in the Eastern Cape to stay with relatives while they complete high school. The Western Cape schools are considered "better quality schools" when compared to schools in the Eastern Cape. The participants spoke often of missing their families and feeling homesick during term time. Thus, they travelled back over holidays to their families and loved ones in the Eastern Cape. This affected their language learning as the learners went for long periods without speaking or hearing English.

4.4.3. Participants and selection

I made use of purposive sampling to select the participants who would contribute considerably to my exploration of the research question. According to Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003), research participants chosen with this type of sampling are chosen for a specific purpose, as suggested by

its name. Similarly, Patton (1990, p. 169) notes that the “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.” In order to be invited to participate in the research, participants had to meet certain criteria. Decisions about these criteria were made in the early stages of research design. The criteria were informed by the research aims, the body of literature and theory surrounding reading comprehension, and hypotheses about the study participants or paucity of research in a specific field. However, according to Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003), such intentional selection in the sample should not cause any bias in the findings.

The selection criteria of the study, discussed below, affected the sample size. Patton (2002) claims that the size of the sample depends on the research purpose and what can be accomplished in the available time and with the available resources. Based on the emergent nature of this research, a small sample was preferable. I employed criterion-based sampling, with the help of the learning-support teacher at the school, who was familiar with the learners. This criterion sampling is one type of purposeful sampling, which involves employing cases based on certain predetermined criteria (Patton, 2002). Four criteria guided the participant selection process. First, each participant was required to be a Grade 10 learner, between 16 to 20 years of age. Dobbs (2011) reports that adolescents’ cognitive capacity is different to that of an adult, and I wanted all participants to be defined as adolescents cognitively, although the differences in age yielded welcome diversity in the data. Second, participants could only take part if I had received signed parental consent and informed assent forms. This was to ensure that the ethical considerations of this study had been accounted for. Third, each learner had to be an isiXhosa mother-tongue speaker, with English as the LoLT in the classroom, based on the school policy. In this way, I could confidently assert that English was viewed as a second language for all participants involved.

I had planned to use interviewees’ language subject marks as the final criterion for selection: the learner should have obtained a minimum of 40% for the subject English and a minimum of 50% for the subject isiXhosa in his final Grade 9 results. However, during the course of the intervention, I found that this criterion was unrealistic as their marks ranged from 26% to 57% for English and 35% to 57% for isiXhosa as a language subject. I therefore employed a translator at the end of July to aid me in communicating effectively with the isiXhosa-speaking learners regardless of their proficiency. The translator was an isiXhosa-speaking male who lived in the same neighbourhood as the learners. He attended the contact sessions and provided much needed help in conveying concepts and ideas to the learners in their mother tongue. This was very helpful as isiXhosa does not have the extensive vocabulary that was needed to describe abstract metacognitive and linguistic concepts. The translator was therefore present throughout the second half of the intervention phase and attended the focus group interview.

In all, eight learners were involved in this study, five females and three males. The learners ranged in age from 16 to 19 years of age. They were all in Grade 10 at the research site, where English was the LoLT and was offered as an FAL. I received signed assent and consent forms from all involved parties. Detailed descriptions of each learner will be given in the following chapter.

4.4.4. Research methods

As pointed out by O'Brien (1998), action research allows multiple methods of data collection and analysis. These research methods are typical of the qualitative research paradigm and include "keeping a research journal, document collection and analysis, participant observation recordings, questionnaire surveys, structured and unstructured interviews, and case studies" (O'Brien, 1998, p. 15). In this study, several qualitative data collection methods were used to obtain information from the participants: focus groups, dialogue journals, a reflective journal, comprehension tests, document analysis, and interviews. All these methods allowed me to gather rich descriptions of the participants' experiences of English reading. The following discussion will detail each data collection method separately in the context of the intervention trajectory presented below.

4.4.5. The intervention trajectory

The intervention phase of this study took place at the research site over a period of 5 months. I was granted access to the school for the second and third terms. I met with the learners twice a week, every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for one and a half hours. This arrangement was negotiated with the learners at the beginning of the study. They had stipulated the days of the week and the meeting times, while I decided on the length of the contact sessions so that I could ensure that I covered significant amounts of content with them in order to complete my research within the specified time frame.

The data in this section have been presented to reflect the five phases of the action research cycle. Each phase was associated with different data sets, which correlated to my activity as researcher as I moved through the phases in the action research cycle. The data sets have therefore been grouped according to the condensed data processes reflected in Figure 5.2.

In addition, Table 4.2 below details the chronological development of the intervention. The fourth column in the table entitled 'Process' shows which activities were included in each data process. The action research cycle phases inherent in the data processes are explained in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. As mentioned previously, 'micro-cycles' of acting and reflecting within the 'macro-cycle' were incorporated into the three data processes. The reasons behind many of my consecutive decisions in the intervention were based on obtaining results from prior weeks, monitoring the learners' progress, and reflecting on my previous decisions. In this way, I attempted to act and reflect in accordance with the action research approach within a paradigm of praxis.

Table 4.2: The Chronological Development of the Intervention

Semester	Month	Week	Process	Instruction topic	Journal entries
Second School Term (First semester)	April	Week 1	Problem Demarcation	Welcome Distribution and collection of consent and assent forms	
		Week 2		Treasure Hunt instructions: Problem identification Reading comprehension test.	
		Week 3		MARSI	
	April/May	Week 4		Informal questionnaire	
	May	Week 5	Process	English letter-sound relationships, phonemes and the alphabet A game of SNAP Revision of decoding and co-articulation (blending of sounds)	
				Week 6	
		Week 7		Word search	
		June		Week 8	
Third School Term (Second semester)	July	Week 9		Process	Guest speaker about career choices English pronouns, articles and determiners ("pointing words") Application forms
					Week 10
		Week 11			Harriet Tubman: Situational models
	August	Week 12			Mxit: Situational models
		Week 13	Mind maps		
		Week 14	Mind maps		
	September	Week 15	Outcomes		Summary chart Reading comprehension test
		Week 16			MARSI and focus group interview
		Week 17			Reading comprehension test and MARSI for absent learners

4.4.5.1. Assessing reading comprehension

Much work has been done on reading comprehension testing and the role that tests play in learners' learning, especially with regard to learners' mental models (Gordon & Hanauer, 1995). On a mental level, the actual test of comprehension is whether a learner can form a mental model of the text. According to Gordon and Hanauer (1995, p. 300), text processing is "the ability to construct a coherent internal representation of the spatio-temporal relations described in the text." In order to view comprehension realistically, it was necessary to look at the process of forming the mental model and not solely the product of text comprehension.

During testing, a learner's academic success relies on whether he can build a situational model of the text content. However, an important point made by Bachman (1990) is that the chosen language and test methods will affect the test results. The best results are obtained when the learner is able to read in his mother tongue and respond in his mother tongue. This increases the chances of the learner building an accurate mental representation and not being hindered by proficiency deficits (Gordon & Hanauer, 1995). Such an approach to assessment would ensure that the learners' test responses are "valid representations of their understanding of the text" (Gordon & Hanauer, 1995, p. 302).

Similarly, Keenan and Meenan (2012) argue that test format has an effect on diagnosing reading comprehension deficits. This is especially true of the cloze exercise because it is dependent on decoding skills. The researchers claim that longer passages of text allow for further decoding and thus aid in the learner's overall text comprehension as he has more information for building a mental model. According to Keenan and Meenan's (2012) study, learners with weak comprehension skills can be identified through poor decoding skills and working memory. This applies regardless of whether the learners are under 10 years of age or adolescents. Keenan and Meenan (2012) advise that educators and learning-support professionals use multiple tests when diagnosing comprehension deficits on account of the variance between tests. In light of this, this study made use of multiple data sources to assess learners' comprehension skills. A comprehension test, informal questionnaires, classwork, and final Grade 9 marks were obtained in the planning stage of the research process before the intervention commenced. The school that the learners attended streamed them according to their academic abilities (Refer to Table 5.1). The participants in the study were all from the same academic group at the school and thus should have had similar decoding abilities. However, the same could not be said of working memory. This varied between learners and needed to be accommodated in the planning of the intervention.

In addition to decoding skills and working memory, prior knowledge is also a factor in successful comprehension. In recent years, much has been said about 'prior knowledge' after the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) dispensation was introduced with its emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as valuable information sources (Van Rooyen & De Beer, 2007). This was discussed in Section 3.1. It has been said that learners with a better general knowledge are more

likely to perform well in reading comprehension tests (Johnston, 1984). In light of this, the text passage in the comprehension test was based on familiar, context-appropriate subject matter for the learners—the medical use of indigenous plants. This is practiced widely amongst the traditional healers, *sangomas*, in many African cultures. The traditional use of plants for medicinal purposes is considered an IKS of many of the African tribes in South Africa (Van Rooyen & De Beer, 2007). Therefore, the use of this IKS placed all learners on an equal footing with regard to prior knowledge bias in their test results.

While this study made use of a multiple methods approach to testing reading comprehension, assessment was conducted in English as I strove to assess the learners' English reading comprehension specifically. It was therefore necessary to develop a comprehension test in English that was appropriate for the learners' linguistic abilities and challenged them to work in their ZPDs. According to the textbook sources that I consulted, the comprehension test that I designed was on par with the Department of Basic Education's expected standards for Grade 10 English FAL learners. I designed the comprehension test under the guidance of my supervisors and went through numerous iterations before using it as an assessment tool. The design process consisted of numerous steps. The *first* step involved understanding what could be considered as the components of reading comprehension. This was answered by Prof E. J. Pretorius (personal communication, July 17, 2013; Pretorius, 2012), who discusses three different components: literal understanding of the text, anaphoric inferencing, and general inferencing, referring to situational models and across text links. Gunning (2008) provides further detail on the learning-to-read process and emphasises the role of decoding skills through letter-sound relationships and syllabic understanding through phonemes. As learners are expected to have already mastered these essential skills at an FET phase level, I assumed that the learners were proficient as readers and concentrated on the higher order thinking skills needed for a metacognitive approach to reading comprehension. The *second* step was to choose texts that were suitable in terms of their length, content, and linguistic complexity. The texts also needed to be dense so that I could construct questions that would require learners to demonstrate their metacognitive abilities. After reviewing a number of texts, I chose Janisch and Macrae's (2005) text on traditional medicine and conservation of indigenous plant populations. It fitted the demands of a cognitively challenging assessment for ZPD development, and the authors expressed approval for the inclusion of IKSs in schools and discussed a topic that related to the learners' background knowledge. Moreover, a custom that is part of the learners' cultural, social, and historical background as people of the amaXhosa tribe is described in the text. The former and latter considerations aligned my work well with my Vygotskian framework.

Third, upon analysing the chosen comprehension text, I found that it was unsuitable for testing anaphoric inferencing and so decided to look for an additional text, one that lent itself specifically toward this purpose. I decided that Carter, Bangeni, and Thesen's (2006) article on fashion and PETA in *Keys to English: Learner's Book Grade 11* provided me with numerous options. Both

these texts were adapted to suit the research aims. The first text was chosen from a Grade 11 textbook to lead the learners into their ZPDs in accordance with Vygotsky (1978). It was formatted to make it more accessible for the learners. I added paragraph numbers to aid their navigation when answering the reading comprehension test questions and underlined a phrase that was part of an anaphora question so that it was easily located. The PETA text was also formatted, and I underlined five words that related to the test questions. In both cases, the content of the texts were left intact. The *fourth* step involved a great deal of editing and formatting of the test layout. My supervisors and I spent time adjusting the questions to ensure their content validity. Additionally, the questions were compiled using Bloom's taxonomy⁴ so that there was a reliable and well-known measure for each question's cognitive demand. After that, questions from the three categories were distributed randomly through the test so that there were no identifiable patterns in the questioning sequence.

In the end, the test was developed to ascertain whether learners could make inferences and use their inferences to build up a representation of the text, that is, to comprehend the text. In Section 3.3, I explained that one way of understanding the concept of comprehension is through the construction of a situational model. Kintsch (1998) mentions three representations that the reader builds while reading: a perceptual representation, a linguistic representation, and a semantic representation. These are not separate but overlap to a large degree and so one can distinguish between two representations: a text-based representation and a situation-based representation. The text-based model is the first representation that the reader constructs and forms the foundation of the situational model (Kintsch, 1998). The reader cannot access the meaning or ideas in the text if he is unable to understand the propositions, find the links between sentences and paragraphs, or to use pronouns for anaphoric inferencing. The situational model is based on the reader's interpretation of the text, which is deeper and requires that he interacts with the text and integrates old and new information. This model is necessary for the switch from *learning to read* to *reading to learn* needed in the FET phase (E. J. Pretorius, personal communication, July 17, 2013).

In the context of the reading comprehension test that I composed, which targeted three components of comprehending expository text, I used my questions to target both the learners' text-based model and the situational model that they created while reading. There were three question types and each type targeted one of the mental models. The literal questions and anaphoric inference questions targeted the text-based model, while the inference questions targeted the situational model. I used Bloom's taxonomy (see Figure 4.3 below) to help me

⁴ Bloom's taxonomy of educational goals was developed by Dr. Benjamin Bloom (1956) in order to rank tasks according to their complexity. Tasks are ranked as more complex and cognitively demanding when they require increased amounts of mental information processing (Moseley, 2005).

construct these three question types. The first three categories in the taxonomy were used for the literal questions (low-level inferencing). The last three categories were used to compose the inferencing questions (high-level inferencing). Anaphoric inferencing involves cross-referencing between pronouns and/or synonyms. It could be understood as part of literal understanding but it is also used to construct both text-based and situational models. This test was used as a baseline assessment and so did not require statistical validation. It was tailored to the needs of the Grade 10 learners and was therefore context-specific.

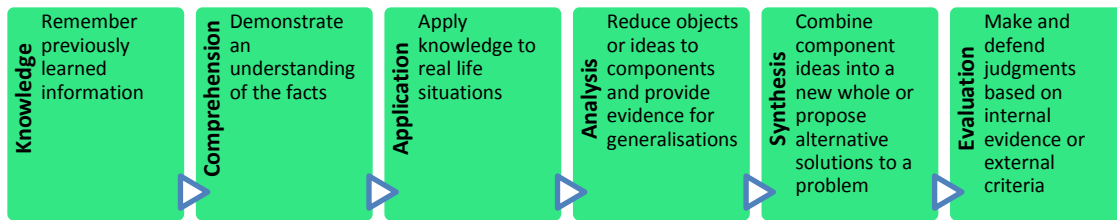


Figure 4.3: Bloom's Taxonomy (Moseley, 2005)

The test consisted of three factors, with a certain number of items in each factorial category. This is shown in Table 4.3 below. The test totalled 50 marks. The inference questions made up the bulk of the test because the metacognitive instruction was used to improve the learners' inferencing abilities as I had chosen to use the construction of a situational model as a good measure of reading comprehension at high school level. The inferencing section was worth 26 marks and contained 11 items. The literal questions were the second largest group, with 12 items worth 17 marks. Lastly, there were six anaphoric inference questions worth seven marks. The reading comprehension test can be viewed in Addendum B.

Table 4.3: Question Differentiation and Distribution

Question type	Question number	Marks
LITERAL	1.1.1	1
	1.1.2	1
	1.1.3	1
	1.1.4	1
	1.3.1	2
	1.3.2	2
	1.4.1	3
	1.5.1	1
	1.6.1	1
	1.6.2	1
	1.6.5	2
	1.6.7	1
	Total	17

INFERENCE	1.2	1
	1.4.2	1
	1.4.3	3
	1.5.2	3
	1.5.3	3
	1.5.4	5
	1.6.3	2
	1.6.4	2
	1.6.6	2
	1.7.1	2
	1.7.2	2
	Total	26
ANAPHORIC	1.5.5	2
	2.1	1
	2.2	1
	2.3	1
	2.4	1
	2.5	1
	Total	7

Fifth, this test was used in a pilot study at the research site before the research process began. This step helped in the adaptation for the final version. However, because it serves as a baseline assessment, the test did not go through statistical validation before being used for this study.

In comparison, the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSİ) is a statistically validated test used by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002, p. 249) as a “self-report instrument” assessing adolescents’ and adults’ metacognitive awareness and perceived use of reading strategies. In this study, the MARSİ (Addendum A) was used qualitatively as part of the baseline assessment. This instrument provided me with insight into whether the learners were metacognitive about their reading and what reading strategies they used, if any. I will now discuss the reliability and factorial validity of the MARSİ. The MARSİ has three strategies, considered to be factors, with 13, eight and nine items in each respectively. The test should be used primarily for testing academic reading, as found in textbooks, journal articles, or selected magazine articles. Factor analysis was performed using three factors and Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each subscale and grade levels ranging from 6 to 12. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated as .93 for the reliability of the total sample while coefficients ranged between .89 and .93.

4.4.5.2. Informal questionnaire

Thereafter, I developed the informal questionnaire because I did not feel that the MARSİ had given me realistic insight into the learners’ metacognitive habits. I used the questionnaire to verify the data that I had collected, using the reading comprehension test and the MARSİ. The questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions:

1. What are your feelings about learning in English?

2. What do you do first when you're given something to read? What do you do next? What do you do after that?
3. What do you think about when you're reading?
4. What do you do if you don't understand what you're reading?

The learners' answers were not sufficient to draw themes from and so I have used a broad description of their responses and included some supporting quotes from their scripts, as set out below.

The responses to Question 1 were all positive. They generally felt "good" or "happy" while P3 diplomatically stated in her answer that she had "*nothing negative to say about learning in English.*" Six of the eight learners said that learning to communicate in English was a valuable skill because it allowed them to communicate with "*many people who are not speaking my language, so that means when I talk to them, we speak English*" (P5). Other learners tied this skill more directly to communicating with people of a different racial background, that is, people "*who is not understand Xhosa*" (P3) or "*white people*" (P8). P1, P2 and P8 mentioned that they needed to be able to communicate in English to find employment. P2 wrote, "*When you want a job, you talk English*" while P8 noted the perceived ease that English proficiency provides for procuring a job: "*You can get job easy*". P7 tied employment to communicating across different languages: "*Even if I want job I can't get if I understand Xhosa, only English is language that help to connect to other languages*". P4 and P6 related learning in English to their personal skills development. P4 was enthusiastic about how learning in English will help him read English adventure books. He wrote "*I am very exciting and interesting because some book that are writen in English help me to understand more about English. Some of the books are very adventurous*". P6 wrote that he wanted to learn how to speak and write in English but did not elaborate on his reasons.

Responses to Question 2 were also all in a similar vein. P1, P4, P5, P7 and P8 wrote that they all looked at the title of the text before reading from the beginning to the end. P1 elaborated on this and said that she thought about the topic before she started her reading and then scanned the text when she had finished reading to ensure that she understood. P1 and P8 used a global strategy (scanning the text) and a support strategy (making notes), respectively, to support their comprehension. P4, P5 and P7 mentioned that they re-read the text through a second time but P7 specified "*especially when I don't understand what I'm reading*". P4's motivation was different. He wrote,

[I] look at the heading and try to know what the book is about. Then I read it carefully to find out more about the story. After that it depends how interesting it was. If it was boring I leave it but if I am interested I will re-read.

P2 used summaries (a support strategy) and discussion (a support strategy) to monitor her comprehension. In contrast to all the others, P3 just read the text straight through and did not mention using strategies before, during, or after reading. She motivated her actions with the

following explanation: *"I read it because he/she give to me on purpose he/she to read it. He/she know the reason of giving me this thing."* In contrast to both the aforementioned approaches, P6 simply identified the words that he was unfamiliar with and the underlined them (a support strategy) so that he could use his dictionary (a support strategy) and ask his teachers or his parents for help (a support strategy).

The responses to Question 3 were varied. I admit that the question would have been very strange to a learner who was unfamiliar with his mental processes; however, the responses were interesting nonetheless. Three learners, P1, P5, and P7, wrote that they thought about what they were reading and tried to understand it but did not elaborate further. P3 and P6 wrote that they *"tried to have an image"* of what they were reading. In contrast, P2 first evaluated whether the text was worth reading and *"if [it] is not good for I [me], live [leave] it"*, while P4 wrote *"I always think about how the story is going to end. I think about the place where the story took place"*. P8 seemed to experience reading, especially before an audience, as a threatening experience and thought the following while she read:

I think when I'm reading I feel neveous [nervous] especial when I read in front of the students because I don't know what they say about me when I reading, so when I read in public I don't feel comfortable.

Responses to Question 4 seemed to reflect learners' differing motivation levels while reading. Four of the learners, P1, P3, P4, and P5, wrote that when their reading comprehension needs repairing, they follow different courses of action but all the answers included asking someone older or more knowledgeable for help. P1 and P5 specified that they make use of dictionaries (a support strategy) before going to ask for assistance (a support strategy). In addition, P3 and P5 mentioned that they also re-read the text before going to ask someone else. The other learners, P2 and P6-8, had similar answers. P2, P6, and P7 used their dictionaries and their teachers as reference resources but said that if those two methods did not help them understand, they simply stopped reading:

I just ask someone about the words mean and if he or she don't understand I just live [leave] it because I don't understand (P2)

Sometimes I just leave it like that to read what I am understanding or I read it twice so that I can understand (P6)

Sometimes if there's something that I don't understand I don't bother I just leave it (P7)

P8's answer was perhaps the most revealing of all, *"I think when I don't understand what I read I feel ashamed because I don't know what I'm reading and I don't understand what I am reading."*

From the answers to the informal questionnaire, it appeared as though learners possessed a few metacognitive strategies that they used prior to the intervention. Among these were activating prior knowledge, skimming, and making notes. Question 3 in the informal questionnaire targeted the

learners' metacognitive awareness, but their answers were too vague to make a critical judgment on their levels of metacognitive awareness. Several described constructing mental models while most just stated that they tried to understand the text while they read. These answers did not give me any insight into whether they were actively aware of how much they had understood and where they had encountered difficulties. In general, the learners had used support strategies to aid their comprehension. All the learners highlighted the role of discussion or consulting others as one of their primary strategies. Discussions with more knowledgeable others were an important part of their existing metacognitive repertoires. It appeared as though the learners voluntarily sought out more knowledgeable others to mediate their learning on a frequent basis by approaching parents, teachers, or older siblings, all people perceived to be more knowledgeable than themselves. One could also tie this behaviour to the sense of connectedness and community that is part of their culture. It was therefore possibly more likely that a learner would have approached a person for help through conversation, a more highly esteemed activity in Xhosa culture than consulting a book. This is discussed in detail at the end of the chapter.

Given the educational crisis in South Africa, especially in literacy, and the lack of metacognitive abilities displayed by South African learners in general, metacognitive instruction presented itself as a way of addressing the literacy crisis among the small group of ESL learners (Connerly, 2006; Lipman, 1993; Manning & Glasner, 1996). It also provided the learners with a new skill set to enable their learning across the curriculum. In this study, I assumed that the learners who displayed signs of partial metacognitive activity (evidenced by their use of support strategies before the intervention) were less skilled than those classified as good readers, with a wide variety of metacognitive strategies at their disposal (Lin, 2001). Regarding the Department of Basic Education's (2011b) expectation of learners becoming independent analytical thinkers, who are able to transfer their learning to a variety of different contexts, metacognitive instruction provided a means of achieving both governmental expectations and addressing the literacy crisis. In this study, I assumed that analytical thinking is unlikely without metacognitive activity, which enables a learner to act on his analyses through declarative and procedural knowledge. Eilers and Pinkley (2006) expressed a similar opinion—that less skilled readers need explicit instruction in specific metacognitive reading strategies that can be applied across the curriculum. This is particularly important for poor readers whose reading comprehension has been shown to improve from such strategies as they make high-level inferences by processing texts deeply and, in return, are able to monitor their comprehension effectively. Furthermore, reading comprehension, and meaning-making as the goal of reading, is unlikely without comprehension monitoring; that is, when a learner is unable to monitor his own comprehension, one can assume that he is not metacognitively aware of his mental processes while reading and therefore will not notice comprehension breakdown. Such a breakdown in his comprehension will most likely produce an unsuitable mental representation of the text and therefore his meaning-making of the text will either

be impaired, incomplete, or inaccurate. All these elements were motivation enough to take action in the intervention phase.

4.4.5.3. Focus group interview

McConnell (2000, p. 523) defines a “focus group as a planned discussion among various types of people designed to obtain information on a specific topic.” The debate about what constitutes a focus group is not covered in this discussion; instead, I used Morgan’s (1996, p. 132) inclusive view, in which focus groups were based on a “set of central tendencies” that could be adapted to fit a variety of situations and research purposes. As this study required flexibility and adaptability in its research methods, an inclusive approach was deemed most appropriate (Morgan, 1997). Morgan considers the following three characteristics to be of importance: first, focus groups provide a method of collecting data; second, the group interaction is a source of data, and third, the interviewer is responsible for creating the opportunities for discussion (Morgan, 1996). In addition, focus groups complement other research methods such as in-depth interviews or surveys and generate descriptive, explanatory data as participants share their personal views and ideas (Morgan, 1996). Berg (2009, p. 158) adds that focus groups help the researcher access the “conscious, semiconscious and unconscious psychological and sociocultural characteristics and processes among [the group].” In this light, group interaction is seen as part of the data collection process.

Several authors (Berg, 2009; McConnell, 2000; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2006) consider a skilled interviewer, or moderator, to be of great importance to the interview process. He is responsible for ‘teasing out’ participants’ emotions and drawing out useful information that is relevant to the discussion’s topic. The moderator must set the tone and emotional climate of the meeting (Berg, 2009). Unfortunately, the moderator’s effect on the discussion is often considered a weakness of focus group interviews, but the extent of these effects depends on the style of moderation used. Another concern mentioned in the literature available was the discussion of sensitive topics. Focus groups require “mutual self-disclosure” and this seems to limit the range of topics that can be discussed (Morgan, 2002, p. 141). Thus, most of the information gathered from focus groups is socially constructed and not representative of the individuals’ thoughts.

Furthermore, group dynamics and the participants’ views should be viewed by the researcher as important additions to the collected data—as a source of data in its own right. The interaction present in focus groups is not only a data source but is considered an element of strength, where the range of agreement and disagreement between participants’ views can be clearly observed. In addition, the researcher can prompt participants to explain these differences and thus gain further insights and richer data (Morgan, 1996). Morgan and Spanish (1984) also claim that focus groups combine the best strengths of individual interviews and participant observation; that is, through focus groups, researchers are able to access a person’s attitudes and perceptions and record interaction between people. The type of data collected is often dependent on the format of focus

groups. Focus groups can be conducted formally, in a structured manner with a guided format, or informally, without a prepared interview schedule (Berg, 2009). Morgan and Spanish (1984) state that, independent of the format, focus groups offer researchers an improved method of answering sociological questions. Participants are able to choose what information to present in a group context, can use questions as a form of interruption, and may compare their answers, providing the researchers with greater insight into their attitudes and perceptions (Morgan & Spanish, 1984). Many definitions of focus groups specify that the participants be strangers to one another. However, I did not adhere to this norm in my study. As Kitzinger (1994) points out, the benefit of having participants who are familiar with one another is that they can easily identify the contradictions in what their peers profess to believe in contrast to their practices. Furthermore, the quality of conversation present in the focus group is more representative of natural conversations during day-to-day activities where the participants interact. Research participants steer the research in different directions based on their agreements and disagreements during the topical discussions (Kitzinger, 1994). All three of the above points were realised in the case of my research participants. Importantly, I wanted to control group dynamics by limiting dominant personalities and encouraging the “silent voices” as the learners who were more fluent in English often dominated informal discussions (Morgan, 1996, p. 145). However, I only aimed to guide questioning to the degree that learners spoke as much as possible.

Kitzinger (1994) mentions the benefits and drawbacks of using focus group interviews as a research method. Discussing the positives, she states that focus groups allow participants to imprint their meanings on experiences and topics, which the researcher grasps through studying the word and phrase choices used when describing their opinions or experiences. The interaction amongst group members mimics everyday conversations “peppered with teasing, jokes, anecdotes and loose word associations” (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 109). Liamputtong (2011) raises similar points but adds that focus groups are specifically geared towards capturing the views of marginalised groups such as black South African people and women. She also advocates the use of focus groups in conjunction with action research, and while enablement was the goal of my study, I hoped that individual action in terms of internalisation of the strategies and skills on the learners’ part would be an added outcome. I distinguished ‘enablement’ from ‘empowerment’, which is normally associated with action research, as I had improved the learners’ language proficiency in a high status language but I could not guarantee that they would make use of their new skills towards a transformational goal. Thus, I felt that ‘enablement’ was a better description as, in a sense; I was ‘leading a horse to water’ but was unable to ensure that he (the learner) would ‘drink’ once the intervention had ended.

Due to the cross-cultural nature of the intervention, code-switching formed a natural part of the intervention sessions, focus groups and individual interviews. This was because the English language skills of ESL learners are often weak and they could not be expected to learn new concepts through English while acquiring English as a language (Mugweni, Ganga, & Musengi,

2012). Code-switching is defined as the use of more than one language in a single conversation. It has been used in cross-cultural research and education for many years (Marawu, 1997). The purpose of code-switching is to convey meaning through the “negotiation and renegotiation of meaning, and the construction and interpretation of meaning in context (Marawu, 1997, p. 46). In her thesis, Marawu (1997) identifies four types of switches: tag switches, intersentential switches, intrasentential switches, and translations. Each type of code-switching is used for different purposes. It serves various functions in verbal exchanges. These can be directive, expressive, or interrogative.

Furthermore, in Marawu’s (1997) study, translations were used as a classroom strategy. Similarly, in this study, translations formed part of the learning process during the intervention as the less proficient ESL learners needed further explanations in isiXhosa. The learners were all multilingual learners who used code-switching to make sense of their worlds (Canagarajah, 2011). They read in one language and spoke in another or listened in one language and wrote in other. The use of translation was meant to help learners associate their prior knowledge in their mother tongue with the meaning and new vocabulary of the LoLT, English (Marawu, 1997). Translation also occurs in two forms: direct and conceptual (Marawu, 1997). I, as the researcher, used direct translation as a communicative strategy with the learners, but during peer-to-peer translation, conceptual translation “interlingual reformulation” took place frequently as learners added extra information or explained concepts differently, compared to the English translation (Authur, 1996, p. 24). The translator made use of both types of translation discussed above and all four types of code switches.

In this study, focus groups were used as part of the reflection phase of the action research cycle. This happened in August of 2013 at the research site. All the participants were included in the focus group. I used the MARSJ as a guideline for the discussion questions. The MARSJ and interview schedule are attached as Addendum A and Addendum D respectively. The aim was to collect data that reflected the success of the intervention. The participants were asked to reflect on their metacognitive development as language learners reading in English. All the questions were aimed at determining whether the learners had improved their reading comprehension and expanded their repertoire of metacognitive skills and strategies, and, if so, how much.

4.4.5.4. Dialogue journals

The benefits of the use of dialogue journals overlapped with an underlying concern of this study: to improve the general literacy of the Grade 10 learners through increased metacognitive awareness (Williams, 2012). In addition, Liao and Wong (2008) list improved English vocabulary, intrinsic motivation, and reflective awareness amongst other benefits of this practice. As reflection and metacognitive awareness were both integral to this study, dialogue journals were a logical choice. The learners in Liao and Wong’s study indicated that the use of dialogue journals acted as a tool that promoted and furthered their self-understanding and self-growth and allowed them to mature

through sharing (and gaining feedback about) their thoughts, feelings, and self-perceptions as well as to reflect on the activities and practices in their daily lives. This may have happened to the learners in this study as well. Similarly, Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, and Haag (1995) assert that the purpose of the learning process is to make meaning and that this happens through constant reflection. Dialogue journals therefore provide learners with the opportunity to reflect on their learning and to make sense of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences that are connected to learning experiences both at school and beyond (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997; Peyton, 1993). Importantly, this meaning-making allowed the study's participants to transfer their metacognitive skills through reflection; that is, they were able to make links between situations in and out of the classroom and so transfer their knowledge.

Dialogue journals consist of a written conversation between the teacher and a learner that is confidential and long-term. There are no set topics for writing and the teacher does not assess the written work in any way but responds to the learner's writing as a dialogue partner (Liao & Wong, 2008). In this study, dialogue journals were used as a method of building a trusting relationship between me and the participants. Given the current situation of our country, it would have been short-sighted to work on their literacy levels without considering their personal development and welfare. If literacy skills are meant to help a person make meaning from his environment, then it is necessary that he make meaning to further progress whether in himself or in his communities. In explanation, dialogue journal writing allows children to make meaning regarding themselves and their surroundings.

With regard to ESL learners, a multitude of benefits have been associated with the use of dialogue journal writing. In Carroll and Mchawala's (2001) study, the researchers reported that learners were able to understand multiple viewpoints and to develop an awareness of academic writing conventions. Furthermore, Trite (2001) found that learners became self-regulated, could evaluate their strengths and weaknesses as language learners and improved their reflective thinking. Awareness, reflective thinking, evaluation, and self-regulated learning are all metacognitive components. Dialogue journals were therefore used as part of the strategies utilised to achieve the aims of this study. The dialogue journals allowed the ESL learners to use English in a meaningful way and in real-life contexts (Orem, 2001). Williams (2012) also emphasises the role of writing in second-language acquisition, through tasks that involve 'writing to learn', but she stresses the importance of a strong foundation in the learner's mother tongue before this is possible. Writing, as opposed to speaking, with its permanence and slower pace, allows the learner to focus an increased amount of attention and awareness on language learning both during and after production. Oral communication often proves too rapid for language learners to notice deficits in their knowledge banks, but written production provides the learner with the opportunity to first be aware of the gaps in his writing and then to actively address them by consulting his peers, educator, or instruction material (Williams, 2012). Dialogue journals, as a research method, thus

not only aimed to strengthen the learners' language acquisition but also allowed them to become metacognitive about their daily decisions, choices, and activities.

In this study, each participant kept a journal in which they were free to write about whatever interested them. I encouraged them to write regularly, not only to the benefit of the study but also for the benefits described in the literature. The journals were not assessed, but I responded to the learners' writing when they voluntarily requested it. The learners were expected to reflect on each contact session through discussing what they had learnt as well as what they thought could be adapted. They needed to bring their journals to each contact session as the books formed a good record of their progress and a way of collating important information, such as my contact details or reminders.

Similarly, a reflective journal served the same purpose to me as the researcher. As a co-researcher with the learners, I was interested in knowledge co-construction, which according to Williams (2012), is centred on reflection. Reflection therefore preceded knowledge co-construction and took place in my journal as part of action research's phasic reflection and formed a sounding board for me as the researcher. Reflection also formed the backbone of this study as it bound a paradigm of praxis, action research as action and reflection, and metacognition together. Stevens and Cooper (2009, p. 5) define a journal as "a sequential, dated chronicle of events and ideas, which includes the personal responses and reflections of the writer (or writers) on those events and ideas". The authors identify six characteristics of a journal: it is "written, dated, informal, private and archival" and contains information, descriptions of events, ideas, thoughts and questions (Stevens & Cooper, 2009, p. 5). Blake (2005) comments that journaling produces many benefits for the writer, including meaning-making, making connections, honing critical thinking skills, developing affective skills, and improving writing abilities and emphasises that reflective journaling serves as a form of self-examination aimed at fostering professional growth. My reflective journal used in this context served to strengthen the reasoning processes and action decisions during the research process, whilst looking for connections, discovering meaning, and improving my critical thinking about the research process. This is strongly tied to one of the methods for improving validity, called *researcher reflexivity* and discussed in Section 4.6. My reflective journal also acted as a companion throughout the research process. I reflected on each contact session with its strengths and weaknesses, recording observations and notes for the following session. The journal was used to capture my questions, ideas, and planning for future sessions. Furthermore, I detailed any additional information about the participants' body language, conversations, gestures, or stories that granted me insight into their reading comprehension habits or the learning context. Similar to the learners' dialogue journals, my reflective journal contributed to my reflexivity as a researcher and therefore to the validity of the study. Through reflection, I motivated my reasons for decisions that were made throughout the research process. Plack (2005) notes that reflective journaling allows the writer to look at his lived experiences from multiple perspectives and to question his assumptions before making judgments. This happened as I moved between action and reflection,

where the one informed the other in a cyclical fashion. In summary, reflective journaling allowed me to improve my own metacognitive habits.

4.5. Data Analysis

Hubbard and Power (1999) advocate that researchers should be mindful of data analysis as part of the research design, even prior to selecting a design for their studies. In this study, data were collected on a continuous basis throughout the research process and were analysed in the same manner. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 154) view analysis as “working with data, organising it, breaking it down, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. There are various ways to work with data, depending on what types of data are collected, which features of the data one would like to emphasise (Bogdan & Biklen, 2002), and what research question one needs to answer. According to Henning et al. (2004), data analysis uncovers the artistic skill of the researcher in communicating his findings in writing. Qualitative data are analysed in ways that will highlight the informational content, reflecting the meaning of people’s lived experiences (Forman & Damschroder, 2008). Henning et al. (2004) recommend qualitative content analysis for less experienced researchers for its ease of access and single layer of meaning in the content of the data text, which I therefore made use of in this study. Forman and Damschroder (2008) and Morgan (1993) view qualitative content analysis as systematically categorising informational content where data are sorted into categories that are generated from careful analysis. Words, phrases of meaning, or categories are analysed to identify patterns in the data. The categories are derived from repetitive themes that emerge through analysis (Gordon & Levin, 2008), where “analysis examines data that are the product of open-ended data collection techniques aimed at detail and depth, rather than measurement” (Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p. 41). The following diagram, as depicted in Figure 4.4, was adapted from Henning et al. (2004):

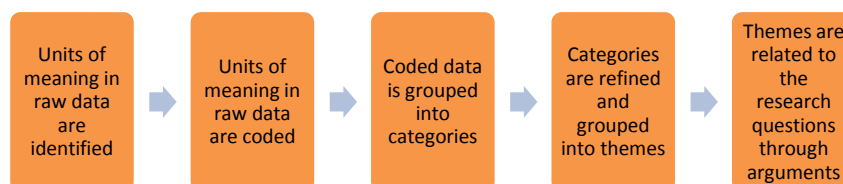


Figure 4.4: A brief overview of qualitative content analysis.

Various data sources were used in this study: dialogue journals, my reflective journal, focus group interviews, audio recordings, documents, and field notes of observations. Once data had been collected, some preparatory work was necessary before data analysis could begin: field notes were organised, participants’ identifying information was masked through codes, and all interviews and audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim. Transcribed texts included additional communicative

information such as emotions, pauses, or gestures. Once the transcription was complete, I verified the transcribed data by comparing them to the original recordings with the assistance of the translator (Forman & Damschroder, 2008). After the systematic sorting and labelling of data, analysis could begin. Units of meaning in hand-written data or transcripts were highlighted, coded, and grouped according to their codes into categories (Gordon & Levin, 2008). The categories were then named inductively. At this stage, according to Henning et al. (2004), the categories already displayed the emerging themes, to be discussed later, which will be represented “a reasonably ‘researched’ chunk of reality”, (Henning et al. 2004, p. 107), and is often a rationalised version of the raw data. Each theme formed the basis of an argument which was then used as evidence to support or disprove the research questions (see Figure 4.5 below). Qualitative data analysis is an iterative process of coding and analysis (Henning et al., 2004) and therefore the interpretation process begins while the researcher collects the data, reads through them, refines and questions them, and organises them into themes and categories.

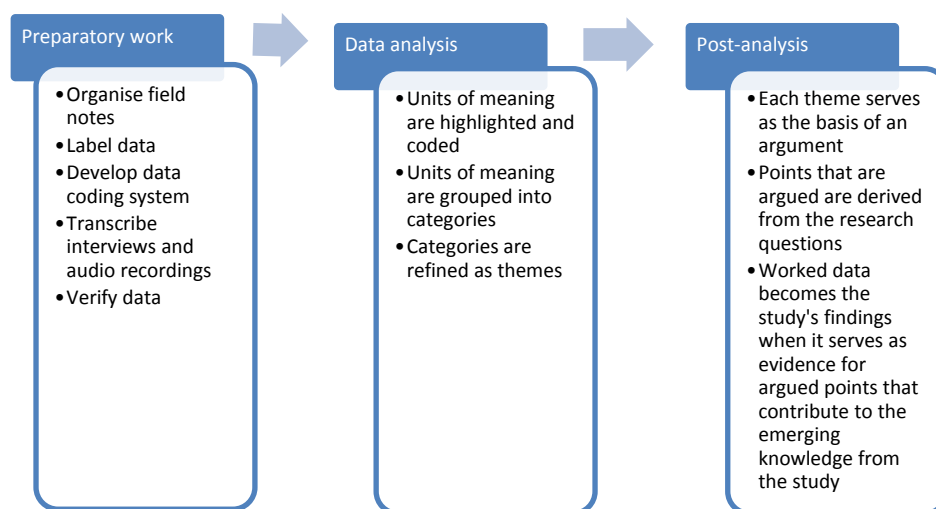


Figure 4.5: The general process of data analysis (Henning et al., 2004).

Data analysis requires the researcher to be transparent and open about the analysis process in order to effectively engage with unexpected or complex emerging knowledge (Butterfield, 2012; Holliday 2007). I, as the researcher, was thus required to report on data that was contradictory to or did not affirm my theoretical stance and to give an accurate rendition of what emerged at the research site (Oswald, 2010). In essence, the aim of my data analysis was to track any changes in the learners' reading comprehension and metacognitive skills with reference to the research questions. Furthermore, Sagor (2005) notes that data analysis incorporates understanding of the factors which contribute to the research intervention's outcome. He adds that the researcher's intuitions are also valuable and should not be excluded from the action research findings. The final reflective phase of the action research cycle was crucial in the answering of my research questions. The data gathered about the metacognitive growth of the learners and their English reading comprehension abilities were used to address the research questions.

4.6. Data Verification: Validity and Reliability

In a field such as education, researchers and research typically intervene in people's lives (Merriam, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (2000) emphasise the implications of such a situation by asking whether the research findings can be acted upon with a clear conscience. Furthermore, because qualitative data reflect predominantly subjective realities and socially constructed knowledge, validity and reliability are often causes for concern. Merriam (2002) discusses the two research aspects under the following headings: internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

Validity is applied differently in qualitative research than in its quantitative counterpart (Oswald, 2010). Validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the research accurately measures or describes what it intended to (Bush, 2002). That means it is concerned with the trustworthiness of the research findings. Various types of validity were considered to ensure that this study was authentic: triangulation, member checks, peer reviews, and reflexivity.

Firstly, an important method of ensuring validity is triangulation. Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 223) define triangulation as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour." Data are therefore 'cross-checked' to establish validity (Bush, 2002). Both Denzin (1970) and Patton (2002) identified four types of triangulation: multiple data sources, multiple data collection methods, multiple researchers, and multiple theories (multiple researchers and theories will not be discussed in this section as they did not apply to this study). Data for this study were collected through interviews, focus groups, dialogue journals, reflective journals, intervention phase activities, and observations. In this way, the data was triangulated. Adendorff (2007) explains that through a variety of perspectives, action researchers are able to achieve greater validity. In addition, content validity refers to the degree to which the assessment tool is representative of and relevant to a "targeted construct for a particular assessment purpose" (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995, p. 238). The reading comprehension test was specifically designed to elicit responses from the learners and allowed me to make deductions about their reading comprehension skills, while the MARS1 enabled me to gain a thorough understanding of their metacognitive awareness before, during, and after reading.

Secondly, face validity or member checking "refers to the process of asking research participants to tell you whether you have accurately described their experience" (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001, p. 147). I had visited the research site many times during the study, which gave me the opportunity to ensure, by sharing my interpretations with them, that the personal notes, observations, and the participants' intended meaning were all accurately perceived and recorded. The same was done for the focus group interviews. In addition, Seidman (2006) mentions two further benefits to in-depth interviewing. If the interviewee and interviewer are able to make meaning from the interviewee's experiences through reflecting on them during the interview, this increases the achievement of a study's validity. Many researchers are concerned about the influence of the

research instrument (that is, the interviewer) on the resultant data, but Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 107) urge that the interviewer be viewed positively as a “smart, adaptable, flexible instrument who can respond to situations with skill, tact, and understanding.”

Thirdly, peer review happened on a continual basis throughout the research period. My supervisors and I discussed the raw data, my decision-making processes, and tentative interpretations each week. I also met with the learning support teacher at the research site on a frequent basis to gather her insights, cautions, and observations about the learners and session design. Fourth, reflexivity is needed, whereby the researcher discloses his position in and towards the research. This requires critical self-reflection and a disclosure of all aspects that may affect the study's outcomes, such as his theoretical stance, worldview, or personal biases. Thus, much of this reflexive process was recorded in my reflective journal. As a fifth strategy, researchers should ensure that they are immersed in the data collection process for a lengthy period in order to develop a deep understanding of the studied topic. They should also deliberately seek out data that are dissonant to the emerging themes (Silverman, 1993; Silverman, 2011). In the context of my research project, certain cultural differences presented serious challenges during data collection. One such challenge was the *social desirability bias*, where research participants wanted to be seen in a favourable light. Such a motivation affected their answers during interviews, questionnaires, and informal discussions, where participants exaggerated the positive projected view of themselves (Stoeber & Rambow, 2007). Another challenge was *impression management*, where participants controlled and regulated information sharing during social interactions, whether consciously or unconsciously, to manage others' perceptions of a person or event (Piwinger & Ebert, 2001). This was especially pertinent when I conducted the focus group interviews. Impression management also included self-presentation, where the participant responded to the researcher or interview questions in a way that portrayed him as he would have liked to be seen during social interactions (Smith, 2006). In order to prevent these challenges or at least be aware of them, I planned to look at various ways of 'extracting' or identifying possible dissonant data. I considered learners' verbal and nonverbal communication, their interpersonal communication in their mother tongue, and their formal documents (such as report cards that provided me with reliable measures of their English capabilities).

Continuing the discussion of validity, it is necessary to discuss external validity. In quantitative research, investigators often use a randomised sample of the population and then generalise their findings to the whole population statistically. Generalisability is referred to as *external validity*. This is problematic in qualitative research as the sample sizes are often small and participants are specifically chosen. Thus, collected data is particular to individuals and cannot be generalised to a larger group. Nonetheless, there are often underlying principles or knowledge that can be distilled from qualitative data and transferred to similar situations or topics of interest (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Towards this end, qualitative data should be described comprehensively, using in-depth descriptions. This allows for the contextualisation and transfer of findings or underlying principles

(Merriam, 2002). These types of descriptions were emphasised during my data collection. Last, reliability “relates to the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or similar results” (Bush, 2002, p. 60). Reliability is thus concerned with the consistency of results. In the context of human experience, repeatability is often not a concern as it is usually not possible because the fluidity of human life is an obstacle to reliability, as it is understood in quantitative work. In the social sciences, one person’s experience cannot be counted as more reliable than another’s (Merriam, 2002). However, in qualitative research, reliability relates to the researcher’s interpretation of the findings, that is, whether others would draw the same conclusions from the data? In other words, are the data and the conclusions consistent and dependable? (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability can be accomplished through triangulation, peer reviews, reflexivity, and an audit trail (Merriam, 2002). The first three have been discussed in this section. An audit trail involves keeping a research journal that documents the reasoning process throughout the research. It details the decision-making processes and how data were collected and analysed into categories and, finally, into themes. The journal should include the researcher’s questions, solutions, ideas, and reflections (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, my reflective journal formed part of the audit trail for this study. An audit trail also presents the research processes in an organised, transparent manner that allows for repeatability, showing how the researcher worked with the data during analysis and so on.

4.7. Ethics

Finally, ethical considerations are of paramount importance in research as the trustworthiness of research depends on whether it was conducted ethically (Merriam, 2002). However, this should not be researchers’ primary concern, but, as Wassenaar (2006) suggests, ethical considerations should ensure the welfare of research participants and guard against irregularities. The ethical side of qualitative research still remains a contested area. Some researchers perceive ethical issues as necessary while others view issues as constraints on their academic freedom (Burgess, 1989). Wassenaar (2006, p. 61) stresses that “research ethics should be a fundamental concern of all social science researchers in planning, designing, implementing, and reporting research with human participants.” In South Africa, research ethics committees were established at all the large tertiary institutions to promote ethical conduct and further scientific inquiry. Therefore, permission for this research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University and the Western Cape Education Department as the gatekeeper of schools in the province (refer to Addenda E and F).

Action researchers may face increased numbers of ethical issues during research because, as Kelly (2001) points out, action researchers are active participants in the research process; that is, they are not passive bystanders who merely observe. Dick (2000) asserts that ethical issues are embedded in every research project, and this may be all the more true of action researchers, who research real-world phenomena and situations. As O’Brien (1998) notes, action researchers often

work collaboratively with the research participants and their interactions and communication are often of an intimate nature. In light of this, I chose to use the Helsinki Declaration and its guiding principles for the ethical conduct of researchers to steer my investigation (Human & Fluss, 2001). Wassenaar (2006) cites four guiding principles that form a framework for research in developing countries like South Africa: autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons, maleficence, beneficence, and justice. Each principle will be discussed separately in the paragraphs that follow.

First, respect as a value is especially pertinent to action research, where all participants and their contributions are valued equally in the research process. The nature of the research and development of the project, along with personal biases, agendas, and interests, are explicitly made known (Winter, 1996). This principle of respect views individuals as “autonomous agents” and entitled to protection (Brydon-Miller, 2008). In the case of this study, autonomy as a principle was doubly important as I engaged with the learners. As autonomous agents, their voluntary participation was highly appreciated. Usually, informed assent forms are signed, detailing every aspect of the research process, as a sign of the researcher’s respect for participants’ autonomy as individuals. Consent letters are also sought from authority figures such as parents/guardians, schools, or organisations. Such a form assures the participants or organisations of confidentiality and anonymity during data dissemination (Burgess, 1989; Henning et al., 2004). Upon approaching the school before commencing with this research process, I sought permission to work with the learners and on the school premises. This was granted by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the school principal. I was required to send detailed explanations to both parties about the study before permission was granted (see Addenda E and G). In this study, once the participants had been identified, they were given parental consent and learner assent forms (see Addenda H and I). I then explained the forms in detail and exactly what the study would entail. I made sure that they understood every aspect and what was expected from them so that they could explain it to their parents or guardians at home. They were also given ample opportunity to ask questions. The signed forms were all returned, and an example of a parental consent form can be viewed in Addendum H.

Second, the principle of preventing maleficence also upholds respect for persons. This principle requires researchers to ensure that participants are not harmed either directly or indirectly. Included in this is “deception”, as in the case of covert research and harm or risk of harm during an intervention. This dovetails with the third principle, beneficence. Beneficence encourages researchers to maximise the benefits of the research for all concerned parties but especially for the participants. Often, research ethics committees will analyse the benefit-to-risk ratio and decide whether potential knowledge gained outweighs harm to individuals or communities. Maleficence and beneficence were included in the study’s assent and consent forms and were considered during the intervention phase too.

I had some concerns about the sustainability of the study's effects at the research site given the small sample size of the research participants. I therefore agreed to return to the research site should the study be a success and implement a large-scale programme to ensure that all learners would have access to metacognitive instruction. This was recorded in my contract with the school principal. Given my current full-time employment, I may be able to offer a future workshop in which I train the research site teachers regarding the cognitive aspects of reading and reading comprehension and equip them with metacognitive strategies that they can apply to their relevant subjects. In addition, I left copies and detailed explanations of my research resources with the learning support teacher after explaining the purpose and method of each. Furthermore, none of the participants were harmed or were at risk of harm during the intervention. All research methods were conducted in a transparent manner and participants were informed of each step and what was expected of them. Every effort was made on my part to ensure that the participants were benefitted by the research through providing meals and teaching metacognitive strategies that would improve their academic results across the curriculum if they chose to transfer the knowledge.

The fourth and last principle requires that researchers treat everyone with fairness and equity throughout. Also, researchers must ensure that participants stand to benefit from future implications of the research should the study be successful. Researchers cannot be the only party that stands to benefit (Brydon-Miller, 2008). If participants choose to implement what they have learnt during the research process, previous research proves that they will benefit by using metacognitive skills and strategies. All participants were treated equally, receiving the same instructions and exposure to new texts during the metacognitive training. They also each received equal meal portions and materials to complete the tasks during the intervention. Finally, when a few participants chose to miss contact sessions or to withdraw completely, they were not pressured to attend involuntarily; even though non-attendance did have a marked effect on their knowledge gains as they missed key information presented in consecutive lessons.

4.8. Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the research design and methodology, aimed at answering the study's research questions, were detailed. The research paradigm was explored and the action research cycle, with its five phases, as well as the research design and methodology, explained. I emphasised that reflection forms the linking concept between the research paradigm, design, and methodology. This chapter has, in essence, provided details about stages three (the chosen research design and methodology) and four (data collection and analysis methods) in Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) five-stage model. Stage four also included a discussion about data verification and relevant ethical issues. In the next chapter, the data analysis will be discussed in more detail and the findings presented.

Chapter 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and themes drawn from the intervention phase. It represents Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) fourth and fifth phases, described in Section 1.5.3, and the outcomes and reflections phases of the action research cycle. In it, I seek to make sense of the findings by integrating them with the theoretical framework discussed in Section 2.2.

During the intervention (action) phase of the action research cycle, I entered the research site and worked with eight Grade 10 learners, using metacognitive instruction to improve their English reading comprehension. I will briefly describe the learners biographically before revisiting the action research cycle and then presenting the data from the intervention. The data are presented in a way that reflects the evolution of the research process over time. After the data presentation, the themes that emerged from the data are presented and discussed.

5.1.1. The research participants

Eight learners, five females and three males, originally agreed to participate in this research process. However, in July 2013, at the start of the second half of the intervention phase, one female learner withdrew, citing her responsibilities at home for her withdrawal from the process. All the other learners remained for the duration of the intervention. Table 5.1 below depicts all the biographical information for the participants. I have included P8, the learner who withdrew, because I made use of her comprehension test, MARSI, informal questionnaire, and dialogue journal as data sources during the data analysis process. All the learners were isiXhosa-speaking.

Table 5.1: A Presentation of the Biographical Information of Informants

Participant	Age	Sex	Grade in which English became the learner's LoLT	Grade in which the learner began to read in English	English proficiency	Reading level	Additional description
1	19	F	Grade 2	Grade 3	Limited	Less skilled	P1 was an outspoken and kind person. She often assumed a mothering role with the younger learners and was quick to reprimand them if she felt that they were in any way disrespectful. She was a pleasure to have in the contact sessions and brightened every lesson with her sunny disposition.
2	18	F	Grade 2	Grade 3	Poor	Unskilled	P2 was a quiet and polite learner. She had strong opinions and liked to contribute during conversations and she was not afraid to ask questions. She wanted to study nursing after

							Grade 12.
3	16	F	Grade 3	Grade 4	Poor	Fairly skilled	This learner spoke English confidently. She was an outgoing, vivacious learner who invested herself in many extracurricular programmes that she believed would help her achieve her dream of becoming a clinical psychologist.
4	16	M	Grade 4	Grade 4	Fair	Skilled	P4 was a quiet, intelligent young man who thought deeply and listened carefully during instruction. He often volunteered answers and seemed to have a broad general knowledge. He wanted to qualify as a chemical engineer after school and had the potential to achieve his goal with financial help.
5	16	M	Grade 2	Grade 5	Good	Skilled	This bright young man was full of tricks. He had a great sense of humour and had natural leadership qualities that the other learners recognised. He was quiet during instruction but extroverted in conversation. He had a good English vocabulary and his natural curiosity made him an active learner. He was academically the strongest in the group.
6	16	M	Grade 8	Grade 8	Poor	Less skilled	P6 was a kind and pleasant person. He had compassion on others less fortunate than himself and loved to practice speaking English. He also had a great sense of fun and came to lessons with an easy smile. This learner's exposure to English was limited and he often struggled to follow the discussions and comprehend English text during the contact sessions. The translator's presence and skills were of benefit to this learner.
7	16	F	Grade 9	Grade 7	Poor	Fairly skilled	This quiet learner also struggled with comprehension in English, a language which she did not enjoy speaking. She was above average academically, was not afraid to ask her peers questions when she needed help and was determined to become a quantity surveyor after school.
8	16	F	Grade 5	Grade 5	Poor	Unskilled	This learner was very shy and quiet. She was reluctant to share her ideas or opinions and did not interact much with me or the others. When she did speak however I found that her thoughts expressed in isiXhosa were valuable contributions to every conversation she chose to partake in.

5.1.2. A review of the action research cycle

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, the research question that this study aimed to answer was,

Can metacognitive instruction be used to improve the English reading comprehension of ESL learners in the FET band?

and the following sub-questions were formulated:

- Do learners demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading? What evidence is there of this?
- What types of metacognitive skills and/or strategies are most effective during reading with the goal of improving English reading comprehension?
- If reading comprehension is improved, does the improvement have an effect on other content subject results, that is, in what ways does transfer take place?

I attempted to answer these questions through conducting one cycle of action research at the research site with micro-cycles of action and reflection in the macro-cycle, as discussed in Section 4.3.2. The research sequence for this study was as follows: problem identification, planning, action, observation, and reflection, in accordance with Susman's (1983) model, depicted in Figure 5.1 below:

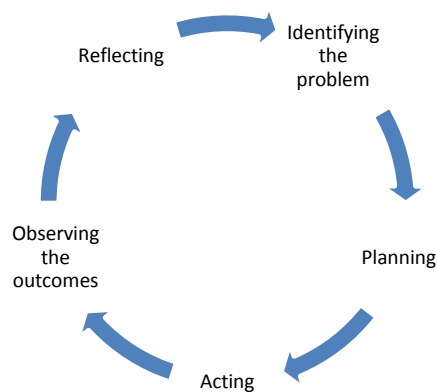


Figure 5.1: The action research cycle.

I used this cycle as a means of presenting the study findings. I, however, condensed the action cycle results into three data processes: problem demarcation, process, and outcomes. Figure 5.2 below depicts this 'new' cycle and how the data will be grouped and presented in this chapter.

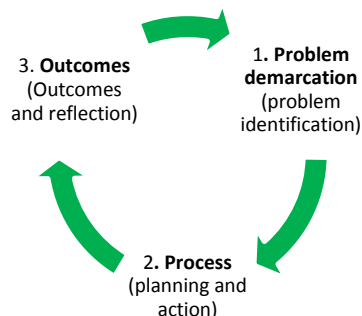


Figure 5.2: The three data processes in the action cycle.

5.2. Presentation of Research Findings

Below, the three data processes from the action research cycle are presented. I have used the data to clearly indicate the five phases within the three data processes. The data sources have been grouped together in a way that positions them in the chronological development of the study (refer to Section 4.4.5). The data presentation will follow this chronological development. I have strived to ensure that the learners' voices are heard in this section; thus the observations from my reflective journal have been made clearly identifiable. The data codes are presented in Addendum T.

All quotes from the focus group interview and the learners' dialogue journals have been included in their original form. I have not altered their use of grammar, their spelling, or their sentence structure. Therefore, the reader may be surprised at times by a learner's lack of basic English proficiency. In these cases, I have included my own words, clearly indicated in square brackets, should their intended meaning be unclear or obscured.

5.2.1. Problem demarcation

Four data sources were grouped in the problem demarcation process: 1) the outcome of the exploratory study in 2012, 2) the reading comprehension test, 3) the MARSI, and 4) an informal questionnaire about the learners' metacognitive awareness during reading. The 2012 exploratory study will not be discussed again in this section but the data that I collected during those three days convinced me that an intervention targeting the learners' English reading comprehension was necessary. The results from the other three data sources are discussed below.

5.2.1.1. Gaining access and establishing contact

Wassenaar (2006) states that it is essential that researchers establish good relationships through open communication with those at the research site and by expressing clear expectations, and as a qualitative researcher interested in effecting change, it was doubly important that I should build trusting relationships with the learners. In a sense, building these relationships never stopped as I experienced that "gaining access to the research setting is ongoing" (M. M. Oswald, personal communication, 2 October 2013). Similarly, gaining access to the metacognitive activity of the research participants was also ongoing. As this activity was exhibited within cultural norms and language, it was necessary for me to equip myself properly with cultural sensitivity, an attitude of openness, and a willingness to listen and understand.

Once I had gained access to the research site and established contact, I set about getting to know the adolescents. In order to do this, I had to try and bridge the language barrier and identify, and navigate my way through cultural influences so that I could work towards furthering the learners' metacognitive growth, that is, by empowering them through their own learning and internalisation of metacognitive skills and strategies.

The first activity I planned was motivated by my desire to gain as much information as possible about the learners' reading comprehension and metacognitive abilities. Before administering the tests, I was uncertain whether the learners would be able to answer the reading comprehension questions in the benchmark test. I also felt as though I did not have sufficient information to plan accurately for the action phase of the action research cycle. I therefore used the idea of a treasure hunt activity to address this issue and help me obtain additional information. The instructions for the treasure hunt were printed on A4 sheets of paper and learners had to read and follow (comprehend) the instructions to find the treasure (Addendum J). The whole lesson took place in silence and the learners communicated with one another and with me through reading and writing. Based on their execution of the written instructions, I felt reassured that I could proceed with the comprehension test.

5.2.1.2. The reading comprehension test in April – Data source 2

The reading comprehension test was described in Section 4.4.5.1. I used three different types of questions to assess whether the learners had constructed representations of the text while reading. The test was worth 50 marks in total. During the test, the learners were encouraged to talk to one another and use reference materials but they chose not to. Learners' scores ranged from 12 to 29. Most learners were able to answer the literal questions adequately, while the anaphoric inference (anaphora) and inferencing questions proved more challenging for them. These results are summarised in the table below:

Table 5.2: Results of Reading Comprehension Test in April 2013

Learner	Total (50 marks)	Literal questions (17)	Inferencing questions (26)	Anaphoric inference questions (7)
P1	20	12	8	0
P2	18	9.5	3.5	5
P3	15	7	7	1
P4	22	11	5	6
P5	29	12.5	13.5	3
P6	15.5	7.5	8	0
P7	26.5	10	11.5	5
P8	12	6	6	0

The answers to the literal questions, which test whether a learner can extract information explicitly stated in the text, were weaker than I expected. This indicated to me that the learners were not making effective mental representations of the text and/or that their English vocabularies were so limited that they experienced the text as inaccessible. However, even more concerning were the scores for the inferencing questions. An inference question requires deep processing of the text or what Kahneman (2011) calls *slow thinking*, that is, a steady, deliberate mental effort similar to the

ocean eating away at a coastline. High-level inferences are made through this kind of processing and they are made using higher mental functions that are responsible for metacognitive activity. This inferencing and metacognitive activity is used to build a situational model of the text. Many of the inferencing question scores were less than 50% of 26 marks, excluding P5's, although Bachman (1990) points out the effect of the language and the test methods on test results. The best results are obtained when the learner is able to read in his mother tongue and respond in his mother tongue. This increases the chances of the learner building a suitable mental representation and not being hindered by proficiency deficits (Gordon & Hanauer, 1995). With this in mind, their results affirmed that I needed to pay attention to their construction of text-based representations in the intervention phase.

As can be seen from the data above, the results for the anaphora questions were also low, excluding P4's score. I considered any score below six as low because anaphoric inferences are vital for comprehension and grasping them is a skill that is usually acquired in Foundation Phase education. The anaphora scores served as a 'red flag' of sorts, and I wondered about the learners' English proficiency levels. Overall, I could therefore see that the learners would benefit from metacognitive instruction based on the test results. Their answers to the comprehension questions revealed large gaps in their understanding of the text. The learners reported that the test had been difficult but did not state what specifically they found challenging in their dialogue journal entries. Therefore, I suspected that although they used strategies to repair their reading comprehension, they were not able to regulate or control their mental processes. This was implied by the learners who ceased reading if their repair strategies did not work: "*I just ask someone about the words mean and if he or she don't understand I just live [leave] it because I don't understand*" (P2) or "*Sometimes if there's something that I don't understand I don't bother I just leave it*" (P7). These comments were obtained in the informal questionnaire discussed in Section 5.2.1.3 below. Subsequent to the first round of testing, I asked the learners to reflect on the comprehension test and give me some feedback in their dialogue journals. Of the few learners who did respond, all of them said that the text had been difficult. In P6's words, "*That test we was writing, it was a smallest little bit of difficult*" (P6/RC/Und/DJ). P1 and P4 simply stated that it was difficult and that they had struggled to understand the questions.

5.2.1.3. MARSII in April – Data Source 3

The Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSII) was administered to complement the results of the reading comprehension test. I wanted to gain insight into the learners' metacognitive habits and MARSII provided me with a means of doing so. The learners' scores were generally high across all three strategy categories. Many learners circled '5' (the highest value) when rating their metacognitive awareness and use of metacognitive reading strategies, resulting in problem-solving strategies having the highest group mean score. Problem-solving strategies are usually made use of, but not exclusively, by skilled readers so this result was

unexpected. The overall group mean of 65% was also unexpected. It is likely that this was a result of Dunning-Kruger effects and/or the social desirability bias.

The questions were rated according to the method set out by Mohktari and Reichard (2002), that is, the mean was calculated for each strategy category and then rated. Scores equal to and above 3.5 were considered high (yellow). Scores between 3.4 and 2.5 were considered fair (orange). Scores equal and less than 2.4 were considered low (red). The results are summarised in Table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3: The MARSİ Results from April 2013

Strategy types	Global strategies	Rating	Problem-solving strategies	Rating	Support strategies	Rating	Overall strategy score
Total	65		40		45		150
P1	30	2.3	23	2.9	34	3.8	87
P2	34	2.6	34	4.3	29	3.2	97
P3	38	2.9	33	4.1	38	4.2	109
P4	43	3.3	25	3.1	23	2.6	91
P5	36	2.8	31	3.9	32	3.6	99
P6	36	2.8	28	3.5	29	3.2	93
P7	38	2.9	28	3.5	36	4	102
P8	45	3.5	27	3.4	29	3.2	101
Mean	37.50	2.9	28.63	3.6	31.25	3.5	97.4

The initial results of the MARSİ in April revealed that the learners relied heavily on problem-solving strategies. By comparing the MARSİ findings to the results from the reading comprehension test, it was not clear whether, or to what extent, the learners were metacognitively aware. I would argue, according to Balcikanli's (2011) definition, that the learners were not metacognitively aware even though they claimed to make use of metacognitive reading strategies. Balcikanli (2011, p. 1316) defines metacognitive awareness as "being aware of one's own knowledge, processes, cognitive and affective states as well as of [the] regulation of those states". He emphasises that metacognitive awareness is crucial to learning and especially to language acquisition. The learners first needed to be aware of their cognition before they could implement strategies to improve it (Lin, 2001). On closer inspection, the learners obtained scores that were over half for each strategy group. The fact that the skilled readers, P4 and P5, obtained higher scores across the strategy categories is to be believed, but, surprisingly, the poor and less skilled readers also rated themselves highly across the categories. As mentioned before, it appears as though there were Dunning-Kruger effects at play here as the weaker learners' (P2, P3, P7 and P8) performance assessment is inaccurate and overconfident. However, P1 appears to have had a more accurate understanding of her low mastery levels. Similarly, P4 and P5, who had high levels of mastery, rated themselves lower in the use of each strategy category.

Furthermore, the global strategy scores seemed to reflect frequent use, but when I compared each learner's scores to the reading comprehension test scores, they did not correlate well. I would argue that the learners were not only unaware of their mental processes but that they also 'did not know that they did not know'. Thus, my goal was to guide them at the end of the intervention to the point where they were metacognitively aware of their knowledge and to equip them with the skills to address their 'unknowing'.

5.2.1.4. Informal questionnaire – Data source 4

The learners' answers to the informal questionnaire were discussed in Section 4.4.5.2 and will not be repeated in this chapter even though they formed part of this data process.

5.2.2. Process

The presentation of these results is meant to provide an idea of the intervention trajectory. This data process details the action phase in the action research cycle. On account of the emergent nature of action research, the activities for metacognitive instruction were born out of reflecting on the problem demarcation phase, my observations from the contact sessions, and the learners' needs. I therefore worked reflectively and emergently. This is in accordance with the interactionist approach to reading. Teachers who follow this approach do not want reading to appear as a fragmented process (Gunning, 2008). Therefore, the types of skills that are taught by interactionist teachers are in response to the learners' needs. The skills are then used during reading and writing in relation to real-life situations, as discussed in Section 3.2.1.

In this data process, two data sources were used to record my work with the learners. The first was my reflective journal, which was the primary data source, and the second was the learners' dialogue journals that I used to track their experiences of the research process. In the sections below, I have included a brief summary of what types of metacognitive instruction were used during the intervention in the titles of the subsections reflecting the metacognitive strategies depicted in Figure 5.6 in Section 5.2.2.3. This has been done so that the reader is aware of how the data processes, data sources, metacognitive strategies and skills all relate to one another.

5.2.2.1. Strengthening English reading skills: Activating background knowledge and analysing text structure

During the intervention's chronological progression, I made use of different resources to teach different skills. The interactionist approach was the best choice for me as teacher because the learners needed both technical instruction about language (offered by the bottom-up approach) and an emphasis on meaning and global thinking (the top-down approach). The interactionist approach worked well with the learners. They received the necessary support on a technical level and came to understand language on a holistic level, in terms of its purpose, its functions, and its uses within culture and history.

I decided that commencing with the basics would help me ascertain the learners' real linguistic capabilities, their levels of English reading comprehension and would put all of them on an equal footing. I also made every effort to continually build and maintain a sense that we, as a group, were a community of learners. They taught me about their culture and language, and I taught them about English reading comprehension. My first step was to highlight some significant differences between English and isiXhosa. I had noticed poor sentence construction and missing words in their test scripts. There were indications that they were transferring first language knowledge to their second language writing, but because the languages differed greatly, their lack of knowledge about these differences actually hindered their comprehension levels. One such difference was the use of pronouns. In isiXhosa "u" denotes both male and female. For example, *uyahamba* can be translated as "he is going" or "she is going". The correct meaning is inferred by the context. If one adds a question mark after *uyahamba* (*uyahamba?*), the word means "Are you going?" Again, the meaning is inferred by the context of the speaker. This is the case for most other isiXhosa pronouns as well. As an agglutinating language, isiXhosa differs considerably from English in this regard. When speaking and writing in English, the learners used "he" and "she" interchangeably for both genders. Not only was this confusing for me as the listener, but it also had a marked effect on their reading comprehension. That is, the pronouns that English speakers use to make anaphoric inferences had little meaning to these learners. Thus, they seldom made intersentential links in English. Without these links, it becomes nigh impossible to construct a mental representation of the text. Therefore, I decided that a mother-tongue explanation of this difference would be best and asked the translator to help me explain the critical elements of such a lesson in isiXhosa. We wrote the following explanation together:

NgesiXhosa amagama amaninzi ayadibana ukubumba igama elilodwa. Njalo igama elibanzi lilamagama amaninzi amancinci. Kodwa ngesiNgesi igama linye ngalinye lima lodwa ngoba igama ngegama libalulekile. Awungeke ulishiye igama ngaphandle ngoba uba uke walishiya iziyakalisi zakho zizohluka.

[In isiXhosa, many words combine to produce a single word or sentence. In this way, a Xhosa word has many little words in it. But in English, each word stands on its own. You can't leave a word out because if you do, it will change the meaning of the sentence.]

In essence, I was trying to explain that English pronouns are placed as words on their own in an English sentence and perform very important functions. In isiXhosa, pronouns are assimilated as prefixes and suffixes into a longer word that is usually equivalent to an English sentence. Because of this, the learners often left out pronouns, articles, or determiners when writing in English as they were not accustomed to adding them as separate words. Fortunately, they understood this explanation and were grateful for the mother-tongue instruction (Refer to Addendum V "Thanks").

As a result of their low scores in both the reading comprehension test and the MARSII, I worked systematically through the letter-sound relationships in the English alphabet (see Addendum K). I did this in order to highlight pronunciation differences of the five vowels and consonants such as

“q”, “c”, “g”, “x” in English compared with the click sounds in isiXhosa. The learners named the letters with ease but could not tell me what sound was associated with them when spoken. The learners were also unable to read English words at times because they pronounced each phoneme using isiXhosa letter-sound relationships; that is, when the sounds of an English word were co-articulated with isiXhosa sounds, the resultant word was unrecognisable as part of the English language. For example, the word “murderers” was pronounced “moo-dahs”. In addition, they did not seem able to blend sounds to produce simple words like ‘cat’ or ‘assist’ because they were uncertain of corresponding letter-sound relationships.

I addressed this problem with a game of SNAP. Each learner was paired with another of similar academic capability and both were given a set of alphabetic letters. They put all the letters face down on a desk and took turns finding matching letters. For example, P3 turned two letters over, a “G” and a “Y”. The letters were not the same so she returned them to the central pool. In that time, P5 had memorised where she had placed each one and so could make a pair if he flipped a “G” or “Y” over during his turn. Through their guesses, each learner built a mental image of where matching pairs were placed. See Figure 5.3 below.

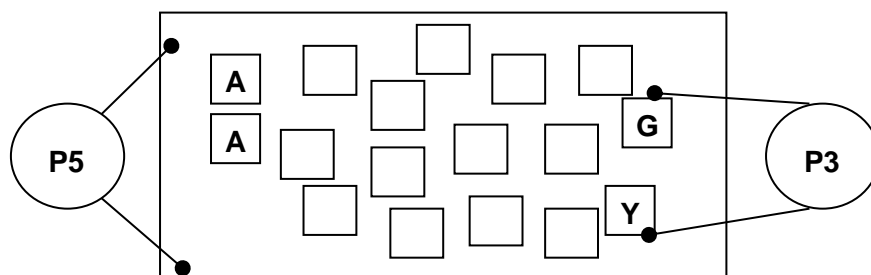


Figure 5.3: A game of SNAP.

Once a learner picked up a matching pair (e.g., an “A” and an “A”), he had to say the name of and sound the letter to his partner before he could keep the pair. The learner who collected the most letter pairs, and correctly enunciated the letter sounds, won the game. The learners loved it! I then decided to consolidate this foundational knowledge by exploring their decoding and co-articulation of English words. The learners found co-articulation particularly difficult. After making this discovery, I went on to work on syllabic awareness and found that the learners had difficulty breaking words up into syllables and isolating phonemes. For example, P4 had particular trouble isolating the “q” from ‘queen’. We practiced these skills through simple revision exercises at the beginning of each contact session throughout the second school term and I observed that they improved with practice. The learners and I also started a vocabulary list to record new words and their meanings (see Addendum S).

Researcher’s reflections

Their writing capacity does not match their oral fluency and so it is difficult to get an accurate picture of their reading comprehension. I will have to get a translator’s help soon but I must stop

assuming that the learners will just 'get it'. They don't get it and they do a lot of guessing. P3 asked me in today's contact session what *anxiety* meant and if she asked that, then I'm sure that the others didn't know many of the words in the text either. Their vocabularies need a lot of work and I know now that they work best in groups. I find it encouraging that they keep telling me how important the lessons are! However, when we learn together it almost seems as though they are just going through the motions, as if a veil comes down and they go into 'school mode'. I must make this process fun and show them how relevant reading is! (RC/Obs/RJ)

5.2.2.2. Reading for meaning: Questioning and creating mental models

Once I had strengthened the learners' basic linguistic skills, I focused on *reading for meaning* and *reading to learn*. In the FET phase, learners are expected to use reading as a tool for learning. After a few verbal exchanges, I found that most of the learners could read fluently in English but they often did not attach any meaning to the words they read. It seemed as though reading was an oral exercise to them. I decided that I needed to emphasise the role of reading in an adult's daily life. I therefore chose *reading for meaning* as the intervention theme and set about exposing the learners to as many different text types as possible. I wanted to help them discover that most authors are trying to convey thoughts and ideas through their writing. Consequently, we spent a lot of time discussing why people chose to write books, newspaper articles, and anti-apartheid struggle songs. Former president Nelson Mandela's book *A Long Walk to Freedom* was a frequent example in these discussions. Subsequently, I decided on three types of text: a story, a recipe, and a modified puzzle. I used these to emphasise that reading is about making meaning.

First, using the recipe, the learners baked their own chocolate muffins (see Addendum L). Each learner was given a responsibility; for example, P2 had to crack and add the eggs, P4 read the recipe to the others, P5 was responsible for mixing the ingredients together, and P8 had to pour the mixture into the muffin pan before baking. The learners had to rely on their reading comprehension (and make meaning) to produce an edible product, and fortunately, the final product was delicious.

Second, the learners wrote their own fictional stories. This gave them the opportunity to become more aware of their linguistic knowledge while thinking at a slower pace (Williams, 2012). I structured the story writing as group work so that they also had the opportunity to identify gaps in their reasoning processes, while composing the story together, and could work towards ensuring a coherent mental model of their own stories with one another's help. The boys worked together (as a mixed ability group) and the girls were also divided up into mixed ability groups. I have recorded the stories below:

Group 1's story: The suit

There was a couple who lived in Sophiatown. This couple was married for eleven years. Philemon was a lovely man who would wake up in the morning. He will do

breakfast in bed for his wife and offer to wash the dishes. Matilda would say no to him. Then Philemon would go to work.

Matilda only washed the dishes and then call another man that is having an affair. Then Philemon heard romours about his wife having an affair with another man. He decided to go and see for himself, who he was on his way home. He got in his house and he saw a man jumping out of his window and the man's suit over his wardrobe. He didn't beat his wife and he didn't become angry.

Group 2's story: Hurts of love

There's a girl called Sisipho live with her stepfather called Mapikiso. Her stepfather tells that she is not beautiful so she never get a boyfriend because she is ugly. When she was 18 years, she got a boyfriend called Zuko. Then six years later Zuko and Sisipho were ready got a child. Sisipho found out that Zuko cheating on her, so she decide to kill her self.

Group 3's story: The three girls

There were three girls who were going to fetch water on the river. On the way they saw a man coming in front of them and there were afraid. They did not know the man and man asked one of them to show him the way to the shop. One of the girls show him the way in the way to the shop. He went to shop with Sasa. She didn't come back because she was raped by that man.

The groups then exchanged stories and analysed the texts, as shown in Figure 5.4 below:

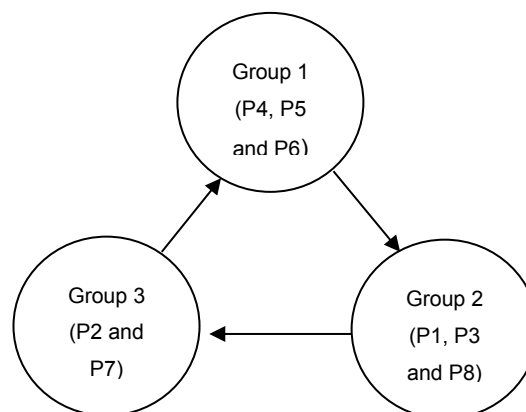


Figure 5.4: The exchange of stories between groups

I was amused by the learners' exclamations of surprise at their poor sentence structure, missing words, and lack of coherence. A classroom discussion followed in which a spokesperson from each group was nominated and had to describe the story's plot, the main ideas, and the authors' intended meaning to the class. A strong cultural influence was evident in the content of the stories. Adultery, rape, and infidelity in relationships are common occurrences in the learners' surroundings. Even though the stories were not actual experiences, I felt that they highlighted issues that needed to be addressed. As a result, we explored the story topics together as a group and I had to remind myself that these sensitive topics were viewed differently in Xhosa culture, when compared to my own. For example, beating an adulterous female spouse is considered acceptable in many Xhosa households and washing dishes is traditionally considered women's

work. Thus, the character of Philemon in the boys' story was perhaps a role model for the boys, and I so praised his (Philemon's) kindness towards his wife and his mature handling of a conflict situation.

Group 2's situation was more complex. Their story hinted at the cultural view of sexual partners as a status enhancer among Xhosa youth, recorded by Bray et al. (2010) – refer to Section 1.6.5.2. In a study by Wood and Jewkes (2001) conducted in the Eastern Cape, young men and women reported that they engaged in sexual relations as a means of gaining peer respect and social status where there was an absence of employment and recreational opportunities. The study's discussion also touched on the often obvious discrepancies between acceptable behaviour for the different genders (Wood & Jewkes, 1997; 2001). I therefore thought it unwise to venture into the dangerous waters of cultural norms that I was unaccustomed to. I thus treaded carefully and decided that Sisipho's self-image and suicide were safer topics to address (see Group 2's story). Lastly, the discussion of Group 3's story revolved around personal safety and alternative ways to assist strangers without endangering oneself. The female learners did not appear alarmed by or uncomfortable with the topic of rape. They seemed almost resigned to it. In all, this was a challenging task for us all, but it helped them practice their mental model construction and English writing. The lesson was yet another reminder to me that people may inhabit the same surroundings but they operate in different mental spaces with different rules.

Researcher's reflections

They enjoyed reading each other's stories. There were exclamations of surprise and delight at the missing words, incomplete or nonsensical sentences and the lack of a plot. I was called over by P1 and she said, "This doesn't make sense! This sentence doesn't make sense!" "I know", I replied, "keep reading." "But it doesn't make sense. It doesn't mean anything!" I gave her a big smile. It was as though they could suddenly see their writing in a new light. Some real learning was taking place (RC/Obs/RJ).

My discussion with the boys about their story left me taken aback. I asked them why Philemon had not beaten his wife and P5 told me that it was because of the suit. Not understanding his reply, I asked, "But what about the suit?" P5 told me that Philemon punished Matilda by making her carry the suit around with her for the rest of her days. It appeared to me that instead of beating her, Philemon had used public shaming as a suitable consequence for her behaviour. In terms of reading comprehension, I pondered why they had left this key part of the story out: Was it because they had had enough of writing? Did they not have the necessary vocabulary? Or was their writing style simply implicit? What did this imply about their mental model construction? I am yet to find answers.

I later found that the famous short story of *The Suit*, written by Can Themba, was well-known amongst the Xhosas. They would automatically have understood the reference but I, coming from

a different cultural background, was unfamiliar with this shared knowledge. In comparison, it would be similar to an English person indirectly referencing the story of Snow White or Cinderella in conversation with others from the same cultural background.

The learners reported that this activity had been valuable because it forced them to reflect on their own writing and the meanings that they tried to convey in their exams, tests, and assignments. I acknowledge that language proficiency was a large component of this task. For the most part, I wanted the learners to realise that in every piece of writing, an author is trying to *communicate* with his reader. I also repeatedly emphasised this point for their dialogue journal writing. I encouraged them to consider what they were trying to communicate to me as the reader of their journals. In addition, I used these stories to teach summarisation, which proved successful.

For the third project, I handed out three different puzzles, one for each group. Each puzzle consisted of a background picture with the instructions for the afternoon's session superimposed on it. The paper was cut up into eight different pieces. The learners seemed stumped and spent considerable time rotating pieces so that the picture and sentences aligned. To my surprise, the boys did not even seem to notice that their puzzle piece alignment produced nonsensical sentences. This was perplexing because P4 and P5 were in that group, both intelligent young men with an eye for detail and with 'perfectionist' tendencies. I did a lot of mediating during the puzzle lesson and discovered that the learners improved as their learning was supported and mediated.

5.2.2.3. Continuous progress: Metacognitive strategies

Based on the learners' journal entries and my own observations, I hired a translator to help me communicate with the learners in the third school term. Lungisani had been invited to speak to them as a guest speaker in week 9. The learners had responded well to him, so I was delighted when he agreed to help me. I wanted to ensure that the learners were learning optimally and could internalise the metacognitive instruction that I had planned for later. I was encouraged by the many skills that they seemed to have acquired thus far and wanted to ensure that they acquired the metacognitive knowledge and skills effectively. After I had chosen two texts that were appropriate, both for their cognitive demand and linguistic complexity, the metacognitive instruction commenced. The first text was about Mxit, a free mobile messaging application. Mxit had partnered with an add-on counselling service from LoveLife to provide adolescents with free real-time counselling through instant messaging (see Addendum P). I used this text to teach the learners the metacognitive reading strategy, KWL. The strategy consists of three questions. It is usually set out as follows:

Table 5.4: The KWL Strategy

<u>K</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>
What do I know?	What do I want to know?	What have I learnt?
Fill this block in <u>before</u> reading the text	Fill this block in once you have <u>skimmed</u> the text	Fill this block in <u>after</u> reading the text

The group worked systematically through the use of the KWL method. I told them how and when to use the strategy. The first question “What do I know?” acts as a cue for the activation of the reader’s prior knowledge. This is considered a pre-reading strategy (Dreyer, 2011). The second question involves skimming, prediction, and question generation and touches on personal motivation. The last question involves reflection, evaluation, analysis, and synthesis. The strategy encompasses many higher mental functions and was therefore a good choice as a metacognitive strategy.

Metacognitive knowledge instruction at schools has previously focused on two knowledge types: 1) knowledge in a specific domain, and 2) knowledge about self-as-learner (Lin, 2001). Lin (2001) proposes that teachers create social environments that encourage metacognitive thinking and integrate metacognitive strategy instruction into everyday situations; that is, teachers should instruct for both knowledge types. I therefore worked on teaching both knowledge types simultaneously. Both knowledge types were brought into knowledge co-construction as a social activity. Firstly, I desired that the knowledge about self-as-learner would strengthen the sense of community among the research participants, the translator and me. I also hoped that this knowledge type would produce metacognitive awareness in the learners about themselves as people, their emotions, and their thoughts. Secondly, I hoped that the metacognitive strategy instruction would be deeply entrenched in their minds through discussion and that the constant interpsychological exposure would result in individual internalisation of the strategies. Given the sense of togetherness, physical, spiritual, and mental, among the *amaXhosa*, I knew that the best way to teach something was to put it in the *group’s* mental domain.

After teaching KWL, I then began working on their mental representations of the text. I explained what they were, how to create one while reading, and how to adjust it while addressing new or conflicting information. They had struggled to make a mental model of the Mxit text and so I decided that we would return to that text at a later stage. The second text was about an African-American slave named Harriet Tubman who had worked as a spy in North America’s civil war. She had been instrumental in ensuring the freedom of many slaves (see Addendum Q). Using their knowledge about generating situational models, the learners produced questions that revealed their monitoring and evaluation of their story comprehension was improving. P6 (P6/Evi/Q/Cnxt) asked, “*How does the slaves whe [were] treaten [treated]?*” and “*How does Harriet Tubman help slaves to escaped to freedom in the North?*” as questions that he wanted answered. P1 wanted to

know how the slaves came to be slaves, while P4 and P5 asked metanarrative contextual questions before analysing the text, such as “*How did it end? How did she get all the information? Why did those people treated them like that?*” (P5/Evi/Q/Conf) or “*What I want to know is what did the slave owners do after their buildings were bombed?*” (P4/Evi/Q/Conf).

The learners gave me positive feedback about what they were learning and were outspoken and began responding frequently and easily during sessions (RC/Obs/RJ). P8 wrote, “*It was a wonderful and amazing lesson about pointing words*” (P8/Emo/DJ). The others added detail about what they had enjoyed:

I get lots of knowledge. I feel so happy because I can see that my English is improve it. This project is good for me to improve my English. I like to attend your class because I get lot of knowledge to you and also a lot of skills about English (P6/RC/KL/DJ).

I think that the game we were playing [‘spy game’ with Harriet Tubman text] on Tuesday was perfect because it was make me think and I like that (P1/Emo/DJ). I don’t mind difficult things because I learn more (P1/Res/Deter/Mot/DJ).

On this day we were writting English Paper 3. The paper consisted of 1 essay, 1 diary and a friendly letter. The lessons that I had from Ro[s]anne really helped me (P4/Trans/Know/DJ)

Also English I was study hard to improve it. I want to learn English so that they can to easy for me and keep myself busy in learning at school so that I cannot be affected by things of happen in my community (P6/Res/Deter/Mot/DJ).

I used a word search as a revision exercise for all the words we had added to our word list thus far (see Addendum S). During my reflective times, I deduced that if I could work on their mental models, I could address pointing words and conflicting information and teach them how to build situational models as a transferable skill for use in other subjects. It also gave me the opportunity to help them practice the KWL method, which expanded their repertoires of metacognitive reading strategies (RC/Plan/RJ). Before returning to the Mxit text to tackle the concept of a graphic organiser as a mental model, I felt that explicit, direct instruction was necessary to give the learners a step-by-step method of *how* to comprehend. I planned such a lesson with the goal of transfer in mind. I wanted to equip the learners with knowledge of reading that would transcend the intervention.

Consequently, I used the metaphor of eating to explain comprehension to the learners. I called the lesson “Chew and Swallow”. Previously, when the learners read to themselves, they would move through the text regardless of whether they had understood the preceding sentences or paragraphs. Such a practice was detrimental to the construction of a mental model and it needed to be addressed. Thus, I bought a packet of Marie biscuits and executed the following lesson. P1 volunteered as the lesson example for the group activity. The learners placed the Mxit text in front of themselves on the tables. I instructed them to read the first sentence and tell me what it meant. They explained the sentence successfully and I gave P1 a biscuit to eat. Each biscuit represented

a sentence. I told the learners that reading is like chewing and understanding what the sentence means is like swallowing. I stressed that they needed to *chew and swallow*. To illustrate this point explicitly, I asked them to read a linguistically complex paragraph in the same text. Once they were finished reading, I asked them to explain it to the translator and me, which they could not do. P1 then pushed six biscuits into her mouth and began to laugh. She could not speak or swallow. The biscuits in P1's mouth represented the paragraph that they had read. Each sentence remained undigested because it had not been swallowed (understood) and I explained that their minds would therefore "spit" the text out again because it (the text) would seem meaningless and irrelevant. The learners loved this display! Many of the learners recorded their new understanding of what it meant to comprehend, in their dialogue journals. I felt excited about their progress, and once the translator became part of our "community", the learners exceeded all my expectations.

Researcher's reflection

The extroverted learners are interrupting me now during instruction and saying that they are confused or don't understand.... The learners' sentence structure is improving and they asked some very good questions.... They are becoming better and better with their reasoning and were able to understand inference questions in the lesson today. They answered quickly and thought hard about the questions. They were able to reason their way to many of the answers through mediation and scaffolding (RC/RC/RJ).

Towards the end of the intervention, I noted that the learners interrupted me to voice their sense of confusion or clarify aspects that they did not understand. This seemed to indicate that they were more metacognitively aware and had begun to monitor their understanding while reading. The Harriet Tubman text proved to be the most effective tool for teaching metacognitive awareness, mental model construction, and the use of metacognitive reading strategies. During that lesson, P6 turned to me and told me that he was 'lost'. The translator stepped in and made use of code-switching. I had been worried about P6 throughout the intervention because of his poor English language proficiency. Knowing that he was monitoring his comprehension and that he felt safe enough to say that he needed help encouraged me. After the translator had worked through the lesson's principles with him in isiXhosa, P6 turned, smiled at me and said, "*Rose, I understand now*" (RC/MCA/RJ). This was the best illustration of increased metacognitive awareness for me.

The abovementioned examples do not satisfy all the conditions in Balcikanli's (2011) definition but they do point to an increase in metacognitive awareness, however small it may have been. I therefore tentatively suggest that learners can increase their levels of metacognitive awareness through metacognitive instruction. The following excerpts from the dialogue journals show gains in metacognitive awareness in three areas mentioned in Balcikanli's (2011) definition. The first is knowledge: "*I didn't know how to point a words but now I know how to it was really, really helpful*" (P8/RC/KL/DJ) or "*And now I know how to create mind map in words*" (P1/PS/DJ) or "*Without this programme I wouldn't be able to do so well. I guess it's true when they say practice makes perfect*"

(P4/MCA/DJ). The second was cognitive states: *“When I do my homeworks I found that there are many words that I don’t understand when I read”* (P6/MCA/DJ). Here, the learner was aware that he did not understand because he was monitoring his comprehension; that is, he was aware of his comprehension. The third area was affective states, *“That lesson was very easy but I was sick of head ache but I hope next week I will be okay so that I can listen very well”* (P7/MCA/DJ). This learner was aware that she had not listened because of her overwhelming physical condition and resultant affective state.

The learners wrote about their new skills in their dialogue journals. P4 wrote, *“My sentence construction was really good. The programme improved my writing very well and my spelling was really good”* (P4/PS/DJ), and P8 commented, *“I didn’t know how to point a words but now I know how to, it [the lesson] was really, really helpful”* (P8/RC/KL/DJ). P6 showed that his motivation for learning was stronger: *“I not a loss. I didn’t give up because I want to know what happens in the story”* (P6/Res/Deter/Mot/DJ). All the learners cited mind maps as an important new strategy in their repertoires; in P6’s words, *“I learn how to do mind map so now I have easily way to write and understand”* (P6/PS/DJ)

Throughout this study, language in conversation was used as a tool to mediate the learners’ learning. Vygotsky proposed that tools such as language are prominent in the mediation process (Kozulin, 2003). I therefore made use of mediation in the contact sessions while modelling and prompting to scaffold their learning and encourage active learning. Mediation is a method of ensuring that a child gleans more from the learning experience through social interaction than what would have been possible through direct learning (Kozulin, 2002). Mediation was used as an approach to learning because Vygotsky believed that higher cognitive processes can be mediated through tools (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). The translator and I thus tried to mediate the learners’ higher mental processes through language. Narvaez (2002) observes that a reader’s culture influences the inferences that he makes subconsciously as the cultural assumptions that he brings to the text can be vastly different from those of the author in terms of moral judgments, idioms, and general knowledge. Narvaez suggests that this obstacle to instruction can be overcome by *scaffolding*, which is another form of mediation. In the intervention, the readers’ culture clearly influenced the inferences that they drew while reading and so mediation and scaffolding were both necessary in each contact session.

The last step in the intervention was to teach the learners how to create a mind map. I had used mind maps as one of a variety of representations of their mental models for previous texts and knew that the learners would find them useful as a transferrable skill into content subjects such as Life Sciences. I justified my decision with the knowledge that as newly metacognitive learners just beginning to regularly build mental models, they needed a structured method to help construct their models from content-rich, linguistically complex expository texts. Throughout the intervention, Life Sciences had been mentioned as the “problem subject”. Upon reviewing their June reports, I found

that their marks for this subject ranged between 20% and 46%. I noted that their marks for content subjects seemed to fluctuate depending on their English marks. Considering the implications of CALP, as described in Section 3.2.2.1, this was to be expected. In order for transfer to take place, the learners needed to understand the “bones” of a mind map so that they could transfer the principles of mind mapping to other contexts (Malan, 2011). Known as *high transfer*, mind mapping in content subjects would need the conscious application of abstract knowledge or strategies to a new situation. This type of transfer does not happen automatically but needs to be taught (Malan, 2011). I first taught the learners the principles of mind mapping using Figure 5.5 below:

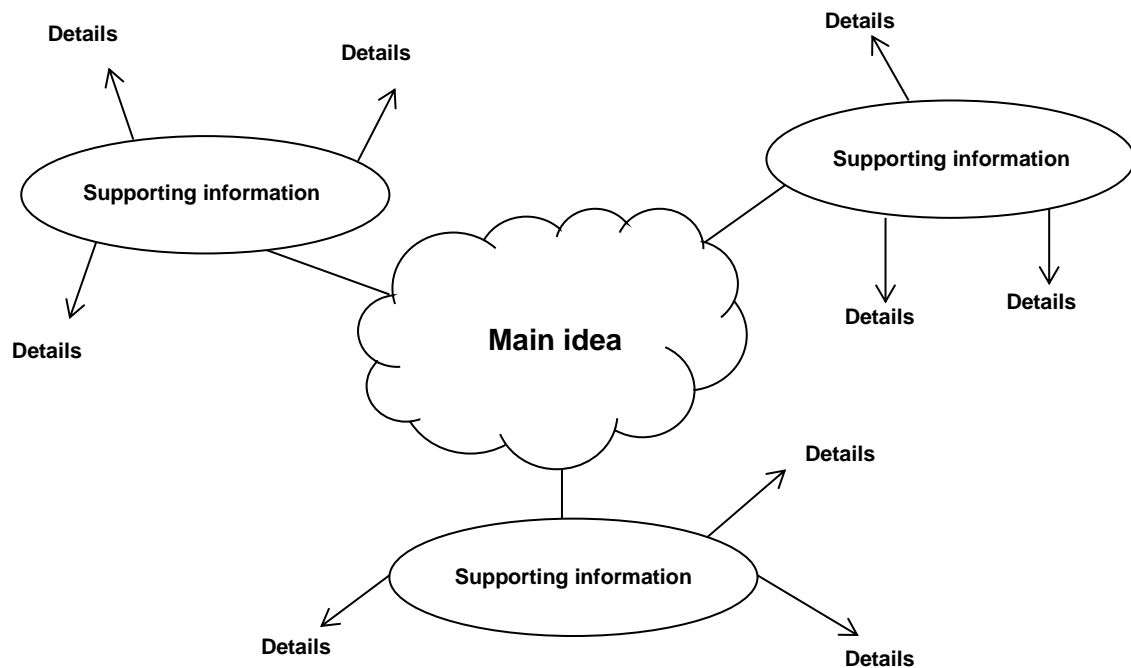


Figure 5.5: The basic structure of a mind map

I was wary of trying to make a mind map of the Mxit text. I decided to use soccer as a theme, a sport that they were all passionate about, instead. They enjoyed using their prior knowledge about soccer to create a mind map. The learners were generally physically affectionate with one another and enjoy being in and having others in their personal spaces. I integrated this tendency and their visual learning styles into a group activity. I asked Lungisani to act as the ‘main idea’ and then asked P1, P6, and P8 to be the ‘supporting information’ and P3, P4, P5 and P7 to be the ‘details’. This exercise worked well. Lungisani told me after the lesson that he believed if I had not made use of the group exercise, the learners would not have grasped mind mapping. I was grateful for his opinion. Once they had mastered making mind maps cognitively, I decided to use mind maps as a way of teaching them multiple global and problem-solving strategies that they could make use of while reading. I took the MARS1 and grouped the strategy statements into their respective categories. I then drew three mind maps, one for each strategy category. I combined similar strategies to reduce numbers, trying to keep the mind maps simple with little visual clutter. I

grouped the strategies under different headings that would convey the purpose of each map. The first was about previewing the text. The second concerned unfamiliar words (vocabulary) and the third was about mental models (see Addendum R).

We worked systematically through each strategy mentioned on each mind map. The learners knew how, when, and why to apply each one. I then bought supplies for large summary charts. The learners collated all their notes describing the different things we had learnt together. In the last week of the intervention, each learner created a summary chart of the different skills and strategies that we had learnt together (see Addendum R). It was organised around Dymock and Nicholson's (2010) *Strategies to Enhance Comprehension of Expository Text*. The strategy was based on a hand symbol and each finger represented a different metacognitive reading strategy. Fortunately, I had already explained all the strategies during the contact sessions when I came across the article. I used Dymock and Nicholson's idea as the foundation of the summary chart. Each learner received an A2 sheet of paper. They then traced an image of their left hands onto the sheets as the centre point of a mind map. Each finger represented a different strategy. Each strategy was then elaborated on with additional notes and figures from the contact sessions. These strategies suitably summarised the work that I had done with the learners and I was delighted to find such a simple method for remembering the strategies (see Addendum R). The central hand symbol is depicted in Figure 5.6 below:

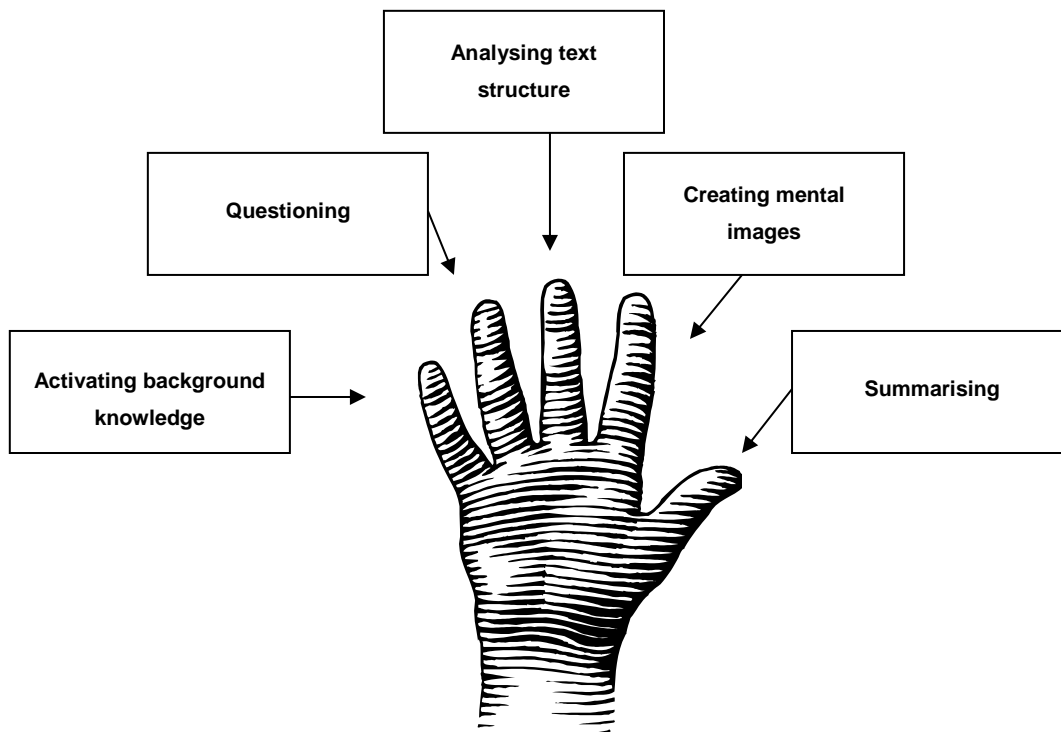


Figure 5.6: Dymock and Nicholson's "HI5" strategies.

Unfortunately, the charts seemed of little use during the reading comprehension test in August as many of the learners had forgotten their charts at home or seemed overwhelmed by the amount of

information available to them on the charts. This happened despite my systematic and explicit instruction. I found that they still preferred asking one another, Lungisani, or me. But as former president Nelson Mandela said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, *that* goes to his heart." (CNN, 26 June 2008).

5.2.3. Outcomes

The outcomes phase was used to determine the success of the intervention and therefore of the research project. It was accompanied by much reflection. The reflection was captured to some extent in the learners' dialogue journals, but the bulk of the reflection phase data emerged from the focus group interview and my reflective journal. I will present these findings after the results of the reading comprehension test and the MARSII. They were conducted at the end of August and beginning of September 2013, respectively. This data process thus contains five data sources: the reading comprehension test, the MARSII, the focus group interview, the dialogue journals, and my reflections. It encompasses all the data from the outcomes and reflection phases of the action research cycle.

5.2.3.1. The reading comprehension test in August – Data source 1

The reading comprehension test was administered again in August. It was used to gauge whether the learners had gained from the intervention and whether they could implement the strategies that they had learnt during the intervention. They were allowed to use reference materials such as the internet and dictionaries during the test. They were also encouraged to consult each other and discuss areas of confusion. To sum up the table below, their scores ranged from 25.5 to 36.5. The scores in all three question types had improved but the inferencing and anaphoric inference question types showed the greatest improvements, as shown in Table 5.5 below:

Table 5.5: A Comparison of the April and August Results

Learner	Total (50 marks)		Literal questions (17)		Inferencing questions (26)		Anaphoric inference questions (7)	
	April	August	April	August	April	August	April	August
P1	20	31	12	15	8	11	0	5
P2	18	25.5	9.5	10	3.5	10.5	5	5
P3	15	34	7	11	7	19	1	4
P4	22	35.5	11	14	5	16.5	6	5
P5	29	36.5	12.5	12	13.5	17.5	3	7
P6	15.5	33.5	7.5	11.5	8	17	0	5
P7	26.5	33	10	15	11.5	12	5	6
Mean	20.86	32.71	9.93	12.64	8.07	14.79	2.86	5.29

While the learners were completing this test, P5 spoke to P1. I asked P1 to translate what he (P5) had said and she replied, "*They were saying that this is not the same test that you gave us in the beginning. This test is too easy. That test was very difficult. This is not the same test*" (RC/Ski/RJ). I found this very encouraging as I could tentatively conclude that they had gained from the intervention. In comparison with the test in April, the learners' scores had improved across all three question types. While the learners completed the test, I observed that they were able to externalise all that they had learnt and acquired in the intervention. Glauberman, Glauberman and Ofir (1997) suggest that metacognitive reading allows the internalisation of the strategies, which in turn produces self-directed, regulated learners, able to transfer the strategy use to new situations (externalisation).

The inferencing and anaphora question results were markedly better. Although the anaphora results were not as high as I would have liked, the improved marks were a good start. With practice, I believed that the learners would become increasingly skilled at making intersentential links using anaphora. Importantly, the results show that the less skilled readers benefitted to a greater extent from the metacognitive instruction than the others. P2, P3, and P6's results were strikingly higher. However, P4 and P5's inferencing scores were also much better, suggesting that all learners benefitted, regardless of skill level. In P4's case, I postulate that his English language proficiency improved as his vocabulary expanded and he practiced communicating his thoughts in English, and this contributed to his unexpectedly high scores.

5.2.3.2. MARSII in September – Data source 2

Once again, the MARSII was administered in September to complement the results of the reading comprehension test in August. I wanted to gain insight into the possible changes of the learners' metacognitive habits and MARSII provided me with a means of doing so. The learners' scores were once again generally high across all three strategy categories but lower than the scores from April. The high scores were distributed more evenly across the three strategy categories. However, the results reflected higher scores for global and problem-solving strategies. It appears as though the first two strategy types were favoured over the support strategies in the second round of assessment. The questions were analysed according to the method set out by Mohktari and Reichard (2002); that is, the mean was calculated for each strategy group and then rated. Scores equal to and above 3.5 were considered high (yellow). Scores between 3.4 and 2.5 were considered fair (orange). Scores equal and less than 2.4 were considered low (red). The following table, Table 5.6, shows a comparison of the scores in April and September. The green blocks indicate an increase in the scores between the two test opportunities.

Table 5.6: A Comparison of the April and September Results

Strategy types	Global strategies		Rating	Problem-solving strategies		Rating	Support strategies		Rating	Overall Strategy score
	Month	April		September	April		September	April		September
Total	65			40			45			150
P1	30	45	3.5	23	33	4.1	34	41	4.6	119
P2	34	47	3.6	34	34	4.3	29	37	4.1	118
P3	38	32	2.5	33	12	1.5	38	17	1.9	61
P4	43	45	3.5	25	28	3.5	23	31	3.4	104
P5	36	39	3	31	30	3.8	32	29	3.2	98
P6	36	33	2.5	28	23	2.8	29	28	3.1	84
P7	38	36	2.8	28	20	2.5	36	27	3	83
Mean	36.43	39.57	3.05	28.86	25.71	3.2	31.57	30.00	3.3	95.23

In contrast to the MARSII results in April, September's results show an increased reliance on global strategies by most learners. Their scores had generally decreased across the strategy categories but were more evenly spread across the strategy types. The global strategy score was again the highest of the three. Although, it appeared as though the learners had become more skilled as readers evidenced by a higher group mean for global strategy use (Mohktari & Reichard, 2002), this result could have been caused by the learners' using global strategies to a greater extent after the intervention. This could also explain the decreased group-mean scores for the remaining two strategy categories. In addition, I suspected that the MARSII scores were lower overall for the second round of testing because learners were more aware of their mental processes and therefore their answers mirrored the reality of their strategy use more closely. Therefore, it appears as though the Dunning-Kruger effects had decreased in the second test opportunity. As an aside, P3's unexpectedly poor results for the support and problem-solving strategies were puzzling. The day of the testing, she was not in a positive frame of mind but refused to speak about what was bothering her. I assumed that her affective state coloured her response to the test questions.

As an introduction to metacognitive strategy instruction, modelling, mediation, and scaffolding the learners' knowledge formed a large part of the intervention on my part as researcher and teacher. Houtveen and Van de Grift, (2007) warn that the teacher should explain each metacognitive reading strategy in detail and should include how and when to use the strategy. Such explanations provide the learner with metacognitive information about the strategy, which is crucial as the learner's understanding relies on internalising and applying his new knowledge, skills, or ideas (Woolfolk, 2010). The transfer and subsequent application of metacognitive knowledge, skills, and strategies is only possible when the learner has internalised these things. Externalisation can then take place in the form of transfer and application in different contexts. I not only modelled these strategies but taught them explicitly and explained how and when to use them. The learners were therefore repeatedly exposed to the strategies in different ways. I did this because "learning takes

place over time” (C. van der Walt, personal communication, 16 October 2013). I specifically targeted the global and problem-solving strategies as they are the hallmarks of a skilled reader (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

In light of this, it is interesting to note the differences between P1’s and P6’s results. At the beginning of the intervention, both learners were less skilled readers, with a limited and poor English proficiency, respectively. P1’s (female) scores increased in the strategy categories, while P6’s (male) decreased. From P6’s results, I assumed that he became more reliant on support strategies while reading instead of augmenting his existing metacognitive repertoire with the skills of a good reader. In addition, P2, the weakest reader in the group, with a poor English proficiency, also increased her score quite substantially in the global strategy category. In contrast to those of P6, such increases were in keeping with the conclusions drawn by various authors in the research literature. Furthermore, both P4 and P5, who were skilled readers, had higher global strategy scores. Pretorius (2010) commented on the prevalence on the Matthew effect among South African learners. It is understood as what happens when the reading gap between skilled and unskilled readers widens with time, the good readers become increasingly skilled at reading and comprehending while the poor readers fall further and further behind and are unable to catch up. Looking at the reported scores in Table 5.6, one might feel concerned that the scores reflect the Matthew effect, but I do not think that the results of the MARSIs are evidence of the Matthew effect at work as the learners’ reading comprehension test scores were all higher and the feedback in the focus group was positive, as discussed in the next section.

Lastly, if the results of post-test MARSIs are analysed alongside the learners’ post-test reading comprehension scores, a few interesting observations can be made: three of the learners (P3, P6 and P7) are obtaining upper 60% scores for their post-test reading comprehension yet made more cautious claims about their strategy use, while the two weaker readers (P1 and P2) are making bolder claims about their strategy use (mean scores of 39.6 and 39.3 respectively). The top readers (P4 and P5), with 71% and 73% respectively, make more conservative claims about strategy use (34.5 and 32.6 respectively) than the two weakest readers. These results suggest that the better readers make more cautious, and perhaps more realistic and credible, claims about their strategy use than the weaker readers. These results seem to support arguments about Dunning-Kruger effects.

5.2.3.3. Focus group interview – Data source 3

The focus group interview was conducted as part of the reflective phase in the action research cycle. There were six learners present on the day of the interview. P7 was absent from school and P8 had already withdrawn from the study. The interview transcription is attached as Addendum U. When the transcript was analysed, the units of meaning did not have any value divorced from the context of their questions and so the first two questions have been presented together, then the following three, and the last one on its own. I have edited all the responses by removing additional

information, such as repetitions, pauses, and silences, but have left all the sentence construction, word choice, spelling, and meaning intact. The questions were as follows:

- I. How did you feel about our meetings? (Prompt—What made you attend and what made you stay away?)
- II. Would you recommend these lessons to your friends? If yes, why? If no, why?
- III. If you were teaching English reading comprehension (i.e. if you were me) to your peers, what would you do differently?
- IV. What strategies that we have learnt together have been the most helpful? How have you used them? When do you use them? (Prompt—In what ways have these lessons helped you to understand what you read?)
- V. When you read in English, which aspects do you find easier? Which aspects are still difficult?
- VI. Have any of the things that we learnt together helped you understand what you read in other classes?

In response to Question I, all the learners either replied that they felt “*good*” or “*happy*” about the meetings. They gave various reasons for this. Many claimed that they felt personally enriched or that the contact sessions provided them with a safe place to practice their new skills. P1 and P4 said that they felt happy about attending because they had learnt something and P1 added, “*I’m enjoy learning and also spending time with these lesson mates and also you, Rose.*” P1 substantiated her answer by adding that she felt that the time she spent in the contact sessions was constructive, which was why she would encourage her peers to join the lessons:

I will get them to come and spend time here than spend time in the loxion [slang for location] because here they can do something better than... to just to sit in loxion and... do... some... [shaking her head] bad things [dismissive wave of hand].

P2 agreed but added that she had appreciated the extra information that I had provided them with about their career choices. She wanted her peers to receive the same knowledge and develop the new comprehension skill set that she used as a result of the intervention. This implicit communal sense of care is common among those who interpret life through an *ubuntu* worldview. P2 displayed her understanding of respecting authority figures and her teacher-centred model of learning when she added, “*Uyazi, miss ... ba ukwazi miss ba ufunda more than thina*” [you know Miss, you Miss, read more than us]. On reflecting on this, I was not surprised that the learners’ motivation to learn was low. It seemed that because of a cultural understanding of what it meant to be respectful, the learners had forfeited a sense of ownership over their own mental processes and learning.

Similarly, P3 believed that she would also share what she had learnt because

it [referring to the lessons about English articles and determiners] helps me to know what this is based on and who it refers to and then also to summarise. Like yesterday, I was reading a short story in my History book then when I read it I understand it clearly because I make sure that I have an image in my head. So, it helps me a lot so I will like to tell other people ... it is good ... it helps with a lot of, it helps a lot to understand.

The apparent transfer of the knowledge of mental models was especially helpful to the learners in content subjects like History and Life Sciences. P5 answered in a similar way to P3 but added that he would like his friends to join the lessons because they could then discuss their new knowledge: *"I would like my friends to be like me and then when I'm at home or at the township to talk about what we learn here and decide ... what we know and all that"*. P6 was also positive in his response and mentioned his new skills,

I feel good and happy because when I am there I get lot of knowledge and I love to speak English when I'm there at class. You will give me lot of information, how to talk English and other things ... how to ... do examples, summarise and all those things.

He added that he wanted to practice using English as *"English is the most important in the country because you don't get a job without English"*. It seems his view was part of a community discourse in which the children had been told that the English language would help achieve their dreams, both financial and material.

In response to questions on their absences, the learners cited illness as the main cause of their absences. However, P3 and P4 added that homework played a role in their attendance rate too:

I feel good when you are in the meetings ... and when I not come sometimes, I'm tired ... or sometimes I have a lot of stuff like projects so it needed to be typed and so have to type, mmm. (P3)

...there were some obstacles because ja, if after school when it's time to go here, the reason why I didn't come I was sick [tapping his nose] and sometimes I have to, I have lots of work to do, I must go to the gym and a lot of homework so the time was not right so sometimes I won't come here. (P4)

Interestingly, P6 mentioned that others had influenced his attendance rate. The collective thinking, typical of Xhosa culture, seemed to have affected him more than the other learners, but overall, the learners felt positive about the contact sessions and enjoyed attending. It seemed as though I had succeeded in creating a community of learners, which was reflected in their dialogue journal entries:

"I wish this project will always there for me" (P1/Com/DJ)

"They help me to teach [learn]" (P6/Com/DJ)

"I wish she can stay with me every time." (P7/Com/DJ)

The third question required metacognitive reflection on the success of the intervention. This question was analysed in conjunction with questions IV and V in order to verify the reasons for the

study's success. From the data set, it was apparent that the learners preferred the forceful, authoritarian approach to discipline. In P1's words, as a hypothetical teacher,

I would make sure every learner came with their book [waving her index finger] if the learner didn't come with book... I will... hit... or **beat** [her emphasis]... to come with book next time. I will not be so nice every time, not every time [shaking her head].

This was followed by:

P5: *Ngubani uzozakuwe xa usibhetha?* [Who will come if you hit them?]

P1: No, you are helping yourself, you are not helping me [tapping her chest] I'm teaching you.

P5: *Hayi* [Turns to P4 and laughs incredulously]

P1: If you don't want knowledge, we cannot help you.

This suggests that P1's motivation to learn had improved—even though the improvement had not taken place in an emotional climate that she was accustomed to, that is to say, where fear was usually used as motivating factor.

Researcher's reflections

Authority/respect is taken in their culture and not given.... Authority seems to take on a violent nature in Xhosa communities: I haven't seen any form of polite rebuke in the learners' interactions. There is always a lot of anger displayed when they reprimand one another, which happens frequently and for numerous reasons. They must have this type of disciplinary approach modelled to them by the adults in their communities (RC/Auth/Power/RJ)

Interestingly, later on, in answer to Question III, P5 offered his opinion,

I was you I would check their books every time to see that the learners are improving in English and in other subjects and I will also see that the lesson is helping them in other subjects by checking their reports to see if their marks are changing.

From his response, it was difficult to discern whether he was concerned with personal progress or having an authority figure consistently monitoring his progress. On a deeper level I wondered whether he expected his motivation to come from an external source. Thus, even though he was against physical discipline, he still seemed to value a stricter approach to learning.

In this exchange, the learners' responses indirectly suggest a contradictory realisation that learning, teaching and reading can be practiced in more meaningful and empowering ways and yet they still seemed to prefer the traditional teacher-centred, transmission style of learning. The teacher explains the text, tells the learners what they should understand and know from it and the learners rely on the teacher and their memories for acquiring new knowledge. If this was an

accurate observation, it has serious implications about the development of independent readers amongst Xhosa youth.

P4 believed that he would do more reading activities to minimise the writing aspect of the intervention if he were the teacher. He clarified his answer by adding,

when you read something you can understand it more faster than when you write it because sometimes you are lazy of writing and you say maybe the passage is too long but if they read it themselves they can ... they can mos summarise it [tapping his temples] because they know what is left in their mind, so then they must read more than to write, you see?

I asked the group if they agreed and P3 said that she found spelling problematic when writing. I still did not feel as though I had understood what exactly they were communicating but then P4 continued,

Yes, and so that if you notice when you mark a book or English book, you will find a lot of spelling because why sometimes you write more and you write, you write; yes, most of the time you are writing. But when you read, and in that time you don't understand, you take the time to look at it and see how it is written so that you will not forget it. But when you teach to write all the time, sometimes the word comes now and then it slips away you write a test and then you forgot the word – why? - because you keep on writing but if you read a book sometimes it will stay longer in your memory, you see.

The learners all informed me that they found writing in English difficult. P3 elaborated saying that she experienced words to “*flash*” through her mind. She believed that one way of overcoming this problem was by providing lots of examples through explanation. She believed that through oral explanations and examples, it would be easier for her to remember the English “*spellings*”. From this data, I deduced that the learners were referring to a lack of vocabulary as problematic. They suggested that if I had added more reading activities to the intervention, they would have been able to expand their vocabularies. I asked P4 what methods he would use to monitor the learners’ reading comprehension if he was the teacher. He replied that he would use a class discussion as a way of ensuring that they understood. He would first discuss a text by asking them questions before distributing a reading comprehension. It appeared as though he found discussions helpful because they direct his attention to information that he needs to retain. I needed to make sure that I had understood correctly, and as a result, the following exchange ensued:

R: Okay, the one [point] I want to ask you about, I'm interested that you said is you said that once... once they were finished reading [in P4's hypothetical lesson] we [everyone in the class] must talk about it [the text that they had all read]?

All: Yes!

R: So do you remember things more if we talk, if you've read something and then we talk about them? Are you saying that you remember it better if we talk about it afterwards?

P4: Yes.

- R: That's very interesting and why?
- P2: When you talk about something m'am ne, you maybe get more information like [scratches head] like ... ah ... yesterday ... la la lacase study ka Hardman 'yabon'... bana masbesi ubus'funde ubus'fundele ne endetyo naselesfundela xa esiz'bonayo epicture 'yabon'?
- R: [L], can you translate for me? Thanks [P2]!
- L: She said you read to them and then they read it themselves and then they saw that picture of um ...
- R: Harriet? The one where she was all hunched up like this? [demonstrates] And what about the picture?
- P2: [These following sentences were so fragmented in the audio recording that I have put the translator's version of her answer below instead]
- L: When they read for themselves they could not see the head picture [mental representation] that you, Rose, saw but when they saw the photo, they understood.

I was uncertain about the accuracy or complexity of the mental representations that they built when they read individually but it was as though they had used figures to help further their understanding of texts, such as the photograph of Harriet Tubman that accompanied the article (see Addendum Q). The learners told me that when they spoke about something, they helped each other understand, like creating a communal pool of knowledge that they were all free to draw from.

Because they had emphasised the importance of discussion in their understanding previously, I wanted to know whether they thought that their marks were higher in subjects in which they were allowed to discuss subject content as a class. They replied in the affirmative with "*Geography*." Their marks were much higher in Geography. I wanted some more information about their reading practices in this subject so I asked a few more questions:

- R: Okay, [P5] said that he would take the learners reports and look at their marks for English. You [looking at P5] said that you would use their reports to check whether their marks were changing, so do you find that in Geography your marks are better because you can talk to each other?
- P1: Much better, all of us in Geography.
- P5: Much better.
- R: Does your teacher speak to you in Xhosa or in English?
- P1: In Xhosa, but also in English. If you don't understand in English, he speaks to you in Xhosa [not sure of second sentence—poor sound quality]
- R: And how do you experience reading in Geography? Do you read a lot?
- P1: No, we don't. He just explain to us and then we discuss. After that you read when you are writing.

P3: But you read something that you understand so it's easy to... and he he will show us if he is making an example, he doesn't make an example in the book and...

P1: He also asks us questions to make sure that you understand what he what he explaining.

I was shocked to discover that they were accustomed to reading the text for the first time when they had to answer comprehension questions about the Geography lesson. That implied that most of their learning occurred aurally through oral communication resulting in a dominant auditory style of learning. Through this practice, they seemed to have learnt that the processing and interpretation of text were a teacher's responsibility. What is more, the learners' strong oral orientation to learning and reading texts emerged throughout their responses, albeit subtly at times, during the interview. The recorded exchange above was a good example of that. All the same, P2 had this to say about her previous reading practices:

When I'm reading something miss because I read only so that I can answer the questions 'yabon' [you see?] and I read nton' nton' [what what] and then I take the heading as the main idea and then I look for the detail and I put the supporting information.

It appeared as though this learner had not internalised reading as a means of learning but rather as a means of overcoming the difficulty of certain activities (such as answering questions in writing) perceived to be of little value. It seemed evident from all the data that the learners in general did not enjoy writing but instead bore it as a necessary evil associated with schoolwork. P4 also raised mind maps as a topic but said that he used them as a way of summarising long passages of text that he encountered in his content subjects. P1 and P5 both said that they also used mind maps to summarise texts in order to grasp the meaning of the text quickly and easily when reviewing their mind maps in preparation for assessment tasks.

Furthermore, perhaps the most influential strategy overall was the construction of mental representations or "*head pictures*" of the texts. The learners repeatedly cited this strategy as the most helpful in the focus group interview and in their dialogue journals. This strategy went hand-in-hand with teaching comprehension monitoring at sentence level. P5 explained:

now, I read with understanding because before when I'm just, when I'm reading a text, I read the first sentence, whether I understand it or not, I move to the next sentence. But now I try to understand the first sentence and then to move to the next sentence. And on head pictures ... when I read I have to make a mind map, I just look for the main idea and then the detail and the supporting information so that it could be easier for me to summarise it.

From his response, it is clear that P5 was using mind mapping as a means of making his mental model of a text a concrete thing in order to deepen his understanding. I found this approach very interesting because the learners had found making mind maps difficult when I used them as representations of my mental model during the intervention.

Question VI was included in the interview schedule to help me ascertain whether any transfer of the metacognitive knowledge or skills had occurred. It appeared as though some transfer had taken place: P1, P2, P4, and P5 stated that they used mind maps in English Language and while studying Life Sciences. The male learners had repeatedly emphasised text length in their answers to previous questions about reading and studying. Long texts had been implicitly equated with poor comprehension so I explicitly asked about the link and P4 replied,

as you read it ne, maybe you read some four paragraphs and then you turn [the page] and then 'Yoh, this is a long!' and then you get lazy. You are not focused on what you are doing now; say you [are] doing Geography, only just to get finished that's how you lose your marks. But when you make a mind map out of that [text], you will, you will know the information will be there and you only know the important stuff and those that just come you know that they are not important and you leave them out and focus on what is important.

It seems as if mind mapping helped these learners direct their attention and increased their motivation to learn because they felt able to regulate their own learning.

Lastly, P3 and P5 cited "*pointing words*" as a valuable tool. English pronouns, articles and determiners were called *pointing words* to help direct the learners' attention while they were reading. By way of explanation, I have included notes from my reflective journal below:

Researcher's reflections

I have just had a huge breakthrough! I've been thinking about the children's writing for a while and how I can help them express themselves better through their use of written English. I then pulled myself back on track reminding myself that my challenge is reading comprehension and not writing ... and that's when it hit me! It's the same problem, the root of the problem is the same in both spheres: the reason why they can't write coherent sentences (or string words together in the correct order, not leaving any out that affect the meaning, in order to communicate something specific) because isiXhosa does not contain English articles (a, an, the) as such; it only uses "I", but the meaning is inferred by the context. So the point is that when you are reading in English, the author has to use articles as fingers to point at what he means and this is the essence of the cloze exercise. Another aspect that must be considered is determiners such as 'this', 'that', 'his', 'my', 'some', 'mine' and 'our'. These types of determiners exist in isiXhosa such as "le" (this) and "la" (that) but are still context-dependent. Therefore, it is my job to help the learners understand this difference and use the appropriate articles in their writing but most importantly to take note of them when reading so that their comprehension improves (RC/Plan/RJ)

One reason why I believe that the learners can't do a cloze exercise or write sentences that make sense is because the use of articles and determiners is entirely different in the English language system to those of the isiXhosa language system. In English, articles and determiners are stand-alone words but because isiXhosa is an agglutinating language, pronouns are fused to the

sentence as a prefix or the adaptation of the initial vowel to denote possession or specificity (RC/ComLang/RJ).

P5 used the words to follow the logical flow of a text by linking the meaning of sentences together and thereby constructing a mental representation of the text, while P3 said that she used them in conversation with her friends. She seemed to have internalised this knowledge to the extent that she was correcting herself in conversation to ensure that she used the appropriate terms, which she did frequently in the contact sessions. In addition, P6 said that when he encountered foreign words while reading the newspaper, he used his dictionary to look them up and found that he was able to understand more and more text when he did so. Apparently, he had transferred this support strategy to his leisure-time activities.

5.2.4. Themes from the data presentation

5.2.4.1. Introduction

The quantitative data and the categories of qualitative data presented in Addenda U, V and W were refined, and this produced three themes that cut across all the data sets. Qualitative content analysis, discussed in Section 4.5, was used to refine the data. The themes are presented in Table 5.7 below:

Table 5.7: Themes from the Data Presentation

Data source	Categories		Themes
Reflective journal Translator Dialogue journals	Culture Community and support Group-think Authority/Power Autonomy Voice Motivation to learn		1. Contextual factors impacting on metacognitive learning
Reflective journal Translator Dialogue journals Focus group interview	Culture (cultural practices) Observations about their communication/language Observations about their reading/comprehension /OralTrad		2. Factors impacting negatively on reading comprehension mastery
Reflective journal Translator Dialogue journals Focus group interview	Words Improved personal skills	/Enj /Com /Res/Deter/Mot /Evi/Q/Conf /Evi/Q/Cnxt /RC/Und /RC/KL /MCA /Trans/Know /Thks	3. Metacognitive awareness and learning

Each of the themes is explained below. As the focus group interview data were not grouped in categories, I used in-text references with the codes discussed in Addendum T to indicate data stemming from a specific data set.

5.2.4.2. Theme 1: Contextual factors impacting on metacognitive learning

The following diagram, Figure 5.7, represents factors that formed part of and influenced the research intervention narrative. I have inserted the three data processes so that the consecutive discovery of these factors is portrayed within the chronological progression of the intervention. All the factors were interrelated and interdependent. Often I could see numerous factors at work in one scenario during a contact session.

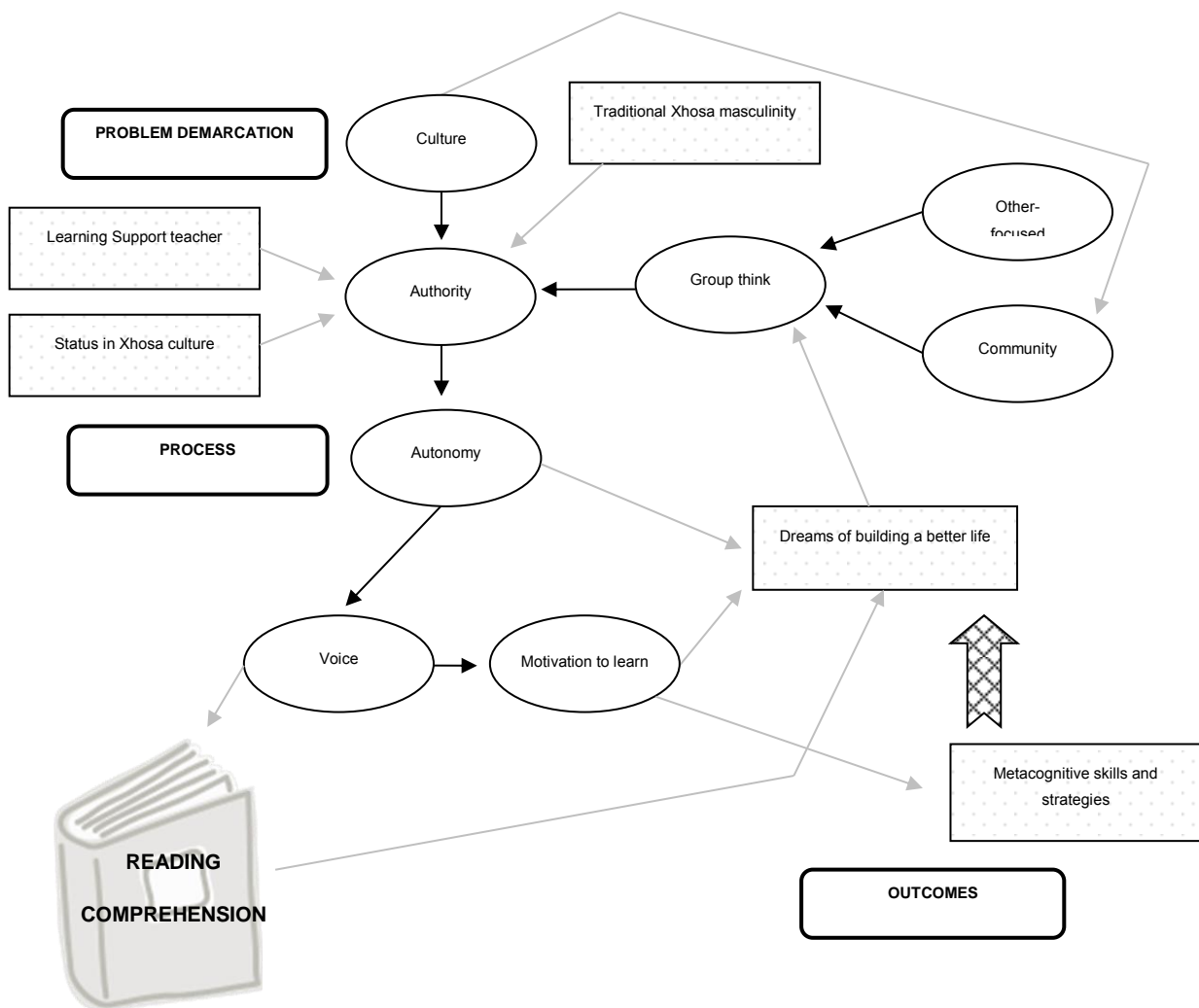


Figure 5.7: A concept map of the factors affecting the intervention.

a) Community

Many African countries share the understanding of an *ubuntu* worldview. This worldview has been studied prodigiously for many years, but in this study, it formed the explanatory framework for the factors that influenced my study and will therefore not be discussed in a detailed, nuanced way.

Nevertheless, the Xhosa's reality is one of communal interconnectedness. The meaning of *ubuntu* is "I am because you are" or as the Zambians understand it: to be a normal human being who cares (F. K. Kalaba, personal communication, 12 April 2013). This communal interconnectedness can only be inadequately and superficially described in English. Therefore I have turned to other Xhosas for their interpretations: Former president Thabo Mbeki gave one a glimpse of his Xhosa worldview in his 1996 speech on behalf of the African National Congress in Cape Town on 8 May 1996, on the occasion of the passing of the new Constitution of South Africa. At the time Mbeki was the vice president of South Africa under the presidency of Nelson Mandela:

I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.... I am the grandchild of the men and women ... the patriots ... the soldiers.... I am born of the peoples of the continent of Africa. (Hadland & Rantao, 1999, p. 153)

In this excerpt, one can see both the importance of land and of community to the *amaXhosa*. This sense of community among the learners was essential to the formation of "a community of learners". I consequently planned activities that would enhance a sense of community and mutual support. The learners reported that they experienced a sense of community among one another before the intervention. I assumed that this was a natural manifestation of the *ubuntu* worldview being lived out. As I drove around in the neighbouring community, I found this assumption to be true. One male learner wrote, "*My classmates at school were take care of me*" and he added later in his dialogue journal, "*I love to stay with my classmates. The [They are] like my family because I spend [spend] lot of time with them*" (P6/Com/DJ). This sense of community was a reoccurring theme throughout the research process.

b) Xhosa culture

During the intervention, my learning about, and understanding of, Xhosa culture was an ongoing process. Culture played a large role in the way that the learners and surrounding community operated. In the Xhosa culture, patriarchal ideology continues to dominate social life. Townsend and Dawes (2004) explain that in the "predominately patriarchal Nguni culture", children are expected to show "unquestioning obedience and subservience to adults, especially men" (Bray et al., 2010, p. 73). IsiXhosa-speaking adults refer to *ukuhlonipha* (to respect) as a vital part of their interpersonal, intergenerational relationships and the manner in which children ought to be raised (Bray et al., 2010).

An aspect of the Xhosa culture that is often highlighted by media reports is the practice of initiation whereby boys transition into men. The Xhosa male initiation rite of passage into adulthood, which involves circumcision, metaphorical death and rebirth, and isolation from females, remains a practice shrouded in secrecy (Ragnarsson, Townsend, Ekström, Chopra, & Thorson, 2010, p. 5). The boys "go to the bush" usually between the ages of 16 and 18. It is considered unacceptable for females to discuss any part of the rituals or be party to knowledge thereof. In this case, I had to be

culturally sensitive as one can easily offend a Xhosa male by addressing him incorrectly. The correct terms of address are dependent on whether the individual has been through the initiation rite or not. Recent literature (Ragnarsson et al., 2010) notes that an increasing number of underage Xhosa males are attending these initiation schools and it was therefore necessary for me to ask the male learners how they preferred to be addressed. Otherwise, I ran the risk of alienating them through disrespect and threatening the success of the study. I asked them which term of address was appropriate, *abafana* (young men) or *amadoda* (men), and one learner replied, “*Abafana, because we are not men yet.*” He quickly added that he would be going to the bush when he turned 18. I thus tried to adhere to the principles of *ukuhlonipha* throughout the intervention. In my attempts to really understand the learners’ experiences of their reading comprehension in English, it was also necessary for me to remain mindful of how the learners interpreted the world. I was thankful that I had made the effort when P1 commented in her dialogue journal: “*You are so special to me because you are careful about people*” (P1/Thks).

Even as Xhosa culture changes under the influence of Westernisation through globalism and technology, some of the old traditional beliefs about land, masculinity, and femininity remain firmly ingrained in the youth. Thus, I knew that in order to assert my place among the learners as someone worth respecting and listening to, I had to mention, while wearing a skirt that covered my knees, that I was married and that I originated from the Eastern Cape. I knew this had to be done at the beginning of the intervention phase. The biggest indicator of adulthood for Xhosa females is motherhood but that was something I could not claim. As I had spent time reflecting on their cultural practices, it was not surprising that my introduction was received enthusiastically. I also had prepared an introduction regarding the purpose of the research in isiXhosa, which the learners greatly appreciated.

Researcher’s reflection

Tying my husband (mentioning a husband) and me to the land (the Eastern Cape) as part of the introductory lesson was a good idea. The children immediately related and were visibly interested right off the bat. I also found that using a few Xhosa words during the session kept them engaged and amused and surprised them. I noticed that they became visibly relaxed. It also encouraged questions, which were all land-related and child-related. This interaction allowed us to discuss the differences in cultural practices and introduced an openness that really helped facilitate communication (RC/Cul/RJ).

The scope of this factor’s influence was limitless. The learners’ cultural understandings of the world influenced their thinking, reasoning, and meaning-making.

c) Group-think

Due to the shared nature of the lives of the Xhosa children, collective thinking and a collective identity were also prominent. I found that collective thinking was an obstacle in my attempts to gain

access to the learners' metacognitive awareness and habits and to gauge their progress with English reading comprehension, and it affected their attendance rates. For example, P6 said that when he didn't attend the lessons, it was because the group had told him that they, as a group, would not be attending on a given afternoon. In his words, "*I disturbed by other learners they say 'he [it should read 'she' and refers to me] will come' [to the school for the contact sessions], others they say 'Hayi, we don't come' and then I don't know what to do and then I decide to go home*" (P6/Q1/FG). Similarly, during the contact sessions, I found that one learner would answer for the group without consulting the others first. The most frustrating part of this was when I asked if they understood and one learner would reply, "Yes, we understand", while others were still be frowning in confusion. Consequently, I decided to work on developing the learners' individual voices and sense of autonomy.

d) Authority

Aside from culture, the greatest factor that affected the research process was the Xhosa understanding of authority and power. As stated before, in Xhosa culture, respect is not earned; it is taken. This often happens by force and a person's authority is entrenched over time through physical consequences meted out for disrespect. I was uncomfortable with implementing this as, besides corporal punishment being illegal in South African schools, I wanted to make sure that the learners remained invested in the research process as co-researchers and willing participants and so decided to approach the issue gingerly. In the beginning, a few learners attended the lessons erratically, wrote in their dialogue journals infrequently, or asserted themselves as an authority figure during the contact sessions. Mindful of their understanding of how an authority figure behaves, I enlisted the help of the learning support teacher (a married woman with children) and pleaded with the learners on numerous occasions. Their erratic attendance proved to be problematic throughout the intervention but having the learning support teacher as an ally was helpful. During the contact sessions, I discovered that if I shared my opinion first, I was more likely to get an honest response in return. For example, I would say, "I want to go home now, do you want to go home?" or "I am tired, are you tired?" This approach not only placed me in a position of authority in the learners' eyes but also gave them a chance to voice their opinions and needs.

Researcher's reflection

I have spent a lot of time thinking about "voice"—personal voice. The Xhosa culture emphasises collective voice and individual voices are often drowned out. In the beginning of our sessions, I couldn't get the learners to share their opinions at all. They would either just agree with what I said or they would decide together what they thought I wanted to hear what I said and then answer me. I suppose it is because they saw me as an authority figure and so all their cultural understanding of authority was activated. As a result, I decided to begin sharing my opinion first (modelling) before asking them for their opinions. This worked wonders! I was able to get each learner to respond as an individual. Their "voices" started coming through clearly (RC/Cul/RJ).

During a contact session just before the June holidays, a boy walked into the classroom during one of our sessions. He was not part of the study but was enrolled at the school as a scholar. He ignored me sitting at the front of the classroom and walked straight up to P6 and asked to have an apple from the bag that I had brought for my learners. From when the child had entered the room, I had asked him thrice to leave but had been ignored on all three occasions. P6 then told his peer that he did not own the apples, that they belonged to me, and so he would need to ask me if he wanted one. The child then turned to me and asked for an apple, citing his hunger as a reason why I should have given him something to eat, but I replied in the negative. He left the classroom immediately. I noticed that P6's face fell at my response. In the following session, I wanted to have a discussion with the learners to ascertain whether I had done the right thing culturally and to institute a new kind of relationship—one of equality between the learners and me, drawing myself into the community of learners. I describe the ensuing discussion in my notes below:

Researcher's reflection

The more I work with the learners, the more I become aware of the power differential inherent any classroom scenario. I have come to realise that power is definitely communicated through space. When a teacher is standing and the learners are sitting, their upturned faces immediately create the impression that the teacher is in charge and they have to submit. This has been bothering me for a while and I started wondering how a change in the seating arrangements would affect the amount of learning that took place. I therefore decided that I wanted to have discussions with the learners as equals. So I made them sit on their tables so that we could all discuss things at eye level. I wanted to talk about the boy and the apple scenario from the previous week. When questioned, to my surprise, 6 of the 7 agreed that they would not have given him the apple because he was *disrespectful*, that is, did not speak to me when he entered or when I addressed him (RC/AuthPow/RJ). I realised then that even though I was from a different racial group, one associated with negative connotations among many Africans, they had still extended their understanding of authority and power to me in the contact sessions. I was the authority figure there.

That 'watershed' moment was the beginning of a new season for the group as a 'community of learners'. Even though I was the assumed authority figure, the learners began to take ownership of the group and interacted with me more authentically. I suspected that this was because I had taken the time to seek out their thoughts and opinions and to allow them to develop personal voices. After a difficult lesson one afternoon, I was reminded of an observation made by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) regarding research in traditional communities. Some African communities' description of their negative research experiences with people from Western cultures, seemed to point out that by being culturally insensitive, numerous white researchers had caused indigenous people to view most them with suspicion and distrust (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Relevant to my study, it would seem that white people often try to dictate to Xhosas what their experiences or

answers should be by asking them leading questions during research projects. I made a mental note of this and tried to avoid repeating this mistake. As a result, a community of learners was established and the authority issue moved from being a power struggle to one of communal trust, reliance, and support.

e) The role of autonomy, voice and motivation to learn in reading comprehension

After navigating through the learners' cultural understanding of authority, described above, my next challenge was motivating the learners to want to learn through reading. Based on my observations, I wanted to strengthen the children's sense of autonomy, their individual voices (as opposed to thinking collectively for fear of authoritarian figures) and their motivation to learn. All these things would help them access tertiary education.

Researcher's reflections

Based on my experience, submission plays a huge role in how these children react during learning experiences. It's almost as though submission to authority or elders dominates and suppresses any natural inclination that Xhosa children have towards inquisitiveness, creativity, or critical thinking. It's almost as though the idea of "children should be seen and not heard" has silenced them to such an extent that it produces bewildered adults who are trapped in the poverty cycle because they do not possess the necessary skills to rise to the top, reminiscent of the children described by Charles Dickens in *Hard Times*. They also seem to be lethargic, lazy, and despondent at times. I know that there are many reasons for this, but it is still concerning (RC/AuthPow/RJ).

5.2.4.3. Theme 2: Factors impacting negatively on reading comprehension mastery

I noted in my reflective journal at the beginning of the intervention that I suspected the learners were just reading to pass (RC/RC/RJ). Additionally, they also alerted me to their experiential challenges through their dialogue journals:

I struggle to understand this story because of other word was very difficult (P6/RC/Und/DJ)

During this lesson everybody they understand this story, it was me who was not understand (P6/RC/Und/DJ)

I don't understand English when you speak, I can hear you (P7/RC/Und/DJ)

I later made the following observation, further on into the intervention:

Researcher's reflection

They cannot communicate what they have understood. A lot of their misunderstanding and confusion seems to be as a result of the language barrier. I am finding it increasingly difficult to determine which problems are reading comprehension problems and which are proficiency

problems ... the learners' vocabulary seems to be their weak point. They are unfamiliar with words such as *massive*, *great*, *potential*, *pharmaceutical*, *critical*, *decline*. Their inferencing is also weak. Academic texts are a real challenge for them. P6 reads word by word with his pen as a guide and mouths each word to himself. I have noticed that P2 does the same thing occasionally. I think that it is very difficult for them (RC/RC/RJ).

Observations during the contact sessions and the research findings helped me 'tease out' the barriers to the learners' development. Question III in the focus group interview (If you were teaching English reading comprehension [i.e. if you were me] to your peers, what would you do differently?) was particularly insightful in this regard. It revealed more about the learners' mental activities than I had anticipated.

As the discussion around Question III in the focus group interview progressed, I began to notice that the learners consistently brought up oral communication as a highly valued method of learning and knowledge construction. They mentioned it as part of their community as learners but also in the broader Xhosa community and their home lives. IsiXhosa has a long oral history but does not share the well-established traditions of reading and writing that European languages such as English and French have (Pretorius & Currin, 2010). Thus, Xhosa people are historically accustomed to communicating with one another, and learning, through speech. For learning to take place in a community where conversation is highly prized, it must take place within conversation. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's claim that knowledge is socially constructed (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). He believed that human activity takes place within a cultural context, is mediated by language and other symbol systems and is best understood within a historical context. As a result, he saw human development as increasing interdependence, where socially shared activities were transformed into processes internalised in the individual person (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). The learners therefore placed their learning in a social context by discussing it with others. Their learning was consequently mediated in the ensuing discussions not only through isiXhosa as a language but also through the culture of the *amaXhosa*. Once the new learning had been processed through discussion, the learner internalised the knowledge created in collaboration with his peers and continued reading until he encountered another obstacle. The learners reported that they routinely use this method of learning during instruction time at school and at home when doing homework.

The learners emphasised oral communication as the best form of checking reading comprehension. For example, I asked P4 what methods he would use to monitor the learners' reading comprehension if he were the teacher. He replied that he would use a class discussion as a way of ensuring that his learners understood by first discussing a text and asking his learners questions before distributing a reading comprehension exercise. He justified his answer by explaining that he found discussions helpful because they directed his attention to important information. I wanted to make sure that I had understood him correctly and so I asked a few more

questions about the frequency of classroom discussions at the research site. P2 cut in and reminded me of the lesson about Harriet Tubman. P2 explained that when I had read the text to the group, they had not understood it or created *head pictures* as I read. When they had read it for themselves, their comprehension had not benefitted either, but when they saw the photographs that accompanied the article, they began to understand what the text was about. Up to that point, we had worked on constructing mental models for 2 weeks. I had integrated mental models with all the lessons on anaphora so that it would become second nature for the learners through modelling and constant exposure. I thus deduced from P2's answer that they either made partial mental models while reading or they did not make any attempt to construct a mental representation because they did not know that they should have done so. This created the impression that they were not too certain about the purpose of reading.

In this exchange, the learners emphasised the role of oral communication in their learning processes. It appeared that they were unable to make meaning while reading the Harriet Tubman text because we had not *discussed* the text first as a group. Even though I was uncertain about the accuracy or complexity of their individual mental models, it was clear that they had used additional information to further their understanding of text, such as the photograph of Harriet Tubman that had accompanied the article (see Addendum Q). Mohktari and Reichard (2002) consider the use of figures, tables, and diagrams to be a global metacognitive reading strategy. This was a promising sign of progress but I wanted to know more about the role of communal discussions in the construction of their mental representations. The learners told me that when they spoke about something, they helped each other to understand. It seemed they created a collective pool of knowledge. Shayer (2003) suggests that when learners collaborate and interact, they create a collective ZPD, which all the individuals can then draw from. In such a group situation, learners actually support one another's learning by interacting. Turuk (2008) adds that during the negotiation and co-construction of meaning, internalisation takes place. The research participants confirmed this theoretical aspect.

Furthermore, I wanted to know whether their marks were higher in subjects in which they were allowed to discuss subject content as a class, to support their claims. They replied, in the affirmative, with "*Geography*." Their marks were all much higher in Geography compared to other subjects and they attributed the higher scores to discussion. With some further questioning on my part, they revealed that their Geography teacher made use of code-switching in his explanations of textbook material but the lessons took place *without* the learners actually reading the text for themselves. First, the teacher read the text. Second, as an ESL learner himself, he processed and interpreted the text, and third, he provided his pupils with a mental representation of the text meaning. Last, he questioned them verbally about his mental model and then wrote questions on the board to test their reading comprehension. I was shocked to discover that the first time they read the text for themselves was when they had to answer the reading comprehension questions on the board.

In summary, P2's description implied that most of their learning occurred aurally through oral communication, a long-standing tradition in Xhosa culture. The new information had profound implications for the reading practices and reading comprehension of my isiXhosa learners: the learners were accustomed to and enjoyed it when a more knowledgeable other made meaning of text on their behalf. Thus, their inferencing abilities (both high- and low-level), activating their prior knowledge and using anaphora to construct individual mental models, were all disregarded as the teacher cognitively transformed the text for them. I suspected that this manner of learning was closely tied to Xhosa culture, where authority figures are to be respected and adults are viewed as more knowledgeable and not to be questioned. It therefore appeared as though the cultural practice of unquestioning submission to authority figures resulted in a teacher-centred approach to learning. The learners seemed to have accepted that the teacher "knew" and that they needed to be told "how and what to know". Chapman (2000, p. 35) makes a point worth noting about linguistic research in the sociocultural approach:

the varieties of language performance that are culturally valued are many and sometimes include learning to be quiet, rather than learning to talk. Importantly, the work informed by sociocultural variation in the reasons for talk that children encounter has revealed a richly varying repertoire of communicative genres and expectations for children's participation in them (or not)... Noteworthy are the variations in storytelling, argument, patterns of prohibition, and gender language reviewed by the collaborators.

I conclude this section by tentatively suggesting that just as one can acquire beneficial knowledge and skills through social activity, one can also acquire a few detrimental practices which are considered to be right or good when shaped by cultural understandings of everyday activities such as reading. In summary, the reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking ESL learners can be improved with metacognitive instruction and appears to enable them to make meaning for themselves and so empower them, not just in academic contexts but also as lifelong learners.

5.2.4.4. Theme 3: Metacognitive awareness and learning

The learners increased their metacognitive awareness about themselves as people (reflected in their dialogue journal entries) and became metacognitively aware of the mental processes needed for academic purposes.

a) Effective metacognitive instruction for improving reading comprehension

The focus group interview revealed that any metacognitive activity that aided the learners' comprehension monitoring was effective for improving their reading comprehension. The learners acknowledged identifying anaphora (a skill) and constructing mental models (a strategy) as being effective. With the use of these strategies, I observed their metacognitive awareness increase. This is in accordance with the opinion of Khonamri and Kojidi (2011), who consider metacognitive awareness to be a type of declarative knowledge. This suggests that the more metacognitively aware the learners were of their comprehension levels and reading strategies, the better their

comprehension monitoring was—a result proven by the research findings. Block (1992) emphasises that these strategies are most important for second language speakers, who are inclined to encounter many linguistic difficulties and gaps in their comprehension. The metacognitive reading strategy that the learners had found most useful for learning across the curriculum was mind mapping. They referred to mind mapping as summarising and used it to that purpose. Below I will discuss anaphora, mind maps, and mental models in more detail. I explore the role of the interactionist approach in these results, which include modelling and prompting, as recommended by Lin (2001).

As discussed briefly in Section 3.2.1, teachers who subscribe to the interactionist approach mix skills instruction with a holistic, meaningful approach to reading. One of the foundational assumptions of this approach is that language develops socially (John-Steiner, Panofsky, & Smith, 1994). Therefore, language should be viewed from a social and functional perspective because a child's language develops through its function in his family and social lives. As mentioned in Chapter 5, I hoped that the metacognitive instruction about reading would be placed in the group's mental domain, where it could be socially shared knowledge. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1987) law of genetic development. He claimed that language moves from being interpsychological to intrapsychological through internalisation and is affected by social and individual factors. Human learning and development is a result of the dynamic interaction of these factors (John-Steiner et al., 1994). Individual and social factors were evidently at work in our contact sessions, as discussed in Sections 5.2.1.4 and 5.2.2.3. As an interactionist teacher, I monitored the learners' developmental processes and learning over time and made changes accordingly, in line with action research and a paradigm of praxis (John-Steiner et al., 1994).

Lee (2005) claims that anaphoric inferences are an essential part of comprehending expository texts as they help the reader to “make local coherence among sentences” (Lee, 2005, p. 2510). Forming links between sentences at local and global level are the foundation of constructing a mental model. The learner needs to be able to do this so that he can understand how concepts in a text are related or influence each other. Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) remind one that the reader starts building a mental model of the text using the articles and determiners (“*pointing words*”) that hold the textual argument or discussion together. Anaphora (low-level inferencing) provides these links on a local level as a foundation for high-level inferencing at global level. It appears from the collected data that the learners benefitted most from learning simple metacognitive reading skills (see Section 5.2.2.1) which then facilitated vertical transfer. That is to say, they learnt to direct their attention to important detail and made anaphoric inferences while reading so that they could create a mental model of the processed text, requiring high-level inferencing, synthesis, and evaluation of textual concepts. Having higher mental functions, I could mediate their development through language, as Vygotsky (1987) had claimed. In almost all of the responses about constructing mental models, the learners mentioned the role of anaphora. P3 added that anaphora had helped her to summarise as she read a short story in her History textbook:

It [referring to the lessons about English articles and determiners] helps me to know what this is based on and who it refers to and then also to summarise. Like yesterday, I was reading a short story in my History book then when I read it I understand it clearly because I make sure that I have an image in my head.

P4 described his method of summarising that combined anaphora and the construction a mental model of the text:

When you make a head picture of something, it helps me because maybe when I'm studying Life Sciences ne, I'm studying Life Sciences for an exam I can...read the notes there and if I don't understand, I try and make a picture of it so that when the picture is finalised, I will take the knowledge okay ... make it on a paper and when you have finished making it on a paper and then you will see that okay in this in this notes it is saying that and this and that and that is happening so that I will be able to understand it more and to read it ... all the notes.

He then went on to explain that the complexity of the text dictated whether he made concrete representation of the text on paper. He repeatedly implied that constructing a mental model helped him to summarise the text:

You see, when you maybe you given ne, they say read page 200 to 208 and then when you read, you say before you get there you say "These pages are full of notes" You read the first page ne, when you have finished you make a head picture, you make a head picture [R: one page at a time?], yes, one page at a time, and then when you have finished, you read what you wrote in your head picture and then you see okay this and that, you see okay you when you read, you will understand it more because why you have made it short... you summarise all the information and make it small and then you take the key points not all of that, you don't need all of that. Take only the important stuff.

P5 also linked his summarising to anaphora. He found it particularly useful in Life Sciences. All the learners reported that Life Sciences was their most challenging subject as it was content-rich and required that they use their English CALP. P4 used mind mapping as a way of summarising long passages of text that he encountered in his content subjects. P1 and P5 both said that they also used mind maps to summarise so that they could understand the meaning of the text quickly and easily, just by reviewing their mind maps. According to Mokhtari and Reichard (2002), summarisation is often a metacognitive reading strategy that is avoided by learners because it is difficult to acquire as a skill and requires slow careful analysis of text, which is a cognitively demanding activity. It was therefore interesting that learners found summarisation so useful and frequently used it as a metacognitive reading strategy in their content subjects.

However, perhaps the most important strategy that I taught was constructing mental models ("*head pictures*") of text. The learners repeatedly cited this strategy as the most helpful, as apparent in the quote above where P4 described using mind maps to build a mental model of the text. This goes hand-in-hand with comprehension monitoring at sentence level through anaphora, as stated previously. Similarly, P5 explained that mind mapping was his means of making a mental representation of a text something concrete in order to deepen his understanding. He used

anaphora to make meaning at sentence level and thereby built up an image of the text sentence by sentence. This comment surprised me because the learners had found making mind maps difficult when I had used them as representations of my mental model during the contact sessions. It appeared as though P5 had internalised the social learning process and then externalised it after he had transformed it and made sense of it for himself (Vygotsky, 1987).

Finally, P6's description of his understanding of mental models summed up the great strides that he had made as an English language learner and as a metacognitive learner:

In my mind I remember Rose and Lewis when they teacher me they say if you read a story or something you must understand the first column before you move to another column ... [you must] have a picture on you[r] mind [of] what [is] happening... like you[re] watching a movie (P6/Trans/Know/DJ; P6/RC/Und/DJ)

From his description of his new reading habits, his comprehension monitoring and metacognitive skill set had expanded to the point where he could make meaning of text by watching his "*mental movie*". Overall, the effects of the learners' new metacognitive knowledge and skills were reflected in the higher scores of the reading comprehension test in August. The scores for anaphoric referencing and high-level inferencing had greatly improved.

I attribute these improvements to the interactionist approach. Throughout the intervention, I made sure to be a model to and prompt the learners so that they could internalise the desired knowledge and skills more quickly. I placed an almost undue amount of emphasis on meaning-making as the purpose of reading and consistently modelled this to them and prompted them when they had forgotten. This is in accordance with Lin's (2001) view, in which learners need to be coached in metacognitive thinking through specifically designed activities, where the teacher acts as a living example of metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategy use. I attempted to be this role model throughout the research process. As discussed in Sections 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.4, prompting can form part of modelling as learners come to realise what kinds of questions they should be asking or where they should be directing their thoughts and understanding. The learners began to generate metacognitive questions that helped them build mental models of the text in the learning tasks by identifying conflicting information and causing "extensive inference generation" (Lin, 2001, p. 27). I was careful to heed McKeown and Beck's (2009) warning about presenting strategies in a manner that might distract the learners and make the text appear secondary. In accordance with the authors' argument, I therefore made text-based discussions a regular part of classroom instruction. This approach to instruction produced an increased amount of both low- and high-level inferencing, which enhanced the learners' comprehension (see Table 5.7). The interactionist approach definitely proved more beneficial than the other two approaches in this context.

To conclude, I will offer a brief discussion about the MARS results in September. Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) suggest that MARS results can be used for enhancing assessment and planning instruction. In this study, it was used to assess the learners' metacognitive awareness so that I could plan activities that would strengthen their use of strategies (global, problem solving, or

support). I accomplished this by instructing them in the types of strategies that they often did not use, which were the global and problem-solving strategy categories. According to Mokhtari and Reichard (2002), who developed the MARS, highly skilled readers usually score high in the global and problem-solving categories, whereas most people score high in the support-strategy category. The authors suggest that a reader who relies heavily on the support strategies may have a limited view of reading or, in Garner and Alexander's (1989, p. 145) words, "children, particularly younger and poorer readers, often rely on a single criterion for textual understanding: [the] understanding of individual words." Similarly, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) state that an underutilisation of problem-solving strategies may indicate a lack of metacognitive awareness during reading and poorly regulated comprehension processes. MARS was administered as part of the pre-testing and the post-testing to determine the impact of the intervention. From the results, it appeared as though the intervention had been successful and the goal of the study had been achieved. That is to say, not only had the learners internalised anaphora, mind mapping, and mental models but they had also internalised many global and problem-solving strategies as well (see Addendum A for examples of such strategies).

b) Transfer of metacognitive instruction to other content subjects

Question VI was included in the interview schedule to help me ascertain whether any transfer of the metacognitive knowledge or skills had occurred. In Chapter 1, different types of transfer were briefly described. As stated in Section 1.6.2, transfer is the "application of knowledge and strategies from one context to another" (Malan, 2011). This plays into metacognitive abilities as learners who are able to operate metacognitively are often also capable of using their metacognitive skills to transfer knowledge and skills from one context to another. There were thus four types of transfer possible within reading comprehension at school level: low- and high-road transfer and lateral and vertical transfer. Low road transfer is the spontaneous, automatic transfer of highly practiced skills, which requires no reflective thinking. In this study, I hoped that the learners would convert many of the metacognitive strategies, especially the support strategies that they had acquired, into highly practiced skills and, in this way, that transfer would take place and aid their learning across the curriculum. This was the case with anaphora and the construction of mental models. The learners had begun automatically building models of texts that they read outside of the research setting (e.g., in Life Sciences).

High road transfer, as the conscious application of abstract knowledge or strategies to a new situation, also took place in the form of mind maps (Malan, 2011). This type of transfer did not happen automatically but needed to be taught. This was accomplished through teaching the learners the basic principles of how to draw mind maps, when to use them, and in what content subjects they would be most effective. P1, P2, P4 and P5 stated that they used mind maps in English Language and while studying Life Sciences. P1 and P4 used mind maps to summarise information that they had to learn about the biomes of South Africa. They reported that mind maps

provided them with a quick and easy way of checking their understanding and were easier to remember than normal text. As I stated in the previous chapter, mind mapping helped the learners direct their attention and increased their motivation to learn because they felt able to manage their learning.

Malan (2011) describes lateral transfer as the generalisation of knowledge or skills to a new situation but one which is not more complex than the initial situation, in contrast to vertical transfer, which happens when complex skills are more easily learnt because of simpler skills learned previously. Both lateral and vertical transfer took place in the study. P6 used his dictionary while reading the newspaper, P5 used pronouns, articles, and determiners to make sense of texts in Life Sciences, and P3 used them in conversation. All these contexts were not too far removed from the initial research setting. It is clear from the higher scores in the reading comprehension test that vertical transfer had taken place as a result of the accumulation and mastery of skills during the intervention phase. The learners began with simple letter-sound relationships and ended the intervention with mastering the construction of mental models and transferring the principles of mind mapping to different content subjects. Malan (2011) notes that vertical transfer is strongly associated with social constructivism and the ZPD as children are able to learn much quicker if they can link new knowledge to their existing knowledge. Once vertical transfer has taken place, a child can move more quickly and easily into the ZPD where real learning and development happen (Malan, 2011). The study's learners affirmed that vertical transfer had taken place but added that it was because they had been able to discuss their thoughts and ideas in the contact sessions with one another, the translator, and me. The metacognitive knowledge that they gained was therefore socially constructed through mediation and psychological tools. Stated differently, the learners had made meaning for themselves in a group context.

In the case of this study, this is in accordance with Valsiner's (1987) description of Vygotsky's theory of genetic development, which he described as the process where every mental function of the learner appears twice, first interpsychologically during social interaction between people (discussions involving mediation, scaffolding, and modelling) and then intrapsychologically within the child (as skills and knowledge that he can transfer and apply in other areas). The link between the interpsychological and the intrapsychological is the semiotic mediators such as language and other symbol systems. Vygotsky (1979) believed that these mediators and psychological tools mediate social and individual functioning. Social interactions therefore formed the source of the learners' individual development as they co-constructed knowledge alongside others during this project. Vygotsky stressed that human development takes place within a cultural context, is mediated by language and other symbol systems, and is best understood against its historical backdrop. As a result, he saw human development as increasing interdependence, where socially shared activities were transformed into processes internalised in the individual person (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Psychological tools are not manufactured by the individual. Rather, they are communal in origin and appropriated by the individual during communal activity, after which they are internalised and used to transform and support individual mental functioning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). One example of such a tool is language *per se*. Another example is written symbol systems, such as English and isiXhosa. Cultural tools are formed and shaped in specific cultural and historical settings. These tools are then mastered by the individual and used to transform his own mental functioning. Language is therefore both a psychological tool and a cultural tool. The learners used English and isiXhosa to mediate their mental functioning, first in a group context and then individually. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) claim that children's ways of behaving and thinking are derivative of the cultural environment that surrounds them. This was evident from the factors that influenced the intervention phase such as Xhosa culture including collective thinking and a certain understanding of authority, as discussed in Section 5.2.1.4. Vygotsky claimed that learning and language acquisition both require the learner's engagement in socially mediated activities. This contention proved true, as the research findings showed. Transfer had taken place because the learners had internalised their metacognitive knowledge, skills, and strategies.

5.3. Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the data sets from all the data sources in three data processes that took place during the intervention. There was a clear improvement in the second test results, and the learners reported that they had gained from the intervention. I discussed factors such as culture and authority that had had an influence on the study's intervention phase and explained all the activities in narrative form. In the next chapter, I will present my reflections as a researcher, the strengths and limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Addressing the Research Question

This study was aimed at determining whether the English reading comprehension of ESL learners in the FET phase could be improved through metacognitive instruction. Its purpose was to explore whether the learners demonstrated metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading, what types of metacognitive skills or strategies were most effective for improving English reading comprehension, and if improvement did take place, whether transfer took place between content subjects. In order to address these questions, one cycle of action research was conducted at the research site, embedded within a paradigm of praxis. This chapter will conclude with my reflections on the research process, the strengths and limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Below I will present a summary of the findings for each research sub-question. The effectiveness of the study was reflected in these results.

The research sub-questions were as follows:

- Do learners demonstrate metacognitive awareness of their mental processes during reading? What evidence is there of this?
- What types of metacognitive skills and/or strategies are most effective during reading with the goal of improving English reading comprehension?
- If reading comprehension is improved, does the improvement have an effect on other content subject results, that is, in what ways does transfer take place?

In order to answer the research question that governed the whole study adequately (that is, “Can metacognitive instruction be used to improve the English reading comprehension of ESL learners?”), it was necessary for me to review the answers to the three sub-questions above.

Firstly, the learners made progress in their metacognitive awareness levels. The scores for the reading comprehension test and the MARSi increased (in some cases). The learners reported being aware of their comprehension in their dialogue journals and actively monitored their mental processes by making mind maps as mental representations of Life Sciences texts. Secondly, the study findings show that anaphora (as a metacognitive skill) and two metacognitive reading strategies, mind mapping and mental modelling, were most effective for improving English reading comprehension. Last, three types of transfer took place: low road, high road, and vertical transfer. English letter-sound relationships and anaphora were transferred as *low road*. The metacognitive strategies were transferred as *high road* and vertical transfer was a crucial part of accumulating knowledge and skills from the contact sessions, which the learners did quite easily. I, therefore,

can tentatively conclude that metacognitive instruction improved the English reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking FET phase learners in this study in its specific social, cultural, and historical contexts.

6.2. My Reflection as Researcher

'Whiteness', 'reality' and 'survival' (refer to Figure 5.7) were factors that influenced my experience of the research process to a large extent. "Whiteness" refers to my "otherness" as I was "other" to the learners in so many ways: skin colour, culture, language, background experiences, financially, materially, and in available opportunities. These discrepancies meant that we experienced different realities: mine as one of prosperity and theirs as one of survival. I drew on Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation to help me make sense of my research experiences.

Maslow's theory of human motivation

Maslow (1943), in his theory of human motivation, noted that there are numerous ways to attain human goals within different cultures. Therefore, his motivation theory looks at subconscious goals that are common to all people and not desires that are tied to specific cultures. He proposed that these goals (or needs) were organised in a hierarchical manner, where the fulfilment of one need is dependent on the satisfaction of the previous need. Figure 6.1 shows Maslow's arrangement of human needs:

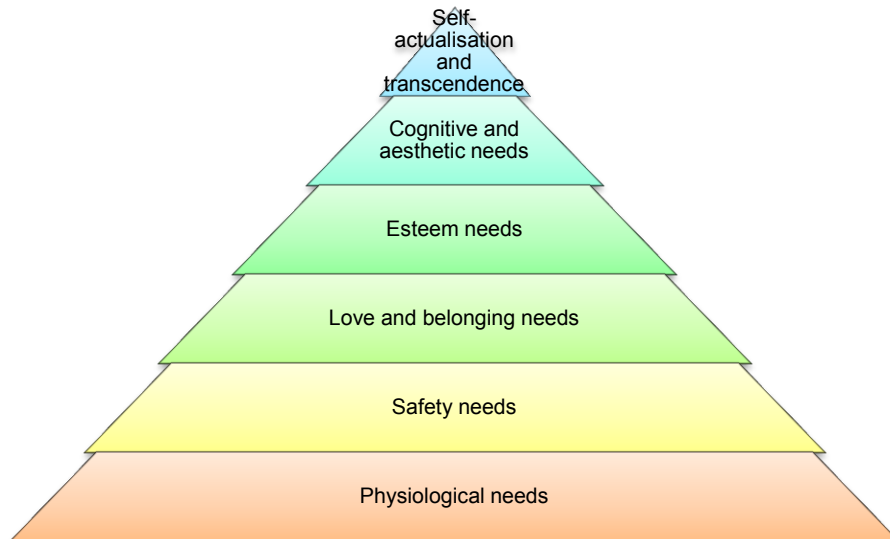


Figure 6.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (adapted from Poston, 2009, p. 348).

Importantly, Maslow (1943) pointed out that the circumstances in which a person functions cannot be viewed as the primary source of behavioural motivation because it is also influenced by biological, cultural, and circumstantial factors. In South Africa, hunger (an unfulfilled need) serves as a motivating force in many communities. As a result of high rates of unemployment, many black learners live in extreme poverty where food is scarce. Maslow (1943) explained that when a need

such as hunger goes unfulfilled, that need becomes all-consuming for the individual and that “all [his] capacities are put into the service of hunger-satisfaction, and the organization of these capacities is almost entirely determined by the one purpose of satisfying hunger ... [his] intelligence, memory, habits, all may now be defined simply as hunger-gratifying tools” (Maslow, 1943, p. 373). Therefore, the cognitive, esteem, and self-actualisation drives remain dormant while the body and mind are geared towards gratifying basic needs. This is the case in many townships where food, running water and electricity are precious resources. When I applied this theory to my experiences, I realised that I could rank myself and the learners in clear positions on the pyramid. If I ranked them according to their descriptive writing in their reflective journals, all the learners were motivated by physiological, safety, or love and belonging needs. In contrast, I was motivated by cognitive and aesthetic needs. Below, I have included excerpts from some of the learners’ dialogue journals that reflect these different rankings on Maslow’s hierarchy. Through their writing, they described experiences that were very far removed from my daily life. Excerpt 1 describes a boy’s delight on receiving a pair of shoes. Maslow (1943) classed clothing as a physiological need. I have not attributed the excerpts to specific learners as some of the experiences are of a sensitive nature.

Excerpt 1

Dear Diary

That day that I won’t forget it was the day I started to dress a name shoe who called Nike. It was a Christmas to me because it was my first time to dress a expensive shoe. I was so very happy when I am dress my shoe. When are walk it was like I am walking in a red carpet and feel my self and proud of who I am.

Excerpt 2

Me a was to the list of those learners who don’t have red pen and rule. He beat us because of whe don’t have rule and red pen. I was feel very angry because whe came in a different famalies others parent they can’t afford to buy stationary for our childrens because they don’t have a work so that they can buy everything for he childrens.

Excerpt 3

At 00:00 in the midnight I heard a noise in his room, I woke up to check if what was happening.

His girlfriend broke the car windscreen because she suspect if he’s having an affair, but I know if that wasn’t possible.

Yes I was right, my uncle didn’t have an affair, because he always say he love his girlfriend.

Excerpt 4

I was invited to a party in Khayelitsha. I have a friend who was celebrating his 17th birthday. We met in Knysna we used to go to the same school there. At the party we meet some girls. We had some fun. We were buddies in Knysna so we

caught up with each other. I remember waking up naked while the girls and [name of friend] weren't there. Also the door was wide open. I started to be angry and I didn't notice that there was a camera that was videolising me.

The following excerpt from my reflective journal is a record of a conversation with Lungisani, the translator, when I visited him at work one afternoon. This conversation had a big impact on me and helped me see that I could make a difference if I looked at my efforts as drops of water that could become small streams:

Researcher's reflections

Yesterday I had the great opportunity to speak to Lungisani about the children and *boy* did he help me develop my understanding of what is actually going on w.r.t. their career choices! I told him about the children's parents dying and asked him what I should do. I told him about their career choices and asked him what I could do to help them get there. He said that there is nothing that I can do about the hardships that they are facing but that saying "I'm sorry" to them is all that is really possible and all that anyone can do. He said that he feels just as helpless and as clueless as I do when it comes to these things. We both agreed that we don't know what to do. I felt comforted that someone living in [name of research site] and speaking isiXhosa feels the same way that I do.

Regarding their career choices, one of the first questions that Lungisani asked was, "How open are they about their lives and their families?" At first, I wasn't sure why he mentioned their families but then when I told him what they have put forward as their career choices, he giggled a bit. I also told him that I am having trouble because I believe that all they can see is my white skin, my white face, my whiteness, my otherness. I don't believe that they can see my heart and that I want to help them so very much. It's almost as if they don't even try because they can't see what's motivating me. Lungisani said that he thinks the learners are telling me what they think I want to hear. They don't want to be embarrassed or ashamed so they are repeating ideas that they have heard are good ideas as career choices. He said that, realistically, one of them may want to be a taxi driver because he knows that he can earn money that way, but he will not say it because they don't want me to think that their choices are shameful or worthy of scorn. Lungisani also said that most of the learners he sees are unbelievably lazy and are not interested in school; they are not interested in hard work. He told me of many matriculants who are just sitting in [name of township] day after day because they are not willing to hand their CVs in to different places like Spar or Checkers. He said they are contemptuous of people that work at those places but that they are not earning anything by sitting around. I told him that I want these children to see beyond the borders of [name of research site], beyond the borders of their school grounds. I want them to be able to think about what their lives will be like, how they are going to find work, and what will happen to them if they don't work hard now and make good choices. He said that *that* all depends on their families and how much money is available. He said that I should tell them that they need to start small and do lowly jobs like work at Spar before they can get the opportunities and money to become engineers

etc. He told me that he is also an orphan and that he constantly compares himself and his position in life to Anele, his best childhood friend. Anele is studying at a tertiary institution because his parents are paying for his tuition. Lungisani said that he cannot do that because he doesn't have the finances for it so he has learnt that it is not a good idea for him to compare himself to others. "People have different lives and different opportunities," he said, "A big thing is made up of lots of small things; for example, small streams flow into rivers, rivers flow into bigger rivers and big rivers flow into the ocean". I like this a lot; it is such a good metaphor for life (RC/Obs/RJ).

This study challenged me academically and emotionally. It often felt like an uphill battle but I was so enriched by it as a person and as a learning support teacher that I would gladly do it over again.

6.3. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

6.3.1. Strengths

The study had numerous strengths that contributed to its success. First, the intervention results were positive and proved that I had succeeded in improving the learners' metacognitive awareness (MARS), their English reading comprehension (test), given them a new skill set for reading in different subjects, created a community of learners, encouraged autonomy and furthered the development of their individual voices. Second, the research design played a prominent role in this study. Action research provided a means of working with the learners and in the school that was both flexible and responsive to their emerging needs and the changes at the research site (Dick, 1993). O'Brien (2001) asserts that action research as a research design is appropriate where circumstances are ambiguous, as was the case here. Moreover, action research is often used in communities where a holistic change or greater understanding is urgently needed, which made it even more suitable for this study. The learners were empowered through increasing their knowledge of a status language and enabled to achieve better academic results by improving their use and understanding of the LoLT. I aimed to achieve change through action as part of praxis. The cycles of action and reflection helped me plan activities carefully and provided an excellent 'feedback loop'. Third, I was fortunate to have been familiar with the Xhosa culture and language before entering the school. This made the intervention phase much easier, and the more I learnt about the culture, the more I could effect change through action within acceptable cultural boundaries.

6.3.2. Limitations

Three limitations affected this study: language, the translator's mediation, and the school culture. First, language as a barrier to learning and communication was the most prominent limitation of this study. I tried to compensate for this weakness by employing a translator to ensure that the learners were able to access the metacognitive knowledge that I offered them. The use of a translator provided its own challenges. The translator's presence became a strength as his

contributions to the lessons went beyond translating and he played an integral role in the “community of learners”. The learners were easily able to wrestle with new concepts under Lungisani’s guidance, but it also complicated the intervention as he acted as a language mediator. In his role as translator, he mediated the thoughts that I directed at the learners through language and he mediated their mental processes and learning through language. In some ways, this could have been seen as detrimental to the study but the benefits of his translation far outweighed any negative consequences for me as the researcher. Third, developing “boundary crossing competence” was challenging at times. Akkerman and Bakker (2011, p. 133) define a boundary as a “sociocultural difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction.” The challenge of cultural boundary crossing is summed up well by Engeström, Engeström, and Kärkkäinen (1995, p. 319), who note that a researcher straddling cultural boundaries faces “the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations.” I attempted to achieve this “hybrid space” so that we could all exist as a special type of community with a separate culture. Suchman (1994) noted that the unfamiliarity with cultural territory often renders the researcher unqualified to some extent. I felt “unqualified” at times. Even though I was familiar with Xhosa culture, the school culture required a lot of adjustment on my part. The natural flow of learning at the school was quite fragmented and difficult to navigate. I was at once both part of and active in two different activity systems: the first being the ordered academic world of tertiary studies and the second being the often chaotic school environment where I was teacher, co-researcher, “*umlungkazi*” [white woman], authority figure, and friend. However, the research process could not have happened without my willingness to try and cross cultural boundaries through language and a desire to understand.

6.4. Recommendations

6.4.1. Recommendations for future research

I recommend that future researchers use multiple iterations of the action research cycle as I believe that this type of intervention would be increasingly beneficial to the research participants. In order to do this, I suggest a longer intervention phase with fewer contact sessions per week to lessen the load on the research participants. I also suggest that researchers seek to improve the sustainability of their efforts within the research site. This may be done by training school staff or by establishing an extracurricular club that teaches learners metacognitive strategies through peer-to-peer tutoring. This would both overcome the communication barrier and better align with the action research goal of sustainable change. As stated previously, action researchers are interested in sustainability and equipping people with new knowledge and skills from the research findings that will allow them to continue as agents of change after the research process is complete (Hills and Mullet, 2000).

6.4.2. Implications for teaching

The study results were in accordance with previous studies attesting to the great improvements made in the Foundation and Intermediate phases by mother-tongue speakers who received training in the use of metacognitive reading strategies. Therefore, it would seem that metacognitive instruction would benefit many South African learners but the success of such an endeavor would depend on intensive and extensive teacher training. Implementing metacognitive instruction in schools without pre-service and in-service training of teachers would be counterproductive. Teachers would need to be well-versed in metacognitive practices and instruction through clear, comprehensive training programmes before training learners. I acknowledge that there are many barriers to the implementation of metacognitive instruction in schools within the current education crisis in South Africa and so have tried to make my recommendations realistic.

Firstly, I suggest teaching critical thinking skills as a foundation for metacognitive training. Kuhn and Dean (2004) propose that critical thinking requires two types of skill families: inquiry and argument. In the classroom, inquiry skills should lead learners to believe that there is something to find out and that the content being presented in class is not automatically true and complete. On the other hand, argument skills require deep level processing of discourses. Through regular discussion, learners will be able to internalise questions such as “How do you know?” or “What makes you say that?” and apply them to their own thoughts (Kuhn & Dean, 2004). Metacognition can therefore be facilitated through allowing learners to reflect and evaluate their classroom activities, forcing them to seek out the value of new information and tasks for themselves. Teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for this to take place and to allow for the internalisation of argument skills. This could be achieved for example, by adjusting the Life Orientation syllabus to include the teaching of critical thinking skills as a prerequisite for metacognitive instruction. As an aside, this suggestion obviously depends on the quality and character of the teachers involved, which raises numerous concerns as a topic on its own, but it remains one that warrants further investigation in the future.

Secondly, metacognitive strategy instruction requires slow and deliberate training in the use and application of different strategies. Learners need to know how and why a strategy should be used in order to master it. Therefore, only a few strategies should be taught at a time to allow the learners to successfully integrate them into their cognitive repertoires. Dymock and Nicholson's (2010) five metacognitive strategies provided a solid base from which to work in this study. The strategies are broad enough to be adapted to any subject content and could form a helpful set of introductory strategies. I would make the goal of such an exercise to teach learners how to build accurate mental representations of text, which is a skill that can be used across the curriculum and outside the classroom. I believe that this is more likely to be achieved if learners are taught how to make detailed, accurate mind maps.

Furthermore, one hopes that independent readers are a product of any education system but for this to be accomplished in South Africa many changes will be needed in the educational sphere. Based on my findings in this study and the 2012 findings, I suggest that all high school learners have a brief “refresher” course in preparatory reading and phonics. In this way, weaker readers will be identified early on and can receive the necessary support to improve their reading and reading comprehension. I recommend strongly that this takes place in rural schools especially where teachers are often ESL learners themselves. Another ongoing practice should be vocabulary training in order to expand ESL learners’ English vocabularies and thus indirectly improve their reading comprehension.

6.5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine whether the English reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners could be enhanced through metacognitive instruction. I investigated three aspects: metacognitive awareness, metacognitive skills and strategies, and transfer. Making use of action research, embedded in a paradigm of praxis as a research design, I achieved positive results after one iteration of the action research cycle. Good progress was made in high-level and anaphoric inferencing. The learners incorporated a larger number of global and problem-solving metacognitive strategies into their metacognitive repertoires and demonstrated heightened levels of metacognitive awareness. Constructing mental models proved to be particularly effective as a strategy.

As the study has shown, metacognitive instruction is effective as a tool for enhancing ESL reading comprehension. However, the study findings also revealed that cultural and social factors play a very influential role in individuals’ learning and therefore also in their reading and reading comprehension.

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Addendum A: MARSI

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory
(MARSI) Version 1.0

Kouider Mokhtari and Carla Reichard © 2002

DIRECTIONS: Listed below are statements about what people do when they read academic or school- related materials such as textbooks, library books, etc. Five numbers follow each statement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and each number means the following:

- 1 means "I never or almost never do this."
- 2 means "I do this only occasionally."
- 3 means "I sometimes do this." (About 50% of the time.)
- 4 means "I usually do this."
- 5 means "I always or almost always do this."

After reading each statement, circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that applies to you using the scale provided. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the statements in this inventory.

TYPE	STRATEGIES	SCALE				
		1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	1. I have a purpose in mind when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	2. I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	3. I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	4. I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	5. When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	6. I summarise what I read to reflect on important information in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	7. I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	8. I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	9. I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	10. I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	11. I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	12. I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	13. I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	14. I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	15. I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	16. When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	17. I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	18. I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	19. I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	20. I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	21. I try to picture or visualise information to help remember what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	22. I use typographical aids like bold face and italics to identify key information.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	23. I critically analyse and evaluate the information presented in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	24. I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	25. I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	26. I try to guess what the material is about when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	27. When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
SUP	28. I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
GLOB	29. I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
PROB	30. I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	1	2	3	4	5

Reference: Mokhtari, K., & Reichard, C. (2002). Assessing students' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94* (2), 249-259.

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory

SCORING RUBRIC

Student Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

Grade in School: 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th College Other

1. Write your response to each statement (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in each of the blanks.
2. Add up the scores under each column. Place the result on the line under each column.
3. Divide the score by the number of statements in each column to get the average for each subscale.
4. Calculate the average for the inventory by adding up the subscale scores and dividing by 30.
5. Compare your results to those shown below.
6. Discuss your results with your teacher or tutor.

Global Reading Strategies (GLOB Subscale)	Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB Subscale)	Support Reading Strategies (SUP Subscale)	Overall Reading Strategies
--	---	--	----------------------------

1. _____	8. _____	2. _____	GLOB _____
3. _____	11. _____	5. _____	PROB _____
4. _____	13. _____	6. _____	SUP _____
7. _____	16. _____	9. _____	
10. _____	18. _____	12. _____	
14. _____	21. _____	15. _____	
17. _____	27. _____	20. _____	
19. _____	30. _____	24. _____	
22. _____		28. _____	
23. _____			
25. _____			
26. _____			
29. _____			

_____ GLOB Score	_____ PROB Score	_____ SUP Score	_____ Overall Score
_____ GLOB Mean	_____ PROB Mean	_____ SUP Mean	_____ Overall Mean

KEY TO AVERAGES: 3.5 or higher = High 2.5 – 3.4 = Medium 2.4 or lower = Low

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES: The overall average indicates how often you use reading strategies when reading academic materials. The average for each subscale of the inventory shows which group of strategies (i.e., global, problem-solving, and support strategies) you use most when reading. With this information, you can tell if you are very high or very low in any of these strategy groups. It is important to note, however, that the best possible use of these strategies depends on your reading ability in English, the type of material read, and your purpose for reading it. A low score on any of the subscales or parts of the inventory indicates that there may be some strategies in these parts that you might want to learn about and consider using when reading (adapted from Oxford 1990: 297-300).

Addendum B: Reading comprehension test

Question 1

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Traditional medicine and conservation

- 1 The use of herbs in both traditional and modern medicine has led to a new environmental problem.
- 2 Plants are a source of fuel, building and craftwork material, dyes, food supplements – and medicine – for people all over southern Africa. Each year thousands of indigenous plants are gathered from the bushveld, grasslands and forests, putting severe pressure on the species collected. In addition, the habitat in which these species occur is shrinking as more and more natural vegetation is destroyed for agriculture, timber, industry and urban settlement.
- 3 Researchers are investigating the active ingredients of medicinal plant species, as these may be useful in modern medicine. Many of the plants collected for medicinal use are specially protected species i.e. collection of the plants without a permit is illegal. Although people who illegally collect protected species may be prosecuted, the demand for these plants is so great that collectors are often prepared to take the risk of being caught in order to earn a living.
- 4 Research has shown that the massive demand for bark, roots, and whole plants from wild populations is causing a critical decline in population numbers of some species, and may lead to numerous extinctions. At greatest risk are the popular, slow-growing species that have limited distribution. Concern about this problem has brought conservationists and resource users together to investigate possible solutions.
- 5 The cultivation of alternative sources of supply is crucial. However, it is important that plants be made available in large enough quantities and at low enough prices to take the pressure off wild stocks. If the price is too high, then it will be cheaper to collect from the wild. Most gatherers of medicinal plants are women who are forced to over-exploit this resource as one of their few income-earning options. It is important that traditional healers and gatherers grow their own plants.
- 6 Traditional medicines also have the potential to form the basis of pharmaceutical drugs for the treatment of a range of diseases. Thus the loss of these potentially valuable generic resources ultimately affects the whole of society.
- 7 African traditional knowledge is the key to indigenous plant use and has been accumulated through trial and error over thousands of years. This knowledge is disappearing at an ever-increasing rate as skilled herbalists and practitioners die. Ethnobotanists play an important role in conserving and recording this anecdotal traditional knowledge.

Adapted from Janisch, R. & Macrae, C. (2005). *English for all*. Pretoria: Macmillan.

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Question 1

Answer the following questions:

1.1 Read the quote below and answer the questions that follow. *Think about what you already know.*

“Plants are a source of fuel, building and craftwork material, dyes, food supplements...”

1.1.1. Write down the name of a plant used for medicine (1)

1.1.2 Write down the name of a plant that people use for building (1)

1.1.3 Write down the name of a plant used to dye clothing different colours (1)

1.1.4 Write down the name of a plant used for food supplement (1)

1.2 Which ONE of the following statements best expresses the theme of the passage above?

Choose from the options below:

A Indigenous plants have medicinal value but conservationists warn that the plants are fast becoming endangered due to increased private and commercial demand

B The women who collect endangered plant species for money are responsible for the decline in the indigenous plant populations

C Traditional medicine and modern medicine are competing for the use of endangered plant species

D Researchers and conservationists are looking for solutions to the problem of endangered indigenous plants becoming extinct (1)

Question number	Circle the correct letter – choose only ONE letter			
1.2	A	B	C	D

1.3 Read paragraphs 1 and 2 slowly and answer the following questions:

1.3.1 Are indigenous plants always classified as herbs as stated in paragraph 1?

Motivate your answer. (2)

1.3.2 Name two factors from the text that are causing the loss of indigenous plants in the wild. (2)

1 _____

2 _____

1.4 Read paragraph 3 and answer the following questions:

1.4.1 In your own words, explain what a “permit” is, mentioned in paragraph 3.

(3)

1.4.2 Read the following definition and choose the correct one for the word “prosecute” as it is being used in paragraph 3?

Prosecute *vb* **prosecutes prosecuting prosecuted. 1** (tr) to bring criminal action against a person. **2a** to seek redress through legal proceedings. **2b** to institute or conduct a prosecution. **3** (tr) to practise (a profession or trade).

A Definition 1

B Definition 2a

C Definition 2b

D Definition 3

(1)

Question number	Circle the correct letter – choose only ONE letter			
1.4.2	A	B	C	D

1.4.3 Use the table below to compare the similarities between the role of people who illegally collect endangered indigenous plants and the role of rhino poachers. *In this answer you will need to use what you already know about rhino poachers and what you have learnt about people who collect plants illegally to answer the question. Also, focus specifically on the poachers that actually kill the rhinos in your answer and not the people that sell the rhino horns for money.* (3)

People who collect indigenous plants	People who poach rhinos

1.5 Read paragraph 4 and answer the following questions:

1.5.1 Give an example of a person in your community who uses bark, roots and whole plants for medicine? *Think about what you already know.* (1)

1.5.2 Predict the effect of higher unemployment rates on the wild indigenous plant populations. Motivate your answer. *Think about what you already know.* (3)

-
- 1.5.3 Explain why slow-growing plants are most likely to become extinct while growing in the wild compared to fast-growing plants. Think about what you have read. (3)

- 1.5.4 Read the excerpt below and rewrite it as ONE sentence capturing all the important information. You are being asked to summarise this excerpt:

“Research has shown that the massive demand for bark, roots, and whole plant from wild populations is causing a critical decline in population numbers of some species, and may lead to numerous extinctions. At greatest risk are popular, slow-growing species that have limited distribution” (5)

- 1.5.5 What does “this problem” in paragraph 4 refer to? (2)

- 1.6 Read paragraph 5 and answer the following questions:

- 1.6.1 Suggest a synonym from the paragraph that would describe the production of large quantities of plants at low prices. (1)

- 1.6.2 What does the word “quantities” mean?

Choose from the options below:

- A A number or an amount of something
- B Something that can be measured and weighed
- C An unpredictable person
- D Big fields (1)

Question number	Circle the correct letter – choose only ONE letter			
1.6.2	A	B	C	D

1.6.3 Do you think it would be a good idea to make farms that grow indigenous plants as a possible solution for keeping the wild indigenous plant safe? *Explain your answer.*

(2)

1.6.4 Imagine that you are a farmer who grows indigenous plants on your farm. Justify why you could sell some indigenous plants for more money than other indigenous plants?

(2)

1.6.5 Suggest a reason why *women* (and not men) often collect endangered indigenous plants.

(2)

1.6.6 Look at question 1.5.2 again. Why should traditional healers and gatherers grow their own indigenous plants? *Think about what you have read in the text and what you know.*

(2)

1.6.7 What does the word “exploit” mean?

Choose from the options below:

- A A heroic act
- B An important act
- C To take advantage of something or someone to benefit yourself
- D To make the best use of (1)

Question number	Circle the correct letter – choose only ONE letter			
1.6.7	A	B	C	D

1.7 Read paragraph 6 and answer the questions that follow:

1.7.1 Explain why many people in society will be affected by the loss of indigenous plants. (0.5 x 4 = 2)

1.7.2 Discuss why the text says that losing the plants as a resource would affect all of society? *Base your answer on the information provided.* (2)

Total = 45 marks

Question 2

In the following section, there are a few underlined words. In the answer spaces provided, write down what each underlined word refers to. *This section is about "pointing words".*

For example: Andy was a very angry boy. He fought at school every day.

He _____ (refers to) Andy _____

Fashion with a conscience

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), with more than 800 000 members, form the largest animal rights organisation in the world.

The fashion industry is not just about beautiful clothes and models. The industry has lent itself to a good cause, protecting innocent animals from being trapped and shot for their fur, which is then used to make fur coats, belts, shoes and bags!

Many fashion designers have vowed not to use fur in their designs. They support an organisation called PETA. The acronym PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Founded in 1980, PETA is dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals. PETA operates under the simple principle that animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on or use for entertainment. PETA focuses its attention on four areas where the largest numbers of animals suffer the most intensely for the longest periods of time: on factory farms, in laboratories, in the fur trade and in the entertainment industry.

This group of people who want to put an end to the killing of animals in this cruel way, which only benefits people who want to look good in the latest fashions.

So what are these fashion houses doing to help fight against the slaughter of innocent animals? They get well-known models to wear T-shirts saying "I do not wear fur", with the PETA slogan below. This kind of advertising helps raise awareness of how animals suffer, and encourages designers to use fake fur instead of real fur in their designs. If the designers refuse to use fur, this means that the companies that trade in fur do not make a profit. Celebrities such as Charlize Theron support PETA, she is against the use of fur in designs. By contrast Jennifer Lopez, who is also known as J.Lo, has angered the organisation by wearing fur.

Adapted from Carter, Bangeni & Thesen (2006). *Keys to English: Learner's Book Grade 11*. Sandton, RSA: Heinemann.

itself _____ (1)

their _____ (1)

They _____ (1)

its _____ (1)

she _____ (1)

Total = 5 marks

Addendum C: Informal questionnaire

Name: _____

READING COMPREHENSION AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS

1. What are your feelings about learning in English?

2. What do you do first when you're given something to read? What do you next? What do you do after that?

3. What do you think about when you're reading?

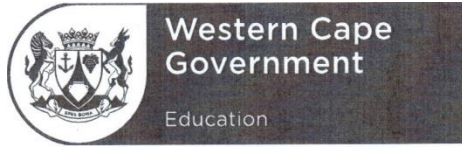
4. What do you do if you don't understand what you're reading?

Addendum D: Focus group interview schedule

Focus group interview schedule

1. How did you feel about our meetings?
 - Prompt - What made you attend and what made you stay away?
2. Why would you recommend these lessons to your friends?
 - Prompt - If yes, why? If no, why? Do you think you would recommend these lessons to your friends?
3. If you were teaching English reading comprehension (i.e. if you were me) to your peers, what would you do differently?
 - Prompt -What would you change?
4. Which strategy/ies that we have learnt together has/have been the most helpful? How have you used them? When do you use them?
 - Prompt - In what ways have these lessons helped you to understand what you read?
 - Prompt – Which subjects do you use these strategies in? In English?
5. What aspects do you find are easier now when you read in English? What aspects are still difficult?
6. Have any of the things that we have learnt together helped you understand what you read in other classes? Life Sciences?

Addendum E: WCED



Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20120702-0022

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Rosanne Cockcroft
Faculty of Education
Stellenbosch University

Dear Mrs Rosanne Cockcroft

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) LEARNERS IN THE FET BAND

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **01 April 2013 till 31 May 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 03 July 2012

Addendum F: REC Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

6 May 2013

Tel.: 021 - 808-9003
Enquiries: Mr. WA Beukes
Email: wabeukes@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 84/2012

Ms S Cockroft
Dept of Educational Psychology

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE

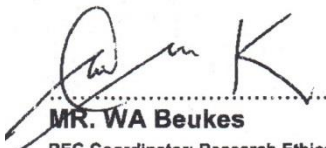
With regard to your application with reference number, **84/2012** I would like to inform you that the project, " *Enhancing reading comprehension through metacognitive strategies for English Second Language (ESL) learners in the FET band.* ", was approved on the following proviso's:

The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.

1. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
2. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
3. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.
4. This ethics clearance is valid for one year from **30 August 2012 – 29 August 2013**

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards



MR. WA Beukes

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humaniora)
Registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC): REC-050411-032

Addendum G: Principal's consent form

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOL

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Your school has been targeted as a research site for a research study conducted by Rosanne Cockcroft [student in MEd Educational Support (100% thesis) with student number 14600714], from the Educational Psychology department at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute towards meeting the requirements for a Master's in Education degree. The school was selected because it has many isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 and 11 girls who are English Second Language learners learning in English as a Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT). The title of the study is as follows:

Enhancing reading comprehension through metacognitive strategies for English Second Language (ESL) learners in the FET band.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to determine whether metacognitive strategies can enhance the reading comprehension of Grade 10 and 11 isiXhosa-speaking learners.

2. PROCEDURES

The participating learners will be divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group.

The learners in the experimental group will be asked to participate in the following ways:

A pilot study

An initial pilot study will be conducted in the school to determine the usefulness of the research questionnaire. During this pilot phase, learners who are not going to participate in the actual study will be asked to complete the questionnaire from a critical perspective. Once the questionnaire has been completed, the learners will be asked to provide suggestions and comments on how the researcher can adapt or improve the questionnaire to make it more suitable for the Grade 10 and 11 research participants.

Pre-test, intervention, post-test

Subsequent to the pilot study, the participating Grade 10 and 11 learners will be asked to complete the revised questionnaire and a reading comprehension test. These will be analysed for evidence of the learners' metacognitive strategy use and their levels of English reading comprehension. Based on these results, the researcher will teach certain metacognitive strategies to the learners in an intervention phase aimed at addressing the learners' areas of need. This phase will be divided into four instruction periods taking place on the school premises during school hours. The researcher will teach subject content, using it as the context and content for teaching metacognitive strategy use. The learners will be explicitly instructed how to use the strategies, when they are most appropriate and why they are important. The researcher will need class time during English Language lessons to instruct the learners. Once the learners have mastered the use of the selected strategies, the researcher will administer the questionnaire and comprehension test again for the final quantitative data collection. The questionnaire and reading comprehension tests will also be administered during class time if possible.

Focus groups

Lastly, certain learners will be asked to participate in focus group discussions about their metacognitive strategy use. There will be two groups: one consisting of six Grade 10 girls and one consisting of six Grade 11 girls. During the focus group discussion, the learners and the researcher will discuss the learners' experiences in detail. The researcher will ask questions about what strategies the learners use, how often they use them and whether they influence their English reading comprehension. These focus group discussions will also take place at the school and should take approximately one hour but class time will not be needed for these activities.

Participants for the focus group discussions will be selected based on certain criteria. Firstly, the learner must be a mother tongue isiXhosa speaker; secondly, the learner must be female; thirdly, the learner must be between 15 and 17 years old and fourthly, the learner must be adequately proficient in English with a minimum of 50% for the subject 'English Language' in her Grade 9 December results.

Lastly, should the results of the study show that the learners in the experimental group benefitted from the intervention, the researcher will return to [REDACTED] and repeat the same process with the learners who were in the control group so that they can also benefit.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Participation in this study does not pose any threats for the learners or place them in any danger of harm.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no certain benefits available to the learners personally from participating in this study. However, published literature suggests that should they choose to actively participate in this study, their academic results may improve if the strategies are understood and applied. In addition, the results of this study may add to the body of knowledge surrounding the metacognitive strategy use amongst mother tongue isiXhosa speakers. As there is little known about this topic, this study aims to shed light on this vital aspect of isiXhosa learners' education and improve the research participants' reading comprehension as much as possible.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There shall be no remuneration for participating in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the learners will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with their permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using numerical codes as opposed to participants' names. Each focus group participant will be given a numerical code which will be attached to her data. Furthermore, all data including audio recordings, obtained through the questionnaires and focus groups will be stored on a protected premises in sealed containers. Participants may review the tapes but may not edit the recorded data except to clarify certain issues. Such changes will be recorded by hand. These recordings will only be used for this study and will be erased six months after the study is complete.

In addition, only the researcher and her supervising lecturers will have access to the coded data. The researcher may discuss certain information with her supervisors in order to refine and improve the study methods and conclusions. Once the study is completed, the findings may be

published in the public domain. However, learners' and teachers' personal information as well as the school's records and documentation will remain confidential through the use of numerical codes and pseudonyms.

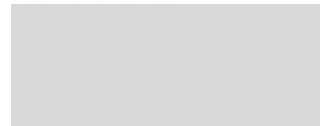
7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants, as volunteers, are able to choose whether they will participate or not. If they volunteer to be in this study, they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. The learner may also refuse to answer any questions if she doesn't want to and still remain in the study. The investigator may also withdraw any learner from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so such as the participation criteria for the focus group discussions remain unmet by a participating learner.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Rosanne Cockcroft



Cell phone:
Email: petaldear@yahoo.com

Dr. Marietjie Oswald
Second Floor
G.G. Cillie Building
Stellenbosch University
7600

Telephone: 021-8082057
Email: mmoswald@sun.ac.za

Prof. Christa van der Walt
Office 3015
G.G. Cillie Building
Stellenbosch University
7600

Telephone: 021-8082284
Email: cvdwalt@sun.ac.za

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The learners may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. They will not be waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of their participation in this research study. Participants can contact Mrs Marlene Fouche (021 808 4222; mfouche@sun.ac.za) at the Unit for Research Development with any questions about their rights as a research subject.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily for my school and learners to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of School Principal

Signature of School Principal

14/1/13
Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [name of the school principal]. He was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

R. Goukroft
Signature of Investigator

15.01.2013
Date

Addendum H: Parental consent form

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY PARENTAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Enhancing reading comprehension through metacognitive strategies for English Second Language (ESL) learners in the FET band

Your child has been asked to take part in a research study conducted by Mrs. Rosanne Cockcroft (BEd Honours), from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will allow the researcher to receive a Master's degree. Your child was selected to take part in this study because he/she is a Grade 10 learner at [REDACTED] School and a mother tongue isiXhosa speaker.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to make the English reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners better through metacognitive training.

2. PROCEDURES

If your child volunteers to take part in this study, I would ask him/her to do the following things:

Contact sessions and dialogue journals

I will come to your child's school every week where I will meet with him/her after school along with the other learners taking part. These contact sessions will take place twice a week and will last for the second and third terms of 2013. Each contact session will be 1.5 hours long. The learners and I will work on their reading comprehension by looking at different skills and strategies to improve their reading. We will also do a bit of baking and similar activities so that they know about different types of reading texts such as recipes and instructions.

During this time, each child will be asked to keep a dialogue journal for writing down his or her thoughts. A dialogue journal is a book in which a child can write down anything that he/she wants to. They may write about their thoughts, feelings, memories or new experiences. Someone older than reads through what each child has written and writes a response. These journals are confidential (private) and only I will read through them. Every child will be asked to write reflectively (thinking back) about the week's contact sessions, discussing whether they were good or bad and why. To strengthen their confidence and familiarity with the English language, they will also be asked to write about a second topic which they consider important. The dialogue journals will not be marked.

Focus groups

Your child will be asked to take part in focus groups twice during the research process – once in the second term and once in the third term. A focus group consists of a group of people that sit together to discuss a certain topic. One person usually leads the discussion by asking specific questions about a certain topic. In the second term's discussion, I will act as the leader and will ask the learners about their experiences of reading comprehension in English. In the third term, the focus group will discuss whether your child thinks the research was successful or not. Therefore, I will ask each child about his/her experiences during the research: whether his/her English reading comprehension improved and whether he/she could see a difference in his/her other subject results. These focus groups will last one hour and will take place at [REDACTED] on both occasions.

Mrs. Rosanne Cockcroft

Principal researcher

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Dr. Marietjie Oswald

Supervisor

Telephone: (021) 808 2057

Address: Educational Psychology Department, G.G. Cilliers building, Stellenbosch University

Prof. Christa van der Walt

Co-supervisor

Telephone: (021) 808 2284

Address: English Department, G.G. Cilliers building, Stellenbosch University

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your child's participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact Mrs Marlene Fouche (021 808 4222; mfouche@sun.ac.za) at the Unit for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to my child in English and he/she is in command of this language. My child was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his/her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily for my child to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.



Name of Subject/Participant



Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)




Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

11 April 2013

Date

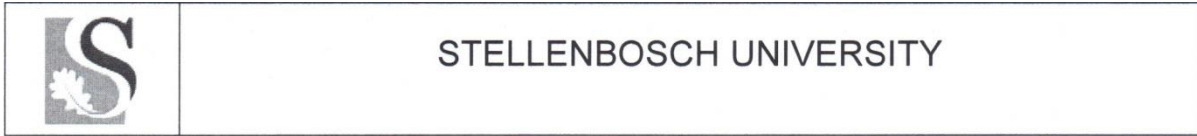
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to the participating child  [name of the child]. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Addendum I: Learner assent form



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Enhancing reading comprehension through metacognitive strategies for English Second Language (ESL) learners in the FET band

RESEARCHERS NAME(S): Mrs. Rosanne Cockcroft

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER:

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to discover new information about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about the way children learn. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping children learn.

What is this research project all about?

This research project is all about reading comprehension. I want to know whether I can improve the reading comprehension of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners when they read in English. I will be teaching the learners strategies and skills that will change their thinking so that together we can change their reading.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a Grade 10 learner at [redacted] and a mother tongue isiXhosa speaker.

Who is doing the research?

I am a student at Stellenbosch University and I am doing this research project so that I can graduate with a Master's degree.

What will happen to me in this study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

Contact sessions and dialogue journals

I will come to your school every week where I will meet with you after school along with the other learners who want to take part in the research project. These contact sessions will take place twice a week and will last for the second and third terms of 2013. Each contact session will be 1.5 hours long. We will work on your reading comprehension by looking at different skills and strategies to improve your reading. We will also do a bit of baking and similar activities so that you learn about different types of reading texts such as recipes and instructions.

During this time, you will be asked to keep a dialogue journal for writing down your thoughts. A dialogue journal is a book in which a child can write down anything that he/she wants to. They may write about their thoughts, feelings, memories or new experiences. Someone older then reads through

what each child has written and writes a response. These journals are private and only I will read through them. You will be asked to write reflectively (this means to think back) about the week's contact sessions, discussing whether they were good or bad and why. To strengthen your confidence and familiarity with the English language, you will also be asked to write about a second topic which you consider important. This could be your family, your girl/boyfriend, sport, politics, HIV/AIDS etc. The dialogue journals will not be marked.

Focus groups

You will be asked to take part in focus groups twice during the research time frame – once in the second term and once in the third term. A focus group consists of a group of people who sit together to discuss a certain topic. One person usually leads the discussion by asking specific questions about a certain topic. In the second term's discussion, I will act as the leader and will ask you and the other learners about your experiences of reading comprehension in English. In the third term, the focus group will discuss whether you think that the research was successful or not. Therefore, I will ask you about your experiences during the research: whether your English reading comprehension improved and whether you could see a difference in your other subject results. These focus groups will last one hour and will take place at Kayamandi High School on both occasions.

Interviews

You may be asked to participate in an in-depth interview. In this interview, we will talk about your reading comprehension, learning in English and your experiences during the research process. This will be half an hour long and will take place at Kayamandi High School.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Nothing bad can happen to you during this research but if you feel uncomfortable or in pain at any time, you must tell your parents, a teacher or me immediately.

Can anything good happen to me?

You may find that your school marks improve if you apply what you learn in our lessons to your other subjects. This cannot be guaranteed though. Hopefully through this research, other researchers will also know more about mother tongue isiXhosa-speakers and their English reading comprehension.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential, which means that no one will know about it unless you tell them. I may only talk about your progress to my supervisors.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors:

Mrs. Rosanne Cockcroft

Principal researcher

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Dr. Marietjie Oswald

Supervisor

Telephone: (021) 808 2057

Address: Educational Psychology Department, G.G. Cilliers building, Stellenbosch University

Prof. Christa van der Walt

Co-supervisor

Telephone: (021) 808 2284

Address: English Department, G.G. Cilliers building, Stellenbosch University

What if I do not want to do this?

You can refuse to take part in this study even if your parents signed the consent form agreeing that you would participate. If you decide to take part and then don't want to later on, you can stop coming

to the lessons without getting into trouble. Please just tell me before you go so that I know that you won't be joining us again.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?



 YES NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

 YES NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

 YES NO

Signature of Learner

11 April 2013
Date

Addendum J: Resource 1 – Treasure Hunt instructions

Instructions for the treasure hunt conducted in week 2 of the intervention.

This was printed on A4 pages in a large font size so that the learners had to look towards me. This gave me the opportunity to watch their eye movements and subvocalisation habits. In addition, I conducted this exercise because I was uncertain how high their English language proficiency levels were.

I have presented the instructions as in a small font size. In the lesson they were presented across numerous A4 sheets of paper in a large font size.

Molweni!

Ninjani?

As you read this, your eyes are absorbing the shape and form of the letters and sending that information to your brain. Your brain is busy trying to make sense of the letters or trying to grasp the meaning of the written words ... you are trying to comprehend what the words are saying 😊

A packet of food is hidden somewhere in this room. If you would like some food, look up at me now with a big smile on your face and put your left hand on the desk in front of you. When I smile back at you, slowly get up from your chair and go and find the packet.

Today's lesson is going to be relaxed. You are going to receive a reading comprehension test to finish during our time together.

Answer every question in the test.

The test is not for marks.

Do your best!

Any questions?

Addendum K: Resource 2 – The English alphabet

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		

Addendum L: Resource 3 – EasyMix Chocolate Muffin Recipe

You will need:

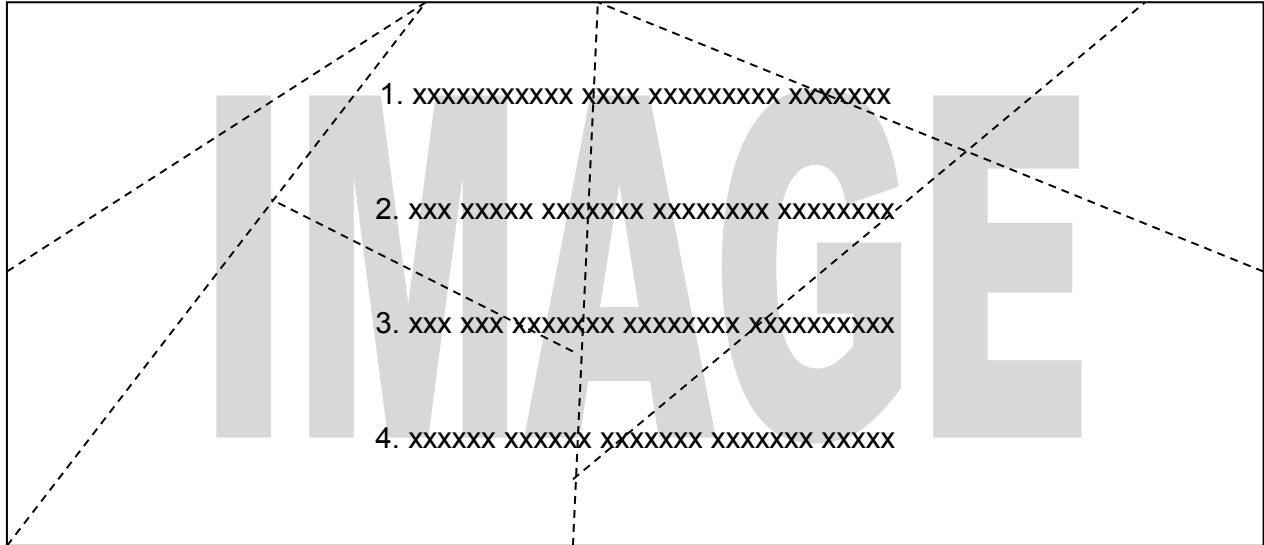
- 1 packet (500g) Snowflake easymix chocolate muffin mix
- 2 extra large eggs
- 160ml (2/3 cup) cooking oil
- 200ml water

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C
2. Place premix into a mixing bowl. Lightly beat sugar, oil, and eggs and add to premix. Mix with a spoon until just combined. Do not over mix.
3. Spoon equal quantities of the mixture into a well-greased muffin pan until two thirds full.
4. Bake for +- 20 minutes. Serve with butter, if preferred.

Addendum M: Resource 4 – Puzzles for group work

The dashed lines represent where the page was cut to make the eight puzzle pieces.



Addendum N: Resource 5 - Word Search

Name: _____

21 May 2013

REVISION OF ENGLISH WORDS

X	H	X	N	L	E	T	T	Z	U	M	S	S	S	W	E	T	E	N	D	C	P	N	I	P
U	D	N	N	H	I	E	Z	P	W	W	A	W	D	P	P	L	L	S	T	G	P	S	E	A
A	N	I	T	I	P	I	T	T	E	W	H	I	I	I	S	O	E	H	I	R	V	I	W	A
L	A	E	L	I	D	E	N	R	E	H	S	T	I	T	N	S	S	N	E	H	R	V	T	S
H	P	H	T	U	S	H	L	H	S	R	G	P	I	I	W	T	W	T	L	S	T	P	T	S
E	N	B	E	A	N	I	A	T	U	P	K	N	L	N	H	A	S	P	W	U	L	A	B	B
M	I	A	E	I	I	E	R	P	K	N	E	W	O	E	I	T	T	K	E	A	N	V	A	A
I	E	R	S	W	I	T	T	E	V	I	S	I	I	E	S	U	S	L	S	D	N	L	E	N
T	G	R	W	I	I	I	B	R	W	A	T	R	S	L	G	I	Z	S	P	I	L	P	I	S
T	W	T	L	E	O	I	L	M	L	A	I	N	R	N	O	Z	T	O	S	E	H	E	O	S
R	V	T	E	N	E	W	P	I	G	T	T	N	T	T	U	T	I	L	R	K	I	W	I	Z
L	H	O	H	W	W	X	A	I	A	N	U	S	T	P	I	N	E	I	E	R	E	T	T	T
W	U	A	G	V	W	R	T	E	K	A	R	E	T	O	T	T	N	L	E	U	I	I	T	I
I	R	S	V	G	T	S	T	E	H	I	P	Z	Z	I	N	A	O	R	H	N	A	A	R	O
I	O	E	N	H	E	H	S	E	A	A	I	I	S	I	H	G	E	E	H	I	G	A	H	E
U	N	A	E	V	G	E	T	S	O	R	T	E	P	U	N	T	I	I	I	T	I	U	A	T
L	G	R	N	E	D	H	E	S	S	S	T	V	W	W	O	I	T	N	H	D	E	K	M	T
A	E	I	R	L	A	N	S	Z	P	D	A	L	S	H	L	L	E	N	S	W	E	O	E	T
U	R	R	I	T	N	W	R	N	E	R	I	I	G	A	E	S	U	H	I	P	I	E	U	A
E	A	E	E	T	T	C	P	U	T	G	E	T	I	E	I	D	A	C	T	R	N	T	O	O
E	T	E	E	T	E	S	N	P	T	T	A	M	I	E	K	E	I	B	I	A	E	R	T	R
D	A	E	E	M	E	S	O	I	L	N	N	V	I	I	V	S	O	E	E	T	E	O	E	T
O	I	I	E	E	G	E	S	A	E	O	L	I	S	X	I	T	T	E	S	V	E	W	G	E
S	D	L	T	O	U	S	W	O	P	V	T	O	I	R	I	I	Z	I	L	V	H	M	S	I
A	N	G	S	N	T	A	T	S	G	E	E	H	E	H	E	I	I	N	P	I	T	R	I	I

puzzle	meticulous	vain	vein
sweat	sweet	plot	standpoint
ballerina	there	their	premix
gang	whisk	grease	investigation
disruption	it	that	this

Addendum O: Resource 6 – Pointing words

Female	Male	Me	You	It	Many people
She has a dog	He has a dog	I have a dog	You have a dog	It has a dog	They have a dog
The dog belongs to her	The dog belongs to him	The dog belongs to me	The dog belongs to you	The dog belongs to it	The dog belongs to them
The dog is hers	The dog is his	The dog is mine	The dog is yours	The dog belongs to it = the dog is its	The dog is theirs

“a”= one of many

“the” = this/that specific thing/animal/person

“an” = used before words starting with vowels (e.g. egg, apple) and words starting with a ‘silent’ h (e.g. hour)

Addendum P: Resource 7 – Mxit text

Look at the title of the article – what do you know about **Mxit**? What do you know about **HIV counselling**? Write down a few points in your book.

Skim the text by looking at:

- The different headings
- How many paragraphs there are
- Any text in **bold** or *italics*

Draw the following table in your book:

What do I know?	What do I want to know?	What have I learnt?
<i>Fill this block in before reading the article</i>	<i>Fill this block in once you have skimmed the text</i>	<i>Fill this block in after reading the article</i>

Then read the following article and identify all the “pointing words”:

Mxit helps with HIV counselling

By: Duncan Alfreds 2013-07-08 14:23

Cape Town - A local social network has partnered with a counselling service to provide real-time help for teenagers who are in crisis. Mxit announced a partnership with LoveLife to offer text-based counselling to youth on the social network. "Currently, Mxit has a number of counselling services on Mxit including Childline and Angel which deal with whatever issues come up for youth," Mxit vice president for communications Sarah Rice told News24 about the reasoning behind the service.

"We are always looking for new and innovative ways to connect with young people. Quite soon after launching the call centre, we introduced a 'Please call me' feature to ensure that even when people don't have airtime they can still access a counsellor," said Precious Magogodi, Call Centre executive manager. "We have also introduced our counselling persona 'Mizz B' who offers support and advice via a column in the Daily Sun, our Facebook page, and our website," Magogodi added.

Pressure

The service will augment other counselling services offered such as Angel and Childline and the application registered 97 000 users after launch and 5 000 subscribers engaged with counsellors within the first five days after the service launched. Many young people face pressure at critical times and one of Mxit's motivations for launching the application is the need for support of young people under emotional stress. "From the experience of running text-based counselling on Mxit since 2009, Angel, which primarily looks at stress and depression, sees a spike in activity over exams as young people struggle with the pressure. There is another spike around the December holiday period where tensions around family, relationships and what the following year will bring become stressful," said Rice.

Exam periods are also stressful for children and counselling services are required to help kids deal with the anxiety as exams approach as well as help them accept results. "Kids get desperate and we have more children who are bored and are nothing to do. Exam periods also see a spike in calls from children managing their anxiety around exam performance and preparation," said Joan van Niekerk of Childline SA.

The LoveLife app primarily deals with issues around HIV and there are currently four counsellors on standby, but Mxit said this number can be increased to 20 if the need arises. Mxit said that the counselling services will enhance the relevance of the entertainment platform which has 7.3 million monthly active users.

"Having organisations such as LoveLife on our platform ensures that we can play a more meaningful role in improving the lives of our users," said Andrew Rudge, head of Mxit Reach.

Now, fill in the last block of your table in your book 😊

Addendum Q: Resource 8 – Harriet Tubman text

Harriet Tubman: Civil War Spy

By Catherine Clarke Fox

Harriet Tubman is well known for risking her life as a “conductor” in the Underground Railroad, which led escaped slaves to freedom in the North. But did you know that the former slave also served as a spy for the Union during the Civil War and was the first woman in American history to lead a military expedition?

During a time when women were usually restricted to traditional roles like cooking and nursing, she did her share of those jobs. But she also worked side-by-side with men, says writer Tom Allen, who tells her exciting story in the National Geographic book, *Harriet Tubman, Secret Agent*.



Tubman decided to help the Union Army because she wanted freedom for all of the people who were forced into slavery, not just the few she could help by herself. And she convinced many other brave African Americans to join her as spies, even at the risk of being hanged if they were caught.

In one of her most dramatic and dangerous roles, Tubman helped Colonel James Montgomery plan a raid to free slaves from plantations along the Combahee (pronounced “KUM-bee”) River in South Carolina. Early on the morning of June 1, 1863, three gunboats carrying several hundred male soldiers along with Harriet Tubman set out on their mission. Tubman had gathered key information from her scouts about the Confederate positions. She knew where they were hiding along the shore. She also found out where they had placed torpedoes, or barrels filled with gunpowder, in the water. As the early morning fog lifted on some of the South’s most important rice plantations, the Union expedition hit hard. The raiders set fire to buildings and destroyed bridges, so

they couldn't be used by the Confederate Army. They also freed about 750 slaves—men, women, children, and babies—and did not lose one soldier in the attack.

Allen, who writes about this adventure and many others, got to know Tubman well through the months of research he did for the book. The historic details he shares bring Tubman and many other important figures of her time to life.



To gather the facts, Allen searched libraries and the Internet, and even walked in Tubman's footsteps. "I went on the river just south of the area where the raid took place," he says. "You are in that kind of country she would have known, with plenty of mosquitoes and snakes, and there are still dirt roads there today—so you get a feeling of what it was like." Allen says his most exciting moment came when a librarian led him to written accounts by people who actually saw Tubman and the raiders in action.

"She was five feet two inches (157 centimeters) tall, born a slave, had a debilitating illness, and was unable to read or write. Yet here was this tough woman who could take charge and lead men. Put all that together and you get Harriet Tubman. I got to like her pretty quickly because of her strength and her spirit," Allen says.

Addendum R: Summary chart

MY READING Comprehension ATTACK PLAN

Look at the main idea?

- Give me a question about the reading story?
- What do you know about the story?
- What do you know about the story?
- What do you know about the story?

Look at how the text is organized?

- Have you previewed the text?
- Look at how the text is organized
- Look at how the text is organized
- Look at how the text is organized

Look at the length?

- How long is the text?
- How long is the text?
- How long is the text?

Look at the context clues?

- Look at the words before/after
- Ask a friend or your teacher
- Use a dictionary or Google to find the meaning
- Guess the word's meaning

How to make a mind map?

- Draw at least 5 branches
- Draw a circle
- Draw a circle
- Draw a circle

How to Write a Summary

1. Find the main idea

2. Find the supporting details

3. Write the summary

4. Check your summary

Mind Map

Central idea: *Reading Comprehension*

Branches:

- Supporting info
- Supporting info
- Supporting info
- Supporting info
- Supporting info
- Supporting info

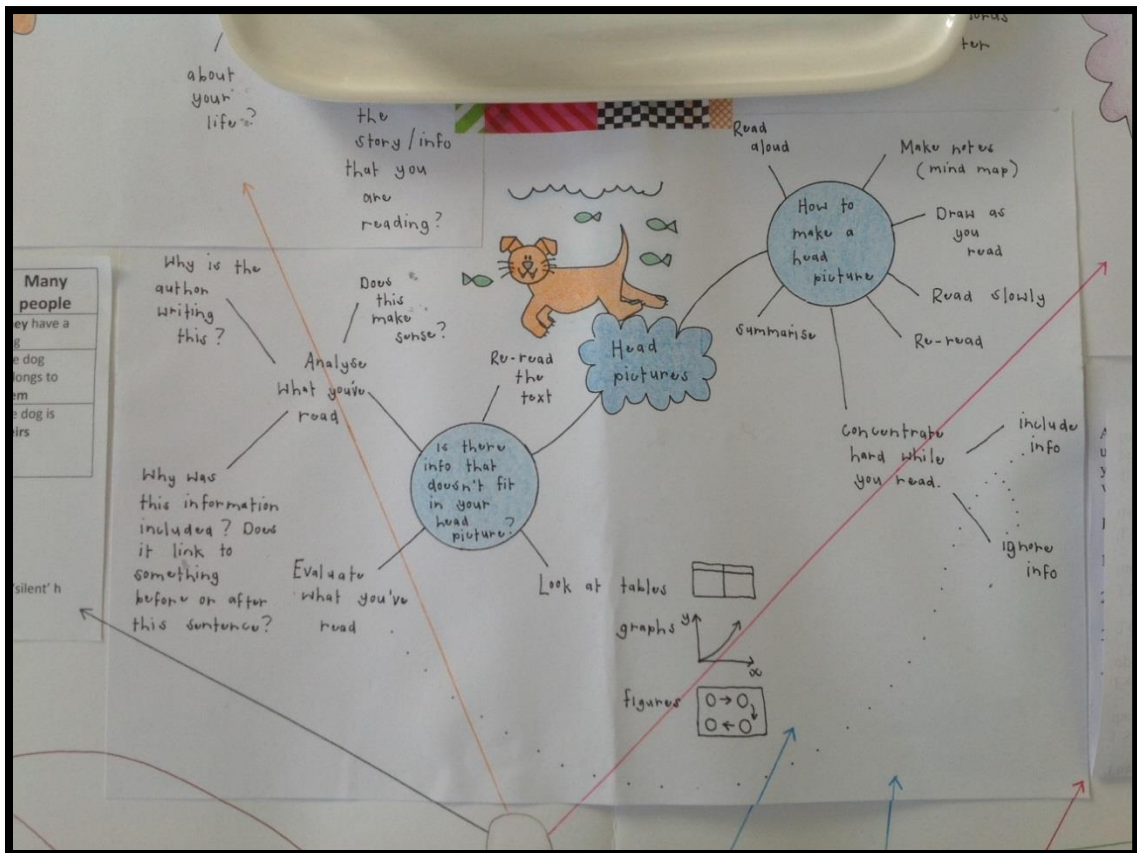
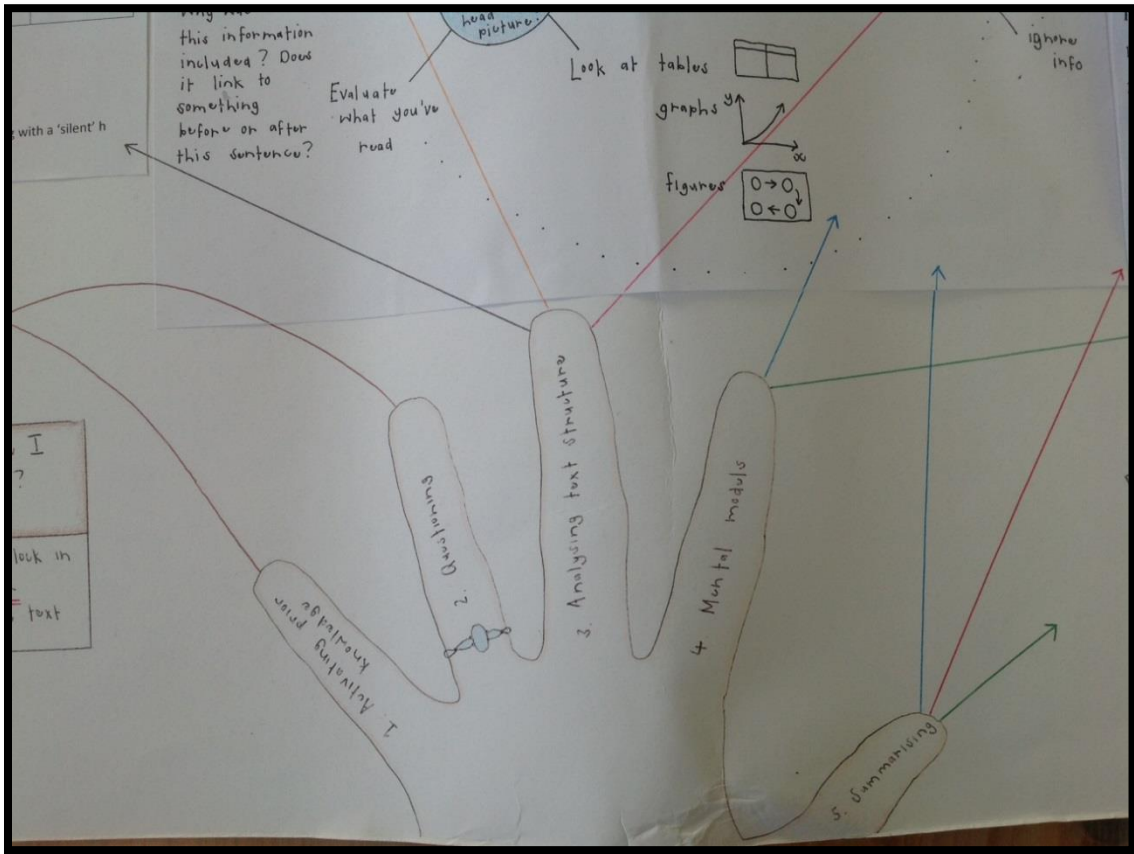
KWL

What do I know?	What do I want to know?	What have I learned?
Fill this blank in before reading the text	Fill this blank in now you have finished reading the text	Fill this blank in after reading the text

Gender Pronouns

Female	Male	Me	You	It	Many people
She has a dog	He has a dog	I have a dog	You have a dog	It has a dog	They have a dog
The dog belongs to her	The dog belongs to him	The dog belongs to me	The dog belongs to you	The dog belongs to it	The dog belongs to them
The dog is hers	The dog is his	The dog is mine	The dog is yours	The dog is its	The dog is theirs

*"s" = use of many
 "her" = she/that specific thing/person
 "me" = use before words starting with vowels (e.g. egg, apple) and words starting with a vowel (e.g. boy)



Female	Male	Me	You	It	Many people
She has a dog	He has a dog	I have a dog	You have a dog	It has a dog	They have a dog
The dog belongs to her	The dog belongs to him	The dog belongs to me	The dog belongs to you	The dog belongs to it	The dog belongs to them
The dog is her	The dog is his	The dog is	The dog is	The dog is	The dog is

Why is the author writing this? Does this make sense? Analyse what you've read

How to Write a Summary

- Read aloud
- Make notes (mind map)
- Draw as you read
- Read slowly
- Re-read
- Summarise
- Concentrate
- Include

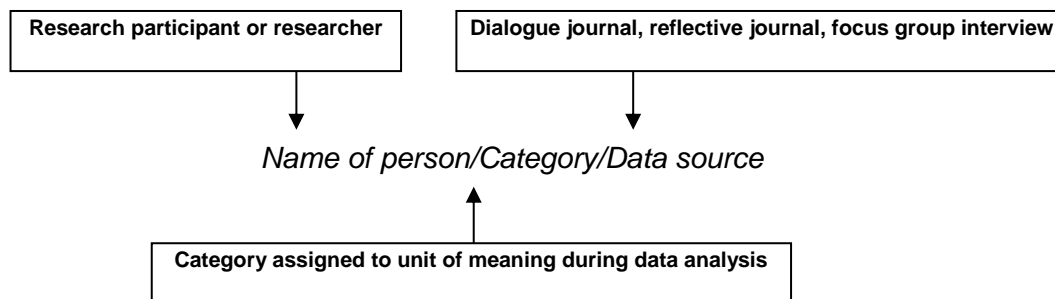
Addendum S: Word list

P1's "bombastic" word list (P1/KL/DJ):

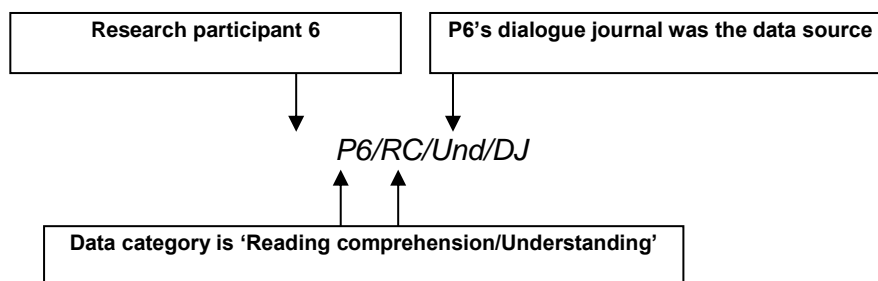
premix	there	scouts
prepaid	their	shore
gang	would	torpedoes
muffin pan	could	bring to life
whisk	should	walked in ...'s footsteps
plot	escaped	debilitating
grease	spy	take charge
meticulous	military	synonym
vain	expedition	cease
vein	restricted	bandit
this	convinced	contemplate
that	brave	quiver
were	hanged	augment
when	dramatic	dye
where	raid	anxiety
investigation	plantation	eating disorder
the	key information	
they	gathered	

Addendum T: Data codes

I used the same coding format for all the data sets involved in this research project. The general format is presented below:



Therefore, for example, the code below represents:



Below the data codes have been presented according to the corresponding data sets:

Data codes for dialogue journals

Coded categories in research participants' dialogue journals	
/Enj	Enjoyment (Enj) expressed about contact sessions or a research activity
/Com	Existing Ubuntu understanding of community or 'community of learners'
/OF	Other-focused in word or deed
/Res/Deter/Mot	A display of resilience (Res), determination (Deter) or motivation (Mot) related to the learner's schoolwork, private life or the research
/Emo	Emotions, both positive and negative
/OralTrad	Oral tradition
/PS	Personal skills – a noticeable change, both positive or negative
/Evi/Q/Cnxt	Evidence (Evi) of metacognition through questioning (Q) about the textual context (Cnxt)

/Evi/Q/Conf	Evidence (Evi) of metacognition through questioning (Q) that confirms (Conf) previous predictions
/RC/Und	Improved understanding (Und) in the context of reading comprehension (RC)
/RC/KL	Increased knowledge or better learning (KL) in the context of reading comprehension (RC)
/Sup	A sense of support (Sup) from community or research 'community of learners'
/MCA	Metacognitive awareness
/Trans/Know	Transfer (Trans) of knowledge (Know)
/Thks	Thanks expressed in a journal entry pertaining to the research project

Data codes for reflective journal

Coded categories in my reflective journal	
RC/Cul/RJ	Culture
RC/AuthPow/RJ	Authority/Power
RC/Com/Lang/RJ	Communication/language
RC/RC/RJ	Any notes about the learners' reading (R) or comprehension (C)
RC/Plan/RJ	Reflective planning (Plan) for the contact sessions
RC/Obs/RJ	Observations (Obs) from the contact sessions

As can be seen from Addendum W, there were many more data categories in my reflective journal but I have chosen to include the few that appear in the text in this table so that they are easily referenced by the reader.

Addendum U: Data analysis—Focus group interview

The transcription of the focus group interview:

Speaker	Speech
P1	Can you ask me the question again?
R	QUESTION 1: Okay, so how did you feel about our meetings? Prompt - What made you attend and what made you stay away?
P1	<i>I feel good because every time when I attend these meetings, I learn something.</i>
R	Okay, but what did you feel like when you came to the meetings?
P1	<i>Uhhh?</i> [frowns deeply in confusion]
R	What were your feelings inside? You know feelings are things like “I feel happy”, “I feel sad”...
P1	<i>I feel happy</i>
R	Why did you feel happy?
P1	<i>Because I know that I will learn something</i> [nods decisively]
R	Okay, so you enjoyed learning?
P1	<i>Yes, I'm enjoy learning</i> [pause] <i>and also spending time with these lesson mates</i> [pointing and smiling at the others] <i>and also you, Rose.</i>
R	Okay, and when you didn't come to the lessons, how did you feel about that?
P1	<i>Wow, so bad</i> [eyes closed, lots of nodding] [P5 says something in isiXhosa to her that I can't hear].
R	Bad? [surprised] Why did you feel bad?
P1	<i>Because I wanted to come to the lesson but I didn't cope because I... I was sick. Yes.</i>
R	Mmm... Okay, P2, you're next. [P2 begins to laugh and turns her face away]
P4	<i>Must I push start?</i> [All learners crack themselves]
R	Yes, you should push start now ☺ Okay Bash...
P2	<i>Ask the question again miss</i> [Big smile and scratching her head looking at the others]
R	How did you feel about our meetings my honey? When you came, why did you

	come? And when you stayed away, why did you stay away? Oh, and also, you can speak in Xhosa if you want to.
P2	<i>I came because I learn something in this class mos, ne, and I get more information like that book you gave me [pointing at R] and...</i>
R	Which book was that?
P2	[Scratching head and smiling while looking at the ceiling] [P1 says something] <i>I forgot, miss.</i>
R	The one about nursing?
P2	<i>Yes, miss</i>
R	Oh, I see
P2	<i>And miss [rocking backwards and forwards] [P5 and P6 start laughing] Hayi [P2 turns face away]</i>
R	And when you were absent?
P2	<i>Sometimes I was sick</i>
R	Ja, and the other times?
P2	<i>Yoh, I can't miss. Yoh sorry miss. [R says it's fine]. Yoh hayi. Sorry miss [rocking backwards and forwards], Yoh, I don't know [starts laughing]</i>
R	You can speak in Xhosa hey, really. [P2 shaking head]
P6	<i>Ja, speak Xhosa</i>
R	No, really you can, it will make it much easier
P2	<i>Mmm, ndiyagula eh, uyabon'</i>
R	Every time? [surprised]
P2	<i>Yes, miss. [Other learners comment in Xhosa]. Only two times [showing number with fingers] I am sick.</i>
R	Okay, and the other times?
P2	<i>The other times... hayi, andiyaz'... I don't know why I don't come here [rocking]</i>
P5	<i>Ndixaniwe</i>
R	Okay, so how do you feel when you come here?

P2	[rocking] <i>I feel good</i>
R	You feel good? [P2 nods] So then when you didn't come, was it kind of like "Oh, I don't feel like doing that today, I'm tired" or what?
P2	[rocking and smiling] [begins to laugh]
R	You don't know? [P2 shakes head] Okay, thanks [P3]. [R turns to P3] My darling, must I ask the question again? [P3 nods] [R repeats Q1].
P3	<i>QC! I feel good when you are in the meetings [inaudible sentence] QC! And... ummm... and when I not come sometimes, I'm tired [R: tired?] ja, ah, or sometimes I have a lot of stuff like projects [R: homework?] Ja [P3 nodding] so it needed to be typed and so have to type, mmm.</i>
R	Okay, and I know that you're also involved in a lot of other things like... [P3: Assess, Vision, ja. nodding] So you're a very busy lady?
P3	<i>Ja</i>
R	Okay, I see. Thanks. [P4]! [P4 looks slightly amused and bewildered] Must I ask you the question? [P4 nods] [R repeats question]
P4	[smiling] About our <i>meetings</i> [begins to rock], <i>I think they [inaudible] because when I came here I will learn something but ja there were some obstacles because ja, if after school when it's time to go here, the reason why I didn't come I was sick [tapping his nose] and sometimes I have to, I have lots of work to do, I must go to the gym and a lot of homework so the time was not right so sometimes I won't come here.</i>
R	Okay so with [P3] and [P4] is it better that you, you go to Assess and the Vision programmes and go to gym then to come here? Do you learn more in those places than you do when you come here? Either one of you can answer.
P3	<i>It's not that we are learning more than when we are here. When we are here, we learn different things than the other. In Vision we learn about how to take care of yourself like when you are in troubles what things you needed to be doing ja those stuff. Here, we teaching about English, how to speak English properly and how to English is combined to put together the right thing, right thing, ja.</i>
R	So do you find the things that you learn at Vision, do they help you more because you live in [name of research site]?
P3	<i>Yes</i>

R	Oh, I see. Thanks. [P5]! Honey, do I have to repeat the question again? [P5: Of course, yes] [R repeats question].
P5	<i>I feel happy and good about our meetings because every time I came here, I know I gain something... something, not something new but something which will help me with my school work and English work and other subjects.</i>
R	And when you didn't come, why didn't you come? Like that day when you were sleeping, why was it better to sleep than to come here?
P5	[scratching head] <i>No, on that day, I wasn't sleeping, the weather wasn't right [learners all laugh] so I had toothache so I decided not to come because here at school, if I came to school the class would make noise and the tooth will kill me so I decided not to come. It's not that I... I like sleeping or [shakes head].</i>
R	Thank you. [P6], how did you feel about our meetings, love?
P6	<i>I feel good and happy</i>
R	And why did you feel good and happy?
P6	<i>Because when I am there I get lot of knowledge and I love to speak English when I'm there at class. You will give me lot of information, how to talk English and other things... how to... do examples, summarise and all those things.</i>
R	Mmm, and when you didn't come then why didn't you come?
P6	<i>I did...I disturbed by other learners they say he will come others they say hayi we don't come and then I don't know what to do [learners giggle] and then I decide to go home.</i>
R	Okay okay, thank you thank you. [R turns to P1] QUESTION 2: Why would you recommend these lessons to your friends? Prompt - If yes, why? If no, why? Do you think you would recommend these lessons to your friends?
P1	<i>I will get them to come and spend time here than spend time in the loxion because here they can do something better than... to just to sit in loxion and... do... some... [shaking her head] bad things [dismissive wave of hand] ja. I'm done.</i>
R	Okay, [P2].
P2	<i>I would make them come mmmq because miss because ne ndifuna [inaudible] or bafuna information ndifumenene 'yabon'? QC! [rocking and rubbing legs] And... QC! [Tells boys</i>

	not to laugh] <i>and miss...</i> [P1 comments] <i>and uyazi miss, ba ukwazi miss, uuuu... ba ukwazi miss ba ufunda more than thina ja</i> [P2 chuckles] [R asks translator to translate]
L	She said that she's going to recommend it to her friends because she wants them to get the knowledge she got here. [R turns back to P2].
R	So [P2] do you feel like you, you, you're going to use the knowledge that you got here? Is that why you want your friends to come or...?
P2	[P2 laughs and rubs her head] <i>Ja miss 'yabon', u...</i> [P2 turns to translator and translator explains] <i>ewe, ndizasebenzisa ndizasebenzisa ne but thike 'yabon' now isebenzisa</i> [laughs and rolls onto desk] <i>Andiyaz'</i> [laughs].
R	Okay [translator] can you please tell me what she said?
L	She said she's using it that's why she would want her friends to use it.
R	Okay, thank you. [R turns to P3]. [P3] would you recommend the lessons to your friends, my love?
P3	Yes [nodding] <i>mmm 'cause it helps me a lot. [R: How?] Mmm, like in pointing words [R: mmm] it helps me to know what this is based on and who it refers to and then ja and then also to summarise. Like yesterday I was reading mmm a short story in my History book then when I read it I understand it clearly because I make sure that I have an image in my head. So, it helps me a lot so I will like to tell other people what really... what really good, ja it is good [nodding vigorously] it helps with a lot of, it helps a lot to understand [looking at others nervously].</i>
R	Thank you. [P4]?
P4	<i>Yes, I would because [starts rocking] because they will get, they will be helped and they will improve on their English like their English subject and they will do well and also... as you know mos, English is the most common language used so if you don't know it, it's the same as you are uneducated [dismissive wave of hand] even when you have but English you do better nyani so they will be more ja, they can understand for themselves ja [nods].</i>
R	Okay. [P5]?
P5	<i>Yes, I would because I would like my friends to be like me because when I am gaining a lot of things here I know a lot of things here so I would like my friends to be like me and then when I'm at home or at the township to talk about what we learn here and decide wha wha... [flipping hand] what we know and all that and the information I got here is so</i>

	<i>important and it helps me in my school work and I think, yes I will [laughs].</i>
R	Okay, I have a question for you [P5 nods] If your friend says to you “I don’t want to come”, you say to him “I think you should come” and he says “No but I still don’t want to come” then what reasons would you give him that he should come? How would you persuade him to come?
P5	<i>I would tell him how important, okay what things he will learn when he came here and what will these lessons help him on and tell him the knowledge and try to convince him by the knowledge which I got here.</i>
R	Oh I see, thank you. [P6], [R repeats question] [P6 looks at L for a translation with apprehension]
L	Whaza kutaza ichommy zakho
P6	Okay, I can tell him to come to attend here [R reminds him that he can speak Xhosa if he would like to] Hah, but I love English [rubbing hands together, other learners laugh] I can tell them to come because when you... [hands held up] [P5 asks L to explain again] [P5 comments] [L explains question again in isiXhosa] Ja, I can tell them to come because when you are der, they learn so many things and how to talk English and then I love my my friends to talk English like me because because me I love English. Xhosa it talk fewer... [gesticulating]
R	Why do you like English so much?
P6	<i>Yoh.... Yoh [laughs]... why... [touching his throat] nguban’... English is the most important in the country because you don’t get a job without English.</i>
R	So do you speak English so much because you’re practicing?
P6	<i>Jaaaa, I speak it because I practice it.</i>
R	I see, thank you ☺ [P6 looks unsure of himself]. QUESTION 3: If you were teaching English reading comprehension (i.e. if you were me) to your peers, what would you do differently? Prompt -What would you change?
P1	<i>I would make sure every learner came with their book [waving index finger] if the learner didn’t come with book... I will... hit... or beat... urrrrm to come with book next time. I will t... I will will not be so nice every time, not every time [shaking her head].</i>

P5	<i>Ngubani uzozakuwe xa usibhetha?</i> [raised eyebrows, naughty grin]
P1	<i>No, you are helping yourself, you are not helping me</i> [tapping her chest] <i>I'm teaching you.</i>
P5	<i>Hayi</i> [Turns to P4 and laughs incredulously]
P1	<i>If you don't want knowledge, we cannot help you.</i>
P3	<i>I want to say something guys. If I were the tutor errr the teacher I will make sure tell them that I'm taking book ibook from their home and then come with it</i>
R	But now, why would you girls make sure that the learners brought their books?
P3	<i>If they didn't, I make sure that I have ones if they don't</i> [pointing with index finger at the township] <i>because I say to them "You must come with your book but if you didn't I will give you the book that you will have for the lesson."</i>
R	You mean this book? [showing dialogue journal]
P3	<i>Yeeees, every book. A book of short stories.</i>
R	So do you mean that if you were giving the lessons, you would make the learners read more?
P3	<i>Not like reading more but erm maybe... hmmm... this week mhlabi [P1] is going to read for us, ja. Maybe the next week [P2] is going to read another book and tell us what it's about and make sure that he you understand it</i> [P3 glances at other learners]
R	Why would you do that? It's a good idea.
P3	<i>Because I want them to understand what really</i> [tapping temples] <i>what really right for them to read, also reading is a good thing to know.</i>
R	So by saying that you want them to know what the right thing to read is, do you think that many learners are reading things that they shouldn't be reading?
P3	<i>I know because most of the learner hate reading, including myself, I hate reading. But, when...when it is really needed to be... like I have to read like "Oh my ***, not this thing again"</i> [frustrated throwing of hands in lap, frowning]
R	Why do you feel like that?
P3	<i>Because it's boring to read but it helps you a lot to understand</i>
R	So, do you mean that the things that you are reading about are boring?
P3	<i>No</i> [shaking her head], <i>sometimes the story that we are reading is boring but you see it</i>

	<i>boring but when you get [pointing at her temples] err more information about that story, you are so amazed that you said "This story is just boring". But it's very... it's a good thing, you don't know what's really in that story is telling you... is about... is telling you, you just saying "No, boring", you didn't focus on it and read it and reread it. But if you reread it, you will understand and you will learn something new even you don't know, even you didn't learn like you will learn... you will have... have the names that you don't know sometimes or you will go and look into the dictionary with the special meanings so it helps you to understand [tapping her temples] and it also helps you to look mmm, to look more words like going to the dictionary help you to look at the dictionary.</i>
R	Okay, [P3 nodding] does everybody agree with [P3]?
P2	Yes
L	Do you [P6]?
P6	<i>Hayi, I didn't hear what she said</i>
P3	<i>Ndithi ne</i>
P5	<i>I didn't hear because it was too long</i>
P2	<i>Ndizokusummarise, u[P3] uthi ne [P2 summarises P3's point]</i>
P5	<i>Okay okay okay, if I was you I would check their books every time to see that the learners are improving in English and in other subjects and I will also see that the lesson is helping them in other subjects.</i>
P1	<i>I agree with [P5].</i>
R	[P4], do you have anything you want to say?
P4	<i>Okay, I can say that... I will say they will read more than to write because when people because when people, when you read something you can understand it more faster than when you write it because sometimes you are lazy of writing and you say maybe the passage is too long but if they read it themselves they can... they can mos summarise it [tapping his temples] because they know what is left in their mind, what can they write about then so den, when they must, they must read more than to write, you see? [sits back in his chair]</i>
R	So do you feel like you've done too much writing?
P4	<i>Jaaaa [P3 nodding vigorously]</i>

R	[Looks at P3] you also feel that way?
P3	<i>I won't say too much writing but sometimes you know like spelling</i>
R	But you were nodding? [P3 looks confused] You were nodding just now?
P3	<i>I'm saying ja it's great, it's a great thing to know because as he said [pointing at P4] writing sometimes you become confused er like you have maybe you have a low message so it helps you.</i>
R	Reading instead of writing?
P4	[begins rocking] <i>Yes, and so that if you notice when you mark a book or English book, you will find a lot of spelling because why sometimes you write more and you write you write yes most of the time you are writing but when you read and in that time you don't understand you take the time to look at it and see how it is written so that you will not forget it. But when you teach to write all the time, sometimes the word comes now and then it slips away you write a test and then you forgot the word why because you keep on writing but if you read a book sometimes it will stay longer in your memory, you see.</i>
R	Ja, I do see. [P3 and P4 nod]. Do you find writing difficult when you write in English?
P4	<i>In English, yes.</i> [P2 and P3 say yes]
R	Why?
P4	<i>Because if you are writing tell me write the question on the board and the answer you know it but eh hh [shakes his head and looks at the floor] the spelling, the spelling is the problem.</i>
R	Is it the spelling or do you know all the words for what you want to say?
P3	<i>It's not that we don't know but that time when you umm like ummm you see when you are know something then it flash</i>
R	Okay, give me an example?
P3	<i>Um, like maybe you are writing something like 'Yesterday I was at the garden' garden? Garden? Yoh! Like it's flash because I think like your mind at that time is so spinning because I don't know [frowning] what to say about it but when you are reading, it helps you a lot to understand and it stay in mind and then if you give a lot of examples, it will stay longer in your mind when you just giving the person and it's just write [pointing at the whiteboard] you not going to understand you have to explain and giver errr examples to understand.</i>

R	Okay [P3 nods]. I have a question for you though: if you were the teacher and you were teacher reading comprehension, how would you check that learners are understanding what they read? Because what I found is, the only way I can check to see whether you understand what you're reading is if you write down answers.
P3	<i>No, ja it's good [nodding]</i>
R	<i>So, if you were teaching, if you were me, and you didn't want to write so much, how would you check that the learners understood what they'd read?</i>
P4	<i>You give them, you give them their reading comprehension then maybe they've got 20 minutes then after that you ask them what what have they learnt and they will say they will talk they will tell you what they read and den you write questions on the board, they must they must answer it then you will see they will gain more understanding because when you read something it stays normally in mind than when you write because when you write you focus there [pointing at board] and then someone there [pointing at back of class] is telling a joke you focus to there and then you leave that [pointing at board] to see. But when you read it by yourself hayi [nods].</i>
P3	<i>Ohmmm</i>
R	Okay, the one I want to ask you about that I'm interested that you said is you said that once... once they were finished reading we must <i>talk</i> about it?
All	<i>Yes!</i>
R	So do you remember things more if we talk, if you've read something and then we talk about them? Are you saying that you remember it better if we talk about it afterwards?
P4	<i>Yes</i>
R	That's very interesting and why?
P2	<i>When you talk about something m'am ne, you maybe get more information like [scratches head] like... ah... yesterday... la la lacase study ka hardman 'yabon'... bana masbesi ubus'funde ubus'fundele ne endetyo naselesfundela xa esiz'bonayo epicture 'yabon'?</i>
R	[L] can you translate for me? Thanks [P2]!
L	She said you read to them and then they read it themselves and then they saw that picture of um

R	Harriet? The one where she was all hunched up like this? [demonstrates] And what about the picture?
P2	<i>Galoku, how do you say... sis'fundele wasifundela... [When they read for themselves they could not see the head picture that I saw but when they saw the photo, they understood].</i>
L	Like um that picture you gave them um [tapping his head] the head picture before before they saw that picture. When they saw that picture then everything was great.
R	So the picture gives you more information? [All nod] And that's why your understanding is better? So are you saying that we help each other to understand when we talk?
All	Yes [decisive]
R	Um, is it like this in the other classes? When you're in Life Sciences and Geography and Maths, do you talk to help each other understand?
P5	<i>Geography [looking at P1]</i>
P1	<i>Geography</i>
R	Why Geography?
P1	<i>Geography teacher allow us to talk yeh [nods]</i>
R	So in the other classes you not allowed to talk?
P1	<i>No, it's only teacher explain on board and if I want something, I go to [P6] and ask, not to discuss with all [makes circular motions with her hands].</i>
R	Oh, I see.
P1	<i>Yes [nods], I go to [P6] and then [P6] help me write, not to the class the class. It's only Geography class [nods].</i>
R	Not [inaudible]... like [P5] said?
P1	Laughs and shakes her head
R	Okay, [P5] said that he would take the learners reports and look at their marks for English. You [looking at P5] said that you would use their reports to check whether their marks were changing, so do you find that in Geography your marks are better because you can talk to each other?
P1	<i>Much better, all of us in Geography</i>

P5	<i>Much better</i>
R	Does your teacher speak to you in Xhosa or in English?
P1	<i>In Xhosa, but also in English. If you don't understand in English, he speaks to you in Xhosa [not sure of second sentence – poor sound quality]</i>
R	And how do you experience reading in Geography? Do you read a lot?
P1	<i>No, we don't. He just explain to us and then we discuss. After that you read when you are writing.</i>
P3	<i>But you read something that you understand so it's easy to... and he he will show us if he is making an example, he doesn't make an example in the book and</i>
P1	<i>He also asks us questions to make sure that you understand what he what he explaining.</i>
R	Thank you. Does anybody else ant to say anything else about this question? You don't have to. Is everybody okay?
P5	<i>Yes.</i>
L	I think I will, ja. Guys like [inaudible] but in my understanding, I like to write cause like our English teacher when I was at school um he used to give us like the comprehension passages and then in the last five minutes of the period then he used to ask us to take our books so that he can give us the spellings. And the spellings he was going to give us was from the comprehension passage uzobefunubona basiyiunderstandile na amanye amagama besiwabalile esinqondweni. It's like u, u integrated [inaudible] we integrated Science and Biology. In those two subjects there's a lot of paragraphs ahh I mean diagrams, diagrams. Most of the drawing was those diagrams and then they used to come to me, "[L], [L] I don't understand, would you please draw this diagram for me?" and then I do it. If I draw for you [P3] and then for [P2], I can draw it just like it's in the book. So when the exam came and they asked me to draw a diagram for marks, it was easy for me to draw it because I drew for [P4, P5, P6] so it was easy for me to pass those things like that 'yabon' because I wrote it down. So I think sometimes writing is much better because the words or the diagram stays in your head.
R	I think what Lewis has said and it's also what you men have been saying um the aspect of revision, you [indicating P3] also said it was rereading, if we go over and over and over things, we remember them more and that's one of the, one of the things that we've done during our lessons: we've looked again and again and again

	<p>at the things that we've read. And another thing that [L] was also saying was: to look at the spelling of different words, what he's actually doing, he's putting more English words into his head so that he can, he can say more in English, he's got more words so he can talk about more things</p>
L	<p>It's like you said, if I can say like spell this word 'enjoy' you can read it but you can't write it down maybe you forgot how enjoy is like is like 'l' or 'e' you know. So every last five minutes of the subject is taking our spelling books... then he dictates the words, then you have to write it down. I think it's helping to write that.</p>
All	<p>[Poor sound quality: learners debate about writing versus reading].</p>
P2	<p><i>It doesn't matter because if I have write it, I can read it again</i></p>
P3	<p><i>Kodwa ancede nalo ongaqondayo because uqhala azicingele yintoni lento siyenzayo jaaa ebe incede ucinge right...</i></p>
P5	<p><i>Come again</i></p>
R	<p>[L], can you please translate for us?</p>
L	<p>[To P3] Ja, she said um uthini?</p>
P3	<p><i>Ukuba iyanceda lanto ba gum la</i> [inaudible]</p>
L	<p>Before this thing is explained to you, you have to read it yourself and then [P3] asked me ahhh, "What if you understood wrong?", then you have to... that's where you have to ask</p>
R	<p>Thanks guys. QUESTION 4: Which strategy/ies that we have learnt together has/have been the most helpful? How have you used them? When do you use them?</p> <p>Prompt - In what ways have these lessons helped you to understand what you read?</p> <p>Prompt – Which subjects do you use these strategies in? In English?</p>
P3	<p><i>Can I answer?... Oh okay like summarising, it help me as I [inaudible]. When I'm reading something or the first paragraph, I will know what is in that paragraph, what are really important there because and then make sure that I have a image like if someone like the books says a man was walking, was walking in there inside the room but what he wanted he was a king on his castle then I would know a person is walking. Then I would make sure that I have a picture so that I can understand what really this story's about.</i></p>
R	<p>So are you saying that the two most important things for you were head pictures and</p>

	summarising? And because you can do head pictures you can summarise?
P3	<i>Mmm</i>
R	That's incredible! [P2], you wanted to say something? [Lots of chatting]
P2	<i>Mind map, mind map. When I'm reading something miss because I read only so that I can answer the questions 'yabon' and...</i>
R	Which one honey, which one are you talking about?
P2	<i>The main idea, the detail, the supporting information.</i>
R	So are you saying that you use that? When do you use that?
P2	<i>When I'm writing something miss like</i>
R	What subject?
P2	<i>Jaaa, Life Sciences [R questions to make sure].</i>
R	What do you use it for? How do you use it? The mind maps?
P2	<i>I read nton nton and then qc! I take the heading as the main idea and then I look for the detail and I put the supporting information.</i>
R	That's very good, very good. Do you want to say something?
P3	<i>Yes. Urrr, ur yesterday I was on [inaudible] and then I don't know who I was chatting with but I was, I wanted to write it was his or her I was like "Oh my ***, is it right?" and then I take the chart that you gave me and I open it and look and then I look under male and I see 'he' and then I write 'he'. So the pointing words also help me and if I... I... I... forgot it then I will go to my chart and open it.</i>
R	So, it it helped you with your writing? [P3: yes]. Okay, that's great! [P5] Mr President, I would really like you to say something ☺ [P5 laughs] If you don't want to say something, you don't have to but I think that there's something happening there in that mind ☺
P5	<i>I will say it, I will say it later on</i>
P6	<i>[L translates question for P6] [Interruptions from other learners in school] I said that when you read a story, you must have an image of what you are reading and when you read the sentence, you must make sure that you understand before you move to another sentence.</i>
R	When do you use these things? When do you make sure that you know what the

	sentence means and when do you use head pictures? [Lots of noise interference from school learners in corridors] [P6 answers but poor sound quality obscures answer] So it's mostly school stuff?
P6	<i>Ja, in other words when I am reading the newspaper, I make a head picture.</i>
R	Okay! ☺ Okay, does anybody else want to say anything about this one?
P4	<i>Head picture. When you make a head picture of something, it helps me because maybe when I'm studying Life Sciences ne, I'm studying Life Sciences for an exam I can I can I can I can read the notes there and if I don't understand I try and make a picture of it so that when the picture is finalised, I will take the knowledge okay what</i>
R	So you make a picture in your head before you make a picture on paper?
P4	<i>It will depend okay make it on a paper and when you have finished making it on a paper and then you will see that okay in this in this notes it is saying that and this and that and that is happening so that I will be able to understand it more and to read it all the all the notes. Sometimes you can see when this you can read there are four pages that you must... but if you read it once and then you try to make a head picture out of the sentence, it will be shorter and so you will be more, you have more, you will be interested in reading the head picture then say "Okay, which one is the fi...</i>
R	You need to explain, I don't understand.
P4	<i>You see, when you maybe you given ne, they say read page 200 to 208 and then when you read, you say before you get there you say "These pages are full of notes" You read the first page ne, when you have finished you make a head picture, you make a head picture [R: One page at a time?], yes, one page at a time, and then when you have finished you read what you wrote in your head picture and then you see okay this and that, you see okay you when you read, you will understand it more because why you have made it short, the head pictures. You have head picture... You read the head picture there and then you have...</i>
R	So are you saying that you use your head pictures as summaries?
P4	<i>Yes, you summarise all the information and make it small and then you take the key points not all of that, you don't need all of that. Take only the important stuff.</i>
R	That's brilliant! [P4: yes {nods}] Okay, is that it for that question? Does anybody else want to say anything?

P1	<p>QC! <i>I think that when you write a diary, you are showing it that you feel inside. Sometimes you are even saying that situation so when you write it down, you know that you are sharing this situation to Rose and, and you know that she will feel your situation and give you some advices. So I get better when I write my situation down because I know Rose will give me some advices and she will always, she will also feel my situation. Or sometimes I am very excited and I don't want to share this to learner, if I write this down and I know that I will also remember this this this day because I will read this and will remember, this book will remind me.</i></p>
R	<p>Did you, did you ummm... experience that the book helps with your English?</p>
P1	<p><i>Yes, because when I'm writing in that book, I write in English so I have to think that because... I have to think what I have to write. I... I can write "I am [learner's name]" then after that I write, "She is going..." I have to think that I have to say "I am", something like that.</i></p>
R	<p>So, so you've found, I think this is what you're saying, you've found you're thinking about pointing words?</p>
P1	<p><i>Yes, I'm thinking about pointing words and also if like, if I am talking about my brother, I think about pointing words and and I realise that I hadn't say that 'she' I have to say 'he' because he is a boy, ja.</i></p>
R	<p>And then has writing in your diary, has that changed you're your English reading? When you read in English in class at home when you read um... has it changed... has it changed how you understand what you read? It doesn't have to, I'm just wondering. Do you find the more you write in English, the more you can understand what you read in English?</p>
P1	<p>Yes ☺ Yes ☺☺</p>
R	<p>Why do you say that?</p>
P1	<p><i>Because qc! When I write, I... think about how to... e... t...</i></p>
R	<p>Say it in Xhosa and I'll get Lewis to translate. It's better because I want to know what you think.</p>
P1	<p><i>No, it's not that I don't know how to explain it in English, I don't know how</i></p>
R	<p>Okay, try. This is the meat that I want, this is what I need. Okay, so when you're writing in English in your diary, you said to me that it does change what you</p>

	understand in English when you read and I want to know <i>how?</i> - why do you say that?
P1	[long pause] <i>Hayi Rose [L translates the question] Okay like uncedela ubalala ediary OKAY, ndibalala nyani OKAY. It helps me to... QC! to... when I have time ne, I take my diary and see that on Thursday, like for example, on Thursday I did this and this happened to me and then I get, I I get, and then I get and then I'm getting through [inaudible word]</i>
R	Okay so then the writing doesn't help <i>reading</i> at school?
P1	<i>No, it does</i>
R	How?
P1	<i>lyohhhh ☺... Because the more I write English, the more I write English the more I learn because then I write...</i>
R	What do you learn?
P1	<i>When I write I learn that like let's say, I learn that if I want to write something that the words the words that I don't know, I ask and I get that word so I learn 'yabon'?</i>
R	Okay, so then if you get that word and then you if you have to read that word later, do you know it's the same word? And do you know what the word means?
P1	<i>Yes</i>
R	Promise? [L laughs]
P1	<i>Yes ☺</i>
R	Okay, okay, thank you ☺ Is that the end of Question 4? Or does someone want to say something? [All laugh] Okay, so it's the end of Question 4, right? QUESTION 5: What aspects, so what things, do you find are easier now when you read in English? We've done a lot of English, are there things that are easier? And what things are still difficult?
P1	<i>... I think to make..... a mind map in pictures ngubani ulanto? Imasebenza apha ngelanduka ngenza for [P2], it's to make that</i>
P4	<i>Ohhh, head picture</i>
P1	<i>Head picture, ja ja</i>
R	The one with words? Are you talking about that one?

P1	<i>Ja, ja. It's difficult.</i>
R	It's difficult?
P1	Yes.
R	What do you find difficult?
P1	<i>I sometimes like hmf...</i>
R	Why is it difficult? What is difficult about making the head picture?
P1	<i>Because you know... andiyazi qc! ... It's not like that... [Talks to friend in Xhosa]. It's it it, it was like [inaudible] that I can't see a head picture or like ja, like that, ja. To write a picture I say "I'm going to write it down [inaudible]</i>
R	Okay, so are you saying... no no that's leading you on... how can I ask this... so are you saying to me that it's difficult to know what is in your mind?
P1	<i>No, it's not difficult. It's difficult to write it down, that's what I'm saying</i>
R	Is it difficult because you you you um you can't see it in your mind?
P4	<i>I can say it depends on the... it depends on the comprehension that you are given. If it's something that she she... it depends maybe you bring something and then that thing hahhh we don't know it, and then we don't know the history about it, we haven't heard about it then it will be difficult but if it's something that ja we have learnt that ja that we have learnt before then it will be easy.</i>
R	So what you saying is, I think this is what you're saying, is that it's difficult to make the picture [P1: Yes] because what you're reading is difficult?
P4	Yes.
R	And from what I think I ..., I understand what you said it's difficult to make the links between the things in what you're reading so that you can make the mind picture. Have I got it, right?
P1, P4	Yes.
R	Okay, okay, that's good. Okay ja, is there anything else?
P4	I can see [P5] is anxious to answer ☺
P5	<i>Yoh hayibo! Question? [R repeats question]. There are things... that are easier now ... [inaudible]now I read with understanding because before when I'm just, when I'm reading</i>

	<i>ehh a text, I read the first sentence, whether I understand it or not, I move to the next sentence. But now I try to understand the first sentence and then to move to the next sentence and on ehh head pictures...</i>
R	I just want to ask you how does understanding this sentence before moving to the next sentence, how does that help you?
P5	<i>It helps me to understand what I am thinking now</i>
R	How? What do you get?
P5	[Long pause] <i>mmm yoh! ☺ [giggles]</i>
R	What do you do with it? If I understand this sentence before I move onto the next sentence, what do I do with all that stuff that I understand?
P5	<i>Put it in my head and if I don't... k also about the ehhh mind map... ja now when I read when you I have to make a mind map, I just look for the main idea and then the detail and theehhh supporting information so that it could be easier for me to summarise it</i>
R	Okay, what do you do with the summaries? Why are you using summaries? What do you use them for?
P5	<i>I use them to make the text short so I can understand it quickly.</i>
R	Oh, I see. Okay, are there any things that are still difficult? In English?... Pointing words... head pictures...
P5	<i>Ja, the head pictures.</i>
R	Difficult?
P5	<i>Ja.</i>
R	In what way?
P5	<i>It's not easy to write them down like to draw them.</i>
R	Even if you're using words?
P5	<i>Yes, even when I'm using words, I don't know how to write it down so that anyone can understand it, I don't know how.</i>
R	Um... so... when you understand that there's a link between two things in the text and you say you put that in your head... then how do you put all the links together?
P5	[Long pause] <i>Come again?</i>

R	[Giggles] Okay, mind maps, we've learnt that mind maps are all about linking things. We're just trying to show the links between things. So I asked you just now say, say you read a sentence and you understand it and then you read the next sentence and you understand it. And I asked you what do you do with it then and you said you put it in your head...
P5	Yes.
R	But are you saying to me that you don't put it in any specific way in your head? You just put it in your head?
P5	<i>I put it in my head in my specific way.</i>
R	What way is that?
P5	<i>The easiest way for me to understand.</i>
R	<i>Which is?</i>
P5	<i>First understand the whole text, including my head... yoh! [laughs] [R: And then?] yoh! Hayi, ndiyaphela ngoku [All laugh]</i>
R	Okay so let's get back to that, so you said to me head pictures are difficult for you because it's difficult to draw them but when you say that you understand the whole text that means that you understand the main idea... so you battle to put... to put the main idea down and then to put all the supporting information and then to put the detail?
P5	<i>It's easier for me to understand... but yoh!..... I can't explain it to someone. It's hard for me to explain. [R asks him to try]. Like, Rose you see, it's hard for me to make someone understand when I'm explaining on the paper like drawing pictures on the paper for someone to understand. That's what is hard for me to do.</i>
R	So, are you saying that you feel more confident speaking than you do writing?
P5	Yes.
R	Has it always been like that?
P5	Yes.
R	And is that specifically for English?
P5	Yes.

R	And why?
P5	I think when you are telling someone, explaining to him or her, he or she, he or she understands it easier than when you writing because ahhh sometimes you'll write some words, maybe he or she won't understand the words which you've written down. So when you are telling he or she maybe understand easy, ja... because there are some people who can't read. Maybe when you are telling them what you have just read before, he or she will understand it quickly than writing it down
R	Thank you. Okay is that it for Question 5? Okay. QUESTION 6: Have any of the things that we have learnt together helped you understand what you read in other classes? Life Sciences?
P2	<i>Mind maps.</i>
R	When do you use them?
P2	<i>Sometimes.</i>
R	When do you use it? When sometimes do you use it?
P2	<i>In English class [R: But the other subjects not?] [P2 shakes her head].</i>
P1	<i>I use mind maps on Life Sciences class and English class</i>
R	What work do you use mind maps for in Life Sciences? ... What's the topic?
P1	<i>If I read... if I read... if I read something that's talking about types of soil and I write down 'soil' as the main idea then like supporting info like erm I choose the types of soil and write around the main idea 'clay soil' 'loam soil' [showing a concentric diagram] then I am looking for the detail, what clay soil is talking about like detail for clay soil, what the loam soil is talking about it's ehhh landuka... for loam soil</i>
R	Now why do you use mind maps?
P1	<i>Because I want it to be short so I can understand easy. So if I say main idea then I write different types of soils then I know okay this is the different types of soils. It's loam clay sand just like that. Then I try to to put the detail so I can know this soil is detail of loam soil okay [inaudible] on the mind map.</i>
R	Okay, good! Okay guys is that it for number 6?
P5	<i>[P4] wants to add something.</i>

P6	<i>You can add [P4].</i>
R	You don't have to speak. So am I right in saying that most of you only use this stuff when you're here? And [P2], you use it in English? Has nobody used what we've learnt here to make their understanding better in other subjects?
P3	<i>Pointing words</i>
R	Pointing words? I know that you've mentioned pointing words a lot, was that the most helpful thing for you?
P3	<i>For me, mmm.</i>
R	So which subject do you use pointing words in?
P3	<i>Most of the time in English</i>
R	In English? Okay. And then you say most of the time in English so do you use it a little bit of the time somewhere else?
P3	<i>Like [inaudible].</i>
R	Oh I see! And is that when you're talking with your friends?
P3	<i>Jaaa!</i>
P5	<i>I'm using pointing words and summarising in English. But sometimes I'm also using them in Life Sciences because Life Sciences most of the time is talking about plants, animals and they want to know what it refers to and on...</i>
R	What do you mean?
P5	<i>Like... [starts giggling] like when the, when it says they like I know when it refers to, it refers to the animals and all that. And on English I use mmm, when I'm getting a text like to read it and understand it. And English most of the time is easy to summarise so now I know what how to summarise and where to start and what you must look for when you are summarising, when you are looking for the main idea on the text so you can summarise easier and quickly.</i>
R	Great! I have one more question, um you know when you said the text is talking about the animals and then it says 'they' um in that, why are you linking those things? I know that they're linked but why do you link them? Why are you interested in pointing words? I'm asking you, are you busy making links um, are you using pointing words to follow what the author is saying?

P5	Yes.
R	As simply as that? ☺ Yes? Okay thank you. Do you want to say something?
P4	<p><i>Yes, I used the mind map when I was studying for Life Science. We doing this... I was studying biomes ne then I make I make a main idea what the biomes and then I had a supporting info what the seven biomes and then on the details I write it on fynbos... k fynbos you can find animals such as this and this and it's more wet and there flowers there are more flowers there in the fynbos [cellphone interrupts] and then you see it makes it more easier because when you do something and it and it is too long, you write what the topic is about and then the seven types of the topic and then you write the detail so it will be much more easier for you to read because you will know the supporting, maybe you will read about fynbos, you know fynbos this and that you find in the fynbos on the details on the details you find this and that and it will make it easier so I could understand it more easy</i></p>
R	Good! I have a question for you though, one thing that both of you have mentioned is that when the thing is long it's not easy to understand.
P4	<p><i>Yes, because as you read it ne, maybe you read some four paragraphs and then you turn and then yoh this is a long and then you get lazy. You are not focused on what you are doing now, say you doing Geography, only just to get finished that's how you lose your marks. But when you make a mind map out of that, you will, you will know the information will be there and you only know the important stuff and those that just come you know that they are not important and you leave them out and focus on what is important.</i></p>
R	That's awesome ☺ Does anybody else want to say anything? Thank you guys, thank you.

Addendum V: Data analysis – Dialogue journals

Dialogue journal categories

<p>P6/Enj</p>	<p>School is the best thing that should everybody go to school</p> <p>I was wish to a school day</p> <p>I like talk English</p> <p>The lesson on Thursday I was enjoying</p> <p>I am at school I feel free and happy</p> <p>I like to attend your class because I gain a lot of knowledge about English</p> <p>I enjoy you lesson because I get lot of knowledge to you and also a lot of skills about English</p> <p>I am happy to study at [name of research site]</p> <p>I am also happy to meet Mrs Cockcroft. She is so loveable and friendly</p>
<p>P8</p>	<p>The first time I meet you I enjoy your class</p> <p>I was enjoying and interested about it (PW)</p>
<p>P5</p>	<p>Had a great lesson with Lewis and Rose</p> <p>Had a great time/lesson when Rose was busy telling us about Harriet Tubman</p>
<p>P6/Com</p>	<p>They used to say to me <i>qamuzation</i></p> <p>My classmates at school were take care of me</p> <p>I ask Rosen and my classmates</p> <p>They used to say that if I don't understand I must ask so that I can understand</p> <p>I love to stay with my classmates</p> <p>The like my family because I spend lot of time with them</p> <p>Take care of your self I will mic you my dear</p>
<p>P1</p>	<p>It is important to sacrifice for other people well it is also important to risk your like so that you can save people's likes</p>
<p>P3</p>	<p>My Tuesday was so fun because me and my classmates we were baking muffins</p>

	I wish today they will come if they don't come we don't know what to do
P5	We do school work together and a group work
P4	That in the olden days that Africans we treated bad but still they united to fight slavery led by women
P1/OF	She was looked like she was stressed about us I do hurting her is the last thing I want
P7	I wish Rose can forgive me I didn't me to hurt her
P3	When I see Rose when was reading our book was so worried and hurt didn't expect this from us from now I will write everyday say what I feel about this day But don't worry next time I will be available I was so worried so much because rose was so hurt
P5	I realise that I should write on my book everyday and I promise if I will do so
P6/Res/Deter/Mot	I not a loss Practice makes people perfect I din't give up because I was want to know what happens in this story Also English I was study hard to improve it Want to learn English so that they can to easy for me and keep my self busy in learning at school so that I can not be affected by things of happen in my community
P8	I want to join your class because I want to learn lot of things in future so that I can seccid I want to know English and speak English so that when I'm old I can get a job easy I will stay with your class and I will do my best
P1	I like to prove myself For now the most important thing in my life is too study
P7	I can't but I can try
P5	I will aim higher codes

	<p>I won't write in this book, because I'm preparing for the controlled test</p> <p>I've got to study</p>
P6/Emo	<p>I dissappoint Rose</p> <p>Sorry for being not attend your class</p> <p>That thing it will never happen</p> <p>I know that I dissappoint you</p> <p>I am proud of Roosen who teacher me English</p> <p>I feel so happy of this project that we attend English class</p> <p>I will miss this project</p> <p>I love to in your project I love what you were treated me</p> <p>I didn't believe on that</p>
P1	<p>I think that the game we were playing on Tuesday was perfect because it was make me think and I like that</p>
P8	<p>And I'm also proud of you a lot</p> <p>It was a wonderful and amazing lesson about pointing words</p>
P7	<p>I was so happy at school because Mrs Rosanne</p> <p>I didn't come to the lesson today I'm feeling sad</p> <p>I thought I would come but head ache was killing me</p> <p>We learn about mind map I was so happy</p>
P3	<p>I didn't go to the leasons I was afriad to tell you that I can't make it today</p>
P5	<p>Today I was very inspired by Louis who came to the programme with Roxanne.</p>
P5/OralTrad	<p>She really explained to us and we did understand what she told us. You are a great teacher Rose</p>
P6/PS	<p>Whe teacher about English how to talk and write everything include English</p> <p>Whe teacher how to talk English and write and other skills about English</p> <p>I can do oral of English</p> <p>I learn how to do mind map</p>

	<p>Have easily way to write and understand</p> <p>Have I image of what you are going to write with it</p> <p>When I start I was looking on my chart</p> <p>I feel happy because now I can talk English at school and at home</p> <p>I can pass subject that include English because of him I get lots of skills to him</p>
P1	<p>I don't mind difficult things because I learn more</p> <p>And now I know how to create mind map in words</p>
P7	<p>We learn how to make a mind map and how to choose main idea, supporting information and details</p>
P5	<p>Now I know what it takes to choose your career</p>
P4	<p>My sentence construction was really good</p> <p>The programme improved my writing very well and my spelling was really good.</p> <p>Today I have learnt how to make a mind map out of a article</p>
P6/Evi/Q/Cnxt	<p>How does the slaves whe treaten?</p> <p>How does Harriet Tubman help slaves to escaped to freedom in the North?</p>
P1	<p>I want to know how do they become slaves?</p> <p>And how to get out of there without Harriet Tubman's help?</p>
P5/Evi/Q/Conf	<p>How did it end?</p> <p>How did she get all the information</p> <p>Why did those people treated them like that?</p>
P4/Evi/Q/Conf	<p>What I want to know is what did the slave owners do after their buildings were bombed</p>
P6/RC/Und	<p>I struggle to understand this story because of other word was very difficult</p> <p>During this lesson everybody they understand this story it was me who was not understand</p> <p>...understand easily because Rose was helping me to explain those difficult words</p>

	<p>Have a picture on you mind what happening... like you watching a movie</p> <p>I look at dictionary so that I can understand what he read</p> <p>The test we was writting it was a smallest little bit of difficult</p> <p>That means everything you read you have to understand it</p>
P1	Test: it was difficult
P7	I don't understand English but when you speak, I can hear you
P6/RC/KL	<p>You must understand the first column before you move other sentence</p> <p>Try to understand before you skip to another line</p> <p>I can see at school</p> <p>I learn English</p> <p>How to write summary</p> <p>I get lots of knowledge</p> <p>I feel so happy because I can see that my English is improve it</p> <p>This project is good for me to improve my English</p> <p>I learn that every sentence you must understand when you read... you will just read without mind map</p> <p>I also learn that I have to have a picture on my mind when I'm reading something</p> <p>I also learn about how to create mindmap</p> <p>I also know the pictures we use the on a story and the words we use them on when you read something and want to understand it</p>
P1	<p>I think that test was good for me to improve my knowledge</p> <p>Bombastic words</p> <p>I learn that when you read something like a story you have to choose supporting information about what you read, and also put details under supporting information</p>
P8	I didn't know how to point a words but now I know how to it was really, really helpful
P4	Meanwhile I also learnt a few thing about how to make mindmap

P6/Sup	<p>Miss Rosen help me and explain what those words mean</p> <p>Their help me</p> <p>They help me to teach</p> <p>And you also teacher me</p> <p>Lewis and Rose was helping</p> <p>Having instruction that was guiding us</p> <p>They was helping me</p>
P1	<p>I wish this project will always there for me</p>
P7	<p>I wish she can stay with me everytime. She is talkative like me.</p>
P6/MCA	<p>That thing they can help me to improve my English</p> <p>When I do my homeworks I found that the are many words that I don't understand when I read</p> <p>Gyinya: that thing they help me a lot</p>
P7	<p>That test was very easy the way. I think but what I see is if I'm writting the test, I just felt is easier but it is not. But what I want to say is that, it was good and easy for me</p> <p>That lesson was very easy but I was sick of head ache but I hope next week I will be okay so that I can listen very well</p>
P4	<p>Without this programme I wouldn't be able to do so well. I guess its true when they say practice makes perfect</p> <p>He made me realise how important it is to be educated. How the world works</p> <p>I found it very difficult to learn yesterday's lesson</p>
P6/Trans/Know	<p>In my mind I remember Rose and Lewis when they teacher me they say if you read a story or something you must understand the first column before you move to another column</p>
P4	<p>On this day we were writting English Paper 3. The paper consisted of 1 essay, 1 diary and a friendly letter. The lessons that I had from Roxanne really helped me</p>
P6/Thks	<p>Thanks Rose, your are the best</p>

	<p>Thanks for everything you help me</p> <p>I just want to say to you thanks for everything that you help me and teaching me English</p> <p>You are best teacher Rose thanks Rose</p>
P8	<p>Thank you for your help, I appreciate you</p>
P1	<p>I love you</p> <p>You are so special to me because you are careful about people</p> <p>I appreciate everything you did for me</p> <p>Thanks Rose to bring this special afternoon or after school project</p>
P5	<p>Thank Rose and Lewis for letting us know about the codes and percentages</p>
P4	<p>I am thankful to Roxanne and her supervisors. I wish she would keep up her good work</p>

Addendum W: Data analysis – Reflective journal

Categories of data from my reflective journal

Culture	Theory	Observations	Whiteness	Communication/ language
<p>Tying my husband (mentioning a husband) and me to the land (the Eastern Cape) using a few Xhosa words during the session kept them engaged, amused and surprised them</p> <p>differences in cultural practices</p> <p>eat with them</p> <p>Land is very important to them as well as the sharing of food, language, experiences</p> <p>Ubuntu is a deeply engrained mindset</p> <p>unquestioning submission to authority</p> <p>they are not men yet</p>	<p>children interpret the world and make meaning out of their own and other people's actions</p> <p>meaning is inferred by the context</p> <p>context-dependent</p> <p>working from each child's ZPD</p> <p>address each learner's needs as they arise</p> <p>meeting learners' needs through the emergent design</p> <p>context clues</p> <p>these children are not 'reading for meaning'</p> <p>make it concrete. I called P2 over and used their fingers</p>	<p>visibly relaxed</p> <p>immediately related</p> <p>The students responded well to the hide-and-seek</p> <p>They were also generally positive (at least outwardly) about LIA</p> <p>unsure how to engage the boys</p> <p>They are reserved, reluctant and almost shy</p> <p>individual food unit</p> <p>seemed incredulous</p> <p>The learners enjoyed the alphabet exercise on the board only when they started to understand what I was getting</p>	<p>'white way of working and communicating'</p> <p>none of the cageyness or politeness that would expect from white learners</p> <p>The thing about the working with people from different cultures is that there is always a barrier, a black and white barrier and I can't get these children to see me as a person. I have to be a white person</p> <p>I felt very white today</p> <p>Tell the white person to give us meat as well!</p> <p>tolerate each other</p> <p>prevent history</p>	<p>an openness that really helped facilitate communication</p> <p>They appreciate it when someone tries to speak their language</p> <p>read fluently in English</p> <p>I told them numerous times that they could speak to one another</p> <p>a lot of chatting</p> <p>isiXhosa does not contain English articles</p> <p>the use of articles and determiners is entirely different in the English language system to those of the isiXhosa language system</p> <p>articles and</p>

<p>they are straining to be in the next phase of life</p> <p>waiting with anticipation and frustration</p> <p>These children are so open</p> <p>It's almost as though their identity is in having problems, in struggling through life, whereas in the white community our concern is with saving face, with not showing others that we are suffering, having money and affirming and admiring other people that are 'successful' as well</p> <p>there is a cultural barrier when it comes to evaluation and rating yourself as an individual on a scale</p>	<p>mediation in practice</p>	<p>at</p> <p>loved interacting with each other, listening to each other and commenting on each person's word choice</p> <p>put them at ease and then they agree and the ones that don't agree typically don't answer</p> <p>those learners are a speedy bunch</p> <p>These are smart children</p> <p>Thursdays seem to be problematic</p> <p>they had all learned something new</p> <p>using Xhosa words as an example and then showing them how to transfer their knowledge into English</p> <p>They audibly said that they understood after</p>	<p>from repeating itself</p> <p>because I believe that all they can see is my white skin, my white face, my whiteness, my otherness</p> <p>I just can't understand why the Western culture is so punctual and the Xhosa culture never developed that</p> <p>us/them" is so deeply entrenched into this country that I can't help them because they don't trust me as a white woman.</p> <p>I don't understand this and I feel so frustrated by it all</p>	<p>determiners are stand-alone</p> <p>because isiXhosa is an agglutinating language, articles are fused to the sentence as a prefix or the adaptation of the initial vowel to denote possession or specificity</p> <p>language is changing so fast in its oral form</p> <p>English is different</p> <p>"the" and "they" were used interchangeably</p> <p>isiXhosa as an agglutinating, fusional language and English as an analytic language (with agglutinative and fusional elements)</p> <p>English is a crazy language</p> <p>there are many ways to talk about the cat in isiXhosa</p>
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<p>what kinds of people they are in their mother tongue</p> <p>culture or cruel they just isolate themselves</p> <p>The Xhosa culture emphasises collective voice and individual voices are often drowned out</p> <p>Men are really dominant in their culture, even from this age</p> <p>It's only for boys, not for girls</p> <p>nomadic history influences their current practices</p> <p>it is a cultural practice that makes most people unwilling to help them</p> <p>called a 'show off'</p> <p>They really do like to gossip and speaking their language is the</p>		<p>that</p> <p>that they enjoy wrestling with concepts</p> <p>they are spoon fed usually or whether it's just because they're sharp children</p> <p>communicated content in isiXhosa is in the 93% or is said in such a way that makes it obvious</p> <p>The learners referred a huge amount to pointing in their answers</p> <p>times they were bored or they had learnt the intended lesson</p> <p>they couldn't answer them</p> <p>P1 seemed a bit out of it</p> <p>Vocab needs lots of work</p> <p>Discussion works well</p> <p>Work best in</p>		<p>but in English, there are only a few</p> <p>great diversity that they have at their disposal to express themselves</p> <p>It took quite some doing getting her to share her opinion</p> <p>ability to verbally and mentally blend sounds</p> <p>more I practice my Xhosa, the more English the children feel competent to speak</p> <p>There is a lot of executive processing happening but I cannot understand it</p> <p>All the important discussions are conducted in isiXhosa and I feel like I am missing so much. I have</p>
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<p>key to getting through to them</p> <p>They really do like to gossip about people who can't understand the language</p> <p>It's almost like the motivation and drive that gets socialised out of them as babies means that they are unable to feel like doing much at all really</p> <p>The children turn on each other quite a lot. They got into an argument about bunking</p>		<p>groups – let their guard down</p> <p>Many of them frequently say how NB the lessons are</p> <p>Boys and girls do not mix</p> <p>Shy but often have great ideas or know the answer to questions</p> <p>Becoming braver and are respond more frequently and easily</p> <p>children's abilities are more varied</p> <p>going through the motions</p> <p>there's like a veil that comes down</p> <p>it's difficult to keep them on task when they are outside</p>		<p>now got into the habit of asking them to translate</p> <p>willing gave his input and corrected me</p> <p>big discrepancy between their oral fluency in English and their writing proficiency</p> <p>They can speak and express their ideas quite easily but when they write, their abilities are not accurately reflected</p> <p>Their writing capacity does not match their oral fluency and so it is difficult to get an accurate picture of their reading comprehension</p> <p>they couldn't speak English</p>
<p>Truth and honesty</p>	<p>Enjoyment</p>	<p>My emotions</p>	<p>Their realities</p>	<p>Reading/ comprehension</p>
<p>Authenticity, as Dr Oswald said, is</p>	<p>enjoy the novelty of hunting for</p>	<p>wasn't able to discern</p>	<p>disappointment through unrealistic</p>	<p>uncertain about their actual</p>

<p>key</p> <p>I told them that if they wanted help, they needed to tell me the truth so that I could help them in a way that coincides with their realities</p> <p>It is a trust thing as Dr. Oswald said</p>	<p>something valuable</p> <p>enjoyed their food</p> <p>enjoyed the puzzles</p> <p>enjoyed reading each other's stories</p> <p>They really enjoyed the muffin lesson and P3 told me that she would like to play some more games</p> <p>much they enjoyed all playing together!</p> <p>they want to carry on</p> <p>We had such good discussions about Mxit, HIV and counselling.</p> <p>They all participated and gave me some great points for the topics</p> <p>but they wanted more</p> <p>Another good thing was Dr.</p>	<p>I found encouraging</p> <p>really eye-opening for me</p> <p>I found this confusing</p> <p>I won't do it again</p> <p>I also couldn't understand</p> <p>I was concerned</p> <p>I need to get some advice</p> <p>I am uncertain whether they will evaluate their reading practices accurately</p> <p>my role as a moderator (mediation)</p> <p>I am uncertain about the academic capabilities of P6</p> <p>I am unsure when to intervene during his interaction with the other learners</p> <p>huge breakthrough</p>	<p>life expectations and contextual circumstances</p> <p>apathy, anger and aggression in the school</p> <p>I know from his demographics that he was only exposed to English in Grade 8 for academic purposes (the literature states that it takes about 5 years to establish CALP, which probably means that he will not be equipped to understand his matric papers at the level of academic proficiency that is needed to pass on a national level</p> <p>admitted to being hungry</p> <p>made the food a priority</p> <p>she was hungry</p> <p>needed someone</p>	<p>comprehension</p> <p>P2 reads slowly, her eyes track the words much more slowly and deliberately than the other learners. P2 and P7 work more slowly than the others. P3 and P5 work very quickly. I could not make judgments about their reading comprehension</p> <p>the children scored below fifty percent besides two</p> <p>an organic whole</p> <p>A apple b boy c cat d dog e elephant f frog</p> <p>Sounds not known</p> <p>Blending not understood</p> <p>Display evidence of metacognitive awareness in their answers to the informal questionnaire</p>
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	<p>Oswald's spy game; the children loved it and it really made them use their noggins which is what I so desperately needed at this stage</p> <p>The learners responded well and followed P3 as a translator because Lewis was working. P6 was much happier with that. He is learning very quickly now, like a little sponge soaking everything up</p> <p>enjoy a sense of urgency. They seem to enjoy feeling productive, which seems contradictory to their behaviour</p>	<p>I don't want them to become bored</p> <p>Today was disappointing</p> <p>I had really achieved something</p> <p>I am so grateful for having the opportunity to work with such amazing learners!</p> <p>I was a bit puzzled</p> <p>I was a bit shocked</p> <p>Today was disappointing</p> <p>sin king feeling</p> <p>it encouraged me</p> <p>I was happy to hear this</p> <p>not sure that I should have done that</p> <p>Learn to roll with the punches</p> <p>Today's lesson was an eye-opener!</p> <p>I am worried</p>	<p>to talk to about trouble at home or whatever</p> <p>my dad is drinking</p> <p>he has stopped</p> <p>he has started drinking again</p> <p>checked out once in the lesson and totally in the car</p> <p>only one protective factor in his community.</p> <p>There weren't any others he said</p> <p>Sisbanxa</p> <p>hardships that they are facing</p> <p>depends on their families and how much money is available. He said that I should tell them that they need to start small and do lowly</p> <p>People have different lives and different opportunities. He said that a big thing is made up</p>	<p>he finds the English very difficult to read and to listen to</p> <p>to take note of them when reading so that their comprehension improves</p> <p>learners left out words or used the incorrect words in the sentences</p> <p>they wrote</p> <p>could not answer the anaphoric inference questions in LIA/</p> <p>did not understand what the question required of them</p> <p>They are reading to pass</p> <p>The less fluent pupils were all stuck but I encouraged them to ask their friends for help. They were reticent</p> <p>no understanding</p>
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		<p>secretly relieved</p> <p>I need a breather</p> <p>I was very proud of him</p> <p>This was my biggest worry</p> <p>I am a bit stumped</p> <p>I should have focused more on the story meanings</p> <p>feel so hopeless for them</p> <p>there is nothing that I can do</p> <p>I felt comforted</p> <p>I feel so frustrated</p> <p>I actually feel very angry about it</p> <p>I just feel so helpless and hopeless about their life situations</p> <p>shocked at how little they have understood without instruction in their mother tongue, it makes me feel depressed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I also was</p>	<p>of lots of small things e.g. small streams flow into rivers, rivers flow into bigger rivers and big rivers flow into the ocean. I like this a lot, it is such a good metaphor for life</p> <p>. It was an eye-opening experience with P3 saying that she would continue on her career path (clinical psychologist first and gynaecologist afterwards)</p> <p>despite it taking her about 17 years to qualify for both and R1.7bar to fund it all. P4 and P5 just laughed at her</p> <p>he is 4 years behind linguistically</p> <p>they had rained wet while walking to school</p> <p>They also seemed</p>	<p>of what a pointing word</p> <p>It's dismal on a technical level but seems to be average</p> <p>They cannot communicate what they have understood correctly</p> <p>They don't get it and they do a lot of guessing</p> <p>a lot of their misunderstanding and confusion seems to be as a result of the language barrier.</p> <p>The Great Wall of Language. I am finding it increasingly difficult to determine what a RC problem is and what is a proficiency problem</p> <p>He takes longer to catch on</p> <p>They can actually</p>
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		<p>shocked by the lack of higher cognitive abilities with inferencing but that could just have been due to the language barrier</p> <p>I don't understand this and I feel so frustrated by it all</p> <p>I'm just so stumped by it all</p> <p>get my pound of flesh</p> <p>worried and worried</p> <p>shocked at how little they have written since last term</p> <p>nothing went well today</p> <p>I was so very angry and really disappointed today. I feel despondent about the rest of the intervention and keen just to get it over with now, I've maybe drawn it</p>	<p>to hint at not being friends and therefore they prefer surnames</p>	<p>do it if they feel like it</p> <p>P5's group did a lot of discussing but did not get any further. They drew pictures and lines but then became discouraged and stopped. This group said that drawing was difficult</p> <p>didn't even know what a full stop was or why sentences are punctuated</p> <p>lag in their language proficiency and basic linguistic skills</p> <p>P4 seems to struggle with the "q" sound and cannot separate the sounds out i.e. he can't say "queen" to himself and the isolate the "q" sound</p> <p>Academic texts are a real</p>
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		out a bit?		<p>challenge for them. P6 reads word by word with his pen as a guide and mouths each word to himself. I have noticed that P2 does the same thing occasionally. I think that it is very difficult for them</p> <p>the learners' vocabulary seems to be their weak point. They do not know words such as massive, great, potential, pharmaceutical, critical, decline. Their inferencing is also weak</p>
Lying	Silence	Others' observations	Motivation	Planning
<p>P5 is lying</p> <p>they need to defend themselves against others through gossip and lies</p> <p>I feel so frustrated</p>	<p>they just carried on working silently as individuals</p> <p>a long silence</p> <p>another silence</p> <p>a period of silence</p> <p>quiet for a very</p>	<p>children are rude and don't work</p> <p>You and your husband have had a lot of opportunities, you have been very blessed</p>	<p>I want to help others have those opportunities too</p> <p>help these children develop realistic expectations and then to reach</p>	<p>must think carefully</p> <p>including as many activities</p> <p>integrate the information about adolescents</p> <p>considering</p>

<p>about the learners' deceptive tendencies helped them to understand that they need to be realistic. Lewis was convinced that they were fibbing never mentioned a sister There is so much dishonesty and a disregard for others that I don't understand</p>	<p>long time and very reluctant to try whether the girls benefit as much as the boys P5 was quiet and listened intently throughout the description of what we were doing They were quiet and listened carefully</p>	<p>concerned about this inconsistency some control needs to come from their side worried about the extent to which my research can be integrated into their lives at this rate that the earlier in the week it is, the more likely the children are to be at school strong learners are the basis of my thesis epilepsy and anxiety induced blankness it's(encouragement) not really something that's in their culture he feels just as hopeless and as clueless as I do when it comes to these things They don't want to be embarrassed</p>	<p>these goals in need of support in both these areas what his needs are how I can help them express themselves better help the learners understand this difference P6 has needs that far outweigh the others' needs I feel a responsibility There's no point in completing this degree if I can't make a difference, even to one child exposing them to the big wide world to inspire a sense of leadership and being a champion for the weak most vulnerable of the group that I want to help them so very</p>	<p>movement, peer orientation (based on P5's "I really, really like girls"), 'good stress' and their tremendous learning capacity I am going to work on the foundational aspects of reading and reading comprehension. These include letter-sound relationships, phonemes and the most basic differences between the English and isiXhosa language systems. I am going to come at this specific problem from the approach of code-switching I am going to work I will use texts Reflecting on last week's session again, I have decided</p>
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		<p>or ashamed so they are repeating ideas</p> <p>they don't want me to think that their choices are shameful or worthy of scorn</p> <p>unbelievably lazy and they are not interested in school, they are not interested in hard work</p> <p>they are contemptuous of people that work at those places</p> <p>that a number of them were lazy</p> <p>He said that one or two others were smart and it was obvious that they were interested</p> <p>humour really does work well with them for diffusing conflict or making serious points</p> <p>they are callous and they don't</p>	<p>much</p>	<p>limiting dominant personalities and encouraging shy ones</p> <p>helped me sort out my thoughts</p> <p>use differentiated instruction</p> <p>Provide more structure</p> <p>Stick to the lesson plan</p> <p>more explicit in my instruction</p> <p>ways to make it fun</p> <p>giving them pointers and making them slow down and reread what they write</p> <p>figured out that if I could work on their mental models I could address pointing words, conflicting information and tell them how to build mental models as a transfer exercise. It also gave me a</p>
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		care about me that they're perfect and know everything; that they don't need help		reason to help them practice the KWL method which helps them practice their MC strategy development
Sharing	Authority/Power	Group think	Dreams	Class climate
those who have are not supposed to take from those who don't have she would never take bread from them because God would judge her if she did were sharing pens frequently fought over misplaced pens learners offered me their dialogue journals enjoy interacting with one another to give their opinion and then a discussion quickly follows, be it verbal or physical begin sharing my	He looked to me for confirmation more firm about consistency what I am feeling first before asking them to provide answers to be more firm about consistency the power differential inherent any classroom scenario power is definitely communicated through space he teacher is in charge and they have to submit seating arrangements	firmly commanded by her peers without imitating one another agreed strongly again discussions and arguments that ensued would decide together what they thought I wanted to hear and then tell me that answer very lively discussions and big debates. They seem to negotiate with each other	mentioned their desire to study at tertiary institutions to qualify as professionals	emotional climate of the assessment this class to be a place where they can have fun but where we are serious about learning that can help them attain their goals create a new culture in the classroom so that it's a place of learning, not a classroom It is virtually impossible to engage the learners' minds if they are in school mode this limiting force foster a positive

<p>opinion first before asking them for their opinion</p> <p>I can see how much they get out of the interaction</p> <p>very chatty and spoke to each other a lot</p> <p>The children often talk about Mxit</p> <p>they help each other a lot</p> <p>everyone is looking out for him in little ways</p>	<p>discuss things at eye level</p> <p>disrespectful</p> <p>they are telling me what they think I want to hear</p> <p>I had them sit in a ring again so that I could diminish the subconscious power dynamic</p> <p>submission plays a huge role in how these children react during learning experiences</p> <p>submission to authority or elders dominates and suppresses any natural inclination that children have towards inquisitiveness, creativity or critical thinking. A spectator sport.</p> <p>It's almost as though "children should be seen and not heard" has silenced them to such an extent</p>			<p>emotional climate in the lessons</p> <p>large amounts of affirmation</p> <p>spent time talking to individuals</p> <p>praising specific character traits</p> <p>encouragement and showing positive regard</p> <p>feel comfortable in our sessions together and know that it is a place where they can relax</p> <p>formal schooling space and into an open space where they can learn through play then it may help remove that veil</p> <p>introduced a relaxed atmosphere</p> <p>They willingly interact much more</p> <p>It was nice to see them feel</p>
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	<p>that it produces bewildered adults that are trapped in the poverty cycle because they do not possess the necessary skills to rise to the top. They also seem to be lethargic, lazy and despondent at times. There are many reasons for this but it is concerning</p> <p>changed the power differential authority/respect is taken in their culture and not given</p> <p>Authority seems to be quite a 'violent' force in their communities i.e. I haven't seen any form of polite rebuke. It's as though the adults use the saw as the only method of discipline</p> <p>I have no authority anyway but this</p>			<p>confident about what they had to say.</p> <p>In this case, they were the experts and it was good</p> <p>struggle to concentrate with a lecture style lesson</p>
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	<p>does count as clout and I'm grateful</p> <p>I will have to be firmer in the future</p>			
Autonomy	They said about reading	They felt in general	Empathy	Their skills in reading/ academics
<p>wanted to know what she must do</p> <p>each learner to respond as an individual</p> <p>make their voices heard</p> <p>P4, who does not mind being different</p> <p>he was resilient and capable</p> <p>the only ones that found words on their own</p> <p>did not find a single word on their own</p> <p>They don't seem to be able to do this type of exercise on their own</p>	<p>they said that it was easy</p> <p>P4 commented on how difficult the test had been in Xhosa to his peers</p> <p>they just have to hurry to finish and get to the last question and then they don't worry about how to write correctly. They just write</p> <p>he doesn't speak English in front of me because he is shy but he speaks a lot of English in class, more than the others often times</p> <p>But it doesn't make sense. It</p>	<p>never seen such excitement in the classroom before</p> <p>P6 looked very somber</p> <p>seemed confused</p> <p>she was confused i.e. didn't understand, at which she got very angry</p> <p>She did not like this answer and seemed deflated or disappointed that she had not got away with being allowed to be quiet</p> <p>He was absolutely delighted</p> <p>He looked uncomfortable and did not look at</p>	<p>I suppose it would be like me learning in isiXhosa</p> <p>This is not good, it reveals so much about how he sees himself and what he expects from himself and his life in future</p> <p>amount of teasing that he puts up with is not healthy</p>	<p>P5 is able to do this and tried to teach P4 the same technique</p> <p>what they were learning in the lesson would help them with their essays</p> <p>They completed the puzzle much more slowly</p> <p>I was also shocked by the boys' puzzle because even though the sentences didn't make sense, they assumed that they were finished. The pieces were all fitted together properly but were misaligned so that</p>

<p>spoon feeding'</p>	<p>doesn't mean anything! she couldn't explain it self-image is so bad and he really is trying his best The children often talk about Mxit they felt that they knew about the topic When I asked them why they wanted to come twice a week, they said it's because they learn</p>	<p>me her mood swings a touch of diva exclamations of surprise and delight The children have responded well to these things The learners were very enthusiastic about being outside he felt a great deal of pride others were a bit shocked and awkward he is embarrassed they were tired sleepy and unfocused The children were late and lethargic They seemed surprised that I was angry The kids were all in a good mood and seemed excited to be there</p>		<p>the picture and sentences were incomplete He talks a lot and actually shares many of his thoughts and usually knows the answers to most questions. He seems insightful, perceptive and bright. I may have to get him to do other work but must just keep his English language proficiency in mind could suddenly see the writing in a new light and yet when they wrote their summaries, they were just as poor as before P6 is speaking more and more English and is doing well seemed to grasp the KWL method quite easily and produced some</p>
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		P7 is still shy and doesn't want to ask questions		<p>fascinating questions after they had skimmed the text</p> <p>spoke a lot during the brainstorming about the topic. P3 also asked him a lot of questions and offered some comments about how she experienced life as a good student</p> <p>P6 said that he understood as well</p> <p>The sentence was so mangled that I tried my best to grasp the meaning but he seemed embarrassed so I didn't push too hard</p> <p>P6 felt like he had something to give the extroverted learners are interrupting now and saying that they are confused or don't</p>
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				<p>understand</p> <p>Their sentence structure is improving and they asked some very good questions</p> <p>better and better with their reasoning and were able to understand inference questions. They answered quickly and thought hard about the questions. They were able to reason their way to many of the answers through mediation and scaffolding</p> <p>told me that he was lost</p> <p>smiled at me and said rose I understand now</p> <p>they did not make use of them as tools to help them understand or</p>
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				<p>problem solve</p> <p>P3 as she had brought her dictionary along and everybody made use of that. The learners asked a lot of questions and I was grateful to have Lewis around. MM is not afraid to say that he doesn't understand and now asks question after question. I found it interesting that when he expresses himself in his mother tongue, he asks insightful questions such as "Is one plant exotic and the other indigenous?"</p> <p>They were saying that this is not the same test that you gave us in the beginning. This test is too easy. That test was very</p>
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				<p>difficult. This is not the same test</p> <p>Me It is the same test so what does that mean? It means you have learnt something in these words thought about EMS and what we studied last year and I thought about supply and demand and ja</p>
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