



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

Faculty of Education, Private Bag X17, Bellville, South Africa

**DEGREE: M.ED (BY DISSERTATION ONLY)**

**EXPLORING READING TO LEARN METHODOLOGY IN THE  
TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN GRADE 6  
ISIXHOSA HOME LANGUAGE: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY**

by

**FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI**

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**Supervisor: Peter Plüddemann**

## **DECLARATION**

**STUDENT NO: 3400344**

**I, FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI**, declare that “Exploring Reading to Learn methodology in the teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study” is my work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged.

**Signed by .....** on the ..... day of .....**20**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my late in-laws Nokuzola Fongoqa and Wellington Genge for their massive support during my difficult undergraduate years, they indeed wanted me to prosper. Songo, Msimango and Madiba, Sopotsho may your souls continue to rest in peace.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AR	Action Research
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
IEA	Evaluation for Educational Achievement
LiEP	Language in Education policy
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies
RtL	Reading to Learn
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
TLC	Teaching and Learning Cycle
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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## ABSTRACT

Reading is central to language literacy, but it has been problematic for decades in South African schools, with poor schools being most heavily affected. Reading comprehension has been identified as a barrier not only for languages but across all learning areas. Contemporary reading literacy studies, such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study report (2016), have shown reading literacy deficits in relation to Home and First Additional languages in South Africa. The objective of this study was ultimately to improve reading comprehension in an isiXhosa Home Language class, in which the majority of learners speak an urbanised, non-standard variety of isiXhosa and struggle to comprehend and produce texts in standard isiXhosa, as required by the curriculum. To achieve this, the study explored the use Reading to Learn (RtL). RtL is based on genre theory and relates to the text-based approach advocated by the CAPS curriculum for Languages. RtL uses language as a resource for making meaning. RtL is specifically designed to foster intensive reading and help learners understand the purposes, structure, and content of the text. Reading then becomes a stage on the way to writing (Rose, 2018).

Regarding research design, the study used the critical paradigm. In this paradigm, researchers believe that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and other dynamics. Critical theory deals with issues of transformation, fairness, and equality. The context of the study allowed for the use of action research method, which is important because it enables teachers to engage in professional learning, change their way of teaching through systematic reflection, and encourage active participation and critical thinking in learners. The intervention has an observable influence on learners' reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language. The research site was a township primary school in greater Cape Town, focusing on Grade 6. Data collection included one on one interviews with teachers, focus group interviews with learners, document analysis, and classroom observation videos. It is thus designed as a qualitative case-study with an interventionist orientation.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, reading to learn, text-based approach, action research.

# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is central to language literacy and is the foundation for all learning activities. However, reading has been problematic for decades in South African schools, with poor under-resourced schools being the most vulnerable. Reading is one of the four language skills identified in the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011). Reading is divided into two types: extensive and intensive reading. Extensive reading refers to reading large quantities of material, which offers broad exposure to the target language and is mainly for pleasure. By contrast, intensive reading focuses on detailed analyses of the text or language material (Mart, 2015, p.1). Studies have shown that the combination of the two reading types leads to substantial proficiency gains in language learning, as one focuses on fluency while the other emphasises accuracy (Laufer-Dvorkin, 1981). However, CAPS prioritises the use of intensive reading. It is my belief that the failure of CAPS to facilitate the combination of extensive and intensive reading has led to the current reading comprehension challenges in both Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) subjects. These challenges have been echoed and documented by international reading literacy studies.

Reading comprehension has been identified as the key to language development and learning in all learning areas. Snow (2002) defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting information and constructing meaning through interaction and participation in written language. Contemporary reading research, such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) report (2016), has shown reading literacy deficits in South Africa (Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena, McLeod & Palane, 2017). PIRLS, under the umbrella of the International Association for the Evaluation for Educational Achievement (IEA), assesses reading comprehension in the home language and monitors trends in reading literacy at five-year intervals. The focus is on Grades 4 and 5, both of which are assessed using PIRLS passages at the international fourth year level and PIRLS literacy passages (easier passages). In PIRLS 2016, South African learners came last out of the 50 nations that participated, averaging 320 points, which is far lower than the PIRLS benchmark of 500 (Howie, et al., 2017). The fact that South African learners were tested in their HL and still performed poorly raises a number of questions. However, PIRLS has come under attack from some scholars. Prinsloo and Krause (2018), for example, heavily criticise

the PIRLS test, claiming that it is suitable only for gauging proficiency in very limited literacy and language structures, and that it is not sensitive enough to test actual classroom literacy practice. They argue on the basis that the tests overlook the major issues that contribute towards reading comprehension challenges in countries such as South Africa, such as large-scale inequality, widespread inefficiency and corruption, and policy bubbles that are out of touch with the reality of classroom practice. PIRLS tests generally represent a one-size-fits-all strategy without consideration of broader issues that certain countries' education systems are experiencing.

A study by Badat and Sayed (2014), amongst others, points to socio-economic conditions as a reason for the noticeable gap in learning achievement between rich and poor. South African 6th graders participated in the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) survey, which involved 15 Southern and Eastern African countries. The richest 20% of learners have an average reading test score of 605, while the poorest 20% of learners have an average reading score of 436. There are similar differences on maths tests, with average scores of 583 and 454. Furthermore, the poorest 20% of learners perform well below their peers in other African countries. Amongst the poorest 25% of learners, South African learners ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in reading, 12<sup>th</sup> in maths, and 12<sup>th</sup> overall amongst the 15 African countries. Furthermore, rural children in South Africa perform worse than their peers elsewhere, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> in reading and 12<sup>th</sup> in maths (Badat & Sayed, 2014). The authors' argument is based on the learning resources which put schools in poor communities at a disadvantage, and it is in these poor communities where Home Languages such as those mentioned above are used.

By contrast, Millin (2015) challenges this position. She notes that the SACMEQ report shows South African learners being outperformed in reading by countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Botswana, whose gross domestic product (GDP) is reportedly one-tenth that of South Africa. This suggests that poverty is not necessarily an excuse for low literacy rates. In addition, South Africa continues to lag behind countries with similar political and economic status, and continues to show significant inequality in educational outcomes between schools.

Another perspective is provided by the Bua-lit collective (2018), which claims that CAPS is responsible for learners' shortcomings in assessments such as PIRLS. According to this collective, CAPS ignores the Language in Education policy (LiEP) (1996) when making decisions. "LiEP explicitly promotes multilingual education and refers to two examples,

teaching through one medium (Home Language) and learning additional language(s) as additional subjects” (Bua-lit, 2018, p.15). In contrast to LiEP, CAPS promotes the use of the home language from Grades 1-3 as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and English as LoLT from Grade 4 onwards. This sudden switch affects learners because they are still not proficient in their home language before transitioning to an unfamiliar language (Bua-lit, 2018). The arguments reveal part of the genesis of the reading comprehension issue in South African classrooms.

A number of studies have been conducted in an attempt to improve reading comprehension. Some studies examine various models that might help identify the components with the greatest effect on comprehension. These components include the Construction-Integration, Verbal Efficiency, and Inferential Mediation models of reading comprehension (Cromley, 2005). A study by Mahdavi and Tensfeldt (2013) encourages family involvement in children’s literacy development to enhance reading comprehension. Although such studies contribute significantly to addressing the issue, the problem persists. In an attempt to contribute towards understanding the reading comprehension phenomenon, this study, like others before it, seeks to explore alternative solutions. Since LiEP promotes multilingual education, strategies that complement multilingual education should be implemented to support multilingual classrooms and enhance reading comprehension.

On the other hand, the Reading to Learn (RtL) as a literacy teaching programme is designed to assist learners develop reading and writing skills at levels appropriate to their age, grade and area of study (Rose, 2006, p.3). Therefore, this study proposes using the RtL methodology to explore ways of enhancing reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa HL.

## **1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

One of the challenges currently facing South African education is learners’ inability to read for meaning and produce meaningful texts. Reading comprehension is a challenge for both Home and First Additional languages. This challenge has been documented in PIRLS 2011 and 2016, where South African learners performed dismally in Home Languages. However, according to the Bua-lit collective (2018), PIRLS does not offer a solution to the reading comprehension challenge.

This study is motivated by the recognition of poor reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language learners. As a Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language educator, I encounter this challenge daily –learners struggle to read for meaning or produce meaningful texts. Although

educator development workshops on languages, including reading interventions, are conducted annually, they have not yielded observable results. An exploration of alternative teaching methodologies to enhance reading comprehension was undertaken. The observation prompted the study to explore the use of RtL methodology as an alternative approach to improving reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study had the following research questions:

#### **Main research question:**

To what extent can the Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology enhance reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language?

#### **Sub-questions:**

- What reading comprehension challenges do learners and teachers encounter in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language?
- In what ways can the RtL methodology address these reading comprehension challenges in isiXhosa Home Language?

### **1.4. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

- To investigate reading comprehension challenges in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language.
- To explore the extent to which the RtL methodology can address these challenges in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language.

### **1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS (CHAPTER OUTLINE)**

This study consists of five chapters which are summarised below:

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the background and context of the study. It outlines the research problem, aims, and objectives that form the foundation of the study. Additionally, it presents the research questions that guide the study's development.

#### **Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework**

This chapter explores empirical studies relevant to the research topic. It also discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study and outlines the study's delimitations.

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

This chapter describes the research methodology and paradigm adopted for the study. It also addresses ethical considerations related to the research process.

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

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected through interviews, document analysis, and self-observation. The analysis is aligned with the study's objectives to ensure that findings address the research problem.

### **Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions and recommendations**

This chapter discusses the findings that emerged from the data analysis. It also presents conclusions drawn from the findings and provides recommendations based on the study's findings.

## **1.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the study. It also highlighted the research problem, objectives, and research questions that guide the study. The next chapter reviews relevant literature and explores the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to my research title and questions to gain a deeper understanding of how reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language can be enhanced through the Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology. The study explores the use of the RtL methodology as a means to improve reading comprehension in this context. Additionally, the theoretical framework of this study is constructed around key concepts, including reading comprehension, the text-based approach, action research, and the RtL methodology. This chapter further discusses the theoretical foundation, which is based on three main theories: Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Bernstein's pedagogic discourse of knowledge and values.

#### **2.2. READING COMPREHENSION**

Reading comprehension involves several cognitive processes, including decoding, vocabulary, background knowledge, inference-making, and metacognition. Researchers have studied various factors influencing comprehension and developed models to explain and enhance it. This literature review first examines reading literacy at the foundation phase of schooling, which is considered the root of reading comprehension difficulties. It then discusses different reading comprehension models aimed at improving literacy outcomes.

A study by Mataka, Mukurunge, and Bhila (2020) highlights several critical challenges and strategies related to literacy development in South Africa's Grade R classrooms. Firstly, Mataka et al. highlights literacy development challenges, noting that South African learners, particularly from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, face significant literacy challenges. Many struggle with reading and writing, which negatively affects their academic success and civic participation. South Africa ranks poorly in international literacy assessments, highlighting systemic issues in literacy education. Secondly, the study emphasises the inadequate focus on early literacy instruction in Grade R, which is a crucial stage for developing foundational reading and writing skills. Contributing factors include limited resources, pedagogical challenges, and an overemphasis on rote learning rather than play-based learning.

Lastly, Mataka et al. propose the Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology as a potential intervention to address the literacy development challenge. RtL is introduced as a structured

pedagogy that explicitly teach reading skills through a six-stage curriculum cycle. This approach aims to scaffold learners' understanding and gradually build their literacy skills. Grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, RtL emphasises scaffolding, allowing learners to progressively develop literacy skills with guided support before achieving independent comprehension.

Implementing RtL significantly enhances emergent literacy skills among Grade R learners, improving phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. RtL fosters a more engaging learning environment, promoting literacy skills, critical thinking, and social interaction.

In conclusion, the study advocates for the urgent adoption of RtL pedagogy to address literacy challenges and to improve educational outcomes for Grade R learners in South Africa.

In another study, Spaull, Pretorius, and Mohohlwane (2020) provide several key insights into early reading development among Grade 3 learners in South Africa. According to the study, a significant challenge in South Africa is that 78% of Grade 4 learners have not learned to read for meaning in any language, highlighting a critical gap in early literacy development. This issue is particularly pronounced among learners reading in their home languages, which are often agglutinating African languages like Northern Sotho, Xitsonga, and isiZulu. Spaull, et al. (2020) refer to this challenge as a "comprehension iceberg metaphor," illustrating that while reading comprehension outcomes are visible, many underlying factors, such as decoding skills, remain unexamined. The study aims to explore these hidden components to better understand why learners struggle with reading comprehension, with decoding skills and reading fluency identified as key factors in this challenge.

The research identifies minimum thresholds of decoding skills necessary for reading comprehension. It emphasises that strong relationships exist between various reading components, letter-sound knowledge correlates with word reading, which in turn relates to oral reading fluency (ORF) and comprehension. If learners do not meet these minimum thresholds, their ability to read for meaning is severely compromised.

The study also advocates for the development of language-specific benchmarks for reading in African languages. Current assessments often rely on generic standards fail to account for the unique features of agglutinating languages, which have different morphological and orthographic characteristics compared to English. The findings suggest that teacher training is crucial, as many educators lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach reading

in African languages, contributing to poor literacy outcomes. The authors advocate for a more robust empirical framework to guide reading instruction and assessment in these languages.

In summary, the research highlights the importance of understanding the foundational skills required for reading comprehension, the need for tailored benchmarks for African languages, and the critical role of teacher preparedness in improving literacy outcomes among young learners in South Africa.

Continuing the investigating into challenges in reading literacy, one study "Enhancing visibility of local African languages in South Africa through learning to read" by Wildsmith-Cromarty et al. (2023), explored the dynamics of language use and literacy growth in South Africa with a focus on isiZulu. According to the study, isiZulu is used in a variety of settings, although its frequency and context vary significantly. While formal reading activities are scarce, storytelling is a prevalent practice in homes, leading to disparities in the development of literacy skills.

English and isiZulu are both used in educational institutions; however, instruction in these languages is frequently sluggish and inconsistent between grades. The study identifies several obstacles contributing to subpar literacy outcomes, such as the lack of reading materials in African languages, ineffective teaching strategies that fail to address the distinctive linguistic characteristics of isiZulu, and insufficient teacher training. Various studies have also examined different models of reading comprehension and their potential to enhance reading comprehension. One such model is *The Simple View of Reading*, proposed by Gough and Tunmer (1986), which posits that reading comprehension is a function of two primary components: word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension. According to this model, a reader's ability to comprehend a text is depends on their ability to accurately decode words and understand the language used within the text.

In contrast, Rumelhart (1980) proposed *Schema Theory* which suggests that readers use their prior knowledge and experiences to create mental frameworks (schemas) that help them understand new information. According to this theory, comprehension occurs when a reader is able to connect new information to their existing schemas.

Similarly, *The Interactive Compensatory Model* proposes that readers use multiple sources of information to comprehend a text, including the text itself, their prior knowledge, and the context in which the text is presented. According to this model, readers are constantly making

adjustments and compensations to overcome any comprehension difficulties they encounter (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978).

Furthermore, Sweller (1988) recommends the *Cognitive Load Theory*, arguing that working memory has limited capacity and that cognitive load can be reduced by presenting information in a way that minimises extraneous cognitive load (e.g., by using clear and concise language, minimising distractions, and providing relevant background information).

Moreover, Harris and Graham (1996) proposed *Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)* an instructional approach that helps learners develop a set of strategies for reading comprehension. The approach involves teaching learners how to use specific strategies (e.g., prediction, clarification, summarisation) and how to monitor their comprehension while reading.

Lastly, Harmon and Wood (2018) proposed *Vocabulary-Comprehension Relationship Across Disciplines*, which states that the relationship between vocabulary and comprehension is crucial across various disciplines because it has a significant implication for instruction. When learners possess a strong vocabulary, their comprehension skills improve, enabling them to understand and learn content more effectively. In language arts, a robust vocabulary enhances reading comprehension. Learners who are familiar with a wide range of words can decipher unfamiliar terms in texts, grasp the context, and extract meaning from what they read. This, in turn, leads to better understanding and analysis of literary works.

Harmon and Wood further state that vocabulary plays a fundamental role in comprehension technical terms and subject-specific language that are often used, and learners must be able to comprehend and use these terms accurately to understand complex concepts. According to this assertion, instruction should focus on teaching discipline-specific vocabulary and providing opportunities for learners to practise using these terms in context.

Moreover, in math, vocabulary is critical for understanding word problems and mathematical concepts. Learners need to comprehend mathematical terms, symbols, and language to solve problems accurately. Instruction should include explicit vocabulary instruction and provide opportunities for learners to apply math vocabulary in problem-solving situations.

In conclusion, the relationship between vocabulary and comprehension is essential across all disciplines. Instruction should incorporate strategies to develop learners' vocabulary skills, including explicit vocabulary instruction, exposure to rich and varied texts, and opportunities

for practice and application. By strengthening learners' vocabulary, we can enhance their comprehension abilities and support their overall academic success.

The above are just a few of the many theories and instructional approaches related to reading comprehension. While there is still much to be learned about this complex process, research continues to provide insights into the various factors that influence reading comprehension and the most effective strategies for improving it.

Smith, Snow, Serry and Hammond (2021) believed that reading comprehension involves both the ability to decode and identify individual written words and language comprehension. The act of comprehending words and connected speech are two separate but related skills that combine to produce reading comprehension. It involves the interplay between linguistic features of a text and the knowledge and thought processes of the reader. To form a mental image of the text's meaning, the reader must integrate textual information with prior knowledge. In contrast, Duke, Ward, and Pearson (2021) emphasise that reading comprehension is about developing foundational word-reading skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, phonics, and word recognition instruction.

In agreement with Smith et al., Kintsch and Rawson (2005) argue that reading comprehension is generally seen as encompassing various cognitive processes. At its core, it is understood to involve brain processes that handle a wide range of information to accomplish multiple reading tasks. However, a central concept emerges from this complexity: Comprehension occurs when a reader constructs one or more mental images of a text's information.

Kintsch and Rawson (2005) extended their argument, asserting that the comprehension processes that result from the above-mentioned mental representations occur at several levels across units of language. These mental representations occur at word-level (lexical processes), sentence-level (syntactic processes), and text-level. Furthermore, across various levels, processes such as word identification, analysing, referential mapping, and inference, all contribute in interacting with the reader's conceptual knowledge to form a situation model of the text. In addition, the framework is effective for giving a freeze-frame view, which is required to handle assessment difficulties in any way short of instruments that can capture the dynamism of real-time processing. The processes entail word recognition and the activation of language-processing machinery that combine these words into messages. These processes give contextually relevant word meanings, construe word strings into constituents, and integrate sentence information inferentially into more full representations of long text.

Lastly, Kintsch and Rawson (2005) further suggest that in an investigation and assessment of comprehension competence, all processes and component knowledge sources become areas of interest. The information sources can be so broad that understanding may approximate general intelligence, requiring general processing constraints (e.g., working memory, retrieval speed) in addition to the use of broad conceptual knowledge.

Bowyer-Crane and Snowling (2005) counter Kintsch and Rawson's argument, stating that conflating understanding with cognition has ramifications for conceptual clarity. According to Bowyer-Crane and Snowling, one of the complications of conflating the two is the loss of an assessment focus. Indeed, the current state of affairs among published reading comprehension assessments is marked by variability of focus, with each assessment differing in the extent to which it evaluates word reading, background knowledge, and inference skills.

However, Keenan, Betjemann, and Olson (2008) argue that such variability may be unavoidable given different assumptions about what comprehension entails and which aspects of it can be efficiently tested. They propose adopting a conceptual framework for understanding comprehension components that reflects both theory and evidence. Additionally, they emphasise that such a framework is useful for guiding evaluation. According to their suggestion, this framework may help identify which components are being evaluated and which are not.

Keenan et al. (2008) assert that an assessment with defined focal areas is beneficial for teaching and learning. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that it is unlikely that all components contribute equally to overall skill variability, are entirely independent, or are equally measurable using traditional assessments. Each of these three factors (skill-related variability, independence, and measurability) serves as a useful criterion for evaluation.

Keenan et al. (2008) further state that researchers often assume that comprehension tests used to assess comprehension challenges all measure the same comprehension skill. However, when the Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT), the Qualitative Reading Test (QRI), the Woodcock-Johnson Passage Comprehension Subtest (WJPC), and the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) were all compared, the findings revealed that these tests yield different results depending on the specific skills being assessed. These differences were based on the percentages and accuracy levels each test provided for each comprehension skill.

Adlof, Catts, and Little (2006), in agreement with Kintsch and Rawson, assert that word identification is a fundamental components of reading comprehension. They argue that word

identification is a critical first step in reading comprehension, with substantial correlations between word reading ability and comprehension observed across age groups, even into adulthood. However, Landi (2010) disagrees with this assertion, arguing that while word identification is necessary, it is not always sufficient for comprehension. Landi contends that some components of reading may not even be required for superficial levels of understanding. The explanation is that the majority of studies into the causes of reading problems exclusively concentrated on word comprehension until recently. It has become obvious in recent years that some children have particular reading comprehension difficulties. Landi concludes the argument that despite having seemingly sufficient word reading ability, some children still show poor reading comprehension. The numerous studies cited above suggest that reading comprehension challenges exist and stem from a combination of poor reading literacy development at the foundation phase (learning to read phase) and ineffective reading comprehension models or strategies from Grade 4 (reading to learn phase).

#### **2.2.1. Reading comprehension successes**

Although studies have been conducted with readers in the intermediate grades who are experiencing challenges with reading comprehension, few have examined the implementation of a repertoire of comprehension strategies in primary classrooms for reading comprehension success. Stahl (2009) highlights the success gains as a result of an intensive synthesis approach to comprehension. The implementation of intentional vocabulary instruction, cognitive strategy instruction, and responsive engagement strategies each contributes uniquely to the comprehension process.

Similarly, a study by Adiguzel and Kumkale (2018) investigated the effects of digital stories on language education. The results revealed that digital stories are more effective than traditional presentations in enhancing motivation, academic achievement and critical thinking skills. The results from the study suggested that lessons should incorporate digital stories and that learners should be encouraged to use them to develop reading comprehension skills, particularly in the fifth grade and, more broadly, across in all grade levels (Adiguzel & Kumkale, 2018). The above studies demonstrate that success in reading comprehension arises from the results of using different reading comprehension strategies tailored to support learners' understanding.

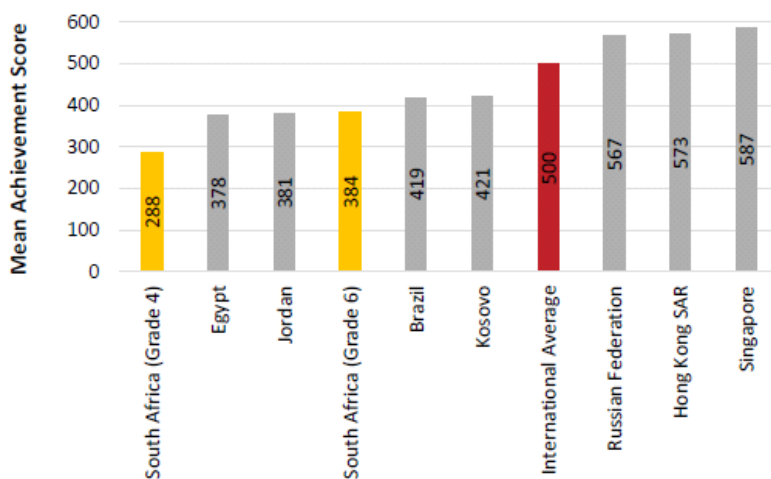
### 2.2.2. Reading comprehension challenges and strategies in the South African context

Reading comprehension has been and still is a challenge in South African schools, especially in home languages, and this has been documented in international standardised tests such as the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), and PIRLS. Badat and Sayed (2014) argue that international tests show a significant disparity in learning attainment between rich and poor people. According to Badat and Sayed, South African Grade 6 learners took part in the third Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) survey, which included fifteen southern and eastern African countries. The average reading test score for the wealthiest 20% of learners was 605, compared to 436 for the poorest 20% of learners. The mathematics test also showed similar disparities, with averages of 583 and 454, respectively. Furthermore, the poorest 20% of learners performed far worse than their peers in other African countries. South African learners rank fourteenth for reading and twelfth for mathematics in a ranking of the poorest 25% of learners.

Badat and Sayed further state that the educational crisis is not limited to learners. It is also about teachers and teaching, as evidenced by the SACMEQ III test results, which tested teachers in language and mathematics. Although South African teachers performed relatively well on questions requiring the simple retrieval of information explicitly stated in the text (scoring an average of 75.1 percent), scores dropped dramatically when the higher cognitive functions of inference (55.2%), interpretation (36.6%), and evaluation (39.7%) were invoked. The mathematics test scores show a similar decline for more complex topics, from a mean of 67.2 percent for basic arithmetic to 49.7 percent for the key topic areas of fractions, ratio and proportion. A 2008 study that examined teachers on the same test items as Grade 6 learners, revealed that teachers performed poorly (Badat & Sayed, 2014). In addition, according to Van Staden and Howie (2010), there is a need for teachers to engage in ongoing professional development. Reading habits of teachers are linked to effective literacy instruction. The study reveals that in the United Kingdom it was discovered that teachers' knowledge of children's literature increased children's reading habits. Echoing the above sentiments, The International Reading Association's (2007) research synthesis on teacher preparation showed that reading instruction is critical to addressing reading achievement challenges in schools. This entails developing both literacy content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge, specifically how to teach reading effectively and meaningfully.

The research conducted by the University of Pretoria, in response to PIRLS 2016 report, has also shown challenges with regards to reading comprehension amongst South African learners in the selected grade for the study. The report revealed that there has been no significant progress in national primary school reading literacy since the last PIRLS report in 2011. According to Howie et al. (2017) the report suggest that the majority of learners cannot read well enough to succeed in subjects across the curriculum from Grade 4 onwards. The report further suggests that fewer than half of the learners who wrote the tests in English and Afrikaans could read proficiently, while 80% of those learning in one of the other nine official languages were effectively unable to read at all. The report also indicates that reading achievement in African languages, such as Sepedi, isiXhosa, Setswana, and Tshivenda, amongst others, is the weakest (Howie et al., 2017).

According to the PIRLS 2021 report by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2023), there has been no improvement in South African Grades 4 and Grade 6 learners’ ability to read for meaning. According to the DBE’s (2023) report, the PIRLS 2021 study for South Africa reveals very low performance levels in reading comprehension as learners reach the age of ten. South Africa scored 288 points, which was significantly lower than the PIRLS average of 500. Singapore (587th) had the best performance. All African countries performed worse than the global average (see **Figure 1** below).



*Figure 1: South African Grade 4 and 6 achievement compared to other PIRLS countries*

The above graph compares the mean achievement score for Grade 4 and Grade 6 learners across various countries. Countries included are South Africa (Grade 4), Egypt, Jordan, South Africa (Grade 6), Brazil, Morocco, Russian Federation, Hong Kong SAR, and Singapore. Singapore

has the highest score at around 600 points. Hong Kong SAR and the Russian Federation also score highly, both above 500 points. The "International Average", marked in red, is just above 400 points. South Africa's scores, highlighted in yellow for both Grade 4 and Grade 6, are notably lower than those of other countries: Grade 4 learners scored around 288 points while Grade 6 learners scored approximately 384 points. Even at the Grade 6 level, South Africa's performance remains lower than that of most other countries' included in the comparison, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Brazil. The graph indicates that South African learners are performing below the international average and significantly behind top-performing countries like Singapore.

This graph is part of a larger report or study on educational achievement, likely focusing on South Africa's performance in relation to other countries participating in the PIRLS assessment (Howie, et al., 2017). Howie et al. (2017) point out that some of the reading comprehension challenges stem from the transition in the fourth year of school. Those taught in African languages from Foundation Phase found it difficult to cope with the switch to English as LoLT in Grade 4. Their assertion is that the challenges experienced by Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language learners seem to stem not from a single source, but from a number of different sources, of which the transition from Foundation to Intermediate Phase is one.

However, Prinsloo (2021) strongly criticises the report, citing its linear perspective regarding the literacy challenge. He argues that the assumption in PIRLS tests and in broader language policy in South African schools is that all children have equal access to a standardised language that aligns with their ethnolinguistic identity. This assumption, often described as 'seeing like a state,' presumes that everyone speaks a uniform language reflecting their place of origin or current location (Prinsloo, 2021). Prinsloo further contends that tests like PIRLS rely on narrow and restrictive definitions of both language and literacy, and that they are not sensitive enough or anchored in real classroom literacy practices to be of much use beyond highlighting what is all already understood in broad strokes. He also highlights several systemic issues contributing to South Africa's educational challenges, including massive inequality, pervasive inefficiency, and corruption, as well as centralised curricula that are implemented, rejected, and revised every few years within a policy bubble disconnected from the realities of classroom practice, workplace demands, and the great diverse nature that characterises South African schooling (Prinsloo, 2021).

Similarly, the bua-lit collective (2018), while raising the same concern of poor performance by South African schools as reported in PIRLS 2016, is also very critical of the standardised tests such as Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and PIRLS, arguing that these studies are designed for monolingual children who have received their education and continuously learned their early reading skills in a language identical to that of their home language. In addition, the collective also claims that PIRLS does not accommodate linguistic repertoires that children bring along to school, and this could be one of the barriers towards reading comprehension success. The above-mentioned claim is supported by Garcia and Vogel (2018), who argue that testing language minority children without consideration of the varieties they speak is socially unjust because the situation cannot be equal. Assessing bilingual children using a monolingual assessment tool will always put bilingual children at a disadvantage, because they are being tested in only half their repertoire. The authors point to the disadvantages of monolingual assessments in bilingual schools, arguing that such assessments are akin to assessing two people playing drums, one playing with one hand and the other with both hands and expecting the sound to be same (Garcia & Vogel, 2018).

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) assert that the challenges in reading comprehension stem from various factors, such as socio-economic status, teaching methods and parental involvement. Access to a wider literacy environment such as print material, technology and infrastructural resources should be taken into account in fostering educational literacy. Curriculum review and language teaching practices should be considered to improve literacy, especially reading comprehension. Certain scholars suggesting possible strategies as part of the solution to reading comprehension challenge.

Janks (2011), in reference to PIRLS 2006, believes that to understand the reasons for the South African learners' reading failure, the four roles of the reader, namely text decoder, text participant, text user as well as text analyst, need to be considered.

The first role is text decoding, an aptitude to discern and recognise letters, to understand the letter sound relationships and to know how letters and their sounds combine to form words. "Text decoding includes phonic, phonemic, sight word and reading aloud pedagogies. Text decoding skills complement lower order cognitive skills" (Janks, 2011, p.4). This role facilitates learning to read and it differs from that of the text participant.

The second role is that of text participant, which encourages readers to make meaning from the texts they read. The role of the reader is to infer, make sense and understand what the text is

trying to convey. Making sense of a text requires learners' prior knowledge and in this way the message from the text can be assimilated. This skill works perfectly with Reading to Learn. Hence it is required of learners to practice interaction with texts and discussing it in relation to their own experiences. Activities in this role facilitate the reading of a wide range of texts (Janks, 201, p.5).

The third role, that of a text user, involves reading a wide range of texts for different purposes. "Reading and writing become tied in people's minds to the worlds of work and school and are rarely associated with pleasure" (Janks, 2011, p. 6). Because PIRLS test items need higher order skills for meaning making, it will not help to provide schools with materials that are only tailored for the teaching of phonics and interpreting without inviting learners to make inferences from what they are reading, to analyse and synthesise meanings and to evaluate texts.

Finally, the text analyst is able to evaluate text in relation to its social effects. Text analysts understand that texts are not neutral and are socially constructed. They scrutinise the text to understand the perspective of the writer. This helps them to take a stance, whether to critique or defend the writer (Janks, 2011).

The aforementioned four roles of the reader should be developed throughout schooling if schools are to improve reading literacy, and should also be extended to writing (Bua-lit, 2018).

The Reading to Learn methodology compliments Janks' assertion because of its four strata model advocated by Systemic Functional Linguistic theory for language teaching. The four strata model, like Janks' four roles of a reader, begins from **phonology** (system of sounding) followed by **lexicogrammar** (system of wording) which is followed by **semantics** (system of meaning) and lastly, the **context** (categories of social situation) (Rose, 2006).

However, Freebody and Luke (1990) advised that there is no single approach to critical literacy that is appropriate or necessary, but such collective forms of literacy approaches show and emphasise particular forms of literacy, hence no single form of approach on its own can totally enable learners to use text effectively.

In conclusion, South African learners are able to decode the text, but assessments such as those of PIRLS need more than decoding. Decoding alone cannot improve reading comprehension because it only facilitates learning to read as opposed to reading to learn. Reading

comprehension teaching strategies, especially in the Home Languages, need to be enhanced to accommodate all four roles of the reader for better text comprehension.

### **2.3. TEXT BASED APPROACH**

The term 'text-based approach' can be used to refer to different variety of spoken or written types of text which serve different purposes, take different shapes, and embody different linguistic and stylistics features. The text-based approach entails a number of units that consist of one or two weeks' worth of lessons which revolve around a written text. This has to be decided by the teacher examining it thoroughly for suitability in terms of interest, level of challenge, and appropriateness for the learners. The chosen text should include a diversity of language uses, and topics should be drawn from a variety of sources. The text should lead to a range of communicative themes, such as word study, vocabulary extension, cohesion and coherence, oral conversations, written comprehension, summaries, note taking and note writing, as well as composition (Mumba & Mkandawire, 2019). In agreement with Mumba and Mkandawire, Mohlabi-Tlaka, de Jager and Engelbrecht (2017) add that a text-based approach investigates how texts function. A text-based approach aims to help learners become proficient, confident, and critical readers, writers, and viewers of texts.

Furthermore, it entails listening to, reading, examining, and analysing texts in order to comprehend how they are created and what their impacts are. It is believed that with text based approach learners gain the ability to analyse texts through critical interaction. The text-based method also entails writing multiple types of texts for varied goals and audiences. An awareness of how texts are constructed informs this approach. Subsequently, Mumba and Mkandawire (2019) suggest that a text-based approach allows the teachers to use texts that are tailored to class communities. This could indicate that the teaching objectives should correspond with the function and purpose of the speech community.

In addition to what Mumba and Mkandawire assert, Hynland (2007) states that a teacher who understands how texts are typically structured, understood and used, is in a better position to intervene successfully in his or her learners' writing, to provide more informed writing feedback, to make decisions about teaching methods and materials to use, and to approach current instructional paradigms with a more critical eye. Moreover, writing instruction must help demystify prestigious forms of discourse, unlock learners' creative and expressive abilities, and facilitate their access to greater life chances. Teachers must have a coherent way of describing the text and teaching our learners to achieve these objectives. Greater control

over these texts can be achieved. In essence, the teaching of writing requires that a coherent theory on how languages interact with humans, be developed. The major response to this needs is Genre Pedagogy (a text-based approach), which provides teachers with a means of instruction, emphasising how writing is shaped by individuals making language decisions to achieve specific purposes in social contexts (Hyland, 2007).

The text-based approach is a method that was developed from Halliday's Functional Linguistics. Its goal is to help learners to interact meaningfully with various texts in various contexts. The text-based approach is influenced by the Systemic Functional Linguistics which is grounded in the work of linguists, such as Martin J.R. and Michael Halliday. The work of these linguists serves as the foundation for the systemic functional linguistics approach. In their conception of language, the importance of context in all forms of communication is emphasised. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is based on the idea that language is functional and cannot be separated from the learner's social environment. This study intends to use texts that relate to the social context of the learners. Halliday asserts that a text cannot exist without a context. When determining the meaning of a text, the context or setting in which it is being read, is always important. Context acts as a link between the text and other sources. (Martin, & White, 2005).

#### **2.4. READING TO LEARN PEDAGOGY**

The *Reading to Learn* (RtL) programme for teaching reading and writing has been developed in a long term action research project with teachers in Australia at all levels of education, from early primary through to secondary and tertiary study, across curriculum areas. The methodology has been developed in response to current urgent needs, particularly of marginalised learners, to rapidly improve reading and writing for education access and success (Millin, 2015).

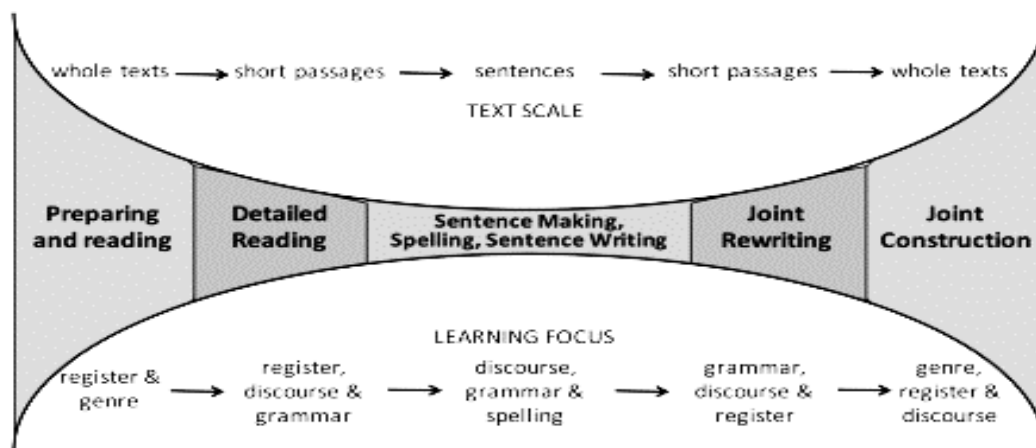
Reading to Learn (RtL) pedagogy is grounded in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) functional grammar and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, which aims to make knowledge about language easily accessible to teachers who may use it in text analysis, lesson planning and assessment. SFL is functional because it focuses on functions of language in social contexts and it is systemic because it focuses on the organisation of language as systems of resources for making meaning (Rose, 2018, p.5). RtL is also inspired by Bernstein's sociological theory that analyses education as "pedagogic discourse with a dual purpose, an instructional discourse

of skills and knowledge, embedded in a ‘regulative discourse’ of social values” (Rose, 2018, p.9).

RtL is a literacy pedagogy of carefully planned teacher-guided activities that enable all learners in a classroom to engage in curriculum texts that may well be beyond their independent reading capacities. It enables learners to cross-examine passages of text with detailed comprehension and recognise patterns of language choices, fitting these language resources into their own writing and lastly, creating texts with effective organisation and language preference to achieve their purpose (Rose, 2018). RtL does not only facilitate comprehension of the text for assessment purposes, but helps learners in recognising the purpose of different text genres and the main argument in every paragraph, and teaches them how to construct meaningful sentences and paragraphs.

RtL relates to the text-based approach advocated by the CAPS for Languages. The text-based approach analyses how texts work, and its objective is to ensure that learners become competent, self-reliant and critical readers, writers, viewers and designers of texts (DBE, 2011, p. 11). One of the objectives of the text-based approach is to understand how texts are constructed and what their effects are. Through this scrutiny the learners develop the ability to evaluate texts and moreover, they become producers of different texts for specific purposes and audiences. Finally, text construction is informed by different perspectives from reading and writing fields (DBE, 2011).

Most literacy pedagogies include a single perspective of reading and writing, but the RtL approach to literacy development endeavours to combine different approaches (Millin, 2015). Millin further states that “literacy development in the classroom should not be perceived simply as the adoption of one pedagogic approach or the mastery of a fairly discrete set of decoding and encoding skills” (p. 4). Rather, RtL seeks to incorporate multiple aspects of the progressivist, behaviourist, social-psychological, critical and constructivist pedagogies, resulting in an intervention that purports to fast-track development of literacy skills within any phase of the curriculum and across all subject specialisations (Rose 2006). The curriculum genres used in Reading to Learn provide a framework for improving reading and writing abilities throughout the entire school (Rose, 2018)



**Figure 2.** Sequence of curriculum genre by RtL methodology (Rose, 2018)

The above figure displays a learning progression for text analysis and writing skills, with levels ranging from whole texts to sentences. The focus advances from register and genre to register, and discourse. It outlines five stages of skill development, preparing and reading, detailed reading, sentence making, joint rewriting, and joint construction. This systematic approach emphasises moving from broad textual understanding to detailed language work.

The initial stage is referred to as preparing and reading, where learners receive assistance to read educational materials that might be more challenging than what they can read on their own. The objective is to comprehend and interpret a text while it is being read. The text is accompanied by the necessary prior information for understanding it, along with an overview of how the subject matter develops in a sequential manner within the text. This preview makes it easier for learners to read, allowing them to understand the text without any difficulty in comprehending the context. When it comes to stories and novel chapters, after going through the preview, there is usually a continuation and it can be further expanded through discussing important aspects. The preview can become more comprehensive when dealing with denser factual texts.

The second genre in the RtL curriculum is focused on intricate reading skills. Selected passages from reading texts are chosen and then read sentence by sentence, helping learners develop strategies to become proficient readers themselves. The objective is to demonstrate to learners how skilled readers approach the reading process, while also assisting them in acquiring strategies to enhance their own reading proficiency while empowering the teacher to provide explicit guidance for these covert processes. The approach entails a meticulously crafted interaction between educators and their learners. The teacher starts by showing a sentence and

then reading it out loud, while the learners track and follow along with the words. Following that, every phrase within the sentence is previewed by using a cue that signifies its meaning. The task assigned to the learners involves identifying and indicating the specific words through the aid of contextual hints.

Another genre of curriculum is sentence construction. In this method, the teacher selects key sentences from a comprehensive reading text and transfers them onto paper or cardboard strips. The teacher then directs the learners to cut these strips and rearrange the words and phrases to their liking, allowing them to actively engage with the content. This hands-on approach helps strengthen and expand their mastery of sentence construction. To promote collaboration and peer learning, learners can work in groups, gradually developing independent control over sentence structure. As in guided reading, the teacher previews and reads the sentence aloud, assisting learners in identifying key words and phrases. Learners then take turns cutting off those word strips. The teacher previews and reads the passage, then skilfully assists the learners in recognising certain phrases and prompts them to remove those sections one by one as they take turns. The aim is to refine the sentences by reordering the words and phrases, resulting in fresh new compositions. The activity progresses in stages: initially on clauses within sentences, then on clusters of words, as a foundation for developing creative writing skills. The primary emphasis of this activity could be on clauses within sentences initially, followed by word groups within clauses, and then on words within those groups. Throughout each step, participants have the opportunity to manipulate and engage in discussions regarding the meanings involved.

The teaching approach of sentence construction is complemented by the RtL spelling genre, where the instructor assists learners in identifying and exercising the letter patterns that compose the spelling system of a language. This activity's goal is for learners to recognise letter patterns in the words they have been reading and then practise those patterns to improve their writing abilities. To enhance its content, the text is composed by recognising the letter formations in well-known words within the sentences, and can further be enhanced by spotting additional words that possess similar letter formations. Traditional spelling activities typically centre on teaching spelling patterns through the use of words that are not connected to any particular context. The RtL method aims to improve learners' understanding of spelling systems through repeated learning starting by presenting examples in relevant contexts and then expanding this practice to cover additional examples.

After learning how to spell new words, learners practise using them in sentence writing. The goal is to correctly write the sentence based on those they have memorised. The purpose of the activity is to help learners remember the word order in sentences by giving them a template that contains the majority of the words, with only a few remaining as prompts to remind them of the sentence structure. Sentence writing has many benefits, including the chance to practice spelling words in a natural setting, improving letter formation abilities, and fostering fluent writing skills. These tasks get easier when we practise with things we are already familiar with. Learners use existing sentences rather than generating new ones.

The subsequent type of curriculum in this sequence is joint rewriting. In this approach, the teacher assists learners in using specific language from a comprehensive reading passage to compose a new written text. When reading factual texts, one makes notes of the important details and then rewrites them into new sentences.

In the final phase of the sequence, referred to as joint construction, learners are instructed to produce complete texts in the targeted genres. Similar to joint rewriting, RtL places a strong emphasis on finding patterns within examples and using those patterns to create new examples. To accomplish this goal, texts are divided into paragraph-level meaningful sections, and during collaborative creation, a similar sequence of sections is adopted. Again, after collaborating on a project, learners can move on to working independently, where they can use the same general framework while receiving instruction from the teacher. They can then write on their own for assessment. In the process of independent writing, learners utilise the different writing styles, structures, and language elements as laid out in the curriculum. They showcase their evolving abilities in genres, registers, discourse, grammar, and spelling.

The strategies here are concerned with the teaching of detailed reading at the paragraph level. RtL clearly describes strategies for reading stories, factual texts and arguments. Lying at the heart of the RtL is the scaffolding interaction cycle which consists of the five sequential learning steps: Prepare, Focus, Task, Evaluate and Elaborate (Rose & Martin, 2012). What distinguishes RtL from other reading methodologies is its strong integration of reading and writing, allowing learners to develop both skills simultaneously.

#### **2.4.1. Reading to Learn studies in South Africa and Australia**

In the past twenty years, South African researchers have carried out numerous practical investigations on RtL. This section outlines the investigations conducted in both primary and secondary schools in South Africa.

Mgqwashu and Makhathini (2017) carried out a study in the KZN province of South Africa with the aim of exploring the impact of the Reading to Learn teaching approach on primary school teachers' perception of the importance of delivering clear reading instructions to enhance academic performance. The researchers directed their attention towards a primary school located in a rural area, paying particular attention to Grades 4 and Grade 6. The findings suggested that RTL can change teachers' perspectives on directly teaching reading in formal education settings, and remove teaching methods in classrooms that give priority to privileged individuals while excluding the majority of learners. The abilities that children acquired ultimately dictated their academic success or failure. Children who possessed a solid grounding in reading frequently emerged as successful in their scholastic endeavours.

Similarly, Mataka, Mukurunge, and Bhila (2021) conducted a study on the efficacy of RtL in the development of cognitive skills. They established that it employs varied scaffolding techniques in reading to make its access easy, even for complex texts. Mataka, et al. further state that such techniques help learners acquire metacognitive skills. The metacognitive skills enable them to evaluate their understanding and adjust reading strategies accordingly. The study also highlights the effectiveness of the RtL approach in encouraging creative writing and its usefulness as an educational tool. Rakhmanbergenova and Kulakhmetova (2022) add that more integrated and supportive approaches to teaching creative writing are critical for fostering effective communication and cognitive development among students. In support of this view, Burea (2023) believes that creative writing can benefit all students, regardless of their vocabulary or proficiency level, by creating an environment that encourages expression and creativity.

The RtL methodology emphasises structured, scaffolded teaching and the enhancement of cognitive skills, leading to better academic performance, and providing learners with essential skills for their educational advancement (Mataka et al.). The RtL approach supports cognitive development through structured reading and writing activities, enabling continuous assessment of skills and enhancing creativity. It is adaptable to various educational contexts, catering to diverse learning styles and abilities. Additionally, the RtL approach incorporates multimodal activities, such as drawing and game design, to maintain learners' interest and promote collaboration.

Millin (2016) conducted research in the Western Cape region with the intention of assessing the effectiveness of the Reading to Learn methodology. The study involved 11th graders from

two schools in the Winelands District. The study's findings suggested that learners' literacy abilities improved, particularly when it came to understanding the structure of academic essays and narrative writing. The learners' academic literacy skills significantly improved. According to this study, implementing RtL pedagogy directly, improved the learners' reading abilities. This was supported by the available evidence. Writing skills among the learners have increased. Research by Millin (2016) indicates that RtL can enhance fair and equal learning opportunities, assisting those with low education levels, those who have been marginalised, and those who were fortunate enough to grow up in homes where they learned to read before entering formal education. The previous study clearly shows that when teachers guide their learners through reading materials gradually, the learners' reading skills improve, which was useful for all upcoming reading tasks (Rose, 2015). Additionally, as these reading skills advance, learners were able to write correctly and precisely.

Mataka, Mukurunge, and Bhila (2020) explored ways to enhance reading comprehension in high school learners through the utilisation of scaffolding techniques and the implementation of the Reading to Learn teaching strategy. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of using Reading to Learn (RtL) in a Grade 8 class within a rural South African school, with the objective of enhancing their literacy abilities. Despite the initial assessment revealing insufficient reading skills among the learners, a significant improvement was observed following the intervention. Data was collected from learners' work, journal reflections, and interviews with learners.

Reading to Learn methodology does not only cater for learners but also for educators' professional development as well as enhancing parent's literacy skills, enabling them to assist their children at home. Koop and Rose (Date?), conducted research in Australia, detailing an educational program designed to enhance the professional growth of teachers. The program specifically targeted 17 schools in the Murdi Paaki Region, located in the remote western part of New South Wales (NSW), where Indigenous learners made up at least 50% of the learner population. The primary aim of the Murdi Paaki project, known as Reading to Learn, focused on improving the literacy performance of Indigenous learners. The project was successfully completed by implementing a structured literacy-learning approach, meticulously developed and effectively utilised in both indigenous and mainstream schools across Australia over the span of ten years. One additional goal of the project aimed to provide opportunities for Indigenous parents and community members to improve their literacy skills to better support their children (Koop & Rose, 2008).

## 2.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is that which underpins the RtL approach (cf Rose, 2006; Rose, 2018). The framework combines three educational theories, namely learning as a socially constructed process (Vygotsky, 1978), education as pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1990), and language as a text located within a social context (Halliday, 1994).

### 2.5.1. Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory

Vygotsky's social learning theory, also known as sociocultural theory, emphasises the role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development. Developed by the psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, this theory posits that learning is a social and collaborative process that occurs within a cultural framework. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that language is the main tool that promotes thinking, develops reasoning, and supports cultural activities like reading and writing. Furthermore, instructional strategies that enhance literacy across the curriculum play an important role in knowledge construction as well as the combination of whole classroom management, group teaching, and independent learning. However, teachers need to provide the opportunity to learners for a managed discussion about their learning. Discussion should promote a meaningful exchange between learners which results in questions that encourage deeper understanding of the text (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's social learning theories also help us to understand how people learn in social contexts (learn from each other) and inform teachers to construct active learning communities (Vygotsky, 1962).

The following are some key concepts of Vygotsky's social learning theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the guidance and assistance of a more knowledgeable other (MKO). It represents the gap between a learner's current independent ability and their potential level of development. The MKO could be a teacher, parent, or peer who provides scaffolding to support the learner's progress in the ZPD. The ZPD recognises that learning is a social and collaborative process. It emphasises the importance of social interaction and the role of more knowledgeable individuals in facilitating learning. By working within the ZPD, learners can acquire new knowledge and skills, develop higher cognitive functions, and ultimately move beyond their current level of independent functioning.

The role of the MKO is to provide scaffolding, which refers to the support and guidance given to learners as they work towards mastering a task within their ZPD. The MKO adjusts the level

of assistance based on the learner's needs, gradually reducing support as the learner becomes more competent.

The second concept is scaffolding, Vygotsky introduced the concept of scaffolding to describe the support provided by the MKO to help learners bridge the gap between their current abilities and the desired learning outcomes. Scaffolding involves adjusting the level of guidance and assistance to match the learner's needs, gradually reducing support as the learner becomes more competent. Scaffolding can take various forms, including breaking complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps, modelling the desired skills or strategies, providing verbal cues or prompts, offering explanations or examples, and encouraging reflection and problem-solving. By scaffolding a learner's learning experience, the MKO helps them develop their cognitive abilities, acquire new knowledge, and enhance their problem-solving skills. This support not only enables learners to complete tasks they could not do independently, but it also fosters their confidence and motivation, promoting independent thinking and learning. Scaffolding is a dynamic process that adapts to the learner's progress and needs. The goal is for learners to internalise the strategies and knowledge they have acquired through scaffolding and apply them autonomously in future learning situations

The third concept is internalisation. Vygotsky argued that learning begins as an external social process and gradually becomes internalised as individual mental processes. Through social interactions and the use of cultural tools, learners internalise knowledge and skills, making them their own and enabling independent thinking and problem-solving.

The fourth concept is cultural tools. Vygotsky emphasised the importance of cultural tools in cognitive development. These tools include language, signs, symbols, and artefacts that are shared within a specific cultural community. They mediate learning and shape the way individuals think and solve problems. Language, in particular, plays a crucial role in internalising knowledge and facilitating higher-order thinking

The last concept is social interaction. Vygotsky stressed the significance of social interaction in learning. He believed that learning is a collaborative process that occurs through interactions with others. Through dialogue, cooperative activities, and shared problem-solving, learners engage in joint construction of knowledge and develop higher cognitive functions

Vygotsky's social learning theory has had a profound impact on educational practices, particularly in the field of education. It emphasises the importance of creating social and collaborative learning environments that support the ZPD and promote cognitive development.

By recognizing the cultural and social dimensions of learning, this theory offers valuable insights into how individuals acquire knowledge and skills in social contexts.

### 2.5.2. **Bernstein's Pedagogic Discourse theory**

Bernstein defines pedagogic discourse as the principle of appropriating other discourses and placing them in a special relationship to each other in order to selectively disseminate and acquire them. Bernstein's pedagogic discourse theory focuses on the way discourse functions in society and its role in maintaining social order, especially discourse related to education (Clark, 2005). Clark, in relations to Bernstein's theory, believes that the education system plays a pivotal role in conveying dominant ideologies of society through the duplication and preservation of a standard variety of a language through which, in turn, ideas of national and cultural identity are transmitted. Bernstein identifies three principles or rules governing pedagogic discourse, distribution, relocation or recontextualisation, and evaluation, which govern institutional practices, school subjects, and pedagogic practice.

According to Bernstein, there are two main types of discourse: restricted code and elaborated code. Restricted code refers to a more context-bound and limited form of communication commonly used in working-class or marginalised communities. It is characterised by its reliance on shared knowledge, implicit meanings, and context-specific language. Restricted code tends to be concise, using shorter sentences and relying heavily on gestures, tone, and non-verbal cues for communication.

Elaborated code, on the other hand, is a more explicit and expansive form of communication prevalent in middle-class or dominant cultural contexts. Elaborated code is characterised by its use of complex sentence structures, explicit explanations, and abstract concepts. It relies on a broader vocabulary and more detailed explanations to convey meaning. Bernstein further tables a detailed distinction between the two codes on the bases of complexity, context, vocabulary, non-verbal cues and educational implications.

Firstly, in terms of complexity, elaborated code is characterised by its use of more abstract concepts and vocabulary, and grammatically complex sentences and allows for detailed explanations and explicit meanings. In contrast, restricted code is simpler, more context-bound, and relies on shared knowledge and implicit meanings.

Secondly, regarding context, elaborated code is prevalent in middle-class and dominant cultural settings, where explicit communication and abstract thinking are valued. It is commonly used

in formal educational settings and professional environments. Conversely, restricted code is often found in working-class or marginalised communities, where communication is more context-specific and relies on shared experiences.

Thirdly, in terms of vocabulary, elaborated code employs a wider range of words, including abstract and technical terms, to convey nuanced meanings. Restricted code, on the other hand, has a more limited vocabulary, focusing on everyday, familiar language specific to a particular community or context.

Another key difference is the use of cues. Elaborated code relies primarily on verbal communication, with explicit explanations and detailed descriptions. In contrast, restricted code heavily incorporates non-verbal cues, such as gestures, tone, and context, to convey meaning.

Lastly, in terms of educational implications, Bernstein argues that the mismatch between the language codes used in home and community contexts (often restricted code) and those used in formal educational settings (typically elaborated code) can create barriers to learning for learners from working-class backgrounds. Recognising and addressing this gap is essential for creating inclusive learning environments and promoting educational equity.

Bernstein argued that these different codes of communication have implications for educational achievement and social mobility. He suggested that learners from working-class backgrounds, who are more familiar with the restricted code, may face challenges in educational settings that primarily use the elaborated code. This mismatch in language codes can create barriers to learning and academic success.

Bernstein's theory highlights the importance of recognising and bridging the gap between different language codes in educational practice. It emphasises the need for educators to be aware of learners' linguistic backgrounds and to provide support and scaffolding to facilitate effective communication and understanding. By acknowledging the different pedagogic discourses and creating inclusive learning environments, educators can enhance educational opportunities for all learners.

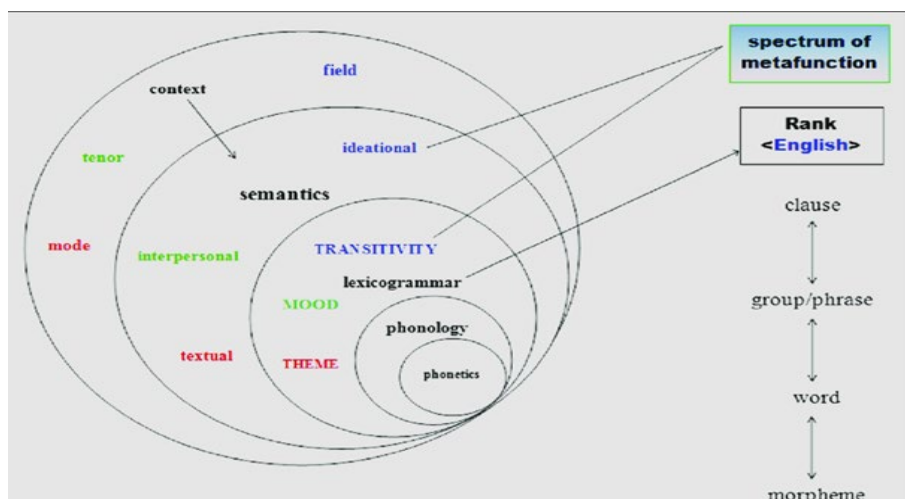
However, Bernstein's approach was critiqued for concentrating on classroom conversation and cultural transmission, ignoring the larger framework of the educational system (Karabel & Halsey, 1977). However, Bernstein's work prompted a body of innovative research on local pedagogic discourse in the classroom, as well as comparisons of home-school discourse, all

equally relevant to studies of classroom discourse today (Hasan, 1988). Additionally, Clarke (2005) concludes that Bernstein identified a new social order as a pedagogised society, requiring a new cadre of pedagogues with research projects, recommendations, new discourses and legitimations. Clark believes that there is still much work to be done on mapping the impact of the Bernstein's recommendations.

In concluding, it is important to note that while Bernstein's theory provides a framework for understanding different forms of communication, it is not meant to label or judge individuals or communities based on their language use. Rather, it highlights the need for educators to be aware of these differences and adapt their teaching practices to support effective communication and understanding for all learners.

### **2.5.3. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory**

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory is a comprehensive framework for analysing language that focuses on the functional aspects of language in social contexts. Developed by Michael Halliday, SFL views language as a system of choices that speakers make to achieve their communicative goals. The term 'systemic' refers to the view of language as a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning. The term 'functional' shows that the approach is concerned with meaning as opposed to formal grammar, which focuses on word classes such as nouns and verbs, typically without reference beyond the individual clause. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is more interested in using language in a social setting to achieve specific goals. SFL does not address the way in which language is expressed or processed in the human brain, but rather tries to see the discourses produced in written or spoken language and the content of the generated evidence. Since SFL focuses on the use of language, it attaches great importance to the functions of language, such as the purpose of language, rather than the entire content and composition of language structures (Halliday & Mathieson, 2004). Additionally, SFL accounts for the syntactic structure of language. It starts at the social context and looks at how language acts upon and is constrained by this social context. The central notion of SFL is stratification such that language is analysed in terms of four strata: Context, Semantics, Lexico-Grammar and Phonology-graphology.



**Figure 3: SFL strata. Source: Halliday & Mathieson (2004)**

The above discussion presents a complex model of language function and structure associated with Systemic Functional Linguistics. Firstly, **phonology/phonetics** forms the most basic level, focusing on sounds and their organisation in language. In social settings, pronunciation and intonation can convey meaning, emotion, and social status. Phonology is followed by **lexicogrammar**, which vocabulary and grammar. In social contexts, word choice and sentence structure play a crucial role in conveying ideas clearly and appropriately. Following this is **semantics**, which deals with meaning. In social interactions, understanding and conveying precise meanings is essential for effective communication. Lastly, the outermost layer is **context**, representing the situational and cultural environments in which language is used. It is crucial for interpreting and producing appropriate language in various social settings.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the aforementioned elements are followed by three metafunctions: Metafunctions in language strata refer to the fundamental purposes or functions of language as described in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). These metafunctions are interconnected with the concept of language strata, which describes the different levels of language organisation. The first metafunction is **ideational**. This function is about representing experiences and ideas. It is how we use language to express our understanding of the world around us. The second metafunction is **interpersonal**. It deals with social relationships and interactions. It is how we use language to interact with others, express attitudes, and take on social roles. The last metafunction is **textual**. It is concerned with the organisation of language itself. It is how we structure our messages to create coherent and cohesive texts.

The next elements are registers. Register variables in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are contextual variables that influence language choices in a given situation. They help describe the context of a communicative event (Eggins, 2004). The first variable is the **Field**, the subject matter or topic of discourse. In social settings, choosing appropriate topics is crucial for achieving communication goals. The second register is **Tenor**, which deals with the relationship between participants. This influences language choices based on social roles and power dynamics. The last register is **Mode**. It plays a role in the channel of communication (spoken, written, etc.). These different modes are suited to different social contexts and goals.

Rank scale (right side) shows the hierarchical organisation of language units, from morphemes to clauses. Understanding this structure helps in crafting effective messages for various social purposes. Followed by the Transitivity that relates to how experiences are represented through language, particularly in terms of processes, participants, and circumstances. It is crucial for expressing ideas clearly in social interactions. The Mood concerns the interpersonal aspects of clauses, such as making statements, asking questions, or giving commands. It is essential for managing social interactions and achieving communicative goals. Lastly, Theme, which deals with the organisation of information within clauses and texts. Proper thematic structure helps in creating coherent and persuasive communication in social settings.

According to Martin (1992), in social settings these elements work together to allow language users to achieve specific goals such as building and maintaining relationships, conveying information effectively, persuading others, expressing identity and group membership, negotiating social roles and power dynamics as well as achieving specific tasks or outcomes through communication. Understanding this model can help in analysing and improving communication strategies in various social contexts.

Johns (2008) concludes that the role of language in education is to transmit knowledge in social context, through relationships, like those of parent and child, or teacher and learner or classmates that are defined in the value systems and ideology of the culture. Lastly, the words that are exchanged in these contexts get their meaning from activities in which they are embedded, which again are social activities with social agencies and goals.

## **2.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In summary, this chapter has first discussed the successes, challenges, and strategies related to reading comprehension in the South African context. The chapter highlights how poor reading comprehension strategies can be a barrier for learners in accessing text. Second, the chapter

has explored the text-based approach, which aims to help learners interact meaningfully with various texts in various contexts. Thirdly, the chapter examines RtL methodology as a pedagogy that enables all learners in a classroom to engage with curriculum texts that may exceed their independent reading capacities. It also helps learners to cross-examine passages of text with detailed comprehension and recognise patterns of language choices, fitting these language resources into their own writing. Furthermore, the theoretical framework was presented, beginning with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which explains how RtL scaffolds reading comprehension teaching and learning through the learner's home language. Following this, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics was discussed, focusing on how language is organised as a system of resources for making meaning of the text, enhancing reading comprehension, and creating meaningful texts. Additionally, Bernstein's pedagogic discourse was explored, considering the knowledge and values recontextualised from pedagogic relations and production of recontextualised knowledge in academic context, including curriculum and resource distribution in society through learner evaluation.

Finally, the chapter introduced an action research methodology that enables teachers to engage in professional learning, revise their teaching methods through systematic reflection, and promote active participation and critical thinking amongst learners.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A key component of scientific inquiry is research methodology, which offers an organised framework for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. In order to successfully answer research issues and accomplish study objectives, it entails a variety of methodologies and procedures to guarantee the validity and reliability of findings (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2009). Sreekumar (2023) defines a research methodology as a systematic approach used by researchers to identify and analyse information related to a specific research topic. It involves designing the study to achieve objectives using chosen research instruments, including research design, data collection and analysis methods, and the overall research framework. This study followed a qualitative approach and is broadly situated within the critical paradigm, although it contains elements of interpretivism (see below). This section aims to discuss in depth the research approach, action research, data collection and data analysis techniques, reliability and validity of the study as well as ethical consideration that the study followed.

### **3.1. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Delimitation in the study refers to the selections that the researcher makes in the process of investigation, and it defines limitations set by the researcher in conducting a study (Anderson, 1998). This study was limited to Grade 6 isiXhosa Home language, and only one class in one school was selected. The rationale for this qualitative study was to get a deeper understanding of Grade 6 isiXhosa Home language challenges and to improve on current teaching methodology. The selection was done knowing that the results do not represent the entire Grade 6 isiXhosa Home language cohort. The limited case-study nature of the enquiry also meant no claims of generalisability can be made, whether to other schools in the area or to school with a similar profile further afield. Nevertheless, the study was significant as it seeks to be a stepping stone towards addressing the reading comprehension challenge.

### **3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH**

As previously mentioned, the study adopted a qualitative approach, which is based on ways to study a phenomenon in its natural setting (Van Maanen, 1979). In addition, data collected must generate facts and insights that make meaning about the phenomenon. Moreover, the qualitative researcher is concerned about how people make meaning of their world and the experiences they have about the world (Kelly, 2005). Qualitative research is recognisable by its objectives, which share an understanding of some aspect of social life, and its methods

which commonly produce words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Bowling, 2002). Qualitative research in this study complemented RtL methodology, which relates to the text-based approach advocated by the CAPS for Languages. Qualitative research focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of people's thoughts, opinions, and behaviours. It is often used to explore complex social phenomena, attitudes, and behaviours, and to gain insights into people's experiences and perspectives (Garza, K., Goble, C., Brooke, J., & Jay, C., 2015). Similarly, RtL methodology rests on SFL theory which focuses on the functions of language in a social context. Like the qualitative research, SFL advocates a deeper analysis of a text.

In terms of SFL metafunctions, the ideational (experiential) function deals with the representation of reality through language, the interpersonal function focuses on the dynamics of communication between people, and the textual function ensures effective communication by organising language elements (Derewianka & Jones, 2023). Rose (2018) takes it further stating that SFL describes language in its social context. According to Rose (2018), SFL, unlike more structural approaches which focus on the elements of language and their combinations, centres around the function of language, what language does and how it does it. SFL analyses language across three interconnected strata: field (what is happening), tenor (social roles and relationships), and mode (communication channel). These three sets of variables in social contexts are known collectively as register.

Through the combination of qualitative research methods with the Reading to Learn methodology, educators can gain a more comprehensive understanding of learners' reading behaviours and develop targeted instructional strategies to improve reading comprehension outcomes and produce meaningful texts.

The study is located mainly within the critical paradigm. Critical paradigm is broadly understood for seeking to transform existing practice to improve learning outcomes. The critical research paradigm claims that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and other dynamics. Furthermore, critical theory deals with issues of transformation, fairness and equality. In this paradigm knowledge is created through analysis and agreement that is pursued through conversation (interviews) (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.7). The critical paradigm inquiry is regarded as valuable if it can show that shortcomings in previous research are addressed and the transformation processes can be observed (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The critical paradigm accommodates action research in advocating for social transformation. In seeking to address the reading challenges experienced by isiXhosa-speaking learners in what is supposedly their Home Language, the study is expected to uncover issues

that go beyond the classroom. These may include access to reading resources in what remains a marginalised official language, as well as issues of language variety, language attitudes, and identity. In this sense the use of action research method to improve reading comprehension was in the service of the critical paradigm.

Within this critical paradigm the study nevertheless contains elements of the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism assumes there are multiple angles to a phenomenon. Interpretivists attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest. The perspective also implies that the researcher needs to engage the situation from the participants' perspective (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p.7). Based on the above explanation, it is clear that the study has an element of the interpretivist paradigm as it seeks to understand how reading comprehension remains problematic while exploring ways of enriching the teaching of it. Co-construction of meaning is designed to emerge especially in the focus-group discussions with learners. Knowledge is created through interpretation, and as the researcher, I must show how I have analysed and interpreted the data to arrive at conclusions. These conclusions then become the basis for further intervention. Interpretivism does not allow for broad generalisations, although some conclusions may be transferred to similar contexts that are described in sufficient detail. It is important to emphasise, however, that these elements of interpretivism should be seen within the study's broader transformational orientation, as described above.

### **3.3. ACTION RESEARCH**

The use of action research method is important as it enables teachers to engage in professional learning, change their way of teaching through systematic reflection, and encourage active participation and critical thinking in learners. MacDonald (2012, p.2) defines action research as the "systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change by generating practical knowledge". MacDonald concludes that generally, the impartment of social change is at the centre of all action research, with a specific action as the ultimate goal. Carr and Kemmis (1988) agree with MacDonald that action research is an essential form of enquiry for educators' professional development. The action research cycle consists of various stages which include: problem identification, planning, fact-finding, executing the action(s) and evaluating the action(s) taken (Pluddemann & Jabe, 2009). The authors suggest that a number of steps for action research should be taken. I briefly explained each step below in relation to my study.

### **Identifying the problem**

Action research begins with the awareness of a problem in one's environment, some issue that negatively affects one's work in class or at school. The problem that motivated the study to be undertaken has been identified, namely the reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa HL. Different reading comprehension strategies have been used but the problem still persists. The action research will help in exploring an alternative strategy in a quest to solve the problem.

### **Discovering your motivation**

Action research involves being aware of your interest in problem-solving. Only when one finds an internal motivation will one find the energy to solve the problem. This motivation comes from the belief in teaching and learning, and the passion for educating learners.

### **Choosing research methods**

To decide what action to take, I collected some data to assess the situation and determine the nature and extent of the problem. To do this, I chose a qualitative design that is implemented through an action research approach in my own classroom.

### **Deepening your understanding of the problem**

This step in the process allowed me to explain the results of my research, initially without referring to anyone else's work, by relying on my own experience and intuition. But to fully benefit from the data collected, it was best to consult other people and some prior research.

### **Deciding on an intervention strategy, and then intervening**

Once the nature and scope of the problem was understood, I planned on how to improve things. I also decided the kind of risk I was willing to take, well aware that radical and bold changes involve risks. However, I also believe that the approach would yield greater returns than a more cautious approach.

Action research fits my study because the information collected formed the basis for improving my practice. The intervention was conducted using learner assessments with the guidance of RtL methodology, which scaffolds reading and writing.

The RtL intervention was preceded by a pre-intervention test followed by a post intervention stage. The pre-intervention stage was done to determine what reading comprehension skills learners already have. During the intervention stage, the RtL teaching/learning cycle developed

by Martin and Rose (2005) was followed, consisting of preparing for reading, detailed reading, intensive reading strategies (such as sentence strips, spelling and sentence writing), joint construction and individual writing. It was instructive to compare the older Rothery teaching and learning cycle (1994) – which consists of setting the context, modelling/deconstruction, joint construction and independent writing – with the more recent RtL approach.

An isiXhosa literary text of the narrative genre was used for reading comprehension and as the basis for essay writing. The register of the text, consisting of field, tenor and mode, were used to determine the text's social context and for meaning making. Learners were able to understand the structure of the narrative genre before they write their own narrative text. Following the RtL intervention, learners will first be assessed on reading comprehension to gauge performance. Since RtL serves both reading and writing, the next step was to focus on writing skills; learners will write a story.

Regarding classroom dynamics, the issue of the power difference between teacher-researcher and learners was addressed to minimise its impact on interaction. Learners were at liberty to choose the text they want to read and their ideas were valued; the researcher's role was to mediate the process. However, the researcher should design activities that will propel the study towards the intended results. The intervention took place over two weeks, and it yielded positive results.

### **Evaluating the impact of your strategy**

The value of intervention depends on whether it can show that it benefits my work in any way. Showing direct influence is never easy, because learning is a social activity that is affected by many factors. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to speak of impact. I am aware that some of the consequences of my intervention may be unexpected and may point in a new direction or lead to unexpected learning.

### **Ensuring validity**

I am cognisant of the fact that once the results of my study are shared with others, I will accept their opinions and suggestions. Feedback from various interested and participating individuals will help validate my research, and thereby enhance its trustworthiness.

### **Reflecting on the value of the investigation**

Solving problems at work by improving practice and new learning is something to celebrate. However, completing a cycle of action and reflection does not mean that efforts to improve our

work stop here. Action research must always keep an open mind and be willing to improve our practice to enhance our capabilities.

For the purpose of the study, the action research was used for continuous professional development which aims at improving the teaching practice for the benefit of both learner and the teacher. Since both action research and the critical paradigm deal with the issues of transformation, a different reading comprehension methodology (RtL) was used to explore its effectiveness in the process of improving my practice.

### **3.4. DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected on site (school) and as the researcher I was cognisant of all the protocols regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The following instruments for data collection was used: Self and classroom observation videos, interviews with teacher, document analysis and focus group interviews with learners,

#### **3.4.1. Interviews**

An interview is a conversation between the researcher and the respondent. However, it is different from daily conversation in that the researcher is the one who plans and asks questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, ch.4). This method of data collection is versatile in that it can be used in all research paradigms. In the critical paradigm, the interviews are not only used to gather information about teachers' work but also to raise awareness of the injustices and power relations in language education (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, ch.4).

This study used two types of interviews: focus group discussions, which will allow learners to express their views freely; and one-on-one interviews with selected isiXhosa teachers. This is to get a broader perspective on issues surrounding reading comprehension, and to ascertain research participants' views on how such issues can be addressed.

#### **3.4.2. One-on-one interviews**

As one amongst several research instruments used for this study, teacher interviews strengthened data triangulation. One-on-one or individual interviews are the most widely used data collection method in qualitative research, mainly because the content of the interviews can focus on the experience, opinions, attitudes and feelings of the interviewee (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). This study used semi-structured interviews because they contain a faster process, and all interviews cover the content well because relevant and appropriate questions are prepared beforehand. In the semi- structured interview process, the researcher uses an interview schedule

which is a set of questions but not in a predetermined order (Bertram & Christian, 2014). Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014) believe that questions should be carefully prepared and tested in advance to ensure that biases and misunderstandings are removed. To ensure that this study collects relevant and informative information, I interviewed two teachers, both teaching isiXhosa Home Language in Grade 6. The set of questions were unchanged to enable easy comparison between the two sets of responses. The interviews lasted 30-40 minutes. The logic behind this data collection technique was to get a broader perspective on the issues surrounding reading comprehension. The teachers' views on the topic provided me with a more holistic picture of the issue within the grade as well as the phase, thereby increasing the chances of improving my own practice.

The interview was conducted face-to-face. The face-to-face interview method is an important tool for qualitative research as it allows researchers to deeply understand the problem (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Face-to-face interviews are convenient and easy to monitor because interviewers can record nonverbal and audio communication. Fortunately, there was no research participant that felt unsafe at the prospect of face-to-face interaction whereby the interview would have to be conducted and recorded online (virtually), using an audio-visual platform such as Google Meet.

During the interview process, one of the teachers chose to withdraw from the study due to personal reasons –a decision the researcher fully respected. It was the participant's right to withdraw at any time if she wishes to do so (see appendix F). This withdrawal necessitated a change of plan. A substitute isiXhosa teacher was approached, and he agreed to participate in the study. The substitute teacher was selected based on his extensive experience in teaching the language, both isiXhosa HL and English FAL.

Dill (2015) noted that participant substitution is a common occurrence in research, particularly within the social sciences and human subjects research. It typically happens when an originally enrolled participant is replaced by another person before the study's conclusion. Dill further explains that participant substitution may arise for several reasons, including personal circumstances, participant dropouts, non-compliance, or unforeseen events.

The researcher that participant substitution can potentially affect the validity and reliability of research findings, as well as raise ethical considerations. However, in this study, the participant's substitution was due to participant's personal reasons, which are unrelated to the research. Furthermore, as outlined in Appendix X, participant have the right to withdraw from the study at any time , without providing a reason for their decision.

### **3.4.3. Focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews is the intentional use of interaction to generate data (McLafferty, 2004). McLafferty states that it is as “using a semi structured group session, moderated by a group leader, held in an informal setting, with the purpose of collecting information on a designated topic” (p.1). Lastly, focus group interviews can be phenomenological, in that they give access to people’s common-sense conceptions and everyday explanations (McLafferty, 2004). The method fits my study because my research participants were learners who, because of their age, may find one-on-one interviews intimidating. However, for this method to be effective, the facilitator only mediated the process; learners led and own the process to allow smooth flow of the discussion. The session was audio-recorded for coding and analysis purposes.

Focus group discussions was held after school and learners were divided into four groups of 5 learners per group. The interviews were done over 4 days. I interviewed one group per day for 30 minutes, and only learners who are walking to school was allowed to participate –to avoid transport issues. The rationale behind selection of the above learners is that most learners walk to school every day, and that no demographic (e.g., foreign nationals; girls or boys) is excluded by limiting my sample to the ‘walkers’. To avoid intimidation where learners might not be able to express themselves freely or speak freely about their experiences during my lessons, I have organise my colleague to take over the interview on my behalf. In addition to the consent forms and permission letters, school management and parents were orally reminded prior to the day of the interviews with learners. The interviews did not interrupt the afterschool programmes, as these programmes are not taking place every day (*researcher chose unoccupied days*).

### **3.4.4. Document analysis**

One of the data collection methods employed in this study was document analysis, with learners’ assessments serving as an instrument to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Document analysis is a chronological approach used to review, and scrutinise documents, and the researcher has no influence over the content of the documented text (Bowen, 2009). Patton (2002) asserts that document analysis can complement other data collection techniques in the research process, contributing to more robust conclusions. Furthermore, document analysis enhances the validity and comprehensibility of the research topic (Patton, 2002).

This method was used in analysing learner assessments at both the pre-intervention and post intervention stages. For pre-intervention, a pre-assessment was done to see where the gaps are.

During the intervention, the RtL cycle was used for reading and viewing and for reading comprehension purposes. Learners were also assessed on writing and presenting skills, specifically through the writing of a narrative text, guided by the RtL methodology. These documents were marked, and results were tabulated and plotted on a graph to measure the influence of the intervention.

### **3.4.5. Classroom observation videos**

Self and classroom observation videos are essential for improving one's own teaching practice, individual growth and professional development. Self-assessment tools in the education field are useful in guiding teachers to think about their own standards for quality teaching and to set goals for development, with the purpose of bringing transformational change in their own teaching practice (Mercado & Baecher, 2014). Video-based self-observation was used as a data collection instrument to record my lessons, and a reflective journal was used to record self-reflection. Self-observation through video is essential for ongoing teacher evaluation and professional development, as it provides information related to a teacher's performance, level of progress, needs, degree of professionalism, and motivation to continue with the development (Mercado & Baecher, 2014). On the other hand, the reflective journal's essential goal is to develop self-awareness and to help the teachers with better concept comprehension. It also deals with structured analysis of critical events (Göker, 2016).

Care was taken to ensure that the video recording of lessons was not disrupting teaching and learning. The camera was positioned or mounted in such a way as to optimally record the classroom interaction between the teacher and learners, without drawing too much attention to itself. This should be a manageable task despite 100% return of learners, faces of learners were blurred on the video for anonymity purposes and for the safety of learners.

Given the culture of the school, the vast majority of parents granted permission for their children to participate. Those few learners who did not get parental permission were asked to join one of the other Grade 6 classes for the relevant periods. The aim was to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in terms of the curriculum.

The head of department and educators for the grade, as well as the school principal, were informed prior to making changes.

Those who did not receive the intervention were not at any disadvantage. There were several Grade 6 isiXhosa HL classes. The RtL intervention was short-term and limited to one of these. For the remaining classes it was 'business as usual'. It was promised that should the study

proved successful, they would eventually be accommodated, and the researcher would approach the school's management team and the colleagues to ask their approval for the programme to be extended to other classes and grades. Any subsequent expansion would, however, fall outside the scope of this study.

### **3.5 DATA PRESENTATION**

Data presentation refers to the process of organising and displaying data in a meaningful and visual way. It involves transforming raw data into clear and easily understandable formats, such as charts, graphs, tables, or infographics. The goal of data presentation is to communicate complex information effectively, allowing users to quickly grasp key insights, patterns, and trends (Smith, 2022). By presenting data visually, it becomes easier to identify relationships, make comparisons, and draw conclusions. Effective data presentation enhances decision-making, facilitates understanding, and supports the effective communication of findings. As previously mentioned, I firstly presented data from self and classroom observation videos preceded by the lesson plans. Secondly, I presented data from one-on-one interviews with two isiXhosa educators identified as Teacher 1 (T1) and Teacher 2 (T2). These interviews were conducted prior to the intervention to understand the challenges faced by the educators in their respective classrooms. Thirdly, I presented data from document analysis (learners' classwork books) presented as pre- and post- intervention. Graphs are also included to answer my research questions. When excerpt were used from learners' classwork activities, such learners were given pseudonyms for anonymity purpose.

Lastly, I presented data from focus group interviews with learners, who were divided into two groups: Focus Group 1 (FG1) and Focus Group 2 (FG2). These interviews were conducted after the intervention to gather insights on the learners' experiences and the perceived impact of the RtL methodology on their reading comprehension and creative writing skills.

To facilitate analysis, I transcribed the interviews, ensuring that the collected data could be examined in written form. The transcription process is an essential step in qualitative data analysis, as it enables a deeper understanding of the responses and provides a basis for identifying key themes and patterns.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Since the study followed a qualitative approach, the thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Braun, Clarke and Weate (2016) define the thematic approach as one of a group of

investigative approaches used to identify patterns of meaning in qualitative data. It is utilised to scrutinise categorisation and present themes that relate to the data while illustrating data in great detail, and deals with diverse subjects via interpretation (Ibrahim, 2012). Thematic analysis is considered appropriate for any study that uses interpretation. In essence, the instruments used for data collection are designed to glean relevant results, which can be categorised into sub-themes for analysis purposes.

The following explanation indicates how the data collected was analysed. Firstly, the interviews which was done in the form of focus groups and one-on-one respectively, were audio-recorded using a smart phone, and the recorded information was transcribed for analysis purposes. Secondly, learner assessment documents were interpreted to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Lastly, the Self and classroom observation videos as stated in the data collection was analysed and video recordings were transcribed.

### **3.7. DATA TRANSCRIPTION**

Transcription is a translation between forms of data. In qualitative research, it is most commonly used in converting audio-recorded discussions into text format, for ease of reference. Widodo (2014) states that transcription of data is a social activity requiring close methodological attention and that enables the research questions to be addressed. However, blunders made during the process of transcription are a challenge because they may result in the researcher's misinterpretation of the respondent's utterances (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2011, p.2). Therefore, re-listening and revisiting the transcribed data is necessary in order to produce accurate transcripts and to establish trustworthiness of the data.

I transcribed and translated the audio data collected from teachers' interviews and focus group interviews with learners before data presentation took place. I used verbatim transcription to capture the participants' responses accurately, ensuring that all spoken words, pauses, and non-verbal sounds were included. Bailey (2008) defines verbatim transcription as the word-for-word conversion of spoken language into written text, capturing every utterance exactly as it is heard in an audio recording, including filler words, false starts, and non-verbal sounds. The rationale for this approach was to understand participants' responses clearly, making the organisation of data for the coding process easy and comprehensible. Transcription symbols such as [pause], [laughter], and [inaudible] were used to indicate non-verbal elements and any unclear speech. The process of transcription was obligatory because some of the respondents responded in isiXhosa, which I then had to translate into English. The interviews process was

then followed by data analysis from learners' workbooks, and learners' classwork activities. Reading and viewing, as well as writing and presenting activities, were divided into pre-intervention and post-intervention. The reason for this action was to determine the influence of RtL methodology in enriching isiXhosa Home language. Lastly, data from self and classroom observation videos were also transcribed and the purpose was to improve my teaching practice on different aspects of the classroom. The following section's main focus is data coding where I describe coding and steps I followed when coding, as well as the rationale behind data coding.

### **3.8. DATA CODING**

Data coding in qualitative research is the process of labelling and organising data to identify different themes and relationship between them. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999) in qualitative research coding is the systematic process of organising raw data into themes that assist in interpreting the data. The main difference between coding in quantitative and in qualitative research is the way in which codes are created and then assigned to the data. Qualitative coding is more interpretive. In addition, it is a process of delineating the nature of a phenomenon by continuous interaction with and re-reading of the data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 55). My data was organised, compared and contrasted to understand themes that emerged from the coding process and how these themes relate to my research questions. By comparing and contrasting themes and pausing often to reflect and ask questions, the researcher finds patterns in the data. The section below presents data that was collected by means of interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with learners.

### **3.9. SAMPLING & SITE SELECTION**

Sampling is the process by which a part or subdivision of the population is selected for investigation. The method of selection may be based on probability or a non-probability sampling. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that sampling includes decisions about which people, settings and events to include in the study. Furthermore, the researcher needs to decide on the number of individuals, groups or objects that were observed. Since the study has followed the critical paradigm, the focus was on detailed and in-depth description and analysis of the phenomenon. Hence this study followed the convenience sampling method. Etikan (2016), describes convenience sampling as a non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population qualify for certain practical criteria, namely easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, and willingness to participate. Convenience sampling is about researching subjects of the population that are

easily accessible to the researcher. Etikan further explains that “captive participants such as learners in the researcher’s own institution are main examples of convenience sampling” (Etikan, 2016, p.3). Similarly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) refer to convenience sampling as the method of choosing the sample that is convenient and easy for the researcher to reach. The rationale behind this choice is that as the researcher, I was investigating my own practice in my workplace, the grade and the learners whom I teach. I chose the sample well aware that the findings may not be reflective or representative of the entire population. Since the convenience sampling method is within the critical paradigm, the concern is not with generalisability but with “emancipation, empowerment, transformation and capability realisation” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 14).

The site of the study was a no-fee ordinary public primary school situated in a predominantly isiXhosa-speaking community on the Cape Flats. One class of 20 learners was selected in isiXhosa Home Language (XHL). While it would have been ideal to use the whole population, this is not feasible, given its size. The class was selected randomly from among the four classes that are taught by the same educator (me) in XHL. Convenience sampling was chosen because I wanted to understand better methodology that can be used to enrich reading comprehension challenges in Grade 6 XHL. I selected this method because it is aligned with the critical paradigm.

### **3.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is a crucial aspect of research, as it refers to the extent to which research findings can be relied upon and trusted. Reliability and validity are two fundamental concepts in educational research that are crucial for ensuring credibility and trustworthiness (Chetty & Ramrathan, 2016). Reliability is about the consistency of a measure while validity is about the accuracy of a measure.

Validity is a procedure that aims to employ appropriate methods, such as surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis, to measure what is being examined. However, measurement should be firmly established and correctly matched to the real world. If the study is invalid, it may lead to incorrect findings or it may be untrustworthy. Validity leads to ethical, cost-effective, and measurement methodologies for the study topic. Validity is the extent to which results may be generalised to people, circumstances, and conditions (Chetty & Ramrathan, 2016).

Reliability refers to how consistently a method measures something. If the same result can be consistently achieved by using the same methods under the same circumstances, the measurement is considered reliable. Kirk and Miller (1986) define reliability as the degree to which measurement remains constant under test conditions. They describe reliability as the consequence of qualitative research procedures employed for data collecting that produce consistent results.

Kubai (2019), elaborating on the above definition, states that the reliability of data from research instruments is influenced by two types of errors: random error and systematic error. Random error is ascribed to an unknown and uncontrollable collection of external circumstances that randomly impact certain observations. Kubai extends this by making an example that those in better moods may answer more positively to categories like self-esteem, pleasure, and contentment than those in negative moods. In measurement, random error is regarded as noise, hence it is typically ignored. A systematic error is one introduced by variables that impact all observations of a construct systematically across the whole sample. Systematic error is seen as a bias in measurement and should be rectified to provide better sample findings

For data interpretation, this study followed triangulation method. Noble and Heale (2019) define research triangulation as the process of increasing the credibility and validity of research. In other words, research triangulation tries to validate the findings of a study. This study employed triangulation to place my findings in their empirical context. Triangulation assisted me in conceptualising my findings in a practical manner. I compared data from the various methodologies I employed in the study. As alluded earlier, validity in the study works together with reliability.

### **3.11. ETHICS**

Ethics describe principles of doing research, meaning the focus is on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour while conducting a study. “Research ethics involve requirements on daily work, the protection of dignity of subjects and the publication of the information in the research” (Fouka, 2011, p.3). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) suggest three ethical principles of research: Autonomy, Non-maleficence and Beneficence. The ethical principle of autonomy stresses the respect of autonomy for all participants while encouraging the researchers to prioritise issues of consent, voluntary participation and freedom of withdrawal by participants from the study. According to the non-maleficence ethic principle, the researcher must ensure

that the study does not harm the participants at all, emotionally, physically or socially. Lastly, beneficence means that the research project should be beneficial to the research participants or society at large. In light of the above the study aims to improve learners' academic literacy (reading and writing). Permission in a written format was sought from the University of the Western Cape and from the Western Cape Education Department. Letters were sent to all participants, requesting their participation and permission. Written permission was also sought from the school principal to conduct interviews within the school's premises.

Participants were informed of the purpose and process for the study, so that they are able to choose whether or not to participate. They were given a consent form and a consent letter. The rights of the participants were explained verbally (orally) and also written letters regarding such rights were issued. Confidentiality and anonymity were respected at all times to ensure that the research participant's identity is not disclosed to anyone, and cannot be inferred from the information received, and that personal information is only known by the researcher and participants.

As mentioned previously, participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study anytime they feel. However, those who dropped out of the study were not at any disadvantage because if the study become successful, they will also be accommodated. If the study becomes successful, I will definitely approach the school's management team and my colleagues and seek their approval to extend the programme to other classes as well as other grades for the benefit of the entire school.

Lastly, it has been a concern for a qualitative research data collection process since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the relaxation of Covid-19 safety protocols, face-to-face data collection methods such as interviews, observations and any methods that needed the exchange of objects between the researcher and research participants, were possible. Since the study was conducted in a school's classroom amongst learners that I teach daily, collecting data was not a huge challenge. The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions and the return of learners to school has been a relief and an advantage. It remains vital to ensure that the data collection does not compromise the integrity of the study.

### **3.12. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter focuses on the methodology and design of the study. The study falls within the critical paradigm as it aims to create change in a classroom environment. The main goal is to explore how the Reading to Learn pedagogy can enhance Grade 6 learners' reading

comprehension in isiXhosa, as well as helping the researcher to improve his teaching practice. The chapter discusses the features, strengths, and weaknesses of action research. Convenience sampling method is explained as the method used for participant selection. The data generation methods employed in this research include Self and classroom observation videos, interviews, and document analysis. A brief overview of data analysis is provided. Issues of reliability and validity and ethical consideration are also addressed.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the methods that were used to collect data for this study. The main purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and discuss data collected by means of video recordings of lessons, one-on-one interviews with teachers, focus group discussion with learners and document analysis of learners' written work. The latter is divided into analysis of the pre-intervention and post-intervention tasks to ascertain the influence of RtL methodology. The thematic analysis emphasises significant patterns and connections pertinent to my research.

### 4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE DATASETS

The datasets obtained from the aforementioned research instruments are briefly reviewed below, before the themes and insights derived from these instruments are explored in depth.

**Interviews with teachers:** Two of my colleagues, both experienced language teachers belonging to the same school, were interviewed for this study. They were asked questions to ascertain the possible causes of reading comprehension challenges (see appendix M). The interviews were conducted in both isiXhosa and English to ensure clarity and comfort for the participants. These interviews have added depth and richness to the study, offering a deeper understanding of Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language (XHL) reading comprehension challenges. They also allow the researcher to capture information which may be complex, and which could be put to great advantage in the thematic discussion. The interviews yield rich and detailed accounts about the teaching of reading comprehension, and what the teachers experience in their classrooms.

**Video-recorded lessons:** classroom observation was essential to monitor and improve my teaching practice through action research. A total of ten lessons were video recorded, averaging about 60 minutes each; from among them, four videos cutting across the major themes that came out of the study, were chosen. Recording can yield an enormous amount of information on teaching and learning if accompanied by detailed analysis and reflection. Lesson plans for each of the four selected videos were included (refer to Appendix R for detailed lesson plans). For authentication purposes, learners' documents are excerpted and discussed. Viewing and reflecting on my recorded lessons was an instructive form of self-observation, and generated

several themes relevant to the study. The first lesson (**Video 1**) focused on effective approaches to teaching reading comprehension, such as the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC). The second lesson (**Video 2**) was also on reading comprehension, but with particular emphasis on the impact of mixed-ability grouping strategy and explicit teaching of higher order thinking skills in RtL. **Video 3** is a recording of a lesson about writing and presenting: creative writing approaches, specifically the genre-based approach. Finally, the fourth lesson (**Video 5**) focused on an aspect of writing and presenting, namely engaging uninterested learners through storytelling.

**Documents (selected):** This section presents data collected from selected learners' workbooks. Some of this data augment the interview data, and shed light on learners' difficulties with reading comprehension skills. The section also attempts to show the relationship between reading comprehension and creative writing challenges as evidenced in learners' books. The documents or artefacts are analysed under the themes of explicit teaching of higher order thinking skills, and creative writing approaches. Both the aforementioned themes were identified during the teacher interviews and the learner focus-group discussions (FGDs). The analysis of Grade 6 isiXhosa HL workbooks was essential in order to understand how poor reading comprehension influences learners' creative writing. For consistency, I presented the analysis of two activities from one learner's workbook as an example to demonstrate specific reading and writing challenges, and to show how the RtL methodology helps to mitigate these challenges. The activities consisted of reading comprehension (reading and viewing) and creative writing (writing and presenting). Both activities were analysed based on pre-test and post-test activities for each activity or skill. For reading comprehension I paid attention to the learner's cognitive levels, while for the creative writing process the attention was on the language, writing style and editing as well as structure and length, and mechanics. For the purpose of anonymity, learners have simply been given a number, e.g., Learner 1, etc. I have presented copies of Learner 3 activities as evidence. Since the research was about learners' reading comprehension, it was necessary to interview them post the intervention to ascertain the impact of the RtL intervention.

**Focus-Group Discussions with learners:** The purpose of conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with learners was to gather in-depth insights and perspectives on the issue of reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa HL. FGDs helped me identify the specific needs, preferences, and challenges learners face during reading comprehension. The FGDs also gave learners the chance to 'spark off' each other, enhancing the richness of the data

collected. The information gained from these discussions will be used to improve my teaching, the way I plan my lessons, and the type of learning resources to better meet my learners' needs. The data from both group discussions are categorised into two groups: Focus Group 1 (FG1) and Focus Group 2 (FG2).

### **4.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

As previously discussed, this study used an action research approach to investigate how RtL methodology can be used to teach reading comprehension in Grade 6 for isiXhosa HL. This study used a thematic approach for data analysis, which is a method used to identify and analyse patterns, themes, and meanings within qualitative data. It involves systematically organising and interpreting data to uncover significant concepts or ideas that emerge from the dataset. Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2010) state that thematic analysis is an analytical approach and a synthesising strategy that is used during the meaning-making process of a variety of data collection methods, including a case study. Moreover, thematic analysis involves seeing, finding relations, analysing, systematically observing a case and quantifying qualitative data (Mills et al, 2010).

The following themes emerged after presenting and analysing data from individual interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with learners, self-observation via video-recorded lessons, and document analysis.

- i. Effective reading comprehension teaching approaches
  - Mixed-ability grouping strategy
  - Explicit development of higher order thinking skills
- ii. Effective creative writing approaches
  - Genre based approach
- iii. Attitudes towards language varieties.

### **4.4 THEME 1: EFFECTIVE READING COMPREHENSION TEACHING APPROACHES**

Effective reading comprehension teaching approaches are necessary for improving a reader's ability to understand, analyse and synthesise texts. A failure to impart these strategies to learners may lead to poor comprehension and writing skills. This section seeks to discuss the above theme in depth, using various datasets to clarify how it relates to the context of this study.

Representative extracts from the four above-mentioned datasets are woven throughout the discussion; such an integrated thematic approach would also serve to avoid or minimise data duplication in the study.

One of the questions posed to the teachers was about the effectiveness of their reading comprehension teaching strategies in achieving learning outcomes. They indicated the following:

*I follow what is prescribed by CAPS for reading comprehension teaching strategies, I divide the text into pre-reading activities, during-reading activities and post-reading activities, for the methodology that I am employing if it yield better results, I will say yes and no, if it can be given enough time, I am not complaining, I am not the cry baby but with our curriculum it is very tight, so we are pressured with time, but as I was saying for instance, when we read, one reading is not enough, we.....in an ideal situation one would need to read 3 times, first read, second read and third read, so even when you do your listening and speaking but because of time, you are forced to only read once. So, yes, I would say if I could have the leisure of doing what I want at my own pace and my own time, then I'll say yes, it could yield very good results [Teacher 1].*

The first part of the quote deals with the strategies that are prescribed by the CAPS Languages document (DBE, 2011) on how to teach reading comprehension. However, Teacher 1 does not elaborate what each stage entails. The quote suggest that the educator is familiar with the CAPS document on how reading should be conducted (reading and viewing skills). What Teacher1 does not distinguish here is the reading strategies employed during listening and speaking activity as well as strategies employed during reading and viewing activity. The questions posed are based on a reading and viewing activity whereby text is made available to every learner; by contrast, for the listening and speaking activity only the teacher has access to the text. DBE (2011) clearly distinguishes between the aforementioned language skills and how to teach them.

During the reading and viewing activity CAPS suggest the following. For **pre-reading** activities learners should discuss the titles, headings, captions and perform text skimming for main ideas as well as text scanning for supporting details while predicting what the text will be about. **During-reading** learners are taught to extract inferring meaning (inferencing) of

unfamiliar words and images using word attack skills and contextual clues. Lastly, **post-reading** activity learners have to draw conclusions/voicing their own opinion.

The integration of language skills is important, however. CAPS gives guidelines on how and when to teach each skill. The excerpt below shows the two-week circle for teaching the skills using the target genre.

GRADE 6 TERM 2				
SKILLS	LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)	READING & VIEWING	WRITING & PRESENTING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & CONVENTIONS
WEEK 1 – 2	<p><b>Listens to and discusses an instructional text, e.g. recipe, directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory activities: prediction</li> <li>• Recalls procedure</li> <li>• Identifies the features of instructional text</li> <li>• Notes key headings</li> <li>• Gives clear instructions, e.g. on how to make a cup of tea</li> <li>• Makes notes and applies instructions read</li> <li>• Asks questions to clarify</li> </ul> <p>Comments on clarity of instructions</p>	<p><b>Reads a recipe or other instructional text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyses the characteristics of the text: organisation and conventions of instructional texts</li> <li>• Orders jumbled instructions</li> <li>• Uses appropriate reading and comprehension strategies: scanning</li> <li>• Shows understanding of the text and how it functions: literal reading</li> <li>• Recognises and explains the different structures, language use and purposes</li> <li>• Identifies and evaluates register of a text</li> <li>• Understands and uses information texts appropriately</li> <li>• Compares two different recipes or instructions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Writes an instructional text, e.g. on how to make a cup of tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orders logically</li> <li>• Lists materials and ingredients</li> <li>• Uses dictionaries</li> <li>• Uses imperatives</li> <li>• Develops a frame for writing</li> <li>• Uses linking phrases and organisational methods</li> <li>• Defines procedures</li> <li>• Organises words and sentences appropriately</li> </ul> <p>Uses the writing process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning / pre-writing,</li> <li>• Drafting,</li> <li>• Revising,</li> <li>• Editing,</li> <li>• Proofreading, and</li> <li>• Presenting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Word level work:</b> stems, prefixes, suffixes</p> <p><b>Sentence level work:</b> subject, object</p> <p><b>Spelling and punctuation:</b> word division, dictionary use</p>

*Source: CAPS document Intermediate Phase (DBE, 2011) Excerpt: 1 CAPS Annual Teaching plan [Home language]*

The above excerpt illustrates the different skills and activities each skill entails. The activities mentioned by Teacher 1 are mostly relevant for listening and speaking activities, and this points to Teacher 1’s unfamiliarity with the document. It is the DBE’s requirement that every educator must possess a copy of the relevant CAPS documents and be familiar with the contents.

Teacher 1’s point about time constraints would resonate with many teachers, as the content-heavy curriculum often does not allow for thorough text analysis, something that can significantly hinder comprehension. The Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology, with its structured and scaffolded approach, might nonetheless be viable. Its focus on detailed reading and structured stages can help maximise the effectiveness of limited classroom time by ensuring that each reading is thorough and supports deep comprehension. Furthermore, the scaffolded approach of RtL helps learners progress more quickly, potentially reducing the time needed for remediation or repetition of concepts. In addition, the scaffolded nature of RtL allows for flexible implementation. Acevedo (2010) discusses how teachers can adapt the RtL cycle to fit their time constraints while still maintaining its core principles. This adaptability allows teachers to focus on the most crucial elements for their learners' needs. For the above to

be realised, Whittaker and Acevedo (2016) emphasise the importance of ongoing professional development for successful RtL implementation.

Humphrey (2017) concludes that although implementing RtL within time constraints presents challenges, research suggests that its structured approach and integration with curriculum content can lead to efficient and effective literacy instruction. However, the key lies in thoughtful implementation, ongoing professional development, and a willingness to adapt the approach to specific contexts.

I prefer text with pictures for learners to be able to do prediction of what the text will be about, the methodology used works for some learners and it does not work for others, especially the academically struggling learners [Teacher 2]

**Teacher 1** does not explain what each stage entails or how his strategy helps with reading comprehension. **Teacher 2's** response also does not give a convincing explanation or indication of how she conducts reading comprehension lessons. Further probing was conducted to gain more detailed insights into their methodologies, unfortunately, both teachers response did not bring new information or anticipated answers.

However, the responses from both teachers prompt the need for the effective reading comprehension teaching approaches. Cleveland, Collins, Parris, Reed and Whitely (2009) in relation to effective reading comprehension strategies state that using such approaches is crucial and beneficial for developing essential skills such as comprehension, vocabulary, critical thinking, fluency, and a love for reading. Moreover, these approaches lay the foundation for academic success and lifelong learning. However, it is suggested that teachers must determine which instructional approaches hold the greatest potential to increase all learners' highest levels of comprehension (Cleveland et al, 2009).

Text choice is one of the reasons that learners struggle with reading comprehension and producing meaningful texts. If learners can be given text that they can relate to it will be easy for them to understand it and be able to produce it in their creative writing activities. [Teacher 1]

According to Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider and Torgesen, (2010), text selection plays a significant role in learners' engagement and motivation to read. By offering relevant, authentic, varied, challenging, and connected texts, educators can create an environment that promotes active engagement and encourages learners to develop a lifelong

love for reading. The point about the role of text selection for reading and writing activities is equally relevant to the present study.

Reading comprehension remains the foundation of RtL. Teachers' responses reflect the need to look closely at various teaching strategies for effective reading comprehension. They also indicate the need for continuous professional development on reading comprehension teaching strategies if learners' reading comprehension backlogs are to be reduced. Adebayo (2008) points out that many teachers have an underdeveloped understanding of teaching reading comprehension skills and also have a negative attitude towards teaching reading comprehension strategies to learners. In-service training would need to address both aspects.

The responses from the two educators also suggest they use a "one size fits all strategy" and disregard differentiation. Differentiated teaching, also known as differentiated instruction, is an educational approach that aims to maximise student learning by tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles of individual students within a classroom. (Tomlinson, 2014).

With reference to Teacher 1's answer, above, Botha, Bizos, Gains, Moris, Place and Puwani (2008) assert that sometimes the employment of unqualified language teachers can add to this negative impact on the quality of reading comprehension instruction. Njie (2013) also laments that most learners have poor reading comprehension skills due to the incompetence of teachers and the poor teaching methods they use in teaching reading comprehension in class. Harrington (2001) has added that the most important factor in learners' learning is the quality of teaching.

The above claims direct the discussion towards educator workshops on reading comprehension strategies to reduce the reading comprehension deficit amongst learners. Concluding the issue of educator workshops on reading comprehension strategies, Madikiza, Cekiso, Tshotsho, and Landa (2018) stress that in order for teachers to help their learners develop strong reading skills and habits, they themselves must improve their own reading skills. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to be trained and retrained in reading strategies. These pronouncements by various scholars encourage regular in-service training for language teachers and deployment of educators according to their specialisation in the field of learning.

Block, Parris, Reed, Whiteley and Cleveland (2009) noted that some researchers have hypothesised that the low level of understanding in schools is due to the lack of quality children's literature available for teaching. They have argued that without a plentiful supply of books and choices for learners, readers will not be interested and motivated enough to improve

their reading skills. The contribution by Bizo et al points to the text selection strategy and its influence on learners' reading comprehension, as mentioned in the teachers' responses above. Many studies have been conducted to find out what influences the process of reading comprehension. While some studies investigated the role of grammar and vocabulary in the reading comprehension process (Sidek & Rahim 2015), other empirical studies focused on the role of reading strategies (Zhang 2008). The results from these studies have shown that there is an extensive body of knowledge suggesting that teaching reading strategies can improve learners' reading comprehension. As previously mentioned, it is clear that the educators' responses indicate the need to participate in an intensive training programmes on reading comprehension strategies.

In the following paragraph, text selection as one of the strategies to improve reading comprehension is discussed, and its applicability in schools with limited resources has also been discussed. Text selection can play a crucial role in improving reading comprehension, as it can strongly influence the reader's understanding and engagement with a particular text. By carefully selecting texts that are appropriate for the reader's age, interests, and reading level, educators can help learners develop key skills such as vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, and reasoning. Shanahan et al. (2010) suggest that when exposing learners to a variety of texts, teachers should ensure that a selected text contains rich ideas and information, has an appropriate level of difficulty for learners' vocabulary and comprehension skills, and is consistent with the purpose of the lesson.

The two teachers' responses above imply that they do understand the impact of text selection on reading comprehension. Sivasubramanian (2006) supported teachers' views on text selection stating that the meaningfulness of the text must relate to the personal interest of the learners so that they engage with it as intensively as possible. Sivasubramanian further states that it is impossible for a text to arouse interest and enthusiasm for reading if the learner cannot relate to it. The relevance of the text can encourage learners to compare their experiences or situations with those presented in the text (Sivasubramanian, 2006). By considering the relevance of the text to their own lives, interests, and academic goals, learners are more likely to become invested in the content and retain the information. This strategy can also help learners make connections between different texts and course materials, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, focusing on the relevance of the text can help learners develop important skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving, which are valuable both inside and outside the classroom.

The problem with this strategy, however, is the availability of reading material. The lack of reading materials, especially in poor schools, makes it difficult to apply such a strategy and it can only remain wishful thinking.

The two teachers give insights on important aspects that may also be used to improve creative writing skills among learners (discussed under 4.5, below). Their contributions could be interpreted in relation to various themes such as the role of vocabulary acquisition, reading practices, and reading comprehension. Therefore, both teachers provide good tips that could help improve learners in creative writing. A more solid foundation for writing skill development might be achieved by using a dual strategy that incorporates balanced reading comprehension activities with extensive reading practices, as proposed by Teacher 1 to address reading comprehension weaknesses and improve vocabulary. Such techniques would enable learners to become more assured and skilled writers, capable of articulating their ideas and thoughts effectively.

The next dataset is classroom observation videos, and the focus is on reading comprehension challenges as well as strategies to mitigate such challenges.

**Video 1** focuses on the traditional approach to teaching reading comprehension through the original curriculum genre in genre-based pedagogy known as the teaching/learning cycle (TLC), which is designed to prepare learners to write successful texts for evaluation. In this lesson the teacher-researcher (me) sets the context/builds the knowledge field. This is an ongoing process that develops as learners read, write and talk about the subject and refine ways to express their ideas. In this lesson the teacher-researcher asks learners to skim and scan the text (**excerpt 3**) in order to identify characters, as well as unfamiliar words. The words are discussed and the meaning extracted, which prepares learners for reading comprehension. This is followed by the modelling/deconstructing stage, during which the teacher-researcher leads learners to determine the text's objective and how its stages and phases contribute to achieving it. Language characteristics are discussed and their relevance to the field, tenor, and mode are also explored. Preparing and selecting texts during modelling/deconstruction significantly

affect teacher-guided conversations during collaborative building. The stage is very important for effective development of metalanguage and critical literacy (Gibbons, 2015).

The teacher-researcher asks learners to explain the following idiomatic expression in the context of the story:

*Kumhlathi wesibini kumqolo wokugqibela umbhali usebenzise iqhalo 'inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili' ingaba ithetha ukuthini le ntetha?*

[In the second paragraph in the last row the author used the idiomatic expression, 'The buffalo's whereabouts are known by those who lead the brigade'. What does this idiomatic expression mean?]

Learners (in unison):

*Asilazi ukuba lithetha ukuthini.*

[We don't know the meaning].

The above exchange shows that learners at this early stage of the intervention are not aware of the metalanguage used in narratives. I had to explain, firstly, the origin of the idiom, and follow this up by explaining the meaning. I also had to explain the establishment of characters in the story (characterisation) and its influence on how characters behave in the story. This drill prepares learners for comprehension, especially in complex texts. The activity where learners

take notes on complex concepts is reflected in lesson plan 1, in the during-reading stage (see excerpt below).

<p><b>Body</b>  <b>During reading:</b> In this stage, learners actively engage with the text.  <b>Educator monitoring comprehension:</b> Learners consistently assess their understanding of the material by summarizing sections in their own words and posing questions about their reading.  <b>Making connections:</b> Learners connect the text to their own experiences (text-to-self), other texts (text-to-text), and wider societal contexts (text-to-world).  <b>Revising Predictions:</b> Learners adjust their initial predictions as they acquire new information while progressing through the text.  <b>Annotating and Taking Notes:</b> Learners are marking important points and taking notes to improve the retention and comprehension of key concepts.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b>  <b>Post reading:</b> Learners to combine the main ideas from the text into a concise summary.  <b>Engaging in discussions with others and writing reflections</b> to deepen their understanding and provide different perspectives on the material.  <b>Recapping:</b> revisiting any questions posed before reading and determining if they have been answered to help solidify comprehension.</p>	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answering questions on their classwork books</li> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>

*Excerpt 2: lesson plan 1*

According to Derewianka (2005), the TLC is a commonly utilised tool in the classroom to direct the evaluation of learning opportunities, delivery, and planning. The phases of TLC cooperate to promote good teaching and learning, thereby encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression in writing. The TLC's methodical approach guides instructors in planning and delivering thorough lessons, encouraging reflection and ongoing development (Derewianka, 2005). The next strategy to be discussed is mixed ability grouping which is rooted in Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory. Socio-cultural theory is one of the theories where RtL the methodology that drives this study rests on.

**4.4.1 Mixed ability grouping strategy**

This sub-theme considers excerpts from the video recording of the second lesson (**video 2**), which focuses on mixed-ability grouping and the explicit teaching of higher order thinking skills. In what follows I first discuss the concept of mixed-ability grouping before illustrating

its deployment in relevant excerpts and quotes from the lesson to illustrate how they relate to the study.

Mixed-ability groupings have a number of advantages, including improved learning opportunities, improved collaboration skills, more confident learners, differentiated instruction, and promotion of an inclusive learning environment (Hove, 2022). Gains in this respect are increased participation from all learners irrespective of the cognitive ability of the learner. According to Hove (2022), mixed-ability grouping brings about acceptance amongst many learners. Besides, mixed-ability groupings expose learners to a number of viewpoints and motivate them to ask critical questions as well as engaging with the text, hence fostering critical thinking. Critical thinking can only be achieved through the exposure of learners to open-ended questions, Higher Order Thinking Skills, that challenges learners to move beyond simple knowledge. Abdolreza, Mansourzadeh, Montazeri, and Saeidi (2022) argue that open-ended questions assess comprehension levels and problem-solving ability, and hence foster higher-order thinking abilities. Mixed-ability grouping also facilitates a number of other teaching approaches in collaboration, identified as supportive of social cohesion and inclusion. For instance, Ngubane and Makua (2021) note that discussions during groups could engage varieties of languages.

These reading comprehension strategies are crucial for absorbing and retaining information from written material. To improve one's reading comprehension, it is important to use a variety of strategies tailored to the type of text and one's learning style. These approaches include, but are not limited to, a combination of different strategies such as explicit instruction, modelling, guided practise, scaffolding support, differentiated instruction, use of technology, and making connections to the real world to help learners develop and effectively apply reading comprehension strategies.

The practice of placing learners of different abilities together into one group involves interaction among individuals of different skills. This is beneficial to all participants because the approach fosters cooperation, peer teaching, and caring in the learning environment. A relevant instance of this phenomenon was evident during a post-test reading comprehension exercise from the story titled "Ubundlobongela Bona Bugquqisile". In this video, the teacher-researcher instructs learners as follows:

Ngokwamaqela enikuwo khanizifake ezihlangwini zabahlali baseDumani, xoxani nize nesisombululo, ukuba beningaba bahlali benizakwenza njani nina ukusobulula le

gxaki bajongene nayo?

*[In groups empathise with the Dumani residents. If you were one of Dumani residents, what would you have done to solve the crime challenge that the residents are facing?]*

All the groups responded in voicing their opinions about the question posed. However, group 3 showed they had thought more deeply about the question when their presenter said,

Into ye crime inzima kuba ngamanye amaxesha abantu bayayirepota emapoliseni kodwa amapolisa angenzinto ngayo yilonto abantu bavele bathule babengathi abahoyanga nto boyikisela nobom babo.

*[Crime is a difficult issue because sometimes people report it to the police but the police don't do anything about it. That's why people just keep quiet and pretend they don't care. fearing for their lives.]*

The above extract highlights themes such as distrust in law enforcement as well as fear and safety.

This activity shows that learners in Group 3 are able to make connections with the text such as text-to-self and text-to-world. The above 3 types of connection are important during reading comprehension lesson as they enhance learners' comprehension of the text (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). Text-to-self refers to a connection between the text and reader's life experiences, text-to-text is a connection between the text and other texts that the reader has read, lastly text-to-world refers to the connection between text and events in the world.

The activity is in line with lesson plan 2 during reading stage (Appendix R). The lesson plan outlines how the teacher will support learners in highlighting specific word choices, offering alternative expressions of certain words or phrases, and facilitating discussions related to the topic. The goal is to guide learners in creating a new story while preserving the original features. This practice prepares learners for writing abstractly, hence, they are asked to pretend to be Dumani residents, just to spark their critical thinking. This exercise, therefore, allows even the introverted learner to voice their views. Besides, it builds their confidence in free expression without the fear of being judged, and it enhances their skill in dealing with abstract questions. The skills gained empower learners to approach complex questions with more confidence and independence. Grouping learners during lessons is the strategy and it is also advocated in the CAPS document. The DBE (2011) states that the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R - 12 aims to equip learners to work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team. CAPS is rooted in Vygotsky's notion of collaborative

learning, and as such, Vygotsky is one of the major theorists that shaped the theoretical framework of this study.

In the mixed-ability grouping learners of different academic abilities are learning together, therefore, developing knowledge of the subject matter and acquiring intra- and interpersonal skills that are needed in everyday life (Wiesen 2013). As previously mentioned, this strategy stems from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process. Vygotsky's theory underscores collaborative learning and that learners learn best when they engage in activities together, discuss concepts and support each other's learning. When Vygotsky's theory is applied to group work in the classroom, it can have a significant impact on learners' learning experiences.



*Post-test reading comprehension-RtL intervention group discussion, requiring higher order thinking skills [excerpt 3]*

In this lesson, learners read the story following two of the RtL curriculum genres, *detailed reading* and *sentence making*. Learners sit in groups in order to help one another to complete the activity. The objective is to ensure that there is no learner left behind even those who are struggling in reading comprehension. Mixed grouping abilities strategy complements the RtL curriculum genres because learners with articulation issues can benefit from hearing their peers articulate themselves more properly, resulting in better social ties among learners (Kruger & Nel 2011; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm 2011). These curriculum genres are utilised to prepare learners for creative writing task.

**Detailed reading** is introduced for the first time and the aim is to help learners to identify key words in each sentence, and this helps in facilitating comprehension. During this activity the teacher asks the learners the following question:

uMadiba noKhwalo bagqiba ekubeni bangabukeli ilali yabo isonakala ngenxa yobundlobongela, abanye abantu babevale imilomo yabo kodwa la madoda mabini azenza idini alwa nezigilamkhuba, ukuba ibiguwe obunokwenza oku kwenziwa ngalamadoda babini? Xhasa impendulo yakho (**excerpt 5**).

*[Madiba and Khwalo decided not to watch their village being destroyed by violence, some people kept their mouths shut but these two men sacrificed their lives and fought the criminals, if you were the one would you do what these two men did? Support your answer.]*

Learner 5 responds:

Mna andisoze ndiyenze kuba ndingabe ndibeka ubom bam esichengeni.  
*[I would never do it because I would be putting my life at risk.]*

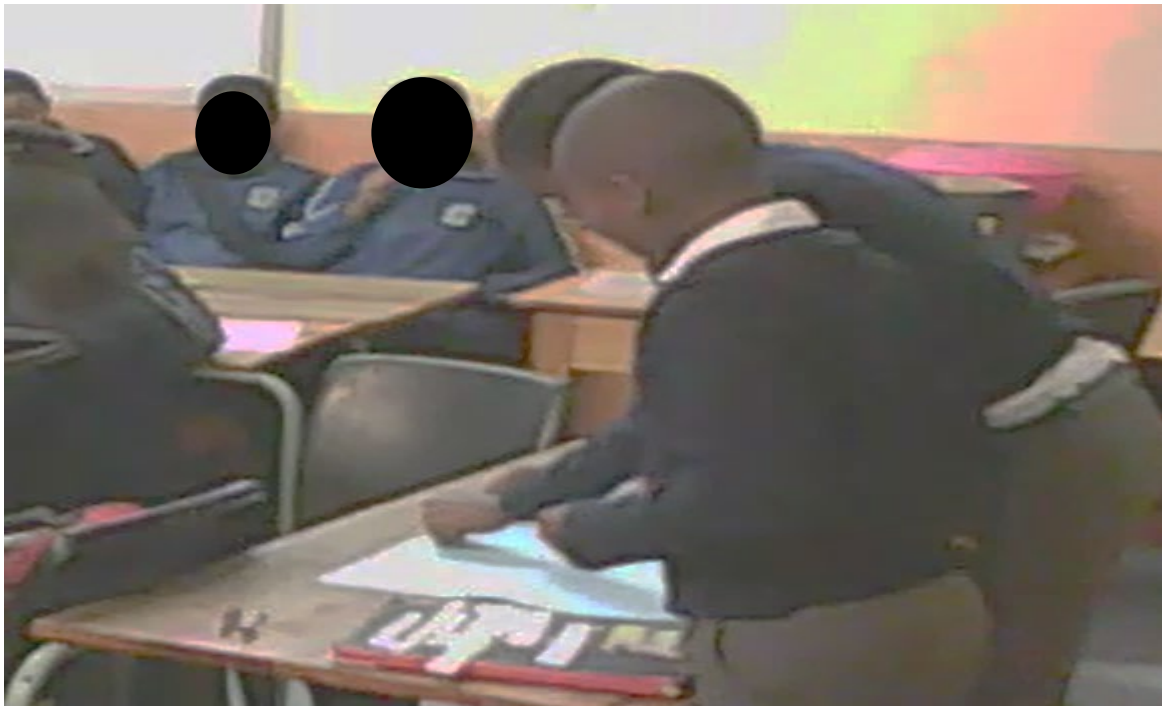
Learner 2's response is as follows:

Mna ndingayenza kuba akuzunceda nto ukubukela kusonakala, xa ufuna kwindawo yakho niphile ngoxolo funeka uphakame wenze something noba uphele usonakala uzakube ulwela into elungileyo uwenzela ukuba isizukulwana esizayo siphile kakuhle.  
*[I can do it because it won't do you any good to watch your village deteriorate. If you want to live in peace in your area, you have to stand up and do something. Even if you end up getting hurt, you will be fighting for something good and doing it for the future generation to live well.]*

Learners' responses illustrate different viewpoints. However, learner 2's response shows a deeper understanding and awareness of what the author is trying to portray through the acts of these two characters, the act of 'selflessness'. Detailed reading is a rigorous support phase during which learners remain focused on genre patterns, academic terminology, and language devices important to meaning-making. At the detailed reading stage, the teacher supports learners to identify and analyse cohesion devices in the text, for example, lexical and grammatical structures. Hence, the learners will be able to ascertain how the different parts of the text connect in the process of creating meaning (Millin & Millin, 2014, p.32). The above quote underscores the importance of the detailed reading stage in making meaning of what is being read.

Rose (2018) explains that in detailed reading the teachers read a statement, and learners must recognise and mark the key words. The entire class marks the words, guaranteeing equitable participation. Detailed reading encourages learners to read text passages in depth, regardless of their reading abilities or difficulties. Due to the influence of the mixed ability grouping strategy learners help each other and those who are struggling to identify key words are helped by their more knowledgeable peers. Abtahi, Graven and Lerman (2017) underscore the importance of collaborative learning, stating that learning is social and takes place in the presence of more knowledgeable others; hence the group work, which provides learners with opportunities to work within their Zone of Proximal Development, as they can receive support and guidance from their peers to help them achieve tasks that they may not be able to do alone.

The lesson moved from detailed reading to the second RtL curriculum genre (**sentence making**).



***RtL sentence construction (making) curriculum genre [excerpt 4]***

After the key words identification activity, in their groups learners help one another and learn how to construct sentences. The activity's objective is to help learners to write meaningful sentences, paragraphs and eventually the complete text. Video 2 shows the teacher reading the story with learners, pausing at some stages and asking questions. The teacher-researcher then takes away the story from the learners and allows them to sit into groups. He gives each group the paragraph of the same story, but in jumbled paper strips.

The teacher-researcher then calls out the instruction:

Nizakusebenza ngamaqela nidibanise le paragraph, nibeka amagama ngouladelelana kwawo kwi sentence nganye kude kuphume iparagraph. Xa nigqibile ukudibanisa iparagraph, ndinale poster apha igroup nganye izakuza izoncamathisela iparagraph yayo kule poster. Zakuba zigqibile zonke igroups sizakulixhoma ibali ebhodini sijonge ukuba iziganeko ziyalandelelana na silungise apho kufuneka silungise khona. *[You will work in groups and combine this paragraph, putting the words in their order in each sentence until the paragraph comes out. When you're done putting the paragraph together, I have this blank poster here. Each group will paste their paragraph on this poster. Once all the groups have finished, we will put the poster on the writing board and see if the events are in sequence and make corrections where we need to.]*

In this activity, the teacher-researcher is seen moving from one group to the other helping struggling groups. Sometimes he is seen pointing at certain words, asking learners to read the sentence after completing it to see if the words are correctly placed. The teacher is code-meshing or translanguaging for learners to be able to understand. He carefully selects words from English, then he moves back to the target language, isiXhosa.

The activity reflects the lesson 2 planning where the plan is to strengthen and expand learners' command of the language in sentences in order to prepare them for independent writing.

Rose (2018) explains that in sentence building, the teacher prints significant phrases from a lengthy reading chapter on strips of paper or cardboard and directs the learners to tear them apart and work on their formulations. Furthermore, the activity may be practiced in groups to help learners encourage one another and take the first steps toward independent control. As with thorough reading, the teacher reads the text aloud and aids the learners in identifying terms, which they then cut from the strips in turns. The pupils' next objective is to shuffle and rearrange the words and word groupings so that they can practise identifying words and meaning sequences. This is what Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) refer to as semantic level (meaning-making), a stage after lexicogrammar stage.

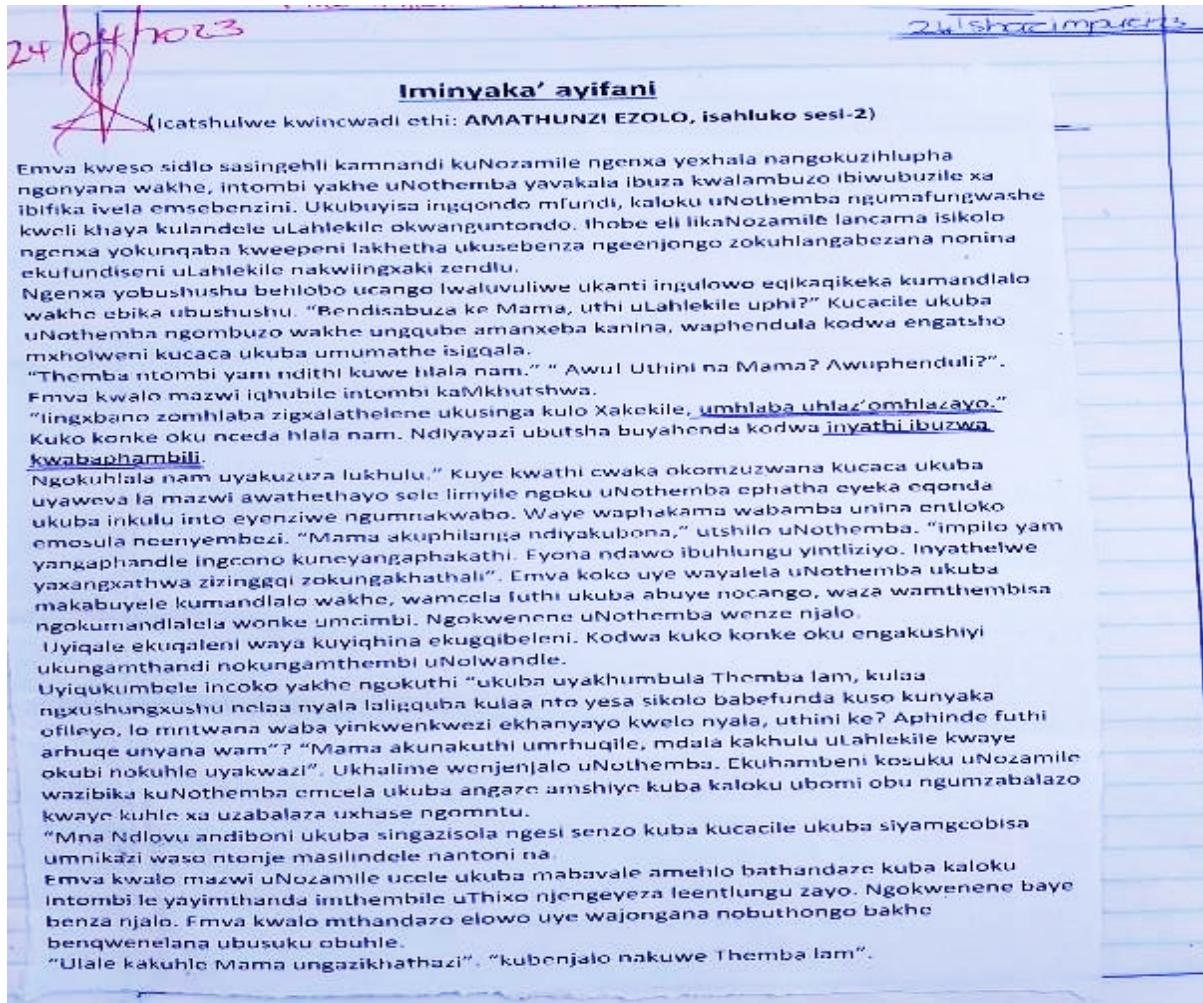
Learners re-arrange words to form new sentences and word groups, concentrating on clauses, groups, and words in groups while modifying and debating meanings at each stage. Learners were able to build the paragraph from the sentences strips. Learners were asked in their groups to arrange the paragraphs by identifying their sequence. At the end the story was created and

read out aloud. What can be noted in this activity is that learners would struggle and some would probably not be able to complete the task if they were working as individuals. However, through mixed grouping strategy it was possible for the activity to be completed but it needed an intense facilitation to ensure that the groups understand what is required. The sentence making genre complements mixed grouping abilities strategy.

Proponents of inclusive education feel that mixed learning groups are an effective way to bring learners with and without disabilities together because they can involve each other in the learning process (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2011). The above suggests that mixed grouping strategy provide distinct benefits to learners, such as access to models for lower ability learners. This has been echoed by Ceri (2013), underscoring that mixed groups are the most effective technique for a child's learning since learners with various intellect levels, hobbies, and backgrounds may interact. Generally, what the literature and the lessons where the mixed grouping strategy was used revealed that mixed ability grouping can be an effective strategy for promoting diversity, collaboration, and individualised learning in the classroom. By creating inclusive learning environments that capitalise on learners' unique strengths, educators can help all learners reach their full potential. The next section looks at the cognitive level strategies and their impact on learners' reading comprehension.

#### **4.4.2 Explicit teaching of higher order thinking skills**

In this sub-theme, I discuss learners' documents for reading comprehension pre-test and post-test activities. The section tries to prove how explicit teaching of higher order skills can help improve learners' reading comprehension.



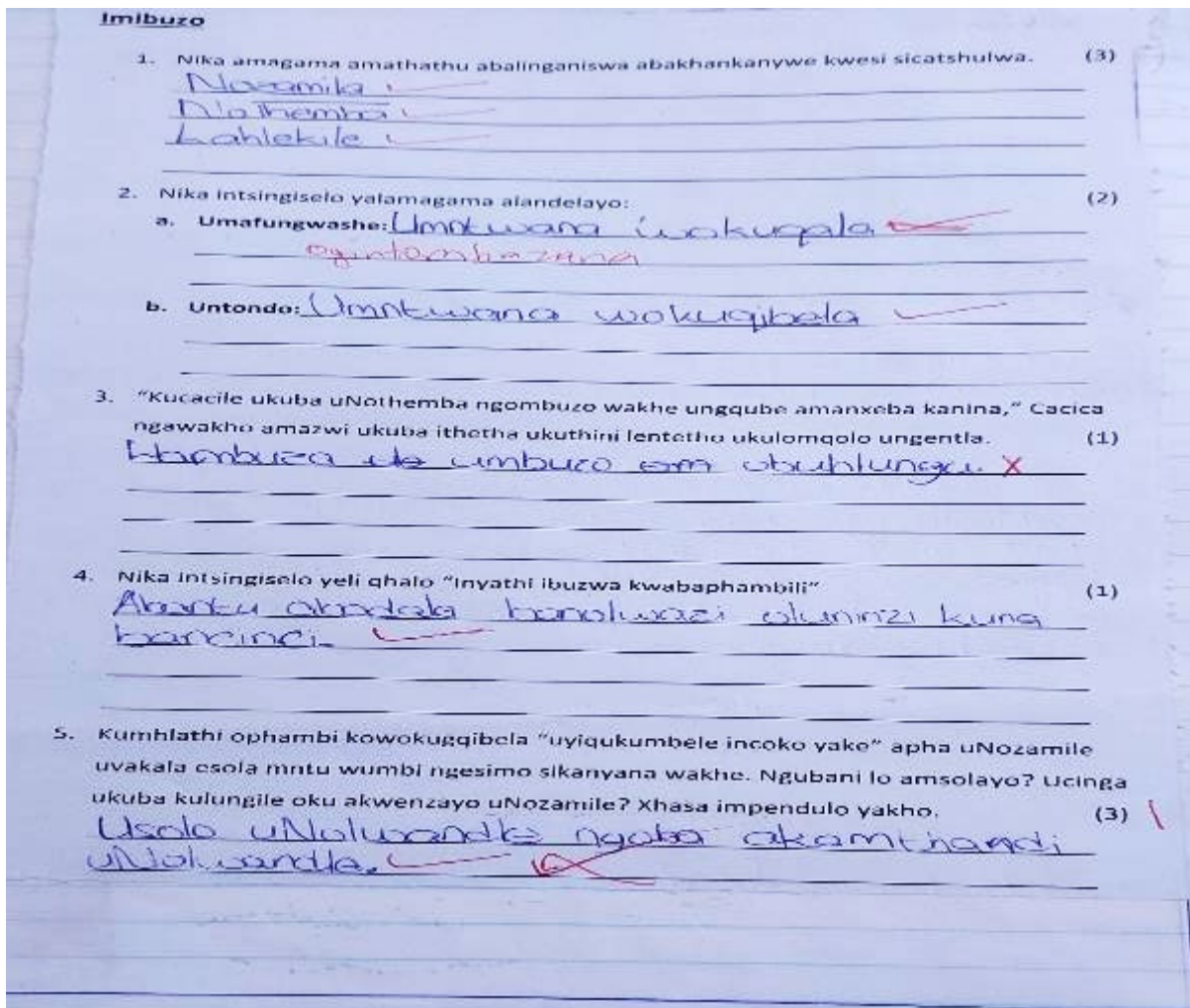
*Pre-test reading comprehension* (see Appendix 6 for English translation) [excerpt 5]

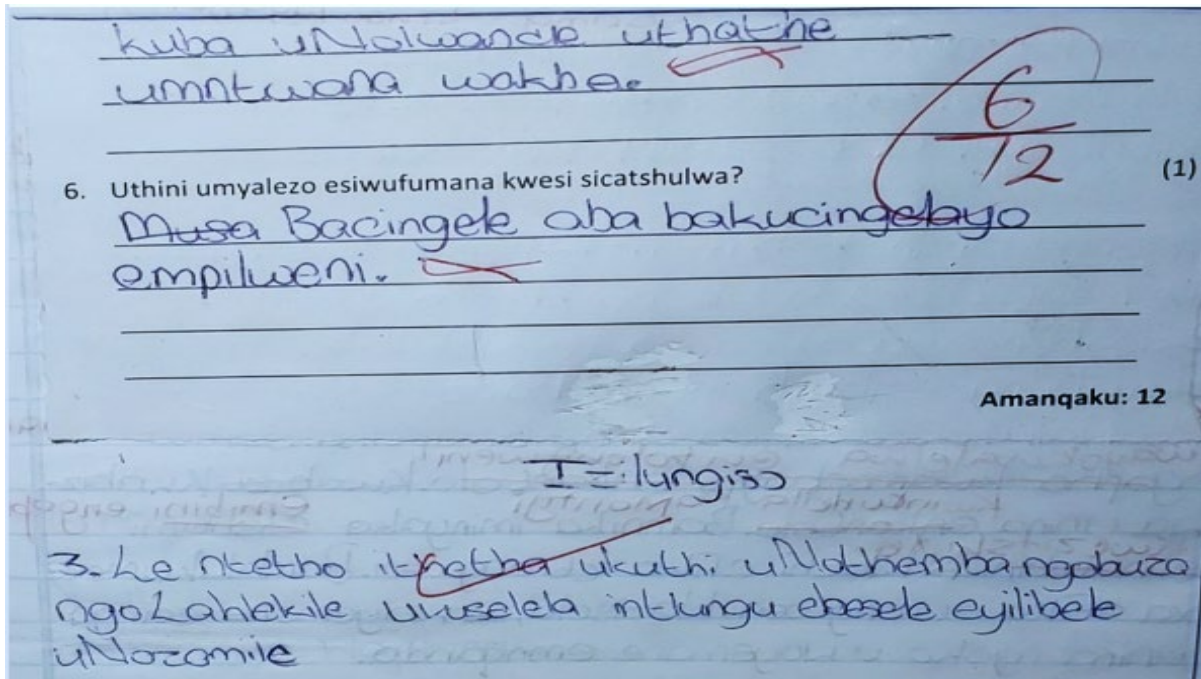
The above excerpt is from the Grade 6 novel "Amathunzi'ezolo," and was selected because the teacher-researcher preferred not to introduce new material. The aim was to evaluate whether learners understood the novel and their approach to unfamiliar comprehension texts. The researcher expected no significant difficulties in comprehension, as the learners were already acquainted with the novel. The text was also chosen for its comprehensive content that covers a wide range of life experiences, making it accessible to the learners. It offers numerous opportunities to gauge comprehension at various cognitive levels.

Family relations are the main theme of the aforementioned tale, which centres on Nozamile, a woman, and her two children, a son named Lahlekile, and a daughter named Nothemba. It depicts the sacrifices and hardships faced by families. As an anxious mother, Nozamile is shown to be especially worried about her son, Lahlekile. Financial difficulties forced her oldest daughter, Nothemba, to drop out of school in order to support the family. The family

experiences emotional upheaval, and Nozamile's anguish is clear as she copes with her children's difficulties.

The story also illustrates the problem of understanding and communication; a crucial exchange between Nozamile and Nothemba emphasises the mother's suffering and her daughter's developing consciousness of family matters. Nothemba tries to console her mother and shows care for her welfare. Nozamile shows mistrust toward Lahlekile's girlfriend, Nolwandle, however, Nothemba calms her mother, pointing out that Lahlekile is old enough to make his own choices.





**Pre-test questions and answers [excerpt: 6 ]**

**Translated Questions and Cognitive Levels**

Question 1: Name the characters that are mentioned in the story. (Lower Order - Remembering) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]

Question 2: Give the meaning of the following words. (Middle Order - Understanding) [Bloom's Taxonomy-revised]

Question 3: “It is clear that Nothemba stirred up her mother’s already healing wounds with her question”. In your own words explain what the author means by this. (Middle Order - Applying) [Bloom's Taxonomy-revised]

Question 4: Interpret the meaning of the idiom. (Middle Order - Applying) [Bloom's Taxonomy-revised]

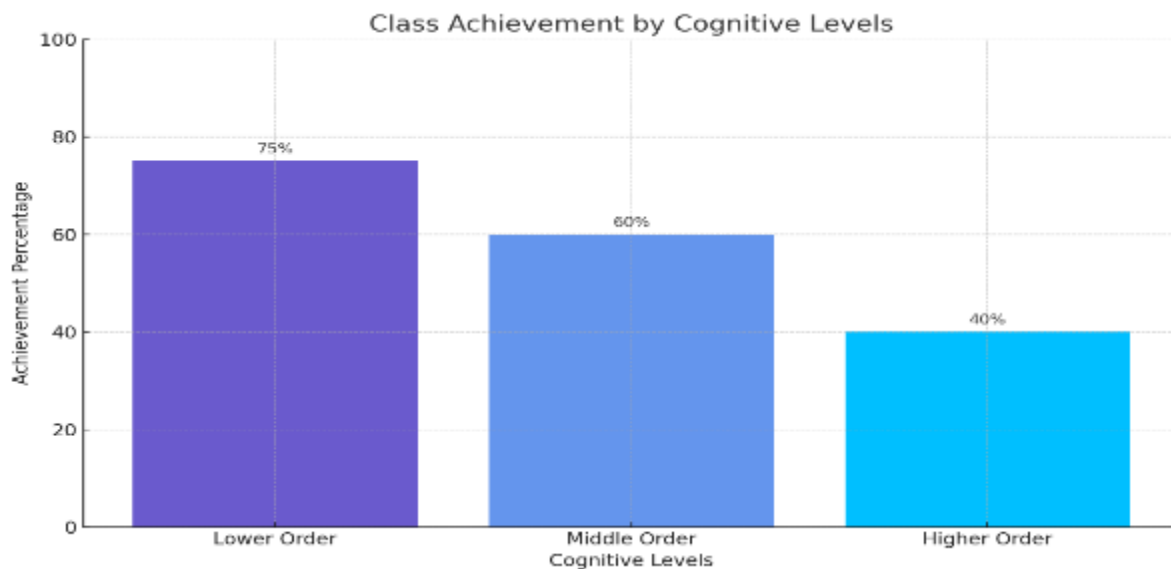
Question 5: Nozomile is blaming Lahlekile’s girlfriend. Do you think what she is doing is right or wrong? Support your answer. (Higher Order- Evaluating) [Bloom's Taxonomy-revised]

Question 6: What is the key lesson from the story? (Middle Order - Applying) [Bloom's Taxonomy-revised]

**Anticipated Difficulties**

- Some learners might struggle with advanced vocabulary.
- Making inferences based on the text might be challenging for many learners.

- Understanding the sequence of events and how they relate to each other could be difficult.



**Figure 4: Pre-test comprehension question and answers, graph analysis (all learners)**

### Analysis of Results

The graph shows the class's achievement in percentage terms for each of the three main cognitive levels (lower, middle, higher order):

Lower Order: 75%

Middle Order: 60%

Higher Order: 40%

With higher-order cognitive abilities, the learners struggled the hardest and only scored forty percent. This suggests problems in activities involving analysis, assessment, and synthesis that call for in-depth knowledge and comprehension beyond mere facts. The learners scored 75% in lower-order cognitive ability. This implies they were better at ease answering lower order questions which involve basic knowledge and memorising of information.

The findings show that learners' development of higher-order thinking abilities has great need of emphasis. Although they can remember and understand material well, they struggle applying, analysing, and evaluating this knowledge. Including extra exercises meant to foster critical thinking and problem-solving can help close this gap. Furthermore, it remains necessary to raise learners' general academic performance through continuous assistance and focused interventions for those who experience difficulties with these higher-order tasks.

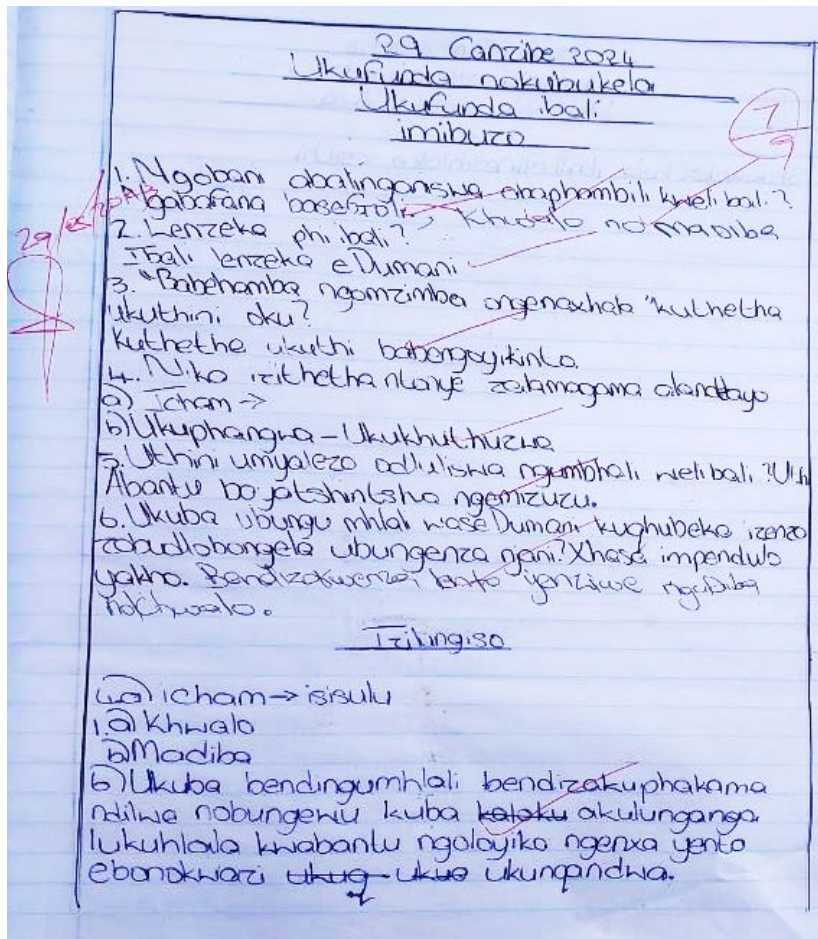
<p><b>UBUNDOBONGELA BONA BUGUGQISILE</b></p> <p>Ilali yaseDumani yayisoloko izólile. Kwakulawla uxolo. Abantu babezihambela nje ngozmzimba ongenaxhala. umntu omdala yayingumntu omdala, umntwana ingumntwana kwakungekho loyiki lomntu omdala ukukhalmela umntwana nokuba udibana naye endleleni esenza into engekho sikweni. Ngo kunjalo nabantwana babehlonipha abantu abadala. Kunjalo nje nokuba abamazi.</p> <p>Ukuvala komgodi wase –Iskholo eGoli kwaba sisizekabani. Abafana abaninzi balelali ababesebenza kulo mgodi babuya. Ukufika nje kwabo zange kubentsuku zatywala yatshintsha imeko, yaphela inzolo.Ngexesha elingephi naba bebehleli belapha abafana namakhwenkwe asuleleka kule mikhwa ifike nabavela eGoli.</p> <p>Kanye njengoko kuthiwa itapilile enye engxoweni ibolile zonke ezo tapile kulo ngxowa zigqibela ngokujola bhutyu nazo. Yaba yiloo nto ipembeleloyaba bafo. Zazimanyumnyezi izinto ababezenza.</p> <p>Kwakunganqabanga ukuba kudlwengulwe ixhegwazana emzini walo.Abavela edolophini behamba ngeenyawo babelicham lokuphangwan nokugetyengwa.Laphela kwathi tu uxolo.Abantu bahlala ngoloyiko .Kwakudlwengulwa omncinci nomdalaiyinto iyinto enye.kwahle kwacaca ukuba uninzi wezenzo lwenziwa phantsi kweempembelelo zotywala,iziyobisi,necuba labaThwa.</p> <p>Yona imitshotsho,imilindo neendlam zabafana zaphela nya! Apho kudityenwe khona babengena aba bafo boxuthe amantombazana bawatsalele ezindongeni. Babengena emzini bonyule inyama ephekiweyo bayitye . Kwakunzima.</p>	<p>Bayijonga le nto bakruquka ootata ababeliliso lomzi,uMadiba no Khwalo.Ngenye imini wavakala esithi uKhwalo kuMadiba,"Noko ke Madiba asizukuya ndawo singabalapha! Masingathuli kukubi kangaka,singamadoda ,mfondini!" "Unyanisile,Khwalo masibize intlanganiso yabantu bale lali.Xasinokumanyana singsphumelela.Masibuchase ubutshinga bongendawo!" waphendula uMadiba."Masibhale isaziso sentlanganiso esiza kuxhonywa apha ezindaweni ezihamba abantu" waphendula uKhwalo. "sibhalwa njani isaziso"? wabuza uMadiba.</p> <p>Ngxatsho ke Diba wazilungisa uKhwalo, " masiqaphele ukubhala oku-injongo zethu kukubiza abantu beze entlanganisweni ukuze sixoxe ngobu bundlobongela bugugqisileyo.</p> <p>"He ke kwatsho kwakhanya kum ngoku, watsho uDiba," sizaluxela indawo eza kuba kuyo intlanganiso, umhla, nexesha. Masixele ukuba ibizwa ngoobani. Asoyiki ukuzixela. Sidiniwe sesi similo sala makhwenkwe!" "Sifake neenombolo zeeselula zethu" Waleka uKhwalo.</p> <p>"kwaqa!ukulunga, Khwalo, masikhe sisibhale phantsi ke ngoku. Ingathi sinawo onke amagqabantshintshi. Singalibali sibhale amagama abonakalayo nacacileyo!" "Uthetha kakuhle Diba, masisenze isaziso sethu sitsale amehlo omntu wonke, sibe nomtsalane". Watsho uKhwalo. Siza kuba nje, watsho uDiba.</p>
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*Post-test reading comprehension [excerpt: 7] Narrative (see Appendix 9 for English translation)*

The text revolves around the theme of community leadership and the challenges faced in preserving cultural heritage and maintaining peace. The first part discusses a community meeting where the elders, including Madiba and others, address the youth. They emphasise the importance of unity and the preservation of their cultural heritage. The elders stress the need for the younger generation to uphold traditions and values that define their community. This dialogue highlights the challenges faced by the youth and the guidance offered by the elders to navigate these challenges. The second part narrates the peaceful life in the village of Dumani, which is disrupted by external influences. It describes the efforts of the elders to maintain order and the challenges they encounter in doing so. The narrative focuses on the community's attempts to preserve peace and manage disruptive elements, illustrating the difficulties in balancing tradition and modernity.

This text was chosen because it deals with relevant themes such as cultural heritage, intergenerational dialogue, community dynamics, conflict resolution, and leadership. These themes are pertinent and relatable to the learners' context, providing a rich basis for discussion and analysis. The language used in the text is formal and includes advanced vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. The complexity lies in understanding the nuances of the dialogue, the cultural references, and the detailed accounts of events. The texts require learners to follow the sequence of events, make inferences, and understand interactions between different characters.

Compared to the pre-test texts, the selected text is more complex due to its formal language and thematic depth. The pre-test texts were more straightforward and focused primarily on basic narrative elements. In contrast, these texts demand a higher level of critical thinking and inferencing to fully comprehend the underlying messages and themes. The anticipated difficulties include understanding advanced vocabulary, making inferences, and connecting events within the text.



*Post-test reading comprehension question and answers [excerpt 8]*

**Translated Questions and Cognitive Levels**

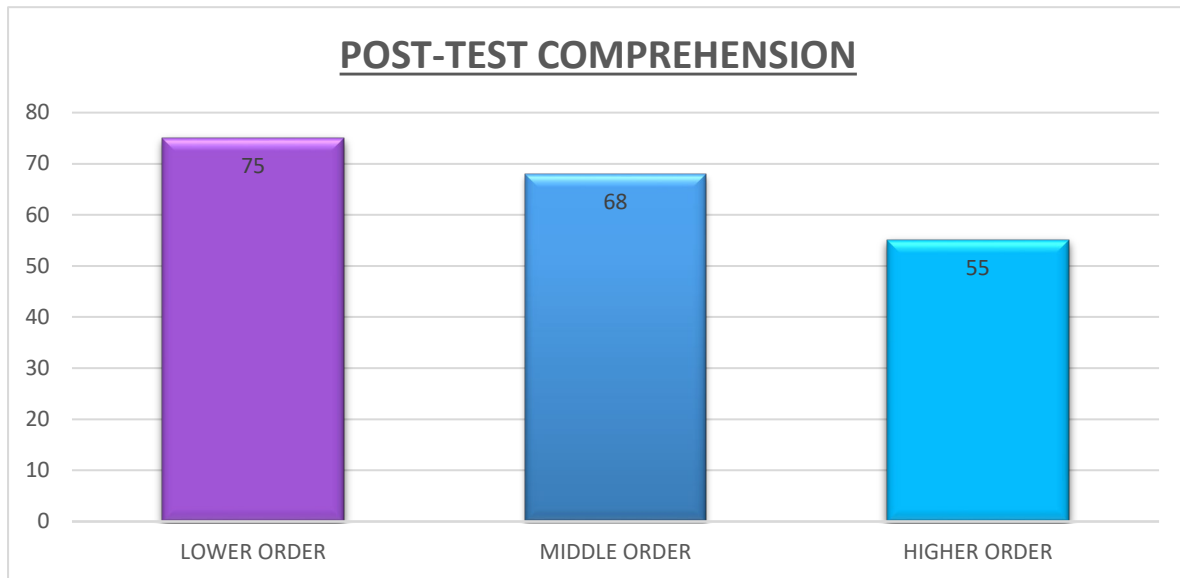
Question 1: Who are the characters from the story. (Lower Order - Remember) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]

Question 2: Where does the story take place? (Lower Order - Remember) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]

Question 3: They walked with carefree body, what does this mean in the context of the story? (Middle Order - Apply) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]

Question 4: Give the synonyms of the words. (Middle Order - Apply) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]

Question 5: If you were a resident of Dumani village while the acts of violence were going on, what would you do? Support your answer (Higher Order - Evaluate) [Bloom's Taxonomy revised]



**Figure 5: Post-test comprehension question and answers, graph analysis (all learners)**

#### Chart Analysis and Results

Graph: Class Achievement by Cognitive Levels

The chart above illustrates the class achievement in percentage terms for each of the three main cognitive levels (lower, middle, higher order):

#### Analysis of Results

Lower Order: The class achieved 75% in lower-order cognitive skills, indicating a strong ability to recall and understand basic information from the texts.

Middle Order: The achievement drops to 68% for middle-order cognitive skills, suggesting an improvement in applying knowledge and understanding in more complex contexts.

Higher Order: The class achieved 55% in higher-order cognitive skills, highlighting observable improvement in evaluating the information. Although the RtL intervention does not show much improvement in this aspect, learners' performance is acceptable, taking into account the greater complexity of the text in comparison to the pre-test.

The results suggest that RtL has the ability to improve middle and higher-order thinking skills. While learners are proficient in basic recall and comprehension, they still struggle with more complex cognitive tasks. The evidence from a FGD2 learner's response emphasises the power of RtL pedagogy to improve reading comprehension in learners. When the group was asked about their experience after the RtL, post intervention, Learner 4 replied:

Ndifunde ukuba ndenza njani ukuze ndikuqonde oko ndikufundayo.

*[I learned how to read for meaning].*

The quote highlights the significant role that RtL intervention plays in developing reading comprehension skills.

Strategies such as explicit teaching of critical thinking skills, more opportunities for higher-order questioning, and scaffolded learning activities could help bridge this gap. Incorporating these strategies into the RtL methodology can support learners in developing the necessary skills to engage deeply with texts and enhance their overall academic performance.

The aforementioned strategies are imperative because in today's fast-paced and complex world, the ability to think critically and solve problems is more important than ever. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential for students to develop in order to thrive in the 21st-century workforce (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Literature suggests that higher-order thinking skills, which include skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, are crucial for students' success in both academic and professional settings. Training students to think critically is vital to improve their academic performance (Nguyễn & Nguyễn, 2017). Research has shown that learners who are taught higher-order thinking skills perform better in standardised tests and are more likely to succeed in college and in their careers (Marzano, 2010). Additionally, higher-order thinking skills need to be deliberately cultivated to enable students to become critical thinkers who can independently tackle complex problems with creativity. Not only does this enhance students' academic achievements, but it also prepares them for success beyond the classroom (El Soufi & See, 2019). In certain circumstances, lack of higher-order engagement may indicate that the text has not been scaffolded enough, or that students have not received adequate assistance or resources to engage with more complicated texts. According to a US study, children who are explicitly taught critical thinking skills outperform those who are not (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2012). This study underscores the value of explicit teaching of higher-order thinking skills to improve learner outcomes.

However, while many educators recognise the value of these skills, not everyone teach them explicitly in their classrooms. The data from my **teacher interviews** indicate that learners struggle greatly with higher-order thinking skills.

*Learners struggle specifically in inferential skills.* [Teacher1]

*Learners struggle mostly on higher order questions.* [Teacher 2]

Teachers did not substantiate their views and did not elaborate further on what they do to ameliorate the situation; instead, their responses suggested the pervasiveness of the challenge. From the responses, I concluded that both educators seem defeated, and the reason for them giving up appears to be the failure to explicitly teach learners higher-order thinking skills or how to incorporate such skills into their informal or classwork activities.

Regarding this research, the above assertions imply that specific instruction of learners' higher-order thinking skills in reading comprehension is necessary. Higher order thinking skills explicitly developed for reading comprehension provide benefits, including deeper knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving ability, transferability to other disciplines, better academic achievement, and future challenge preparedness. These skills enable pupils to interact with books on a deeper level and become active, self-directed learners. Kamagi (2020) describes inferencing as the comprehension of messages implicitly stated in the text being read, or messages that are not expressed but inferred. In addition, inference is the method by which readers employ cues to gain information. Kamagi states further that when forming inferences, we go beyond surface features and read between the lines to derive reasonable conclusions. The above assertion implies that the factual elements in what we read form the foundation of our understanding, However, not every piece of information is obvious or clearly presented.

The teachers' concern regarding learners' difficulty in comprehending higher-order questions has been evident in learners' pre-intervention classwork activities. **Excerpt 4** (above) clearly shows learners' inability to engage in cognitively demanding questions such as evaluation (Bloom's taxonomy level 5). Learners' responses made no attempt to address the question at all. Such poor responses suggest that the learners not only struggle with higher-order questions but also with lower-order ones. The responses also indicate a lack of understanding of the reading material or that they have not developed critical thinking abilities. It might also mean that they have not been sufficiently challenged or encouraged to think beyond simple recollection and understanding.

According to Rouijel, Bouziane, and Zohri (2019), explicit training of critical thinking skills influences learners' use of higher-order thinking skills in reading comprehension. Although high-achieving pupils are usually connected with higher-order thinking abilities, they are not exclusive of them. Low-achievers may also grow and strengthen their higher-order thinking abilities with the correct assistance and interventions, therefore improving their academic performance and general success (Dori & Zohar, 2003).

Drawing on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Barrett's Taxonomy, these models provide methodical approaches for organising and instructing higher order thinking abilities. While Barrett's Taxonomy concentrates on literal comprehension, reorganisation, inferential comprehension, assessment, and appreciation, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy encompasses remembering, comprehending, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating. By using these taxonomies, teachers may create courses specifically aimed at fostering critical thinking abilities across many cognitive levels. Explicit instruction clearly plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills and benefits both high- and lower-achieving learners. This, in turn, promotes deeper engagement with texts.

The responses given by learners were far removed from the context of the story. As mentioned earlier, these skills need to be taught explicitly to equip learners to deal with abstract questions. However, through the RtL intervention (**excerpt 3**) learners were grouped and instructed to come up with strategies that would reduce the impact of crime experienced by the community in the story (**excerpt 5**). Learners' different inputs as groups helped the learners to independently answer abstract questions in post-test (**see excerpt 7, question 6**) and comprehension as oppose to pre-test questions (**excerpt 6, questions 5 & 6**). Explicit teaching of HOTS played a significant role in equipping learners with strategies to deal with complex questions.

However, curriculum demands and time constraints seem to be a barrier for educators attempting to teach higher-order thinking skills. This barrier has been hinted at earlier in Teacher 1's response regarding whether the strategies used by teachers yield better results.

Similarly, the issue of time and curriculum demands has been echoed by learners during focus group discussions. When learners were asked to compare what was previously done when teaching reading comprehension with the current RtL curriculum genre/stages, Learner 1's response suggested that time constraints contribute toward educators' inability to explicitly teach higher-order thinking skills as they always rush to complete lessons within limited time.

Despite the aforementioned barriers in teaching higher-order thinking skills, literature suggests several obstacles that prevent teachers from explicitly teach HOTS in the classroom. Tyas, Nurkamto and Laksani (2019) point out that a shortage of learning and teaching materials is one barrier, Such deficiencies could prevent teachers from utilising HOTS effectively in their classrooms. Since higher-order thinking often entails examining, synthesising, and evaluating information from several sources, Tyas et al.'s claim implies that learners may lack the required information to engage in critical thinking if teachers do not have adequate access to technology in order to access a variety of current resources ,such as books, online resources, or multimedia products.

Moreover, technology enhances the development of higher-order thinking skills because learners become more involved in the utilisation of interactive learning modules, computer-based simulations, and web-based research resources. Without computers and access to the internet, schools deny learners hands-on learning opportunities where investigations of complicated subjects and the development of critical thinking capabilities can be initiated.

Many teachers lack the assistance and training necessary to teach these skills efficiently. The lack of teacher development on how to teach HOTS has been raised by Nguyễn & Nguyễn (2017), affirming that teachers who were not trained to integrate higher-order teaching skills were still heavily influenced by traditional knowledge-transferring approaches. These teachers provided learners with linguistic knowledge and skills but left it up to them to meet HOTS requirements.

In summary, Brookhart (2010) adds that teachers who plan for teaching and extending learners' higher-order thinking skills provide opportunities for growth for both low- and high-ability learners. The lack of resources can limit educators' ability to create meaningful learning experiences that promote higher-order thinking skills.

#### **4.5 THEME 2: EFFECTIVE CREATIVE WRITING APPROACHES.**

This section discusses the inputs from the following datasets, classroom observation videos, teachers' interviews, document analysis and focus group discussion. The points made are explained and supported by the relevant quotes from the relevant datasets. Then, each point made is elaborated using the body of literature and linked to the study's research questions. Document analysis consists of pre-test activity and post-test activity, and this is done to ascertain the influence of RtL intervention.

Creative writing is readiness with inventions of creativity in bringing out ideas, thoughts, and feelings into words. This tends to entertain, inspire, or stir the mind of a reader and is one form of writing that is beyond a mere presentation of facts. Kumar (2020) concurs that creative writing is one indispensable skill of making something up, and even though it is non-academic, it still appeals to a broad audience. The catch herein is that creative writing would have to be explicitly taught, as this is a skill which transcends just the technicalities of writing. Explicit teaching combined with diverse approaches by the teacher may allow learners to develop a love for writing and telling stories, a skill useful both in academics and in personal life.

**Video 3** lesson focuses on the transition from reading comprehension to creative writing using the genre pedagogy (narrative). As one of the RtL curricular genres, sentence construction helps learners to control their language use and write meaningful sentences (Rose, 2018). The educator writes key sentences from a detailed reading text on strips of paper or cardboard, directing students to cut and rearrange the wording. This hands-on activity aids in enhancing learners' sentence-level language skills. Working in groups, learners can develop independent mastery by supporting each other. During close reading sessions, the teacher helps students to pinpoint phrases before they cut the strips. Learners then practice discerning words and sequences meaning by shuffling and reorganising the groups of words. The excerpt below reflects these activities:

<p><b>Body</b>  During the <b>Detailed reading phase</b>, the second <b>RtL</b> genre, will assist the learners in pinpointing particular details that are beneficial for writing. I will read key passages sentence by sentence, pronouncing each word clearly as learners silently follow along, using their fingers to track.</p> <p>In the <b>sentence making curriculum genre</b>, learners cut up key sentences from a reading passage on cardboard strips and rearrange them. This manual practice helps reinforce language</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
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control and will be done in groups for support. Learners also discuss synonyms for highlighted words in the text to be used in joint reconstruction. In the **joint reconstruction** phase of the fourth RtL curriculum genre, I will use the detailed reading interaction cycle to help learners prepare for creating new texts. By outlining key points from the original text, the teacher provides a foundation for learners to construct their own writing. Through scaffolding, I will be supporting learners in highlighting specific word choices, offering alternative expressions, and facilitating discussions related to the topic. The goal is to guide learners in creating a new story while preserving the original elements.

***Lesson plan 2 [excerpt: 9]***

Sentence construction is followed by the (RtL) spelling genre (**excerpt 7**) where the teacher assists learners in recognising and practicing the letter patterns constituting a language's spelling system. The objective is for learners to identify letter patterns in their reading material and practice writing them. This is achieved by pinpointing letter patterns in familiar words from sentences and can be expanded by finding other words sharing the same patterns



***RtL spelling genre [excerpt: 10]***

(Rose, 2018). The video shows the teacher-researcher guiding learners to choose their words carefully before using them to form sentences (above excerpt). He is heard saying to one group after the group have indicated that they are done to assemble the paragraph,

Fundani ke sijonge ukuba ivakala kakuhle na,.....kukhona into eniyishiyileyo lo umqolo awuvakali.

*[Read - I want to hear if your paragraph is correctly assembled.....stop, something is missing in this sentence.]*

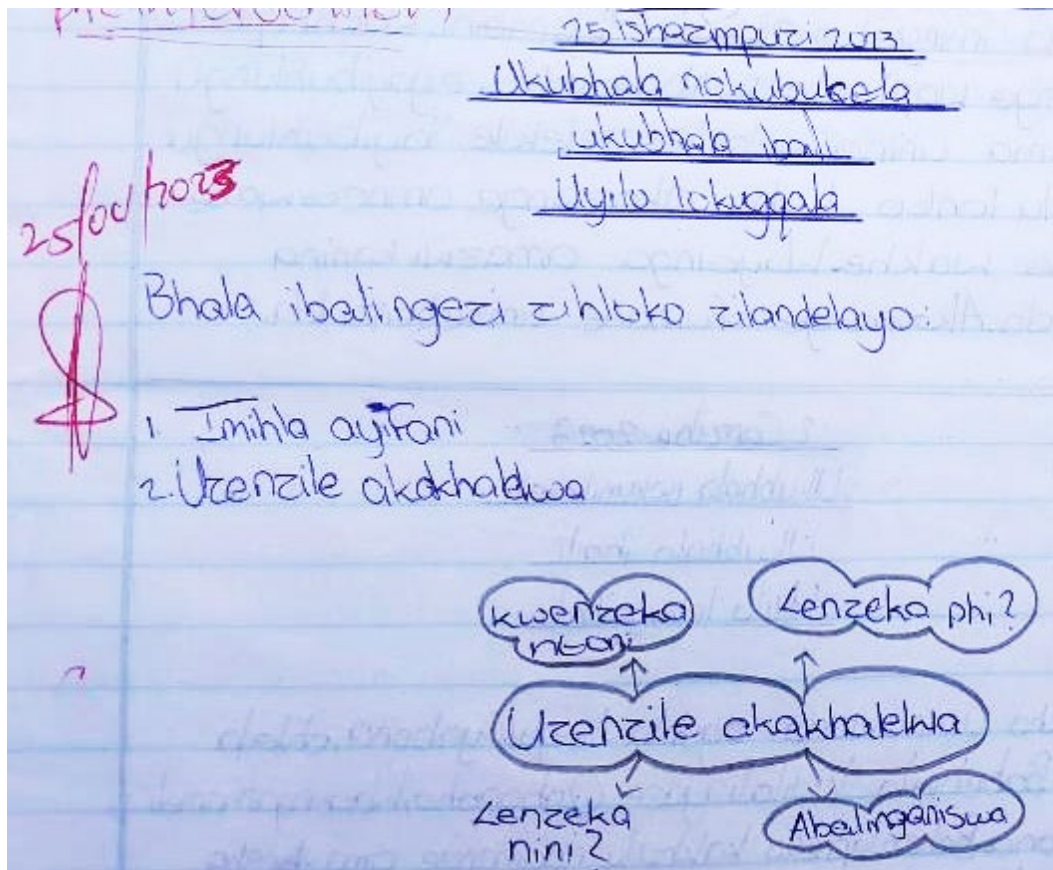
The spelling in RtL methodology is not about phonology/graphology only but it is also about lexico-grammar (syntax), how words are arranged to form sentences. The spelling stage highlights the interplay between syntax and semantics and how grammatical choices affect the meaning.

Traditional spelling activities focus on systems of spelling patterns using decontextualised words. Rose (2018) states that the RtL approach starts with instances in meaningful contexts, and extends this to other instances, allowing learners to build knowledge of spelling systems through repeated practice. For this reason, it can be applied to any expression system, including character syllabaries and sign languages, as knowledge of the expression system is developed from meaningful contexts.

The lesson also focuses on how storytelling may enhance the creative writing process. Together with the teacher, learners co-create the story after engaging in detailed reading for comprehension. Storytelling provides the text structure and organisation. It establishes settings, generates conflict and suspense, provokes emotions, encourages creativity, and fosters a connection between the writer and the reader. Storytelling aligns with the RtL approach, which encourages learners to identify key terms for listening and speaking exercises. Learners then organise their stories and select their story titles using these terms. While Mead (2002) found that storytelling enhances learner writing, even for second-language learners, Makaluza (2018) revealed that storytelling increases word building and vocabulary.

RtL methodology focuses on activity interaction, allowing learners to be more involved, sharing their opinions, hence helping to create a friendly and energetic class environment. The values of narration, reflected in the videos, correspond to the RtL approach that embeds reading and writing into one methodology for teachers' support in developing students' ability in general literacy and creative writing.

These video recordings capture various teaching strategies, such as mixed-ability grouping (see 4.4.1, above), how to engage uninterested learners, and the genre-based approach to support learners' writing, mapping out how the RtL approach can contribute in fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and inclusion in the classroom. Results from these lessons will inform future teaching in order to afford each and every learner an opportunity for continued progression and development in literacy skills.





## Rubric for Marking an Essay

### Criteria and Points

#### CONTENT AND IDEAS

Points: 10

**Excellent (9-10 points):** The theme is clear, focused, and well-developed. The writing is insightful and engaging, with original ideas. Supporting details are specific and well-chosen.

**Good (8-7 points):** The theme is clear and reasonably developed. The writing is generally engaging with some original ideas. Supporting details are relevant but may not be as specific.

**Satisfactory (6-5 points):** The theme is present but may lack focus or development. The writing is competent but may not be particularly engaging. Supporting details are general and may lack specificity.

**Needs Improvement (4-3 points):** The theme is unclear or poorly developed. The writing lacks engagement and originality. Supporting details are vague or irrelevant.

**Poor (0-2 points):** The theme is absent or not discernible. The writing is unengaging and lacks original ideas. Supporting details are minimal or missing.

#### LANGUAGE USE, STYLE, AND MECHANICS

Points: 5

**Excellent (5 points):** Language use is varied and appropriate. Writing style is fluent and expressive. Mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation) are correct.

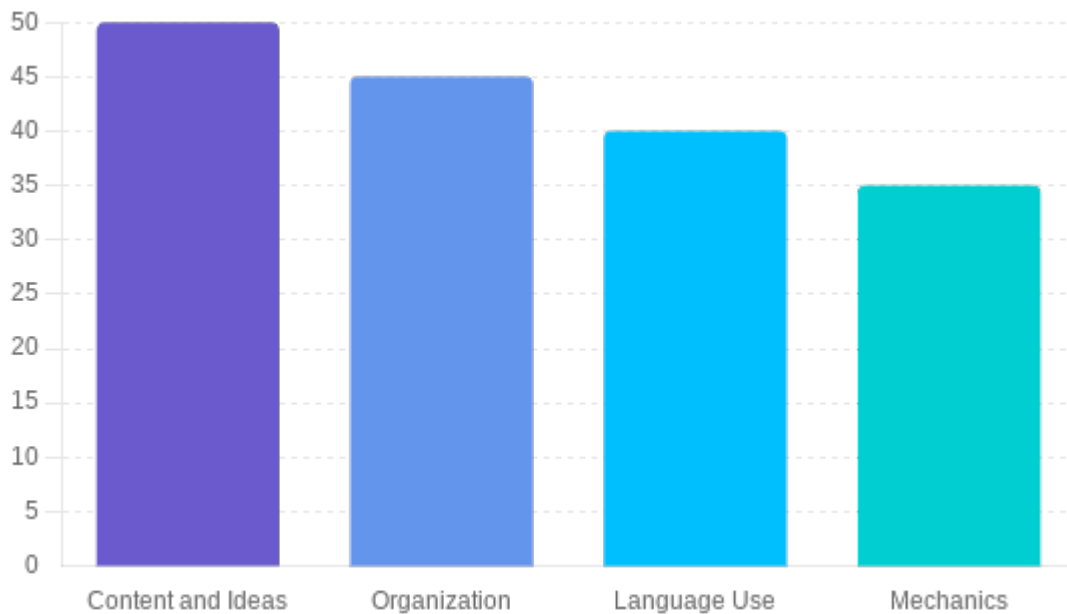
**Good (4 points):** Language use is generally varied and appropriate. Writing style is clear and effective. Mechanics are mostly correct with minor errors.

**Satisfactory (3 points):** Language use is adequate but may be repetitive. Writing style is clear but not particularly expressive. Mechanics are generally correct but with noticeable errors.

**Needs Improvement (2 points):** Language use is limited and may be inappropriate. Writing style is awkward or unclear. Mechanics contain frequent errors.

**Poor (0-1 points):** Language use is very limited and inappropriate. Writing style is confusing and ineffective. Mechanics contain numerous errors that impede understanding.

**Overall Comments:** This rubric aims to evaluate both the content and the quality of the writing, ensuring that students are assessed on their ability to express their ideas clearly and correctly. Specific comments and feedback should be provided to help students improve their writing skills.



**Figure 6: Pre-test creative writing, graph analysis (all learners)**

The pre-test creative writing graph offers a study of students' performance in several facets of creative writing, including Content and Ideas, Organisation, Language Use, and Mechanics.

Learners in the Content and Ideas area averaged 55% (see Fig.16). This implies that while students have some capacity to come up with ideas and substance for their creative writing, their development and elaboration on these ideas needs some work.

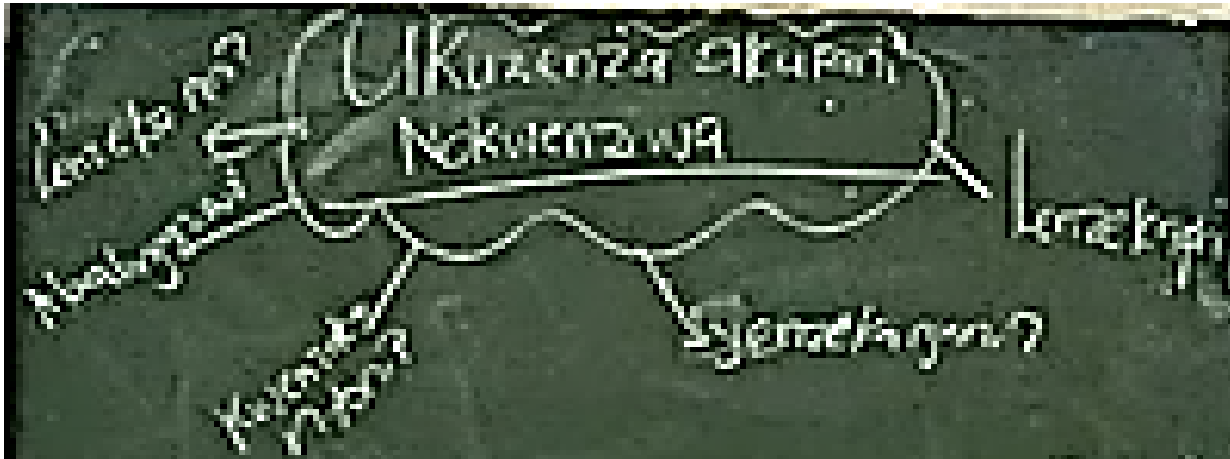
The Organisation category has an average score of fifty percent. This shows that students should work on strengthening the flow and organisation of their writing so that their thoughts make sense and logical sequence is ensured.

Given an average Language Use score of 45% it is clear that students struggle with their language use. Effective written communication depends on vocabulary, sentence construction, and grammar, hence they are also fundamental skills for writing.

With an average of 40%, learners placed lowest in the Mechanics section. This suggests major spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical writing errors that might compromise the general clarity and readability of their work.

The pre-test findings point out areas in which students need focused practice and teaching. The somewhat poor ratings in all areas point to the requirement of thorough teaching plans including topic development, organisational skills, language competency, and writing mechanics. Teachers who concentrate on these areas will enable their students to improve their general academic performance and creative writing ability.

After RtL curriculum intervention through its curriculum genres such as detailed reading, sentence making, spelling, learners, together with the teacher, jointly construct the story. The story begins with the mind map where learners share ideas about what to include on the mind map. This activity promotes learners' sense of ownership over their writing and build a confidence for independently creation of a story. The excerpt below shows the created mind map followed by the story's introduction.



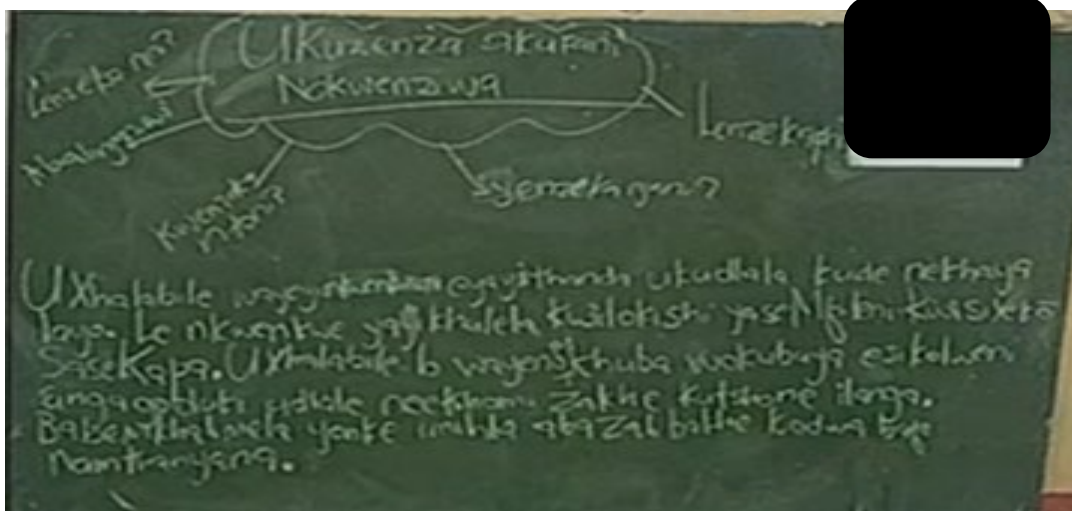
*Mind map-joint construction-narrative writing [excerpt: 13]*

The excerpt above is a collaborative effort between learners and the teacher-researcher (**video 5**), designed to steer the learners' writing. Employing metalanguage in crafting the title (idiom) "Ukuzenza akufani nokwenziwa" aids learners in mastering and enriching their home language. Figuratively, the title translates to "you cannot blame others for the consequences of your own actions." Use of metalanguage allows learners to create suitable title of a story and to talk about the language features of the narrative genre studied. Consequently, it enhances the knowledge of writing conventions.

The "5 Ws and H" of **What** (kwenzeka ntoni), **Where** (yenzeka phi), **Who** (ngobani abalinganiswa), **When** (yenzeka nini), **Why** (kutheni isenzeka), and **How** (yenzeka njani) as shown in the mind map above are essential parts of narrative essays. They add value to the essay's structure and enhance the reader's narrative experience. The "What" tells us about the story's events or acts, while the "Where" pronounces the backdrop and background. The "Who" section describes the people and their views, helping readers to engage emotionally with the tale. The "When" in a story relates to the time frame, which influences pacing and intensity. "Why" delves into the causes for events or characters' behaviour, providing depth and promoting critical thinking. "How" defines how events unfold, such as character choices,

conflicts, and resolves. Understanding these components allows readers to understand character growth and story progression.

For scaffolding process, the teacher supports this through modelling of writing convention and discussion of purpose and audience for the text, so that the learner understands how the language functions in various contexts. The following excerpt shows the structure of an introduction, which is created by learners with the guidance of the teacher-researcher.



*Teacher-researcher together with learners construct an introduction [excerpt:14]*

Below is the copy of what is written on the board in Excerpt 11, with the translation:

Uxhalabile wayeyinkwenkwana eyayithanda ukudlala kude nekhaya layo. Le nkwenkwe yayikhulela kwilokishi yaseMfuleni kwisixeko saseKapa. UXhalabile lo wayenomkhuba wokubuya esikolweni angagoduki adlale neetshomi zakhe kutshone ilanga. Babemkhalimela yonke imihla abazali bakhe kodwa bafe namthanyana.

*[Xhalabile was a boy who loved to play away from his home. The boy grew up in Mfuleni township in the city of Cape Town. Xhalabile had a habit of returning from school and not going home, he would play with his friends until the sun went down. His parents scolded him every day, but all in vain.]*

Video 5 shows the construction of the above paragraph where learners offer suggestions, correct wrong spelling and re-word the notes while the teacher-researcher guides final decisions. Once decisions about wording have been made, the sentences are written on the board. See lesson plan 4 excerpt below:

<p><b>Body</b></p> <p>The next stage is <b>joint reconstruction</b> the fourth <u>RtL</u> curriculum genre, I will use the detailed reading interaction cycle to help learners prepare for creating new texts. By outlining discourse patterns and key points from the original text, the teacher provides a foundation for learners to construct their own writing. Through scaffolding, I will be supporting learners in highlighting specific word choices, offering alternative expressions, and facilitating discussions related to the topic. The goal is to guide learners in crafting a new story while preserving the original elements. Learners construct whole texts in target genres, focusing on recognizing patterns and appropriating them. <b>Independent writing</b> follows, allowing learners to choose a topic from suggested narratives. In an independent stage the scaffolding is removed and learners are able to write on their own a topic that they have chosen.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
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*Excerpt:15 lesson plan 4*

In the above-mentioned paragraph, the statement "His parents scolded him every day, but all in vain" adds drama, and emphasises Xhalabile's connection with his parents. The term "scolded" conveys a stern tone of rebuke, whereas "all in vain" implies a sense of futility. The idiomatic expression in the phrase "**bafe namthanyana**" shows the ability of the learners to use metalanguage to enrich their writing. It also echoes larger themes of childhood disobedience and parental fear, urging readers to reflect on the complexities of family relationships. The above evidence of RtL's influence on learners' creative writing is evident on the post-test creative writing below (excerpt 16).

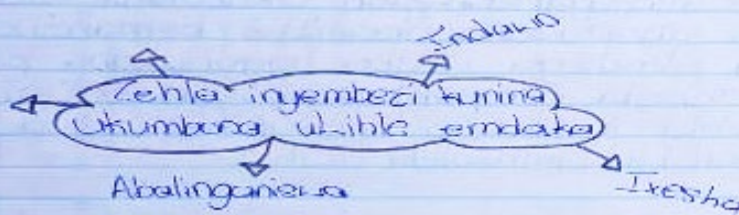
7 Eye Silimela 2023  
Ukubhala Okunikezela  
Ukubhala Ibali elifutshane

Umnyalelo

Bhala ibali elifutshane. Ibali lakho lehlule kathathu intshayelela, Isigu, Isipheb. Bhala imephu yengqondo njengeyo khokhele. Khethe isikhokha sibesinye.

Isikhokha

- 1) Imini endingasizisi ndiyilibale
- 2) Zehla iyembezi kunina ukumbona ulihle emdaka



Kwakukho umama <sup>ekwazi kumadala</sup> wayekudala efuna umntwana. Wadhiyise ngumyeni wakhe, kwathi kanti umshiyi seke khulelwe. Wasaba ke lomama, wasala umntwana oyintombuzane namshiya igama linguLihle. Wathutha ke umntwana kwathi ke xa efunda banga lesixhenxe waqala ukungamameli kwakhe. Wayeshaya intsonga namathwenkhe.

Wamitha ulihle, engazazi naba ucithwele. Kwakukudala umama wakhe empanda. <sup>kwamanye</sup> mele ulihle eyeke isikolo kuba eathwele. Kwathi nangoko ulihle eathwele akazanga ayeke ukuthanda amathwenkhe. Wathi xa exela kumntu wakhe namshiya ephika umntwana wakhe esithi ulihle uthetha ubuho. Wathi ulihle <sup>akazazi</sup> <sup>kwakhe</sup> wasakela nento engazazi ukuba makathi. Wayengazi kinto ngaba uthwari umntwana xa ekhala oko. Wameinga unina empanda. Wathutha ulihle eyohlala endlini wexhego ajola nayo.

Wathi ulihle ukubona ukuba <sup>ali xhego</sup> <sup>atwanda</sup> elixhego ajola nayo alimthandi. Wathi ukubukeka umntwana kude abantwana abamithe bemanine. Wathi exela elixhego ukuba bayahlukana bambetha. Namshesha nempaha. Labuyela endlini kanina. <sup>ku</sup> Zehla iyembezi umakalihle. Kodwa ekugibeleni umakalihle namzoleka ulihle.

Post-test creative writing [excerpt: 16]



The RtL intervention yielded observable results and this change is echoed by learners in their FG discussion post-intervention interviews.

When learners were asked about their experiences with the RtL intervention, a learner from FGD1 stated:

Learner 2: Ndifunde ukuba ulakha njani ibali. *[I learned how to create a story]*.

And from FGD2:

Learner 1: Ndifunde ukwakha iisentences ndenze iparagraph. *[I learned to put sentences together to form a paragraph]*.

Learner 2: "Ndifunde ukubhala iziganeko zilandelelana xa ndisenza ibali" *[I learned how to write the events in sequence when writing a story]*.

The responses from both FGD1 and FGD2 highlight the influence of RtL intervention in helping to improve creative writing particularly in structuring sentences and paragraphs, which are fundamental skills for effective writing

The learners' comments underscore the need for effective creative writing approaches. The RtL pedagogy, with its ability to combine reading and writing, seems to play a pivotal role in enhancing learners' creative writing skills. According to Rose (2018), the curriculum genres used in RtL provide a framework for improving reading and writing abilities throughout the entire school. RtL emphasises that reading is not only a skill to be acquired but also a tool for acquiring new knowledge and deepening understanding while enabling learners to move from the phonological level to the semantic and beyond on the SFL strata. Additionally, Millin (2016) states that by adopting RtL pedagogy, educators aim to empower learners with the necessary reading and writing skills, as well as strategies to navigate and comprehend complex texts across various disciplines. Millin further asserts that RtL pedagogy not only enhances reading proficiency but also facilitates deeper learning, critical thinking, and knowledge acquisition.

As mentioned previously, this chapter also analysed learners' creative writing and how RtL's genre-based approach can help to ameliorate learners' poor writing skills. It has been noted that 70% of the learners involved in this study struggled with creative writing. This issue points towards creative writing approaches used by educators in teaching writing. There are several approaches available to improve learners' creative writing skills, but for RtL intervention

purpose the focus is on the genre-based approach as a method used for teaching creative writing.

According to Saddler et al. (2018), creating well-formed sentences is particularly challenging for writers but imperative for clear communication. However, Saddler et al. believe creating such sentences requires generating complex phrases with proper syntax. Hence teaching learners writing processes through creative writing approaches such as genre-based approaches is vital for better sentence construction as well as good paragraphs leading to meaningful texts.

The analysis of Learner 3's pre-test and post-test activities pointed out similar challenges experienced by other learners regarding classwork activities (see excerpt 8). One major challenge learners faced was writing meaningful sentences and ensuring coherence of events, linking introductions with body paragraphs as well as conclusions. Syntax is crucial when it comes to creating meaningful sentences. This is where words achieve grammatical relations. A lack of syntax leads to poor writing. It may shift readers away from focusing on your message. Therefore, a poor understanding of parts of speech can hinder writing well-structured sentences (Momade, 2021). Literature has shown that poor sentence structure in creative writing can weaken quality and impact by causing confusion, diminishing emotional impact, creating disjointedness in narratives, reducing credibility, and limiting opportunities for creativity.

Another challenge identified is a lack of transitional phrase usage (excerpt 8). For example, there is no link between an introduction's concluding sentence and a body's introductory sentence. This disjointedness can cause difficulties for readers trying to follow or comprehend stories. Ruday (2016) agrees that transitional language is a valuable tool for good narrative storytelling because it helps clarify narratives by connecting information and increasing flow while displaying event sequences. This suggests transitional phrases help maintain logical progression of ideas ensuring stories flow smoothly from one paragraph to another. This continuity provides cohesion making it easier for readers to follow storylines. Furthermore, Ruday (2016) adds transitional phrases can serve as signposts indicating shifts in time setting or viewpoint within stories helping organise narratives while clarifying relationships between different parts.

Since focus was on creating good story introductions along with transitional phrases between paragraphs, I decided not to analyse whole texts but rather this particular part as an area of interest. In conclusion, Ginting (2021) stressed using transitional phrases effectively between

paragraphs can greatly improve cohesiveness and readability creating more engaging reading experiences for audiences.

During one-on-one interviews, teachers were also asked about the strategies they employ when teaching creative writing. Both emphasised the value of reading strategies in fostering learners' creative writing.

It is not easy for learners to write meaningful texts because they lack vocabulary which they can acquire through extensive reading not intensive reading, the problem with us we teach reading for assessment and we do not encourage reading for pleasure and not just reading but read texts that they can relate to unlike reading texts that are foreign to them. [Teacher 1]

It all depend on reading comprehension because without comprehension it will be difficult to produce meaningful texts. [Teacher 2]

Both educators' views suggest that with poor reading comprehension and learners' reluctant reading behaviour it becomes impossible to produce meaningful texts (creative writing). In support of the teachers' views, DBE (2011, p.11) states that creative writing should be directly related to the study of any literary work. Writing tasks that require a thorough grasp of the material might lead to increased creativity and appreciation among students. The assertion by the DBE emphasises the influence of reading comprehension on creative writing skills.

Kumar (2020) also believes that even though we have different theories for improving writing skills, the most effective way for learners depends on the educator's approach, which should aim at emphasizing the process rather than the product. In addition, Kumar singled out the following creative writing approaches: product approach, process approach, and genre approach. Grami (2010) argues that each of the aforementioned approaches has merits and complements each other. However, for post-test activities this study used the genre approach because it complements RtL methodology. RtL as a genre-based methodology has been employed to identify the fundamental challenges in reading comprehension and the creation of meaningful texts. This approach is essentially effective because it integrates both reading and writing processes.

#### **4.5.1 Genre based approach in enhancing creative writing**

In this study, the genre based approach proved to be an effective approach in facilitating learners' creative writing activity. During FGD 1 discussions, Learner 2 mentioned that

*Ndiyayiqonda into yokuba iitext azifani ngesakhiwo sazo, ebalisayo ayifani netext enika ulwazi.*

[I understand that different texts have different structures.]

The quote from the learner indicates the ability of genre based approach to equip learners and guide them on how to structure different text genres. It also guides them on what to include when writing these different texts. Martin (2009) describes a genre as a staged, goal-oriented social process. Similarly, Swales (1990) defines genre as a communication event with certain goals. In reference to the two assertions above, it is possible to conclude that genre is a communication process with a specific aim (goal-oriented) for its participants in a specific communication event owing to a certain social context. Genre is a communication event determined by the social environment. As a result, various social contexts tend to produce different genres. Based on genre based approach, learners had to do creative writing as a post-test activity.

Like other genres, narrative is also staged in a sense that it has an introduction and orientation to the story. Secondly, the body, which discusses broadly the events of a story in a sequence or order of appearance. Lastly, the conclusion, where resolutions are taken. These stages are realised in a story's plot. The plot has different stages or elements. The narrative is goal-oriented. The purpose of the narrative is to entertain while educating the audience and to engage the reader in an imaginative experience. Lastly, the narrative is a social process that emerges and spreads within an ethnic group or culture. Narratives are a key method for individuals to communicate and make sense of their experiences, and they frequently reflect the values, beliefs, and conventions of a specific culture.

	genre	purpose	stages	phases
Stories	recount	recounting events	Orientation Events	setting description
	narrative	resolving a complication	Orientation Complication Resolution	events problem solution
	exemplum	judging character or behaviour	Orientation Complication Evaluation	reaction result comment
	anecdote	sharing an emotional reaction	Orientation Complication	reflection episode (includes other ph

**Table 1: Knowledge genres, purposes, stages and phases (Rose,2018)**

Learners created a narrative essay (*Excerpt 10*), following the RtL methodology teaching circle/ curriculum genres, the essays were analysed in comparison to the pre-test essays. The pre-test essay (*excerpt 8*) had numerous errors, such as transitional phrases which led to the text becoming meaningless or difficult to figure out what the learners is trying to communicate. Another challenge was the structure. The essay did not follow a narrative essay structure, and the plot which consists of an orientation, a complication and a resolution was also not well-structured. Plot is an essential component of a story because it drives the narrative forward and keeps readers engaged, and without a well-developed plot, a story can feel aimless and lack direction. Equally, Cahyono, Musyarofah and Fadilah (2023) in their analysis of a plot in Charles Dicken’s book “Great Expectations,” stated that the plot is central to a story since it serves as the author’s primary tool, and all other components of the tale revolve around it. This claim implies that a good story comes from a well-planned plot. Thus, it is essential when crafting a story to devote time and attention to developing a compelling and well-structured plot. It is then imperative for teachers to explicitly teach story writing for the benefit of learners. Each group was mandated to build the paragraph from the sentences that they have constructed. It was a daunting task because some groups could not arrange words in a sentence correctly. However, due to teacher-researcher facilitation emphasising reading each sentence built, learners were able to arrange words correctly. Kozulin, Feuerstein and Feuerstein (2001) encourage facilitation of knowledge by an adult in what Reuven Feuerstein calls Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). MLE is a learning theory that emphasises the mediator’s role in assisting the learner in constructing meaning.

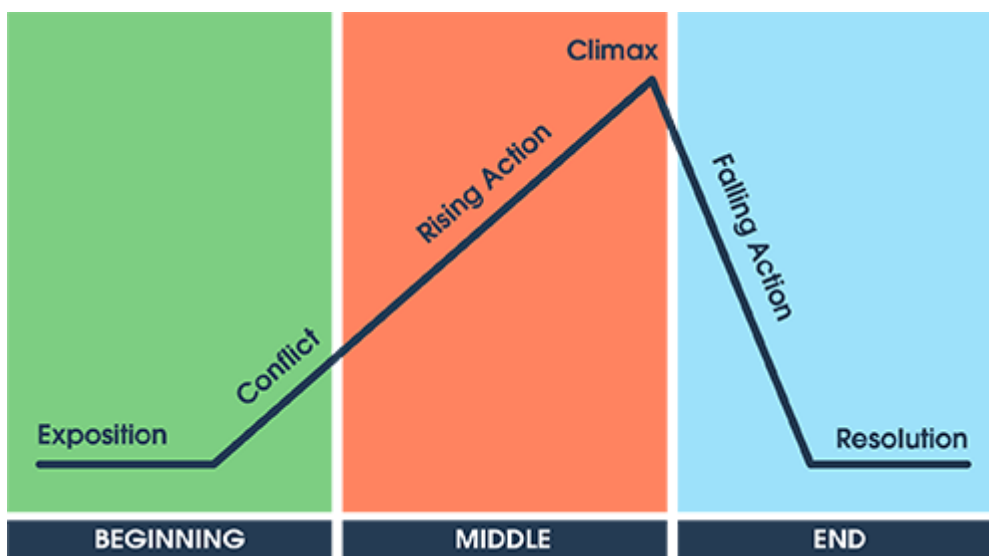
The mediator is someone who gives scaffolding and assistance to the learner, allowing them to make sense of their surroundings. Likewise, Vygotsky (1978) encourages what he named the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, the ZPD is the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the guidance and assistance of a more knowledgeable other (MKO). It represents the gap between a learner’s current independent ability and their potential level of development. The MKO could be a teacher, parent, or peer who provides scaffolding to support the learner’s progress in the ZPD. The above contributions suggest that the educator should be familiar with the subject matter and the methodology in order to successfully impart knowledge to learners. The illustration below (Fig. 20) was used to help guide learners to understand the structure of the narrative genre as they were going to create their own later.

After assembling the paragraphs, in their groups learners started to identify key words and wrote them on the writing board as part of spelling practice, the fourth RtL curriculum genre.

Learners were instructed to put the paragraphs in chronological order to form a full story. The objective was to test their knowledge and ability to put events in a sequence. After completion of the activity an original story was displayed on the writing board and learners working together, corrected their mistakes.

The final RtL curriculum genre was joint construction, where learners were guided to create entire texts in a narrative genre using the key words that they wrote during the spelling genre. The goal of RtL is to recognise patterns in instances and use them to construct a new instance (Rose, 2018). To do this, text was broken down into paragraph-level meaning stages, which were then used for joint construction.

After the group activities, learners were instructed to construct their own narrative essay following the genre based approach. The topic was chosen from the themes that emerged in the short story that they read (*Figure 3*). The plot structure was also displayed and learners were asked to refer to it (*Figure 16*) and (*Table 1*) when writing their own narrative stories.



**Figure 8: Elements of a PLOT (the structure of a story)**

The image shows the classic five-element plot structure in storytelling and analysis: Exposition introduces setting and characters; Rising Action develops the main conflict; Climax is the peak of conflict; Falling Action resolves events; Resolution ties up loose ends. The plot line visually represents how tension rises and falls in the narrative. This structure, known as Freytag's Pyramid or the dramatic arc, is crucial in literary analysis and storytelling in literature, film, and other narrative forms (Richardson, 2006).

In the analysis of post-creative writing test (*Figure 14 & Figure 17*) learners were able to write an improved text (*Figure 9 & Figure 11*). The example that is provided (learner 3) showed

some improvement. The learners managed to write a convincing orientation of the story. Although there are errors such as omitting certain vowels and repetition of certain words, the work is better than the pre-test writing activity.

Looking at how the narrative is structured, there is a link or relation between the introduction, body and conclusion in *Figure 17* as compared to *Figure 14*. By linking these sections together, the reader can easily follow the narration and understand the overall message of the work. This link also helps the reader to see the progression of the story.

#### 4.5.2 Pre-intervention story writing

The following table illustrate (*excerpt 8*) a pre-intervention writing **Table 2**.

<b>ELEMENTS OF PLOT</b>	<b>LEARNER STORY TITLE: <u>UZENZILE AKAKHALELWA</u></b>	<b><i>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</i></b>
<b>EXPOSITION</b>	Kwakukho umntwana othiwa nguLiyabona owayehlala kwilali yaseQoboqobo, wayengamameli uLiyabona.	<i>There was a child named Liyabona who lived in Qoboqobo village and who did not listen to his parent.</i>
<b>RISING ACTION</b>	Ngenye imini babengenanto yokutya ,washiya unina esithi bazakulala bengatyanga. Wathi kanti uLiyabona uyoba isonka neswekile bambhaqa uLiyabona eyiba.	<i>One day they didn't have anything to eat, so he left his mother saying they were going to sleep without eating. It happened that Liyabona went to steal bread and sugar, and he was caught stealing.</i>
<b>CLIMAX</b>	Bamleqa bade bamfumana abahlali babiza amapolisa. Bamsa ngapha kwamaplanga enkantolo..	<i>The residents chased him until they found him and called the police. They took him across to the courthouse</i>
<b>FALLING ACTION</b>	Kwabizwa unina enkantolo. Bamnika iminyaka elishumi elinambini. Wathi efika entrongweni. Bamhlukumeza xa efika etrongweni. Wazisola wayemane ecinga unina ngoko wayemane emnqanda.	<i>His mother was called to court. They gave him twelve years. When he got to the prison, they harassed him. He regretted what he had done. He was thought of his mother who had, kept on warning him.</i>
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	Yadlula iminyaka elishumi elinambini. Wathi ephuma akazanga	<i>Twelve years passed. When he came out, he never stole again. What was</i>

	waphinda waba. Into eyayibuhlungu waphuma unina sele eswelekile. Yayibuhlungu kakhulu lonto kuba akazange amngcwabe umama wakhe. Wayecinga amazwikanina emnqanda. Akazange afumane umsebenzi lula.	<i>sad was that his mother had already died. It was very sad because he did not bury his mother. He was thinking of his mother's words. He did not find work easily.</i>
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**Table 2:** Plotting Learner pre-test story according to the elements of a plot (figure 14)

On the above table, the story does not show the reason why Liyabona decided to go and steal food. This omission of information can confuse the reader and sometimes change the story's intended message. It can also confuse the reader about the main theme of the story. According to the genre-based approach, narratives have several functions, including entertaining, teaching, informing, and embodying the writer's perspective (Derewianka, 2004). Based on the above assertion, it can be concluded that the story (**Figure 9**) did not fulfil the intended purpose, which was to teach the audience about the effects of poverty. The story was intended to show that some children resort to criminal activity due to poverty. Instead, it became a morality tale that showed the main character as a disobedient child who had to learn a bitter lesson.

#### 4.5.3. Post-intervention story writing

RtL methodology played a significant and empirical role in shaping learners' writing in this study. The table below show the plot of the story written by learner 3 (**Figure 12**). Post-intervention.

<b>ELEMENTS OF PLOT</b>	<b>LEARNER STORY TITLE:</b> <u>ZEHLA IINYEMBEZI KUNINA</u> <u>AKUMBONA ULIHLE EMDAKA.</u>	<b>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</b>
<b>EXPOSITION</b>	Kwakukho umama wayekudala efuna umntwana. Wayeshiywe ngumyeni wakhe, kwathi kanti umshiye sele khulelwe. Wazala ke lomama, wazala umntwana oyintombazana wamthiya igama elinguLihle. Wakhula ke umntwana wathi ke sa funda ibanga lesixhenxe waqala ukungamameli kwakhe. Wayetshaya intsangu namakhwenkwe.	<i>There was woman who was longing for a child of her own for quite some time. Soon after her husband passed away, she realised that she was pregnant. She gave birth to a baby girl and named her Lihle. Lihle grew up and when she was in Grade 7 she became rebellious and began smoking dagga with the boys.</i>

<b>RISING ACTION</b>	Wamitha, uLihle engazazi noba uzithwele.kwakukudala unina wakhe emnqanda.Kwakumele ulihle ayeke isikolo kuba ekhulelwe	<i>She became pregnant although she wasn't sure. Her mother had warned her a long time ago. She had to drop out of school because she was pregnant.</i>
<b>CLIMAX</b>	Wathi xa exelela umntu wakhe wamshiya ephika umntwana wakhe esithi uLihle uthetha ubuxoki.Wathi uLihle akuzala waxakana nento engazazi ukuba makathini. Wayengazi ngoba uthwani umntwana xa ekhala oko. Wathutha uLihle wayohlala endlini yexhego awayejola nalo.	<i>When she told her boyfriend, he left her and denied her child, saying that Lihle was lying. Lihle was confused and didn't know what to do. She didn't know how to handle the child when it cried. Lihle moved out of her mother's house to live in the old man's house whom she now was dating.</i>
<b>FALLING ACTION</b>	ULihle wabona ukuba elixhego ajola nalo alimthandi. Wathi ebukele umabonakude wabona abantwana abamithe bebancinci. Wagqiba ekubeni axelele elixhego ukuba bohluwane lasuka lamhetha lamtshisela neempahla.	<i>Lihle saw that the old man she dated did not love her. While watching TV, she saw small children who were also pregnant. Lihle decided to tell the old man that they must break up, but he beat her and burned her clothes.</i>
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	Wabuyela endlini kanina. Zehla inyemebezi kumakaLihle kodwa ekugqibeleni wamxolela uLihle.	<i>Lihle returned to her mother's house. Lihle's mother cried when she saw her condition but in the end she forgave Lihle.</i>

**Table 3:** Plotting Learner post-test story according to the elements of a plot (figure 17)

The above story's plot shows some improvement as compared to pre-test story in terms of the structure and sequencing of events as well as the message to the reader.

The exposition introduces Lihle as a protagonist within her family environment. The exposition tells the reader how her mother longed for a child after the death of her husband. The reader is introduced to the genesis of Lihle's life challenges, how she became rebellious in Grade 7 and her involvement in illegal activities such as using drugs. The introduction prepares the reader for the conflict that will be revealed later in the story.

The next element is rising action, which begins with Lihle's pregnancy, though she is unaware of her condition. Her mother had previously warned her about her behaviour, but this upset Lihle. That is how her life starts to fall apart. Her pregnancy compels her to leave school. This aggravated the situation between Lihle and her mother as their relationship become strained.

The climax occurs when Lihle confides in her boyfriend about her pregnancy. To her dismay, he rejected her and denied any responsibility. The boyfriend accuses her of lying and this leaves her betrayed and helpless. This is the critical stage in Lihle's life, a moment whereby her emotional intelligence is tested. It is at this stage that she decides to leave the comfort of her home only to be with an old man who is as old as her father.

The falling action portrays Lihle as a changed person. She starts realising that leaving home was a mistake. She also realises that the old man never loved her. He refuses to look after Lihle and her child. When Lihle confronts him he violently beats her, destroying her belongings. At this stage she reconsiders her decision to leave home.

In the resolution stage Lihle returns home, and her mother forgives her after seeing her condition. Lihle learned from her mistakes, and her mother also learned that there is no garbage bin for a human being.

The above analysis demonstrates how the aforementioned elements of a plot work together to create a good story. The story explores themes such a family and relationships, rebellion and responsibility that explores themes of rebellion, responsibility, and the complexities of familial relationships.

#### 4.6. **THEME 3: ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANGUAGE VARIETIES**

Attitudes towards home language varieties can vary widely depending on the context, culture, and individuals involved. In this section, there are contrasting views between the interviewees, the educators and learners expressing differing opinions on the influence of these varieties on home language.

Learners were asked whether using everyday spoken isiXhosa during discussions helped them with the tasks or not.

A learner from FGD 1 confidently said:

Yes, it is important to use outside school language to understand the school language because it is easy to understand school language when examples are made with outside school language. [Learner 1]

Similarly, one from FGD 2 said:

Using outside school language when discussing as group can help to understand the language that we use at school. [Learner 5]

The learners' insights contradict the view of their teachers. The latter argued that, in reading comprehension, the language varieties adopted by learners affect them negatively (see interview extracts, below). As for the learners, the varieties represent positive resources for the interaction in standardised isiXhosa. In their work, Garcia and Wei (2022) supports the notion that educators should move away from focusing solely on named or standardised languages. Instead, they advocate for drawing on the full range of features and meanings within the linguistic repertoire of their learners. On this aspect, Garcia and Wei indicate that through such knowledge, teachers can use their intervention to develop classroom pedagogies that are efficient and inclusive. Furthermore, DBE (2011) proclaims that NCS aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives. The above assertion by DBE above suggests that education should relate to learners' contexts and realities and not as an isolated process. Allowing learners to utilise their language varieties promote comprehension of the material being read as these varieties relate to their contexts.

Teachers were asked about the possible reasons for South African learners' poor reading comprehension, as documented in the PIRLS reports (e.g., Howie et al., 2017).

The geographic area which is Western Cape where these learners are exposed to different language varieties could be the barrier to reading comprehension. [Teacher 2]

Due to varieties that these learners speak, including cyber language, the isiXhosa gets affected. [Teacher 2]

In terms of this study, these views reveal negative attitudes towards home language varieties, which are seen as barriers to reading comprehension rather than as tools to access the target language. This perspective relates to Ruiz's (1984) orientation of language planning as a problem, where language diversity is viewed as an obstacle to be overcome. Instead of seeing these linguistic varieties as valuable resources or inherent rights, the teachers' comments reflect a perception of these varieties as impediments to learners' academic success.

Several studies have explored the relationship between bi-dialectalism and its influence on learners' academic success. Bi-dialectalism is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that highlights the cultural, social, and cognitive aspects of language use. It enhances cognitive skills and illustrates how language, identity, and social context are related (Mordaunt, 2011). This approach relates to my study in that it encourages the use of varieties of the same language. Research on the influence of bi-dialectal literacy on educational outcomes in Norway has shown that Norwegian schools with students speaking Nynorsk tend to score higher on national tests. This suggests that bi-dialectal literacy may have a beneficial effect on academic achievement (Vangsnes, Blekesaune, & Söderlund, 2021). Similarly, the study that explores the impact of African-American English (AAE) on education, underscoring the significance of recognising and appreciating students' home dialects to improve their academic success, highlighting the significance of bi-dialectalism in classrooms (Mordaunt, 2011). Finally, research on the use of dialect by elementary school students and its effect on reading achievement, which looks at the relationship between students' success in reading and their use of dialect in oral and written forms, indicates that dialect use can have a significant impact on literacy outcomes (Gatlin, 2017). Overall, the approach recognises and leverages learners' full linguistic repertoires as resources for learning. It may also help augment learners' higher cognitive skills in reading development.

Bi-dialectalism relates to what García and Li Wei (2014) termed non-compartmentalised language use. Non-compartmentalised language use in translanguaging means that multilingual speakers do not treat their languages as separate, isolated systems. Instead, they draw from their entire linguistic repertoire fluidly and dynamically (García & Li Wei (2014). Although Garcia and Li Wei refer to two distinct languages, their assertion complements bi-dialectalism in that both approaches encourage learners to use their language varieties to understand the target language. The aforementioned assertions suggest that these varieties of a language should not be seen as barriers but as contributors to reading comprehension, as long as educators manage the process carefully. The main finding from the teachers' views suggests negative attitudes by teachers towards home language varieties, viewing non-standard varieties as a problem rather than as valuable resources.

In a further response to the PIRLS question, Teacher 1 added the following reflection based on his experience as a student.

At the tertiary level, isiXhosa was one of my modules. I noticed that there was less effort in monitoring of isiXhosa by those in power at the institution... I felt that there

was no passion in enriching the language by the lecturers... If the institutions of higher education behave in such a manner, it's always going to be worse at the school level. [Teacher 1]

This comment reflects Teacher1's concern about the low status and lack of support for isiXhosa at higher education institutions, which he believes negatively impacts language development at the school level. Teacher 1 did not further elaborate on these comments.

The above view is critical of certain institutions of higher education for failing to equip learner teachers with adequate knowledge on how to develop and teach indigenous/African languages. As mentioned in Chapter 3 under the sampling and site selection section the researcher is well aware that this finding is not a reflective or representative of the entire population of higher education institutions. However, Teacher 1's view sheds light on the importance of language development and its impact on reading comprehension if the development is not taken into consideration.

Educators felt that non-standard or colloquial spoken forms, which include internet slang and urban bi-dialectal varieties, affect learners' reading comprehension skills negatively. These sentiments reveal educators' negative perceptions of the isiXhosa HL varieties. The utterances of the teachers would suggest that the multiplicity of causes that could explain the learners' problem in reading comprehension could be attributed to the urban varieties and also the rural homogenous varieties that the learners bring along into the classroom.

However, as we saw above, the two learners cited previously hold different views from those of their teachers. They believe that using the language they normally use outside the school environment enhances their chances of better understanding the standard isiXhosa HL. Learners' views have been supported by Anderson (2011), stating that children who grow up knowing two dialects can have cognitive advantages similar to bilingual youngsters. According to Anderson, bi-dialectal children have greater cognitive flexibility, attention management, and inhibition of irrelevant information. These advantages stem from the mental activity of moving between dialects, which necessitates similar cognitive processes as switching between languages.

Though teachers overlook or take for granted, the use of language varieties by learners, the above views help to clarify how dialects improve reading comprehension. The points of view demonstrate that, as long as the teachers provide direction and support, there is nothing improper in using different language varieties. Earlier in this chapter, under effective reading

comprehension strategies theme, teacher 1 spoke about strategies he uses when teaching reading comprehension (reading and viewing skills). The strategies were suitable for assessing listening and speaking skills where learners are not in a position of a text but only the teacher that have text. This suggests teachers' unfamiliarity with CAPS document. Reverting back to the issue of language varieties, DBE (2011, p.8) state that "many South African schools do not offer the home languages of some or all of the enrolled learners but rather have one or two languages offered at Home Language level. As a result, the labels Home Language and First Additional Language refer to the proficiency levels at which the language is offered and not the native (Home) or acquired (as in the additional languages) language. For the purposes of this policy, any reference to Home Language should be understood to refer to the level and not the language itself." The quote suggests that CAPS acknowledges that the school language which is regarded as home language may not correspond with the home language that learners speak at home. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher to harmonise these varieties through differentiate learning by allowing learners to access the target language though the use of their home varieties.

According to the studies, learners' development or understanding may suffer when teachers fail to promote the use of linguistic variety. Negative responses from teachers regarding languages might cause poor self-confidence and lack of motivation among students to learn. According to Wondimu (2016), negative reactions from educators towards dialects might lead to low self-confidence and the lack of enthusiasm among pupils to study. Wondimu further states that mistaking accents for faults might deter kids from attending school and lead to academic failure.

This study followed the RtL approach, meant to fit multilingual classrooms. By giving learners organised help to build their reading and comprehension skills across many languages, the Reading to Learn (RtL) teaching approach is especially meant to meet the demands of multilingual classrooms. In one Indonesian research project, the R2L bilingual programme significantly improved Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It was creative in using both Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) methodically for L2 education to address the challenge of multilingual classrooms. This intervention showed that whilst still fulfilling the curriculum requirements, the R2L approach can be adjusted and contextualised for different language environments (Kartika-Ningsih, 2023). Furthermore, Kartika-Ningsih (2023) advises teachers to take use of pupils' multilingualism instead of seeing it as a barrier to their development.

In the framework of this research, the RtL approach guided students' understanding and creative writing by means of its cycle of many phases. Lessons including the alternation of linguistic variants of isiXhosa with the standard isiXhosa HL made interesting and motivated students to actively interact with the material. Pre-tests and post-tests actions of students clearly show this. The harmonisation procedure has helped to simplify the RtL teaching cycle's facilitating throughout classes. Recognising and valuing the many linguistic backgrounds and dialects that students bring to the classroom while also offering support and direction to help them grow proficient in the standard language helps harmonise learners' many linguistic varieties with the standard language. Like the harmonisation process, the RtL technique has transforming potential that may result in a more inclusive and encouraging classroom where every student may flourish. The approach is appropriate for multilingual classrooms as it offers a disciplined framework for improving students' reading and comprehension abilities in an inclusive, culturally relevant, and respectful of linguistic variation. The issue of language varieties' attitudes also signalled the importance of indigenous language development on teachers.

The concern of indigenous language development can have a positive influence on teachers' pedagogical skills. However, it seems that there is a little attention or effort by South African government and institutions of higher education to develop and promote the indigenous /African languages. This challenge seemingly affects the entire continent where foreign languages are given first preference in terms of language development. Batibo (2005) states that the development and promotion of indigenous /African languages have been given little attention in Africa, hence there is a lack of literature regarding the indigenous /African languages. Literature plays a significant role in enhancing educators' language teaching skills and it is a valuable tool for educators to improve their language proficiency, cultural understanding, critical thinking, creativity, and empathy.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the above assertion implies that there is an underdevelopment of indigenous /African languages by tertiary institutions in South Africa. The researcher is aware that this assertion is in no way representative of higher education institutions as a whole, but this does not change the fact that some universities do not promote indigenous /African languages or multilingualism. The neglect of African languages is also confirmed by the then Minister of Higher Education and Training in South Africa, Dr. Blade Nzimande, in a report on the development of African languages at Stellenbosch University in 2012, stated that he was aware that universities are promoting multilingualism in their

operations at various levels and that there are universities that have developed language policies in which multilingualism is mentioned as an important element or driver of their policies. However, Nzimande expressed a concern that in some universities, multilingualism and the promotion of African languages remain mere policy expressions that have no equivalent in reality (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012). This confirms the teachers' assertion that certain universities are failing to promote indigenous/African languages.

Nzimande further explained that South Africa cannot effectively preserve and promote the cultures and history of its peoples if it does not pay special attention to the development of their languages. In other words, the best way to preserve the cultures of the peoples is to start with their languages (DHET, 2012). This would mean that the effort on the part of the universities in training the instructors in the methods of teaching indigenous/African languages provides an opportunity for the educators in developing their understanding of cultures and the traditions associated with the language. They would be able to contextualise culturally relevant content and pedagogical approaches into the curriculum. They would also be able to create an atmosphere where learning has become more inclusive and culturally responsive. Seemingly, the issue of indigenous language development is a global issue. The process of language development can also help teachers refine their pedagogical methods since the process of developing indigenous languages has the potential to enhance the various pedagogies for the teachers. Integrating the indigenous/African languages into teaching will allow teachers to explore new and culturally relevant teaching approaches, which include storytelling, traditional knowledge integration, and Indigenizing the curriculum. These pedagogies have a potential and positive impact on increasing student success and facilitating deep learning. Nevertheless, methods should consider literacy so that learners may understand more about their language and later be able to produce meaningful texts.

An intensive workshop for reading comprehension instruction is imperative for teachers. The pedagogical approaches, like the Reading to Learn methodology with its powerful teaching cycle, do hold promise for enhancing the competencies of educators both in reading literacy and writing proficiency. Workshops in RtL methodology allow educators to expand their knowledge of multilingual teaching methodologies and will better equip learners to become readers who can make meaning from and critically analyse complex texts. One implementation in the South African province of KwaZulu Natal clearly used RtL as its pedagogy to show it as one method of improving literacy in rural and urban schools. A study by Hart (2023) on primary education in Pietermaritzburg showed that workshops for teachers, including training in RtL

methodology, are indeed more effective. The results indicated that students with challenges were receptive to the introduction of the RtL methodology and helped underachieving learners to gain self-confidence.

#### **4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented data from self-observation and classroom observation videos, teacher interviews, document analysis as well as focus group discussions. I conducted a qualitative thematic analysis on the generated data. The major themes that emerged from the data are relevant to the study questions and objectives indicated in the first chapter of this thesis. This chapter also drew on the literature presented in Chapter 2 to facilitate data analysis.

The final chapter summarises the study's findings, draws some conclusions, suggests implications for further research, and makes a few recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on discussing and deriving conclusions and recommendations from the study's findings based on research questions outlined in Chapter one. The questions are as follows:

- To what extent can Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology enrich reading comprehension in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language?
- What are the reading comprehension challenges encountered by learners and teachers in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language?
- In which ways can RtL address these reading comprehension challenges in isiXhosa Home Language?

### **5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Research findings regarding study's research questions are as follows:

- RtL methodology's ability to enhance reading comprehension, cognitive and creative writing skills.
- Teachers and learners' views on the use of language varieties in the school context.
- Language development to improve teachers' pedagogical skills.

#### **5.2.1 RtL methodology's ability to enhance reading comprehension, cognitive and creative writing skills.**

One of the major findings of the study was the necessity of an effective learning methodology for improvement in reading comprehension, cognition, and creative writing. The Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology stood out as a successful strategy due to its integrated reading and writing processes. Results showed that the learners who received the RtL interventions showed significant gains in reading comprehension as well as creative writing. Learner 3's script (excerpt 4) from the pre-intervention activity demonstrates how learners struggle in answering middle and higher order questions. This points to the ineffective strategies traditionally used to teach reading comprehension. However, reading comprehension results following the RtL intervention (excerpt 6) showed an observable improvement. With regard to the RtL stages,

Millin (2016) observes that RtI has a "catch-up" effect whereby the gap in achievement between lower and higher achieving students is reduced. Additionally, longitudinal research indicates that consistent application of the Reading through the Lens of (RtL) methodology leads to improved reading comprehension, particularly with narrative texts as compared to expository ones. The gains are linked to the scaffolding techniques that the RtL methodology provides (Wu, Barquero, Pickre, Barber, & Cutting, 2021). The above claims imply that RtL curriculum genres such as preparing for reading, detailed reading, sentence making and spelling facilitate reading which leads to better comprehension. The sequential arrangement of the RtL's unique scaffolding process which integrates reading and writing plays a pivotal role in facilitating learners' creative writing. Learner 3's creative writing scripts show how the learner struggles to create a story (see excerpt 8 and Table 2 –pre-intervention). Sentence making and spelling genres made it possible by facilitating the smooth transition from reading comprehension to creative writing. The spelling genre in RtL allowed learners to arrange words to form meaningful sentences. The learners' ability to move from lexico-grammar level to semantic level indicates RtL capability to scaffold learning. Post-intervention in creative writing activity (excerpt 12 & Table 3) proved RtL methodology as a better approach to improve learner literacy. The supportive evidence from the learners indicates a considerable improvement in the performance of struggling learners' post-intervention, which reiterate that RtL has a remarkable impact on the development of reading comprehension as well as creative writing.

RtL also facilitates the process of collaborative learning, and for the purpose of this study, mixed-ability grouping practice was employed. Grouping learners with different abilities while following RtL curriculum circle helped struggling learners to perform better (see excerpt 1). The practice also helped learners to sharpen their higher order thinking skills in order to deal with complex questions. Classroom observation videos revealed how learners gained from the mixed-ability grouping, and this enhanced their HOTS.

In conclusion, the Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology has been validated as an effective strategy for improving reading comprehension, cognitive skills, and creative writing skills in learners, especially those with literacy difficulties. The favourable results observed in this study highlight RtL's capacity to make literacy education more accessible and assist learners from various backgrounds.

### **5.2.2. Teachers' and learners' views on the use of language varieties in the school setting**

The research findings indicate the contrasting views between teachers and learners regarding the language varieties that learners bring to school. During one-on-one interviews with teachers, both T1 and T2 vehemently criticised learners act of utilising the (spoken) varieties of isiXhosa HL citing it as a barrier towards reading comprehension. Both educators pointed different causes for such behaviour, for example, the influence of geographic area and cyber language that these learners are exposed to. Teachers' views are supported by Brown, et al. (2015), who investigated the effect of bi-dialectalism (dialects of the same language) on reading development. Results indicated that dialect use is related in a complicated way to reading comprehension. Children who develop speaking a kind of dialect different from the standard dialect used in schools may face problems during decoding and comprehending text. The theory supporting the argument focuses on studies conducted about African American English (AAE) speakers. In these studies, the students face a lot of challenges while learning school subjects in schools since they are instructed in Mainstream American English (MAE). The studies have found out that differences in pronunciation and aspects of vocabulary make it difficult to learn. The student will take time before mastering the skills in reading.

Furthermore, Brown, et al. revealed that certain studies have identified that children who commonly use certain pronunciations typical of their home dialects struggle with the skill of decoding words, particularly in instances where the pronunciation of a word changes with dialect. This can add yet another level of challenge in learning to read that may be linked to differences in achievement for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. However, it should be noted that the above argument refers to the learning to read phase as opposed to reading to learn phase. However, it reveals the genesis of certain challenges that the intermediate phase experiences which prompted the current study to be undertaken.

Reading between the lines, the teachers assume that the school language and learners' home language are the same or have the same status, therefore, it should be easy for learners to understand and use school language effectively. In trying to show the distinction between school and home languages, Botha (1994) adds that the home or the family is one factor which has an influence over the child's choice of language variety. The family is regarded as a community of interaction which leads to definite role assemblages. The above proclamation highlights that the family and home environment play an influential role in the child's language choices. It also suggests that family is not only about biological interaction but also a community of interaction whereby the language is shaped by community dynamics and cultural

identities. The claim also implies that the school language has formal language features that the learners' home language might not have. Teachers' views also disregard the fact that South Africa is a multilingual society with different languages that the country endorses, and each has its own dialect/varieties.

In contrast, learners view their linguistic varieties as a resource and believed that such varieties play a pivotal role in facilitation of reading comprehension. Learners' focus group interviews revealed that they are comfortable when using their own language varieties to understand the school language and producing meaningful texts. Sharing the similar views as those of learners, Antoniou and Katsos (2016), as opposed to Brown et al. (2015) believe that children who speak two dialects, develop better cognitive capacity as opposed to their monolingual peers. This assertion is based on the information by researchers at the University of Cambridge who found that bi-dialectal children had an edge in memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility that are necessary for exceptional reading comprehension since they allow children to effectively absorb information and handle challenging language tasks.

The aforementioned research reveals that the benefits which bi-dialectalism confers on cognition are believed to come from the neural gymnastics involved in switching in and out of dialects. The practice is known to enhance a child's abilities in concentration, filtering out irrelevancies, and language switching-skills that come in handy while navigating written texts.

These findings reveal the need for educators to be exposed to multilingualism workshops, that will assist them in planning for their multilingual classrooms. Allowing practices such as bi-dialectalism or trans-dialect might help educators to use learners' varieties as resources to improve reading comprehension. Trans-dialect is the translation from one dialect of the same language into another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The aforementioned practices can play an important role in helping learners to access the target language as long as educators cater for multilingualism on their daily planning.

Allowing learners to use all their linguistic repertoire can improve their comprehension of texts. For instance, an inclusion of learners' first language or dialect during reading clarifies many concepts and improved the overall comprehension.

Reading comprehension needs practice that supports learners' linguistic identities and encourages a more inclusive learning environment.

It is therefore vital for educators to understand these language varieties in order to allow learners to use them in understanding the school language. The reason why I emphasise school

language instead of Home language, is because ironically the language learners bring to school is different from what is expected (Home language) and this prompts for further investigation into whether it is still relevant to use terms such as Home language in multilingual communities.

In conclusion, these findings reveal positive and negative attitudes towards language varieties, and the findings relate to the main methodology of this study which is RtL. The Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology and bi-dialectalism /trans-dialect both aim to enhance language learning and literacy, particularly among multilingual learners. By integrating the principles of bi-dialectalism/trans-dialect into RtL practices, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that values and utilises the diverse linguistic resources of their learners.

### **5.2.3 Language development to improve teachers' pedagogical skills**

One-on-one interviews with teachers pointed to the need for language development, especially the South African indigenous languages. T1 alleges that some of the challenges in reading comprehension emanates from poor language development by higher education institutions. Based on his experience as a student in isiXhosa modules, T1 alleged that the module was not given enough attention. Based on his observation and experience, this suggests that some of these institutions do not properly train educators on how to teach indigenous languages. Language development can significantly influence teachers' pedagogical skills, including communication, scaffolding, modelling, differentiation, assessment, cultural competence, content knowledge, and professional development. Effective language skills assist teachers to explain concepts, scaffold learning, differentiate instruction, assess learners' work, and connect with diverse learners. Cultural competence enhances teachers' ability to understand and connect with learners from diverse backgrounds. Ongoing language development supports teachers in engaging with academic literature and staying current with educational research.

The finding is supported by Bunch (2013) and the knowledge gained from Bunch's work highlights the necessity of a thorough approach to teacher preparation that incorporates language proficiency into every facet of instruction. This will guarantee that mainstream teachers are prepared to meet the diverse needs of language learners in a setting that is becoming more and more demanding on them.

Furthermore, Lucas and Villegas (2013) advocate for a structured preservice teacher education program that integrates sociolinguistic consciousness and pedagogical strategies to prepare future educators for diverse classrooms. South Africa's 2020 language policy framework

emphasises indigenous language development, encouraging universities and TVET colleges to integrate multilingualism into their curricula to address historical neglect (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020). Other African countries such as Ghana also share the same view as South Africa. Recent research in Ghana has shown that students' attitudes, subjective norms, and linguistic insecurity significantly influence their intentions to study indigenous languages (Nyamekye 2024). This underscores the need for higher education institutions to create supportive environments that foster positive attitudes towards indigenous languages and address any linguistic insecurities.

My data collection suggests a gap in prioritising indigenous language development, and addressing this gap requires rigorous efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, and communities to ensure that indigenous languages are not only preserved but also thrive in academic settings. The role of higher education institutions in promoting indigenous languages is important, especially for preserving cultural heritage and fostering inclusivity.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings indicate the need for implementation of effective strategies to enhance reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language. The following are suggested recommendations:

#### **Educator development on RtL methodology**

The DBE to provide training to educators to use the RtL teaching strategy in their classrooms. Reading to Learn methodology needs to be incorporated as an embedded component of the pedagogical practice focused on learners with literacy challenges. It has been identified in the previous chapter that Rtl methodology has an ability to integrate reading and writing to improve comprehension and creative writing among the learners. Moreover, it is also important for educators to understand that reading and writing cannot be separated since what is read is assessed through a written form, and this is what RtL methodology advocates.

#### **Embracing multilingualism in the school environment**

Educators to embrace linguistic varieties in their respective classrooms and to support the use of learners' entire linguistic repertoire. Educators should receive training on effective use of multilingual integrated pedagogical model into educational settings (Mulaudzi, 2024). Additionally, school management teams need to develop practical policies that acknowledge and value linguistic diversity within schools.

In light of this, holistic teacher preparation programs toward language proficiency in each learning area should be rolled out, as this will demand proper teacher language development. The Department of Basic Education should support this continuously with professional development related to language and cultural competencies. Support should also be given in motivating teachers to access academic literature, and to stay abreast of education-related research in multiple languages.

Both universities and TVET colleges to include multilingualism in the curricula to advance the development of indigenous languages. Supportive environments, especially for students who want to include these languages in their respective career fields, to be in place. By fostering such in higher education settings will help develop positive attitudes toward these languages.

### **Classroom differentiation strategies**

Educators to adapt instructional strategies to meet the diversity of learners and to add scaffolding techniques that make complex texts accessible for all learners. Project-based learning to be practised in order to accommodate learners' different learning styles. Encourage inclusive environments where expression and creativity can be easily displayed by learners at different levels of proficiency. DBE to intensively train educators in teaching creative writing using RtL learning circle as the guide.

Lastly, more research into terms like "Home language" and its importance in schools today would be useful. The effectiveness and long-term impact of the RtL strategy in learners can also be explored in these studies.

In a nutshell, the suggestions intend to address the major findings related to the effectiveness of RtL methodology in enhancing reading comprehension, cognitive skills, and creative writing skills.

### **5.4. SUMMARY**

In summary, this study has shown the influence of RtL methodology in enhancing the reading comprehension, cognitive and creative writing skills. The study also revealed the benefits of language varieties for learners to access complex text. However, due to educators' attitudes towards such language varieties, learners are unable to successfully engage with such texts. It is suggested that schools and educators should recognise and practically embrace learners' multilingual skills.

Continuous professional development programmes on RtL methodology for educators in different learning areas is essential for better reading comprehension and creative writing skills.

The study suggests that curriculum advisors should consider using the RtL (Reading to Learn) methodology in school programs because of its effective integration of both reading comprehension and creative writing. Additionally, the research highlights a discrepancy between the isiXhosa spoken at home by learners and the isiXhosa expected in educational settings, indicating a need for further investigation into this issue. The proposed research could explore whether the term "Home Language," particularly in relation to indigenous languages, remains relevant in a school's contexts.

## **5.5 IMPLICATIONS**

It has been previously mentioned that the research site selection was done knowing that the results will not represent the entire Grade 6 isiXhosa Home language cohort. The limited case-study nature of the enquiry also meant no claims of generalisability can be made, whether to other schools in the area or to schools with a similar profile further afield. However, the researcher's personal preconceptions and assumptions may in some ways influence the analysis and conclusions drawn from the data. Due to the nature of this study, which is a small-scale study, generalisation, as mentioned above, is forbidden. Hence, it is vital to consider the limitations when interpreting and applying the results of this study. However, transferability of the findings can be done especially to contexts with similar characteristics. The data analysis and results findings unearthed some implications for future research, such as:

- The investigation on the contradiction in what schools call home language as compared to what learner speak at home.
- Practical development of indigenous languages by institutions of higher education.
- The efficiency of current teacher developmental workshops on reading comprehension as well as creative writing.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The study examined the use of the Reading to Learn (RtL) methodology to improve reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language at a primary school in the Western Cape province. It identified several factors contributing to learners' poor reading comprehension, including educators' teaching methods and the language variations learners bring to school, which educators often see as a barrier.

As a result, the researcher suggests that the DBE should conduct intensive RtL methodology workshops to enhance educators' literacy skills and to improve reading comprehension and creative writing. The study found that the current reading comprehension strategies used by educators are not very effective. A concern is also raised based on studies like the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

This research adds to the existing knowledge on effective reading comprehension techniques for teaching reading comprehension and creative writing skills. It also aims to guide curriculum designers and advisors to incorporate RtL into the curriculum to support reading comprehension and creative writing across various subjects. Additionally, the study suggests that teachers should embrace language varieties to help learners access the target language. More support is recommended for teachers to develop learners' reading comprehension and creative writing skills in isiXhosa Home Language.

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## APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

To: School principal

**Researcher:** Mr Fanisile Soyizwaphi

**Cellular number:** 083 4161345

**Institutional Association:** Student

**Research Title: Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study.** This study aims at exploring the use of RtL methodology to enrich grade 6 IsiXhosa Home Language. It seeks to investigate the extent to which the aforementioned approach can contribute to solving the intensive reading comprehension challenge in the Intermediate Phase. The instruments that will be used in data collection will be self-observations and self-reflection, interviews and document analysis. The study will follow purposive sampling in selecting classes and learners and teachers. Data collected will be audio and audio-visual recordings, field notes and document records. Research ethics as prescribed by the UWC Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (HSSREC) will be adhered to.

I believe that the knowledge gained through this study will bring changes in both reading comprehension and writing skills, for learner academic development as well as teacher professional development.

Supervisor: Dr Peter Plüddemann

Institution: University of the Western Cape

Position: Senior lecturer, Department of Language Education, Faculty of Education

Tel: 021 959 2071 / 083 524 2842

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

HSSREC  
Research development  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
Tel: 0219594111  
Email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

Signature of the researcher ..... Date.....



## APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHEET

To: Teachers

**Researcher:** Mr Fanisile Soyizwaphi

**Cellular number:** 083 4161345

**Institutional Association:** Student

**Research Title: Exploring Reading to Learn methodology the teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study.** This study aims at exploring the use of RtL methodology to enrich grade 6 IsiXhosa Home Language. It seeks to investigate the extent to which the aforementioned approach can contribute to solving the intensive reading comprehension challenge in the Intermediate Phase. The instruments that will be used in data collection will be self-observations and self-reflection, interviews and document analysis. The study will follow purposive sampling in selecting classes and learners and teachers. Data collected will be audio and audio-visual recordings, field notes and document records. Research ethics as prescribed by the UWC Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (HSSREC) will be adhered to.

I believe that the knowledge gained through this study will bring changes in both reading comprehension and writing skills, for learner academic development as well as teacher professional development.

**Supervisor:** Dr Peter Plüddemann

**Institution:** University of the Western Cape

**Position:** Senior lecturer, Department of Language Education, Faculty of Education

**Tel:** 021 959 2071 / 083 524 2842

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

HSSREC  
Research development  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
Tel: 0219594111  
Email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

Signature of the researcher ..... Date.....



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



### APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET

To: Parents

**Researcher:** Mr Fanisile Soyizwaphi

**Cellular number:** 083 4161345

**Institutional Association:** Student

**Research Title: Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study.** This study aims at exploring the use of RtL methodology to enrich grade 6 IsiXhosa Home Language. It seeks to investigate the extent to which the aforementioned approach can contribute to solving the intensive reading comprehension challenge in the Intermediate Phase. The instruments that will be used in data collection will be self-observations and self-reflection, interviews and document analysis. The study will follow purposive sampling in selecting classes and learners and teachers. Data collected will be audio and audio-visual recordings, field notes and document records. Research ethics as prescribed by the UWC Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (HSSREC) will be adhered to.

I believe that the knowledge gained through this study will bring changes in both reading comprehension and writing skills, for learner academic development as well as teacher professional development.

**Supervisor:** Dr Peter Plüddemann

**Institution:** University of the Western Cape

**Position:** Senior lecturer, Department of Language Education, Faculty of Education

**Tel:** 021 959 2071 / 083 524 2842

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

HSSREC  
Research development  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
Tel: 0219594111  
Email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

Signature of the researcher ..... Date.....

## APPENDIX 4: Application to WCED



Western Cape  
Government

education

Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

### APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THE WESTERN CAPE

#### Note

- This application has been designed with students in mind.
- If a question does not apply to you indicate with a N/A
- The information is stored in our database to keep track of all studies that have been conducted on the WCED. It is therefore important to provide as much information as is possible

#### • APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1 Personal Details		
•	Title	Mr
1.1.2	Surname	Soyizwaphi
1.1.3	Name (s)	Fanisile
1.1.4	Student Number (If applicable)	3400344

1.2 Contact Details		
1.2.1	Postal Address	104 Thafeni Street, ext 4 Mfuleni 7100
1.2.2	Cell number	0834161345
1.2.3	E-mail Address	<a href="mailto:3400344@myuwc.ac.za">3400344@myuwc.ac.za</a>
1.2.4	Year of registration	2020
1.2.5	Year of completion	2022

#### • DETAILS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Details of the degree or project		
2.1.1	Name of the institution	University of the Western Cape
2.1.2	Degree / Qualification registered for	M.Ed
2.1.3	Faculty and Discipline / Area of study	Faculty of Education Language Education Department
2.1.4	Name of Supervisor / Promoter / Project leader	Dr P Plüddemann
2.1.5	Telephone number of Supervisor / Promoter	021-9592071
2.1.6	E-mail address of Supervisor / Promoter	<a href="mailto:ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za">ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za</a>

2.1.7	Title of the study	
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Exploring Reading to Learn methodology in the teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study

<b>2.1.8</b>	<b>What is the research question, aim and objectives of the study</b>
<p>The study explores RtL methodology in the teaching of reading comprehension in Grade 6 IsiXhosa HL. The following is the main question that the study is trying to answer: To what extent can RtL methodology enrich reading comprehension in Grade 6 IsiXhosa HL?</p> <p><b>Sub-questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the reading comprehension challenges faced by learners and teachers in Grade 6 isiXhosa HL?</li> <li>• In which ways can RtL address these reading comprehension challenges in IsiXhosa HL?</li> </ul> <p>The aims and objectives of the study are as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To investigate the reading comprehension problems encountered in Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language.</li> <li>• To determine the extent to which RtL can enrich reading comprehension successes and address challenges for Grade 6 IsiXhosa HL.</li> </ul>	

<b>2.1.9</b>	<b>Name (s) of education institutions (schools)</b>
Nyameko Primary School	

<b>2.1.10</b>	<b>Research period in education institutions (Schools)</b>	
2.1.11	Start date	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2021
2.1.12	End date	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2021

Fanisile Soyizwaphi (Student Number:3400344)  
 Email:3400344@myuwc.ac.za  
 Cell: 083 416 1345

Feel free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635,  
 Tel: 021 959 4111, email:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



## APPENDIX 5: PERMISSION REQUEST TO HEAD OF INSTITUTION

Nyameko Primary School  
Corner of Ponoane and Tokwana Roads  
Mfuleni, Cape Town, 7100

To whom it may concern

### **Re: Request for permission to conduct research at (Nyameko Primary School)**

My name is **Fanisile Soyizwaphi**, a Masters student in Language and Literacy education in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting a study on **exploring how Reading to Learn methodology can enrich reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL**. I would like to request your permission to conduct interviews with selected learners and educators as well as carry out an intervention using the Reading to Learn (RtL) approach in one of my Grade 6 IsiXhosa Home language classes. The research will not interfere in any way with the functioning of the school or with the teaching and learning process. In addition, participation will be voluntary and participants will be free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons, should they feel uncomfortable with my research. The educators' and learners' identities will remain confidential. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to improve the researcher's own practice. The results of this study will be useful for educator professional development as well as improving learners' reading comprehension and writing skills. I will be interviewing IsiXhosa subject teachers as well as learners and information will be recorded with the permission of the participants. Classroom observations and learner assessment will be documented. After the study is completed the findings will be shared with the school. While conducting the study, I promise to adhere to all Covid 19 regulations to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Should you wish to find out more about the research, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, **Dr Plüddemann**, whose contact details are provided below.

Yours sincerely

*Researcher: Mr Fanisile Soyizwaphi*

*Contact number: 0834161345*

*Email: 3400344@myuwc.ac.za*

*Supervisor: Dr. Peter Plüddemann*

*Tel. 021-9592071/ 083 524 2842*

*Email: ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za*

*Signature of the researcher: .....*

*Date:.....*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal), hereby give consent for Mr F. Soyizwaphi to conduct his research on the premises. I agree that the data can be collected, photocopied, and used in analysis. I understand that the participation of the teachers and learners is voluntary and I am also aware that I am at liberty to refuse or stop the process of conducting the research at any time.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Feel free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635. Tel: 021 959 4111, email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)



## APPENDIX 6: PERMISSION REQUEST TO PARENTS

Dear Parent

I am a Researcher in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am currently conducting research on **exploring how Reading to Learn methodology can enrich reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL.**

I humbly request your permission for your child to participate in this project. I have received approval from the Western Cape Education Department and from the Ethics Committee at the University of the Western Cape for this research project.

If you allow your child to participate in this study, here is what your child is expected to do; your child she or he will be participating involved in a group interviews as well as classroom lessons. Your child as part of a class will may be video recorded during lessons but their all faces will be blurred (we will hide their faces) so that they are not known that they have taken part in this study they cannot be identified. Focus group discussions will take place after school for no longer than 30 minutes and will be audio recorded using a cell phone but this recording will not be shared with anyone but myself and my supervisor

If you agree for your child to participate in this study you will:

- Sign the consent form to give permission for your child to participate in the research;
- Give permission for your child to be interviewed during the data collection phase of the project.

All information that your child will provide during the interview will be strictly for research purposes only. Your child's identity will be protected, and no names will be revealed; that is, all participants will remain anonymous. Please bear in mind that your child may at any time withdraw from and stop participating in the study, without having to give reasons or fear any repercussions. All information provided will be used solely for research purposes and anonymity of all is guaranteed. All video and audio recordings will be used for this study only, and will not be shared publicly.

If you would like to know more about this research project, please feel free to contact me on [0834161345](tel:0834161345), [Email: 400344@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:400344@myuwc.ac.za) or my supervisor Dr Plüddemann at 021 9592071 or 083 524 2842, email [ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za)

I trust that you will consider my request favourably. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours in education

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

Fanisile Soyizwaphi

**free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635, Tel: 021 959 4111, email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)**



## APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

I.....hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study titled: **Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study.**

I have received, read and understood the written information about the research project. I understand that my child's identity will be protected throughout and in the final report, and information collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

I also understand that I may withdraw my child from the research project at any time.

Please put an X in the appropriate column to indicate your decision:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
For your child to participate in this research project		
For your child to be interviewed with an audio-recorder		
For your child to be video recorded during lessons		

If you have agreed to the above, please provide the full name/s of your child:

Child's name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Sincere thanks

**Fanisile Soyizwaphi**  
Researcher

Feel free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635,  
Tel: 021 959 4111, email:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



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## APPENDIX 8: ASSENT REQUEST TO LEARNERS

Dear Learner

I am a Researcher in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am currently conducting research on **exploring how Reading to Learn methodology can enrich reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL**

I humbly request you to participate in this project. I have received approval from the Western Cape Education Department and from the Ethics Committee at the University of the Western Cape for this research project.

If you agree to participate in this study, here is what you are expected to do; you will be participating interviewed in a small group interviews as well as and be part of classroom lessons. Your will be video recorded during class during lessons but your face will be blurred (we will hide your face) you will not be known to have taken part in this study so that you cannot be identified. Focus group discussions will take place after school for no longer than 30 minutes and will be audio recorded using a cell phone but this recording will not be shared with anyone but myself and my supervisor.

If you agree or disagree onto the above request, please tick the box on the table below to show that you are happy and voluntarily agree to take part in the study, to be interviewed/audio recorded and video recorded.

	AGREE
To participate in this research project	
To be interviewed with an audio-recorder	
To be video recorded during IsiXhosa lessons	

If you have agreed to the above, please provide your full names:

**Learner's name:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of a learner**

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

All information you provide during the interview will be strictly confidential and no names will be revealed; that is, you will remain anonymous. Please bear in mind that you may stop participating in the study at any time. You do not have to give reasons, and you do not have to fear any consequences. All information you give will be used solely for research purposes and your anonymity is guaranteed.

If you would like to know more about this research project, please feel free to contact me on [3400344@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3400344@myuwc.ac.za) or my supervisor Dr Plüddemann at 021 9592071 / 083 524 2842. Email [ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za)

I trust that you will consider my request favourably. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours in education

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

Fanisile Soyizwaphi

**Feel free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635, Tel: 021 959 4111, email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)**



**APPENDIX 9: INFORMATION LETTER FOR LEARNERS**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:** Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study

**RESEARCHER:** Fanisile Soyizwaphi, University of the Western Cape

**WHAT IS RESEARCH?**

Research is something we do to find out about the way things or people work. We use research projects to help us, for example, find reasons why learners do not understand certain subjects that they are learning in schools and what could be a solution to that problem.

**WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ALL ABOUT?**

This research project is trying to help learners improve their reading comprehension skills through a methodology called Reading to Learn. This research project will hopefully help bring a solution so that every learner is able to read and understand what he/she reads.

**WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?**

I hope that you can help me find solutions to the reading comprehension challenges, and your contribution will in future help other learners in your school.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IN THIS STUDY?**

I will give you a story to read and after reading you will answer questions in your classwork book. I will use those answers to see what and where the challenges are and try to find solutions. I will also let you write a narrative text to see if your writing skills have improved after the Reading to Learn intervention. I will also interview you in a group.

**CAN ANYTHING GOOD HAPPEN TO ME?**

Yes, you will be helping other learners so that they become good readers and writers, and you should be proud of yourself.

**WILL ANYONE KNOW I AM IN THE STUDY?**

No one will know that you are in the study, I will protect your name. You are also allowed to tell me if you do not want to be in the study. You can stop anytime if you do not want to continue with the project. Keep in mind that you may not reveal who was in your interview group. The names of your fellow learners, like yours, must remain confidential.

Tick Yes or No in the table below:

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?	YES	NO
Have I answered all your questions?	YES	NO
Do you understand that you can stop taking part anytime you like?	YES	NO

**SIGNATURE OF LEARNER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Feel free to contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635, Tel: 021 959 4111, email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

## APPENDIX 10: UXWEBHU OLUNIKA ABAFUNDI ULWAZI NGOPHANDO

### ISIHLOKO SEPROJEKTHI YOPHANDO: Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study

**UMPHANDI:** Fanisile Soyizwaphi, University of the Western Cape

#### YINTONI UPHANDO?

Uphando yinto esithi siyenze ukufumanisa nokukhangela indlela izinto ezenzeka ngayo. Sisebenzisa iiprojekthi ukusinceda, umzekelo, ukufumana izizathu ezibangela ukuba abafundi babeneengxaki zokungaziqondi izifundo ezithile abazifundayo esikolweni.

#### INGANTONI LEPROJEKTHI YOPHANDO?

Le projekthi yophando izama ukunda abafundi nokulola isakhono sabo ekufundeni nasekuqondeni oko bakufundayo, oku kuyakwenziwa kusetyenziswa indlela yokusebenza ebizwa ngokuthi yi **Reading to Learn** (funda ukuze uqonde). Le projekthi yophando yenziwe ngethemba lokuba iyakuzisa isisombululo ukwenzela ukuba wonke umfundi akwazi kwaye akuqonde oko akufundayo.

#### YINTONI ISIZATHU ESIBANGELA UKUBA NDIMENYWE KULEPROJEKTHI YOPHANDO?

Umphandi unethemba lokuba ungamnceda ukufumana isisombululo kumcelimngeni ekufundeni ngokuqonda ekwathemba kanjalo ukuba igalelo lakho liyakunceda nabanye abafundi abasekumabanga aphantsi kwisikolo sakho.

#### KUZAKWENZEKA NTONI KUM KOLUPHANDO?

Ndizakunika ibali ulifunde emvakoko uphendule imibuzo kwincwadi yakho yokubhalela. Ndiyakusebenzisa ezompendulo ukujonga ukuba umceli mneni lo undawoni ukuze ndizame isisombululo. Okulandelayo uzakubhala elakho ibali ukujonga ukuba Ingaba ukhona na umahluko obonakalayo emva kongenelelo lwe **Reading to Leran Methodology**. Ekugqibeleni ndizakwenza udliwano-ndlebe nani ngokwamaqela ukufumanisa ezinye izinto ezinokundinceda koluphando.

#### INGABA KUKHONA OKUHLE OKUYAKWENZEKA KUM NGENXA YOLUPHANDO?

Ewe uzakube unceda abanye abafundi ukwenzela ukuba babengabafundi beetekisi kwakunye nababhali beetekisi abaphume izandla, ngoko ke kufanele ukuba uzingce kwaye uziqhenye ngegalelo lakho koluphando.

#### INGABA WONKE UBANI UYAKUKWAZI UKUBA NDITHATHA INXAXHEBA KOLUPHANDO?

Akukho namnye umntu oyokwazi oko, ndiyakulikhusele kangangoko igama lakho. Kananjalo uvumelekile ukuba undazise xa ugafuni kuthatha nxaxheba koluphando. Nokuba sele uqalile ukuthatha inxaxheba, uvumelekile ukuba ungayeka nangaliphi na ixesha xa uziva unafuni kuqubeka nophando olu.

**Korekisha u EWE okanye Uhayi kuletheyibhile ingezantsi:**

Uyaluqonda olu phando, kwaye Ingaba uzimisele ukuthatha inxaxheba kulo?	EWE	HAYI
Ingaba ndiyiphendule yonke imibuzo yakho mfundi?	EWE	HAYI
Uyayazi na ukuba ungayeka ukuthatha inxaxheba koluphando nangaliphi na ixesha xa ufuna?	EWE	HAYI

**INTSAYION YOMFUNDI:** \_\_\_\_\_ **UMHLA:** / / \_\_\_\_\_

Ungaqhagamshelana ne **Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC)** kwezinkcukacha zilandelayo: HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635, Tel: 021 959 4111, email:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

## APPENDIX 11: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE (LEARNER ASSESSMENT TASK)

QUESTIONS	Very well	Fairly well	Adequately	Poorly	Not at all
• Does the learner recall what he/she has read?					
• Is the learner able to support his/her answer by quoting from the story?					
• Is the learner able to describe characters in the story?					
• Can the learner retell the story?					
• Can the learner summarise the story?					
• The learner is able to build meaningful sentences and paragraphs?					
• The learner is able to use language correctly and accurately?					
• Events are in a chronological order.					
• The learner can relate the story to his/her own life.					
• The learner is able to answer inference questions.					
• The learner is ready to construct his/her own story.					
• Overall comments:					

## APPENDIX 12: LEARNER FOCUS-GROUP PRE-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### PERSONAL PROFILE

<b>Learner Name and Surname</b>	
<b>Age of a learner</b>	
<b>Place of Birth</b>	
<b>Languages spoken</b>	
<b>Grade and class of learner</b>	

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What do you like to read?
- What have you read over the last week?
- What language do you speak at home?
- What languages are you comfortable speaking?
- What for you is the difference between the IsiXhosa language spoken at home and the one used in school?
- Which one do you prefer using for reading comprehension? (to understand what you are reading).
- Do you think sometimes the text that is written in standard IsiXhosa (IsiXhosa used in school) is difficult to understand? Explain.
- Do you know that texts are divided into different types (text genres)? If yes, name the text types
- Is there a difference in structure for the text types mentioned above?
- Which text type do you prefer to read and write? Support your answer.

- Texts are divided into paragraphs. What do you think is the reason for this?
- Which type of text do you prefer when it comes to reading comprehension? Why?
- What types of question do you prefer, close question (yes/no) or open ended (why, how, etc)? Give a reason.
- What do you think is the link between reading and writing?
- Would you say understanding what you read can help to improve how you write? Please explain.
- What can be done to make texts easy to understand?

## APPENDIX 13: IMIBUZO NGOKWAMAQELA PHAMBI KONGENELELO

### INKCUKACHA ZOMFUNDI

<b>iGAMA NEfANI</b>	
<b>UBUDALA</b>	
<b>UZALELWEPHI</b>	
<b>ULWIMI OLUTHETHAYO</b>	
<b>IBANGA NEKLASI</b>	

### UDLIWANO-NDLEBE

- Uthanda ntoni?
- Yeyiphi itekisi okhe wayifunda kuleveki iphelileyo?
- Uthetha oluphi ulwimi ekhaya?
- Zeziphi iilwimi ozithetha ngokukhululekileyo?
- Yintoni umahluko phakathi kwesixhosa osisebenzisa ekhaya neso sasesikolweni?
- Sesiphi ocinga ukuba silungile xa ufuna ukuqonda oko ukufundayo?
- Ucinga ukuba itekisi ebhalwe ngesiXhosa sasesikolweni yenza kubenzima ukuqonda oko kufundwayo? Cacisa.
- Ubusazi ukuba iitekisi zizintlobo-ntlobo? Ukuba ubusazi, khawunike ezintlobo zetekisi.
- Ingaba ukhona umahluko kwindlela ezakhiwe ngayo ezitekisi?
- Loluphi uhlobo letekisi okhetha ukufunda nokubhala ngalo? Xhasa impendulo yakho.
- Iitekisi zahlulwe ngemihlathi. Ucinga ukuba kwenzelwantoni oku?

- Loluphi uhlobo lwetekisi olukhethayo xa kusenziwa ukubhala nokuqonda? Kutheni kunjalo?
- Loluphi uhlobo lwemibuzo olukhethayo xa kuphendulwa? Ingaba ngu EWE/HAYI okanye imibuzo efuna uphendule gabalala, umzekelo ngubani, kwakutheni, kwakuphi njalo-njalo?
- Ucinga yintoni unxulumano phakathi kokufunda nokubhala?
- Ungatsho ukuba ukuqonda oko ukufundayo kungaluncedo ekubhaleni itekisi evakalayo? Cacisa.
- Kungenziwa ntoni ukwenza ukuba itekisi kubelula ukuzifunda uziqonde?



## **APPENDIX 14: LEARNER FOCUS-GROUP POST-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What have you gained from the RtL intervention?
- What do you think are the benefits of using RtL methodology?
- Comparing what used to be done for reading comprehension before, would you say that RtL is the same or different? Please explain.
- Do you think that understanding text types will help you with your writing? Explain.
- In all the RtL steps we followed for reading comprehension, is there a step that you think is unnecessary? Explain.
- Would you say reading and writing complement each other? Why do you say so?
- Do you think that the facilitator presented the RtL intervention very well? Please be honest. How could I improve my teaching to help you more?
- Beside language teaching, can RtL be used for other learning areas? Why do you say so?
- Has using everyday spoken isiXhosa during discussions helped you with the task?
- In your opinion, has breaking down the text to paragraph, sentence and word level helped with the reading comprehension?
- Do you think that the experience you gained during the course of the intervention will help you going forward? In which way?

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## APPENDIX 15: IMIBUZO NGOKWAMAQELA EMVA KONGENELELO

### UDLIWANO-NDLEBE

- Uzuze ntoni kolungenelelo?
- Ucinga ukuba yintoni inzuzo yongenelelo le RtL methodology?
- Xa uthelekisa indlela obufundiswa ngayo ukufunda ngokuqonda nokufundiswa kusetyenziswa I RtL methodology, ungathi Ingaba ezindlela zokufundisa ziyafana okanye zohlukile? Cacisa.
- Ucinga ukuba xa ngoku uziqonda intlobo-ntlobo zetekisi, oku kuyakukunceda ekuphuculeni indlela obhala ngayo? Cacisa.
- Kumanqanaba onke okufundisa ngokuqonda kusetyenziswa iRtL methodology Ingaba lihona inqanaba ocinga ukuba aliyomfuneko? Cacisa.
- Ungatso ukuba ukufunda nokubhala kuhamba konke? Kutheni usitsho nje?
- Ucinga ukuba umququzeleli ulenze kakuhle na ungenelelo le RtL? Thetha nje ngokunyanisekilyo. Ungandanceda njani ukuze ndifundise ngokugqibeleleyo?
- Ngaphandle kokufundisa ulwimi, Ingaba iRtL ingasebenza kwezinye izifundo?Cacisa.
- Ungathi ukusebenzisa isiXhosa esingesosasesikolweni xa nixoxa kuluncedo?
- Nkokolwakho uluvo ukwahlula itekisi ngokwemihlathi, nemiqolo kuyanceda ekufundeni ngokuqonda?
- Ucinga ukuba amava owafumene kolungenelelo kuyakuneda ukusukela ngoku ukuya phambili?

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## APPENDIX 16: CONSENT LETTER TO TEACHERS

Mr Soyizwaphi Fanisile (M.Ed Student) Faculty of Education  
University of the Western Cape Bellville  
8000  
April 2022

**Dear Colleague**

You are hereby invited to participate in a M.Ed. Research study entitled “Exploring Reading to Learn methodolthe teaching of reading comprehension for grade 6 IsiXhosa HL: an action research study.”. The rationale behind undertaking the study is mainly to improve my teaching practice and professional development as well as improving reading comprehension in IsiXhosa HL. The main objectives of this study are:

- To investigate reading comprehension successes and address challenges for Grade 6 isiXhosa Home Language.
- To determine the extent to which RtL can enrich reading comprehension successes and address challenges for Grade 6 IsiXhosa HL

You are invited to take part in this study because I believe that you can contribute more and bring valuable information on issues surrounding reading comprehension in our classrooms.

### **What will be expected of you?**

You will be given the interview questions beforehand, and you will be expected to answer them honestly. However, you do not have to answer all the questions if you feel that way. You are also at liberty to withdraw from the study anytime. With your consent our interview will be audio-recorded.

### **How will your confidentiality be protected?**

You will remain anonymous and the information you provide cannot be traced back to you. Nobody will know about the content of the conversation other than myself and my supervisor. You will be able to access the data when there is a need. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about how the research has been conducted, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Peter Plüddemann.

Thank you in advance.

I,..... (Teacher), hereby give my consent for Mr F. Soyizwaphi to use my information to conduct his research and I agree to participate in all activities. I also agree that the data can be collected, photocopied, and used in analysis. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can quit at any time if I feel so.

Signed .....Date.....Fanisile Soyizwaphi (Student no: 3400344) Email: [3400344@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3400344@myuwc.ac.za). Dr Plüddemann at 021 9592071 or 083 524 2842, email [ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ppluddemann@uwc.ac.za)

**If you wish, you may also contact the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethical Council (HSSREC) at HSSREC, Research Development, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7635, or at Tel: 021 959 4111, email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)**

## APPENDIX 17: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS (Grade 6 IsiXhosa HL)

### Personal Information

1 Grade/s currently teaching								
2 Gender	M:		F:					
3 Age	20-29:		30-39:		40-49:		50+:	
4 Teaching experience (years)	0-5:		6-10:		11-15:		20+:	
5 Teaching qualifications	Certificate:							
	Diploma:							
	Degree:							
	Postgrad certificate:							
	Other – specify:							

### Interview questions for Gr 6 isiXhosa HL teachers

- What do you understand by reading comprehension?
- According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) reports, South African Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners are struggling to read for meaning, particularly in Home Language. What is your take on this issue?
- How would you rate your own learners' reading proficiency in Home Language? Please elaborate.
- In regard to taxonomies such as Bloom's or Barrett's, at what level of the questioning hierarchy do your learners struggle to answer? Can you give an example?
- What reading comprehension approaches or strategies were you taught at university in your training as a language teacher (i.e. pre-service)? To what extent were these useful?
- Have you participated in any in-service training or courses on developing reading comprehension? How successful were these? Please elaborate briefly.
- What strategies or methods do you currently employ when teaching and assessing reading comprehension? Do you feel that these are yielding better results? Please explain.
- How do you see the link between reading comprehension and producing meaningful texts in writing? Please elaborate.
- What can be done to improve reading comprehension for our learners?
- Have you come across the Reading to Learn methodology?
- 

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**APPENDIX: 18**

**Classroom video observation form**

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

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

**Planning:** (please tick the appropriate box)

Good:

Average:

Poor:

**Teaching Techniques:** (please elaborate)

Speaking & questioning: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Demonstration: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Use of teaching aids: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Execution of Reading to Learn(RtL) curriculum cycle:** (please tick the appropriate box)

Preparing and reading: Good      Average      Poor

Detailed reading:      Good      Average      Poor

Sentence making:      Good      Average      Poor

Spelling:      Good      Average      Poor

Sentence writing:      Good      Average      Poor

Joint rewriting:      Good      Average      poor

Joint construction:      Good      Average      Poor

**Learner involvement & performance:**

Good                  Average                  Poor

**Reflections:**

What was successful, effective, or made a difference for the students? \_\_\_\_\_

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Did you notice any problems? If yes, how were they addressed? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you learn from this observation? \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX: 19

### TRANSLATION OF PRE-TEST READING COMPREHENSION STORY (*figure 6*)

#### IMINYAKA AYIFANI (Years' are not the same)

(quoted from the book: AMATHUNZ' EZOLO, chapter 2)

After that meal, it was not going well for Nozamile because she was worried about her son, her daughter Nothemba was heard asking the same question she had asked when she came home from work. To remind the reader, Nothemba is the first born in this family, and followed by her brother and the last born named Lahlekile. Nozamile's daughter left school due to lack of money and chose to work in order to help her mother to pay Lahlekile's school fees and household needs. Due to the heat of the summer the door was open and everyone was lying on the bed. "I was still asking, Mom, where is Lahlekile?" It is clear that Nothemba's question reminded Nozamile about her son, revived her mother's old wounds, she answered but off the topic, it is clear that her heart was sore. "Trust me my daughter and stay with me." "What are you saying, Mom? You don't answer?".

After these words, Mkhutshwa's daughter continued

The challenges of the world are rushing towards us." In all this, please stay with me. I know that youth days are tempting, but it is wise to seek advice from leaders. By staying with me, you will gain a lot." There was a moment of silence and it was clear that Nothemba can hear the words her mother said. Nothemba started to realise that her brother did something wrong that caused her mother to speak in that manner. She got up and held her mother's head, wiping her tears, "Mother, you're not well, I can see," Nothemba said. "my outer appearance is better than internal. The most painful part is the heart. It has if it has been trampled and trampled by the cycles of indifference". After that she ordered Nothemba to let her return to her bed, asked her again to close the door, and promised her to put the whole matter to rest. Indeed, Nothemba did so. She started it at the beginning and finished it at the end. But in all this she does not leave

The fact that she did not like and not trusting Nolwandle. She concluded her conversation by saying "if you remember Nothemba, in the chaos and that flame that was spreading in that school they studied in last year, Nolwandle was the ring leader. what do you say? Will she again drag my son into that?" "Mom, she did not drag him, he's old enough to make his own decisions, Lahlekile knows what's wrong and what's right ". Nothemba said. Later in the day, Nozamile reported to Nothemba asking her to never leave her because life is a struggle and it's good when you're struggling but supported by someone.

"Ndlovu I don't foresee Lahlekile regretting his action because it is clear that he is enjoying what he is doing. After these words, Nozamile asked them to close their eyes and pray because she loved and trusted God as the medicine for her pain



## APPENDIX: 20

### TRANSLATION OF POST-TEST READING COMPREHENSION STORY (*figure 9*)

#### **VIOLENCE IS RAMPANT**

Dumani village was always peaceful. It was peace. People were just walking around with a carefree body. an adult was an adult, a child was a child, there was no fear of an adult reprimanding a child even if he met him on the road doing something unjust. Even the children respected the elders. It's just like they don't know him.

The closure of the Iskholo mine in Johannesburg changed everything in this village. Many young men from the village who worked in the mine came back. As soon as they arrived, the situation changed and the peace ended. Within a short period of time, the boys and girls who were staying here became infected with the habits of those who came from Johannesburg.

Just as it is said that if one potato in the bag is rotten, all the potatoes in the bag end up rotting too. That's why everyone got infected by the influence of these guys. The things they did were horrible.

It was not unusual for an old woman to be raped in her home. Those who came from the town on foot would hear the indignation of being robbed and beaten. Peace was finally over. People lived in fear. Young and old were raped, it was the same thing again and again. It was clear that most of the acts were done under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

The chatter, the vigils and the excitement of the boys ended completely! Where they were eating, these guys would enter and grab the girls and drag them to the walls. They would enter the houses and take cooked meat and eat it. It was really difficult time for the villagers.

When they saw this, the fathers who were in charge of the community, Madiba and Khwalo, got enough of these crimes. One day Khwalo was heard shouting at Madiba, "Madiba, we will not go anywhere because we belong here! Let's not be silent, it is so bad, we are men, my friend!" "You're right, Khwalo, let's call a meeting for the people of this village. If we're not united, we won't succeed. Let's oppose the wickedness!" replied Madiba. "Let's write a notice of the meeting that will be posted in places where people walk" Khwalo answered. "how to write a notice"? asked Madiba.

At that point, Diba corrected himself, "let's be careful to write this - our aim is to call people to a meeting to discuss this rampant violence.

"Then it dawned on me now, said Diba," we will tell the place where the meeting will take place, the date, and the time. Let's tell why it's called. We are not afraid to express ourselves. We are tired of the behaviour of these boys!" "We have to include our cell phone numbers" He stopped shouting.

"it's starting to be good, Khwalo, let's write it down now. It's like we have all the comments. Don't forget to write visible and clear words!" "You speak well Diba, let's make our notice catchy for everyone's attention, be attractive". He shouted. The notice will look like this, said Diba.



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## APPENDIX: 21

### LESSON PLANS – SELF OBSERVATION VIDEOS

#### LESSON PLAN 1

TERM 2 2023

<b>LESSON PLAN OF: FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: IsiXhosa HL</b> <b>Grade: 6</b>	
<b>Topic:</b> Reading Comprehension (narrative: Iminyaka ayifani) <b>Theme:</b> Family and Responsibility	<b>Term: 2</b> <b>Week: 1</b>  <b>Duration: 60 minutes</b>
<b>Prior knowledge:</b> Learners to be reminded about different text types and their purposes and structure.	
<b>Link with this lesson:</b> Narrative and how it is structured, learners to discuss the title of the story 'IMIHLA AYIFANI'	
<b>Specific Aims:</b> At the end of this lesson the learners should develop in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge (K)</b> vocabulary, acquire content knowledge and to understand how narrative genre is organized and structured.</li> <li>• <b>Skills (S)</b> Vocabulary, critical thinking, text structure, inferential and summarizing skills.</li> <li>• <b>Values (V).</b> Moral Agency, Family, Loyalty and Support, Responsibility and Sacrifice.</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment Strategy (K), (S), (V):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated instruction, guided reading and collaborative discussion.</li> <li>• Close reading, questioning and summarising strategies</li> <li>• Text-based discussion, value-based discussion and Text-to-Life Connections.</li> </ul>	<b>Teaching methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class discussion</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence of Assessment:</b>  <u>Teacher</u> <u>Learner</u>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalkboard/whiteboard</li> <li>• Cellphone and Dashboard camera (Video recording)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classwork activity Answers</li> <li>• Marking corrections</li> </ul>		
<b>Teacher Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>Learner Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>TIME LIMITS (minutes)</b>
<p><b><u>Introduction</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Before reading:</b> learners previewing the text: Skimming through the text title and images, to get an overview of the content.</li> <li>• <b>Activating Background Knowledge:</b> reflecting on what the learner already knows about the topic, which helps in understanding new information.</li> <li>• <b>Setting a purpose to determine why the learner is engaging with the text and what he/she hopes to</b></li> </ul> <p>learn. This process involves posing questions that the learners want to answer through their reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Making Predictions:</b> Based on the preview, learners speculate about the content and direction of the text, which sets a context for understanding as they read</li> </ul>	<p>Learners are listening and following the instructions</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><b><u>Body</u></b></p> <p><b>During reading:</b> In this stage, learners actively engage with the text.</p> <p>Educator Monitoring Comprehension: Learners consistently assess their understanding of the material by summarizing sections in their own words and posing questions about their reading.</p> <p>Making Connections: Learners connect the text to their own experiences (text-to-self), other texts (text-to-text), and wider societal contexts (text-to-world).</p> <p>Revising Predictions: Learners adjust their initial predictions as they acquire new information while progressing through the text.</p> <p>Annotating and Taking Notes: Learners are marking significant points and taking notes to improve the retention and comprehension of key concepts.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b></p> <p>Summarizing: Learners to combine the main ideas from the text into a concise summary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answering questions on their classwork books</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

<p>Engaging in discussions with others and writing reflections to deepen their understanding and provide different perspectives on the material.</p> <p>Recapping: revisiting any questions posed before reading and determining if they have been answered to help solidify comprehension.</p> <p>Evaluating and understanding by reflecting on what was learned, how it relates to prior knowledge, and what new insights were gained to reinforce learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	
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## LESSON PLAN 2

### TERM 2 2023

<b>LESSON PLAN OF: FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI</b>		
<b>SUBJECT: IsiXhosa HL</b>		<b>Grade: 6</b>
<p><b>Topic:</b> Writing and Presenting (narrative)</p> <p><b>Theme:</b> Writing</p>	<p><b>Term: 2</b></p>  <p><b>Duration: 60 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Week: 2</b></p>
<p><b>Prior knowledge:</b> Reminding learners about sentence making stage that they have done during reading and viewing.</p>		
<p><b>Link with this lesson:</b> Writing a story(narrative)</p>		
<p><b>Specific Aims:</b> At the end of this lesson the learners should develop in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge (K)</b> vocabulary, acquire content knowledge and to understand how narrative genre is organized and structured.</li> <li>• <b>Skills (S)</b> Vocabulary, critical thinking, text structure, inferential and summarizing skills.</li> <li>• <b>Values (V).</b> Open-mindedness, empathy and perseverance.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Assessment Strategy (K), (S), (V):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated instruction, guided reading and collaborative discussion.</li> <li>• Close reading, questioning and summarising strategies</li> <li>• Text-based discussion, value-based discussion and Text-to-Life Connections.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teaching methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class discussion</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Evidence of Assessment:</b></p> <p><u>Teacher</u> <u>Learner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classwork activity Answers</li> <li>• Marking corrections</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalkboard/whiteboard</li> <li>• Cellphone and Dashboard camera (Video recording)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Teacher Activity &amp; resources</b></p>	<p><b>Learner Activity &amp; resources</b></p>	<p><b>TIME LIMITS (minutes)</b></p>
<p><b>Introduction:</b> Reminding learners about sentence making stage that they have done during reading and viewing.</p> <p>The next curriculum genre in preparing learners for writing is <b>joint rewriting</b>, where learners use detailed reading passages to create new text passages with new characters, events, and settings. This method helps learners to build their repertoires by appropriating language resources.</p>	<p>Learners are listening and following the instructions</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><b>Body</b></p> <p>The next stage is <b>joint reconstruction</b> the fourth RtL curriculum genre, I will use the detailed reading interaction cycle to help learners prepare for creating new texts. By outlining discourse patterns and key points from the original text, the teacher provides a foundation for learners to construct their own writing. Through scaffolding, I will be supporting learners in highlighting specific word choices, offering alternative expressions, and facilitating discussions related to the topic. The goal is to guide learners in crafting a new story while preserving the original elements. Learners construct whole texts in target genres, focusing on recognizing patterns and appropriating them. <b>Independent writing</b> follows, allowing learners to choose a topic from suggested narratives. In an independent stage the scaffolding is removed and learners are able to write on their own a topic that they have chosen.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>•Answering questions on their classwork books Resources</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>

Reflection on the work of the day to check for learner understanding and to see if my goals that I have set at the beginning of the lesson were met. I will then allow learners to create their first draft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answering questions on their classwork books</li> </ul> <b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	10 minutes

### LESSON PLAN 3

TERM 2 2023

<b>LESSON PLAN OF: FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: IsiXhosa HL</b> <b>Grade: 6</b>	
<b>Topic:</b> Writing and Presenting (narrative) <b>Theme:</b> Writing	<b>Term: 2</b> <b>Week: 3</b> <b>Duration: 60 minutes</b>
<b>Prior knowledge:</b> reminding learners how to write a short story and how to structure it.	
<b>Link with this lesson:</b> Writing a story (narrative: <b>Imihla ayifani/Uzenzile akakhalelwa</b> )	
<b>Specific Aims:</b> At the end of this lesson the learners should develop in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge (K)</b> Understanding Narrative Structure, literary devices and genre familiarity.</li> <li>• <b>Skills (S)</b> Organizational skills, writing mechanics, editing and revising and creative expression.</li> <li>• <b>Values (V).</b> Empathy and perspective-taking, confidence and cultural awareness:</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment Strategy (K), (S), (V):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating the learner's comprehension of narrative structure and elements, such as plot development, character creation, and thematic exploration.</li> <li>• Assessing writing proficiency, including organization, clarity, creativity, and use of literary devices</li> <li>• Understanding how personal experiences reflect broader societal values or individual beliefs, encouraging learners to connect their narratives to universal themes.</li> </ul>	<b>Teaching methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class discussion</li> <li>• Group work (paragraph writing)</li> <li>• Individual work (writing a story)</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence of Assessment:</b>  <b>Teacher</b> <b>Learner</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalkboard/whiteboard</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classwork activity</li> <li>• facilitating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cellphone and Dashboard camera (Video recording)</li> </ul>	
<b>Teacher Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>Learner Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>TIME LIMITS (minutes)</b>
<p><b>Introduction:</b> Building the Field: this initial stage focuses on developing learners' content knowledge about the topic at hand. Teacher engages learners in discussions, activities, and readings that relate to the subject matter, helping them to build a shared understanding and context for their writing..</p>	<p>Learners are listening and following the instructions</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><b><u>Body</u></b></p> <p><b>Modelling or Deconstruction</b> In this phase, teacher presents model texts that exemplify the genre being studied. Both teacher and learners analyze highlighting key structural elements and language features. This helps learners understand how language choices shape meaning and how different genres function.</p> <p><b>Joint Construction</b> During joint construction, the teacher and learners collaboratively create a text. This process allows learners to apply what they've learned from the model texts while receiving guidance from the teacher. It's a supportive environment where learners can experiment with language and structure.</p> <p><b>Independent Construction</b> In this stage, learners write independently, applying their knowledge and skills to produce their own texts in the target genre. They draw on their previous experiences from the earlier stages to inform their writing.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b> Learners are reflecting on their own writing. They assess their work, considering what they learned throughout the process and how they can improve in future writing tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing their own stories (first draft)</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>

## LESSON PLAN 4

TERM 2 2023

<b>LESSON PLAN OF: FANISILE SOYIZWAPHI</b>		
<b>SUBJECT: IsiXhosa HL</b>		<b>Grade: 6</b>
<b>Topic:</b> Writing and Presenting (narrative) <b>Theme:</b> Crime	<b>Term: 2</b>	<b>Week: 4</b>
		<b>Duration: 60 minutes</b>
<b>Prior knowledge:</b> Reminding learners about sentence making stage that they have done during reading and viewing.		
<b>Link with this lesson:</b> Writing a story(narrative: <b>Imini endingasoze ndiyilibale / Zehla iinyembezi kunina akumbona uLihle emdaka</b> )		
<b>Specific Aims:</b> At the end of this lesson the learners should develop in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge (K)</b> vocabulary, acquire content knowledge and to understand how narrative genre is organized and structured.</li> <li>• <b>Skills (S)</b> Vocabulary, critical thinking, text structure, inferential and summarizing skills.</li> <li>• <b>Values (V).</b> Open-mindedness, empathy and perseverance.</li> </ul>		
<b>Assessment Strategy (K), (S), (V):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated instruction, guided reading and collaborative discussion.</li> <li>• Close reading, questioning and summarising strategies</li> <li>• Text-based discussion, value-based discussion and Text-to-Life Connections.</li> </ul>	<b>Teaching methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class discussion</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>	
<b>Evidence of Assessment:</b>  <u><b>Teacher</b></u> <u><b>Learner</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classwork activity Answers</li> <li>• Marking corrections</li> </ul>	<b>Resources &amp; Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalkboard/whiteboard</li> <li>• Cellphone and Dashboard camera (Video recording)</li> </ul>	
<b>Teacher Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>Learner Activity &amp; resources</b>	<b>TIME LIMITS (minutes)</b>
<b>Introduction:</b> Reminding learners about sentence making stage that they have done during reading and viewing.	Learners are listening and following the instructions	10 minutes

<p>The next curriculum genre in preparing learners for writing is <b>joint rewriting</b>, where learners use detailed reading passages to create new text passages with new characters, events, and settings. This method helps learners to build their repertoires by appropriating language resources.</p>		
<p><b>Body</b></p> <p>The next stage is <b>joint reconstruction</b> the fourth RtL curriculum genre, I will use the detailed reading interaction cycle to help learners prepare for creating new texts. By outlining discourse patterns and key points from the original text, the teacher provides a foundation for learners to construct their own writing. Through scaffolding, I will be supporting learners in highlighting specific word choices, offering alternative expressions, and facilitating discussions related to the topic. The goal is to guide learners in crafting a new story while preserving the original elements. Learners construct whole texts in target genres, focusing on recognizing patterns and appropriating them. <b>Independent writing</b> follows, allowing learners to choose a topic from suggested narratives. In an independent stage the scaffolding is removed and learners are able to write on their own a topic that they have chosen.</p>	<p>Class exercise, group work,</p>	<p>40 minutes</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Reflection on the work of the day to check for learner understanding and to see if my goals that I have set at the beginning of the lesson were met. I will then allow learners to create their first draft.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answering questions on their classwork books</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks</li> <li>• Answer books</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>