



**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BENEFITS OF READING CLUBS FOR
LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

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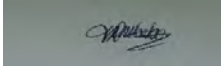
ABSTRACT

The study explored how reading clubs inculcate the love of reading in Komani, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Reports indicate that learners at secondary schools do not understand the vocabulary used in comprehension passages. They need exposure to a variety of texts to promote reading comprehension. This study is situated in the interpretive paradigm. The participants were three educators with 24 learners in the reading clubs. Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory was the theoretical framework to explore how reading clubs promote the love of reading. Data was analysed by using an inductive, thematic approach. The findings indicate that the reading clubs instilled the love of reading among the learners, improving their comprehension skills. The other benefits were that reading clubs are a source of pleasure, instil the culture of reading, and develop the learners' confidence. The implications of the findings of the study are that reading boosted thinking, reading skills, fluency, knowledge, writing, and vocabulary use. Reading clubs were beneficial to both teachers and learners. Teachers improved their practice and could determine, through oral and written reviews, whether reading took place during the silent reading sessions. Involvement in reading clubs had social benefits for learners.

Keywords: English language learning; exploratory studies; secondary schools; South Africa; reading clubs; reading.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the work in this dissertation is my original work and that I have not previously submitted it at any university for a degree. I used an AI application, Grammarly, for editing and proofreading. Wherever I have used the work of other scholars, I have acknowledged them by Rhodes University reference guidelines.



Xolela D. Mbebe

February 2024

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I would also like to thank the Eastern Cape Department of Education, Chris Hani West District Director, Principals of the three research high schools and the families of the participants for allowing me to conduct the research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, Lulama Cynthia Mbebe, my late grandparents (Nokhaya and Lucas Mbebe), my spouse and three children, for being my pillars of strength and loving beings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GET	General Education and Training
HL	Home Language
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PIRLS	Progress International and Literacy Study
SES	Senior Education Specialist

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how out-of-class reading clubs instil a love of reading among Grade 10 English First Additional Language learners. There are many definitions of reading; reading is when someone looks at a text and starts to absorb the information from the written linguistic message—perceiving a text to understand its contents. This can be done silently. The understanding that result is reading comprehension (Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics). Across the secondary curriculum, reading is important. The ability to understand any text emanates from word recognition and decoding the said text, for secondary school learners, that implies being able to dissect the text for information. That ability to dissect has a direct bearing on competence in intensive reading in class, as well as being able to read extensively for enjoyment. Being able to spell correctly and use improved vocabulary in writing and speech are products of interacting with the texts through reading. The academic performance of secondary school learners is tied to their ability to read with meaning and comprehension. Secondary schooling, as a precursor to tertiary studies and the working world, requires that learners be developed sufficiently to have depth of knowledge and understanding and to be able to evaluate texts they read for them to extract meaning critically. Reading is at the heart of curriculum outcomes. It has a direct impact on learners' ability to make meaning from texts and it affects reading comprehension.

1.2 Background and context of the study

Reading is the vehicle for literacy and reading comprehension mastery. Failure to master basic reading comprehension created all sorts of communication problems. South Africa found itself grappling with low levels of reading comprehension among its learners at both primary and secondary schools. That worsened, especially with learners who used English as a Second language or First Additional Language. Grade 10 learners were expected to be confident, independent

readers in their FAL. According to CAPS (2011), teachers should guide them in selecting texts of the right level, using library visits, book clubs and classroom libraries to support this aspect of the reading programme (p.13-14). The Department of Basic Education attempted to close the reading gap when it launched the Read to Lead Campaign in 2015, whose main aim was to ensure that learners demonstrated appropriate reading levels by 2019. It aimed to increase the average literacy learner performance in Literacy and language by 75% by the end of the campaign; it hoped that in the long term, a culture of reading would be reflected in sustained activities in school, home, communities, and business. The PIRLS Report (2016) exposed the extent of the problem as we came last out of 50 nations tested on grade 4 reading competence. Sadly, reading comprehension problems persist. This study explored the benefits of reading clubs for learners in grade 10 English First Additional classrooms.

1.3 The Research Problem

The reading problems at primary schools, like inability to decode in the second language, insufficient vocabulary, text reading fluency and limited comprehension skills are brought to secondary schooling. They limit learners' comprehension of texts, vocabulary use and spelling and affect their attitude toward reading, in general. Reading is a fundamental language learning skill that learners are expected to have mastered by the time they reach the FET Phase (Grades 10, 11 and 12). However, observations and examination reports indicate that the English FAL learners in the FET phase struggle with listening comprehension, oral presentations as well as reading comprehension (PIRLS, 2006; Kargar, 2012; Tien, 2015; NSC Diagnostic Report: Part 2, 2022). One of the many approaches to enhancing secondary school learners' reading comprehension that has been suggested is reading for pleasure programs to improve learners' low reading proficiency levels. Reading for pleasure aids the understanding, spelling, vocabulary and reading comprehension of adolescents. (NEEDU and QLTC Progress Report, 2016; Du Plessis and Mestry, 2019).

Even though reading for pleasure has positive outcomes, few studies have used reading clubs to improve the reading comprehension challenges of English FAL adolescents. In addition, there is a general dearth of the reading culture. This study sought to explore how out-of-school reading clubs

infused the love of reading among learners. That is the gap this study intended to fill, by focusing on selected schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

1.4 Motivation to conduct the study

I taught learners in both the GET Phase and FET Phase as a teacher of English for a period spanning 22 years and five months. I witnessed how much learners struggled with mastery of the basics of English speaking, reading, reading comprehension and writing. Currently, I am employed in Chris Hani West District as a Senior Education Specialist for English Home Language (EHL) and English First Additional Language (EFAL). The directorate I function under is Curriculum Management and Support. Part of my duties entails Curriculum Management and Support. I visit schools weekly to ensure that legislative policies are adhered to, about teaching, learning and assessment in English, with a particular focus on grades ten to grade twelve. I am always on the road doing school visits to ensure that quality curricular and co-curricular activities linked to the English subject take place. The district is vast and is made up of three Curriculum Management Centres (Komani, Cacadu and Inxuba Yethemba) which have a total of 87 schools that I serve and support. I must ensure that the reading period exists within school timetabling and that it is utilised for extensive reading, as the Department of Basic Education requires that reading be a priority. From the school visit, I observed that most schools have no functional libraries or corner libraries created in classes. Those that have a structure called a library use it for other purposes. In schools I visited, it is either neglected or used as a store room of goods or converted to a staffroom for teachers. I also noted the absence of reading material in those schools, other than the prescribed textbooks. I also conduct analyses of term performances in all district schools that offer English, for both Home Language and First Additional Language schools. I also conduct onsite oral moderations in the grade 12 class, for both English Home Language (EHL) and English First Additional Language (FAL).

Since 2001, I have had the pleasure of being appointed as a marker for English First Additional Language (EFAL) Paper 1 (Language and Grammar), in the Eastern Cape National Senior Certificate (NSC). Between 2014 and 2019, I became a Senior Marker of that paper. From 2020 to 2021, I served as a Deputy Chief Marker for English FAL Paper 1 in the Eastern Cape. In 2023, I

served as a Senior Marker for the same paper. Observations from school visits and from marking learners in the matric class gave me a unique perspective on how learners battle with reading, generally, and reading comprehension. The 2021, 2022 and 2023 annual Chief Markers' Reports, a report on the performance of the grade twelve class in English FAL, had interesting findings on learner performance in English FAL Question 1 (Reading Comprehension). The table below summarises learner performance in the final exams for the grade twelve class, a class that ought to have mastered reading and reading comprehension at the exit stage of the Department of Basic Education.

Table 1.1

NSC EXAMS	EFAL PAPER 1	AVERAGE LEARNER SCORES OUT OF 30 MARKS	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE PASS FOR QUESTION 1 (COMPREHENSION)
2023	Question 1 Comprehension	13.2 / 30	44%
2022		16.6 / 30	55%
2021		31.5 / 30	61%

(NCS Chief Marker's Report, EFAL Paper 1, 2021-2023)

The table above assists in highlighting the challenge of reading comprehension. There has been a decline in learner average percentage passes over the last three years. Chief Marker noted that "Candidates lack reading skills, which becomes evident when they answer comprehension questions. Candidates should have more reading material like magazines available to them in the classroom" (NSC Chief Marker's Report 2023, English FAL Paper 1, p.4).

For educational outputs to improve at the exit stage (grade 12) learners ought to have mastered reading and reading comprehension skills by grade ten. Grade ten represents a transit stage for learners, moving from the General Education and Training (GET) Senior Phase to the Further Education and Training (FET) stage. It is my wish to ensure their basic mastery of reading and understanding reading comprehension by grade ten. These skills impact learners' future careers as

well as the standard of our education system as it aims to develop competent, responsible citizens. Education, therefore, becomes a fitting vehicle to ensure that. Reading mastery becomes crucial if such ideals are to be realised in this highly competitive global village we live in. I wish for every learner to master basic reading and reading comprehension skills, appreciate out-of-class reading and develop a new reading habit which will, hopefully, translate to a long-term love of reading.

1.5 The state of reading among adolescent learners

Since the focus of this proposed study is adolescents, it is necessary to consider the challenges faced by adolescent readers. Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. Adolescence is defined as the period of life between puberty and adolescence, which depends on both individual development and cultural norms (Blakemore, 2019). Of interest to the researcher, is the inclusion of adolescents in numerous studies that highlight reading challenges. Some of the challenges identified include reading comprehension. Reading comprehension involves putting together pieces of information from a text to come up with the actual meaning of the text. When learners reach the Senior Phase and FET Phase, they are generally expected to have mastered basic reading skills and can comprehend what they read. However, research shows a significant number of adolescents struggle with poor reading comprehension. Some of the causes include limited vocabulary to explain terms and low reading proficiency. Mother tongue interferes with understanding and pronunciation of the second language. Grammar, syntax and tense errors become evident as learners translate directly from their mother tongue (Dreyer, 2017, p.7). This implies if learners do not master the skill to read in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase, they will struggle with reading comprehension in the Senior Phase and FET phase (Nippold, 2017; Lesaux and Kieffer, 2010; Ganie et al, 2019; Dara, 2019; Pretorius and Klapwijk, 2016; Clemens et.al, 2021, NSC Diagnostic Report: Part 2, 2022).

Studies conducted in the US and UK respectively, showed that adolescents battle with reading comprehension, vocabulary and reading fluency. Kim et al (2017) conducted an Interventionist study on 483 Grade 6-8 learners in the US. The researchers used Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) to improve the reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary of

struggling adolescent readers. The outcomes of the study indicated an improvement in reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. On the other hand, a study conducted in the UK revealed that adolescent learners who struggle to read tend to lose interest in studying. The researchers conducted an intervention study at a mainstream high school in the West Midlands. Their focus was on an affective reading intervention to support adolescents reading (Cockford and Atkinson, 2017). The similarity between both the US study and the UK study with this study is in the target age group of adolescents and the focus on reading comprehension. However, this study explained the impact of reading clubs on learners' love for reading.

Research conducted in Nigeria and Botswana showed that both primary and secondary school learners exhibit low levels of reading competence and comprehension. Obiegbu (2018) conducted a study in the Lokoja metropolis, Nigeria. She sampled 300 pupils, 150 of whom were in primary education and 150 in secondary education. Their reading competence levels were tragically low at 70.6% and 81.05% for primary and secondary education, respectively. An analysis of the results showed that 68.26% of the primary education learners and 69.94% of the secondary education sample made grammatical and semantic errors. Comprehension was less than 50% and word recognition was below the required 90%. Only 20% of primary education learners and 18.3% of secondary education learners read at instructional/ comprehension level. Only 9.33% of primary education learners and 0.65% of secondary education learners could read appropriately. Obiegbu (2018) further states that in Botswana learners are unable to master literacy and language competence upon entering secondary school. The results show that second-language readers across the globe manifest profound reading difficulties. One of the challenges identified in the Nigeria study was that comprehension was below 50%. This seems to be a common challenge among adolescent struggling readers; hence the interest of this proposed study is to focus on whether an out-of-school reading club can instil the love of reading among learners. It is hoped that the love of reading will result in improved reading comprehension.

Studies conducted among adolescent learners in South Africa are not different to the ones conducted elsewhere. For example, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) posit that among the myriad of reasons for the poor reading comprehension skills of learners in South African schools is the struggle to decode. Statistics show that learners struggle to read in English and indigenous

languages. They explain that when a learner struggles to read it becomes difficult to comprehend what he or she is reading. Tlou and Snyman (2020) investigated adolescents' reading habits at Letlhabile community library in North West Province, South Africa. The study's findings were that learners confused reading for pleasure with intensive reading done in class, a challenge that revealed serious comprehension challenges and the dearth of the reading culture. Another study investigated the reading comprehension of Grade 10 learners at a senior secondary school in Mthatha, South Africa. The outcomes of the study showed that when the Grade 10 learners write a comprehension test they read at a pace too slow for their grade and respond to the comprehension passage questions by transcribing aspects of the text verbatim (Chaka, 2015). The Letlhabile study confirms the argument made by this proposed study that there is a dearth of reading culture among adolescent learners. Pretorius and Klapwijk's study echoes the assumption made by this proposed study that when learners struggle to decode then they will struggle to comprehend. The Mthatha study highlights the need to develop the comprehension skills of learners. Even though these studies had different goals from this study, they targeted adolescent readers just like this proposed study.

A common thread that runs through these studies is that adolescent struggling readers generally battle with reading comprehension which suggests that they may identify the words (decode), but they may not read with meaning or may not comprehend. This proposed study intends to find out if an out-of-class reading club program can improve the love of reading of adolescent learners. The gap identified by this proposed study is that a significant number of studies have been conducted on reading comprehension. However, not many studies have used reading clubs to develop the love of reading of Komani, adolescent learners. Next is a brief view of assessments. Several assessments were conducted to measure the reading proficiencies of learners in South African schools. A Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) consisting of 40 countries, including South Africa, sampled learners from the 4th grade, where most of them should have learnt to read, and are now reading to learn (PIRLS, 2006). Findings from the study showed that 78% of learners in South African schools were unable to read for meaning in any language by grade 4 in 2016 (PIRLS, 2006; PIRLS, 2011; PIRLS, 2016; Howie et al, 2017; Spaul and Pretorius, 2019). Their poor reading skills impact negatively on performance when they reach the FET phase.

Even though Annual National Assessments (ANA) were done away with in 2015, they had given us an indication that there is a challenge when it comes to reading (ANA, 2014). Both grade 6 and grade 9 English FAL learners were unable to reach the achievement target of 60% in 2014 (ANA, 2014). The National average percentage marks for grade 9 were:

Table 1.2

GRADE 9	PERIOD IN YEARS	2012	2013	2014
EFAL	2012 – 2014	35%	33%	34%
EHL	2012 – 2014	43%	43%	48%

(ANA, 2014, p.44)

The above data spells a significant gap in performance in the General Education and Training (GET) Phase which learners carry to the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. Both nationally and provincially, learners were unable to reach the set standard of adequate performance of 50%. This report sheds light on existing literacy problems that underpin this proposed study.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) document emphasizes the value of intensive reading and reading for pleasure (CAPS, 2011). South African schools generally focus on the intensive aspect of the curriculum. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about extended independent reading and viewing. Educators are expected to guide the learners to read for pleasure by providing access to libraries and evidence of extended reading in the form of speeches, discussions, and book films. Learners should be exposed to a wide range of books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading material during and after class. To ensure that this missing reading portion is done, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced a reading period during which the educator and the learners are expected to sit and read any books of their choice.

Unfortunately, this period has been used for other purposes instead of reading for pleasure (NEEDU, 25 October 2016).

In her 2018 NSC Report, The Chief Marker for English FAL Paper 1, stated that

“The overall standard of the paper was fair, as it caters for levels on all cognitive levels. The texts used were interesting and the language used on the paper was appropriate for FAL learners. Most of them performed well in the comprehension (Section A). Reasons for the poorly answered first question on comprehension included a lack of insight into terms, with many learners scoring zero in question 1b since they failed to provide a detailed answer. They also noted that a lack of vocabulary prevented them from scoring in question 1.9.1. as they didn’t understand certain words that were tested” (NSC Report, 2018, p. 1, 2). The 2019 NSC Diagnostic Report on Languages (Part 2) highlighted the following areas of concern: they noted that learners did not understand the vocabulary used in the comprehension. Teachers were encouraged to expose learners to various texts to build vocabulary, improve comprehension, and to sharpen their critical thinking. Promotion of vocabulary exercises and reading was needed (NSC Diagnostic Report, 2019, p.13).

1.6 Reading clubs and the role they play in language acquisition

Research shows that reading for pleasure improves the reading proficiency of learners (Ukume and Udu, 2020; Owusu, 2020; Nelani, 2020; Thaba-Nkadimene and Emsley, 2020). These studies indicate that participating in reading clubs has a positive impact on the learners’ reading comprehension. It is for this reason that this study seeks to find out if reading clubs have a way of instilling a love for reading among secondary school learners, specifically Grade 10 learners.

1.6.1 Definition of Reading Clubs

Owusu (2020), citing Bikos and Papadimitriou, 2015:38-39, defines reading clubs as informed groups, consisting of members engaged as readers who come together in private or public places or even through the internet to discuss, within a set of rules, books they have read following some objective consensus that they have made among themselves (p.142).

1.6.2 Features of Reading Clubs

Key features of reading clubs (Bikos and Papadimitriou, 2017, p.4) are:

- a. Each RC has a distinct identity as its members have unique personalities (rules, approach, themes, and organization of the club are unique).
- b. Communication within the RC is an issue of decisive importance (to ensure equality and expression of member opinions).
- c. RCs connect reading to public discussion. Books become the group's, not a person's business (they have a semi-public practice, operate in public, but welcome members only).

Bikos and Papadimitriou (2017), in their study on special aspects, social function, and developments of RCs in Greece, found that mapping their history is difficult as they have existed since reading existed. In the 5th Century, after printing was invented, they consisted of groups reading philosophical and religious content when manuscripts were extremely expensive. In the 7th & 8th Centuries RCs were found in social arrangements; by the 19th C, groups discussed poetry and literature. At the end of the 20th C, individual participation skyrocketed, and they were established with themes, giving rise to engaged readers. Private entities established RCs of small groups, and they've become part of civil society activation toward a better future. Ukume and Udu (2018) found that RCs enhance students' academic and composition writing. Their study sampled 122 SS2 students from 4 secondary schools in Makurdi metropolis, Benue. Two groups were pretested and post-tested, but only the experimental group was exposed to reading club activities. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. A study by Owusu (2020) on the overview of reading culture also took a retrospective view of Ghana. He noted that the reading culture is dwindling, noted by poor reading and antisocial behaviour in youth, as Ghana embraces audio-visual means of information. He opines that lack of reading manifests itself in socio-economic issues (poverty and unemployment) as literacy underpins economic development and is central to prosperity; illiteracy leads to poverty. Owusu noted how, in the past, Africans organized themselves socially, culturally, and politically to demonstrate literacy. He feels the need to cultivate a reading culture is imperative.

Nelani (2020) undertook a qualitative study on offenders in a Western Cape prison in South Africa to highlight the value of RCs and demonstrate that reading was central to offender rehabilitation. He demonstrated that offender reading can advance their social transformation, and enhance rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Funda Mzantsi Project established RCs for formal, informal, and non-formal offender mass participation to enhance lifelong learning. Offenders showed positive behaviour in the community book clubs. Reading allowed them to escape life imprisonment's hardships and reconstruct a positive worldview from the distorted world of criminality. It exposed them to a rich world of knowledge and experience. A reading culture and an enabling environment to engage with books for fun resulted. In 2018, more than one book club was established in each of the ten management areas in the Western Cape. Some offenders established community book clubs upon their release (p.2). Reading for pleasure continues to be challenging in South African schools, hurting learner literacy levels and overall outcomes. 2015 DBE Campaigns like “Drop all and read,” an initiative for the formation of RCs in schools, and the “Read to Lead campaign,” aimed to improve the reading abilities of all South African children to demonstrate age-appropriate reading levels by 2019. Thaba-Nkadimene and Emsley (2020) conducted an interpretive, qualitative case study to examine the influence of RCs on learners’ attitudes to reading for pleasure and the outcomes thereof. Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were used to gather data from 5 spark coaches and 5 teachers, from selected Bahananwa grade 6 schools in Limpopo, South Africa. Findings established a positive link between RCs and learners’ attitudes to reading for pleasure, as reflected through improved reading levels. RCs influenced their attitudes in the first three months; at the end of the year, reading skills were expanded (p.148). Those who had low self-esteem, after joining the club, changed through encouragement to retell stories they read to parents at home (p.149). RCs improved learners’ outcomes and promoted emotional intelligence participation, and active engagement in the classroom; learners loved reading more (p.151).

1.7 Research aims and objectives of the study

Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- i. Describe the participants’ understanding of reading clubs.

- ii. Explore the teachers' perceptions about how Grade 10 learners who participate in reading clubs benefit.
- iii. Explore the Grade 10 learners' experiences and perceptions of participating in book clubs.

1.8 Research questions

The research sought to answer the following research questions:

- a) What are the teachers' and learners' understanding of the nature of reading clubs?
- b) What are the benefits of reading clubs for Grade 10 FAL learners who participate in reading clubs from the teachers' and learners' experiences?
- c) How do the Grade 10 learner participants experience the reading clubs?

1.9 Significance of the study

The various reports highlighted above show the extent of the problem and that a gap exists in the FET adolescent learners' vocabulary, language and reading comprehension. My study focuses on the gap in the FET phase; most studies have not zoomed in on the promotion of the love of reading; inculcating the reading culture will help improve future matric class results. The intention is not to duplicate the studies above, but to explore whether reading clubs can help improve adolescents' love of reading.

The study seeks to add a new dimension to the existing research knowledge on reading clubs. It will add value by focusing on grade 10 FAL learners' reading clubs, an area that has not been explored much, and the role reading for pleasure plays in instilling English FAL adolescents' love of reading. It may lead to new practices in reading clubs to promote a love of reading for pleasure.

1.10 Overview of the Thesis

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a roadmap of what the reader should expect in subsequent chapters. In Chapter 1, I introduced my study. Chapter 2 will focus on the literature review and the conceptual and theoretical framework used, specifically Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT).

In Chapter 3, I will detail the research methodological approach, research study design, and data gathering techniques used. Chapter 4 will contain data analysis and interpretation of data collected from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. In Chapter 5, a conclusion to the study is drawn.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a bird's eye view of the whole thesis. The background of the study was discussed, the statement of the problem, the research objectives as well as the research questions were outlined. The chapter ended with the study's significance and the thesis's overview.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the literature that informed this study. It begins by the state of reading among adolescence, reading clubs, the benefits of reading clubs, their roles as well as research conducted on reading clubs. The chapter further discusses the theoretical framework that was used for this study is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. This section defines social constructivism, gives a brief historical background of SCT, and explains 2 of the 5 theoretical principles. For purposes of this study, the focus is mainly on two principles, Mediation and ZDP.

2.2 The state of reading among adolescents

Since the focus of this study was adolescents, it is necessary to consider the challenges adolescent readers face. Adolescence is a transitional physical and psychological development stage that generally occurs from puberty to adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. Adolescence is defined as the period between puberty and adolescence, which depends on individual development and cultural norms (Blakemore, 2019). Of interest to the researcher is the inclusion of adolescents in numerous studies that highlight reading challenges. Some of the challenges identified include reading comprehension. Reading comprehension involves putting together pieces of information from a text to come up with the actual meaning of the text. When learners reach the Senior Phase and FET phase, they are generally expected to have mastered basic reading skills and can comprehend what they read. However, research shows that many adolescents struggle with poor reading comprehension. Some causes include limited vocabulary to explain terms and low reading proficiency. Mother tongue interferes with understanding and pronunciation of the second language. Grammar, syntax, and tense errors become evident as learners translate directly from their mother tongue (Dreyer, 2017, p.7). This implies that if learners do not master the skill to read in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate phase, they will struggle with reading comprehension in the Senior Phase and FET phase (Nippold, 2017; Lesaux and Kieffer, 2010; Ganie et al, 2019;

Dara, 2019; Pretorius and Klapwijk, 2016; Clemens et.al, 2021, NSC Diagnostic Report: Part 2, 2022).

Studies conducted in the US and UK, respectively, showed that adolescents battle with reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading fluency. Kim et al (2017) conducted an Interventionist study on 483 Grade 6-8 learners in the US. The researchers used Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) to improve the reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary of struggling adolescent readers. The study outcomes indicated improved reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. On the other hand, a survey conducted in the UK revealed that adolescent learners who struggle to read tend to lose interest in studying. The researchers conducted an intervention study at a mainstream high school in the West Midlands. They focused on an affective reading intervention to support adolescents reading (Cockford and Atkinson, 2017). The similarity between both the US study and the UK study with this study is in the target age group of adolescents and the focus on reading comprehension. However, this proposed study intends to explain the impact of reading clubs on learners' love for reading.

Research conducted in Nigeria and Botswana showed that both primary and secondary school learners exhibit low levels of reading competence and comprehension. Obiegbu (2018) conducted a study in the Lokoja metropolis, Nigeria. She sampled 300 pupils, 150 in primary and 150 in secondary education. Their reading competence levels were tragically low at 70.6% and 81.05% for primary and secondary education, respectively. An analysis of the results showed that 68.26% of the primary education learners and 69.94% of the secondary education sample made grammatical and semantic errors. Comprehension was less than 50%, and word recognition was below 90%. Only 20% of primary and 18.3% of secondary education learners read at instructional/ comprehension level. Only 9.33% of primary and 0.65% of secondary education learners could read appropriately. Obiegbu (2018) further states that in Botswana, learners cannot master literacy and language competence upon entering secondary school. The results show that second-language readers across the globe manifest profound reading difficulties. One of the challenges identified in the Nigeria study was that comprehension needed at least 50%. This seems to be a common challenge among adolescent struggling readers; hence the interest of this proposed study is to focus

on whether an out-of-school reading club can instill the love of reading among learners. It is hoped that the love of reading will improve reading comprehension.

Studies conducted among adolescent learners in South Africa are similar to the ones conducted elsewhere. For example, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) posit that among the myriad of reasons for the poor reading comprehension skills of learners in South African schools is the struggle to decode. Statistics show that learners struggle to read in English and indigenous languages. They explain that when a learner struggles to read, it becomes difficult to comprehend what he or she is reading. Tlou and Snyman (2020) investigated adolescents' reading habits at the Letlhabile community library in North West Province, South Africa. The study found that learners confused reading for pleasure with intensive reading done in class, which revealed severe comprehension challenges and the dearth of the reading culture. Another study investigated the reading comprehension of Grade 10 learners at a senior secondary school in Mthatha, South Africa. The study's outcomes showed that when the Grade 10 learners write a comprehension test, they read too slowly for their grade and responded to the comprehension passage questions by transcribing aspects of the text verbatim (Chaka, 2015). The Letlhabile study confirms the argument made by this study that there needs to be more reading culture among adolescent learners. Pretorius and Klapwijk's study echoes the assumption made by this study that when learners struggle to decode, they will struggle to comprehend. The Mthatha study highlights the need to develop the comprehension skills of learners. Even though these studies had different goals from this study, they targeted adolescent readers like this study.

A common thread that runs through these studies is that adolescent struggling readers generally battle with reading comprehension, which suggests that they may identify the words (decode). Still, they may not read with meaning or comprehend. This study intended to find out if an out-of-class reading club program can improve the love of reading of adolescent learners. The gap identified by this proposed study is that many studies have been conducted on reading comprehension. However, only a few studies have used reading clubs to develop the love of reading of Komani adolescent learners. Next is a brief view of assessments. Several assessments were conducted to measure the reading proficiencies of learners in South African schools. A Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) consisting of 40 countries, including

South Africa, sampled learners from the 4th grade, where most of them should have learned to read and are now reading to learn (PIRLS, 2006). Findings from the study showed that 78% of learners in South African schools were unable to read for meaning in any language by grade 4 in 2016 (PIRLS, 2006; PIRLS, 2011; PIRLS, 2016; Howie et al, 2017; Spaul and Pretorius, 2019). Their poor reading skills negatively impact their performance when they reach the FET phase. Include the 2023 PIRLS results.

Even though Annual National Assessments (ANA) were done away with in 2015, they had given us an indication that there is a challenge when it comes to reading (ANA, 2014). Both grade 6 and grade 9 English FAL learners could not reach the achievement target of 60% in 2014 (ANA, 2014). The National average percentage marks for grade 9 were:

Table 2.1

National average percentage marks

GRADE 9	PERIOD IN YEARS	2012	2013	2014
EFAL	2012 2014	35%	33%	34%
EHL	2012 – 2014	43%	43%	48%

(ANA, 2014, p.44)

The above data spells a significant gap in performance in the General Education and Training (GET) phase, which learners carry to the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. Both nationally and provincially, learners could not reach the set standard of adequate performance of 50%. This report sheds light on existing literacy problems that underpinned this study.

2.3 What the Curriculum Says about Reading

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) document emphasizes the value of intensive reading and reading for pleasure (CAPS, 2011). South African schools generally focus on the

intensive aspect of the curriculum. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about extended independent reading and viewing. Educators are expected to guide the learners to read for pleasure by providing access to libraries and evidence of extended reading in the form of speeches, discussions, and book films. Learners are supposed to be exposed to a wide range of books, magazines, newspapers, and other reading material both during and after class. To ensure this missing reading portion is done, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced a reading period during which the educator and the learners are expected to sit and read any books of their choice. Unfortunately, this period has been used for other purposes instead of reading for pleasure (NEEDU, 25 October 2016).

In her 2018 NSC Report, Chief Marker for English FAL Paper 1 stated that.

“The overall standard of the paper was fair, as it caters for levels on all cognitive levels. The texts used were interesting, and the language used on the paper was appropriate for FAL learners. Most of them performed well in comprehension (Section A). Reasons for the poorly answered first question on comprehension included a lack of insight into terms, with many learners scoring zero in question 1b since they failed to provide a detailed answer. It was also noted that a lack of vocabulary prevented them from scoring in question 1.9.1 they didn’t understand certain tested words” (NSC Report, 2018, p.1, 2). The 2019 NSC Diagnostic Report on Languages (Part 2) highlighted the following areas of concern: It was noted that learners didn’t understand the vocabulary used in the comprehension. Teachers were encouraged to expose learners to various texts to build vocabulary, improve comprehension and sharpen their critical thinking. Vocabulary exercises and reading needed to be promoted (NSC Diagnostic Report, 2019, p.13).

The reports highlighted above show the extent of the problem and that a gap exists in the FET adolescent learners’ vocabulary, language, and reading comprehension. My study focused on the gap in the FET phase; most studies have not zoomed in on promoting the love of reading; inculcating the reading culture will help improve future matric class results. The intention is not to duplicate the studies above but to explore whether reading clubs can help improve adolescents’ love of reading.

2.4 Reading Clubs (RCs)

2.4.1 Definition of Reading Clubs

Owusu (2020), citing Bikos and Papadimitriou, 2015:38-39, defines reading clubs as informed groups consisting of members engaged as readers who come together in private or public places or even through the internet to discuss, within a set of rules, books they have read following some objective consensus that they have made among themselves (p.142).

2.4.2 Features of Reading Clubs

Critical features of reading clubs (Bikos and Papadimitriou, 2017, p.4) are:

- a. Each RC has a distinct identity as its members have unique personalities (rules, approach, themes, and organization of the club are unique).
- b. Communication within the RC is an issue of decisive importance (to ensure equality and expression of member opinions).
- c. RCs connect reading to public discussion. Books become the group's, not a person's business (they have a semi-public practice, operate in public, but welcome members only).

2.4.3 Benefits of reading clubs

According to Cermeno (2021, p.17), one of the benefits of reading clubs is the hands-on, inclusive activities incorporated into learner programs like opportunities for interaction and discussion to understand and process what was read fully; those activities may include collaborations and conversations with peers. Gambrell, 2015 (cited in Cermeno, 2021, p.17) argues that a reading club in schools gives students more exposure to books and more opportunities to read independently and for pleasure. According to Merrimack (2021) allowing students reading time during the regular school day is important for increasing specific reading skills and developing good reading habits (cited in Cermeno, 2021, p.17).

Bikos and Papadimitriou (2017), in their study on particular aspects, social function, and developments of RCs in Greece, found that mapping their history is difficult as they have existed since reading existed. In the 5th Century, after printing was invented, they consisted of groups reading philosophical and religious content when manuscripts were extremely expensive. In the 7th and 8th Centuries, RCs were found in social arrangements; by the 19th Century, groups discussed poetry and literature. At the end of the 20th Century, individual participation skyrocketed, and they were established with themes, giving rise to engaged readers. Private entities established RCs of small groups, and they have become part of civil society activation toward a better future.

2.4.4 Limitations of Reading Clubs

It is a bit cumbersome to pinpoint the specific limitations of reading clubs. The clubs function as a means to improve comprehension and develop the love of reading due to the scope and nature of studies undertaken on reading clubs and their findings. However, an understanding of the limitations of reading research might assist clarify the limitations. Rimensberger (2014, p. 3) argues that a limitation of reading is that it depends on self-reported data and participants frequently respond to questions with what they believe is the right response (McKool and Gespass 2009, p.272).

2.4.5 Role of Reading Clubs in Language Acquisition

Ukume and Udu (2018) found that RCs enhance students' academic and composition writing. Their study sampled 122 SS2 students from 4 secondary schools in the Makurdi metropolis, Benue. Two groups were pre-tested and post-tested, but only the experimental group was exposed to reading club activities. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. A study by Owusu (2020) on the overview of reading culture also took a retrospective view of Ghana. He noted that the reading culture is dwindling, noted by poor reading and antisocial behaviour in youth, as Ghana embraces audio-visual means of information. He opines that lack of reading manifests itself in socio-economic issues (poverty and unemployment) as literacy underpins economic development and is central to prosperity; illiteracy leads to poverty. Owusu noted how, in the past, Africans organized themselves socially, culturally, and politically

to demonstrate literacy. He feels the need to cultivate a reading culture is imperative.

Nelani (2020) undertook a qualitative study on offenders in a Western Cape prison in South Africa to highlight the value of RCs and demonstrate that reading was central to offender rehabilitation. He demonstrated that offender reading can advance their social transformation, and enhance rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Funda Mzantsi Project established RCs for formal, informal, and non-formal offender mass participation to enhance lifelong learning. Offenders showed positive behaviour in the community book clubs. Reading allowed them to escape the hardships of life imprisonment and to reconstruct an optimistic worldview from the distorted world of criminality. It exposed them to a rich world of knowledge and experience. A reading culture and an enabling environment to engage with books for fun resulted. In 2018, more than one book club was established in each of the ten management areas in the Western Cape. Some offenders established community book clubs upon their release (p.2).

Reading for pleasure continues to be a challenge in South African schools and has a negative impact on learner literacy levels and overall outcomes. 2015 DBE Campaigns like “Drop all and read,” an initiative for the formation of RCs in schools, and the “Read to Lead campaign” aimed to improve the reading abilities of all South African children to demonstrate age-appropriate reading levels by 2019. Thaba-Nkadimene and Emsley (2020) conducted an interpretive, qualitative case study to examine the influence of RCs on learners’ attitudes to reading for pleasure and the outcomes thereof. Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were used to gather data from 5 spark coaches and five teachers from selected Bahananwa grade 6 schools in Limpopo, South Africa. Findings established a positive link between RCs and learners’ attitudes to reading for pleasure, as reflected through improved reading levels. RCs influenced their attitudes in the first three months; at the end of the year, their reading skills were expanded (p.148). Those who had low self-esteem, after joining the club, changed through encouragement to retell stories they read to parents at home (p.149). RCs improved learners’ outcomes and promoted emotional intelligence, participation and active engagement in the classroom; learners loved reading more (p.151).

2.4.6 Reading for pleasure as a source of knowledge

A five-week study conducted by Kazemi (2021) on English foreign Language learners showed the merits of reading for pleasure. 21 learners were put in an experimental group in a language institute. They were allowed to read texts of their choice while the control group read texts in their books. Results showed that the experimental group improved their comprehension skills. The study found that pleasure reading assists in listening, communicating, and expressing oneself better. It helped the students acquire language skills. The study findings showed that extensive reading had a more significant improvement in reading skills than intensive reading done by the control group (p. 5). My study's interpretation of findings also confirmed the benefits of extensive reading through reading clubs for knowledge acquisition.

2.4.7 Reading for pleasure as a source of pleasure

A study was carried out in Durban, South Africa, by Rimensberger (2014), which explored the contradiction between student teachers' acknowledgment of the importance of reading and their reading habits. If reading was to be seen as a source of pleasure in South Africa by future learners, their teachers had to practice the reading enjoyment habit first. The study's rationale was to understand student teachers' attitudes first to address the reading and literacy challenges in the classroom fully. The situation was worsened because the reading population was small; those who had means and could read were not readers and the schooling system produced children with functional literacy. 66% had read novels and non-fiction books infrequently, over months or a year. Only 19% had read in the previous two weeks. These findings showed how little the student teachers enjoyed engaging in reading for pleasure. My study, like this one, was interested in exploring learners' interest in reading for pleasure and closing the South African gap identified by this study, which is akin to my study' identified gap that needs to be filled in secondary schools English First Additional Language through the use of reading clubs.

2.4.8 Reading for pleasure as a creator of the reading culture

An investigative study was conducted by Ahmed (2015) on the reading habits of undergraduate students at a Malaysian public university in English Foreign language classes. Reading was seen as a useful language-learning tool. It was noted that reading was neglected by adults due to the availability of electronic gadgets. Although students had a positive attitude towards reading, very few people generally read for pleasure in Malaysia. Students' attitudes were linked to previous encounters with reading, their exposure to people who read, and the usefulness of reading to learning (p. 3). Findings showed that 58.6% read for an hour or two hours daily. They read various types of texts per. 34.1% read online e-books, and 18% read textbooks. The findings showed a positive attitude towards reading but the students lacked a proper reading habit and practice. Only 36% said they enjoyed reading for pleasure (p. 11). For this study, adolescent learners who were not enjoying reading clubs were very few due to their lack of a positive attitude towards reading clubs. Reading attitude had an impact on how they enjoyed the clubs.

2.5 Research Conducted on Reading Clubs

Chen and Chen (2021) conducted a study to investigate mediated narratives and the identity construction of a reading club of female workers in call centres in China. The study concluded that modern technology, social media, and reading apps facilitate a self-becoming, self-improving, and self-performance process. The conclusion highlighted the value of reading in shaping women's identity in an English reading club.

Eunseok Ro (2022) undertook an investigative study on students' language alternation practices during a second language book club in South Korea. His findings showed that book talks within the club served as self-repair practices. Students did book talks in English second language and went further and translated into Korean, their first language, in pursuit of mutual understanding with the recipients. Language alternations through second language book clubs improved students' mutual understanding as they anticipated possible difficulties in understanding the second language (p.1). Findings showed that the first language was used as a last resort to make meaning between the teacher and student when students had insufficient knowledge of the second language (Ro, 2022, p.4).

Ridley (2023) conducted an exploratory study in the U.S.A. to explore how text connections were constructed between students and their teachers in an English second language book group. His findings showed that protestation (voicing out disagreements) was used to make cultural and religious connections to co-construct between the teacher and peers, over a passage that was read in the club. Book discussions were a product of the teacher's posed questions to the book group. Also, piggy banking (linking one's context to the peers' context) was used to make text connections. This was a consequence of engaging in discussions in the book group.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be used for this study is Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory.

“Social constructivism is a theory of knowledge in sociology and communication theory that examines the knowledge and understandings of the world developed jointly by individuals. The theory assumes that understanding, significance, and meaning are developed in coordination with other human beings. The most essential elements in the theory are:

- a. The assumption that humans rationalize their experiences by creating a model of the social world and how it functions.
- b. The belief in language as an essential system through which humans construct reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009)” (Amineh and Asl, 2015, p.13).

2.7 A historical background of SCT

SCT argues that human mental functioning is a mediated process organized by cultural artefacts, activities, and concepts (Ratner, 2002, cited in Lantolf et al, 2015, p.2). Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, believe that the principles of the SCT can also apply to Second Language Acquisition. They explain that learning is embedded within social events and occurs as an individual interacts with people, objects, and environmental events (Aimin, 2013, p.1). SCT argues that although human neurobiology is necessary for higher mental processes, the essential forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction within social and material environments, including conditions found in instructional settings (Engestrom, 1987, cited in Lantolf et al, 2015, p.2). Vygotsky (1978)

firmly believed that the community and the environment played a significant role in making meaning for the learners. The theory argues that individual development is embedded in a social and cultural context.

2.8 Theoretical Principles of SCT used in the study

SCT comprises five main theoretical principles and constructs: mediation, regulation, internalization, zone of proximal development, and verbal thought. This study hinges on two theoretical principles, expanded upon in subsequent paragraphs:

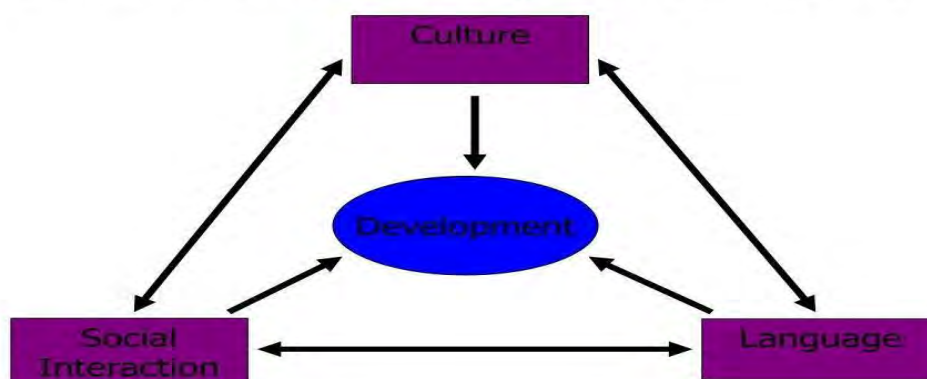
2.8.1 Mediation

Bruner, 1986, states that mediation is rooted in the observation that humans do not act directly on the world. Instead, their cognitive and material activities are mediated by symbolic and physical tools. While physical tools are outwardly directed, symbolic tools are inwardly or cognitively directed. Centeno-Cortes, 2003, says that language is the most pervasive and powerful tool (cultural artefact) humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, each other, and themselves (Aimin, 2013, p.2).

According to Lantolf et al, language is vital in mediation as the key that links thinking to social and communicative activity; they noted the double function of the linguistic sign, which simultaneously points in two directions—outwardly, as a unit of social interaction, and inwardly, as a unit of thinking. Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, refer to the inward or self-directed use of language as a symbolic tool for cognitive regulation as ‘private speech’ (Lantolf et al, 2015, p.6-7). Ehrich, 2006 (as cited in Aimin, 2013, p.2) states that, in sum, human functioning is fundamentally a mediated process organised by cultural artefacts, activities, and concepts. The diagram below shows how learners develop through mediation by a skilled or more knowledgeable person.

Figure 2.1

Sociocultural Theory of Development



(www.google.com)

For purposes of this study, reading clubs, therefore, served as the mediated environment. They provided a social environment in which learners interacted and developed their love of out-of-class pleasure reading. The three reading clubs used a social artefact (language) to help grade 10 English First Additional Language learners improve their thinking and comprehension skills to internalize their pleasure reading culture. The three teachers who managed the clubs functioned as the more knowledgeable others in helping the reading club members develop through language use that is found in reading the club's books. This aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis (cited in Lantolf, 2015, p.3) on individual development within the material, social and historical conditions.

2.8.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

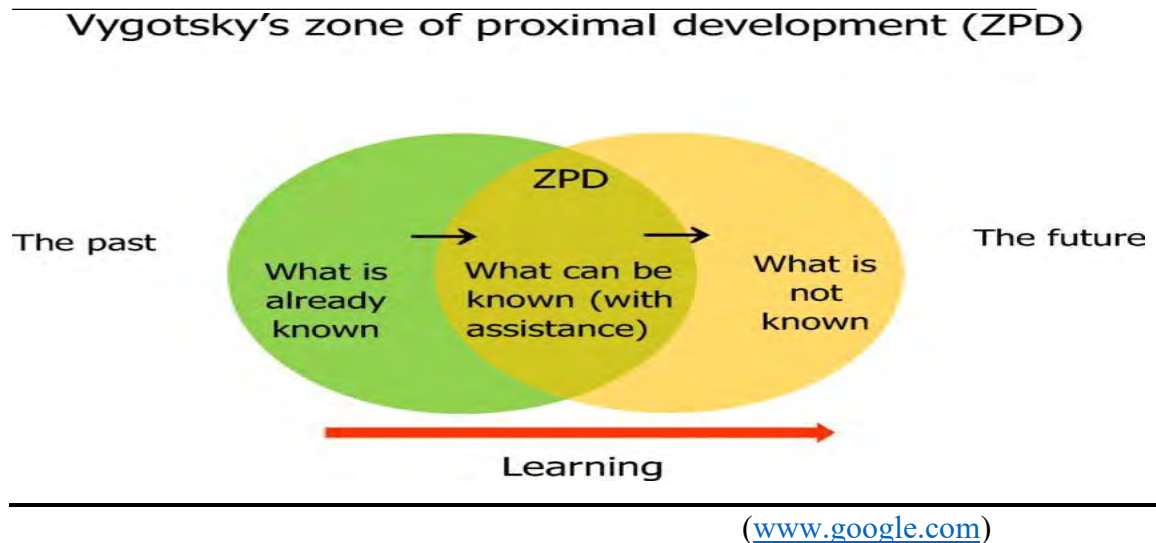
Harvey (citing Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p.266) says internalization enables humans to develop the capacity to perform complex mental and physical processes with increasingly less reliance on

external mediation. However, as Vygotsky noted, the process varies from individual to individual and, indeed, across periods for specific individuals (Harvey, 2011, p. 14). “To explain this variation, Vygotsky developed his idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This he defined as —the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult [expert] guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978, p. 86)” (Harvey, 2011, p.14).

Chaiklin, 2003 (cited in Aimin, 2013) affirms that The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) originates from Vygotsky’s genetic law of cultural development, in which he put forward a child’s two development levels. The first is the actual development level, that is, the level of skill reached by the child working independently. The second is the future development level, that is, the level of potential skill that the child can reach with the assistance of a more capable instructor. Chaiklin, 2003 (cited in Daneshfar and Moharami, 2018) states that “the zone in this concept is mentioned to focus attention on the relationship between instruction and development “(p.2). Vygotsky viewed the ZPD as a way to better explain the relationship between children’s learning and cognitive development. He believed that learning always precedes development in the ZPD. In other words, through the assistance of a more capable person, a child can learn skills or aspects of a skill that go beyond the child’s actual development (Aimin, 2013, p.3).

Therefore, development follows the child’s potential to learn. In this sense, the ZPD provides a prospective view of cognitive development instead of a retrospective view that characterises development in terms of a child’s independent capabilities (Aimin, 2013, p.3). The ZPD functions as a scaffolding to get to the next level. Learners already have skills and knowledge; they can do certain things independently. The teacher and the student exchange ideas through learning. The teacher provides skilled assistance to elevate the learner to a higher mental function to be independent. This social interaction leads to cognitive development. The diagram below illustrates learning that occurs through scaffolding.

Figure 2.2



In this study, reading clubs present an out-of-class social learning space for learners through reading books for pleasure. The teacher participants, as the more knowledgeable others, will help scaffold learners to their next level of love of independent reading and develop comprehension skills through exposure to various reading texts. Learners bring their reading skills and knowledge as they partake in reading clubs. The reading clubs provide a community for the participant learners to use language in the development process. This is in line with Vygotsky's theory (1978) which emphasizes the role of culture. Language is part of the culture as it affects behaviour and the individual's psyche. Reading clubs provide a social and cultural context for individuals' guided development and learning. The constructed knowledge (social level) and internalized knowledge (individual level) become part of the child's development (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe and justify the research procedures employed to respond to the three research questions in Chapter 1. I will discuss what and how I did it, considering the following subtopics: paradigmatic orientation, research approach, research design, sampling technique, data gathering tools and procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical concerns, and then conclude.

3.2 Paradigmatic Orientation

This study is set within an interpretive research paradigm. Kamal (2019, p. 3) states that the term paradigm derives from the Greek word "pattern." Kamal defines a paradigm as a way of seeing the world that shapes a research topic and influences the way researchers think about the topic (as cited in Hughes, 2010, p, 35). In educational research, a paradigm is a philosophical stance that informs every decision the researcher makes during the research process. It begins with what to research, how to research it, and how data will be collected, analysed, and reported (Khatri, 2020).

According to Bryman (2008), the interpretive paradigm concerns itself with understanding the world from the subjective experiences of individuals by using meaning-oriented methodologies like observations and interviews. An interpretive researcher aims to explore individual perceptions, share their meanings, and develop insights about the observed case. In this study, I used an interpretive stance to understand teachers' pedagogical practices in the reading clubs and understand learners' opinions and views. As a researcher, I had to seek to understand the participants in their natural setting. To have a depth of meaning and understanding from data analysis and interpretation, my stance informed my research-gathering tool.

3.3 Research Methodological Approach

The study's chosen methodological approach is qualitative. This research study is a qualitative case study. Kamal (2019), citing Creswell (2014, p.32), interprets qualitative research as an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (p.2). Kamal (2019) affirmed that qualitative research aims to reveal the meaning of an occurrence for people involved (p.2).

A qualitative study approach has three characteristics: First, the study aims to understand people's experiences. Second, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Third, data from the study is analysed inductively (Kamal, p.2). As a researcher, I gathered, analysed, and interpreted data from observations, interviews, and focus group discussions to arrive at themes in line with the abovementioned characteristics.

There are benefits to using qualitative research approaches and methods. The qualitative approach produces a thick (detailed) description of the participants' feelings, opinions, and interprets the meaning of their feelings (Denzin, 1989, cited in Rahman, 2016, p.4). Some argue that interpretivism holistically understands human experiences in specific settings. Interpretivism is regarded as ideographic research and can understand different people's voices, meanings, and events (Rahman, 2016, p.4). One disadvantage, though, is that the analyses of cases take a considerable amount of time, and one can generalize the results to the larger population in a very limited way (Flick, 2011, cited in Rahman, 2016, p.4). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argue that the interpretive researcher can get trustworthy, transferrable, dependable, and confirmable results through honest, conscientious efforts and clear descriptions of the processes and techniques of the study.

Almeida, Rosero, Chiluiza, and Castillo (2021, p.10), citing Mason 2002, p. 121, state that there are two reasons for sampling and selecting cases. First, sampling is practical and considers limited resources. Second, it is a way to focus on what the researcher wants to accomplish, as qualitative research is about depth, nuances, complexity, and understanding how these work. Miles,

Huberman, and Saldanha, 2014, cited in Almeida, Rosero, Chiliza, and Castillo (2021, p.8) pointed out that a sample is pivotal to drawing appropriate conclusions. For this study, my sample consisted of 24 learners and 3 teacher participants. They belonged to three different reading clubs for adolescents from three secondary schools. I sampled them due to their proximity in Komani and that they all offered grade 10 English First Additional Language. One school represented a high enrolment rural school, the other a high enrolment township school, and the third was a low enrolment township school.

3.4 Research study design

Fick (2009) defines research design as an action plan chosen among many to collect and analyse data, a design selected to help answer the research problem and research questions. This qualitative study uses an exploratory multiple-case study design to explore educators' pedagogical practices through reading clubs. Aspers and Corte (2021, p.1) define qualitative research as an iterative process in which an improved understanding of the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied. Creswell (2012, p.4) states that qualitative research aims to gather thick descriptive and explanatory data to understand a phenomenon being studied through learning from participants in real-life situations.

3.4.1 Case study

Yin (2017) defines a case study as an in-depth assessment of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, using different sources. A case could be an individual, a role, a small group, an organization, a community, or even a nation (Miles et al., 2014, p. 28, cited in Schoch, 2020). Case study research offers benefits in terms of process and outcomes. My research is a qualitative case study as it is neither a survey, nor an experiment, or statistics.

Using a case study has many benefits. A case study allows the researcher to collect different kinds of data, like interviews, observations, or surveys. It provides you with an opportunity to get an in-depth look at a case's inner workings and organization, be it an organization or an individual. It also helps you to focus your research within the confines of space and time on a specific case. In

terms of outcome, it provides a comprehensive understanding of a bounded unit and helps the reader examine it so that he or she can learn from it. It also leads to transferability; lessons and principles from one case can be applied to other cases or situations, unlike the generalisability in quantitative data (Schoch, 2020, p.2). A limitation of case studies is that case studies may be difficult to replicate, a feature common in qualitative studies. It may also be difficult to generalize because of the inherent subjectivity and because they are based on qualitative, subjective data (Nasir and Sukwamati, 2023. p.4)

My research study aimed to explore and elucidate to the readers the value of school-based, adolescent reading clubs so that other teachers can use my case in the future for their application in their schools. A case study was fitting as it confined my study to interpreting data from just the three reading clubs. To overcome the listed limitations, I regularly consulted with my supervisor to limit my biases and subjectivity. To confirm Nasir and Muskawati's view, I also checked for the accuracy of interpreted data results in line with qualitative procedures (Nasir and Muskawati, 2023, p.6). I used three qualitative data-gathering tools (interviews, observations, and focus group discussions) to inform findings from my case.

3.4.2 Exploratory case study

Exploratory research in social science can be defined ways differently. Still, its core consists of an attempt to discover something new and interesting by working your way through a research topic (Swedberg, 2020, p.17). An exploratory case study is an empirical inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident. It is an inductive research process used to gain an indepth understanding of a complex issue, event, or phenomenon. It generates ideas, identifies key issues, and develops hypotheses for further study. It is mainly used to gain an understanding of an unfamiliar phenomenon or situation (Ogawa and Malen, 1991, p.1).

As a researcher, I chose an exploratory case study as the best design to explain the relationship between reading clubs and the love for reading. It allowed me to explore relationships in the three reading clubs' environment and to answer the research questions. It helped me to respond to the

questions, to describe and explain what transpired in the clubs I observed. It answers the question of how learners experience the phenomenon of reading club from both the teachers' and learners' points of view.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Taking a subset from a chosen sampling frame or entire population is called sampling (Taherdoost, 2020). The researcher sampled 24 adolescent learners (both males and females) out of the three reading clubs, with three teachers as the main participants who managed the reading clubs in their respective schools. To ensure the reliability of this particular study, I recorded the 24 sampled participants in 3 focus group discussions. The sample was selected using non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) methods. Both probability sampling and non-probability sampling surveys share a common goal: to estimate the characteristics of a large population efficiently based on measurements of a subset of the population (Cornesse, 2020). Probability samples ensure the generalizability of the study results to the target population. Each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected (Acharya et al., 2013). Purposive sampling was chosen based on the convenience of the investigator, as respondents are chosen because they are at the right place at the right time (Acharya et.al, 2013). For this study, the researcher used purposive sampling. Two of the three research sites are closer to the researcher; the third is a rural, high-enrolment school 30 km away. All three schools offer grade 10 English First Additional Language. All selected learner participants were English First Additional Language adolescents; both males and females were included due to the limited sample size, which prevents me from generalizing and applying data findings across the entire country.

3.6 Data Gathering Techniques and Methods

The research was carried out in three phases, as stipulated below:

3.6.1 Observations

Observation is a way to gather data by watching people and events or noting physical characteristics in their natural settings. Observations are instrumental in getting insight into a

particular setting and actual behaviour (Busetto et al., 2020). They can be overt (subjects know they are being watched) or covert (do not know they are being watched). The *setting* was the three reading clubs, with club members (learners) and the three teachers as *subjects*. I did two rounds of *planned* observations per site. Observations were 30 minutes long per site.

Observations occur along a spectrum from shallow or passive observation to deep or immersive observation. Observations can thus be reductive and quantitative (seeking to enumerate) or inductive, experiential, and richly descriptive (seeking to elucidate) – essentially, these are different ways of seeing the world. For this study’s observation, I took the latter route. As a direct *non-participant observer*, I observed, without involvement, learners’ and teachers’ activities and behaviours to understand their interactions during reading club sessions. I used an observation template to note my findings.

Table 3.1

OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

SITE NAME:		DATE OF VISIT:
	FOCUS AREA	OBSERVATIONS MADE
1.	What kind of a setting (venue) is it?	
2.	Is the environment conducive? (space, noise, light, privacy)?	
3.	How long is the reading session (time)?	
4.	How is the seating plan (arrangement) during reading?	
5.	What does the teacher do or say to learners to promote a love of reading in the reading club?	
6.	What behaviour by learners shows they are interested in and enjoy the reading session?	

7.	Are there any other activities done to enhance reading?	
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According to Byrne (2021, p.14), the key to data analysis is the search for patterns; researchers seek to identify similarities and differences and cluster in patterns- in space and time and then report the significance of their findings. I considered privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity in my observations of reading clubs.

3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Opdenakker (2006, p. 2), citing Kvale, 1983, p.174, defines the qualitative interview as an interview to gather descriptions of the life-world interviewee concerning the interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomenon (p. 2). Collecting interview data can be done either face-to-face, by phone or by internet use. An advantage of face-to-face interviews is that they are characterised by synchronous communication in time and place. The benefit of face-to-face interviews is that they can take its place on social cues. The researcher can get extra information that can be added to the verbal answer (p.3). In this study, interviews were done face-to-face.

The researcher conducted 3 recorded–structured interviews with the three teacher participants, whose aim was to determine their feelings about the reading club. Interviews clarified the teachers’ role, impact, and techniques used in trying to help improve the learners’ love of reading. For safekeeping, I filed audio recordings of the participants on a password-locked computer. A backup of recorded data was stored in a computer hard drive kept in a locked office accessed by myself only.

Teacher responses shed light on learners’ prior access to reading materials at home and their general attitudes to reading and education. They also gave me insight into teachers’ motives for starting the three reading clubs. Interviews provided data on how learners benefitted from reading clubs, how the three respective teachers instilled a love of reading in adolescents in their reading clubs, and the challenges they encountered. In this study, the duration of the interviews I conducted ranged from 30 – 40 minutes per participant. Thirty minutes was enough to avoid interviewee

fatigue, and I conducted them in a comfortable environment at a time agreed upon with the interviewee.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

Adler et al. (2019), citing Krueger and Casey, 2009, describe a focus group interview as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (p.1). Focus group discussions are an acceptable qualitative research method that enables in-depth data collection, providing more details on the phenomenon under study. They can be used in descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, provided philosophical underpinnings exist. They are used to collect data in participatory research, especially when involving young people. This method can also be used with people with disabilities or who have problems with writing or reading to elicit youths’ perspectives (Adler et al., 2019, pp. 1-2). They are practical and suitable for collecting data on children, youths, and parents' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs (Adler et al., 2019, p.12). For this study, the researcher conducted three separate focus group discussions with 15 learners per group. I used a focus group discussion template to record my findings on learners from the three reading club sessions.

Table 3.2

Focus Group Discussion template

SITE NAME:		DATE OF VISIT:
		DURATION OF VISIT:
DISCUSSION FOCUS / QUESTIONS		RESPONSES
1.	Do you enjoy being a member of the reading club(s)?	(YES/NO)
2.	If yes, what activities did you find most interesting during reading sessions? If not, what did you not enjoy about being a club member?	
3.	Which genre(s) / type(s) of books did you enjoy reading the most? (e.g. Novels / short stories/drama/magazines/non-fiction)	
4.	What did you think of your interaction with your teachers, during reading sessions?	
5.	In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate	

As a researcher, I recorded learners in their respective sites to capture adolescent learners' thoughts, feelings, and impressions of reading clubs. They helped the researcher to respond to the research questions and to understand whether involvement in reading clubs benefitted them and impacted their love of reading.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data (Clarke and Braun, 2012, p.57). The thematic analysis looks for patterns of meanings in data sets. It looks for themes emerging from reviewed data and is useful for discovering people's views and experiences.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) state that thematic analysis has six phases, namely: *familiarisation with data* (transcribing the data, reading and re-reading and noting initial ideas), *coding* (searching for interesting patterns or features from the entire data set), *searching for themes* (collating codes into potential themes and gathering all relevant data to each theme), *reviewing themes* (checking if themes work about coded extracts and the entire data set), *defining and naming the themes* (clear definitions and names per theme) and *writing up* (producing a scholarly report of the analysis).

From raw data gathered from observations, interviews, and focus group discussions, I interpreted my data and extracted patterns to arrive at emerging themes, per the data-gathering tool used, in the respective reading clubs. Identifying patterns from raw data and colour- coding by hand made it easier for the researcher to establish common themes for the entire study.

3.7.1 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research strives for worthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that qualitative research studies rely on four general criteria in their trustworthiness approach: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Norman et.al). The following paragraphs will detail these criteria and link them to my study.

3.7.2 Credibility

Trustworthiness or rigour of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot and Beck, 2014). One method of promoting credibility is through the various processes of *triangulation*. Triangulation means repeatedly using

several sources of information or procedures from the field to establish identifiable patterns (Norman et.al). These similar outcomes are recognised through various data sources. In this study, I used data triangulation, using observations, focus group discussions, and interviews to establish patterns and themes. I analysed, compared, and interpreted data from teachers' interview transcripts, observation notes from reading club sessions, and focus group discussion transcripts of learners to focus on the same phenomenon. Data triangulation allowed me to do data comparisons from raw data captured using the three data-gathering tools. As a researcher in the study, I intended to establish any themes arising from the patterns identified from each tool. I colour-coded and numbered common features across research tools to arrive at a theme.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to trust in trustworthiness. Cohen et al. (2011) believe that the researcher must return to study participants from whom data was collected to confirm if his findings are dependable. As a researcher, I went back to written interview transcripts in the interpretation data interpretation process. I recorded audio from teacher interviews and focus group discussions with learners to ensure the accuracy of my data. I wanted to confirm whether I had captured the responses as intended and captured the participants' meaning and tone correctly. The audio recordings were easily accessible from storage when needed. They allowed the researcher to revisit those files to confirm findings, thereby improving his interpretation of data and reporting in this study.

3.7.4 Transferability

Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research cannot aim for replicability by design. Qualitative researchers claim that patterns and descriptions from one study may apply to another and that lessons may be learned from study extensions (Lincoln and Guba (1985). Transferability is the degree to which the study results can be transferred to other settings or contexts (Kumar, 2011). Transfer is only possible when a thick description provides a rich portrayal of circumstances for application to others' situations. Descriptions of methods, time frames for the collected data, and

the duration of the entire field study must be completely described (Norman, 2020, p.2, citing Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

To ensure the transferability of this study, I endeavoured to detail all data collection processes, interpreted findings, and all nuances linked with reading club formation and their management to ensure that lessons from my study will benefit teacher practices. I quoted extracts and direct responses of participants (from teacher interviews and learners' focus group discussions) to prove the transferability of findings and to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study.

3.7.5 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which other findings accept and confirm the researcher's findings (Megheirkouni and Moir, 2023, p. 11). It refers to the degree of impartiality of the findings (Rink et al., 2023, as cited in Beck, 2009). To ensure the confirmability of findings, in this study, I employed *member checking*. Member checking is a strategy that allows a specialized and experienced person to review the data and the research process (Lincoln and Guba, 2004). It helps eliminate misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the researcher's vocal tone (Megheirkouni, 2023, p.11, citing Maxwell, 1916). Its purpose is to challenge the researcher's assumptions and ask difficult questions about the research process and interpretations of data (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln and Guba, 2004)). Input from my supervisor made me revise my initial assumptions about what data meant to me. It steered me towards a fair, balanced interpretation of data due to her vast experience in student supervision. Her advice and critique helped shape my approach to the entire study and sharpened my data presentation.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an integral element of research studies. They ensure that the researcher communicates reliable knowledge and truth and avoids making mistakes (Datt, 2016), enabling the researcher and participants to maintain high trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility (Resnik, 2015).

An application to conduct educational social research was sent to the Education Faculty Ethics Committee at Rhodes University for research approval. After presenting my proposal to their provincial research committee, I promised to share my study's findings with the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education. The District Director of Chris Hani West district, where the three research schools are based, also gave me a written consent letter. The principals of the three respective secondary schools were requested for approval to conduct research in their respective schools after explaining the nature of the study and its duration. The three grade 10 teachers who manage reading clubs in three different sites also agreed to be participants in the study upon satisfying themselves and getting responses to their questions. Parents of learners also signed the forms of consent, which highlighted the gist of the study, for their children to partake voluntarily in the study. Learners also signed their assent forms after I explained what would transpire and that they may withdraw at any stage in the study. I assured them of anonymity and their hidden identities. No undue pressure was put on them due to the power difference between myself, a researcher and departmental official, and the teachers and learner participants. The participants permitted me to take pictures during reading session observations and also to do audio recordings during teacher interviews and focus group discussions with learners. As a researcher, I did all of the above to ensure that an ethical consideration was made in every step of this study.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed my choice of methodology and how it was justified. Paradigm, research design, methodology and procedure, Sampling procedure, data gathering tools, case study, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical concerns were addressed. The next chapter, chapter 4, deals with data analysis and findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the benefits of reading clubs on the reading habits of Grade 10 learners. This chapter analyses data from three teacher interviews, focus group discussions with learners, and reading club observations. The data was collected from three respective reading clubs over fourteen weeks. The researcher will comment on insights gained from the data-gathering process. Data will be analysed using thematic analysis. It looks for themes emerging from reviewed data and is useful for discovering people's views and experiences. Data analysis will respond to the following research questions:

- (i) What are the teachers' and learners' understanding of the nature of reading clubs?
- (ii) What are the benefits of reading clubs for grade 10 learners who participate in reading clubs from the teachers' and learners' experiences?
- (iii) How do the grade 10 learner participants experience the reading clubs?

Three main themes emerged from the data analysis: reading is a source of pleasure and knowledge, and reading clubs instill a culture of reading. The chapter discusses the themes and then analyses how Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) was utilised in the reading clubs. A summary of the findings wraps up the chapter.

Collected data showed that books read in the reading club affected the learners' emotional responses. From their facial expressions, teachers noted smiles or shock, as a response to the text or book that they were reading. That evidence talked to the excitement and keenness observed from the learners that arose from engaging in book reading.

Table 4.1

Teachers' Interview extracts

Miss N	<i>Uhm... during the sessions, I would observe their facial expressions. Their expressions say a lot. When a learner is reading and the book is exciting you see them smiling, you see them ...uhm... being shocked by whatever that they are finding in the book, ...</i>
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(Miss N, 2023)

Miss M	...once they are there, they show willingness, though they are not in numbers. Those who are there, they show willingness...yes.
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(Miss M, 2023)

The extracts above from two reading clubs suggested that learners enjoyed attending the two reading clubs and they were willing to grasp books and enjoyed reading the books available to them.

4.2. READING IS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE

Agustina et al. (2023) define pleasure reading as reading with a mental atmosphere and a pleasant process in which students have the right to choose reading material that they think is fun and interesting, be it magazines, articles on the web, newspapers, or comics (p. 3). Data findings from the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews indicated that both the teacher and learner participants stated that reading is a source of pleasure.

4.2.1 Learners reading for pleasure

During the focus group interviews with the learners in School A (Mrs M), School B (Miss ZN), and School C (Miss N), the learners indicated that they enjoyed reading in the reading club.

Learners enjoyed reading the information the texts provided. This was noted in how they would be drawn into their reading books due to the information and knowledge it brought them, which they

found interesting. The variety of books increased their enjoyment as books of various genres offered a wide choice of reading material. Such a wide range catered for and appealed to their reading tastes and needs. The data extracts below attest to learners' enjoyment of reading material

Table 4.2

Learners' Focus Group Discussion extracts

FGD1 (Miss N)	FGD 2 (Mrs M)	FGD 3 (Miss ZN)
Learner 1 (TT): “Before I joined the book club, I was a person who was not familiar with reading, but, after I read two books, I started loving the book club and I started loving reading”.	Learner 2 (MM): “The book club really boosted my thinking and my love for reading since I’m a shy person, I don’t like to talk a lot. So, I just grab my book and read. That helped me a lot”.	Learner 3 (ST): “It helped because I used to read a book for four to five weeks. Now, ever since I joined the reading club, I read a book for two weeks. The interests- I’m more interested in reading now”.

The three extracts highlighted that learners from the three reading clubs loved reading. Data on Learner 1 showed that she was not keen on reading books before joining the club. It was after joining it that her love of reading developed. Learner 2 stated that from reading books in the reading club, her love of reading and her thinking appeared to have developed. She seemed to enjoy reading books independently, considering that she said she was shy. Learner 3 suggested that her reading speed and love of reading increased, from reading 1 book for five weeks to reading it in two weeks. Data suggested that reading books in the reading clubs had its benefits. Clark and Rumbold (2006, p.9) conducted a study on children that showed that reading for pleasure was positively linked with positive reading attitudes, which are linked to achievement in reading and pleasure reading in later life (as cited in Aarnoutse and Van Leeuwen, 1998). These relationships were true for children and adults' first and second language acquisition (as cited in Krashen, 2004).

An important aspect that emerged from the data was that although learners were excited about the club, however, the time for contact sessions for reading club members was not enough. Data

pointed out that competing school academic programs like test days and exams led to postponements and cancellations of reading club sessions.

Table 4.3

Interview extracts

Miss N	<i>...Also, we did not have enough time. We would plan that we are going to meet but because we have to do some school work, maybe they are writing tests, it's exams so we cannot meet, ...</i>
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(Miss N, 2023)

Data showed that learners from Miss M's club enjoyed reading within the reading sessions and found pleasure in it. Miss ZN's learners were captivated by the actual reading of books, books they chose on their own. In Miss N's club, the learner participants had great excitement due to the presence of new reading books. Evidence pointed to pleasure derived from reading books in the various reading clubs.

4.2.2 Extended access to and sharing of reading books

Another point that confirmed that learners enjoyed reading in the clubs is that learner club members requested and needed extra reading time. Some requested an extension of time from the allocated thirty minutes for reading. Once learners got drawn into the author's world of the written text and engaged in the silent reading session, they became oblivious to the passage of time. Data findings from Mrs. M's interview confirmed that other learners in her club continued reading although the allotted reading club time had expired. The books exchanged by learners on Miss N's site served as a form of recommendation among club members of what to read next. The extracts below confirmed that learners exchange books because they enjoyed reading them.

Table 4.4

Teachers' Interview extracts

Mrs M	Miss N
“Yes, there are. For example, they will be asking me all the time “Are we meeting today?” Then, if sometimes I’ve forgotten due to some of the schedules that just come, then I will see them coming. So, in that extent, I will say they are very interested because it’s them, sometimes they will come and borrow the books even though it’s not the time for us to meet or the day to meet”.	“Yes, they are. I see that in their response because when they read, they become so excited to share what they have read, to talk about it and the books that excite them ... ‘’.

The above extracts showed what teachers said about learners’ interest in reading and exchanging books from the clubs. Data pointed to growing interest and excitement with reading.

Data showed that some learners borrowed reading books outside of the scheduled meeting days and times. Those actions were the direct result of their interest in the various contents of the books offered in their respective reading clubs.

Table 4.5

Teachers’ Interview extracts

Miss M	<i>So, in that extent, I will say they are very interested because it’s them, sometimes they will come and borrow the books even though it’s not the time for us to meet or the day to meet.</i>
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(Miss M, 2023)

Miss ZN	<i>It always excited them choosing a book to read and they would come to me, after reading a book, they want another book. ...</i>
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(Miss ZN, 2023)

The extracts above, from Miss M and Miss ZN’s reading clubs, highlighted that the learners were interested in accessing and reading from the books; they needed more reading opportunities, although, at times, that was not a time set for the reading club members to meet.

The data extract below confirms that learners enjoyed their book-reading sessions, as shown in the extracts above. However, the researcher noted a limitation existing within the reading clubs. The common limitation of the three clubs was the shortage of reading books for learners, especially in the early days of the formation of reading clubs. It negatively impacted the learners’ reading interest and teacher practices during reading club sessions. Educators were asked to give their opinions of things that did not go well in their reading clubs. Their extract below is evidence of a teacher’s responses to a shortage of books.

Table 4.6

Interview extracts

Miss M	<i>But, what err... sometimes does not go well it’s when we do not have the material for reading because we find out all the material that is circulating amongst them is finished. Then we don’t have anything to read then it’s only magazines and available newspapers. So, in those aspects, that challenging aspect, running short of the reading material and then now we don’t have any books to read, and then now all the books they have, they have circulated amongst them.</i>
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(Miss M, 2023)

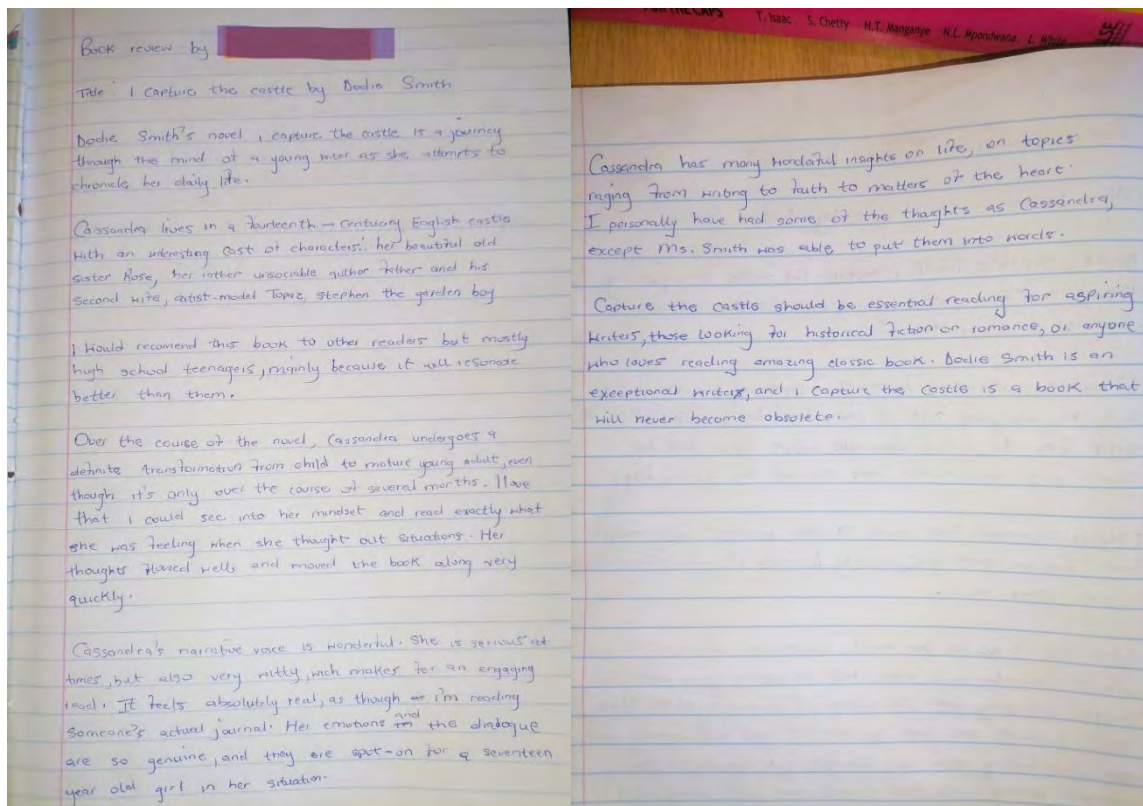
4.2.3 How Learners Received Reading Clubs

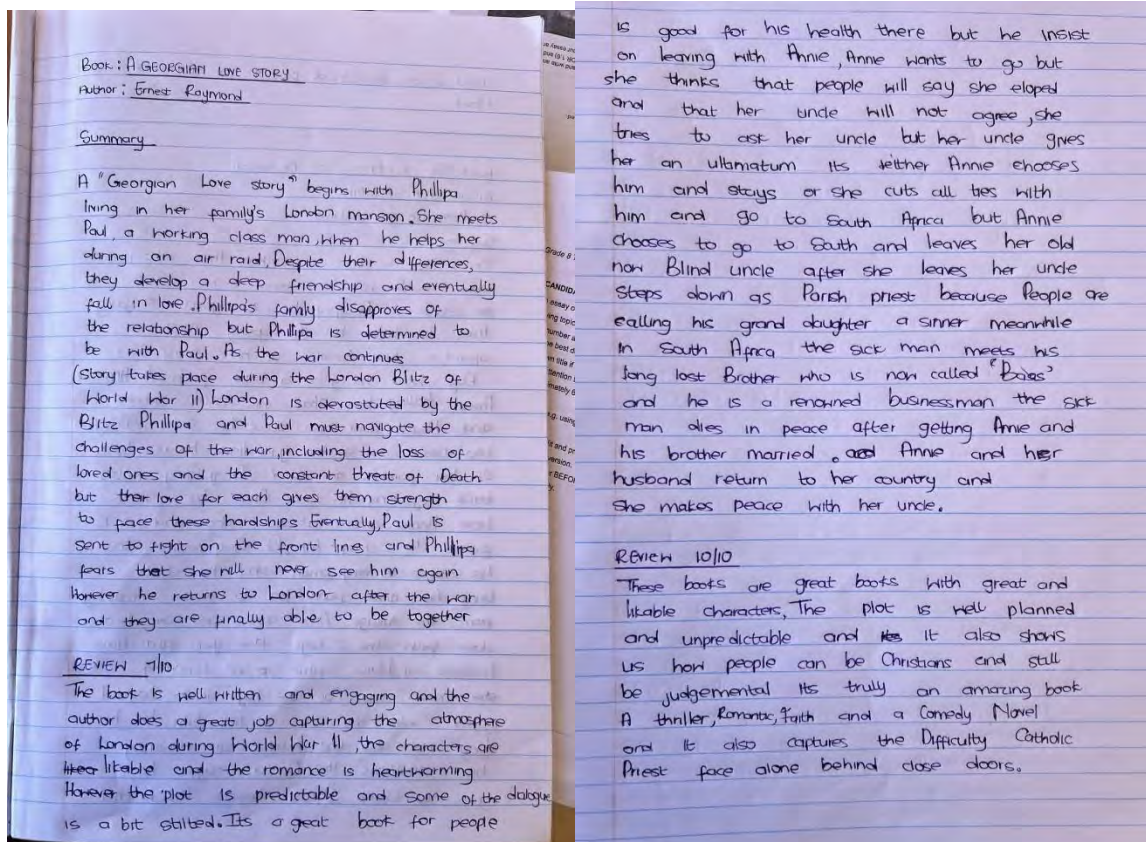
Getting other learners to join reading clubs seemed to work well during the initial period of learners’ excitement with the club. That was the case on Miss ZN’s site. In Mrs M’s site, the opposite was true. Few learners joined her club after its inception. What the study data showed from the reading clubs was that, during reading sessions, teachers in the three respective sites

allowed learner club members the freedom to choose their books to read. That strategy worked well as it added to their enjoyment of reading books. The learners' choices were based on a few genres of interest to them, i.e., novels (fictional fantasy), short stories, and drama. They were captured by reading the written words in those texts. Learners requested new reading books once they were done with the first one. Active steps were taken by the teachers to persuade and encourage learners to love reading; as a consequence, some learners of Miss ZN were interested in joining the reading clubs. Data pointed to consistent book reviews at the end of each reading session. Those reviews were either written or verbal. The verbal ones were done voluntarily and informally in Miss N's site at the end of the silent reading sessions. Her learners also kept diaries for writing book reviews as well. Reviewing books was an opportunity for shared reading by learners. On Mrs M's site, learners did written reviews.

Figure 4.1

Examples of learners' written reviews





Data from teacher responses suggested that the learners reacted with excitement at the formation of the new reading clubs. They were excited by the access to reading books. Also, the variety of reading texts provided added to their excitement. Some learners were avid readers and enjoyed reading when they joined the club. Others were uncertain what the reading clubs entailed, but they joined still out of curiosity. How the various teacher participants promoted and managed their respective reading clubs, as they recruited grade ten learners to join, had an impact on how learners viewed the reading clubs. The attitudes learners had towards reading and brought to reading clubs were either reinforced or changed as they engaged in the reading clubs at the formation stage.

Data gathered pointed towards learner enjoyment of the reading clubs and reading sessions. Learners from Mrs M's reading club enquired about the next meeting dates of the reading clubs; that was a sign of growing interest in the reading club. Some borrowed reading books outside of the set meeting dates. That spoke to their rising interest in reading club activities. The table below shows data findings from three teacher interviews that confirm the growing learners' interest in reading books.

Figure 4.7

Teachers' Interview extracts

Mrs M	Miss ZN	Miss N
“The learners will go and read and they come and review the book”.	“It always excited them choosing a book to read and they would come to me, after reading a book, they want another book”.	“So, now, when I gave them the book and I gave them diaries, even this year, to write whatever review they want to write from the book, so, I saw that they got an interest”.

4.2.4 The activities of the Reading Club kept the learners motivated

After the formation of the reading clubs, data showed a notable difference in teacher practices and approaches. Mrs M removed all her strict formalities in her reading club. Miss ZN's learners were allowed to do book exchanges and swaps. There was greater interaction among learners in the reading club. Miss N allowed her learners to take books home for reading. They began to diarise and review books they had read. She played reading and writing games with her reading club members. She motivated them and showed them the future benefits of reading. She became flexible on book choices and when learners returned the club's books. Sharing of readings done and discussions took place within the reading club after silent reading sessions. The findings agree with Vygotsky's view that learning is embedded within social events and occurs as individuals interact with people (Aimin, 2013, p.1). The data clearly distinguished teachers' practices before and after the reading clubs existed. Learners exhibited signs of reading enjoyment in all three clubs after clubs were formed. From my first observation in Mrs M's club, learners were keen to choose their books for reading. In Miss ZN's club, they would swap books they finished reading and help recommend to peers. In Miss N's club, they would confirm to the teacher when they had finished reading a book. In my second observation of Miss ZN's reading club, learners read silently and

focused attentively while in Miss N's club, they were glued to the new stock of books that had been delivered; some even read while standing up, focused on their books. In Mrs M's club, they did oral sharing with peers from their readings.

4.2.5 Excitement over New Reading Books

There's sufficient evidence from data from observations to support the idea that the availability of a wide variety of reading books had a positive bearing on learner interest in reading and enjoying the reading club sessions. Of particular interest was learners' interest in literature genres. Their choice of books showed it was texts they could relate to. Teachers provided age-relevant books, especially novels, short stories, and drama, and kept learners glued to reading books during reading sessions. Teacher participants allowed for rotation and exchange of reading texts among learners and made available new books. The learners' excitement over new books and book swaps were drivers of learners' interest in coming to read leisurely within reading clubs.

The reading clubs consisted of learners who loved reading. Some were not so keen initially, but having access to a wide selection of reading material increased their interest in the club. Other learners wanted to join the reading club. There was a growing reading interest from learners, as data from Miss ZN's and Miss N's sites showed. Books containing information and knowledge were shared on the latter's site even with non-members. The availability of different reading genres positively impacted learners' love of reading and knowledge development. On Mrs M's site, learners regularly reviewed books they were reading and gaining knowledge. They would then exchange those and get new books to read to gain new insights.

However, data showed that although most learners were motivated club members, a few lost interest in the clubs. Miss ZN would advise learners in class and recommend which books they should read. For Miss N, she dealt with learners who did not enjoy reading. Data suggested that learners who left the reading clubs fall into one of the following categories. They found the reading clubs boring or too serious, with silent reading dominating club sessions. A contributory factor could have been that the educators recommended and chose books for learners to read that they

did not find exciting. A few learners left the reading clubs, as a consequence. The interview extract below highlights this problem from the teachers' point of view.

Figure 4.8

Interviews extract

Miss N	<i>...and then the ones that did not go accordingly, I would say losing some of the learners. I thought maybe we would still have that. I know, some would get bored and then decide to leave the club. So, losing one of the learners, I think, I would say is one of the aspects that didn't go according to plan, I guess.</i>
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(Miss N, 2023)

The above data showed that the loss of new club members did not go well in reading clubs. Data confirms that even though there were activities that kept learners motivated in the club, a few were not. Hence, they left the reading clubs.

A noted finding from teacher interviews is how, when teachers advised and recommended to learners books to read, that backfired and did not have the envisaged outcomes, the envisaged outcome of learners seeing the text from the teacher's point of view and getting the outcomes the educator expected. Instead, learners sometimes could not relate to such recommended reading texts. Other learners in the reading clubs did not enjoy reading when they joined as members. Data showed that the educators observed how their lack of interest in reading generally led to them not enjoying being members of the reading clubs, which resulted in their lack of motivation to remain in the clubs.

Research shows that reading for pleasure can be a source of pleasure. What kept the learners coming to the clubs was the pleasure they derived from reading various books available in the reading clubs. It is the reading of different, age-appropriate literature genres that captivated the learners. Consequently, the availability of books within reading clubs kept them coming for weeks

for book exchanges. For this study, pleasure from reading books appeared to be derived from a social setting where learners exchanged books and recommended books for one another; book swaps and reviews added to the social exchange among peers. In line with Vygotsky's theory, language is a social artefact used in reading clubs to promote learner interaction and pleasure. It is the language used in the literature genres and short stories that learners enjoyed reading, Language from books results in pleasure for learners who are club members.

4.2.6 Interaction and Shared Reading among Club Members

An aspect I regard as a success of reading clubs, from collected data, was the interaction among learners who are club members. Such interactions lead to learner club members exchanging reading books. They swapped books among themselves, upon completion of their reading of the entire text. That highlighted the value of peer recommendations, which arose from verbal exchanges and discussions that took part within the reading clubs.

Members volunteered to share with other club members what they read during the silent reading session. It was noted that sharing included a summary of the book read or the sharing of interesting facts from a novel's plot or characters from a short story or drama. Discussions arose among the club members, as a result. It was an opportunity for all to engage with other members, voluntarily, at the end of the silent reading session. These discussion opportunities were initiated by the teachers who facilitated the clubs and added enjoyment to club members. Data pointed to the sharing of books that took place in the various reading clubs. Learner participants shared plots, highlights, as well as interesting areas of what they read. They were able to do a synopsis of what they read for their fellow club members. By so doing, they aroused the interest of the other learners who, in turn, would want to read that same book. The learners were keen to even share with those who were not members of the clubs. In this study, the interactions and sharing of readings among learners were part of the activities that brought joy to reading club members. It helped to promote their social interaction.

4.3 READING IS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

4.3.1 Learners' eagerness to attend reading club sessions

Data evidence suggested that the learners were willing to be club members. As evidence of their interest in joining, they would enquire from their teachers about meeting days and meeting times. In addition, if the teacher forgot, learners would remind the teacher of the next reading session.

Table 4.9

Interviews extracts

Miss ZN	<i>Okay, err... when I, when we introduced the reading club, I'm sure some of them, they didn't know what was going to happen, err... so they were excited ..., but, there are learners who love reading. They enjoy reading, they don't have a problem with that...</i>
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(Miss ZN, 2023) (Miss M, 2023)

Miss M	<i>... For example, they will be asking me all the time "Are we meeting today?" Then, if sometimes I've forgotten due to some of the schedules that just come, I will see them coming. ...</i>
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(Miss M, 2023)

Focus group discussion extract

IM	<i>I enjoyed being in the reading club because, at some point I, as an individual, it helped me improve my vocabulary and I've been in this reading club for almost three years from grade 10. I've been reading as an individual. I couldn't get time to meet with other reading club members.</i>
BX	<i>I was not fluent enough. So, reading more, it helped me be fluent in reading .</i>

The first two responses quoted above from teachers' interview data give the reader a point of view from the lens of the teachers, which showed that in the two reading clubs highlighted learners were interested in the clubs and excited at the existence of the reading clubs. They seemed to be interested in reading books. The last two response, from two respective learner's focus group discussions, Miss ZN and Miss N's club, indicates what the learners learnt. Although learner (IM) claimed to have learnt alone, from reading books in the reading club, there was learning of new words, an increase in his vocabulary occurred. For learner (BX), reading books provided in the club helped improve his fluency, unlike when he was involved in the reading club.

4.3.2 Confidence Development

The three teachers stated that the need to improve their learners' confidence and public speaking motivated them to maintain their respective reading clubs. One benefit to learners was an improvement in the level of their confidence. Opportunities for that were activities that took place in reporting at the end of the silent reading session, being comfortable speaking before club members, and expressing their thoughts and feelings about books read. Mrs M wished to instil reading in the learners to help them overcome their language barriers. For Miss M, her wish was for them not to be afraid to read, express themselves in public, and have the confidence to present before others. From the data, Miss ZN noted how much they had gained the confidence to read in front of the class. She attributed those improvements to the existence of the reading club.

The researcher asked the following questions to the three respective teachers:

What are your motivations for wanting to partake in the reading club? What motivates you as a teacher? Responses from teachers suggested that confidence in public speaking is a goal some teachers hoped their learners would have as a result of being reading club members who are constantly reading and improving with time. Data suggests that developing reading confidence in learners would lead to improved public speaking.

A study conducted by Tichenor et al., whose aim was to ensure successful independent reading and help teachers organize reading opportunities, had findings that supported positive changes to

club members' attitudes. The club members met at lunchtime twice or thrice a week to read and discuss books they had selected from those brought by the teacher. They read for twenty-five minutes and enjoyed the social aspect of a book club. The study was conducted on reading clubs formed with learners regarded as "at-risk in reading". Their reading program resulted in positive attitudes among club members. They had higher student engagement in class and increased their reading achievement.

Table 4.10

Teacher Interviews extracts

Miss ZN	<i>...it does not make me happy when I see that some learners are afraid to read in front of other learners. ...partaking in this reading club, makes me happy because I can see that there are learners who want to learn. They want to be able to speak in front of an audience and I know that if they read they will gain some information, and they will also grow their vocabulary. They will be able to pronounce some words ... I also want to see them doing better...yes.</i>
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(Miss ZN, 2023)

Miss N	<i>... and also wanting to see them...uhm... being able to balance everything; being able to balance Science and Geography and reading at the same time; having the confidence to present before people. That is what I want for them.</i>
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(Miss N, 2023)

The above data findings from two reading clubs showed how Miss ZN and Miss N hoped to transform their learners. They wished the learners to develop confidence and lose their fear of reading publicly.

4.3.3 Learners' book reviews

One achievement that emerged from the reading clubs was the consistency of the learners in doing book reviews. Those reviews were done at the end of reading sessions, be they verbal or written in the learners' reading diaries and journals.

Table 4.11

Interviews extracts

Miss N	<i>... So, now, when I gave them the book and I gave them diaries, even this year, to write whatever review they want to write from the book, so, I saw that they got an interest. As a result, when I showed them the books today that arrived, they got so excited for the books. So,... I was seeing there's a lot of difference.</i>
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(Miss N, 2023)

Miss M	<i>The book review went well, for some reason. The learners will go and read and they come and review the book.</i>
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(Miss M, 2023)

Data from the two reading clubs pointed to the success of two teachers (Miss N and Miss M) in ensuring that their learners did written book reviews, as evidenced by the book reading. What is the importance of book review? Whether oral or written, a book review signifies comprehension. A study by Goctu (2016, p. 2) highlighted the importance of reading and its link to comprehension. He explained that reading recurrently helped maintain the long-term memory of the words that students studied. While reading texts, students found out the meaning of words, encountered new vocabulary, or retained the vocabulary they had already encountered. That is important because vocabulary plays a vital role in comprehension and acquiring a foreign language. Without acquiring a sufficient number of words, language learners would not be able to comprehend or acquire the second language. The outcomes were from a study conducted with 42 freshmen university students over eight weeks. The study's experimental group showed better improvement in comprehension skills. Like Goctu's, this study is concerned with the pleasure of reading for

adolescents and its impact on comprehension. Kazemi (2021, p. 1) believes that extensive reading is stress-free, has cognitive value, and can increase the motivation of learners to master a foreign language. He believes that when students read more and comprehend more, their attitude towards the foreign language can also change and they will be motivated to achieve more. This study focused on grade 10 English First Additional Language learners and had similar aspirations of exploring reading clubs for comprehension improvement. Data from learner focus groups showed its impact on comprehension improvement.

4.3.4 Silent Reading and Knowledge Gain

At the centre of the reading club are the books which are to be read by club members. The reading clubs presented opportunities for learners and teachers to engage with written words in books outside of normal tuition. All the participants enjoyed those moments and participated in weekly club meetings on designated days and venues. The clubs consisted of the three teacher participants in charge of their respective clubs and learner participants from the three respective reading clubs. The reading clubs became a social space for learners to choose books, interact, and read silently.

Observations of learners during the reading sessions showed the link between silent reading and the attentive focus of the readers. The learners were deeply engaged in their reading of books. Silent reading appeared to work best when both learner participants and the teachers engaged in it, all reading their respective books, during the club sessions. Reading silently was a moment of uninterrupted, deep-focus engagement with the written words. It allowed the participants to extract information from the written book, be it to learn a new idea or enjoy the fictional novel, drama, or short story they read.

After checking the day's learner attendance register on arrival, the teacher participants would signal the start and end times for silent reading sessions. Learners would begin to read silently and focus attentively on their books. The silent reading opportunities highlighted the value of reading as learners appreciated the texts they chose on their own. At the end of the silent reading session, a teacher's electronic device (a cellphone) would signal that the set time for silent reading had

elapsed. Most silent reading sessions were twenty minutes, with the last ten minutes reserved for reviews, discussions, and feedback.

Reading club observations, a search-gathering tool was used to help respond to the second research question on the benefits of reading clubs for grade 10 FAL learners who participate in reading clubs from the teachers' and learners' experiences. The observation tool used focused on the following items:

The reading venue, the reading club environment, the duration of the reading session, the seating plan in the reading club, what the teacher does and says to learners to promote a love of reading, learners' behaviour that shows their interest and enjoyment of the reading session and other activities done to enhance reading. The researcher's observation findings are state below.

4.3.5 Reading Comprehension Enhancement

Data suggested that as learners read more texts, their understanding sharpened. This was made evident by how they shared what was contained in their reading texts when doing oral summaries, oral reviews, and written reviews on the texts they read. The fact that they chose reading texts and genres of their choice to read may have had a positive bearing on their comprehension enhancement. Most of the learner reviewers were familiar with the contents of their readings. The teacher participants added to learners' comprehension improvement by guiding them and checking for synopses of the texts they read at the end of reading sessions.

4.4 READING CLUBS INSTIL A CULTURE OF READING IN LEARNERS

In all sessions, learner club members were constantly reading across the three reading clubs. They read from the available club books at various speeds. Data from interviews seemed to suggest that even those less interested in reading did engage in reading books, however minimal that may have been. Through participation in reading clubs, a reading culture was instilled in adolescent learners. Those who loved reading and were keen on it were guaranteed a chance to engage in out-of-class reading. From the data, it emerged that, on the one hand, learners had a visible interest in reading. On the other hand, teachers influenced learners to join the reading clubs. Learner club members

shared books with non-members of the clubs. Interview data showed that teachers attempted to promote the love of reading in learners through sharing books, written reviews of books read, and playing reading and writing games.

4.4.1 The teacher participants were glad that their learners were developing a culture of reading

Data suggested that at the core of all the three participant teachers, the need to ensure that their respective learners used the reading club sessions as a platform and a means to promote a reading habit in their teenagers and improve reading skill existed, as an end goal. The observable reading benefits to learners, like information gain, increased vocabulary, pronunciation improvement, and excitement with just reading texts, are what the participant teachers hoped to achieve over some time. Those goals motivated the teachers to partake in the reading clubs as grade 10 English FAL teachers.

Table 4.12

Interviews extracts

Miss ZN	<i>...partaking in this reading club, makes me happy because I can see that there are learners who want to learn. ...and I know that if they read they will gain some information, and they will also grow their vocabulary. They will be able to pronounce some words because,</i>
(Miss ZN, 2023)	
Miss N	<i>Uh...What motivates me is seeing them being excited with reading. That is something that is not popular with township schools, so... that motivates me, ...</i>
(Miss N, 2023)	

Miss M	<i>What motivates me is that...err... as a teacher I have a role to instil reading to my learners. So, when I see them reading, I become to see the goal that we are getting in because they show willingness even during the assembly to read if I instruct them, ...</i>
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(Miss M, 2023)

The above data extracts spell out the motives each of the three reading club teachers had for their learners. The common goal among the teachers seemed to be the need to move their learners in a positive direction toward reading improvement and learning.

4.4.2 The learner participants confirmed that the reading clubs instilled the culture of reading

Data from focus group discussions supports the theme of reading promotion and instilling a culture of reading in clubs. Learners in the respective reading clubs sighted benefits derived from reading books in the reading clubs. In Miss N's club, the participants read more books. Data findings showed improved learners' reading skills and vocabulary expansions; they grew to love reading other genres like novels and short stories. In Mrs M's club, learners improved their pronunciation of words while in Mrs M's club, they experienced that reading books boosted their thinking and writing. Miss ZN's data showed that learners improved their reading speed. It is worth noting that data showed that learners enjoyed reading books on teenagers. The findings align with Vygotsky's idea of locating individual development within material, social, and historical conditions. The learners' development occurred in an organized social activity; the reading clubs functioned as a social condition for learners' development (Lantolf, 2015, p. 2-3).

4.4.3 Reading promotion and feedback in the reading clubs

At the core of the reading clubs is the provision of opportunities to engage in reading. The feedback club members make, written or verbal, after reading their chosen books adds to opportunities to engage in reading. The two subheadings above contain data findings on opportunities for reading and feedback from learners:

4.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 began with an introduction, followed by a detailed interpretation of data findings collected through focus group discussions with learners, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and reading club observations. The interpretation and analysis of data provided the answers asked by the study in three themes: reading is a source of pleasure, reading is a source of knowledge, and reading clubs instil the culture of reading in learners.

The data analysis and interpretation answered the three questions of the study.

Question 1: What are the teachers' and learners' understanding of the nature of reading clubs? The teachers' understanding of reading clubs metamorphosized during the running of the reading clubs. At first, they understood the reading club as an extension of formal class where the teacher chooses material for the learners to read. However, as time passed, the teachers learned that the reading club was an informal space where learners read what they wanted at their own pace. The learners were initially not interested in the reading club because they had no interest in reading. However, as time passed, those who remained in the clubs began to enjoy the activities in the respective reading clubs and developed a love for reading.

Question 2: What are the benefits of reading clubs? The reading clubs instil a culture of reading in learners. Data discussed in the chapter shows that the learners who participated in the reading clubs developed a culture of reading, improving their comprehension, oral speaking, and confidence. A benefit of reading clubs to teachers is new and improved teacher practices. Data from the three reading clubs showed that different practices occurred before the formation of the reading club. The reading clubs offered the three teachers an opportunity and a platform to benefit from improving their practices. Limited research in the area of reading club practices meant that the teachers did not know much about how to go about starting reading clubs since no blueprint or manual existed that tabled a step- by- step sequence and procedure for starting reading clubs. This study has done to add to knowledge on teacher practices by expanding possibilities on how to begin reading clubs and manage them from a teacher's point of view.

A practice that yielded success from interview data is the flexibility in how the teachers, as reading club facilitators, ran their clubs on a day-to-day basis. Different practices existed in the three clubs. Central to all practices was the comfortability of the learners as they engaged in reading for pleasure and enjoyed the entire reading session. Data from one site (Mrs. M's site) highlighted how incorporating language games in reading clubs added great value to the entire reading experience during reading sessions. Such games took place outside the 20 minutes reserved for the silent reading session. Such games range from spelling bees and scrabble to oral reviews. As proven in Miss N's site, incorporating reading and writing games at the end of the silent reading session seemed to have its merits in improving teacher practices. Games seemed to increase learners' enjoyment in the reading club and participation as club members. They made the reading club a welcoming place for reading enjoyment.

Question 3: How do the grade 10 learners experience the reading clubs? The grade 10 learners who participated in the study found reading as a source of pleasure. They enjoyed reading to the point where reading became a habit for them. They also developed confidence, and their comprehension skills improved, as well as their speaking skills. As focus group discussion data showed, most learners attested to positive changes and improvements that occurred to them over time due to being club members. However, when I asked if he enjoyed the reading club sessions, one learner (from Miss ZN's club) who was a competent, avid reader by the time he joined the reading club, replied by saying that he did not. His motivation was that he learned nothing new. My interpretation of that data response is that even for this particular learner who claimed not to enjoy the club but remained attending all sessions, there is a benefit he derived from the club. Although competent, he, like others in the club, had not reached his peak reading competence level. The learner in question was a unique case within my case study. He represented the ideal learner, one who had already mastered the basics of reading comprehension but continued attending out of the love of reading.

Data findings were in line with Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory. The reading clubs have proven the importance of language in aiding the development of understanding and thinking. Social interactions in the reading clubs, in the form of discussions and oral exchanges, helped in the language development of the learners who were reading club members. Reading clubs served as a

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners learnt and were supported (scaffolded) for developing their potential that was reached through the power of language. Both teacher and learner participants exchanged knowledge and ideas within the reading clubs. Data showed that even learners who were not keen on reading were also aided or scaffolded to the next level by teacher participants and peers, be it for their improved love of reading or vocabulary expansion or a newfound love of reading and enjoyment of books. Reading books helped the learners to get closer to attaining their maximum potential, through the power of language, as language developed from social interactions from communication. In exchanging with learners who were reading club members, the three teacher participants, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) played a crucial role in learner guidance on approach and activities in their respective reading clubs. The social construction of knowledge occurred when the learner participants and their teacher participants engaged and exchanged thoughts and ideas through the reading clubs. Learning occurred in the clubs as learners got skilled assistance from teachers. Reading clubs, a mediated environment for collaborative learning, became social spaces for transmitting culture through language.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will synthesize and conclude the study by summarising the key research findings concerning the research aims and questions, as well as the value and contribution thereof.

Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural theory (SCT) was used as the theoretical and analytical framework. Chapter 4 data from interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were analysed and interpreted following Vygotsky's SCT. I will also review the study's limitations, make recommendations for practice, and propose opportunities for future research at the end.

This study aimed to describe the participants' understanding of reading clubs, explain the benefits of reading clubs for Grade 10 learners who participated in reading clubs from the teacher participants, and understand the experiences and opinions of Grade 10 learners who participated in the reading clubs. It used thematic analysis to establish patterns from collected data sets. After data interpretation, major common themes emerged to inform study findings.

5.2 FINDINGS

The following paragraphs give a detailed summary of the study findings as I sought to answer the following research questions:

5.2.1 What are the teachers' and learners' understanding of the nature of reading clubs?

The learners' initial understanding of reading clubs, based on observation data, was that it was a place for enjoyment and for accessing books at will. Learners were excited by that prospect at first. When they later found it an engaging environment for reading books, a few learners stopped attending as the fun element they anticipated was minimal. Interestingly, data from focus group discussions pointed out that for most learners in the reading clubs, the fun aspect was in the actual

reading; books were the source of pleasure. From observations data, teachers felt that the whole reading program was good for the development of learners, to help them with public speaking and to learn new words. Data from interviews agreed with that view; teachers regarded reading clubs as an avenue to help learners overcome the language barrier and develop vocabulary in using English. From the above, data showed how teachers and learners understood the nature of reading clubs.

5.2.2 What are the benefits of reading clubs for Grade 10 FAL learners who participate in reading clubs from the teachers' and learners' experiences?

The data findings showed that for learners, there were benefits derived from reading books in their reading clubs. From the data on focus group discussions, learners listed the benefits they made from the reading clubs. Some learners who initially had no interest in reading found themselves reading books when bored and alone. Some made reading speed progress as they read three books in the research period, yet they used to read one book for the year. What data suggested was that some learners developed their self-confidence. It emanated from learners' interactions within clubs and from the oral feedback provided during the oral book reviews at the end of silent reading sessions. All three reading clubs engaged in this exercise and it gave positive feedback to learners. It allowed them to give summaries and highlights from the books they read. They were able to recommend books to peers to read. By so doing, their reading comprehension levels were getting better. Data showed that reading books helped to boost their thinking and increased their reading skills, fluency, knowledge, writing, and vocabulary from learning new words.

Data on teachers suggested that they made gains in practice. How they managed their reading clubs improved compared to how they managed them initially. Part of the change in practice originated from the learners. Data showed that some learners were the ones who motivated educators to keep the clubs running. Such feedback may have impacted practice as the teachers got motivated to come to the reading clubs and engage in book reading. The feedback session, when learners did their reviews, benefited teachers. As the reviews learners did were voluntary, teachers got to determine whether their learners had done any reading in those silent reading sessions. Oral or

written reviews allowed the teachers to determine the level of reading comprehension progress learners made.

These benefits listed above suggested that reading clubs were beneficial to both teachers and learners,

5.2.3 How do the Grade 10 learner participants experience the reading clubs?

For learner participants, reading clubs offered an opportunity to read books, meet people, and share a common interest in reading books. Reading clubs, data showed, offered them easy access to reading books as the reading clubs were based in schools. Learners did not have to travel long distances to the library anymore. Learner participants found that reading various age-related books in the reading clubs made it a place of interest and enjoyment. Some found reading clubs to be a place that opened their imagination while reading books. One learner (named DZG) stated that reading clubs offered them an escape from their realities. The various experiences listed above reveal what the reading clubs meant to learners and the kind of environment they found them to be.

The results indicate that (i.) reading books does benefit learners who are members of reading clubs. (ii.) There seems to be a visible change in teacher practices before and after participating in reading clubs. (iii.) Silent reading in reading clubs has value for teachers and learners. (iv.) Reading clubs seem to aid in improving the love of reading, although results may vary from reading club to reading club. Further findings show that involvement in reading clubs appears to have social benefits for learners. It appeared that oral book reviews added to the promotion of learning, confidence building, and vocabulary improvement of learners in reading clubs.

This study contributes to theory and practice, however minimal. One achievement of this study is ensuring that learners engage in reading; it increased the number of existing adolescent reading clubs by adding three new ones in grade 10 English First Additional Language (FAL) classrooms. Through this study, I demonstrated the practicality of starting and managing reading clubs. It may serve as a blueprint to emulate for the future establishment of reading clubs of English FAL learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) and lower Phases for reading comprehension

improvement, whose ultimate aim is improved love of reading and new reading habit formation. The study created a platform for learners to engage in reading as they aimed to improve their reading comprehension. For educators, this study served as a reflection opportunity for those who engaged in reading clubs, a chance to compare their old and new practices as alternative means of managing and running reading clubs.

The study is valuable, especially when you consider that this is the era of the internet, screen communication and social media use, where slang takes centre stage at the expense of reading books, writing the correct spelling, writing full sentences and having face-to-face communication that benefits reading comprehension or promotion of the love of reading. It seeks to solve the existing problem at the FET phase of declining reading comprehension levels which negatively impacts results in the exit grade, grade 12. This study explored the benefits of reading clubs to grade 10 learners in English First Additional Language classrooms. Lessons learnt from this study's practice may be used as valuable lessons in helping to create future reading clubs.

The existing gap in the literature is that very few studies have focused on grade 10, a transitional grade from the GET Phase to the FET Phase. This study helps to close that gap by dedicating its focus to the neglected grade 10 classes. It also samples Komani, in the Eastern Cape; not many studies involving reading clubs were conducted in that part of South Africa. Still, not enough studies on reading clubs focused on our Eastern Cape adolescents in grade 10 FAL classrooms. The majority of the literature focused on studies carried out at the primary or tertiary level. Tlou and Snyman (2020) found that adolescents confused reading for pleasure with intensive reading done in class, which revealed severe comprehension challenges and the dearth of the reading culture. Their study echoed what Pretorius and Klapwijk suggested, that when learners struggle to decode, they struggle to comprehend. Chaka's (2015) Letlhabile study, confirmed the need for more reading culture among adolescent learners.

This study does relate to SCT when considering two of Vygotsky's principles, namely, ZPD and Mediation. We can establish connections between theory and practice. The learners joined the reading clubs, having the knowledge and skill to work independently. They were able to read on their own. Through their engagements in the reading clubs, they progressed from the level of their

initial knowledge and skills brought when they joined the clubs and acquired new skills and knowledge through guidance from their more knowledgeable teachers. Through reading in the reading clubs, vocabulary expansion occurred in others. Vygotsky used ZPD to explain the relationship the child experiences between learning and cognitive development. Reading clubs facilitate that process to occur in their members. The presence of the teacher or peers of higher competence levels (the More Knowledgeable Others) allowed for the child's development to a level they wouldn't have reached without guidance. The reading clubs functioned as platforms to scaffold the club members to the next level of reading competence. Looking at mediation, it is crucial to consider that language was its major driver. Through language, all the activities and interactions within the reading clubs occurred – interactions among peers when they exchanged ideas and knowledge and when they interacted, shared thoughts and oral and written reviews with their teachers. Language, a cultural tool, was central to the club members' cognitive development in the three social settings called reading clubs.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I reflect on the weaknesses and limitations of this study. The scope of the study is the first limitation. Only three secondary schools were sampled for data collection. My sample size could have an impact, positive or negative, on the nature of the study findings. Secondly, the findings may be limited as the scope of the research field was small. In addition, the length of time the study took to gather data could be a limiting factor. All data was gathered over a school semester. The time taken to gather qualitative data from three different sites may be a limiting factor in the study's findings. Finally, as a beginner researcher, my lack of experience in gathering, analysing, and interpreting data may limit the depth of the scrutiny of my collected data which may influence results in a particular direction. Working closely and having regular contact sessions with my supervisor for guidance and critique of my work helped me minimize all potential limitations to this study.

5.4 REFLECTIONS ON MY LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

This journey has been an eye- opener. At first, it was exciting to get into this learning space and discover what various theorists and academics think of the same aspect. It was more exciting to learn that the issue I researched was a worldwide phenomenon. The next phase was to shrink and compress all literature readings to meet the requirements of a research proposal. The test of academic writing began, as I had to write to please and meet an audience's standards.

Feedback, both from the supervisor and the ethics committee, helped to sharpen my focus. It was constant feedback that propelled me forward on the research journey. I must state that this journey tested my focus, tolerance, emotions, and mental capabilities. It was a journey demanding great sacrifice and good time management. Isolating oneself at Rhodes University's ISEA and library for prolonged periods proved to be useful and cumbersome at the same time. It was cumbersome in that all other duties, responsibilities, and roles I have had to take a back seat, my family and work included. It was fruitful because the isolation periods' outcomes led to my study gains. I could measure progress and determine how far I was from attaining goals.

I enjoyed the research design workshop, the fortnightly seminar online meetings, and sharing with peers and the ISEA team; they were of great help. The lessons from my studies helped me implement my subject advisory duties at work from an informed point of view. It gave me the edge in terms of content gained and possible application thereof, as I set up additional reading clubs in other schools in Komani. The interest in reading clubs is growing in my community, and more clubs will be established, even after the conclusion of this study.

I refer to my journey as “a spiritual journey”; it tested me to the point of considering dropping out of the course or being so angry and frustrated when I stagnated and progress was minimal. To conquer it, I always had to remember why I started. It is that why that kept me going. I had always to keep my eyes on the prize. Was it worth it? Yes. Would I do it again? Most probably, yes.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

My study's data findings, on the whole, support the use of reading clubs to curb reading comprehension challenges and promote the love of reading. They have detailed the relevance of Vygotsky's SCT as a choice theoretical framework. This study's findings have shown the value of reading clubs and reading. Future studies may consider researching better mechanisms to ensure deeper learner engagement in reading clubs. Such studies may result in a pool of activities to be undertaken to keep learners keen as reading club members. This study revealed that some teacher practices are unique to their particular reading clubs. Another potential study might consider establishing a new methodology for teachers to employ, which could be used for in-service training. It may assist teachers to develop, formulate and manage reading clubs better and uniformly. There is also room for a future qualitative or quantitative study on home literacy. The reading comprehension problems experienced can be traced back to the home, focusing on the availability of reading material at home as well as parental literacy levels.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This study makes a strong argument in advocating for the use of reading clubs as a mechanism to reduce reading comprehension problems. My study findings support using reading clubs for learners to help close the reading comprehension gap in grade 10 English First Additional Language classes. The study posits Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory as a preferred and fitting theoretical lens to view the activities that unfold within adolescent reading clubs. It details how to go about it in practice, how to manage the reading sessions, and states possible behaviours that may emanate from the learners who are club members. For teachers, it points to teachers' practice, roles and approach as they actively participate in weekly interactions in reading clubs. Central to this study is the advocacy for using reading books to help cure the reading comprehension ills and lack of interest in reading, poor comprehension skills, and the dearth of reading culture among adolescents.

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5.6 APPENDICES

18 May 2023

Dr Rethabile Mawela

ISEA

R.Mawela@ru.ac.za

Dear Dr Rethabile Mawela and X. Mbebe

Your application AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BENEFITS OF READING CLUBS FOR LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE, 2023-5155-7628 has been reviewed by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee [EF-REC].

Ethics approval has been granted pending the required Permission Letters being obtained from the organisation(s) listed in your application.

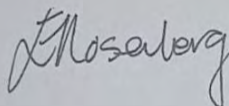
Eastern Cape Department of Education

School Principals

Your application can be downloaded as a PDF version and forwarded with your permission letter request. Please refer to the Applicant User Guide for how to do so.

Please forward the required permission letter/s, once received, to the EF-REC Chair (E.Rosenberg@ru.ac.za) and to the Education Research Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) in order for your approval to be finalised.

Sincerely



Professor Eureka Rosenberg

Chair: Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee



CORPORATE PLANNING, MONITORING, POLICY AND RESEARCH COORDINATION

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex, Zone 6 Zwelitsha, 5608, Private Bag X0032, Bhisho, 5605 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA:

Enquiries: Ms. F. Pakade Tel: 040 608 7170/4001 . Fax :040 608 4372. Email: fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za

Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Date: 08 Sept 2023

Mr. Xolela Desmond Mbebe

8 Tafelberg Road

Bergsig

Queenstown

5319

Dear Mr. Mbebe

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS RESEARCH: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BENEFITS OF READING CLUBS FOR LEARNERS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

1. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research involving three (3) educators with learners who are part of the reading clubs in three (3) selected Secondary schools of Chris Hani West district under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you seek parent's consent for minors;
 - d. it is not going to interrupt educators' time and task;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
 - f. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, provided that an arrangement to do research at the school including getting inside a classroom has been arranged and agreed upon in writing with the Principal and the affected teacher/s;
 - g. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;



- h. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - i. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management;
 - j. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis;
 - k. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary;
 - l. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management upon completion of your research;
 - m. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you;
 - n. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form);
 - o. You submit on a six-monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management.
2. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there be non-compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE and/or legal requirements to do so.
3. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
4. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Mrs. Fundiswa Pakade on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email fundiswa.pakade@ecdod.gov.za should you need any assistance.

T. MASOEU
CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT
FOR ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR : CHRIS HANI WEST DISTRICT

Physical Address: Bathandwa Ndondo Office Park, New Building, Block 1, Queenstown; **Postal Address:** Private Bag X7053, **QUEENSTOWN** 5320, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, **Contacts:** 045 858 8900, **E-mail:** nkosinathi.godlo@ecdoe.gov.za/pelisa.njani@ecdoe.gov.za

TO : MR. X.D MBEBE

FROM : THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR CHRIS HANI WEST DISTRICT

SUBJECT : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

DATE : 01 JUNE 2023

Dear Mr. X.D Mbebe

Receipt of your correspondence in the above subject is acknowledged.

Kindly be advised that the permission is granted for you to conduct research as requested.

I wish you success in your attempts to further your studies.

Thank you

Yours in Education

H.N GODLO
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

02/06/2023
DATE



Customer care line: 086 063 8636
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za





KWA KOMANI COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Est. 1988

1874 Pelem Road,
Queenstown Queenstown,
Tel & Fax: 045 830 2074

P.O. BOX 1159, Mlungisi
5320
email: kwakomanicomprehensive@gmail.com

ACTING PRINCIPAL: VELLEM N.

DATE: 28/09/2023

To whom it may concern: Authorizations letter

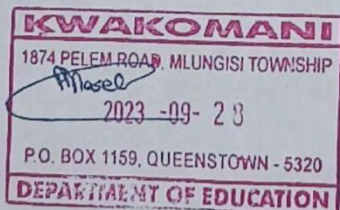
This serves to acknowledge that as KwaKomani Comprehensive School, we grant full permission to Mr Mbebe X.D. to conduct his research at our institution. The above-mentioned institution is giving him the permission to use our learners as participants in his sample as we believe that his research findings will contribute to the education of the learners.

Yours in education

Ms Vellem N

PP

Acting Principal- KwaKomani Comprehensive School



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: EASTERN CAPE
SIXISHE A.H.S.



P. O. BOX 24
EZIBELENI
5326



e-mail address: principal.200600755@ecschoools.org.za

Enq: X. SIYEKA Cell : 083 665 4646

siyekax@gmail.com

DATE: 6 June 2023

TO: MR X.D. MBEBE

From: MR SIYEKA (PRINCIPAL)

Subject: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Mr Mbebe

Responding in the above subject, we as the grants you the permission to conduct your research.

I wish all the best and success in your studies.





EKUPHUMLENI HIGH SCHOOL

P.O BOX 1, WHITTLESEA, 5360

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0408410015

FAX NUMBER: 0408410015



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

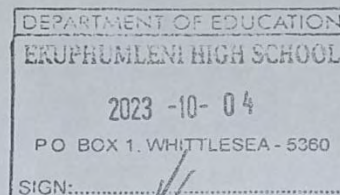
This is to certify that Mr X Mbebe has been granted permission to conduct a research at Ekuphumleni High School on Grade 11 learners based on the conduction of Book clubs.

For more information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in Education

M. Mdlangu

078 013 5553



CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

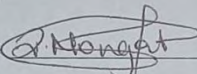
I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking for my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

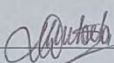
I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

Through this consent, I agree to be interviewed, for my interview to be audio recorded and for my reading club sessions to be analysed.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full name of participant: ZOLA OWWETHU NONGAHO

Signature of participant:  Date: 06/06/2023

Signature of researcher:  Date: 06/06/23

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

I, UNESINE NDOBENI (participant name), confirm that the person asking for my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

Through this consent, I agree to be interviewed, for my interview to be audio recorded and for my reading club sessions to be analysed.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full name of participant: UNESINE NDOBENI

Signature of participant:  Date: 01/06/2023

Signature of researcher:  Date: 25/05/2023

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION: PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

From: Xolela D. Mbebe
Cell: 0842910889
P O Box 263
Queenstown
5320

To: The Parent

Date

Subject: Request for permission to observe your child/ward in the English reading club

The parent/guardian of : Mkhone Lwe

Name of parent/Guardian: Mtombiungile Mkhone Grade:

11th Name of learner: Lwe Mkhone

Name of school : Kwa-komani Tech High

Dear Parent

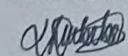
My name is Xolela Mbebe, currently a registered MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 20M2568) at Rhodes University, and a subject advisor for English FET based in Chris Hani West district. I hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school over a period of eight weeks.

The purpose of the study is to explore how out-of-class reading clubs instil love of reading among Grade 10 English First Additional language learners. The reading club is made up of members who come together to read books of their choice, within a set of rules, in silence. Participating in this study means that your child/ward will be observed and audio recorded during the English reading club but I will not communicate with them directly. Your child/ward is free to terminate their consent to be part of the study and no punishment or victimisation will be instigated if they decide to withdraw. If you allow your child to participate, please complete the form below.

The project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Rethabile Mavela from Rhodes University. Her email is r.mavela@ru.ac.za. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 0842910889. This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and received ethical clearance. If any concerns arise during the data collection process, the Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted at

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics
Coordinator: ethics-committee@ru.ac.za t: +27
(0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707
Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy
Road, Makhanda, 6139

Yours sincerely



Student's name: Xolela D. Mbebe

Phone: 0842910889 Email: xolela.d.mbebe@ru.ac.za

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT/ GUARDIANS

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, Ntombilungile Mkhone..... give consent for my child,
Mkhone Lwe..... to be observed and audio recorded during his/her
English reading club.

I am fully informed and I understand all the procedures and processes as well as the purpose of the
study.

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Learner participant's assent form)



Project Title: An exploratory study of the benefits of reading clubs for learners in English First Additional Language classrooms

Researcher's name: Xolela D. Mbebe

Name of learner: Phembo Zubenathi Hope

1. Has the researcher explained what she will be doing and wants you to do?

☒ YES ☐ NO

2. Has the researcher explained why she wants you to take part?

☒ YES ☐ NO

3. Do you understand what the researcher wants to do?

☒ YES ☐ NO

4. Do you know if anything good or bad can happen to you during the research?

☐ YES ☒ NO

5. Do you know that your name and what you say will be kept a secret from other people?

☒ YES ☐ NO

6. Did you ask the researcher any questions about the research?

☒ YES ☐ NO

7. Has the researcher answered all your questions?

☒ YES ☐ NO

8. Do you understand that you can refuse to participate if you do not want to take part and that nothing will happen to you if you refuse?

☒ YES ☐ NO

9. Do you understand that you may pull out of the study at any time if you no longer want to continue?

☒ YES ☐ NO

10. Do you know who to talk to if you are worried or have any other questions to ask?

☒ YES ☐ NO

11. Has anyone forced or put pressure on you to take part in this research?

☐ YES ☒ NO

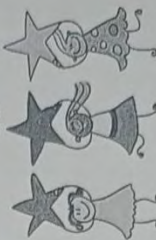
12. Are you willing to take part in the research?

☒ YES ☐ NO

Phembo Zubenathi
Signature of learner

Date

30-8-23



Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics
Ethics Coordinator: ethics-examiners@ru.ac.za t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707
Room 220, Main Admin Building, Dredy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

Interview Questions

1. You established a reading club for your adolescent learners. From your interaction with the learners during the session, do you think they are receptive to the new reading club?
2. At which point during the reading sessions did you observe that the learners are enjoying or not enjoying involvement in the club?
3. What are some of your motivations for wanting to partake in the reading club?
4. Walk me through the reading club session. Which aspects of the reading club went well? Which ones did not go according to your plan? Are there any differences between the way you approach extensive reading now and the way you used to approach it before the reading club existed?
5. In your opinion, how does the reading club instil the love of reading in your learners? Elaborate.

Focus Group Discussion tool

SITE NAME:		DATE OF VISIT:
		DURATION OF VISIT:
DISCUSSION FOCUS / QUESTIONS		RESPONSES
1.	Do you enjoy being members of the reading club(s)?	(YES/NO)
2.	If yes, what activities did you find most interesting during reading sessions? If not, what did you not enjoy about being a club member?	

3.	Which genre(s) / type(s) of books did you enjoy reading the most? (e.g. Novels / short stories/drama/magazines/nonfiction)	
4.	What did you think of your interaction with your teachers, during reading sessions?	
5.	In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate	

5.6 Appendices

Interview Questions

6. You established a reading club for your adolescent learners. From your interaction with the learners during the session, do you think they are receptive to the new reading club?
7. At which point during the reading sessions did you observe that the learners are enjoying or not enjoying involvement in the club?
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Focus Group Discussion tool

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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) 1@Ekuphumleni

Researcher	Good afternoon, guys.
Participants	Good afternoon, Sir

Researcher	Alright, welcome to your FGD. This session will take between thirty to forty five minutes. It won't be longer than that I hope, but, it depends on what you have to say.
Participants	Yes, Sir.
Researcher	So, yours is to relax and give me your honest responses. Secondly, you're not going to tell me your actual names, you are going to tell me your initials, the first letter of your surname and the first letter of your name. If you are Nomsa Madubedube you'll be NM. You don't have to give me your name and surname because of anonymity, we're not supposed to know who you are, but, we want to capture the points around that. I've got five questions or five points we're going to discuss about. The first question I'm going to pose is: Q1. Do you enjoy being members of the reading club? Q2. If yes, what activities did you find most interesting during the reading session. If you're saying no, what did you not enjoy about being a club member? Q3. Which genres or types of books did you enjoy reading the most? An example, did you enjoy the novels or the short stories or the drama or the magazines or non-fiction? Q4. What did you think of your interaction with your teacher, Miss N, during the reading session. Opinions – we've got different answers, we are fifteen. Q5. In your opinion, what is your view, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Then you'll have to explain that, you'll have to elaborate ON THE FIVE QUESTIONS. Are they all clear?
Participants	Yes, Sir.
Researcher	Any questions for clarity?
Participants	No, Sir
Researcher	Fine, thank you, guys. I'll start with the easy one, number one: Q1.Did you enjoy being members of the reading club? I'll take answers from anyone. Should we say, just to have a check, how many are saying yes and how many are saying no.
Researcher	The yeses - how many are saying yes, by show of hands. Okay, if you are all saying yes, my interest is - why are you enjoying, what is it that you are enjoying here? I'll take answers from anyone. Just give me the first letter of your name and surname.

SMY	I enjoyed the collectiveness I got, based on the reading session.
Researcher	Okay. Others, what's on your mind?
AM	I kind of like the moment where...I like the fact that everybody when we were reading was quiet. So, it's more relaxing and more easy to understand what you're reading when everybody was quiet. So, that's what I liked.
Researcher	I got that, the quietness and reading. Go ahead, TT
TT	I think it's like the way we read, like somehow, depending on the person, every particular person has that kind of way like where he or she reads. I love the kind of books that we read?
Researcher	Okay, Additions? Should we go person by person? Just give me any answer. What is it that you enjoy with being a member of the club? Initials?
NN	I enjoy reading because I find peace on reading. The more I read and I feel like I just wanna read and keep on reading.
Researcher	Right, all answers are correct.
BX	I love being a member of the book club because it helped me with my reading, and it helped me enjoy books more than I actually did.
Researcher	How did it help you with your reading?
BX	I was not fluent enough. So, reading more, it helped me be fluent in reading.
Researcher	Alright, thank you. AS, over to you.
AS	I like the kind of book that we have. Like, the first time I've got or I had <i>ibook</i> (a book) about the girl who had lost her mother, like, it was very traumatizing, let me put it like that way. But now I've got <i>ibook</i> (a book) about happiness. It feels like the girl is happy, so I like the books.
Researcher	Okay...okay. Tell me is that book a novel or a short story or a play?

AS	A novel
Researcher	It's a novel in your case. Thank you, over to you. Initials?
EM	EM.
Researcher	EM. Right, Over to you, EM.

EM	I enjoy reading my book; it was all about teenagers.
Researcher	Okay. So, you're focused on books with teenagers?
EM	<i>Ja</i> (yes).
Researcher	What kind of a book is it- novel or short story? What is it?
EM	It's a novel
Researcher	Okay. What's the title?
EM	One moment everything was easy and the next it wasn't.
Researcher	Alright, okay. Thank you. Initials?
Participants	ZD
Researcher	Fine, over to you, ZD
ZD	I enjoy being a member of the book club because... when we meet and we are reading nobody is laughing; we are not laughing at each other and there is peace. That's what I'm saying.
Researcher	Thank you. Initial?
Participant	ZP
Researcher	Over to you, ZP

ZP	I enjoy the book club because it help(s) us to become more fluent in English and to become freely to read in front of too many people.
Researcher	Okay... okay. Have you started reading in front of people?
ZP	I wasn't familiar with that before.
AN	I enjoy being in the book club because I wasn't a fan of reading so it helped me to see that reading isn't a bad thing and I was a slow reader. So by being around others...
Researcher	So, how is your pace now, are you still slow, how is it?
AN	No, I'm a bit faster.

Researcher	Alright, thank you. Go ahead KM.
KM	I like being a member of the book club because I got to know how the author had experienced his emotions in the book.
Researcher	Wow! Interesting. Could you explain that? Can you explain that further about how the author...
KM	The type of book that I'm reading is a novel, so the guy was the guy that got dumped by his friends and he actually left him with dogs that were not his. The dog was the guy's ex-girlfriend's dog and it was pregnant, but, the guy lied about the dog being pregnant. He said he's a male and he was not pregnant and all of that.
Researcher	Share with us the title of that book and the author.
KM	The dogs of Christmas.
Researcher	Who's the author there?
KM	W. Bruce Cameron
Researcher	Bruce Cameron; thank you. Over to you. Initials?

SY	SY, Sir. I enjoy being a member of the book club because I enjoy reading different books.
Researcher	So, it's about the variety of books?
SY	Yes, Sir.
Researcher	Which ones did you choose – what type did you choose?
SY	A novel, Sir.
Researcher	Only, strictly reading novels?
SY	Yes, Sir.
EQ	EQ
Researcher	Go ahead EQ.
EQ	I enjoy being a member of the book club because I was uhm...

Researcher	Relax.
EQ	I enjoy being a member of a book club because uhm...
Researcher	Okay, do you want to say it in Xhosa and translate?
EQ	Okay. I enjoy being a book club member because I wasn't... I was afraid of reading in front of people but now I'm not, and my vocabulary is improving day by day.
Researcher	Did I leave someone else? Yes, over to you.
LB	I enjoy reading at the book club because the way that we read there it's so peaceful and when you are there you are so comfortable. There is no one judging you, saying nasty things about you when you are there, like you can't speak English well and as you read, as you improve your vocabulary even at the class my English has improved.
LG	(nods that she is enjoying the reading session)

Researcher	Q2. If YES, what activities did you find most interesting during the reading session in that 20 - 30 minutes? What happens that you like in the reading session – activities. Let us list these things. I will take any answer.
SMY	The comfortability and relaxation we got.
AM	The quietness and the peace. Everyone was focusing on his or her book.
TT	Discussion and sharing. Each person would discuss his or her book. Then by that way we would see how interesting each other's book is.
NN	
BX	
AS	
EM	
ZD	
ZP	
AN	
KM	
SY	
EQ	
LB	
LG	
Researcher	Q3. Tell me about the genres or the type of books that you were reading the most. Which ones did you find interesting?

SMY	Short stories
AM	Shot stories
TT	Short stories
NN	Drama
BX	Novel
AS	Novel
EM	Novel
ZD	Novel
ZP	Novel
AN	Novel
KM	Novel
SY	Novel
EQ	Novel
LB	Novel
LG	Novel
Researcher	Q4. What did you think of your interaction with your teacher, Miss N, during the reading session? How do you think of the way you were relating with your teacher? We want your opinion.
SMY	I think it's nice because she is interested in every single book that each one of us has.
AM	She was an observant person and we would feel comfortable and freely around her. She would make us comfortable, she would give us chances to freely read. She would complement us when we read well.
TT	
NN	
BX	
AS	
EM	
ZD	
ZP	
AN	
KM	
SY	
EQ	
LB	
LG	

Researcher	Q5. In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate

EQ	I read different books and they are relating to my age. They are quite interesting. I really enjoy reading them.
SY	My reading skills were improved because I grow on reading more books.
KM	Yes, it did, Sir, because I didn't have the love that I have for reading now, so it helped me love books more.
AN	Yes it did, Sir, because when I first got my novel it was all about drug dealers. The novel made me love reading and also improved my vocabulary.
ZP	Yes it did because at first I wasn't a fan of reading, but, now I am because I realized that when you read more oftenly you become more fluent in English and your vocabulary improves.
SMY	The reading club helped me a lot with my vocabulary and the love of books because it helped me to read everything I saw. That's all I can say.
ZD	Yes, it did, Sir because I wasn't also a fan of reading book and it also helped me improve my vocabulary. That's all I can say, Sir.
EM	Yes it did because I wasn't familiar with books with no pictures; I was always reading books with pictures.
AS	Yes it did help me. Before I didn't find any kind of book interesting, but now I find them interesting.
BX	Yes, sir, it did because I didn't read as much books as I read now. I used to take a year reading one book; but now I've read three books.
NN	It's like back in my past I was interested in reading books. So, I feel like I've got the interest again.
TT	Before I joined the book club, I was a person who was not familiar with reading, but, after I read two books, I started loving the book club and I started loving reading.

AM	At first, before I joined the book club, I had books before, but, I had zero interest in reading. So, as soon as I joined here, I got familiar with reading, I read more. Now I have a chance to read my books. I really love reading now.
LG	Yes, it did. I was not interested in reading books before, but now that I'm in the book club I actually noticed that it is interesting.
LB	Yes, it did. Before I joined the book club, I didn't love reading because I have to travel a long distance before I get to the library so I can get books. So, now I can get books by going to the teacher and ask for a book to read. So, that makes me love booking.
Researcher	Okay... love reading books, okay. So we're solving a problem, in terms of distance, we're bringing the library to you now?
LB	Yes.
Researcher	Great. Fine, fine! I think everyone has had their chance to give me their opinion on this. Any last words, before we conclude? Any last words from you
Participants	No, sir.
Researcher	Okay. What did you have for lunch?
Participants	Rice. Chicken wings.
Researcher	Great...okay. So, your stomachs are still full; that's why you're quiet.
Participants	No, sir.
Researcher	You are still full, that's why you're quiet. You still want some more? No ways, <i>Ninentshulube</i> (you've got worms). Right! Thank you for this half an hour, guys. That brings us to the end of the focus group discussion, but, the club does not stop just because I'm stopping my recording. The club continues and Miss N had just showed me a stack of books that you got yesterday. Thanks a lot, guys
Participants	Thank you, Sir.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD2)@Sixishe transcribed

Researcher	Good day, guys. Welcome to your focus group discussion. The aim of this discussion is to find out information from you. I want to know what you think and how you feel about the reading club. I have five questions for you that I want us to discuss: Q1. Did you enjoy being a member of the reading club? (YES/NO).
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	Q2.If yes, what activities did you find interesting during your reading session? If no, what is it that you did not enjoy about being a club member? Q3. Which types of books or genres did you enjoy reading? For an example Q4. What do you think of your interaction with your teacher - what do you think of your facilitator, Miss M? Q5. In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading?
Researcher	Let's start – Q1. Did you enjoy being a member of the reading club?
AM	Yes, I did.
DZG	Yes, I did enjoy.
SR	Yes, I did enjoy it.
YM	Yes, I did enjoy.
NN	Yes, I did enjoy.
MN	Yes, I did enjoy it.
IR	Yes, I did enjoy.
DM	Yes, I did enjoy.
KG	Yes, I did enjoy it.
JH	Yes, I did.
MM	Yes, I did.

SN	Yes, I did.
NT	Yes, I did enjoy it.
HM	Yes, I did enjoy it.
IK	Not really.
Researcher	Q2. If YES, what activities did you find most interesting during the reading sessions- things that happened?
AM	For me, it was the spelling bees, the book reviews and the debates, etc.

DZG	For me as ZDG, it was the debate and spelling bees.
Researcher	Your response must tell me about what happens in the club, during that reading session.
SR	For me it was interesting because we tackle, like the words we don't know, finding new definitions and debating or reviewing the book, about what we were reading about.
YM	For me, actually, it was mostly the debating because it actually increased our vocabulary and to out-speak in public.
NN	For me it was the book reviews because we had to learn more about stories and books.
MN	For me, it was the book reviews because, like, it helped others who didn't know about the book learn more about the book. They learnt something they didn't learn before.
IR	For me, it was the debating and the book review because it really helped us to enlarge our minds.
DM	For me, it was the debating because we learn how to tackle problems.
KG	For me, it is the book review to help people to learn more about the book, what is inside out the world and we can learn more things we don't know.

JH	For me, it is the debating of the story and the spelling.
MM	For me, it was the book review because it helps because...
Researcher	Okay...Just the book review?
MM	...and the spelling bee as well.
SN	For me, it is the book review. It helps us to learn more about the book, even if what we didn't know, we knew.
NT	For me, it was... it taught me to pronounce meanings and write it.
HM	For me, it is the spelling; to know how to pronounce a name and I can say, also, it is the book review to know about the book.
IK	Since I said not really, I need to give you a reason. So, my reason was, to be honest I didn't focus more on myself when I was focusing on the book

	club. So, I lost myself in different ways mentally, psychologically, emotionally, not physically.
Researcher	Okay, So, does that mean you were reading while losing yourself that way?
IK	Yes I was reading. I was focusing more on the books, not on myself.
Researcher	Thank you for that answer, guys. That was question number 2. Which brings us to Q3. Which types of books or genres did you enjoy reading? For example, novels, short stories, drama, newspapers, magazines.
AM	I enjoyed reading novels and dramas.
DZG	I enjoyed reading novels – romance.
SR	I enjoy reading novels and short stories.
YM	I enjoyed reading novels and quite some short stories, <i>ja</i> (yes).
NN	I enjoy reading novels and drama.

MN	I enjoy reading novels, drama and short stories.
IR	I enjoy reading novels, short stories and also drama.
DM	I enjoy reading newspaper articles and magazines.
KG	I enjoy reading short stories.
JH	I enjoy short stories and drama.
MM	I enjoy reading short stories and drama
SN	I enjoy reading short stories and novels
NT	I enjoy to read short stories and novels
HM	I enjoy reading drama and novels
IK	I enjoy reading fictional fantasy, novels, drama and rom-com.
Researcher	Interesting- you read a lot hey.
IK	<i>Ja</i> (yes).

Researcher	Which brings us to the fourth question. The fourth question is: Q4. What did you think of your interaction with your teacher, Miss M, during the reading club session? So, I want your opinion about her, when the club was in session. What do you think of her , based on what happened when we started, a couple of months back or	
AM	Me, I think that she's patient with the learners that's kind of slow and she's calm. I think that's all.	
DZG	I think Mrs. M is a very encouraging person. She does not give up on us even when we are lazy to come to the book club.	
SR	I think she's more than patient with us because sometimes we are not eager to come here, but, she encourages us to come and gives us more reasons to do this.	
YM	I think she's quite phenomenal because judging from, like, she puts up with us every single time, encouraging us, putting more focus on us, to come and ,like, come to the book club, mostly, and read.	
NN	I think she is patient with us and puts fun in the club even when we don't want to come. She convinces us that this is not about reading books, it's about having fun with knowledge.	
MN	I think she's fine because, sometimes, she used tell us, on short notice, that we should attend the book club and sometimes she told us that we should attend after school, of which, after school, we are all hungry.	
IR	I think that she's doing phenomenal work because she always encourages us to read our books and she always takes us through the books by doing book reviews.	
TM	I think she's very independent and strong because it's not always easy to motivate or encourage students, especially young ones. We easily get bored, at times.	
KG	She encourage us to do more good and teach us to go through the book and know how to imagine out of the world, out of the book, inside the book and motivates us to do more good and acknowledge knowledge and be wise more because some people don't know English and don't know more things. When you go through the book and figure out how to be wise and know what life is about.	

JH	I think she's a nice person, she's patience with us. She teach us more things like English.
----	---

MM	I think she's very kind, funny and impatient. I just love her.
Researcher	Patient or impatient?
MM	Patient with us.
SN	I think she's loving and caring.
NT	For me, I think she is kind, loveable and an encouraging person to go to the book club and read.
HM	She encourage us and all I can is that she put more pressure to us to go the book club.
Researcher	Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
HM	It's a good thing.
IK	I think that she's affirming and she's a kind person and somehow she is patient with us, and sometimes she encourages us to come to the book club, although sometimes we don't want to.
Researcher	Aha! Thank you for that.
Researcher	Right!!That brings us to question number five, we've answered for question so far. Q5. In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate.
AM	The reading club helped to improve my love for reading because at first I didn't like to read the books, especially the novels, but, now since the reading club has started I became more interested in reading books.
DZG	Yes, the reading club helped me to improve my love for reading because, at times, I feel like I am in the book as a character and it helps me to get out of the real world. Thank you.
Researcher	Which book is that - which genre is that?
DZG	Novels – romance.

Researcher	Have you got a book that comes to mind or a character?
DZG	Jay

Researcher	Alright...alright, Jay.
SR	The reading club helped me to improve the love of reading because... and sometimes I imagine myself in the book and it makes me, like, learn new words and have a greater mind and be a critical thinker of what's going to happen next if I stop the book I'm reading.
Researcher	Okay! Is there a word that you want to share with us - a new word that you picked up from reading?
SR	The word I learnt is arteriosclerosis, which means the ancient worlds which are hard and unbreakable.
Researcher	Repeat that word for me.
SR	Arteriosclerosis.
Researcher	I'm also learning.
YM	Well, for me, it's quite...yes, I love the reading because, like, for instance, there's a book I'm currently reading right now. It's called <i>Tenth anniversary</i> . So, the book is quite interesting because it's quite similar to what I go through as a person through life and the challenges I face. So, it's like... it's a goddess that's with me, like, through the way that I'm going through. So, <i>ja</i> (yes), it's quite phenomenal, actually.
NN	The reading club helped me because I learnt that there's more to a story than just reading it and it increases my knowledge, vocabulary. So, even when I'm reading, maybe, a fantasy, I feel like I'm in the fantasy.
MN	Not really, because the reading club, we usually have competitions, book reviews. When you're reading you have pressure that on Friday I have to do this book review for everyone. Reading was a hobby to me, but now it felt like a job. So, not really.

IR	Well, for me, I used to read novels before I joined the book club. Well, the book club did help me to fall in love more with other genres of novels because I was reading fantasies most of the time because of the adventures and mysteries there. I actually got motivated to read more dramas.
Researcher	So, which other genres do you read now?
IR	Fiction, romance, action, drama, etc.

TM	Yes, I enjoyed the book club because it helped me to know, to learn more about the places where we live in. It helped us a lot; we knew things that we didn't know. It opened our imagination world.
KG	The first time I read this book, I didn't like it at all, but, the times goes in when I was reading it. I find myself more interesting on it and then I get too addicted on it. So, now as a result I'm reading <i>The lost island of Tamarind</i> . So, I find myself so addicted in it. I ant even go a day without reading it.
JH	I think the book club helped me a lot. It helped me to understand some words.
MM	The book club really boosted my thinking and my love for reading since I'm a shy person, I don't like to talk a lot. So, I just grab my book and read. That helped me a lot.
SN	I think the book club had really helped me a lot. It has really increased my vocabularies.
NT	And for me, the book club helped me a lot with reading and stuff, like, at home now I read everything I see.
HM	For me, reading club helped me to improve pronouncing words and, also, I have learned more about reading a books, <i>ja</i> (yes).
IK	In my opinion, the reading club did not just improve my love of reading, it even improved my love of writing because now I'm on an ongoing session of writing my own book which is called <i>Dark despair</i> , and, it helped me improve on my vocabulary, on the way I understand people and somehow I hate it because it reminds me that in the real world there is no happily ever after, like in the fairytales.

Researcher	Okay. Let me just ask, what genre are you writing?
IK	It's a fictional, fantasy story.
Researcher	Okay. Are you in the story?
IK	Somehow I am.
Researcher	Alright. I'm looking forward to reading that book, when it's published. Alright. Thank you, thank you for your time, guys. That covers the five questions I wanted from you. In fact, you did exactly what I expected, just being honest, giving me your thought and your opinions about the clubs. Remember, the ultimate aim is to improve the functionality of these clubs.
Participants	Yes!
Researcher	Thank you for the time spent recording. The club does not come to an end, but, this recording does come to an end. So we'll proceed with the club. See you in the next session.
Participants	Yes!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD 3) @Kwa-Komani

Researcher	Good day, guys.
Participants	Good day, Sir

Researcher	Welcome to your focus group discussion. We are beginning now. The purpose is to get your inputs around your involvement in the reading clubs; that's the whole point because I need to get information from you which we will analyze later to have a sense of what you truly think of the reading clubs. I have five questions for you: Q1. Do you enjoy being a member of the reading club? (YES/NO). Q2.If yes, what activities did you find most interesting during your reading session? If no, what is it that you did not enjoy about being a club member? Q3. Which genres or types of books did you enjoy reading the most? For an example, it could be dramas, novels or stories or newspapers. Q4. What do you think of your interaction with your teacher, during the reading club session? Q5. In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate
Researcher	Let's start with question one. The first question is: Q1. Did you enjoy being members of the club? .I'd like to get inputs from all of you, individually.
TM	Yes, I did, Sir.
Researcher	Is there something specific that you enjoyed?
TM	Yes – reading
NS	Yes, I enjoyed being part of the group.

Researcher	Okay. What did you enjoy there?
NS	When we shared the stories.
LD	Yes
Researcher	Tell me, what did you enjoy about it?
LD	Reading
Researcher	The actual reading?

LD	Yes.
Researcher	Okay.
MK	No
Researcher	Great. Would you like to explain that?
MK	We did not interact much in the reading club, that's why.
Researcher	Interaction between yourself and the other learners?
MK	The teacher and students. We didn't meet much
ES	Yes, I enjoyed being in the reading club because I got to meet other people who were also interested in reading
JB	Yes, I enjoyed because it made us unite and I loved reading with others and we share ideas.
Researcher	Thank you for that.
AV	I enjoyed because I got to exchange my love of books with others
Researcher	Thank you , AV for that
ST	I enjoy being in the reading club because it is where we share our ideas and it where we showcase our talent.
Researcher	Okay, fine.
IM	I enjoyed being in the reading club because, at some point I, as an individual, it helped me improve my vocabulary and I've been in this
	reading club for almost three years from grade 10. I've been reading as an individual. I couldn't get time to meet with other reading club members.
Researcher	Initials? Remind me again.
IM	IM, Sir.

SD	Yes, because we are sharing stories and we are sharing books...and it's talented.
Researcher	Okay, alright. Thank you.
Researcher	Q2. If you said YES, what activities did you find most interesting during the reading session? Things that were happening you found interesting as a club member.
TM	I didn't find any, Sir, because we didn't get much time to interact with each other, time to read books.
Researcher	So your answer to question one is no longer yes, now. Is it a yes or a no?
TM	<i>Ja</i> (yes), it's a yes.
Researcher	... But you're complaining about limited time?
TM	Yes, Sir.
NS	I enjoyed the part where we shared books and told each other the stories we have read.
Researcher	Okay, thank you.
LD	There are two in particular. The first one isn't necessarily an activity, but, I actually like the fact that we didn't interact much because I'm more of a lone wolf, Sir.
Researcher	So, how did that help you, the fact that you were not interacting much with others?
LD	Interaction with other...I don't really get along with a lot of people, Sir.
Researcher	In terms of being in the club...or did the club help you to remain alone?
LD	Being in the club? It didn't change anything. That's why it's a plus, because nothing changed.
Researcher	Alright. Great. MK, if you said yes to question 1, what did you enjoy?

LD	No, I said no, Sir.
Researcher	If you said no, what did you not enjoy about being a club member?
MK	It's that we, as a book club, didn't interact much. So, we didn't get the opportunities to exchange books and our opinions about that specific book, Sir.
Researcher	Oh! Great. I get you, Okay, thank you.
ES	I enjoyed being a club member because I got to share books that I loved or enjoyed with others.
Researcher	Alright.
JB	Since we didn't do much, I loved reading and share ideas and learning more from others.
Researcher	Okay, thank you, JB.
AV	For me I enjoyed reading new books and hearing other people's opinions on the books and just learning more.
ST	I enjoyed being in the reading club because we got to share our ideas, what I think and what others think about certain books.
Researcher	Okay...I get that.
IM	My answer is going to contradict my first answer. My answer is going to be no, I didn't enjoy being in the reading club much because we didn't get a chance to exchange our views about how we feel about this reading club or, rather, for the books that we were reading together.
Researcher	So, you are saying that was limited.
IM	Yes, Sir.
Researcher	Okay, thank you. Tell me about the activities, if you said yes, what you enjoyed.
SD	I enjoyed to be a reading club member because we shared ideas and stories and the books that we love.

Researcher	Who chose the books? Did you choose your own books?
SD	Yes, we choose own books.
Researcher	We answered the first two, which brings us to question three Q3. Which genres or types of books did you enjoy reading the most?
TM	Short stories
NS	Novels and drama.
LD	Short novels.
Researcher	Is there a specific book that comes to mind, maybe, one that you can think of?
LD	The moon is down by John Steinberg.
MK	Short stories.
ES	Novels and plays.
JB	Short stories and drama.
AV	Just novels.
Researcher	Is there a reason why you're reading one specific genre?
AV	I think it's just a genre I enjoy.
ST	Novels and short stories.
IM	Novels, Sir.
SD	Novels and drama.
Researcher	You're reading quite a diverse... your choice is wide.
Researcher	Q4. What did you think of your interaction with your teacher, during the reading session?

TM	Nothing , Sir
Researcher	What did you think, you must have an opinion. Explain...

TM	No, Sir because we didn't get time to connect. I don't know what kind of person is she.
Researcher	Are talking personally or as a club teacher?
TM	No, Sir, as a club teacher.
Rsearcher	Okay. I got that.
NS	I got to connect more with the teacher.
Researcher	Can you explain that? How did you connect?
NS	With the teacher I connected in such a way that, before I joined the reading club, I didn't know how to interact with other people, but, when I entered the reading club, the teacher taught me how to interact with other people.
Researcher	Alright, thank you.
LD	I liked it most of the time, it was pretty interesting. I would have liked to interact with her, Miss N,
Researcher	Have you got an example?
LD	Just get to know her as a person, then the reading club provided a good excuse.
Researcher	Alright, I got it.
MK	I am actually pleased because I got to know who Miss N really is and she is really nice.
Researcher	Great. Can you explain that - the niceness or can you give an example to show that she's nice or something that she did?
MK	She bought me food.
Researcher	Oh! Because of food, not because of the books. Great!!
ES	We interacted, but not that much. There wasn't a lot of interaction. I got to know her more.

Researcher	What did you get to know about her?
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ES	I'd say she's a kind person and when she's doing something, she's dedicated to it because she's always looking for us as the reading club and doing all these things, and bringing us books.
Researcher	Thank you, ES. JB what do you think?
JB	We didn't interact that much. What I like about her, she taught us to be united and also to learn to speak with others.
AV	I actually really enjoyed my interaction with the teacher because it helped me realize that teachers are not only here to teach us but they're also here to just help us extend our vocabulary and just help us find our interests.
ST	We interacted because I got to know her better and she always encouraged us to unite and to know each other better.
IM	The interaction was sublime, Sir, because she's got good communication skills. She does not raise her voice towards us and she's also a nice person, Sir.
Researcher	Explain to us how nice she is, her niceness.
IM	As I said, Sir, she doesn't raise her voice towards us. Yes, Sir.
Researcher	Alright, thank you.
SD	Our interaction with the teacher, the teacher is as others they say, she is a nice person. She helped us to, how to connect with other people and communicate.
Researcher	That's how she helped you.
SD	Yes, Sir.
Researcher	Q5. In your opinion, did the reading club help improve your love of reading? Elaborate

TM	Yes, Sir, because I was so excited when I heard there's a teacher who cares about reading because a lot of students, they don't love reading, Sir. They spend a lot of time watching television, Sir. So I was so proud that our teacher, Miss N, started a book club.
NS	Yes, because now, even when I'm sitting alone and bored, I think of having a book and read. When I'm bored I always look for a book and read. I'm more interested in reading, more than before I came.
LD	No, not really. I've been an avid reader even prior to joining the book club so there's no change. What did improve though was my opinion of the rest of the club members.
Researcher	Okay. Would you like to share that opinion or not share?
LD	I have no problem sharing it.
Researcher	Your answer is about club members as a club – do you like to tell us without pointing at specific people? Just give us a general idea.
LD	They are better readers than I thought they were and I'd say slightly more intelligent than I thought they were, as well.
MK	Yes, it did, Sir. Like, ever since I entered the reading club, like, there's a wide range of books I can choose from and read. I discovered that I do love reading, Sir.
Researcher	Didn't you have that love before?
MK	Not really, Sir.
ES	No, because I've always loved reading, it didn't change anything.
Researcher	So you're still as you were before you joined the club, is that what you're saying? You haven't learned anything in these weeks?
ES	Yes. Because I've always loved reading.
Researcher	So, your answer is not really, it's a no.
ES	It's yes. I can say is no, because nothing has changed.

JB	Yes, it did. It made me love more to read, want to learn more about the stories that I read, like <i>The questions of life</i> .
Researcher	The questions of life, is that a book?
JB	Yes
Researcher	Who's the author?

	I didn't wrote it.
Researcher	Is that a novel, short story or drama?
JB	It's a short story
JB	I've learned a lot in that book. It tells me much about what I love. Since I'm a Christian, it tells more about Christianity, how to be Christianity, how to dress and how to act with others
Researcher	Alright, thank you.
AV	For me, it really did help because it gave me an opportunity to be able to read even here at school. I got to meet people who shared the same interests as me.
ST	It helped because I used to read a book for four to five weeks. Now, ever since I joined the reading club, I read a book for two weeks. The interests- I'm more interested in reading now.
Researcher	So in your case what has improved, is it the reading speed?
ST	(nods)
IM	Yes, sir, the reading club did help me improve my love for reading because I didn't like reading, but, ever since I read <i>The Curry morning</i> by the Guy Butler.
Researcher	Can you remind me of that book again?
IM	<i>The Curry morning</i> by the Guy Butler.

Researcher	SD, you are the last one.
SD	Yes, it improves me to have more love for reading and...
Researcher	Alright, okay. Thank you for that answer. Thank you guys for the five responses- it's what you think and all answers are correct. I'm glad you did not do it for me and be afraid of saying no, because I'm here. What we want is an honest answer. Which brings us to the end of this focus group discussion. This is not the end of the club, it's just that it's the end of the recording, so, the club will live after the recording. So, ours is to grow this club and expand it to all greats. Any last words?
ES	God loves all of you.
Researcher	Thank you for that. Amen.

OBSERVATION 1@EKU_23/08/23

FOCUS AREA	OBSERVATIONS MADE
1. WHAT KIND OF SETTING (VENUE) IS IT?	• Venue – a home economics room with tables and chairs • The arrangement (seating) of furniture is similar to a class group setup. Chairs are around tables.
2. IS THE ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE?	• Space is ample; there is plenty of room to move around. • Noise – it is a quiet environment • Light – electricity is available and there are plenty of big windows. • Privacy – the room is in a separate block, away from administration and teaching blocks.
3. HOW LONG IS THE READING SESSION?	30 minutes for the entire session.

4. HOW IS THE SEATING PLAN (ARRANGEMENT) DURING READING?	• Seating formation – there are two rows of parallel desks (tables) in the room. Each desk (table) has chairs around it which form a semi-circle. • The teacher's table faces the learners' tables.
5. WHAT DOES THE TEACHER DO OR SAY TO LEARNERS TO PROMOTE LOVE OF READING IN THE CLUB?	• Teacher's activity - The teacher issues new books to choose from for reading, if the participant has finished reading the old one. She takes her seat and reads silently, facing the learners. • Teacher's words – The teacher asks if the participants have finished reading the books. She requests silence from all the participants and states the session duration for silent reading. At the end of the session, she requests the participants to share their reading, especially those who have started reading new books. She enquires whether they enjoyed the text and asks them to share orally what is interesting in it. Participants are requested to write reviews of the book read in their notebooks.
6. WHAT BEHAVIOUR BY LEARNERS SHOWS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN AND ENJOY THE READING SESSION?	Learners' activities – They choose their books to read, from the catalogue of novels and stories provided by the teacher. The books are displayed on the side table. The participants confirm when asked, if they have finished reading their books. Silent reading then ensues. Pencils are used as book pointers and for underlining areas of interest in the book read. They engage in focused, deep reading of the books; they are unaware that the allotted thirty minutes of reading time has elapsed. An alarm (cell phone) rings to signal the end of the silent reading session. At the end of the session, participants share by giving an overview or summary of the books read on the day. They give their opinions about the books, whether it (novel or drama) is interesting or not. Code-switching is allowed, from Xhosa (mother tongue) to English, and vice versa to enhance the reviewing and reporting.
7. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES DONE TO ENHANCE READING?	No.

OBSERVATION 1@KK_27/07/23

FOCUS AREA	OBSERVATIONS MADE
1. WHAT KIND OF SETTING (VENUE) IS IT?	• Venue – a classroom library with shelves and a lot of books. • Arrangement (seating) of furniture – there's a central table with a chair; shelves are on either side of the table.
2. IS THE ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE?	• Space – there's ample room in the library. • Noise – it is silent inside; outside voices can be heard. • Light – electricity is available and there are big windows. • Privacy – a secluded space.
3. HOW LONG IS THE READING SESSION?	30 minutes for the entire session.
4. HOW IS THE SEATING PLAN (ARRANGEMENT) DURING READING?	• Seating formation – seats are near the windows, close to the bookshelves. • A central table and a chair are adjacent to the seats.
	• Learners are seated on chairs and bottom shelves engaged in reading their books silently. Others opt to stand near shelves as they read books.
5. WHAT DOES THE TEACHER DO OR SAY TO LEARNERS TO PROMOTE LOVE OF READING IN THE CLUB?	• Teacher's activity - The teacher guides learners on how to check the synopsis of a book by reading its back outside cover first. She allocates them space to check books of their choice from the shelves. • Teacher's words – the teacher determines the duration of time for silent reading. She reminds the participants to read silently for twenty minutes. The teacher asks those learners who have completed reading books to swap them, as preparation for the next session.

6. WHAT BEHAVIOUR BY LEARNERS SHOWS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN AND ENJOY THE READING SESSION?	Learners' activities – they share by having an oral discussion on how much they have read, individually. They help each other choose interesting books by recommending the next read to their peers. The learners choose their reading material and books (novels). They engage in independent, silent reading.
7. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES DONE TO ENHANCE READING?	• The teacher encourages them to bring others or friends to join the club. • The teacher announces that a new set of books will be brought in the next reading session.

OBSERVATION 1@SIX_31/08/23

FOCUS AREA	OBSERVATIONS MADE
1. WHAT KIND OF SETTING (VENUE) IS IT?	• Venue – a classroom. • Arrangement (seating) of furniture – four rows of desks face the chalkboard.
2. IS THE ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE?	• Space – enough to move around in between the desks. • Noise – slightly audible voices from learners playing outside.
	• Light – electricity is available. • Privacy – a classroom next to the Principal's office.
3. HOW LONG IS THE READING SESSION?	30 minutes for the entire session.
4. HOW IS THE SEATING PLAN (ARRANGEMENT) DURING READING?	• Seating formation – all desks face the chalkboard.

5. WHAT DOES THE TEACHER DO OR SAY TO LEARNERS TO PROMOTE LOVE OF READING IN THE CLUB?	• Teacher's activity - The teacher issues reading books. An attendance register is circulated and then filed. • Teacher's words – the teacher checks learners' comfortability where they are seated. She announced the departure time for the day. At the end of the reading session, she thanks them for coming and encourages daily reading at home. She requests them to prepare for book reviews for the next reading session. Learners are allowed to ask questions.
6. WHAT BEHAVIOUR BY LEARNERS SHOWS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN AND ENJOY THE READING SESSION?	Learners' activities – they sign the attendance register on arrival. Silent reading ensues after signing the register. The learners read books of their choice. A few learners whisper as they engage in silent reading on their own. One learner needs assistance from the teacher, seeking clarity on a word she read in her book.
7. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES DONE TO ENHANCE READING?	The teacher calls the learners by their pet names and refers to the researcher as “<i>tatomkhulu</i>” (grandfather) – a humorous moment. As the session concludes, learners do an oral prayer, in unison.