

Rhodes University

Department of Education

**Making visual literacy meaningful in a rural context:
An action research case study.**

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on a collaborative action research case study into the teaching of visual literacy to Grade 10 learners in a rural high school in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Visual literacy is one of the critical aspects that have been incorporated in the teaching of English First Additional Language as required by the National Curriculum Statement (Grade 10-12), which has been implemented in Grade 10 as from 2006.

With the aim of improving learners' performance in visual literacy I designed a visual literacy unit that consisted of lesson plans running over 7 periods in 10 school days. In implementing the unit the learners were first grouped and then exposed to visual grammar and visual texts and then they critically viewed such texts and designed their own. Data was collected daily in the form of individual learner journals, researcher's journal/diary, and copies were kept of activities done by learners (individually or in groups). Also, two teachers were invited as non-participant observers to each visit a lesson. Learner focus groups were conducted and critical friends were interviewed, tape recorded and transcribed. A camera was used to take still photographs to show learner activities in groups and during group presentations.

The data revealed that visual literacy could be taught meaningfully in a rural high school as the learners could identify, cut, paste and discuss elements of visual language and they finally designed their own advertisements in groups. In the analysis of data the following factors emerged as hindrances for successful teaching of visual literacy in a rural high school: lack of resources; learners' lack of a foundation in visual literacy from Grades 7-9; and problems revolving around time management and pacing.

As action research comes in spirals, this research represented the first one and the researcher found the study an eye opener and a foundation to build on in the second spiral (that is not part of this research).

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is give an introduction to my research project, which was intended to improve the way I teach visual literacy in a rural high school. In this chapter, I will contextualise my study within the field of visual literacy, give my motivation for the research, describe the research site, discuss the research goal and present an overview of the following four chapters of the thesis.

1.2. Context of the study

Visual literacy is one of the new elements that have been incorporated in the new curriculum for English First Additional Language. This curriculum was implemented in Grade 10 in 2006. The 2006 cohort of Grade 10 learners were the first learners to have experienced Outcomes Based Education (OBE) throughout their education (i.e. since its inception in Grade 1 in 1998). The new curriculum envisaged a learner who would be “imbued with values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 5).

Visual literacy was first described by Debes as “a group of vision-competences a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences” (1969: 27, as quoted in International Visual Literacy Association, 2002). Visual literacy has become an increasingly important aspect of literacy in a period in which the nature of literacy has undergone change. In this regard, Kress wrote, “Texts which would once have been continuous written prose, printed in black print, with limited variety in font now involve a complex interplay of written text, images and other graphic elements” (1996: 15). This points to the importance of visual literacy, which will be discussed in depth in chapter 2.

Visual literacy encompasses a wide scope of texts that includes: “film images, photos, computer graphics, cartoons, drawings, paintings” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 81) but for this research I chose advertisements because they “are found everywhere” (Prinsloo and Criticos, 1991: 295) even in a rural place where the research was done.

There is a fairly extensive literature on teaching and learning visual literacy but little so far with a specifically South African focus. Similarly there has been little research done in South Africa on teaching visual literacy; I found only one S.A. thesis on teaching visual literacy and only one on teaching media literacy. First-world research - on say middle-class students in media- and technology-rich environments – may not be always transferable to say disadvantaged rural children. My research is focused on finding meaningful ways of teaching visual literacy in a disadvantaged rural setting.

1.3. My motivation for this research and discussion of the research goals

Having completed my Bachelor of Arts in Education majoring in Education, History and English I started teaching in 1993 in a rural high school. Even though I started teaching both History and English, I was later required by the school management to teach only English from Grade 10 to Grade 12, at which level teaching was generally examination driven. Focusing only on English, I became exposed to the difficulties of teaching it as a second language. I started attending workshops, in-service training and annual conventions, which enabled me to meet the challenges that confronted me.

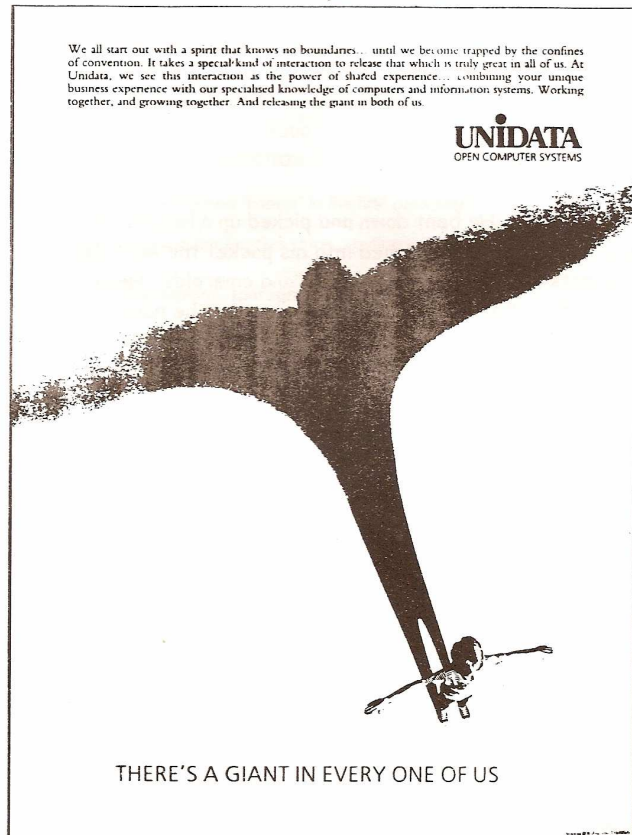
Without realising it, English became part of my daily life, as I was always eager to know how and what to teach, and to find out how other teachers managed it. As a result, I was able to observe an improvement in my learners. I began teaching English using the Ex-Transkei Education Department English Syllabus, but after South Africa became a democracy in 1994, a new educational system came into being which was intended to integrate the various racially-divided education departments, and at that stage the Transkei became part of the Eastern Cape. At the same time, a new transitional English syllabus was introduced.

The syllabus and examiners changed and aspects like visual literacy were introduced into the language paper, which both my students and I found difficult to answer. As an illustration, in the November 1999 English Second Language Third Paper, my Grade 12 learners came out of the final examination room and asked me what the possible answers were to question 5, as shown in the following extract from the examination paper below.

Figure 1.1 – Example of HG Visual Literacy Question

QUESTION 5

Study the advertisement below and then answer the questions on it.



To be honest, I did not know the answer, as I was in a sense visually illiterate. This was a trigger to me to learn about visual literacy in order to avoid embarrassing situations in front of my students. I strongly desired to investigate meaningful ways of teaching visual literacy in a rural high school so as to improve my performance and empower my learners in their interpretation of what they see.

Having identified myself 'incompetent' to impart to

learners the necessary visual literacy skills, I did an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising in English Language Teaching (ELT) in 2003-2004. The ACE programme stimulated my interest further, and I desired an in depth study that would equip me, on one hand with knowledge about visual literacy in its totality, and on the other, with the practical teaching expertise. This pointed me in the direction of action research as suitable for my research study.

Out of this desire, I chose to focus on Grade 10 and formulated my research goals that were:

- To implement collaborative action research with my learners and evaluate a unit of teaching/learning on visual literacy.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 5.1 | What is the child facing? | [1] |
| 5.2 | How do the words in capital letters at the bottom of the advertisement link with the picture? | [2] |
| 5.3 | Why has a child been used in the picture? | [1] |
| 5.4 | According to the advertisement, what do we need to do in order to become giants? | [2] |
| | | /6/ |

- To improve my performance in teaching visual literacy and gain a better understanding of the National Curriculum Statements for English as an additional language (FET Band) in this regard

1.4. Description of the research site

The high school in which I teach is located in a rural village in the Butterworth District of the Eastern Cape. Two teachers started the school in rondavels in 1971 as the extension of a junior senior secondary school. The school is three kilometres from the nearest small town and is at the centre of many poverty stricken villages. As the second high school to be established in the district, it has been the centre of education in the area and leaves a trail of professionals. The buildings consist of 10 classrooms, a combined principal's office and a storeroom, a clerk's office, a domestic science hall, a science laboratory and a staffroom with two heads of department offices. The school was connected to electricity in 1994 and has two televisions, two VCR's, a DVD Combo and an overhead projector.

At the time the research took place, the school had sixteen teachers who all speak Xhosa¹ as a home language and their teaching experience ranged from three to thirty three years. Their qualifications ranged from a two-year diploma to an Honours degree and some were studying to upgrade their qualifications to keep abreast with the current developments in education. In English as an additional language, the 10 classes depended on three teachers who also taught one or two subjects like History and Mathematical Literacy in other classes.

At the time of the research project, the school had an enrolment of 451 learners who all spoke Xhosa as their home language and dressed in a prescribed school uniform. Many learners at the school come from the surrounding villages whilst a few are from the small town nearby. Learners walk distances ranging between 150 metres and 6 kilometres to and from school. Many learners come from extremely poor families where the main source of income is government grants for old age or disability. A few parents hawk in the village to make a living. Children from this background struggle to pay the R150.00 per annum school fee. A few students are from families whose parents are

¹ : Following Mesthrie (2002), the term 'Xhosa' is used throughout the thesis rather than the alternative 'isiXhosa'.

teachers, nurses, policemen and business people and are exposed to viewing of television, reading of magazines, newspapers and novels, and travel on vacation.

1.6. Overview of the thesis

This section provides an overview of the five chapters that form the core of this thesis.

Chapter one places the study on visual literacy in context, explains the motivation for the research, discusses my research goals, and provides a description of the research site.

Chapter two, the literature review, will provide a theoretical framework in which this research on visual literacy can be located. It discusses the nature of visual literacy; ways of reading visual texts by looking at some aspects of visual grammar; it explore ways in which media uses visual images; the teaching of visual and media literacy; and finally, how visual literacy is realised in the new curriculum.

In chapter three, the methodology chapter, I describe and justify the research design and procedures that I used to carry out this research.

In chapter four, I present an analysis and discussion of the lesson unit on visual literacy, which forms a critical reflection of what happened during the implementation of research.

Chapter five, the discussion of findings, presents a discussion of common issues that emerged from the analysis in chapter 4 of the teaching and learning that occurred in a lesson unit on visual literacy. It will focus on the conclusions drawn, limitations of this research and recommendations including that another cycle of action research be conducted with the new intake of grade 10 learners. It will also give other suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, the goal of this research was to work together with my learners to find meaningful ways in which visual literacy can be taught in a rural high school through a collaborative action research approach with a unit of teaching/learning on visual literacy. Additional goals were to improve my own performance in teaching visual literacy and give me a better understanding of the National Curriculum Statements for English as an additional language (FET Band).

This chapter will provide a theoretical framework in which this research on visual literacy can be located. I begin by discussing the nature of visual literacy. Secondly, I discuss ways of reading visual texts by looking at some aspects of visual grammar. Thirdly, I explore ways in which media uses visual images. Fourthly, I focus on the teaching of visual and media literacy. Finally, I show how visual literacy is realised in the new curriculum.

2.2. What is visual literacy/media literacy?

2.2.1. The changing nature of literacy

Most dictionaries define literacy as “the ability to read and write”. In the first half of the 20th century, a literate person was someone who was familiar with letters and literature, and anyone who was not was categorised as illiterate (Christie & Misson, 1998: 2). Over time this has changed and in the worldwide debates around literacy there is disagreement on what it means to be literate, how to be literate and how to measure it. Literacy has come to be viewed more broadly as “the ability to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate using a wide range of resources including text, visual, audio, and video sources” (Information age inquiry 2005: 1).

Literacy is a social phenomenon that is able to change both “the nature of human societies and is changed by them” (Christie & Misson, 1998: 4). As western societies reached higher levels of literacy, a demand for new literacies arose due to technological and economic advancements. Kress (2002: 140-143) acknowledged the changing views of what it means to be “literate” by suggesting a shift to the “world as shown” and the

development of new ways of reading texts in different “media landscapes” where different logic and patterns may apply. He further stated that visual and multi-modal texts “shape the imagination of the current generation around communication” and “the use of image as a fully representational mode has an effect on the very syntax of the language” (Kress, 2002: 166-167), which will be discussed in the sub-sections to follow.

Although, literacy and language are two inseparable things that a society cannot do without, the acquisition of literacy is not like the acquisition of language. All human beings are born with a natural ability to speak a language and it is essential for communication. Noam Chomsky stated, “the deep structure of the language is biologically innate” (in Moore & Dwyer, 1994:7), whereas the ability to read and write a language is acquired through a process of training and learning. Similarly, the case with visual literacy is that although the ability to see is a natural human condition, the ability to encode and decode meaning of a particular visual image, is a skill that needs to be explicitly taught.

Literacy, therefore, extends beyond reading and writing to include viewing and designing, and being critically aware of language as a human construct. The word “literacy” is now coined together with other words to refer to a specific form of literacy. As an illustration, there is: verbal literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, environmental literacy, and critical literacy to mention a few. Each of these literacies has got its own definition relating to its own field of expertise. Grouped together they have come to be known as ‘multiple literacies.’ Unsworth (2001: 10) explains how they are categorised:

Multiple literacies can be differentiated not only on the basis of the channel and medium of communication (print, image, page, screen), but also according to field or subject area (history, geography, science, maths etc).

It is common to find one person having combined some of these literacies and that person will be multi-literate.

2.2.2. The understanding of visual literacy

The origin of the concept of visual literacy can be traced from a number of disciplines, which include: visual arts, art history, aesthetics, linguistics, literacy, philosophy,

psychology, perceptual physiology, sociology, cultural studies, media studies, instructional design, semiotics, communication studies and educational technology (Bamford, 2005: 2). John Debes first used the term “visual literacy” in 1968, in relation to the use of visual images as educational aids for teachers, librarians and media experts. Debes’ early work on the use of visual aids in education led to the first National Conference on Visual Literacy in 1969, which was the forerunner of the present day International Visual Literacy Association. At the 1969 first annual conference, visual literacy was defined as follows:

Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication. (International Visual Literacy Association: 1)

Visual literacy has been given many definitions by different people at different stages of its development as:

- The ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision-making communication, and learning (21st Century Skills, 2005: 1)
- The ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through visible actions or images, as well as to be able to convey ideas or messages through imagery. (Aanstoos, 2003: 1)
- The ability to construct meaning from visual images (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo & Colbert, 1999: 146)

From the above definitions of visual literacy, one returns to the debate of what it means to be literate or illiterate. It is not possible to refer to a person who can see as visually illiterate because each individual within their own socio-cultural, learning and working environment acquires different types and levels of visual skills and intelligence to survive, function and interact effectively within those environments (Griffiths, C. 1997: 5).

As an illustration, a peasant woman can be perceived as ‘mathematically illiterate’ but still be able to sew a complicated geometrical pattern, or a street newspaper vendor who cannot pass Std 2 can easily give a motorist change. Similarly, with regard to visual literacy individuals with little or no experience of print can distinguish natural images like the markings on the skins of cattle or patterns in beadwork or woven materials. People, therefore, acquire a basic visual competence as part of their everyday lives (Prinsloo & Criticos, 1991: 57-59). However, if the same person was to be placed in a different environment with a different culture or work situation, she/he might not have the necessary skills to assign meaning to visual images.

Dondis (1973: xi) wrote that:

The successful interpretation of pictures and the whole crux of visual literacy itself is dependent on all users sharing an agreed upon code, a code being the system into which signs are organised. All codes, including pictorial codes, rely on agreement amongst their users on their basics: the units they contain, the rules by which these units may be selected and combined, the meanings open to the receiver, and the social or communicative function they perform. Such agreement is usually reached by convention (culture). Inevitably, the final concern of visual literacy is whole form, the cumulative effect of the combination of selected elements, the manipulation of the basic units through techniques and their formal compositional relationship to intended meaning.

All in all, visual images do not bring meaning to the people but the people bring their own interpretation to the text according to their prior knowledge.

To be visually literate, Bamford (2005: 1) wrote that a person should be able to:

- Understand the subject matter of images;
- Analyse and interpret images to gain meaning within the cultural context the image was created and exists;
- Analyse the syntax of images including style and composition; analyse the techniques used to produce an image;
- Evaluate the aesthetic merit of the work;
- Evaluate the merit of the work in terms of purpose and audience; and
- Grasp the synergy, interaction, innovation, affective impact and/or feel of an image.

The great need for visual literacy came with the invention of the camera, which according to Dondis (1973: 7) formed:

...The final connecting link between the innate ability to see and the external capability to report, interpret, and express what we see, without having to have special talent or extended training to effect the process.

In our modern life, “most of what we know and learn, what we buy and believe, what we recognise and desire, is determined by the domination of the human psyche by the photograph” (Dondis, 1973: 7). Kress (2002: 1) pointed out that modern life is more about “the world shown than the world told”.

2.2.3. Visual literacy and media literacy

Visual images are everywhere as shown in dance, film, fashion, hairstyles, exhibitions, public monuments, interior designs, lighting, computer games, advertising, photography, architecture and art to mention a few (Bamford, 2005: 1). Apart from being seen live in our surroundings, these visual images are common sights in the media. That gives visual literacy and media literacy a thin line in between them; hence the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably in this research.

Media literacy has been defined variously as:

- The ability to sift through and analyse the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day. It’s the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media— from music videos and Web environments to product placement in films and virtual displays on NHL hockey boards. (Media awareness network, n.d.)
- The ability to read, analyse, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of media forms (television, print, radio, computers, etc.). (Web definitions for media literacy, n.d.)
- The skill of understanding the nature of communications, particularly in regard to telecommunications and mass media. The skill entails knowledge of the structural features of the media, and how these might tend to influence the content of the media. (Media literacy, n.d.)

Media consist of "mediums" such as books, newspapers, billboards, magazines, comics, mail, packaging, jokes, radio, television, movies, software and the Internet (Critical

Media Literacy, 1994: 2). In this thesis, the word media is used to refer to “mass media”, which is used to communicate with a mass of people.

The main purpose of media text (Fielding, 1996: 406-407) is to:

- Inform the mass of people about basic things like weather forecasts or local and international news bulletins.
- Persuade customers to use an organisation’s service, to buy a product or to make a donation.
- Entertain an audience with the aim of attracting prospective buyers in which advertising can be done.

Media texts consist of the following four basic codes: sound, written language, moving images, and still graphic images. With the exception of sound, the other three codes are basically visual (Day, 2001: 9) and that is where the link comes with visual literacy. A media text is likely to use one or more of these codes to get the message across.

All media productions embody "points of view" about the world. Whether these viewpoints are consciously intended or not, they manifest themselves through a variety of choices by the people who make them (Critical Media Literacy, 1994: 3). Questions surrounding the media's point of view will lead us to ask:

- What story will be told (or reported)?
- From whose perspective will it be presented?
- How will it be filmed (camera placement, movement, framing)?
- How will it be edited? (What will be included and what will be left out?)
- What sort of music will be used, if any?
- Whose voice will we hear?
- What will the intended message be?

Visual literacy has a critical element in that it calls for an awareness that language is not free or neutral but language is bound by society or depends on those who design such texts.

2.2.4. Visual representation

Visual images are a representation of reality because “visual images are never innocent or neutral reflections of reality...they represent for us, they offer not a mirror of the world but an interpretation of it” (Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, 2002: 2). All media texts are framed in the sense that the designer decides what to put in and what to exclude in the picture and how to present that. In the process, the world is interpreted according to the designer’s views. As many people get exposed to media texts, they accept these visual texts as the real things without critically examining them.

Moore & Dwyer (1994: 16) wrote

Movies, photographs, commercials, and even printed statements are representations of reality. They are metaphors and therefore must be understood as metaphorical points of view. The ability to read visual images is an essential skill even for those who can read and write well in verbal language.

The majority of visual images are photographed, whether to present a moving or still image, and that is where representation occurs (this is to be discussed in detail under visual grammar below).

2.2. Reading of visual images

Reading visual images depends on composition, which Quin & McMahon (1995: 22) defined as “the way in which the various elements within an image are structured and placed in a relationship to each other and to the viewer”. The composition of pictures used in advertisements is “thought out in a great detail, with attention to every object, every figure and every aspect of the setting” (Day: 2001, 20). This section will focus on the design elements used in the research lesson unit: camera shots, camera angles, foreground and background, colour, texture, lighting, focus and juxtaposition. The section will also look at non-verbal communication signs that commonly appear in visual images. In explaining what each of these design features is, I have included pictures to make a point clear and avoid using a lot of verbal words; a picture is said to be equivalent to a thousand words (Bamford, 2005: 2).

2.3.1. Description of composition features

2.3.1.1. Camera shots

There are six camera shots that range from a very close up to a very long shot, which are explained below (as in Beard, Hortrop, Prinsloo & Sullivan, 2002:93-94):

- A close up shot makes the person's head occupy the whole photo frame, showing facial features and expression.
- A very close up shot would show even finer detail than the close up. It does not show the whole head but cuts through the head or the chin or otherwise.
- A medium close up shot would show a person from the head, shoulders and chest.
- A medium shot shows the person from the hand to the waist, showing hand movements.
- A long shot shows the whole subject with limited background. If it is for a human being, it shows the whole body revealing the person's action.
- A very long shot shows the subject in its surrounding and establishes the scene.

Given below are visual examples of three camera shots taken from the same person.

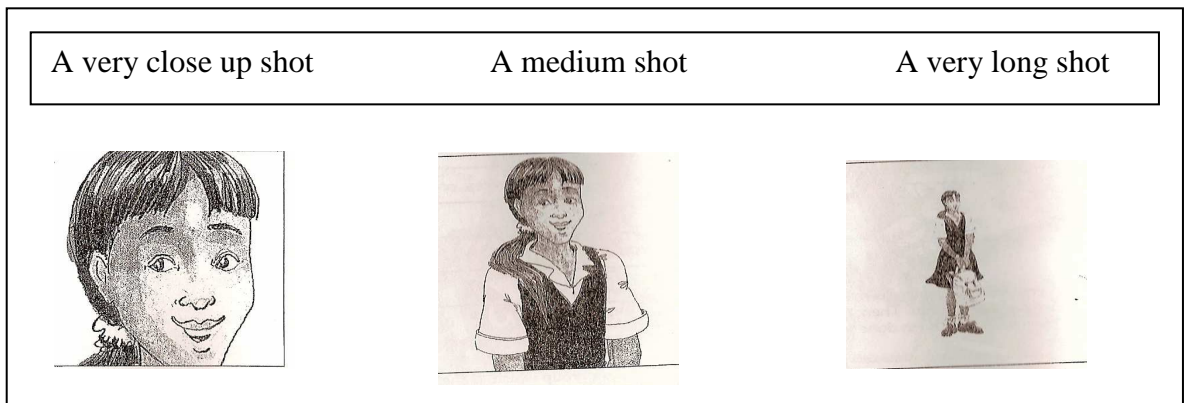


Figure 2.1 – Camera shots

2.3.1.8. Camera angles

Camera angles are an “important technique for creating a relationship between the audience and the subject in film, television and photography” (Quin & McMahon, 1995: 20). The relationship created might make the viewer feel inferior, superior, or equal to the subject in the image, as explained in each camera angle below (as in Day, 2001: 28):

- In a low angle shot, the camera is placed below the subject photographed, making the subject look down on the viewer. This makes the subject of the image look dominant and powerful.
- In a level angle shot, the camera is placed at the same level as the subject being photographed and the subject photographed looks straight at the viewer.
- In a high angle shot, the camera is placed above the subject photographed, making the subject look up at the viewer. The subject in the image will appear small or inferior. It is used to give a general view of something and can make the reader feel less involved.

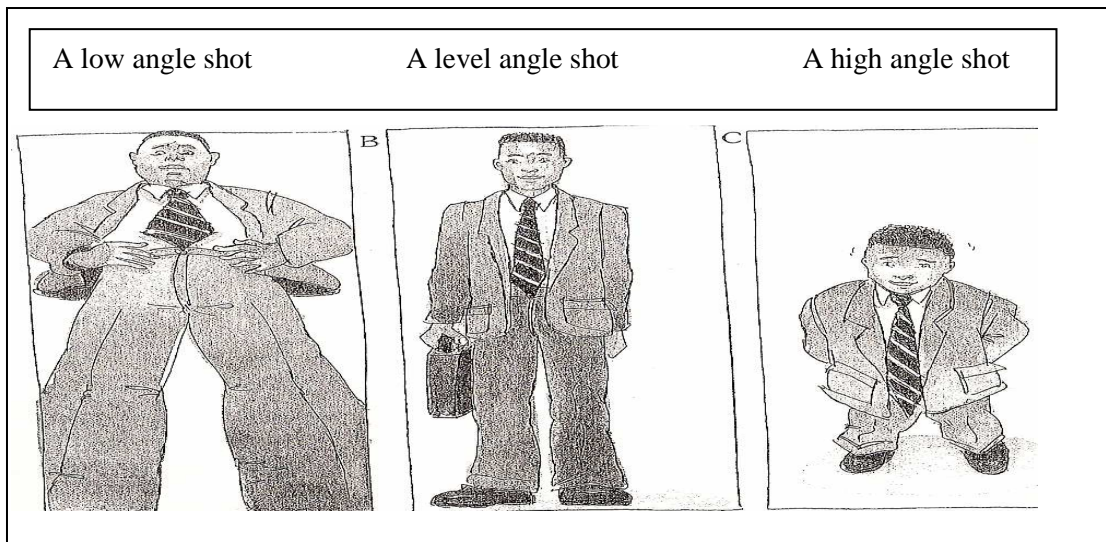


Figure 2.2 – Camera angles

2.3.1.9. Foreground and background

An advertised product in photo frame is mostly presented with other related images. “The designer carefully selects the surrounding of the target product to make it look real” (Rumboll & Pilbeam, 2005: 139). Foreground refers to the image(s) that appear before the target product; whilst background refers to image(s) that appear behind the advertised product. Both background and foreground are strategically added to give a feeling of reality.

2.3.1.10. Colour

Colour is “one of the most emotionally evocative artistic elements in which the use of particular colours in a visual image may represent particular moods or feelings” (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo & Colbert, 1999: 148). For example, hot or warm colours such as red or yellow can suggest excitement whereas cool tones of blue or green may suggest calm. The symbolic meaning attached to particular colours depends on the context and cultural perspective in which it is used.



Figure 2.3 – Meeg advertisement

The way western culture assigns meaning to colour is different from eastern culture. For example, when you see a Black South African woman wearing all black outfits, it is known that such a woman has recently lost her husband; whilst in the Arab world it is common attire for women to wear all black clothes. In western culture, red in one visual image could refer to danger whereas it could mean passion in another one (Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, 2002: 6). If you look at the Meeg Bank advertisement in figure 2.3., the use of a green colour as shown in the lawn and the evergreen conifer trees suggests new growth, money and cheerfulness, whereas other connotations of green, such as health and fertility, may not be applicable in this advertisement.

2.3.1.11. Texture

Texture refers to a visual design in which the viewer could visually determine “how the image would feel if it were touched, and the image could appear to be smooth or rough, hard or soft, heavy or light, sharp or flat” (Moore & Dwyer, 1994: 170). Smooth, soft, light and flat textures will create a different feeling from rough, hard, heavy and sharp ones. For example, smooth, calm scenery of the sea will create a different impression to a rough, stormy sea. A good illustration of texture is shown in the Meeg Bank advertisement above and the Toyota Hi-lux advertisement in figure 2.4. In the Meeg Bank Advert, a well preserved lawn and bushy trees with tiny branches and green leaves

presents a smooth, soft and light environment for the bank, which is attractive and invitational to the viewer. This texture could suggest that accessing a car loan from this bank is affordable and without any problems. The Toyota Hi-lux advertisement, on the other hand, presents a rough, hard, heavy and sharp atmosphere by placing the car near a construction site. Even though this might be seen to be negative, the designer of the advertisement carefully selected that view to depict the car as rough, hard and heavy, the qualities that workmen look for in a vehicle like this.



Figure 2.4– Toyota Hi-Lux advertisement

2.3.1.12. Lighting

Lighting refers to the light in the image, which could be natural or artificial. An example of a camera that shoots without a flash in the sun will present an image with natural light whilst if the image is taken with a flash it will be artificial. Also, filters can be used to make daylight look like moonlight. Lighting is a visual code in which the degree of brightness and the direction of the source of the light create meaning to the viewer. For example, a



Figure 2.5. – Purity Mabele

dim light can be used to indicate a scene that takes place indoors or at night and it could create an evil scene, whilst a bright light can create a scene that suggests a sense of hope and gives a dramatic feel to the image. “A softer light can create a romantic feeling” (Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, 2002: 6). For example, the Purity Mabele advertisement in figure 2.5. shows a bright light that has been taken artificially to give viewers hope for their children.

2.3.1.7. Focus

Focus refers to “sharpness or clarity of an image within a frame” (Rumboll & Pilbeam, 2005: 139). An example of this can be found in the Fiat Strada advertisement in figure 2.6. In the background there are shapes of skyscrapers that are not clear because the car is moving. Sometimes other aspects that are not important in the advertisement are not given focus. In the Purity Mabele advertisement



Figure 2.6 – Fiat Strada advertisement

above, presenting the boy in sleeveless attire showing his muscular arms whereas the man’s muscles are put out of sight by presenting the man in long sleeves shows the boy’s physique. The product targets young children of this age together with their parents, and long sleeved clothes shift the focus from the man who has well defined muscles to the boy.

2.3.1.13. Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition is the “placing of two different images of the same thing or person close to each other with the aim of showing extreme differences” (Quin & McMahon, 1995: 22). This is a common technique in advertising where a thing or a person would be shown before the application of the advertised product and after the application of such a product. An example of this would be found in hair products, slimming products and facial creams. In juxtaposition “the meaning of an image depends partly on the images surrounding it and changing those images can change the meanings derived” (Quin &

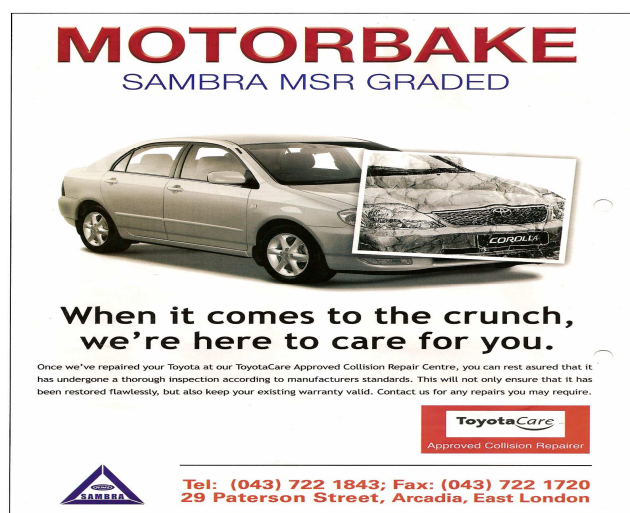


Figure 2.7 – MotorBake advertisement

McMahon, 1995: 22). In the MotorBake advertisement in figure 2.7., the front of a smashed Toyota Corolla has been placed in front of a spotless Corolla giving a feeling of how it would be like if the car were to be involved in a head on collision.

2.3.2. Non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication (NVC) is usually understood as:

The process of sending and receiving wordless messages. Such messages can be communicated through gesture; body language or posture; facial expression and eye contact; object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture; symbols and infographics; prosodic features of speech such as intonation and stress and other paralinguistic features of speech such as voice quality, emotion and speaking style (Nonverbal communication, n.d.).

However, as already stated, this section will focus only on the non verbal signs and symbols that were presented in the lesson unit, which include: facial signs, hand signs and body posture.

2.3.2.1. Facial signs

Day (2001: 22) wrote that facial signs are:

Non-verbal communication strategies that people show in their faces to express their feelings at a particular time and they include: the shape of the mouth, shape of the eyes (narrowed, wide-eyed), direction of gaze and eyebrows (raised in surprise, lowered in frown)

The following three shots depict Lucas Radebe expressing different emotions by his facial appearance. In the first image, his eyes are gazing up with raised eyebrows and he seems to be focused. The hand sign on his chest suggest that he was singing the national anthem before the start of an international game. In the second image, his eyes are narrowed

and looking at the viewer with a smile, and he is relaxed



Figure 2.8 – Demonstration of facial signs

possibly in a press conference as shown by the tip of a micro-phone below his chin. In the third image, his eyes are narrowed and the mouth is wide opened suggesting that he is shouting instructions or happy after scoring a goal.

2.3.2.3. Hand signs

People use their hands “to express their feelings such as anger, power, confusion, care and friendship” (Day, 2001: 23). In figure 2.9., the pointed finger together with the facial expression of the player wearing jersey number 13 shows dissatisfaction or anger at the player named Stewart. The interference of the third, balding man, who is likely to be an official in this game, suggests that Stewart executed a foul on the other player.

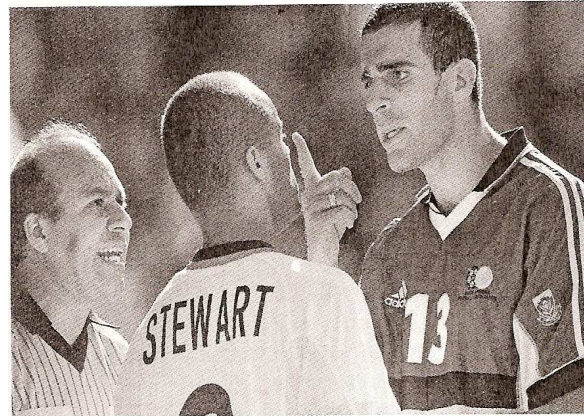


Figure 2.9 – Demonstration of finger sign

The same finger sign can be used to denote another meaning such as pointing direction or noting an important point.

2.3.2.3. Body signs

Body signs include all aspects of the bodily appearance such as “posture, dress and hair” (Day, 2001: 25). A person’s posture gives many clues as to his/her age, health, mood and attitude. It can also show if the person is tired or expectant, bored or happy by the way people sit, stand or lean. Clothes establish a person’s identity, taste, status, well-being, values, personality and attitude towards others. The presence of a particular hairstyle or jewellery also indicates age, status and wealth (Moore & Dwyer, 1994: 148-149).

Looking at the two images of women, the following is observed (as in Day-Teacher’s book, 2001: 18).

The woman in the first photograph (figure 2.10):



Figure 2.10 – Demonstration of relaxed

- Is dressed in stylish clothes, which she wears in a relaxed manner. Her hair is uncombed but modern in style. She is sitting in a high-backed leather chair, at a polished desk suggesting that she is at work and on a phone.
- Her relaxed posture with her feet up on the desk makes her look confident, at ease and relaxed. Her smiling face tells the reader she is happy.

The woman in the second photograph gives a different impression to the first one in that:

- She is dressed in smart travelling clothes. Her hair is short and modern looking. There is a briefcase on the bed and a larger suitcase upright on the floor.
- Her hand supporting her chin suggests she is tired and fed-up.



Figure 2.11 – Demonstration of a tired

The far away look in her eyes suggests she is thoughtful and lonely. The way she is holding her ankle suggests her legs or feet are tired.

In conclusion, when a photographer composes a media text, he or she directs the subjects used in the photo frame to deliberately pose the NVC signs and symbols to represent reality as mentioned earlier in section 2.2. The above signs and symbols of visual communication present a form of grammar that can be read to work out meaning. The visual grammar is different from verbal grammar in that “visual grammar does not have a fixed dictionary of meaning, but visual meaning depends on the context in which visual elements are composed” (Bamford, 2005: 3). These signs and symbols are not used in isolation from each other, but they are combined to give “an overall unity, balance, and a sense of rhythm that enhance viewers’ aesthetic pleasure” (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo & Colbert, 1999: 152).

2.5. Visual literacy and media literacy in schools

2.4.1. Living in an increasingly visual age

Visual images “surround us every day in advertising, on packaging, on bank notes and on CD covers” (Howells, 2003: 4). The research described in this thesis focused on advertisements as already mentioned in the first chapter. Advertisements “are everywhere” (Prinsloo & Criticos, 1991: 295), and even found in a rural area such as the one where this research was conducted. People are visually immersed in advertisements in a similar way that the fish is to water to the extent that neither the water nor the advertisements are noticeable to the fish or the people, and advertisements have become part of our daily viewing such that they are now in a “taken for granted state” (Graydon, 2003: 8). The visual images in advertising include:

Fridge magnets, promotional messages on morning cereal box, the neon and awning signs of local stores, posters on telephone poles, outdoor billboards, bumper stickers, advertisements on buses (and minibus taxis in the South African situation), photos on pop machines, posters in the school hallways, logos on friends’ clothing, blurbs on internet sites, advertisements in magazines and commercials on television (Graydon, 2003: 9).

There is a long list of such images one can think of and which have come into existence because of advertising. Advertising is defined as a:

Paid form of nonpersonal message communicated through various media by industry, business firms, non-profit organisations, or individuals. Advertising is persuasive and informational and is designed to influence the purchasing behaviour, and/or thought patterns of the audience. Advertising is a market tool and may be used in combination with other marketing tools such as sales promotions, personal selling tactics or publicity. (Advertising, n.d.1)

From the above definition, it can be observed that “advertising plays a critical role in capitalist economies in creating demand for industrial output” and “can be seen as necessary for economic growth” (Advertising, n.d.:1). The main focus in such an economic setting is to make profits by selling more, which is done by persuading people to buy more or persuading more people to buy or to engage both strategies, and that is the primary purpose of advertising (Bazalgette, n.d. : 12).

Advertising agencies design advertisements taking into consideration positioning the product and the target market. Positioning the product means to “give a product a special identity that will make it seem different from other products of the same kind” (Balzagette, n.d.: 14). This is done by emphasising the features of the product that will give it a clear identity, a kind of personality for the consumer. Everybody sees advertisements, but they are designed to appeal to a selected target market that is expected to buy the product.

All in all, advertising is a vast industry on its own in which produced goods are brought to the public. As the advertising agencies carefully design advertisements, our environment becomes full of images surrounding us every day and everywhere. Lance (2005: 1) viewed “the use of visual texts as spreading throughout modern cultures and saw schools as compelled to change their instructional practices by encouraging visual literacy”.

2.4.2. The way media uses visual images

2.4.2.1. AIDA method

Media uses visual images in different ways when advertising. The AIDA method in advertisements is used when constructing advertisements (Fielding, 1996: 327) and it consists of the following four stages:

Stage 1: Attention

The first step aims to “attract the viewer’s attention and make him/her start thinking about the advertisement and its contents” (Fielding, 1996: 328).

Stage 2: Interests

In this stage the aim is to “arouse the interests of the audience” (Fielding, 1996: 328). To achieve this, advertisers use humour, dramatic images or interesting dialogue to keep viewers interested in the advertisement (Graydon, 2003: 35).

Stage 3: Desire

After the advertiser has evoked our interests by “convincing us that the advertisement tells the truth, and the product is good, the advertiser creates the viewer’s desire to get the product” (Graydon, 2003: 36).

Stage 4: Action

The final stage is about converting our desire into action, which is getting us to go out, find the product and buy it.

To achieve success in this AIDA method the advertiser uses elements of visual grammar (mentioned in 2.3. above) to publicise the product by incorporating these elements in the four stages. This AIDA approach is based on people’s need for (as in Fielding, 1996: 328):

- Pleasure
- Power
- Security
- Beauty
- A long life
- Happiness
- Health
- Love
- Social acceptance
- Leisure

Advertisements that are designed to appeal to these desires are difficult to resist because these are common to all human beings.

2.5.2.2. Brand name

Branding is an “act of burning the rancher’s identification symbol into the flesh of a cow leaving a permanent mark, so that everyone would recognise whose cow it was” (Graydon, 2003: 45). In a similar way, companies brand their products by giving them a name and/or a logo that will stay permanently in our minds. Companies introduce

brands to increase the reputation and value of a particular manufacturer, and an identified brand often signifies safety and quality (Advertising, n.d.: 2). For example, Nike's brand is represented by its unique and simple "swoosh" that is seen everywhere and observers associate it with the company's name or sport (Graydon, 2003: 45). In advertising, brand loyalty is often established by targeting children at an early age (Australian Government Quality teacher, 2002: 2).

2.5.2.3. Stereotypes

To be able to hit the right target market group, "advertisers relied on stereotypes as one of the key advertising strategies due to limited space and time" (Graydon, 2003: 37).

Stereotypes "put people into categories that allow an opinion to be formed about people on the basis of one characteristic, rather than looking at the person as an individual and these opinions will be believed as facts" (Beard, Hortrop, Prinsloo & Sullivan, 2002: 105). The repetition of stereotypes in the media makes people believe, for example, that it is natural for all women and men to accept the view that the actions and interests of men are more important and well paid than those of women. Media promotes this kind of mentality by categorising some roles, actions and behaviour to men and boys and others to women and girls. As an illustration, in the Purity Mabele porridge advertisement (shown in 2.3.1.6. above), a boy was used with his father/brother to lift a refrigerator, an activity that demands physical strength. The advertisement gives a feeling that boys are stronger than girls and certain physical activities in the society can be best done by boys, something which is not true in reality as girls could also use their physical strength to achieve their objectives.

All in all, the use of AIDA method, branding and stereotypes in advertising creates an urgent need for learners to be visually literate. Leslie (2005:1) found that the majority of school going children in the United States are immersed in media for more than eight hours a day and proposed that learners should be made proficient in information and communication technologies to prepare them for everyday life. Although in South Africa children's exposure to media is likely to vary depending on the context in which they grow up, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10-12 (2003) attempts to close the gap by envisaging a learner that would be visually literate as shown in the learning outcomes.

2.6. Teaching of visual and media literacy

2.5.1. Teaching critical language awareness (CLA)

Visual and media literacy include critical language awareness. Janks (1993: iii) wrote that:

Critical language awareness emphasises the fact that texts are constructed. Anything that has been constructed can be deconstructed. This unmaking or unpicking of the text increases our awareness of the choices that the writer or the speaker has made. Every choice foregrounds what was selected and hides, silences or backgrounds what was not selected. Awareness of this prepares the way to ask critical questions: why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used?

Janks (2003: 1-2) viewed critical literacy as twofold in its purposes. On the one hand, she describes the importance of deconstructing texts with the view that language is constructed to benefit those in power and disadvantage those who are not.

Deconstruction skills would be the best way to understand who does what, to whom and why that action is done. On the other hand, she sees the importance of reconstruction with the view that deconstruction alone is likely to repeat history by marginalising particular groups of people. In her view, reconstruction could narrow the gaps created in the past and open opportunities of unity, especially in a country like South Africa that has practised discrimination for a long time.

The following advertisement does include children from different racial groups in South Africa in keeping with the principles of our constitution, but shooting this photograph at a time when it is the black child who is pouring milk makes it look as if the black child is serving whilst the other children wait to be served, a situation that existed before 1994 in South Africa when these racial groups did not have the same status. In deconstructing this photograph critically, the main question is why the photographer



Figure 2.12 – EverFresh milk advertisement

decided that the image was the best to sell this product and what message he/she wanted to communicate. The image gives the impression that the photographer's mind-set is modelled on the views of the past where blacks were servants and whites masters, and that consciously or unconsciously he/she wants to communicate that message so that through images like this the past is taken for granted.

Ivanic (1990: 125-126) wrote that

Language is shaped by social forces. Powerful social groups determine how, particularly people, should be described. Power relations affect how people speak to each other. Historically, the communicative practices of the dominant group have come to be accepted as correct, appropriate, the norm; this has effectively excluded most people from many realms of action

Language, which in this case is visual, is a "powerful means of maintaining and reproducing relations of domination" and is used by "men and women to fight out their social and political battles at the level of signs, meanings and representations" (Janks, 2000: 176).

To reconstruct the above image, it would look free of stereotyping if the black child was one of those waiting to be served, and language would have an element of change for the future. For learners to be able to deconstruct and reconstruct social meaning that is presented in media forms, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills to do so and that is what this research is intended to achieve.

All in all, critical language awareness "makes people aware of how language can be patronising, demeaning, disrespectful, offensive, exclusive or the opposite" and if people choose to conform to the images presented, it helps them to do so "with open eyes, to recognise the compromise they are making, to identify their feelings about it, and to maintain an independent self-image" (Ivanic, 1990: 129-131).

2.5.2. Teaching aspiration

Appadurai (2002, as cited in Janks, 2003) argues that oppressed human subjects need to learn to aspire. Aspiration is important for apartheid subjects whose sense of self was brutalised by classifications of racial inferiority and whose hopes for a better self were nullified by structural exclusion. This is even the case with children growing up in a rural area where the majority of learners cannot see themselves worthy of achieving the

best in their future. Provided they are dealt with critically, bringing advertisements into the classroom can be a source of aspiration for the learners especially in a rural setting where resources are very limited.

2.6. Visual literacy and the new curriculum

The achievement of freedom in 1994 in South Africa marked the appearance of a first single National curriculum in which teachers, parents and learners regardless of race, class, culture language, and locality benefited in a similar way as compared to Apartheid Education system, which was racially and socially divisive. This new outcomes-based curriculum, which was first introduced in 1998, was known as Curriculum 2005.

This sub section will look at visual literacy in relation to apartheid syllabi, and show how visual literacy is reflected in the curriculum.

2.6.1. Visual literacy in the Apartheid South Africa

Visual literacy is not a new thing in the history of education in South Africa. In the 1970's many countries including the Republic of South Africa took an initiative to include visual literacy as one of the components in the syllabus. However, due to the political setting of that time in the Republic of South Africa, visual literacy was included in the English First language syllabus, intended mainly for white children and it was not included in the English Second language syllabus intended mainly for black learners. Prinsloo & Criticos (1991: 32-33) wrote, "Visual literacy was introduced as an option into National Core Syllabuses for English First Language (Standard 5-10) in 1986".

As Curriculum 2005 is based on the principle of redressing the imbalances of the past (Republic of South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 as quoted in South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 1), the introduction of visual literacy in English First Additional Language (the equivalent of the old English second language) curriculum statement marked the beginning of a visual culture for everybody in South Africa. Howells (2003: 3) commented that "visual culture is very much part of the democratic process."

2.6.2. Visual and media literacy in the new curriculum

Visual literacy is reflected in the curriculum in many ways. Firstly, visual and media literacy is revealed in the principles that underpin The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10-12 (General). In Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the Critical Outcomes require learners to be able to:

Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking and to communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and or language skills in various modes (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003:2).

In the principle for human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice, the NCS is grounded on sensitivity to issues of “diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 4).

In defining the purpose of language, the NCS recognises a new trend in literacy by writing,

The range of literacies needed for effective participation in society and the workplace in the global economy of the twenty-first century has expanded beyond listening, speaking, reading, writing and oral traditions to include various forms such as media, graphic, information, computer, cultural, and critical literacy (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 9).

Some of the language objectives of the NCS have an element of visual and media literacy; for example, learners are expected to be able to:

- Use language and their imagination to represent and explore human experience. Through interacting with a wide range of texts, learners are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences and to consider alternative worldviews.
- Use language as a tool for critical and creative thinking. This objective recognises that knowledge is socially constructed through the interaction between language and thinking.
- Express reasoned opinions on ethical issues and values. In order to develop their own value system, learners engage with texts concerning human rights and responsibilities such as the rights of children, women, the disabled, the aged and issues linked to race, culture, ideology, class, belief

system, gender, HIV and AIDS, freedom of expression, censorship and the environment.

- Interact critically with a wide range of texts. Learners will recognise and be able to challenge the perspectives, values and power relations that are embedded in texts (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 10).

Finally, visual and media literacy are spread throughout the four Learning Outcomes (LO's) together with their Assessment Standards (AS's). In the first Learning Outcome, Listening and Speaking, it is written;

Learners collect and synthesise information, construct knowledge, solve problems, and express ideas and opinions. Critical listening skills enable learners to recognise values and attitudes embedded in texts and to challenge biased and manipulative language (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 12).

In the second learning outcome, Reading and Viewing, it is written, “learners develop proficiency in reading and viewing a wide range of literal and non-literal texts, including visual texts, for information” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 13).

Learning Outcome 3 aims “to produce competent, versatile writers who will be able to use their skills to develop appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 13).

In the fourth Learning Outcome, Language, it is written that learners should “develop critical awareness of how values and power relations are embedded in language and how language may influence others” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 13).

Visual and media literacy is woven into the curriculum through the aspects that have been mentioned above.

2.7 Conclusion

In the first section, this chapter explored the evolution of literacy and explained the concept of visual literacy. Then visual grammar was discussed in relation to elements that were used in the lesson unit. The third section showed the various ways in which media use visual images to attract consumers. The fourth section discussed how visual

and media literacy should be taught and specific reference was made to critical language awareness, aspiration and providing feedback. Finally this chapter showed how visual literacy is reflected in the curriculum.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.2. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the research design and procedures. The chapter will locate this case study within the discipline of research, explain action research as a method and explain its suitability for this research project. Sampling as one of the key aspects of research will be described and choices made in this regard will be justified. A justification of the lesson unit on visual literacy in relation to what was done and why it was done will be given as per each lesson plan. Data collection, which in this case was done through the use of non-participant observation, interviews and document analysis, will be discussed. The validity of this research project will also be discussed, as will ethical considerations. This chapter will also highlight limitations of this case study.

3.2. Research goals

As was indicated in Chapter 1, the goals of my research were to:

- Implement collaborative action research with my learners and evaluate a unit of teaching/learning on visual literacy.
- Improve my performance in teaching visual literacy and enable me to gain a better understanding of the National Curriculum Statements for English as an additional language (FET Band) in this regard.

3.6. Case study

Sturman (1994:61, as quoted in Bassey, 1999: 26) viewed a case study as a generic term used for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon. He further maintained that the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, and may include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This case study is qualitative because it is not a survey or an experiment and it is not statistical in nature. Merriam (2001: 19) pointed out that:

A qualitative case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest

is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation.

O'Leary (2004: 115) defined a case study as:

A method of studying elements of the social through comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case, for example, a detailed study of an individual, group, episode, event, or any other unit of social life organisation.

In the case of this research, the phenomenon under investigation is visual literacy that was implemented for the first time in grade 10 in one classroom at a rural high school in 2006. The main purpose of the research was not to test a hypothesis or generalise the outcomes, but it was concerned with contributing to the development of visual literacy by feedback of information that can guide revision and refinement of the action; hence this research became an action research case study (Stenhouse, 1985: 50 as quoted in Bassey, 1999: 28).

3.7. Action research and its suitability in this research

Action research is a category of educational research that is carried out by action researchers who are teachers or managers trying to make beneficial change within their work place (Bassey, 1999: 41). Miller and Pine (1990, as quoted in Schmuck 2000:17) defined action research as:

A recursive ongoing process of systematic study in which teachers examine their own teaching and students' learning through descriptive reporting, purposed conversation, collegial sharing and critical reflection for the purpose of improving classroom practice.

Action research starts when the teacher recognises a problem that is in need of attention. In my case I recognised that there was a problem in my teaching of visual literacy, which had just been introduced in the new curriculum. I was confronted with the challenge that I needed to examine my teaching and students' learning of visual literacy in order to bring about improvement in my practice in this regard. It was in the MEd (ELT) course work programme that I was able to formulate research questions about the visual literacy problem in my teaching. I defined the focus of such a study and I was able to review literature that provided valuable information. Then I was able to formulate research goals to guide the scope of this research.

In my endeavours to improve my practice, I wanted to strive for a balance between gaining knowledge and improving my practice. Action research was ideal for my situation; as Kombis and McTaggart (as quoted in McNiff, 1996: 10) put it:

The linking of the terms action and research highlights the essential feature of the method trying out new ideas in practice as means of improving and as means of increasing knowledge.

O’Leary (2004:139) saw the combination of knowledge and change as characteristic of action research. I followed action research because I wanted to be part of what was going on; hence this study became “insider” research. The implementation of the lesson unit on visual literacy was part of my day-to-day teaching and not something from outside; it was what I was supposed to teach and what the learners were supposed to learn.

Action research is also often described as critical because it seeks to bring about continuous change. Elliot (as quoted in McNiff, 1996:10) viewed action research as about improving practice rather than producing knowledge. Our school required change and innovation in the teaching of visual literacy, thus action research seemed the appropriate choice of method.

Key steps in action research were followed:

- Identifying the problem,
- Planning the action,
- Implementing the action,
- Reflecting and evaluation.

McNiff (1996:21-23) pointed out that action research operates in cycles or spirals as one cycle builds on the other and this leads to spirals of action. In my case, these steps of action research were followed:

- Firstly, visual literacy was identified as a problem in my teaching practice as already mentioned earlier.
- Secondly, a lesson unit on visual literacy was planned and literature relating to it was reviewed.
- Thirdly, the researcher taught the lesson unit in Grade 10 A.

- Lastly, the researcher, students, colleagues and a critical friend, through journals and small face-to-face group discussions that are mentioned under data collection below, reflected on and evaluated the unit of teaching. All this discussion was intended to find the best way of teaching and learning visual literacy in a rural high school.

The implementation of the above steps echoes the definition of action research as a recursive process that has been mentioned earlier and it reflects what many teachers do in their classrooms, which is identifying a problem and working out a way to solve it. The only difference between the teachers' day-to-day activities and action research is that action research is a disciplined inquiry that a teacher does fully guided by theory, which makes the research public and allows others to challenge the action and decisions taken.

After having applied all the steps of action research, the researcher then replans, re-implements, reflects and re-evaluates in what would be a second cycle or spiral. However, as this is a half thesis, only the first spiral of the action research process was used in 2006. The results of this spiral of research will be implemented again in 2007, but not included in this thesis.

Action research is sometimes participatory in that it "calls for participation and collaboration between, researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders" (O'Leary, 2004: 139). In my case, my learners, two colleagues and a critical friend co-researched with me. I placed a high value on their knowledge; hence I worked "with" them rather than "on" them and thus narrowed the gulf between the researched and the researcher.

Participatory action research has a democratic nature, which in my case involved small face-to-face groups working towards a common goal. We had meetings with grade 10A learners, two teachers and a critical friend on separate occasions in relation to the research project. In those meetings the purposes of the research were discussed, individual or group roles were defined, problems were solved together and differences were valued (Schmuck, 1997:111-113).

Practically, learners took photographs during lesson presentations. Some learners brought newspapers, magazines, scissors, glue and coloured pens or crayons to facilitate

the activities. One learner took notes from the chalkboard as I was writing learner responses on it and those notes were valuable as raw data (See appendix 3 D). Learners were involved in discussion with me as the researcher when the unit was done; they were able to reflect on what they had learned, and their input was to be used in designing the second spiral of action research, which would be in the following year and not part of this research.

The involvement of these small groups aimed to transform my practice in the new curriculum and empower the learners. All the participants in this action research contributed to the action taken and benefited from the knowledge gained.

3.8. Sampling

As this is a small-scale research project that focused on one classroom in one school, I used non-probability samples because they target a specific group and do not attempt to allow for generalisation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 102).

Convenience sampling and purposive sampling were used to select the school, classroom, learners' activities, teachers and Educational Development Officer (EDO). Convenience sampling means choosing the sample on the basis of easy access whilst purposive sampling involves handpicking the cases to be included in the sample to serve specific needs in the research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 102-103). The samples I took in this research do not, however, represent the wider population. Action research is often done on one's own practice, so it is logical to focus on oneself, one's own class and school.

I have found the school very convenient for me because it is where I work as a teacher and I did not have to request special leave from the department to visit a site in a different location or to observe someone's lessons elsewhere. Also the school is in a rural area, which makes it a suitable site for my research question.

I purposefully sampled a Grade 10 A classroom because:

- Grade 10 students in South Africa were the first group to experience the New Curriculum in the Further Education and Training (FET) band in 2006.

- I was assigned by my school management team to teach English First Additional Language in Grade 10 A and it was my only English class at that grade level,
- The research project became my day-to-day practice in Grade 10 A, as visual literacy is prescribed in the New Curriculum Statement.
- I was also assigned as a class teacher in Grade 10A,
- Grade 10 A, which had 45 students at the beginning of the year, had fewer students compared to the grade 11 English classes I taught where learners ranged between 50 and 79 in one classroom.

In addition, Grade 10 learners were the first group who had experienced Outcomes Based Education (OBE) throughout the whole of their education. They should, therefore, have had some prior experience of learning about visual literacy. The introduction of this new curriculum was not a sudden change but a gradual one which started in Grade 1 and those learners continued with it until Grade 9 in 2005.

Two teachers from the researcher's school were invited to visit some of the lessons as non-participant observers whenever their free periods coincided with Grade 10 A English periods. Like the researcher, both teachers were not going to incur extra transport costs or have to request leave to be at the research site as they were my colleagues. The two were experienced teachers who had taught for more than 13 years in rural high schools from Grade 10 to 12. I chose them in accordance with gender equity, as they were a man and a woman. Neither of them were strangers in my classrooms as I had invited them to adjudicate in student debates that were introduced in 2004. They showed keen interest in English and had been of assistance in my classroom in the past years. Because of those joint efforts, I assumed that even in this research they would be willing to collaborate as co-researchers with me.

Purposive sampling was used to select an EDO from my district office. I had invited the EDO with the view of having a critical friend, which Schmuck (1997: 100) described as someone with expertise in my practice who would be able to challenge my views and be able to give a positive feedback. I was sure that he would be able to do so as he had attended workshops about the new curriculum and we had done an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in English Language Teaching (ELT) programme in the same institution from 2003-2004, where visual literacy was introduced. However, he

was unable to fulfil that role due to meetings, workshops and moderations that occurred simultaneously with the implementation of the lesson unit. I, therefore, worked with my supervisor as my critical friend.

3.6. Lesson unit on visual literacy

I started off by designing a visual literacy lesson unit on advertisements, which I did as an assignment during the course work of the Master's programme. The unit consisted of 10 lesson plans covering 10 school periods in 10 school days.

The lesson unit was grounded in the theories underpinning visual literacy, and the learning outcomes laid down in the National Curriculum Statement (English First Additional Language) Grade 10-12, which were discussed in chapter 2. After careful thought about its implementation in a rural high school, some parts of the unit were removed, refined or redesigned, as it appeared that some activities were far beyond the learners' understanding; hence 7 lesson plans remained running over 10 school days (See appendix 2).

Following hereunder is a justification for the inclusion of each activity in the 7 lesson plans.

3.6.1. Lesson One (Camera shots and camera angles)

I designed this lesson to promote prediction skill as a key to reading and viewing. Also, I wanted to grab the attention and interest of the learners so that they would be able to concentrate throughout the lesson unit. Furthermore, I wanted to show the learners that a photographer decides what to put in a photo frame. That was to reinforce the view that photography is subjective, that is, photographs are constructed from the viewpoint of the photographer as has already been discussed in chapter 2. I specifically chose the photograph of a man, which is reproduced below, to lay the foundation for lesson 4 where the same picture was used again (See appendix 2).

I specifically included different camera shots to show the learners that the image in a photo frame is selected by the photographer and that the way a person (or an object) is framed expresses or communicates how the person feels or makes viewers feel in a particular way towards what is viewed, which was the main activity of the lesson.



Figure 3.1 – Prediction activity

With the camera angles I wanted learners to know that the angle from which a photograph is taken is likely to create an attitude towards the person or the object photographed.

3.6.2. Lesson two (Figure signs)

In this lesson I included facial signs, hand signs and body signs as the key components of visual semiology or non-verbal communication. Advertisements rely on these signs to persuade viewers. Learners had to recognise that communication is not only in words but also in signs.

3.6.3. Lesson three (Composition features)

I taught this lesson to show the learners that everything placed in an advertisement has been given special thought and is there to serve a purpose that would be to attract, persuade or manipulate a targeted group. The lesson was intended to show learners that the advertised product will come with other aspects which would make it appear real and the best in the market whereas in reality it may not be so.

3.6.4. Lesson four (Emotive and manipulative language)

This lesson reinforced prediction as the learners were requested to predict the background and foreground in the advertisement used to introduce the first lesson. Its main purpose, however, was to reveal to learners that written words in an advertisement

are carefully chosen to win the viewer's confidence. This is done through the use of a unique slogan/motto, adjectives, ambiguity, figures of speech and/or rhyme. The lesson was in a way promoting critical language awareness that language is not neutral or free but is coloured by the views of the speaker, writer or advertiser.

3.6.5. Lesson five (Stereotyping)

The main purpose of this lesson was to introduce learners to the foundations of our democracy that all people should be free and equal. It aimed to bring awareness to learners that transformation in South Africa has not yet been fully achieved as the designers of advertisements still carry or share in the discriminatory practices and ideas that existed before 1994. To the uncritical eye of the viewer, these ideas or practices appear in advertisements as normal whereas constitutionally they are not. Learners need to question whether there are specific roles for boys and men, girls and women, black and white, young and elderly, rural or urban, rich or poor, and the implications of this. We live in a society where everyone should have an equal opportunity to occupy different roles without being discriminated against.

3.6.6. Lesson seven (Designing a school advertisement)

I taught this lesson to give the learners the opportunity to be designers so that they could apply all the knowledge they had acquired and could talk or justify their actions. As the school is in a rural area I specifically thought that advertising the school could provide a common ground for everybody and it was based on reality.

3.6.7. Lesson six (Unit assessment)

The purpose of this lesson was to assess whether the learners could critically analyse a given advertisement in a given time without the assistance of peers in their group. The questions were set in a way that some of the issues involved in the lesson unit were assessed.

3.7. Data collection

Data collection in this research was done around the lesson unit on visual literacy (See appendix 2). Data collection techniques, which included: non-participant observation,

interviews, keeping of journals, photography and audio recording, were implemented and data gathered were kept in well-organised files. Also, data that in this thesis included verbatim extracts that were sampled from the learners' activities and the rest of the activities would be kept in my research archive and could be available when requested, as not all of it is part of this thesis.

3.7.1. Non-participant observations

As has already been stated earlier, two teachers were invited to be non-participant observers during the presentation of the lesson unit. Schmuck (1997: 52) identifies observation as a means of attentively watching and systematically recording what is seen and heard.

During the progression of the lessons, the two teachers were expected to be physically present in the classroom and not to take part in the activities, but to note down what they heard and saw. Prior to the visitation, I briefed each teacher on a one-to-one basis about what was expected. The briefing included taking note of:

- What the lesson was about,
- What the learners were doing,
- What the teacher was doing,
- What made the lesson a success,
- What did not go well,
- What needed to be improved,
- And anything else of interest that could contribute in the research.

However, it is worth mentioning at this point that neither teacher wrote down the field notes as requested and I did not want to force them as that could violate research ethics.

3.7.2. Interviews

I used interviews to collect data from the two teachers, a critical friend and focus groups of students mentioned earlier in this chapter. Macintyre (2000: 84) describes interviews as:

A face-to-face interaction, which allows the interviewer to ask carefully, prepared questions and in addition to probe the respondents so that further information is obtained.

All the interviews in this research were carried out using a semi-structured schedule of questions (See appendix 4a for teachers and 4b for focus groups). According to O’Leary (2004: 165) these interviews are:

Neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible and pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation.

In my case, the interview questions were pre-planned. The first questions were biographical, requesting the respondents to provide factual information about themselves such as age, previous school, and qualifications. The questions were intended to ease the situation and start the conversation. As the questions progressed they took an open-ended approach and dealt specifically with the lesson unit on visual literacy.

The actual interviews were informal in nature in an attempt to establish rapport, gain trust and create a more natural environment conducive to honest communication (O’Leary, 2004: 164). To achieve this environment, a vacant classroom was used and desks were arranged in a D-shape to provide seating together and to close the gulf that existed between the researcher and the researched. Also, the researcher negotiated the language to be used in the interviews whether it should be in English or Xhosa. Both teachers preferred English whilst the learners chose Xhosa.

To record these interviews, audio taping was done. The tape recorder was advantageous because it freed me (the researcher) to listen attentively and to ask probing questions where I felt the respondents left gaps. Had I been taking notes, this would have been more difficult. Also the recorded interview allowed me to replay and preserve that raw data.

All the interviews were transcribed. However, only one focus group interview was translated into English just to give non-Xhosa speakers reading this thesis a flavour of what the learners’ responses were. Other interviews were not translated because learners expressed the same points or views and I wanted to save time. (See appendix 6a for the English translation and appendix 6b)

3.7.3. Document analysis

Document analysis includes studying documentary evidence such as policies, minutes of meetings, teachers' planning records and students' work. According to Koshy (2005: 96) "these sources can often provide a useful background and context for the project and also can be very illuminating." In the case of this research, learner activities, journals and photographs were the main documents and are each discussed below. All these documents were collected during the presentation of the lesson unit on visual literacy that was mentioned earlier.

3.7.4. Research diary/journal

McNiff (1996: 85) describes a research diary/journal as a useful technique researcher's use to record their personal experiences, thoughts and feelings with a view to trying to understand their actions. It can show personal growth on aspects that are likely not to be represented in the action research cycle. I kept a research diary (See appendix 7b) that I would write immediately after the lesson or at home in the evening. I would record the lesson and my reflection.

The learners also wrote journals (See appendix 7a) in the last three to five minutes of every lesson. In their journals learners were guided by these questions:

- What was the lesson about?
- What went well?
- What did not go well?
- If the lesson were to be taught in future what could be done to improve it?

I did not select a sample of the learners' journal entries regarding the lesson unit but rather decided to analyse them all since what they had written was very brief and some had not written anything at all. The learners' journals were typed up and tabulated (See appendix 7a).

3.7.5. Learners' activities

I used purposive sampling to select evidence from the learners' daily activities, lesson unit evaluation, and group advertisements. As for the daily activities and lesson unit evaluation, I decided to select only one item in each category per group of the eight groups in the classroom. I based my decision on the basis of individual learner consistency in attending school and in doing his or her assigned tasks. I also considered equal representation of both boys and girls in the sample. As for the advertisements, I decided to use the eight advertisements as a representation of the eight groups.

3.7.6. Photography

In the presentation of the lesson unit on visual literacy, photographs of learners were taken to document action (McNiff, 1996: 103). Learners were photographed as unobtrusively as possible when they were engaged as groups in their daily activities and when each group was presenting its own advertisement to the class at large. Each group was photographed as evidence that an event had occurred. One learner assisted me in taking photographs to enable me to focus on other aspects of the lessons.

Photographs were used during interview sessions with teachers and focus groups to stimulate recall. As the interviews did not occur immediately after the presentation of the lesson unit, both the two teachers and Grade 10 A learners were shown these photographs to refresh their memory of what happened and to get them ready for interviews. Given below is an example of the photographs taken during the research project, which I chose because it was well taken. This is the only photograph made available in this research report; the rest of them are kept separately in the case study archive and can be viewed on request.



Figure 3.2 – Photograph of learners

3.8. Data analysis and discussion

After gathering data from various sources (as mentioned in 3.7. above), I analysed and discussed it in a descriptive way.

Firstly, I looked at the data I had collected from several sources and related them to my original and expected outcome. I also looked out for unexpected outcomes that were of significance and reported them (Koshy, 2005: 109). I developed a set pattern of the following three questions that I applied to each lesson of the research unit:

1. What went well?
2. What did not go well?
3. What needed to be improved if the same lesson were to be taught in future?

These questions gave me “the ability to step back and critically analyse situations, to recognise and avoid bias to obtain valid and reliable data and to think abstractly” (Koshy, 2005: 114). The process of analysis gave me the opportunity to construct personal theories as I listed successful strategies and what did not work effectively.

I used verbatim extracts from the students’ journals, focus group interviews, and produced activities; non-participant observations; discussion with a critical friend and a research diary. I used these as evidence to support the claims that I made and to triangulate the data.

As I did the analysis and discussion of each lesson and presented an ongoing story of the first cycle of action research, important themes or patterns emerged and I discussed them.

3.9. Validity

The utilization of more than one method of gathering data helped to make the research valid. As illustration, the absence of field notes that should have been gathered during non-participant observation as mentioned earlier, could have threatened the validity of this research but the use of other data collection techniques helped to balance up the evidence. For example, interviewing the two teachers helped to gather the data, which the teachers were expected to write down as field notes.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000: 105) warned that validity threats could arise if one selects data in an unrepresentative way, presents inaccurate data or does not answer the research questions. That was guarded against by the use of triangulation, which was gathering information from all the data collection tools mentioned above.

Getting the perspectives of all participants was also important: students, teacher (myself) and the critical friend. Honesty, depth, richness of the data, the choice of participants approached and the researcher's objectivity enhanced validity.

Data was also gathered accurately as no omission or deletion was done in transcribing interviews and typing the learner journals. The exact words of the respondents were used. Also, the interview transcripts were given to respondents to facilitate member checking thus validating the information in this research. The respondents were requested in the actual interviews to choose the language they preferred; as mentioned earlier, learners chose Xhosa whilst teachers chose English. The choice of the language validated data, as respondents were free to express their feelings or opinions.

3.10. Ethical issues

Ethical issues will be addressed by following the ethical recommendations of McNiff (1996: 35): negotiating access (written letter to principal, teachers and parents), promising confidentiality, right of withdrawal from the research, keeping good faith and right to information.

Immediately when the schools opened in January in 2006, I met with my school principal and informed him about the research project. I verbally explained what it was and what it was not. He agreed to my proposal. Later I wrote a letter requesting permission (See appendix 1a) and he wrote his positive response as shown in appendix 1g.

I also invited an EDO to be a participant observer. I wrote him a letter requesting him to come and showing him the dates and times for English lessons in Grade 10A (See appendix 1b). I informally invited two teachers to be participant observers and I wrote them letters inviting them to take part in the interviews as follow up to the lessons they observed (See appendix 1d to my school principal and appendix 1e to non-participant observers). The teachers agreed to be interviewed verbally.

A week before the implementation of the lesson unit I held an informal meeting with Grade 10 A learners in connection with the research where I requested the class to co-research with me. I explicitly told them the role they had to play and explained that the project was to be part of their syllabus. I wrote a letter to my school principal requesting permission to conduct focus group interviews (See appendix 1c) and he agreed. Finally, in writing I requested parents to grant me permission to use a photograph with the image of their child. In the letter parents showed their informed consent by signing in a space that was provided (See appendix 1f).

In all the permission letters and interviews I promised the participants confidentiality by assuring them that the name of the school and their names would not be shown in the final document that would be published; rather false names would be used. As for the learners' activities and where the school names or symbol appeared, I had blocked that out to ensure that readers could not draw links with the learners or the school.

Also, I explicitly acknowledged that participants had a right to withdraw from the research if they felt like so that no one was forced to participate; I requested the parents to sign in appendix 1e if they agreed and not to sign if they disagreed, as that fell within their democratic right.

Moreover, I kept good faith by not taking things for granted; I always consulted my school principals, colleagues and learners about any changes to normal teaching patterns resulting from the research, for example, moving desks to accommodate group work. Before I grouped and allowed learners to remain seated in groups in Grade 10A, I discussed the issue with Grade 10 A and all teachers who teach there to find out if the classroom arrangement would suit them. When the project was completed, I went back to them and inquired if that arrangement could continue or not, and they agreed to discontinue those groups. I wanted them to trust me all the time and avoid any misunderstanding.

Finally, throughout the year I kept all the participants informed about the development of the research. As an illustration, when the photographs came from the laboratory, I showed the participants so that they could have an idea of where the proceedings were.

3.11. Limitations of the research

The use of a still-photograph-camera instead of a video camera or DVD recorder as a way of showing that something had happened left out some of the important data that could have been observed whereas a video camera or DVD recorder could have been able to capture every movement of the learners and teacher together with their discussions during activities, providing rich data for the research.

Also, the use of a tape recorder instead of a video recorder could not show communication in total because in the transcription of the interviews, the non-verbal communication was left out, thereby omitting important data, which would have contributed positively to this research.

As action research is often done on one's own practice, the reflection and evaluation of this case study cannot be used to generalise since the findings are focused on oneself and one's own class and school.

3.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented and justified the research methodology I used in this qualitative action research case study. I explained action research and showed its suitability for this research project. I described the sampling of the school, class, colleagues, EDO, the learners' journals, learners' activities and photograph. The lesson unit on visual literacy was justified in relation to each lesson plan. This chapter discussed the data collection, which was done through the use of non-participant observations, interviews with tape recording and document analysis that included: journals, learners' activities and photography. The validity of this research project was discussed, as were ethical considerations. Finally, the chapter highlighted the limitations of this case study.

CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present an analysis of how each lesson played out in practice. This analysis will be presented in a way that realises the goals of this research which, as described in previous chapters, were to:

- Implement collaborative action research with my learners and evaluate a unit of teaching/learning on visual literacy.
- Improve my performance in teaching visual literacy and enable me to gain a better understanding of the National Curriculum Statements for English as an additional language (FET Band).

To facilitate this analysis, the following categories will be used to critically evaluate and reflect on each lesson plan by focussing on individual activities:

- What went well?
- What did not go well?
- What needed to be improved if the same lesson were to be taught again?

These categories were applied to evidence from the learners' journals and performed tasks, the researcher's journal, non-participant observations and discussion with a critical friend (as discussed in chapter 3), from which claims are made.

4.2. Description of context

The researcher's high school is in a rural area in Butterworth District in Eastern Cape. It has 10 classrooms, one of which is the home to Grade 10 A, in which the research was conducted. In Grade 10 A the following subjects are offered: Xhosa Home Language, English First Additional Language, Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Science, Life Orientation and Geography. There were eleven-30 minute-periods a day excluding two breaks and a bell would be rung every half an hour to signal the beginning and the end of a period.

When the research project started, the class consisted of 45 learners: 28 boys and 17 girls who, together with the researcher, use Xhosa as home language. From that number five were repeating Grade 10 whilst the rest were from grade 9 from the neighbouring feeder schools. However, by the end of the project 5 learners had dropped due to reasons such as sickness. This is the first group of learners that had experienced Outcomes Based Education from Grade 1. Their ages range between 15 and 23 years.

Only a few learners stay with both parents; the majority stay with single parents, siblings, grandparent(s) or relatives. The majority of learners did not have access to magazines, newspapers or television. The majority of learners came from families that were not well off, only a few having parents who are teachers, nurses, policemen and businessmen from the nearby village town.

The classroom is well built with cement walls and an old wooden floor. Electricity is connected, although it is seldom used because windows provide enough sunlight and ventilation. The seating arrangement of learners was in single files with all facing forward, but it was changed to group seating for the purpose of the research.

4.3. Lesson 1

The purpose of this lesson was to show the learners that photographs are a representation of reality that give an interpretation and not a true reflection of the world, as already discussed in chapter two. In short, the lesson aimed to show learners that “texts are constructed” in a way that encompasses a point of view, which they need to consider with an open eye (Janks, 1993: iii).

4.3.1. What went well in the lesson?

Firstly, the seating arrangement of the learners in groups contributed to making the lesson a success as learners shared resources like scissors or magazines, and ideas about a given task. Non-participant observer A said, “the students were divided into groups and that on its own was quite interesting to the learners because now they were free and not in that tense atmosphere as they were just around the table being a group of 5-6” (See appendix 5a). Similarly, one learner wrote, “It is easy because working the other children in the group of my classroom” (See appendix 7a). As most activities in this lesson unit depended on the distribution of images, I found it time-saving and

convenient to pre-arrange those images in batches of six so that I quickly distributed them to 8 groups instead of to 45 individual learners. As a result, the resources reached the learners at almost the same time rather than having some learners panicking about whether they would get them and losing focus on the coming activity. I also easily attended to each group's difficulties without disturbing the flow of the lesson.

Secondly, the activities were presented in an interesting way that engaged learners. I made the activities interesting by introducing a problem-solving element. For example, there were several stages of prediction involved. First, I gave learners a close up camera shot and asked them to predict what the medium close up camera shot would look like. I then gave them this shot and asked them to use it to predict what the medium camera shot would look like. A similar approach was used in all the activities and learners' responses in their journals supported the view that this made the lesson interesting. For example, one learner wrote: "It was interesting... the teacher made it exiting anyway" (See appendix 7a). Similarly, Non-Participant Observer A said,

What I have sensed is that the kids were quite interested and the lesson was quite challenging to them as you can see in groups that they were all engaged in the discussions trying to figure out what is required by the teacher (See appendix 5a).

Thirdly, the instructions given in the activities were constructed in an easy, straightforward and practical manner so that learners were able to use their strategic competence (Canale and Swain as quoted in Brumfit, 1986) to get an understanding of what was required. In his observation, non-participant observer A said that, "the instructions given by the teacher were very clear for the learners so it was easy for them to grasp or understand what is it that the teacher is actually in need of" (See appendix 5a). For example, in activity 1 on camera shots the instruction read (See appendix 2):

Learners are to order the pictures in such a way that the one that appears to be closest to them will be the first whilst the one that seems to be furthest will be the last one. To achieve this reordering of photos, learners will discuss what is included and what is excluded in each picture.

In the activity that followed the above, the wording of this instruction was used where learners were to re-arrange names of camera shots (See appendix 2).

The teacher writes names of camera shots in a jumbled manner on the chalkboard and requests the learners to order the names so that they start

with the shot that seems to be closest and end with the shot that seems furthest away. (Medium shot/close up shot/very close up shot/very long shot/ long shot/medium close up shot)

The phrase, “the words closest to you and furthest to you”, was used in two consecutive activities, making it unnecessary to introduce new instructions that would hinder learners from becoming visually literate. In the activity, the learners transferred the knowledge they had acquired in pictures into words (See appendix 7b).

Fourthly, learners demonstrated respect for the teacher, a willingness to learn and good discipline. After I distributed the first prediction activity, I observed that the learners were noisily disputing each other’s views and the two minutes they had for the activity were over without progress (see appendix 7c). I intervened and taught learners about: the purpose of group work, tolerating each other, and taking turns when talking. Thereafter, we achieved one learning outcome of the lesson (listening and speaking) (See appendix 2 and chapter 2), which aimed at preparing learners to be “able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts” (South Africa, Department of Education, 2003: 14). That was achieved when the learners were able to:

- Initiate and sustain conversation by developing appropriate turn taking conventions, filling in gaps and encouraging where appropriate;
- Give and follow directions and instructions;
- Interact in group discussion by expressing own ideas and opinions and listening to and respecting those of others, while engaging with a range of issues such as inclusivity and power relations, and environmental, ethical, socio-cultural and human rights issues;

Practically in the groups, there was no noise except the “buzzing” which is expected in any group discussion (See appendix 7c). The learners stopped shouting their views at each other and there was progress. The students’ conduct and my intervention laid good group work ethics for this lesson and the whole lesson unit.

Fifthly, learners enjoyed the activities that involved cutting and pasting. For example, one learner wrote in his journal: “Yes because nothing confuse me what feel about

today's I feel happy because I want this car ting". One learner further said that: "It is easy camera because you see" (See appendix 7a group c).

Moreover, learners understood the different camera shots together with camera angles, and could identify them in any setting as shown in the image above (Also see appendix 3a). To better their understanding I requested those who learnt quickly, to help those who were lagging behind to catch up. For example, I instructed learners to display the correct version of the six camera shots and asked the following question to scaffold the learners who did not

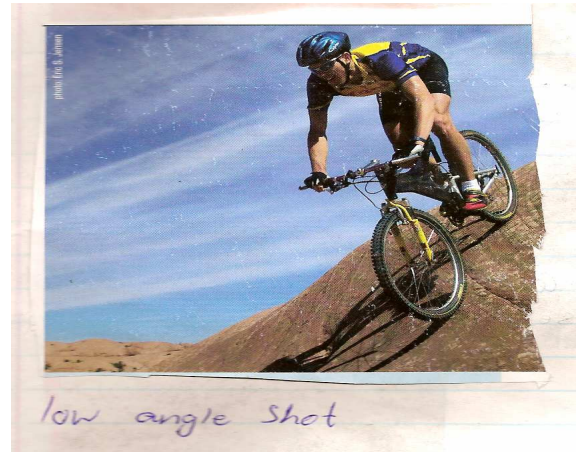


Figure 4.1 – Example of a low angle

understand: "Of the six camera shots in front of me, which one looks similar to the one of the student who got it right?" (See appendix 7b). Thereafter, we checked if labelling was correct. The activity made sure all learners understood the camera shots and camera angles, and developed a logic for doing things.

In addition, learners produced a neat and well-labelled piece of work. Evidence that learners cut, re-arranged, pasted and labelled camera shots is provided in Appendix 3A. One learner wrote, "My work is a beautiful and cleanliness because I respected your work." (See appendix 7a). This comment showed that the learners took pride in what they did and appreciated the lesson.

Lastly, learners demonstrated early signs of being visually literate (as in Bamford, 2005: 3). In the second prediction activity, the learners were more quiet and thoughtful about their responses rather than throwing out responses as in the first activity. At first I thought it was because I disciplined them for noise whilst they worked with the first photograph (see appendix 7c) or they were bored with the lesson, but later on I thought that they were realising that a portion of the photograph had been omitted and it would not be straightforward to predict. Learners showed that they were starting to think critically in their journals:

- "Prediction although I know I can be write and be wrong" (Appendix 7a).

- “I am benefit about this I know how to look a picture” (Appendix 7a).
- “I’m understand this work because it is very easy but is not easy because you can not understand clothes of another person do you wearing what” (See appendix 7a).

4.3.2. What did not go well?

First of all, the activities took longer for some of the groups to complete than anticipated. For example, Non-participant Observer A commented that:

The two minutes that was given to them to look at the picture was not quite enough because you find out that the other one is having another idea and the other one is having another idea. Now maybe the 2 minutes would just lapse without them having agreed on one point so that I believe that now 2 minutes was not enough to promote good discussion in group (See appendix 5a)

Even though some groups finished the given task in time, some did not show any sense of time in what they were doing.

Moreover, precious time got wasted in group discussions as some groups could not quickly settle to the task assigned. The observer said (See appendix 5a) that:

What the teacher can do is for the teacher to assist the group leaders in that immediately the task is given, anybody who has been assigned as a group leader should take the lead in terms of keeping time, giving chances to everybody so as to speed up the activity within that given time.

In addition to that, designing the lesson around many activities confused the learners and wasted time. Whilst doing a routine check-up on their work after I taught about camera shots (See appendix 7b), I discovered that learners labelled the six camera shots wrongly and some did not follow the pasting pattern as instructed i.e. that “learners are to order the pictures in such a way that the one that appears to be closest to them will be the first whilst the one that seems to be furthest will be the last one” (See appendix 2). I concluded that some learners or some groups did not understand camera shots and in their journals they wrote: “I have to need improve for a camera shot because I’m not understanding” (See appendix 7a).

Furthermore, lack of resources like paper glue, scissors and dictionaries delayed and hindered progress. Even though prior to the activities learners were requested to bring

these items, some groups did not have anything whilst others only had one of the two. Learners expressed their need for these resources in their journals. For example: one learner said, “Is not has all equipment to makers enough” (See appendix 7a). Another learner wrote, “I went wrong when I label a pictures because I havenot a paper glue” (See appendix 7a).

Lastly, many learners could not cut pictures accurately as shown in the above photograph extracted from their daily activities (See appendices 3a). The edges of what they cut were not in straight lines, but zigzagging.

4.3.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

The first improvement in this activity would be time management. Since only a few learners had watches (See appendix 7c), a wall clock could be used in future so that all the learners could have a sense of time. When the wall clock is there, learners should be taught about time and how to use the clock. That would give them a sense of urgency when they do something.

Secondly, individual learning should be promoted as an alternative to group work. Group work needs a lot of time, as learners have to engage in a discussion. Individual learning gives each learner a chance to have a feel for the activity and reduces the domination of weaker students by stronger ones. It saves time as one thinks for oneself without consultation. Group discussions could be used judiciously when an activity lends itself to this.

Thirdly, the number of activities should be reduced to allow time for the photographs to have an impact on the viewers. The purpose of the activities would be to teach the learners to see how they are positioned by each camera shot or angle. I have realised that teaching is not about covering a lot of activities at one time but it is about learners mastering defined skills. In future if I am teaching the topic for the first time, I would, for example, reduce the camera shots to three that is: close up, medium shot and long shot. I would teach the other shots in the next cycle as it appears that the learners got confused in starting with all six (See appendix 7a).

Fourthly, there should be another way of organising resources such as scissors, glue paste and dictionaries rather than relying on the subject teacher or the learners. Non-participant Observer A said:

I think within the school budget... there is a need that... each subject should be allocated its own funding, but not only relying on that, but each department, they should also embark on a sort of fundraising especially that they know that they will have some programs that will need some minor resources here and there and try doing even once trying to compliment those who are having problems.

That would be one way to counter the resource challenge where the materials would be bought, kept in one place and accessible to all teachers and learners as long as prior arrangements were made to avoid inconvenience and conflicts.

Fifthly, I would begin this lesson by introducing the learners to a camera and a photograph. I would allow them to label the elements of a camera and give them a feeling for how it is operated. This would include holding the camera and looking at it. Then I would show them photographs and comment on visual elements like shape, border, line and placement. Learners would make frames and later cut images in a similar way as a photograph cuts an image, precisely.

Finally, I would use the above exercise as a pre-reading activity and use the prediction activity in this lesson as a post-reading activity to reinforce the camera angles and camera shots that the learners had already learned.

4.4. Lesson 2

This lesson aimed to explore the various non-verbal signs that people consciously or unconsciously use to show the feeling or attitudes they have at a given time. It also aimed to show the impact these signs have in advertising. As already stated in chapter two, facial, hand and body signs were explored.

4.4.1. What went well?

Learners' prior knowledge was activated very well and that set up a good atmosphere for teaching and learning. I requested three learners, who I knew would be confident enough, to demonstrate facial expressions showing when they

are angry, sad or happy (See appendix 2). As the three demonstrated these facial expressions, the rest of the learners related the signs to what they already knew. One learner wrote in his journal, “this I know before, because if person is angry see their face” (See appendix 7a). There was laughter in the classroom as I requested the demonstrators to change their facial expressions from angry to happy or vice versa. When the learners stopped dramatising, the class was looking expectantly at me, eager to know what was to follow, signalling their readiness to explore non-verbal signs (See appendix 7b).

Also, the use of photographs of well-known people, even in a rural place like mine, triggered the interest of learners. The main exercise on facial signs had five different close-up shots of Lucas Radebe, a soccer super star, and the supplementary one had President Thabo Mbeki. Radebe’s strip of different facial expressions focussed the attention of the learners on facial signs only, avoiding distractions. Had I used more than one subject, learners would have been distracted, having to figure out who the next person was and what he/she did for a living instead of exploring the non-verbal signs.

The instructions for this activity were clear and simple, on one hand, and there was scaffolding for the learners, on the other. Learners described the shape of the mouth, shape of the eyes, eyebrows and direction of the gaze. They then wrote the feeling expressed in each photo strip (See appendix 2). One learner wrote in her journal,

I ‘m understand because your question are very very simple and write down your answer (See appendix 7a).

Some learners got the idea of figure signs correctly as shown in the image below (Also see appendices 3a). Learners variously said in the focus group interviews (See appendix 6):

- I can say it is the way these human signs were shown to us because I personally did not know that a person who is photographed passes a message by frowning or smiling or is hurt by something especially from a book.
- To see that a character is angry makes you interested to know what has happened, why is the person angry?
- I am able to understand a message from a picture now even if it is not written in words.

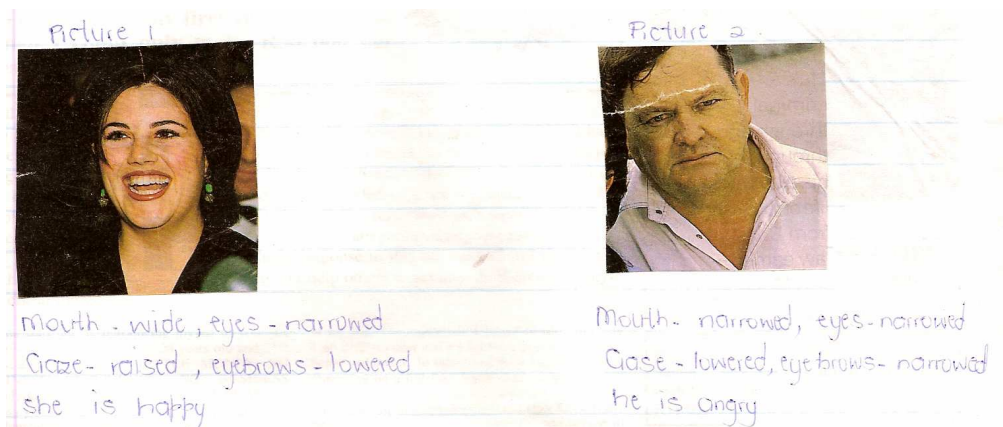
In addition, learners correctly described some feelings or attitudes shown in the photo strip portraying Lucas Radebe by writing in words. Learners wrote in their class workbooks (See appendices 3a):

Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Picture 4	Picture 5
He feel confuse	Lucas is consentrating and his normal.	He feel glad	Lucas is disapointed or down spirited	He feels very happy.

Table 4.1 – Learners’ response to facial signs

Individually, learners identified, cut and pasted three different facial signs. In their workbooks I could see that some did so correctly (See appendices 3a).

Figure 4.2 – Example of facial signs given by learners



4.4.2. What did not go well?

Firstly, learners lacked vocabulary to express the figure signs they saw. For example, instead of saying Lucas Radebe was showing a feeling of doubt or uncertainty in photo frame 1 (see appendix 2), some learners wrote that he was angry or unhappy (See appendices 3a). Also, some learners did not seem to use the vocabulary they were provided with correctly. As an illustration, these learners wrote “the direction of the gaze is raised” (See appendices 3a) for her description of Lucas’s eyes in photo frame 1 whereas in actual fact Lucas gazed from the corner of his eyes looking far left or backwards.

Secondly, trying to resolve differences in the interpretation of a photograph was time consuming. Some learners and I had different interpretations of the facial expression of Radebe in photo frame 5 where the group thought Lucas was happy after scoring a goal whilst I maintained that he was shouting instructions as a defender and a captain of the national soccer team (See appendix 7b). One learner wrote in her journal, “what did not go well was that there were pictures that we did not agree with”. (See appendix 7b).

Because photographers do not show everything in a photo frame, that makes it difficult to get other clues, which could allow for common agreement on the message of the picture, as Bamford (2005: 3) wrote

The symbols used in visual communication unlike those of written and to a lesser extent oral communication are not a fixed vocabulary. There can be no dictionary of meanings for symbols of visual communication.

Interpretations differ because people bring their attitudes, values and ideas to the texts they view as already discussed in chapter 2.

Due to time limits, the finger signs and body posture were not explored. There are many contributory factors to that. It could be that I was not judicious enough about time when I designed the lesson. The learners’ pace in learning was much slower than I anticipated even though learners worked in pairs instead of groups. It could also be that in my teaching style I do not like to rush the learning process so that learners could discover things on their own. In a classroom of 45 learners it was not easy to balance up time, understanding and activities to be done. Some learners showed their lack of understanding by writing in their journals (See appendix 7a):

I went rong because it is a short time to do this facial signs.
But it is a very difficulty to know how pictures person feel.

Last of all, as the lesson ended in a rush, although the learners could identify and describe these figure signs, they could not relate them to advertising, which was the core part of the lesson unit. I did not take them beyond the level they obtained where they could develop critical thinking about photography and advertisements such that they would understand that the subjects used in the photo frame deliberately pose the NVC signs (Day, 2001: 22). However, in the presentation of the lesson, learners did consider how they felt about the figure signs shown to them.

4.4.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

Firstly, the figure signs should be taught gradually during the FET phase. In Grade 10, then, I would focus on facial signs first and explore them in detail. With facial signs only, all the learners could understand, as there would be no rush to cover other signs. For example, I would explicitly teach a variety of facial expressions shown in photographs and also the equivalent adjectives to describe those expressions so that in future the learners would have enough vocabulary to express either the feeling/attitude the subject in the photograph has or the feeling/attitude the learners have towards the image they are viewing.

Also, I would make sure that my lesson would be developed through a chalkboard summary, which learners would copy as notes. That would provide them with information that is accessible to them and which they could read and view in future. Those learners who did not fully understand in class could then study further on their own. I would provide these notes taking into consideration that learners are in a rural high school where there are not enough resources for them to acquire English as an additional language.

Furthermore, I would relate learners' understanding of facial signs to the art of advertising in a way that would promote their critical thinking. Being able to identify and describe a facial sign is not enough. Learners should be taken beyond that understanding to a point where they could understand the motive of having a photograph taken of such a facial expression. If the AIDA approach is based on the people's need for pleasure (Fielding, 1996: 328 as already discussed in chapter 2), learners should know that in advertising a product according to the pleasure principle, a person should not frown, for example. The lesson would sensitise and prepare learners for the advertisement that they would design at the end of the unit (See appendix 8). In short, it would be to place the learners in the position of a photographer and allow them to start thinking of what they would include or exclude.

Lastly, I would organise a video camera or camera that produces photographs instantly to capture learners as they dramatise the various facial signs at the beginning of the lesson. These photographs could be used at a later stage of the lesson to clarify a

certain point or to match up with those images from magazines or newspapers. It would show the class that the three learners posed in a similar way to how some characters pose in advertisements and allow them to think and choose from those learners the facial signs that would attract the target group if the advertisement was placed in another place (See appendix 7b).

4.5. Lesson 3

This lesson showed learners that everything placed in an advertisement has been given special thought and is there to serve a purpose that would be to attract, persuade or manipulate a targeted group. The lesson showed learners that the product is advertised using techniques that make it appear real and the best in the market whereas in reality it may not be so.

4.5.1. What went well?

The explanation of each composition feature was done verbally and visually. For example, if the teacher was teaching about texture, he explained it first, then wrote notes on the chalkboard and later showed learners in the advertisement (See appendix 7b). For all these features there was an image to show, which ensured learners' understanding of the issues involved (See appendix 2). One learner wrote in her journal,

What went well was we had enough picture to identify all the composition features. (See appendix 7a).

In addition, the lesson was interesting and it engaged the learners in many activities that involved thinking, responding, viewing and writing almost at the same time. One learner commented in his journal, "This advertisement is well, cause (sic) you must fast and quick to see, and answer the question" (See appendix 7a). The teacher played an important role in creating and sustaining that atmosphere by scaffolding learners with questions that ensured active participation of learners as revealed in the following extract from my research journal:

The way I approached colour evoked the learners' interests to the lesson as I stood turning the page with two red cars. After I asked what was common in the two advertisements, learners came with different answers such as loads, bricks, cars and colour. I asked them the reason for the choice of such a colour (red) and one of them answered that red is bright and therefore

attractive. I utilized one of the yellow and red Shoprite plastic bags that have got “lowest prices” written in red (See appendix 7b).

Also, as active participants, learners responded in positive ways that the teacher did not anticipate. For example my journal record indicated:

When I asked their interpretation of the key in the Meeg Bank advertisement, the student gave a different view that the key could symbolise that Meeg bank is the key to open doors in our lives, but I thought it was to show that the car belongs to the gentlemen (See appendix 7b).

Some learners understood the concept of composition features. In a homework exercise that was given, learners found an advertisement and described four features from those we had done. One learner wrote:

Foregrounding there is a table, the cup and sourcer and lazy chair.
The background are chairs and tables, buildings and trees.
In focus, everything are clearly. They are happy. This advert shows the fashion clothes (See appendices 3a)

The above description of this advertisement showed that there was an understanding of these features as they also appear in the chosen advertisement.

4.5.2. What did not go well?

First of all, teaching many different composition features with many advertisements and my fast speed of delivery confused some learners. These learners slowly viewed the features as compared to the rate of others and before those learners could identify the aspect in question, we had moved to the next aspect on the list, which would have a different advertisement. As I recorded in my research journal:

I discovered that some learners took a long time to finish writing or took longer to view the advertisement in question. I saw them asking questions from others and I realized that my pace was too fast for them. I then intervened by advising them to focus their attention to what I taught and forget about other things that appear in the advertisement (See appendix 7b).

This problem, which lay in the fact that learners had varying levels of abilities and exposure to newspapers, magazines or television, hindered successful teaching and learning.

The lesson could not be finished in the time set for it. On the first day, the lesson was interrupted by a sport's session. Learners wrote in their journals (See appendix 7a) "We talking about composition feature but we stop this lesson because of sport time". "But at the time the sports captain come at our classroom and tell us lets goin to the fields to play our games that were disappoint us". I could not finish up because of time. However, I negotiated for an additional period from the Life Science teacher and she agreed, but still I did not finish (See appendix 7b). The lesson was finished on a second day.

Some learners did not do as I expected in the homework, providing clear evidence that they did not fully understand composition of an advertisement. In their workbooks, some learners reproduced the contents of the advertisement instead of describing the features used to compose that advertisement and to discuss the reason for including that feature in the place of another one. For example, in the Jet Store City Golf competition, the learner wrote, "this city golf you can win 15xR500 winners when you buy at jet account 10x3 000". (See appendices 3a). Seemingly, the learner did not fully understand what focus entails.

Moreover, it was not easy to assess the analysis done by the learners because some would list all the colours that appear in the advertisement and write their meanings according to the table I gave them as shown below:

Green-health
Orange-Warmth
White-Purity. (See appendices 3a)

Also, learners experienced difficulty in assigning meaning to colours that did not appear in the table that I gave to them.

4.5.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

Firstly, the number of texts should be reduced to two advertisements. This would avoid confusion and reduce the number of examples learners have to deal with. Also, learners would not be exposed to many texts where they would spend time figuring out what is there and what is not there. The teacher should select texts in which the majority of these composition features appear. The emphasis in Grade 10 should be on colour, background, foreground and texture, the rest being done in Grade 11 and Grade 12.

The teacher should vary his speed of delivery to accommodate all learners in the classroom. This could be achieved by slowing down after each point and allowing the quick learners to express their understanding thereby supplementing what the teacher has said. Sometimes if the teacher and the learners have a common home language, the teacher could switch to home language to make a point clear and then transfer that to English. As an illustration, if you explain the meaning of white, it would be easy for learners to understand that white means peace because that is familiar, but if you tell them that white in an another situation could mean purity, then the concept of ‘purity’ should be expressed first in the home language (icwengile in Xhosa). During the focus group interviews learners said, “I want the two languages to be mixed” (See appendix 6a).

Learners should be given a common homework exercise, where the teacher would set specific questions that assist and direct learners to targeted composition features. In the Meeg bank advertisement, the question would be: which qualities of the bank are advertised by the combination of white (as shown in the car) and green (as shown in the grass and trees)? A question like this would make learners think about the placement of these items and the purpose the advertiser wants to achieve. Thereafter, learners could individually find an advertisement and analyse it in the light of what had been said.

In addition, the above questions could make it easy to assess the learners as there could be marks assigned next to each question. As for the advertisement that they would analyse individually, the teacher together with the learners could design an assessment rubric in which learners could be assessed using a short piece of writing or a long piece. The assessment rubric could also be used as a checklist by the learners to determine if they were still on track before the submission of the task.

The teacher should get an explanation that details all the most common colours. If that fails, the teacher should tell learners to ignore a colour they do not know or which does not appear in their brochure.

4.6. Lesson 4

This lesson aimed to identify emotive and manipulative language that accompanies visual images in advertisements. This includes: the name of the product, slogan/motto,

adjectives, ambiguity, figures of speech and/or rhyme and a description of where to get the product.

4.6.1. What went well?

The lesson began with a problem solving activity that was a continuation of the one done in the first lesson as shown above. The learners predicted from the long shot they already knew in lesson one, what was missing in the very long shot, which showed a detailed view of the foreground and background (See appendix 2). Learners came with different views such as: the man is in a fashion shop, a street, next to a car, looking at boys playing rugby. When I showed them the whole advertisement, the learners exclaimed in disbelief. It was engaging and interesting like the first exercise. That gave me the opportunity to reinforce the view that a photographer carefully selects what to include and exclude in the photo frame (See appendix 7b).

The learners were introduced to the art of advertising that included: target group, the product advertised, its logo/motto/slogan, where to find it and words used to glorify the product (as shown in chapter 2). Some learners understood that an advertisement is a combination of an image and words. One boy remarked in the focus group interview,

“I would say that it’s easy to identify an advert from other pictures because an advert has got a slogan, the name of the shop or the product advertised at the bottom corner” (See appendix 6).

Home language was used to explain the metaphorical and difficult expressions in the advertisement and that intervention was later transferred into English. Seeing that learners could not move, I decided to take over and lead them in their home language to make them understand an expression like “cream of the crop”. Then they realised that ‘cream’ referred to the best car or farmer, and ‘crop’ could mean of all cars or farmers. And that linked very well with the words ‘the best in the land’ or ‘lead the way’ (See appendix 7b). To explain this I used Xhosa to show learners that a maize stalk or cob does not have cream, which is found in milk, but the expression should be taken figuratively.

Also, learners thought of other expressions that advertisements used to promote their products. One boy gave the example of Omo Washing Powder that calmed down parents and encouraged children to be dirty as if dirt is a natural measurement of

children's growth. The motive behind the words, "Dirt is Good", is that parents should not worry as the washing powder will take care of it and a lot of that product will be sold furthering the interests of the producer (See appendix 7b). Learners reviewed all the advertisements that were done in the lesson unit and identified the emotive and manipulative language used.

4.6.2. What did not go well?

Learners had difficulty in understanding ambiguity, metaphorical language and adjectives used to describe advertised products. Responding to a question in the focus group interview, one boy stated;

In English one word gives two meanings and that confuses which meaning is correct and you end up guessing wrongly (See appendix 6).

Learners also did not write in their journals on that day except for only one learner, who wrote about the advertisement of the farmer. For all learners to leave a blank space symbolised the impenetrability of the lesson.

Even though activities were discussed in groups, the lesson lent itself to written work, which would have made it easy to assess whether the learners had achieved the desired outcome or not.

Furthermore, the chosen Toyota advertisement was complicated for the learners to comprehend. As an illustration, first, the advertisement strategically did not show the actual product advertised, but it showed a farmer. Secondly, the qualities given to the farmer ambiguously referred to the qualities of an invisible Toyota and that made the advertisement impenetrable to novice viewers (See appendix 2). In the focus group interviews all learners in the sample said that they were beginners in studying advertisements or visual literacy (See appendix 6).

4.6.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

Prior to this lesson, learners should be taught about adjectives, ambiguity and figures of speech in a separate lesson. The teacher should start the lesson knowing that the learners would not encounter difficulties. I would teach the lesson in the last half of the year when I knew that learners would be able to draw from their prior knowledge and

transfer knowledge from other sources like literature. All in all, learners' prior knowledge should be well established before this unit is taught.

Learners should be given activities to identify the language used in an advertisement individually. These activities can include questions like: What product is advertised? What is the target group? What is the motto/ logo/slogan? What words/phrases/expressions are used to describe the product? Then, there should be a follow up exercise where learners would show how such a language evokes the emotions of viewers or how the language could manipulate viewers. The follow up exercise is the crucial part of the lesson as it fosters critical language awareness (as already discussed in chapter 2).

An advertisement with few words should be used for novice viewers. The advertisement should be straightforward and simple. As the learners show their understanding then the advertisements could also be advanced to meet their acquired knowledge.

4.7. Lesson 5

The main purpose of this lesson was to bring awareness to learners that advertisements tend to categorise and stereotype people. It aimed to equip learners with skills to question specific roles assigned to boys and men, girls and women, black and white, young and elderly, rural or urban, rich or poor that people take for granted.

4.7.1. What went well?

The lesson began with an identification exercise where learners were instructed to write down a list of the visual objects contained in two Purity advertisements (See appendix 2). The exercise provoked the interest of the learners and familiarised them with the contents of the two advertisements that formed the core part of the lesson. Individually, learners identified and listed the items, which they reported to the class at large.

Also, the two advertisements were well chosen to explain stereotyping because both advertised different products from the same brand, targeting toddlers (See appendix 2). One product had an image of a boy whilst the other had an image of a girl, making it easy for the teacher to teach learners about something they see from a real perspective.

In both advertisements boys and girls were assigned different roles and that made stereotyping self-explanatory.

Thirdly, some learners co-operated with the teacher in facilitating the lesson. Although the learners responded orally about what they identified in the two advertisements, I discovered that they identified many things that could be forgotten as they continued listing them (See appendix 6). I thought of writing their answers on the chalkboard so that we could compare the responses in the end. In the process I realised that the responses were important data and I requested one learner to record the responses as I wrote them on the chalkboard (See appendix 3d).

Fourthly, stereotyping was explained in a practical way that learners understood easily. Sharing the same background with the learners, I brought to their attention common sayings in the villages that were typical stereotyping. This is revealed in the following journal extract:

For example, I asked, “what is a boy who appears weak likened to in the villages?” and all learners answered: “a woman”. I also asked them, “What would be said to a girl who eats very fast?” and they responded that she would be discouraged in behaving like a boy (See appendix 7b).

Then I explained stereotyping from there and learners understood.

Some learners demonstrated their understanding of stereotyping in the homework activity given (See appendices 3a). In their workbooks, learners pasted advertisements and described what their understanding of the visual images. For example, one learner showed an image of a young man advertising a burger (as shown in figure 4.3) and a young woman advertising a skin toner.

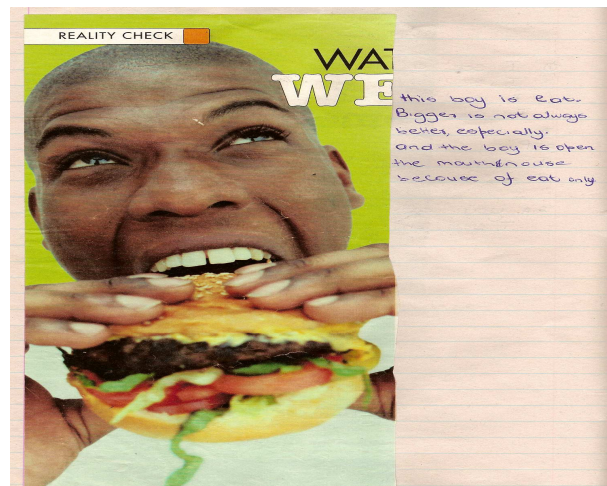


Figure 4.3 – Learners' example of

Moreover, the lesson prompted the learners to aspire in a social critical manner. In the focus group interviews, some learners expressed their desire to have the best in their future. Being asked how he desired his children to be in future in relation to the children he saw in the adverts, one learner said, (Hayi owam umntwana ndinqwenela

angane future eright) “No I desire that my child could have a right future” (See appendix 6). The teacher also motivated learners to aspire, as some of the things that appear in advertisement were do-able like owning a decent house before the age of 30 years (See appendix 6).

Finally, some learners were able to identify composition features even if they were shown differently from the way that was previously explained. For example, in the Purity advertisement showing the boy and the man, I asked the learners to give a reason why the boy was portrayed in sleeveless attire whilst the man was shown in a long sleeved shirt. One learner answered that it was to show that the boy is strong because of Purity (See appendix 6). The learners were therefore able to:

Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words or images in selected contexts by using knowledge of grammar, word attack skills/ contextual clues, sound, colour, design, placement and by using senses (See learning outcomes and assessment standards in chapter 2).

4.7.2. What did not go well?

Some learners did not follow up the instructions given in the activities. One learner, for example, did not list the items she saw in the two advertisements as she listed “purity mabele and purity cream of maize” only and left out all the things she was expected to list (See appendix 3a). In finding advertisements that showed stereotyping, some learners selected images that do not show stereotyping. As an illustration, one learner cut separate images of a woman and Johnson Sun Care products and then pasted them together as one image (See appendix 3a). Even though this could be attributed to lack of resources, the learner’s work did not show any understanding of what underpinned stereotyping. Also, other learners got the correct images but could not write how stereotyping occurred to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge.

In addition, some learners showed lack of exposure to the modern world. In identifying the visible objects in the two advertisements, some learners could not name things correctly (See appendix 3d). For example, the research journal reveals that:

One learner identified a microwave oven as a T.V. The kitchen setting of the advert did not link well with the child’s schemata as some came from muddy huts where the arrangement is completely different (See appendix 7b).

The lesson did not continue smoothly because of different interpretations. Firstly, some learners argued that the relationship between the man and the boy was that of brothers whilst others saw the two as father and son. This argument could emanate from the learners' lack of exposure to urban life where a young man of that age could have a son and a decent house like the one in the advertisement (See appendix 7b). Also, some learners saw the children in both advertisements as boys because in the second advertisement it was not clear whether the child was a boy or a girl (See appendix 2). These arguments delayed the flow of the lesson and had to be resolved before the lesson continued so that there was no learner who felt ignored in the process.

Because at first I tried to explain stereotyping using our common background knowledge, some learners did show understanding of the explanation that was given later in the lesson. In the advertisements that they cut out for homework, the majority of learners selected those images that have food and boys or beauty and women. They did not show the other ways we discussed in which stereotyping could happen, as I expected.

Learners did not show their understanding of redressing stereotyping. Even though learners cut and pasted good examples of stereotyping they did not show how it could be reversed in the advertisements they selected.

Lastly, learners did not show a good knowledge of South African history. When I asked them to describe briefly the relationship that existed between different racial groups or men and women in South Africa before 1994, only a few were able to do this. That disappointed me, as that information was crucial in understanding one way in which stereotyping occurs.

4.7.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

Firstly, instructions should provide a means of assessment that would guide the learners. For example, in the identification activity, the teacher should allocate marks that would be equivalent to the items to be identified. That would guide the learner when doing activities. Also, even if it is homework, an assessment rubric should be provided so that the learners perform according to the expectations of the teacher. Learners could use the rubric as a checklist.

In drawing on learners' background knowledge to introduce stereotyping, one needs to ensure that it does not simply stop there. Learners need to be encouraged to use this merely as a starting point to understanding stereotyping in its entirety. Stereotyping should be taught as manifest itself in: black and white, young and old, rural and urban, men and women, boys and girls to mention a few. If background experience is used, learners should be explicitly told that was simply to help them understand the concept.

Learners should be taught how to reconstruct the advertisement so that it could be free of stereotyping. To identify it should not be the end. In the process learners should be made aware of the past in South Africa so that the learners approach an advertisement knowing explicitly what happened and how designers of advertisements may still hold onto the beliefs, values and ideas of the past.

4.8. Lesson 6

The main purpose of the lesson was to place learners in the position of designers where they applied all the skills and knowledge they had acquired in the lesson unit to designing their own advertisement. It also aimed at allowing learners the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding by presenting their produced advertisements.

4.8.1. What went well?

First of all, learners prepared a piece of writing for a real purpose, which was to advertise their school to Grade 9 students for the following year. Learners presented well-designed advertisements that were beautiful and attractive (See appendix 3b). One learner wrote in her journal:

Phew!! It was the day of presentations. Groups come with beautiful and attracting adverts (See appendix 7a).

Similarly, Non-Participant Observer B said:

I was shocked to see what they did because I never thought they would produce such a good and...eh...topics... (See appendix 5b).

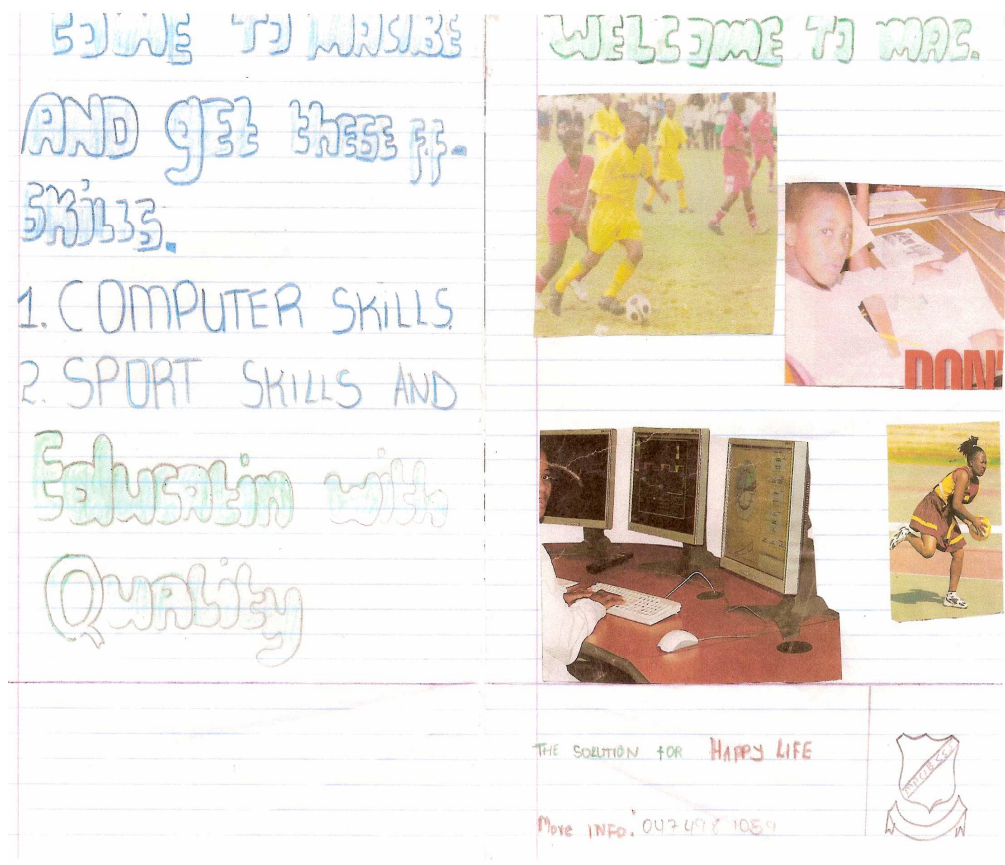


Figure 4.4 – Learners’ example of a designed advertisement

Some groups carefully chose the features to compose their advertisements. These included: colour, background, foreground, camera angles and shots, but what stood out was the use of colour. One group wrote in their advertisement,

The background of this photograph there is blue sky, green trees, houses, shop and school. Infront of this photograph there is green grass. The camera shots that are use is a straight level shot. There is beautiful colours: green and red. Green means growth and vegetation. Red means warmth. (See appendix 3b)

Learners took thoughtful decisions to frame these composition features to attract Grade 9 learners to the target school. For example, one group wanted to show the availability of computers in the school but their problem was that the only image they could find had an operator with dreadlocks and they considered that to degrade the school, as some parents would not consider sending their child there. After my intervention learners excluded the head with dreadlock

included the face and hands in the computer keyboard as shown in the above advertisement (See appendix 7b) just as professional photographers do.

In addition, many groups selected photographs showing extra curricular activities and related aspects of school life, for example, various sport codes, computers, academic settings, awards, school grounds, gardening, school buildings and school logo which they drew accurately (See appendix 3b). Being able to balance the most important features in publicising the school showed that the learners understood the concept of designing advertisements.

During the presentations, learners demonstrated confidence and pride in the advertisements they had designed. Groups selected one representative to describe the choices they had made in designing their advertisement. Non Participant Observer B said,

I mean for them to take the guards to stand there to lead the group telling us of what was going on in the picture they drew.... you see, it was very wonderful for me (See appendix 5b).

Also, some learners gave good explanations for each aspect they included in the advertisement, giving the audience a feel for what had happened in the design process. As an illustration, Non Participant Observer B said,

I remember this three-legged pot. The lid of the pot was being the teacher, what was inside the pot was the student which was being cooked, the pot and then now.... That is now, the lid is the teacher and what is inside the pot is the student and the pot was the whole school... and then the legs of the pot was the S.G.B, the school governing body. I was very impressed with that (See appendix 5b).

4.8.2. What did not go well?

The advertisements were not perfectly designed as I projected. I had high expectations that learners would produce advertisements similar to the commercial ones we had dealt with. For example, I expected them to place things in the foreground, thus hiding the white paper they had used as their base, but in all the advertisements there were white blank spaces that could have been covered in colour or otherwise as shown in the above image (See appendix 3b). These white spaces did not assign any meaning, rather they made things unreal. I am not being blind to the lack of resources encountered in

designing the advertisement, but the little learners had should have made a difference. As an illustration, learners drew a boy or a girl holding a ball, which is indicative that sport is promoted in the school, but such an image would be standing on a white background, creating the view that those subjects are posed.

Even though we worked for three days designing the advertisements, some were not completed by the fourth day, when presentations were done. As I assisted groups, I observed that in one group, all the learners chose to draw the school logo with a view to selecting the best drawing (See appendix 7b). Groups like that could not finish and presented uncoloured and clumsy advertisements, which could not be seen from a distance (See appendix 3b).

In some groups one or two learners dominated whilst others took a passive position. In the photograph shown in chapter three, it can be noted that some learners are passive as they do not have anything in front of them and are just spectators (See appendix 7b).

Even though learners were taught the basics of presenting to an audience, some learners did not conduct themselves well. They were unable to maintain good eye contact, position their bodies well and use their hands in an acceptable manner. Some literally gave the audience their back.

As the lesson was new even to teacher, assessment was not done. In the planning of the lesson, it was anticipated that learners were to engage in peer assessment using an advertisement rubric but they did not. First, the advertisements which were finally produced carried the teacher and the learners away. We exhausted ourselves in designing the advertisements and did not set aside enough time for peer assessment. The time taken to design the advertisement took longer than anticipated and there was a lot to be covered in the last hours. Also, the advertisement rubric was not judiciously designed and it appeared too vague to assess what the learners had produced.

4.8.3. What needed to be improved if the lesson were to be taught in future?

Blank A 3 papers with no lines should be provided to learners to present their final drafts. Learners should have all the pictures cut or drawings ready in one place first. Then, these should be placed provisionally (without sticking them down) on the A 3 paper, which would be representative of a photo frame. The

teacher should encourage learners to think about that placement, by saying for example: “Would it really attract the target group if it were placed in a local store?” (See appendix 8). Again learners should be able to give reasons for the placement of each object. If the placement was good, the learners could paste the advertisement and then think of a colour to fill in the white spaces that would be left so as to give that advertisement an authentic feel. For example, if the learner drew children with a ball, then she/he would put a green colour for grass as in the playground.

Designing the advertisement should be an individual activity where all the learners could demonstrate their own understanding without being dominated or threatened by others. Also, time would be used effectively avoiding learner debates about the design, and who would do what. This would make it easy for learners to work at home and at their own pace unlike waiting for the group during English periods. As for visibility, Non Participant Observer B said:

If you are talking about the school, there's picture maybe of the classroom ...say ...cut it either than drawing it so as to make this more real. To cut it and he puts something that is from a magazine and then so that it is legible. One could see it even if it is far there because now it's there in front.... Other students are far there (See appendix 5b).

In future learners should be exposed to presentations to get them familiar with public speaking and be made aware that they are speaking to an audience.

Rating code	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Marks	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100
A. Physical appearance							
Does background or foreground set an appropriate scene for the advertised product?							
Is the advertisement free of stereotyping?							
Is the texture and lighting used appropriately?							
Are elements of the advertisement chosen carefully?							
Is colour used well and perfectly balanced?							
Is the motto/logo/slogan/name of the school clearly visible?							
B. Justification							
Is a good justification on the choice of these given?							
• Background							
• Foreground							
• Texture							
• Lighting							
• Colour							
• Juxtaposition							
Does the learner explain the impact each of these elements would have on viewers?							
• Background							
• Foreground							
• Texture							
• Lighting							
• Colour							
• Juxtaposition							
C. General							
Is the advertisement designed to appeal to target group's desires for?							
• Quality education							
• Sport/music or other							
• Discipline							
Is the advertisement neat with well-defined borders?							
Is the language used simple and free of errors?							

Seven point scale assessment tool (South Africa. Department of Education, 2005: 6)

Symbol	Rating	Marks %
1	Outstanding achievement	80-100
2	Meritorious achievement	70-79
3	Substantial Achievement	60-69
4	Adequate achievement	50-59
5	Moderate achievement	40-49
6	Elementary achievement	30-39
7	Not achieved	0-29

Table 4.2 – Assessment rubric for a designed advertisement

Assessment is a crucial aspect of learning how to design advertisements that needed to be handled with care. Before learners start designing their advertisement, they should be given a rubric, which should be discussed with the teacher. That would give them insight into what is expected from them and they could use it as a checklist when they work on their own. The advertisement rubric should not be wordy like the one in appendix 2, but it should be simple and precise as shown in the example above.

If group work is to be done, the marks should be divided into a single group mark which could be 20% and the rest should be given by learners to each group member according to each member's contribution, say 70% but together that should be 100% (See appendix 8).

In future a video camera or a tape recorder and a still photograph camera should be made available to capture the presentation for later viewing. This could be used to assist learners in developing critical reflection on what they had done to improve performance in future.

4.9. Lesson 7

The main purpose of this lesson was to give learners an opportunity to apply their newly acquired visual literacy skills by responding to questions set on an advertisement. It aimed to assess how far learners could apply their knowledge in an unfamiliar setting.

4.9.1. What went well?

The Parmalat Milk advertisement chosen for the assessment lesson was simple, familiar and colourful. The scene set for the advertisement presented five children seated at a table playing and drinking milk. The language used in the advertisement was simple and literal. A variety of bright colours were used in the visual image to give background and foreground through the clothes worn by the children, the tablecloth, milk cartoons and words making the advertisement striking from a distance. The visual text advertised milk, which is a commonly used product even in my learners' homes (See appendix 2).

Secondly, all questions were based on what was done during the presentation of the lesson unit on visual literacy. Some questions revolved around identifying the visual images learners could visualise in the text. For example, the first question asked, "How many children do you see in the advertisement?" Other questions required learners to identify composition elements of the photograph like, "At what angle has this photograph been taken?" and:

7. These three Parmalat milk varieties use four common colours.
 - 7.1. List those three colours.
 - 7.2. What do you think each colour stands for or symbolises? (See appendix 2)

There was a question that requested learners to show their understanding of a link between the words and the visual image of the advertisement. As an illustration, the question asked, "According to the advertisement, why is the children's fun is described as healthy?"

The questions finally requested learners to identify stereotyping and to provide ways that could be used to redress it in the same advertisement. These are the examples of questions:

- Which group of children are not represented or included in this advertisement if one looks at South African societies?
- In three sentences, state how you can redesign this advertisement so that everybody regardless of class is included in this advertisement?

o The advertisement does address stereotyping in a way. How has this been addressed? (See appendix 2)

All in all, these questions were set in a range from simple reproducing of information from the text to critical thinking, so as to accommodate all learners regardless of their range of abilities.

Some learners gave unexpectedly good answers. In question 10 about redressing stereotyping one learner wrote on her test script,

I would go to rural areas whereby a boy/girl will be outside a hut, with a glass of milk before he/she goes to play whereby I would have at least three races (See appendix 3c).

4.9.2. What did not go well?

Some learners performed worse in the test than I anticipated. That was first shown in the range of marks they obtained out of a total of 40 (See appendix 3c). As an illustration, the highest mark was 32 whilst the lowest was 5. In their responses learners failed to answer simple questions correctly. For example, some learners could not list the three varieties of Parmalat milk advertised in the text, which were: full cream, low fat and fat free. Other learners answered “seven or five racial groups” instead of three. There were students who answered questions out of context. For example, in listing colours and describing them, learners gave these answers: “black for death”, “red for danger”. With these responses, it became clear that the learners were not mindful of the context of the advertisement.

Some questions were difficult for some learners to answer and that was shown by the blank spaces they left and the answers they got wrong (See appendix 3c).

Having only one copy of the advertisement for the test delayed and frustrated learners. Even though each learner had a black and white copy of the test, there was a need for learners to view the colour copy so as to be able to answer the questions correctly.

4.9.3. What needed to be improved if the test were to be written in future?

In the presentation of colour during composition features, colour should be taught according to its codes. For example, the teacher should have a layout where various

colours would be displayed for learners to see. Some learners did not seem to know what purple, blue or navy looked like (See appendix 7b).

The teacher should make provision for a colourful text on a big poster or screen to supplement the learners' black and white question papers.

In stimulating learners to think about stereotyping further, I would ask a specific question that would make learners think about the implication the advertisement suggested in relation to the black girl child serving the other racial groups.

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter has given a critical reflection of each lesson that was presented in visual literacy. Specific focus was given to what went well, what did not go well, and what needed to be improved if the same lesson were to be taught in future. The chapter drew evidence from data that was gathered during the learners' activities, produced advertisements, test, learners' journals, focus group interviews, non-participant observations, researcher's journal and discussion with a critical friend. In all the above sources, it appeared that there were general factors that could promote meaningful teaching and learning of visual literacy in a rural high school on one hand, whilst there were those that could hinder it, and these are discussed generally in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter will present a discussion of common issues that emerged from the analysis in chapter 4 of the teaching and learning that occurred in a lesson unit on visual literacy. It will focus on the conclusions drawn, recommendations for the next cycle of action research and a critical reflection on what I learnt from the research. It will give suggestions for further research.

5.1. What went well in the lesson unit?

In the first cycle of action research that set out to find meaningful ways in which visual literacy could be taught and learned in a rural high school, the conclusion can be drawn that the implementation of the lesson unit was on the whole successful. Learners were able to produce visual images and use them in an acceptable manner as shown below.

5.1.1. Learners were empowered to interpret and design visual texts.

The implementation of this lesson unit empowered the learners to interpret advertisements and to design their own. As an illustration, the learners identified the visual elements used in composing an advertisement that included colour, background, foreground, focus, camera angles and shots, texture and lighting. In their activities, they were able to write the symbolic meaning attached to the use of particular colours in a visual image and the feelings or moods those colours represented (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo & Colbert, 1999: 148). For example, learners associated colours with the moods or feelings associated with them very well as shown by the following examples from chapter 4: “Green-health; Orange-Warmth; White-Purity” (See appendix 3a).

In the advertisements they designed for their school, the learners were fully aware of the target group they were trying to persuade to come to their school by applying the AIDA approach. As already mentioned in chapter two, this AIDA approach is based on people’s need for (as in Fielding, 1996: 328): pleasure, power, security, beauty, a long life, happiness, health, love, social acceptance and leisure; the learners included elements of visual grammar in a way that would attract Grade 9 learners and their parents to the school.

In all the advertisements, learners incorporated different photographs showing learners engaged in sport, dance, modelling, the computer laboratory and classrooms. They also included the school's "brand name" together with the school logo just as Nike includes the "swoosh" in its products. Some learners drew sections of the school buildings showing the school at an angle in a similar way to that in which a photographer would take a shot, and with a colourful foreground and background. Finally, during the presentation of the advertisements, learners justified the inclusion of each item in the advertisement frame. All in all, learners applied the elements of visual grammar they had been taught in the lesson unit.

5.1.2. Learners acquired critical language awareness

Learners became aware that the language "can be patronising, demeaning, disrespectful, offensive, exclusive or the opposite" (Ivanic, 1990: 129-131). They could deconstruct and reconstruct visual texts with regard to stereotyping, which advertisers rely on as one "the key advertising strategies" (Graydon, 2003: 37). They could identify and redress stereotyping in a given advertisement as shown in their daily activities and the lesson unit assessment. In the designed school advertisements learners avoided stereotyping by including boys and girls, and rural and urban settings.

5.1.3. Language used was routine, consistent and familiar.

The instructions used throughout the lesson unit were prepared in way that would not hinder the learners in knowing what was expected from them. These involved two activities sharing an instruction with similar wording as already discussed in chapter four. Instructions revolved around the same terminology of visual grammar that included: colour, background, foreground, lighting, focus, texture, camera angles and shots, juxtaposition, slogan, logo, target group and the name of the product, all of which were discussed in chapter two. Learners also used this language variously in daily activities, the test, journals, the school advertisement and focus group interviews. Routine, consistency and familiarity ensured that learners would encounter fewer problems communicating in English as an additional language (Wong-Fillmore, 1985: 29).

5.1.4. The teacher's role facilitated meaningful learning.

Throughout the presentation of the lesson unit, the teacher scaffolded learners, which is,

a process where the knowledgeable person gives more assistance to learners when exposed to new or difficult tasks, and the teacher continuously withdraws his support as the learners master the task and are able to interact independently (Larkin, 2002: 1).

In all the lessons, I would assist the learners to understand what the activity required and thereafter leave them to work on their own. I would also utilise those learners who understood earlier than others to scaffold their peers and that sped up the process of learning and teaching as already shown in chapter four. This is one of the new responsibilities facing teachers as they should not make meaning for the learners but should help learners make their own meaning as envisaged in the new curriculum.

5.2. What did not go well?

Even though the lesson unit was successful as shown above, it emerged that there were issues that made teaching and learning of visual literacy difficult and they all revolved around pacing of the lessons and time management. Time and pacing is currently a central concern in South Africa that hinders meaningful teaching and learning as shown in various studies that have been carried out throughout the country (Reeves, 2000: 68). Some studies show teacher absence in the classrooms whilst others show time that time is wasted in the classroom in the presence of the teacher because of disruptions caused by sports meetings, workshops and untimely visits to the school. During the implementation of this visual literacy lesson unit, it appeared that time management and pacing had a negative impact in teaching and learning as will be discussed below.

5.2.1. Time allocation for periods and lack of resources

The school timetable posed problems, as each period was only thirty minutes for a single and sixty minutes for a double lesson, making it difficult to manage time efficiently in very short, single periods. At times I waited outside the classroom to

allow the teacher to collect learners' books or finish a point before I entered the classroom. Sometimes I had been in another classroom when the bell rang and I would spend three or four minutes before I started in Grade 10 A. In short, my periods were less by three to five minutes instead of the thirty (or sixty) minutes that appeared in the timetable.

5.2.2. Lack of resources

Lack of resources in this case refers to magazines, scissors, coloured pens and paper glue that the learners used in the course of the research lesson unit. Even though I tried to bring as many magazines and newspapers as I could and requested learners to bring other materials, as it turned out there were not enough resources. The majority of learners did not come with the requested items and the whole class depended on those that were available. Learners waited for one another to finish before they could start working; in addition, cutting was not done accurately (See appendix 3b). As a result, valuable time was wasted time during tuition (Reeves, 2000: 69). Had each learner easily accessed the required resources, it would have taken a shorter period to do some of the activities than what actually happened.

5.2.3. Group work was not used judiciously

Precious time was wasted in discussion and group work. Some activities in the lesson unit were designed to promote discussion and group work. For example, in the prediction activity in Lesson 1 six learners were given two minutes to decide what had been omitted in a given camera shot. Two minutes was too short a time for each of the six learners to express his or her views and there was an extension of time to allow for discussion. Also, learners' cultural influences together with mine slowed down the pace of the lesson (de Klerk, 2002). For example, there were differences of interpretation relating to certain images and the lesson did not proceed until such differences were resolved, something I attributed to our way of doing things, which should not have been allowed to drag the lesson out especially as the interpretation was not the core part of the lesson.

In addition, the fact that learners communicated in an additional language slowed down things as the learners' language fell below the expected level as will be discussed below.

5.2.4. Constant interruptions during the tuition period

There were constant interruptions in teaching and learning, which had an effect on time management and pacing of the lessons. One of the things that disturbed the flow of the lesson unit was stopping one lesson for a sports meeting. Learners wrote in their journals:

Nothing much we did because we were interrupted by the sports. I was bad to be disturbed because we were so deep interested on the lesson (See appendix 7a).

I never met with it before. But at the time the sports captain come at our classroom and tell us lets goin to the fields to play our games that were disappoint us (See appendix 7a).

On another occasion, the teacher who was teaching the class prior to mine took longer than expected and extended into my period. I wrote in my journal:

Learners could not finish their Life Science test and overlapped to my single period (See appendix 7b).

5.2.5. Teachers did not have knowledge of visual grammar

Even though this action research project was concerned with one teacher (myself) it came out in the analysis and discussion in chapter four that other teachers who had taught my Grade 10 A learners in Grades 7-9 did not have the visual language necessary to teach the learners visual literacy.

As already explained in chapter two, visual literacy was not included in the syllabus for English Second Language before the introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in 1998. Thus teachers who came out of the apartheid education system did not experience visual literacy either as learners or as teacher trainees. As an illustration, both non-participant observers in the researcher's school referred to the fact that they had not been taught visual literacy at any time in their own education:

I don't remember anything of the kind...visual literacy ...maybe it's the term that is missing here (See appendix 5b).

In my teacher training years I received no training on visual literacy (See appendix 5a).

The evidence supports the view that the teachers who learners encountered in Grades 7-9 did not have a formal understanding of visual literacy and thus the visual grammar necessary to teach the learners. This slowed down the pace of my teaching because I could not assume that learners had any prior knowledge of visual literacy before they entered my class. As it turned out, I could not cover the lesson plans in the scheduled time because I had to do the work of teachers in Grades 7-9.

Moreover, in my experience of attending workshops intended to implement the new curriculum, and even facilitating some of them, I realised that the training was by and large generic and very little was done to introduce teachers to the new subject matter in the NCS, such as visual literacy.

5.2.6. Learners did not experience visual literacy in Grade 9

As has already been mentioned in relation to teachers' knowledge, one of the things which slowed progress in the lessons was that learners came with no foundation to build on with regard to visual literacy. Evidence of this was shown in the learners' focus group interviews as most of the learners claimed that they had never been taught about interpreting visual images (See appendix 6). Even those learners who acknowledged that they had been taught about visual images were not taught about their analysis but were just asked to identify people in an image (See appendix 6). Also, learners wrote in their journals:

Yes I know the leson before but it is not sem leson. That I do before is about hobbies (See appendix 7a).

I did not see this lesson before (See appendix 7a).

I didn't go well because its fist exercise and I don't understand what happening in this exarcise (See appendix 7a).

In this Grade 10 class I was obliged to return to teaching visual literacy that normally should have been already taught in Grade 9 and earlier grades, because these learners

had not had any prior visual literacy training. The effect of this was to delay me in starting with the Grade 10 visual literacy curriculum.

The requirement for visual literacy training at the Grades 7-9 levels indicates that the learner is deemed to have reached the required level of competence when he or she:

- Reads a text (fiction or non-fiction) (South Africa, Department of Education, 2002: 97)
 - Explains and assesses point of view in both written and visual parts of the text, and offers alternative points of view;
- Reads and responds to social texts (e.g. a short newspaper article): (South Africa, Department of Education, 2002: 99)
 - Analyses point of view, construction of meaning, way in which reader is positioned.
- Critically analyses media texts (e.g. a short newspaper article): (South Africa, Department of Education, 2002: 99)
 - Identifies subject, context, audience and message of written and visual texts;

Had this learning outcome been achieved in Grade 9, the teaching and learning pace of the lesson unit on visual literacy in Grade 10 would have been faster and more work could have been covered.

On investigation I found that the schools from which my sample of Grade 10 learners came from did not have any textbooks dealing with visual literacy when these learners were in Grade 9 in 2005. It was only in 2006, when these learners were already in Grade 10, that the local schools were issued with appropriate Grade 9 textbooks which included visual literacy. These were Keys to English Learners' Grade 8, which has a unit 9 entitled "Pictures that speak" (Burkett, Olvitt, Robertson, & Smuts, 2006: 131:146), and Focus on English Grade 9 (Dichmont & Wenman, 2006: 161-163) which includes a subsection on advertisements.

5.2.7. Learners' language fell below expectations

Learners had received limited exposure to English in the past. In the course of the lesson unit the learners struggled to express themselves in English. I waited for them to finish what they said in English and that took a lot of time. Non Participant Observer B said in the interview,

I didn't see anything which was not properly done except that now what is the most important thing is that now with our kids it is not easy to express themselves. That is the thing I found out. That, it's not easy for them to express themselves otherwise it was wonderful for me.

Some learners wrongly used words, like "short for shot" or would spell words in a way that was influenced by their mother tongue, Xhosa, where they would spell "because" as "becouse" or 'choose' as "tshuz". Other learners appeared to hear words wrongly as one learner wrote in his journal, "I feel happy because I want this car ting." (See appendix 7a). The learner wrote "car ting" instead of "cutting".

I also spent time explaining instructions so that learners could understand exactly what was expected of them. Generally, their language was far below the level described in the Grade 9 learning outcomes, and I had to slow down the pace of the lesson to accommodate their language level.

To conclude, all the above aspects contributed to the slow pace of teaching and learning of the lesson unit on visual literacy. Even though the lesson plans in the original lesson unit were reduced from ten to seven lesson plans over ten school days and ten school periods, the modified lesson unit took fifteen days. Also, some lesson activities in the modified lesson unit were not done. For example, in figure signs, only the facial signs were done whilst the hand signs and body posture were not done due to time limits.

5.3. Planning for the second cycle.

I have already stated what could be done specifically to improve each lesson in chapter four. This sub-section will give general recommendations on how to improve the teaching of the visual literacy lesson unit in the next cycle of action research.

5.3.1. Adjustment of the school timetable

The shortness of the school periods at 30 minutes each does not allow for adequate time for many in-class activities. To mention just one of many possible examples: when getting students to design an advertisement, be it individually or in groups, it cannot be done adequately in a lesson of only 30 minutes, even if minimal time is allocated to introducing the task. Debriefing the task in the same lesson is impossible given the limited time.

I would recommend that before we implement the second cycle of the lesson unit on visual literacy, the school review its lesson scheduling to aim towards more lessons that are longer. The emphasis today in many subjects is on greater student participation and most especially much richer in-class activities and tasks, which require longer lesson periods in order to reap the full benefits of these pedagogies. There are of course a variety of options which might include more double lesson periods or reducing the total number of scheduled lessons but making them longer. The latter might well be a medium-term goal.

5.3.2. Revision of school policy in relation to regular interruptions

The evidence points to frequent unscheduled interruptions of the tuition programme for extramural activities, such as soccer activities, etc. This was very disruptive of the lessons. The recommendation is that the school should have a firm and practical policy that would ensure a good balance between tuition and extra-curricula activities, but also that each be properly scheduled well in advance so that teaching is not randomly interrupted.

In addition District sports events need to be scheduled well in advance and with due regard for the tuition schedules of the schools so as to avoid disruptions of teaching. Students need well scheduled teaching and extramural activities that fit together smoothly and not an environment of random interruptions of either.

5.3.3. Provision of resources for visual literacy lessons and activities

To teach visual literacy requires some additional resources in addition to the textbook, such as scissors, coloured pens and paper glue. Because the majority of

learners come from families that are not well off we cannot expect them to provide these essential learning resources. So it is recommended that the school management team (SMT) provides funds to buy pairs of scissors, coloured pens and paper glue that would be kept centrally and be circulated in all classes for visual literacy activities when needed.

In addition I would recommend that the school budget for a subscription to a daily or weekly newspaper and a variety weekly or monthly magazines, which would also be made available to learners during break times to promote free reading and viewing. Non-Participant Observer A said,

I think within the school budget there is a need that each subject should be allocated its own funding but not only relying on that but each department, they should also embark on a sort of fundraising especially that they know that they will have some programs that will need some minor resources here and there and try doing even once trying to complement those who are having problems (See appendix 5a).

As the school has three television sets with either a video player or a DVD player, two of these should be placed in two separate classrooms for viewing by learners during break times. The learners' exposure to these media forms would provide additional opportunities for them to acquire language and to view advertisements from another code that includes sound.

5.3.4. Provision of feedback

In light of the experience of this research project, in future – in similar lessons or in another action research cycle - I would provide learners with both positive and negative feedback after each activity they engage in such as: identifying, interpreting, cutting, pasting, labelling, discussing elements of visual grammar and designing their own advertisements as already mentioned in chapter two.

Feedback is defined as a “means of providing information how and why the child understands and misunderstands, and what directions the student must take to improve” (Hattie, 1999: 9). The learning value of providing feedback is well documented by a number of researchers. In his research Hattie (as quoted in Mason, 2005: 5) found that “the single most powerful factor that enhances achievement is feedback on their learning provided to students.” The importance of feedback is vital in language learning

as learners need to know, “when they are communicating well and when they are making errors or fail to communicate” (Murray, 2006: 1).

5.5. Critical reflection on my own learning in the research process

In this section I will give a critical reflection on my own learning in the research process by focussing on: designing a lesson unit, the visual grammar, putting theory into practice, judicious use of group work and knowledge of the National Curriculum Statements in English First Additional Language.

5.5.1. Designing a lesson unit

Before the research process, I had never planned a lesson unit that ran over 10 school days on a given theme. The only thing I knew was how to plan a series of four lessons incorporating listening, speaking, reading and writing as the main skills to be achieved in each lesson. I first planned this unit as a requirement for my assignment in the course work and it had 10 lesson plans over 10 school days. However, before I taught it, I critically evaluated its implementation in a rural high school and found out that some lessons or visual images were not suitable for my learners due to lack of exposure. I, therefore, redesigned and refined the lesson unit into 7 lesson plans over 10 school days, which were used in the research.

5.5.2. Visual Grammar

Unlike the design of individual lesson plans, I found designing this unit very challenging because I had to focus on visual literacy only. At the beginning, I did not know the elements of visual literacy except for camera shots and angles. However, after intensive study, I had a range of visual language (or grammar) from which to select the elements that my learners could understand, taking into consideration their background.

I learned about the use of colour, texture, lighting, focus, foreground, background and juxtaposition together with camera angles and shots in depth as discussed in chapter two. I was also exposed to advertising language that includes: brand names, stereotypes, logo, motto and advertising strategies such as the AIDA approach, which the advertiser carefully puts together to reach viewers. I was therefore able to share this visual

language with my learners which I could not do before. Until I noticed that my learners had difficulty in cutting in a straight line with scissors, I did not realise that I, too, had difficulties in this regard. Once I was aware of this, I was quickly able to remediate it and thus my own ability to design visual texts improved.

5.5.3. Putting theory into practice

After I learned about second language acquisition theories, I put them into practice during the research process as a guide to my actions. As an illustration, if my learners had a difficulty in understanding an element of visual literacy, I would scaffold them. For example, whilst designing the school advertisement, one group of learners was challenged by a photograph they wanted to use but it had an image of a person with dread locks which they did not want to show. I was able to show them how to crop the photograph, so that only the person's hands were visible.

Experiencing a conflict whilst learning a new thing is a normal occurrence (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Once I understood this, I relaxed and took the opportunity to give learners assistance and withdrew that help when they were then able to move forward on their own (Larkin, 2002). I exposed the learners to the art involved in photography where the photographer carefully selects what should or should not appear in a photo frame. In short, during my lessons I took informed decisions based on the theory that I had learned.

5.5.4. Judicious use of group work

Prior to carrying out this research my understanding of OBE was that in prioritised group work as opposed to whole class teaching, which it located as part of a teacher centred approach. However, with the implementation of this research lesson unit, I realised that group work should be used judiciously as some activities are not suited to it. For example, if learners are experiencing a lesson for the first time, it is best for the teacher to improvise ways in which learners could have the necessary information to perform the task or better to explicitly teach them before they work with the activity.

Sometimes, group work wasted a lot of time with little being covered in the lesson. Some learners were dominated by others and this latter group did not benefit from the discussions. Also, learners did not communicate in English as an additional language

but discussed in Xhosa, which worked against the purpose of working as a group (Wong-Fillmore, 1985)

Even if the learners could communicate in English in those group settings, the greatest problem is that the practice they would get from others would develop “permanent interlanguage features through their exposure to the ‘junky input data’” (Wong-Fillmore, 1985: 25). In this regard whole class work with the teacher at the centre should be used as an alternative to group work, when appropriate.

Given the time allocation for English periods in my school, I have learned to strive for a balance between individual work, pair work, group work which would be carefully designed by the teacher activities, and whole class work (Wong-Fillmore, 1985: 26).

5.5.5. Knowledge of the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in English

Before this research I had little knowledge about the NCS and I could not use the document for my lessons. Now I know how the statements link up with the National Constitution. For example, the constitution aims to redress the legacy of apartheid and discourages discrimination of whatever form. One of the main programmes the government embarked on was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). In the NCS, the RDP comes in the form of developing learners to be critical thinkers and that counted for the inclusion of aspects like visual literacy and media literacy in the new curriculum as vehicles to promote the ideal learner envisaged.

The RDP in the NCS comes with critical language awareness, where learners deconstruct and reconstruct a visual image. As an illustration, they would deconstruct stereotyping in an advertisement and redesign the same advertisement to be free of stereotyping.

To conclude, the research process empowered me with both visual knowledge and skills that radically changed the way I teach and gave me confidence as an English First Additional Language teacher who is no longer unable to answer an examination question on visual literacy.

5.6. Suggestions for future research

Leading from this small-scale action research project on visual literacy, it is suggested that the following questions need to be researched further:

1. How do teachers teach visual literacy in both the GET band and FET band?
2. How do teachers deal with learners that have a different range of capabilities?
3. How do teachers provide learners with the “catch up” work they missed in a previous grade?
4. How best can teachers be provided with in-service professional development that is balanced between helping them to understand and implement the new pedagogy and the new content in the curriculum?

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of key themes that emerged from the analysis in chapter 4 of the teaching and learning of visual literacy in a Grade 10 class in a rural high school in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. It discussed what went well, what did not go well and what could be done to improve the teaching of visual literacy at the Grade 10 level in future. Some suggestions for further research to improve the teaching of visual literacy were provided.

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Appendix 1

(Permission letters and Response)

Appendix 1a (Access letter to the Principal)

Appendix 1b (Invitation letter to the EDO)

Appendix 1c (Request to interview the learners)

Appendix 1d (Request to interview my colleagues)

Appendix 1 e (Request to interview non-participant observers)

Appendix 1f (permission to use a child's photograph)

Appendix 1g (Response)

Appendix 1a (Access letter to the Principal)

06 March 2006

The principal

Sir

Request to carry out a research

I request permission to conduct an action research in your school.

The research is for my Med in ESL study with Rhodes University. The research intends to find meaningful ways of teaching visual literacy in a rural school. Visual literacy is one of the new and critical aspects that are included in the new National Curriculum, which is implemented this year in Grade 10. As I have never taught visual literacy before, the research will help me to improve the way I teach and also empower the learners in the way they interpret visual texts.

The research will be based on a lesson unit that will run over 10 school days from 13/03/2006 to 28/03/2006 in grade 10A. The project will be carried out during English periods in this classroom (as shown below) and it will not interfere with other subjects. Also, the research will not present anything different from what the learners are supposed to learn in this grade, but it will be relevant to grade 10 as outlined in the National Curriculum Statements (2003).

	8:00-8:30	8:30-9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30-10:00		10:15-10:45	10:45-11:15	11:15-11:45	11:45-12:15		12:45-13:15	13:15-13:45	13:45-14:15
Mon							*	*					
Tues								*	*				
Wed												*	*
Thurs						*							
Fri			*	*									

An Education Development Official (EDO) has been invited as a non-participant observer who will provide positive feedback. The EDO has been given grade 10 A English timetable and will come only during those periods depending in his her schedule.

The names of: the school, the learners and the EDO will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I hope my request will receive your favourable considerations.

Yours faithfully

Mbelani Madeyandile (Mr)

Signature

Appendix 1b (Invitation letter to the EDO)

06 March 2006

The Education Development Official (EDO)
Butterworth District
Butterworth
4960

Sir

An invitation into a research

I, Madeyandile Mbelani- post level one educator at above-mentioned high school; invite to take part in a research that will be carried out in grade 10A where I currently teach. In the project I request you to co-research with me as a non-participant observer during English lessons.

The research is for my Med in Esl study with Rhodes University. The research intends to find meaningful ways of teaching visual literacy in a rural school. Visual literacy is one of the new and critical aspects that are included in the new National Curriculum, which is implemented this year in Grade 10. As I have never taught visual literacy before, the research will help me to improve the way I teach and also empower the learners in the way they interpret visual texts.

The research will be based on a lesson unit that will run over 10 school days from 13/03/2006 to 28/03/2006 in grade 10A. The project will be carried out during English periods in this classroom and it will not interfere with other subjects. Also, the research will not present anything different from what the learners are supposed to learn in this grade, but it will be relevant to grade 10 as outlined in the National Curriculum Statements (2003) English First Additional Language.

I have specifically invited you because of your valuable exposure in English Second language Teaching and Learning and your current state as a development official. Given below is a school timetable showing only English periods in grade 10 A per week and you can come when the day and time suits you.

	8:00-8:30	8:30-9:00	9:00-9:30	9:30-10:00		10:15-10:45	10:45-11:15	11:15-11:45	11:45-12:15		12:45-13:15	13:15-13:45	13:45-14:15
Mon							*	*					
Tues								*	*				
Wed												*	*
Thurs						*							
Fri			*	*									

The names of: the EDO, the school and the learners will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I hope my request will receive your favourable considerations.

Yours faithfully

Mbelani Madeyandile (Mr)

(Contact Number: 0824045943)

Appendix 1c (Request to interview the learners)

06 April 2006

The Principal

Dear Sir

Request to conduct interviews

I request permission to conduct interviews with focus groups of students (from your school) who took part in the presentation of the lesson unit on visual literacy for my research with Rhodes University which I requested permission to conduct it earlier this year.

These interviews will help to close gaps and validate the data that has been collected. These interviews will run on separate sessions for eight days during afternoon studies or free time and will not interfere with the smooth running of the school. Each session is expected to last between thirty and forty minutes and a tape recorder will be used to take down the conversation, which will be later be transcribed into a written text.

The names of: the school and that of the learners will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I hope my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Mbelani Madeyandile (Mr)

Signature

Appendix 1d (Request to interview my colleagues)

06 April 2006

The Principal
Dear Sir

Request to conduct interviews

I request permission to conduct interviews with two teachers (from your school) who observed some lessons in the research lesson unit I talked of earlier this year.

These interviews will help to close gaps and validate the data that has been collected. These interviews will run on separate sessions for two days during afternoon studies and will not interfere with the smooth running of the school. Each session is expected to last an hour and a tape recorder will be used to take down the conversation.

The names of: the school and the teachers will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I hope my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Mbelani Madeyandile (Mr)

Signature

Appendix 1 e (Request to interview non-participant observers)

06 April 2006

My Colleague
4980

Dear Colleague

Request to conduct an interview

I request to interview you in relation to the lesson I once invited you to observe in grade 10A.

The interview is part of my research for my Med in ELT study with Rhodes University. The research intends to find meaningful ways of teaching visual literacy in a rural school. Visual literacy is one of the new and critical aspects that are included in the new National Curriculum, which is implemented this year in Grade 10. As I have never taught visual literacy before, the research will help me to improve the way I teach and also empower the learners in the way they interpret visual texts.

Your contribution in the interview will help close gaps and validate the data that was collected in the presentation of visual literacy lesson unit, which you attended in grade 10A. I also request that the interview session be held at a convenient time that we will discuss in person and it will last for approximately an hour. A tape recorder will be used to take down the conversation.

Your name and that of the school will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I hope my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

Mbelani Madeyandile (Mr)

Signature

Appendix 1f (permission to use child's photograph)

05 November 2006

Dear Parent(s)

Permission to use your child's photograph

I, Mbelani, M (Mr) a teacher at the above-mentioned school, request you to permit me to use a photograph with the image of your child for the purposes of a research report that will be presented on 15 January 2007.

The research is for my studies with Rhodes University and it was done in Grade 10 A where your child is a learner. The main reasons to use the photograph were to: show that something happened and portray the learners' involvement in an activity. (Attached hereunder is the photograph with your child).



I would like to let you know that you have a right to agree or to disagree as this photograph is only for research purposes. If you agree kindly fill in the space provided below.

Name of the learner		Parent(s)' signature
Name of the parent(s)		

I thank you for your cooperation in advance. I can be contacted at the above-mentioned school or at 0834045943

Yours Faithfully
Mbelani, M (Mr)

Appendix 1g (Response)

Dear Mr. Mbelani

REQUEST TO CARRY-OUT RESEARCH: YOURSELF

Receipt of your letters dated 6 March 2006 in the above connection are hereby acknowledged.

Kindly be informed that this school has no objection in your request as long as other classes wherein you are expected to teach will not be disadvantaged as a result thereof.

Wishing you success in your endeavours.

Yours Faithfully

.....
PRINCIPAL

Appendix 2 (Research lesson Unit)

Learning outcomes and assessment standards used in this research

Learning outcome 1: Listening and speaking

The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts.

We know this when the learner is able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of different forms of oral communication for social purposes:
 - learn about and share ideas, show an understanding of concepts, comment on experience, defend a position, make an unprepared response, tell a story;
 - initiate and sustain conversation by developing appropriate turn taking conventions, filling in gaps and encouraging where appropriate;
 - give and follow directions and instructions;
 - Interact in group discussion by expressing own ideas and opinions and listening to and respecting those of others, while engaging with a range of issues such as inclusivity and power relations, and environmental, ethical, socio-cultural and human rights issues;
- demonstrate planning and research skills for oral presentations:
 - research a topic by referring to a range of supplied and relevant sources;
 - Incorporate appropriate visuals, audio and audio-visual aids such as chats, posters, photographs, slides, images, music, sound and electronic media;

Learning outcome 2: Reading and viewing

The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts.

We know this when the learner is able to:

- Demonstrate various reading and viewing strategies for comprehension and appreciation:
 - Ask to make obvious predictions;

- infer the meaning of unfamiliar words or images in selected contexts by using knowledge of grammar, word attack skills/ contextual clues, sound, colour, design, placement and by using senses;
- Explain the meaning of a range of written, visual, audio and audio-visual texts:
 - find information and details in texts;
 - recognise how selections and omissions in texts can affect meaning;
 - distinguish between fact and opinion, and give own response;
 - recognise between direct and implied meaning;
 - recognise the writer's/narrator's/character's viewpoint and give some supporting evidence from the text;
 - recognise the socio-political and cultural background of the texts;
- Recognise how language and images may reflect and shape values and attitudes in texts;
 - recognise socio-cultural and political values, attitudes and beliefs such as attitudes towards gender, class, age, power relations, human rights inclusivity and environmental issues;
 - Recognise the nature of bias, prejudice and discrimination;
- explore the key features of texts and explain how they contribute to meaning:
 - Recognise the use of visual, audio and audio-visual techniques such as the use of colour, subtitles, dialogue, music, sound, lighting, editing, framing, styles of shots, camera movements, camera techniques, foregrounding and backgrounding;

Learning outcome 3: Writing and Presenting

The learner is able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conventions and formats appropriate to diverse contexts.

We know this when the learner is able to:

- demonstrate planning skills for writing for specific purpose, audience and context:
 - explain the requirements of different tasks;

- identify the target audience and the specific purpose such as narrating, entertaining, persuading, arguing, explaining, informing, describing and manipulating;
- decide on and apply the appropriate style, point of view and format of texts;
- use some visual and design elements appropriately;
- demonstrate the use of writing strategies and techniques for first drafts:
 - experiment with format and style for creative purposes;
 - Identify and use a selection of stylistic and rhetorical devices such as figurative language, word choice, vivid description, personal voice and style, tone, symbol, colour, placement and sound;
- reflect on, analyse and evaluate own work, considering the opinion of others, and present final product:
 - use set criteria for evaluation of own and others' writing for improvement;
 - present final draft product paying attention to appropriate presentation style such as a neatly presented text or a striking, colourful poster;

Learning outcome 4: Language

The learner is able to use language and structure and conventions appropriately and effectively.

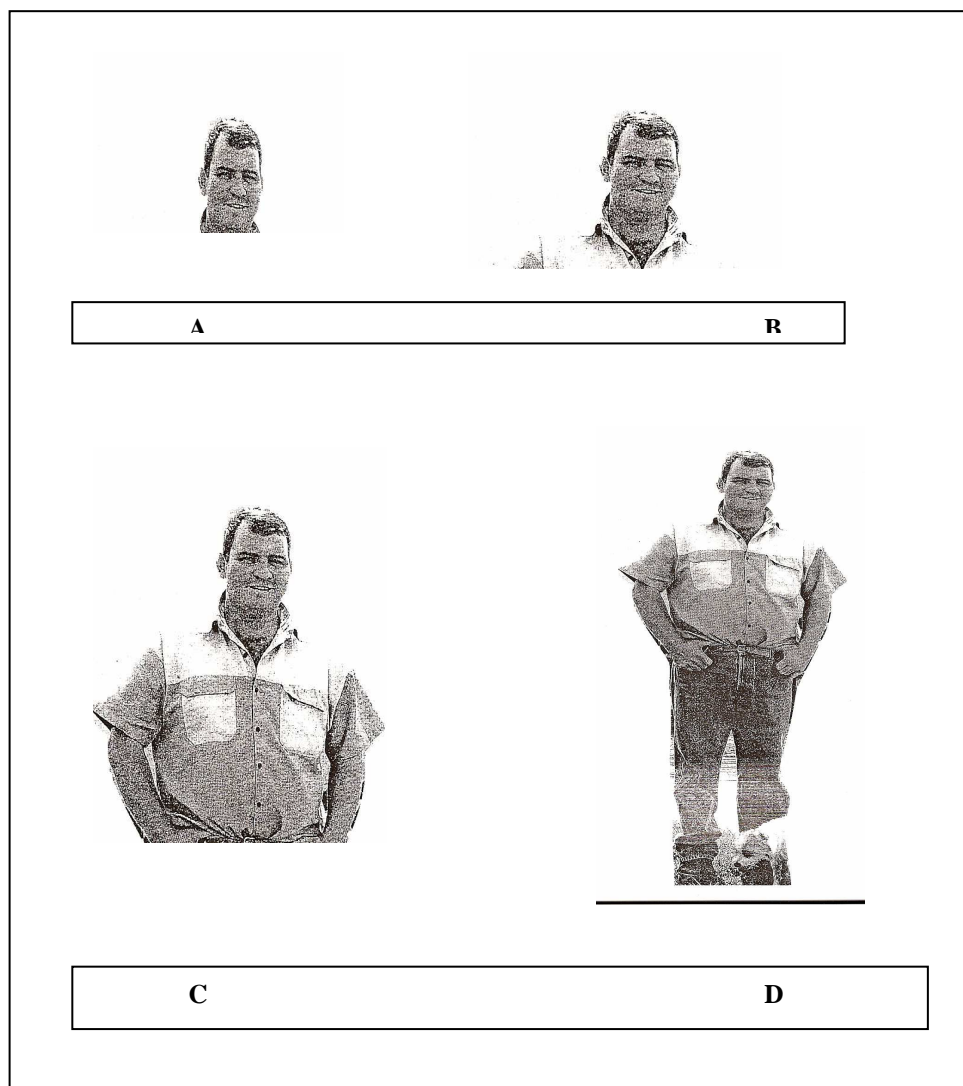
We know this when the learner is able to:

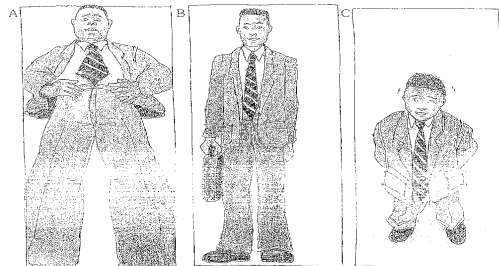
- develop critical language awareness:
 - identify denotation and connotation;
 - explain how implicit and explicit messages, values and attitudes reflect the position of the speaker/receiver/reader viewer;
 - identify and challenge obvious bias and stereotyping, and emotive, persuasive and manipulative language;

Lesson plan 01	
<p>Topic: Viewpoint in photographs</p> <p>Duration of the period: 120 minutes (2 Days)</p> <p>Learning outcomes and assessment standards: LO 1 AS 1-4/5, AS 2-1/5, LO 2 AS 1-4, LO 3 AS 1- 1/9</p>	Time allocation in minutes
Pre-reading Activities	
<p>The teacher shows the learners a photograph of a person in shots ranging from close up to long shots. The teacher asks the learners to predict what is not revealed about the person, and how the person looks like. The teacher will observe the learners' responses and then tell them the goals of the lesson.</p>	15
During Reading Activities	
Activity 1 (Camera shots) (Day 1)	
<p>1. The teacher divides learners into groups of four or six students and hands out six photo frames that are labelled A to F. In groups the learners are to order the pictures in such a way that the one that appears to be closest to them will be the first whilst the one that seems to be furthest will be the last one. To achieve this reordering of photos, learners will discuss what is included and what is excluded in each picture. The teacher moves from group to group facilitating discussion as learners cut and paste the pictures leaving a space for the name of the shot for each picture. Then two groups report back showing the classroom how they did the activity and the teacher makes confirmation.</p>	15
<p>2. The teacher writes names of camera shots in a jumbled manner on the chalkboard and requests the learners to order the names so that they start with the shot that seems to be closest and end with the shot that seems furthest away. (Medium shot/close up shot/very close up shot/very long shot\ long shot/medium close up shot) Learners then write down the names on spaces left on each</p>	10

picture.	
Finally, the teacher introduces the learners to the reason of choosing a particular camera shot instead of the other by asking them these questions:	
1. Which camera shot would be used best to show detail of expression on a face, for example sadness?	
1. Which shot would you use to set the scene before a story or a movie begins?	7
3. Each learner takes the role of photographers or artist. Each one cuts 3 pictures and paste them on ones class workbook. The name of the shot should be written underneath. Learners make self-evaluation of the picture they have cut. This will be given as homework.	8
Journal writing	5
Activity 2 (Camera angles) (Day 2)	
4. The teacher begins this activity by giving learners the following expressions:	
A. to look up to someone	
B. to look down on someone	
C. to look straight at someone.	
In pairs learners discuss these and come up with literal and metaphorical meanings. They can use dictionaries for reference.	15
5. The teacher gives the learners pictures of the same person photographed at three different angles. In pairs the learners think about where they seem to be standing in relation to the person in the pictures. They also discuss what they feel about person in each picture and try to explain why they feel this way. Then the pair should match the pictures with the following types of shots.	15
A. High angle shot (looking down)	
B. Low angle shot (looking up at)	
C. Level angle (looking straight at)	10
6. In groups learners cut these three different shots from comics, magazines or newspapers and paste them in their class workbooks.	10

Post Reading Activity	
7. The teacher highlights the camera shots and their angles. Shots can make a viewer feel detached or part or sympathetic and camera angles can create an attitude towards the person or object photographed. Students ask questions, comment and take down notes.	5
Journal writing	5

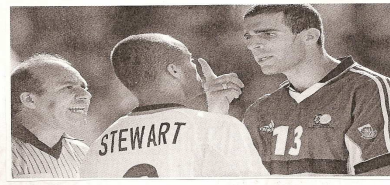
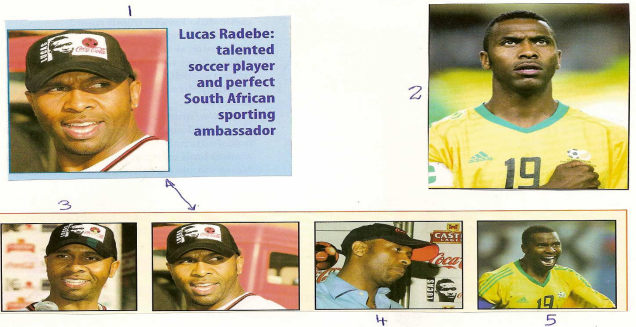
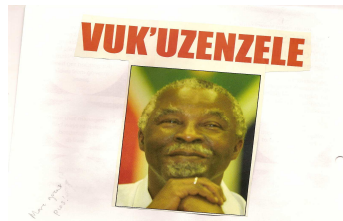




Camera shots and angles

Lesson plan 02	
<p>Topic: Exploring figure signs in images</p> <p>Duration of the lesson: 60 minutes (Day 3)</p> <p>Learning outcomes and assessment standards: LO 1 ASS 1-1/2//3/4; LO 2 ASS 2-9/2/1/5; LO 3 ASS 1-7</p>	Time allocation in minutes
Pre exploration activities	
<p>The teacher randomly asks 3 learners to demonstrate in front of other learners the facial expressions people show when they won a beauty competition or scored a goal, angry because someone stole their money or cannot believe what has happened. Learners will use their prior knowledge to perform this activity. In the process the rest of the class will take notes on what they are observing and a short discussion follows when performance is finished.</p>	10
During exploration activities	
1. Facial signs	
<p>The teacher hands out five different close up photographs of Lucas Radebe. In pairs the learners, look at the shape of the mouth, shape of eyes (wide or narrowed), direction of gaze, eye brows (raised or lowered) and write down the words which would describe the feelings of the person or people shown. Pairs exchange books and perform peer evaluation. Those who finish earlier than others can explore Vuk'uzenzele picture.</p>	10
2. Hand signs	
2.1. Learners will discuss and write down the message given by the player's finger and comment about how they feel.	
2.2. In groups learners discuss and role play short activities to demonstrate what one does with hands if one is feeling;	

angry, caring, powerful, confused and friendly(one feeling one group). Then learners will later describe those demonstrations in words.	8
3. Body signs	
The teacher will explain that body signs which include aspects like the following:	
Posture refers to how a person stands or sits, and how they position their hands, feet, arms and head.	
Dress refers to clothing and jewellery with hairstyle and colour.	
After this explanation the teacher hands out two photographs and questions to guide learners (questions given below).	8
Post exploration activities	
Learners will be given homework to cut pictures that show at least two figure signs that have been discussed in the lesson.	6



Photos showing figure signs

Lesson plan 03	
<p>Topic: Viewing features of composition</p> <p>Duration of the lesson: 60 minutes (Day 4)</p> <p>Learning outcomes and assessment standards: LO 1 AS 1-1, 3-4</p> <p>LO 2 ASS 2 C-1/2</p>	Time allocation in minutes
Pre viewing activities	
The teacher shows the learners two car adverts and asks them the first thing they notice about the adverts (learner answers can be about colour or the brand advertised or any image). Then the teacher tells the learners that advertisers carefully set the adverts using aspects of composition that will be discussed in the lesson.	10
During viewing activities	
1. The teacher will first utilize the opportunity of colour, as two cars are red. Using the chalkboard the teacher will explicitly teach about the meaning colour has on adverts (check notes on using colour in the teacher's notes). Colour used in the car adverts will be described in the light of the information given.	5
2. The teacher will tell the learners about backgrounding and foregrounding, and explain how it is used in photographs by referring to the Toyota advert. From it learners will identify aspects that are used between their eyes and the car (foregrounding) and from the car to where vision end in the advert (backgrounding). They will be asked to give a reason for those aspects to be used in the advert and how will they attract buyers to the product.	5

<p>3. In this activity the teacher will tell the learners about lighting that refers to the light in the image, which could be natural or artificial. An example of a camera that shoots without a flash in the sun will present an image with natural light whilst if the image is taken with a flash it will be artificial.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>4. The teacher expands on composition by teaching the learners about focus which refers to sharpness or clarity of an image within a frame. An example of this can be found in the Fiat Strada advert. In the background there are shapes of skyscrapers that are not clear because the car is moving. Sometimes other aspects that are not important in the advert are taken out of focus.</p>	<p>5</p>

5. The teacher talks of texture as another element of composition. A background that shows for example a stormy weather or lightning shows instability. In the Meeg Bank advert, the teacher will ask learners to identify what is in the background in the bank's advert and what does it mean for the buyers. For example, the choice of evergreen trees, well preserved lawn and blue sky can mean peace of mind or prosperity.	10
6. The teacher will introduce juxtaposition by showing the learners the picture of a Toyota Corolla and ask them to identify any strange thing about the picture (learners might view the car as having been involved in an accident. Then, juxtaposition will be explained as when two different things are placed together as if it is one image.	6
7. The teacher tells the learners that in many adverts the brand name of the product will be found within the right bottom of the page where eyes set on before the page is turned.	4
Post viewing activities	
Homework will be given where individual learners will find a picture and show understanding of four aspects dealt with. The learner will cut and paste the picture, and make short explanatory notes to demonstrate on the wall.	5
Journal writing	5

Images showing composition features

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