

**USING A CLASSROOM LIBRARY TO PROMOTE
EXTENSIVE READING IN A GRADE 8 CLASS
IN A FORT BEAUFORT DISTRICT SCHOOL,
EASTERN CAPE**

AN ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on a collaborative action research case study with Grade 8 learners in a rural high school in Fort Beaufort District, Eastern Cape, South Africa. The goals of the case study were firstly, to understand best practices for promoting extensive reading using a classroom library, and secondly, to use these insights to put an extensive reading programme in place with a view to improving my practice as a language teacher and to gain better understanding of ways of enhancing my Grade 8 learners' literacy skills.

The following qualitative methods were used to collect data: observation, semi-structured interviews, class discussion, questionnaires, journal reflections and document analysis. Analysis of data involved identification of emerging themes and patterns.

The findings suggest that the strategies used in the extensive reading intervention improved my learners' levels of engagement with reading. Putting these strategies into practice, and reflecting critically on how to refine them helped enrich my own professional insight and development in relation to the implementation of extensive reading programmes.

Since action research is usually designed in spirals of action, this research serves as a first spiral and a foundation upon which to build second and subsequent spirals (which do not form part of this research).

The study highlighted the fact that certain challenges that emerged (for example, shortage of books at the learners' level, and a lack of parental cooperation) need to be addressed in a second spiral of intervention. The study further suggested that the implementation of effective extensive reading programmes by teachers in the middle and upper phases of secondary schooling requires further investigation.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis reports on the first spiral of an action research case study. Subsequent spirals for the intervention are ongoing, but not included in the current report.. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to my action research project, which was aimed at promoting extensive reading in a Grade 8 class, using a classroom library at my school. In this chapter, I contextualise my study within the field of extensive reading, explain the motivation for the research, describe the research site, discuss the research goal and present an overview of the following four chapters of this half-thesis.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Extensive reading is one of the elements incorporated in the new curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English First Additional Language. This curriculum was implemented in 2012 to replace the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum which was implemented in 2006. One of the aims of the new curriculum is to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society (South Africa, Department of Basic Education [DoE], CAPS, 2011, p. 4, thereafter referred to as CAPS). To realise this aim, the curriculum requires teachers to engage learners in an extensive reading programme as an aid to practising the strategies modelled in extensive reading and formal text study for extra-curricular independent reading for pleasure and research (CAPS, 2011, p. 31)

Most importantly, the curriculum requires teachers to play a crucial role in encouraging learners to be involved in a reading programme i.e. encouraging learners to have access to libraries and be able to know how books are stored and arranged in the libraries. Learners should also be allowed to read books and provide evidence of books they have read. Teachers should use the available resources like books, magazines, newspapers and other reading materials to ensure that learners read extensively (CAPS, 2011, p. 31).

It is my view that teachers would place themselves in a better position to encourage extensive reading if they themselves have witnessed the benefits of being readers, and are thus able to model reading for their learners. So, for example, in 2007, Zenex Foundation donated books

to our school. I was always reading the books with the learners and, perhaps as a result of the example I was setting, many learners seemed to become keener to read themselves.

The aim of the new South African curriculum is to redress the imbalances of the Apartheid past where most learners were not sufficiently educated to obtain the necessary skills to be useful citizens. Promoting extensive reading among learners is an attempt to help shape them into the kind of learners envisaged by the South African curriculum and constitution. In my view, I felt it was my obligation to promote extensive reading for my learners because in the long run I think this would give them the required skills to become proficient readers and consequently could lead to them becoming lifelong learners who are confident, independent, multi-skilled and able to participate in society as critical and active citizens as envisaged by the South African curriculum (CAPS, 2011).

The term “extensive reading” is generally known as the type of reading in which learners read quietly and independently the reading materials they have selected themselves voluntarily for pleasure. It is an important aspect of literacy study because it enables learners to read, evaluate and respond to aesthetic qualities of literary texts. It helps the learners apply the meta-language of literature study to understand and appreciate elements of literary texts (CAPS, 2011). However, in order to reach this level, learners need to read a variety of texts in order to give them the necessary foundation to be able to apply the skills they have acquired in reading in other contexts (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003). It also provides what Krashen (1985, p.3) calls “comprehensible input” because learners are exposed to English through a variety of reading material. However, Krashen (1985) warns that the reading material should be at the right level for the learners in order for the input to be comprehensible. In other words, the books that learners read in the classroom library should be understandable to them but there should be new language words in those books that will challenge them to encourage them to move forward in their language learning

Extensive reading helps learners with skills to read efficiently and to show verbal intelligence and knowledge of the universe (Hirsch, 2003). These skills are a result of spending many hours reading books and other reading material. In the process of reading, learners learn the language incidentally in their encounter with many words and their vocabulary improves. The moment the learners know many words in a text, they will be able to understand the text easily and they will understand what is happening in the text. Extensive reading makes it possible for learners to be fluent readers because they automatically recognise a large number

of words and do not stumble over unfamiliar words in a text nor lose the thread of an argument in a text (Waring & Nation, 2004).

What I am emphasizing here is that there are strong indications that there is a relationship between vocabulary development and extensive reading. Research shows that the more the learners read, the better their vocabulary becomes, and the better they are able to read (Stanovich, 1986, p. 362). Stanovich calls this “positive feedback loop” because the learners who read extensively gain a sense of achievement from their positive experience of reading and this motivates them to read more frequently. Stanovich (1986, p. 360) uses the term “Matthew Principle” to explain the difference between the learners who read regularly and those who do not. According to him, the learners who read extensively gain an advantage over those who do not. In light of this, it is my view that teachers need to break into this cycle and encourage learners to read interesting books which are at their level. I decided to conduct this research because I wanted disadvantaged learners to experience feelings of achievement and a belief in their potential achievement.

The above explanation is an attempt to show the importance of extensive reading and its contribution to second language acquisition. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter when I review literature. For the purposes of this research, I decided to choose a classroom library as a reading resource which was used to promote extensive reading among the Grade 8 learners who participated in this research study.

A classroom library is described as the place where learners interact with reading materials on a daily basis and also use the resources to read in their leisure time (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez & Teal, 1993, p. 480). It is also described as a place that encourages learners to read when given an opportunity to do so (Fielding, Wilson & Anderson, cited in Fractor et al., 1993, p. 480). Although many writers have contributed to the body of knowledge on the importance of a classroom library in promoting extensive reading, my research, however, focuses on how extensive reading might be applied in a South African context. I used my own Grade 8 class and their classroom library to do this. I involved the learners in the setting up of a classroom library because I wanted to motivate them to develop a good relationship with each other, familiarise them with the reading materials, promote autonomy and create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.

I used action research as a research method because my aim was not to generalise but to focus on a small group of learners. Although this was a small project, I hope that the findings

I arrive at in the last chapter will contribute to the body of knowledge in the literature on extensive reading and also help educators and curriculum writers to learn from my experiences and apply the suggestions I make to other contexts.

1.3 MY MOTIVATION FOR THIS RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION OF MY RESEARCH GOALS

One of the things that motivated me to conduct this research study was that I have long been passionate about language teaching and it has always been my goal to contribute to the literacy development of South African learners. I wanted to familiarise learners with the English language, to increase their goal-orientedness and to make language classes interesting. One of the challenges I noticed as a language teacher was that many learners, particularly those from disadvantaged communities lacked confidence with regard to language learning. I decided to embark on this small-scale project because I wanted to make a contribution by helping learners to have the confidence that they can learn the language successfully via extensive reading.

When I first arrived at my school, I was confronted with many challenges as a language teacher in a rural setting and I saw it as my duty to contribute to the development and improvement of teaching and learning at my school. Firstly, one of the obstacles I was faced with was that there was a shortage of reading materials. Although there were textbooks and other academic texts, there were few literature books and learners did not read any books after the normal school hours. Most learners only studied at home when there was a test and textbooks were only used when they wanted to revise question papers.

Secondly, learners were not motivated to read for pleasure and the fact that the school library was used as a classroom because of the shortages of classrooms also contributed to this situation. There was no library in the township and the only library was in town which was five kilometres away. Most learners came from poor families who could not afford to buy newspapers and magazines because their parents were unemployed. Most learners had few or no books at home and did not read at all. Some did not have television sets at their homes and were not exposed to the English language.

Thirdly, most learners were unable to communicate in English because they were not used to it. Although English was a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at the school, teachers dominated the teaching and learning process because they were not giving learners the opportunity to communicate in class. The learners were also reluctant to speak and contribute

during the lessons in the classrooms. Some learners could not construct simple sentences and were unable to read at all. This problem was not confined to English classes, but to other learning areas as well. I was shocked to learn that some learners could not read Xhosa books (their home language) and some of them could not construct simple Xhosa sentences although they were at high school. Some Xhosa teachers had to battle with learners who avoided oral activities because they did not want to read and speak.

Fourthly, some content subject teachers complained to the language teachers that they were not doing enough to develop the learners' reading and writing skills and were also experiencing the problem of learners who could not read textbooks with understanding. The language teachers who were blamed by the content subject teachers put the blame squarely on primary teachers at the primary school because they argued that the learners did not have the foundation they were supposed to get at primary level. Although teachers blamed each other for the crisis, it did not solve the problem. What was evident was that learners did not have a strong foundation of literacy in their home language and they could not transfer reading skills they were supposed to have acquired in their home language to their second language. Research in the field of bilingual education shows that children learn to read well in their additional language if they already have a strong foundation of literacy in their home language (Cummins, 2006).

Fifthly, another challenge encountered by the school was that the Department of Education constantly failed to deliver the literature books and the learners suffered because they need these books to read in order to have automaticity of word recognition and decoding. They also need to read literature books to acquire writing skills (Krashen, 1984).

Lastly, another difficulty experienced by the school was when some English language teachers were redeployed to other schools and only few teachers remained at the school. The few remaining English teachers could not start and monitor extensive reading after normal school hours because of the demands of the syllabus and the amount of marking. For example, in an extensive reading programme a teacher is supposed to maximise learner involvement by encouraging learners to read aloud in class, make presentation in the form of book summaries, give them work based on their reading and to monitor their reading. However, these challenges made it difficult for the teachers to start extensive reading programmes.

These challenges gave me the opportunity to study further about English Language teaching to keep abreast with the latest developments in language teaching. My studies at Rhodes University opened a new chapter in my academic life because the knowledge I gained there enabled me to learn about the strategies to be used to teach the learners and develop literacy at all levels. This also helped me to reflect on my own teaching and how to apply the skills I had acquired to make an intervention to change the status quo. I felt that there was a need for me to conduct research about the challenges at the school to have a better understanding of them and to be able to make an intervention based on data collected from the participants, I embarked on my research and this half-thesis is the result of that project. I chose Grade 8 learners as participants in this research because the problem was identified there and I was also their English teacher and this made it easy for me to make sampling decisions at an early stage.

A great deal has been written on the value of extensive reading and the importance of classroom libraries. This body of knowledge helped me develop a better understanding of how to promote extensive reading, using a classroom as a valuable resource and to work closely with my learners to discuss and implement the strategies we needed to make the extensive reading programme a success. In addition, as an action researcher, one of my goals was to use this research to help me develop my professional work as a reading teacher. Another goal of this research was to help my learners develop proficiency in reading, hence the intervention to introduce them to a wide range of literary and non-literary texts, including visual texts through an extensive reading programme. My long-term goal was to help learners develop critical language awareness and be able to recognise how genre and register reflect the purpose, audience and context of texts (Janks, 2003). This would help them become critical and creative thinkers in the future as envisaged by the South African curriculum (CAPS, 2011).

My research goals were therefore the following:

- To understand how best to promote extensive reading, using the classroom library as a reading resource.
- Implement a collaborative action research with my learners in the form of an extensive reading programme and evaluate its progress, using a classroom library.
- Improve my performance as a language teacher and gain better understanding of my Grade 8 learners and improve their literacy skills.

My research questions were therefore as follows:

1. How effective is my current practice in using the Grade 8 classroom library to promote extensive reading?
2. In light of question 1, what strategies could be used to improve students' engagement in extensive reading using the classroom library?
3. How do learners respond to the new strategies for promoting extensive reading?
4. How has the intervention supported my professional development as a reading teacher?

1.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE

The high school where I teach is located in the Fort Beaufort District in the Eastern Cape. It is the pride of the community because it is the only high school in the area. The school serves members of the community who mainly come from the surrounding farms. Most of the community members the school serves are unemployed and depend on government social grants for their survival. Few community members have informal businesses and operate as loan sharks, hawkers and fruit vendors. Generally, the school serves a poor community and the Department of Basic Education categorised the school as Quintile 3. Quintile 3 is the category of schools that is regarded as poor by the Department of Basic Education and it is also a no-fee school. There is also a nutrition programme which is aimed at feeding the learners at the school. The Department of Social Development and South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) work jointly with the Department of Education to meet the needs of the poor learners. For example, SASSA provides school uniforms to the poor learners free of charge. Many learners get government grants like child support grants and foster care grants.

The school is staffed by eighteen teachers, including the Principal, the Deputy Principal, and the two Heads of Department. There are also four non-teaching staff members: the administrative clerk, a cleaner, a caretaker and a night watchman. Most of the teaching staff holds a three-year qualification to teach from Grade 8 to 12. The minimum qualification of the teachers started from a three-year diploma and the highest qualification was a doctorate degree. Among the non-teaching staff, only the administrative clerk held a Grade 12 certificate and a secretarial diploma. The cleaner, the caretaker and the night watchman did not hold any formal qualifications. Most teachers at the school taught both in the Senior

Phase and in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. English language plays an important role in teaching because it is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). It was therefore my view that special attention should be given to the acquisition of literacy by exposing learners to lots of written language in order to become literate. It was for that reason that I decided to conduct this research at my school.

At the time of doing this research, the school had an enrolment of 582 learners, including the participants (the 34 Grade 8A learners of 2013). There were 20 classrooms, two science laboratories, a computer laboratory, a school library (which was utilised as one of the classrooms), a Principal's office, a deputy Principal's office, a staffroom, a photocopier room and a clerk's office. There was a classroom which was not used as a classroom because it was in poor condition and we took a decision to use it as a classroom library. Together with my learners, we worked hard to make sure that it was usable. We took all the books from the school library since it was not utilised as a library and placed them in the classroom library. We also added the books that were donated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The classroom library became the main venue for my research since it had all the books that were needed by the learners to read extensively.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This section provides an overview of what is contained in the five chapters of this half-thesis.

Chapter One presents an introduction of this study. In this chapter, I explain the context of the study, my motivation for conducting this research and I discuss both my research goals and research questions. I describe the research site including the participants of this study who were my Grade 8 learners.

In Chapter Two, I review the literature on extensive reading and provide a theoretical framework in which research on extensive reading could be located. When reviewing the literature, I focused on the concept of extensive reading, its role in second language acquisition and factors that enhance reading. I also look briefly at the concept of a classroom library since it was an important component in this research. I review the literature regarding the reading material that should be in the classroom library, and the role played by the classroom library in the development of extensive reading. I explain the purpose of the present study, its significance and its contribution to existing research.

In Chapter Three, I explain the methodology I used in conducting this research. The research design and procedures are described and justified.

In Chapter Four, I present an analysis and discussion of the research I conducted to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library. This chapter also presents a critical reflection on factors which were present when the research and intervention took place, and which may have affected the outcomes.

In Chapter Five, I present a discussion of common issues that emerged as a result of analysis in Chapter 4 when I was using a classroom library to promote extensive reading in a Grade 8 class. I discuss the strengths and challenges of this intervention, what I think should be done when planning for the second spiral of this intervention and a critical reflection of what I have learnt from this research as a reading teacher. I also explain some limitations of this research and provide some suggestions for future research to improve planning and implementation of reading programmes.

CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature that informed the study is the theories of second language acquisition because this is the literature that informed my design of the project and the action. What follows in this chapter is the literature review in which I review some of the writers in literature who focused on reading and extensive reading. This chapter gives an overview of the literature that describes the concept of extensive reading, the role it plays in second language acquisition and the aspects that are vital to enhancing extensive reading e.g. motivation, the role of the parents, the role of the school, and exposure to oral texts. The review also discusses the concept of a classroom library, the reading material in the classroom library and the role played by this in the development of extensive reading. This chapter also discusses the significance of this research and how it contributes to the existing research. Lastly, the review discusses how extensive reading is realised in the new curriculum.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF EXTENSIVE READING

Extensive reading is a concept that is generally acknowledged as the best way to help learners to acquire a second language. It facilitates acquisition and learning of vocabulary and is also believed to increase motivation through positive affective benefits (Krashen, 1982). Mikulecky calls it “pleasure reading” (Mikulecky, 1990, p. 3) because it takes place when learners are reading for enjoyment. Krashen (1993, p. 2) calls it, “free voluntary reading,” because learners usually read voluntarily in their own free time. Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 259, cited in Horst, 2005, p. 357) define extensive reading as the type of reading, “that exposes learners to large quantities of material within their linguistic competence” (p. 355).

Mason and Krashen (cited in Day & Bamford, 1997, p.10) add to what Krashen (1993) says about extensive reading calling it, “free reading.” Hafiz and Tudor (1989) share a similar view to Grabe and Stoller (2002, cited in Horst, 2005) because they claim that extensive reading is the type of reading that exposes learners to large meaningful amounts of interesting reading and they add that the main aim is to benefit the learners in the second language. Grabe and Stoller (cited in Powell, 2005, p.20) add to what he and Stoller say in 2002 (cited in Horst, 2005) by describing extensive reading as, “sustained silent reading.” Here, their main argument is that learners can read silently while they read for enjoyment.

Waring and Nation (2004, p.15) also share a similar view that extensive reading is the type of reading that involves self-selected reading, in which learners usually read at their own pace and the reading material is at their level.

Some writers agree that extensive reading is the best way to expose second language learners to the target language. These writers also agree that the best way to introduce extensive reading is by starting at elementary and intermediate levels to give the learners the necessary foundation that will help them through their entire schooling (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003). Krashen (1989, p. 441) emphasises the role of reading in language learning because he claims that it is only reading that makes it possible for learners to learn unknown vocabulary and this brings learning opportunities because they are able to infer meaning from the texts. Writers like Waring and Nation (2004), Waring (2002), Stanovich (1986) agree that reading large volumes of books and other reading materials is effective but interaction theorists like Gass and Mackey (2006) dispute the fact that reading alone makes it possible for learners to acquire the language. Interaction theorists believe that language acquisition takes place best when second language speakers interact with first language speakers. Gass (2003) for example, argues that interaction research, “takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure and examines the relationship between communication and the mechanisms (e.g. noticing, attention) that mediate between them” (p. 4).

Some writers agree that extensive reading is the type of reading that makes it possible for learners to read books for enjoyment without aiming to learn language features. An aspect of this enjoyment is that learners choose books themselves (Al-Homoud and Schmitt, 2009; Williams, 2007). Day and Bamford (1998) add to what other writers have said that, “there are few or no follow-up programmes” (pp. 7-8) because they argue that the main idea is to enable the learners to read for enjoyment. Meyers (1998) shares a similar view to Grabe and Stoller (2002, cited in Horst, 2005) because he claims that learners read extensively with a view to reading silently but he adds that learners do not use dictionaries more often and they are usually supervised by the reading teacher. Research also strongly indicates that extensive reading is the type of reading that benefits teachers who use the approach of communicative teaching because it requires learners to choose the reading material themselves so that they are able to make decisions that affect their learning (Day & Bamford, 1998). Krashen (cited in Powell, 2005), even suggests that if learners are to enjoy the material chosen by

themselves, as Thompson and other writers say, the atmosphere should be a relaxed one and the input will be comprehensible.

In summary, the literature reviewed on the concept of extensive reading indicates that most writers agree that extensive reading is the type of reading that does not require learners to read intensively but for enjoyment and learners should read the books that have been selected by them. Most writers suggest that books should be at their level in order for successful guessing to take place and the atmosphere should be a relaxed one. This justifies my decision to carry out this research because I wanted my learners to read extensively for enjoyment with the aim of improving their vocabulary and literacy skills.

2.3 THE ROLE OF EXTENSIVE READING IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Extensive reading is described by many writers as the type of reading that has comprehension gains (Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Robb & Susser, 1989; Sims, 1996; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Bell, 2001; Hotosugi & Day, 2004, all cited in Al-Homound and Schmitt, 2009, p. 383). Some writers describe extensive reading as the type of reading that facilitates reading speed (Rob & Susser, 1989; Lai, 1993a, 1993b; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Bell, 2001, all cited in Al-Homound and Schmitt, 2009, p. 3). It is also the type of reading that allows learners to acquire verbal intelligence skills and learners also gain general knowledge of the world in the process of reading extensively (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Horst, 2005; Hirsch, 2003).

Most writers also agree that extensive reading is the type of reading that develops reading fluency because learners encounter the words repeatedly and in this way they develop vocabulary and become fluent (Krashen, 1993; Waring & Nation, 2004; Horst, 2005). Grabe (1991) and Paran (1996) also share a similar view to writers like Cunningham and Stanovich (2008) because they all claim that extensive reading is important because learners acquire the skills of recognising words with automaticity and this is important for fluent decoding and comprehension (see also Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Stanovich, 1986). Hayash (1999, cited in Sun, 2003, p. 438) expresses a similar view when he claims that extensive reading, “provides learners with rich background knowledge, vocabulary recognition skills and higher motivation for more reading” (see also Krashen, 1993; Waring & Nation, 2004; Langan, 1993).

Research from many studies strongly indicates that reading extensively can make it possible for learners to increase their knowledge of vocabulary, lead to improvements in writing, motivate learners to read and consolidate previously learned language (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Krashen, 1984; Stotsky, 1983; Wodisky & Nation, 1988). Some writers agree that if learners read extensively, they will be in a better position to develop their vocabulary and ultimately this facilitates prediction skills (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2008; Waring & Nation, 2004). As seen earlier, writers like Krashen (1982, 1993), Waring (2002) and Waring and Nation (2004) makes strong claims regarding the effect of extensive reading on second language acquisition. Krashen (1993), for example, feels strongly that reading is a valuable source of input and says, “Reading is good for you. Reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers” (cited in Waring & Nation, 2004, p. 20). As I have explained, Krashen’s theory was criticised by interaction theorists like Skehan (2001). However, many writers who also believe that extensive reading has cognitive benefits for learners share the same views as Krashen’s. Day and Bamford, (as cited in Mikulecky, 2008, p. 2), for example, argue that the benefits of extensive reading include, “fluency, vocabulary acquisition, awareness of grammar, models for writing, and an immersion in the culture of the second or foreign language.” Their argument here is that as the learners read the text in the second language everyday they become fluent readers and their vocabulary improves. As the vocabulary improves, they become aware of the grammatical structures of the second language and this will lead to critical language awareness. Again, Krashen (cited in Prowse, 2006) in a radical approach to stress the importance of extensive reading, claims that extensive reading can make it possible for learners to acquire second language without attending their second language classes, without teachers, without study and even without people to speak to. In my view, his views about language acquisition were influenced by Chomsky’s ideas who believed that children do not have to be taught their first language but learn it for themselves (Chomsky, 1959). Cunningham and Stanovich (2003) share a similar view because they claim that, “if most vocabulary is acquired outside of formal teaching, then opportunities to acquire new words occur vastly more often while reading than listening.” However, in contrast to what Krashen, (cited in Prowse, 2006) and Cunningham and Stanovich (2003) claim about extensive reading, Nuttal (1996) claims that although extensive reading is good for second language acquisition, it is the second best way to acquire second language, the best way, according to him, is to live among its people. Nuttal (1996) supports the view of interaction theorists that

language is not only acquired through reading but also through interaction with the first language speakers

Many writers, as we have seen in this chapter, agree that learners who get opportunities to read extensively for “fun” tend to be generally better than those who do not (Stanovich, 1986; Grabe, 1991; Paran, 1996). Such learners end up being critical readers (Janks, 2003) and are able to fulfil the “four roles of the reader”, as suggested by Freebody and Luke (1990). Freebody and Luke (1990), suggest that for a learner to become a critical reader, he/she should be a code breaker, a text participant, a text user and a text analyst. These roles can only be fulfilled by learners who are critical readers as a result of daily interaction with large quantities of reading material. Janks (2003) claims that when they are critical readers, they will not accept everything written in the text and will weigh texts against their own ideas and values as well as others. Langhan (1993) shares a similar view to writers like Cunningham and Stanovich (2003) and Waring and Nation (2004) that reading extensively helps develop prediction skills and the learner is able to interact with the text by using bottom-up strategies or top-down strategies effectively when reading a text. What Langhan (1993) is claiming here is similar to what we have read earlier on about Grabe (1991) and Paran (1996) when they say that extensive reading helps learners practice automaticity of word recognition because if learners read large quantities of books and other reading material, they would have that “positive feedback loop” as Stanovich (1986) suggests.

In addition to this, South African studies of academic achievement consistently found correlations between extensive reading and academic performance. In a study by Pretorius and Ribbens (cited in Fleisch, 2008, p.61), on the impact of extensive reading on literacy development, they found that there was a “massive difference in reading achievement” between those who read extensively and those who do not. The study found that the learners who were reading extensively were better off than the learners who did not. In a similar study by Crouch and Mabogoane (cited in Fleisch, 2008, p. 53), similar results were reported because it was found, for example, that learners whose achievement was low were those who did not read extensively. In their early TIMSS results, Howie and Plomp (cited in Fleisch, 2008, p. 53) found that books at home to encourage extensive reading were the most significant predictors of pupil achievement. Also, Pretorius and Currin (2010) in a similar study on the effects of an intervention programme found that it had positive effects on reading in the home and school language in a high poverty multilingual context. This study is also proof that, even in a high poverty context, an intervention programme like a reading

programme (using classroom libraries) can be very effective. The study by the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA, 2007) on the effects of extensive reading in rural areas found that many learners benefited from the books that were donated to the teachers to start their own classroom libraries. According to the researchers, the availability of books in these rural areas not only encouraged and motivated learners to read extensively, but also helped develop their literacy skills.

In addition to that, research also seems to suggest that the reading problems encountered by most learners here in South Africa and overseas are mainly caused by lack of exposure to written texts through extensive reading. For example, the report by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found that fewer than 50% of South African learners have access to more than 10 books at home, compared to 78% internationally and this tends to impact negatively on their academic performance (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy, 2007). This report also acknowledges the important role played by extensive reading in learner's academic performance because it suggests that there is a relationship between the number of books at home and the achievement of the learner. In a related study, the SACMEQ II Report, had similar findings to those of Pretorius and Ribbens, Crouch and Mabogoane, Howie and Plomp (all cited in Fleisch, 2008) and Pretorius and Currin (2010). These studies all show that most learners who did not read extensively performed poorly as compared to those who did. This report also found that most learners in South African classrooms did not have their own reading books and this becomes an obstacle to effective extensive reading (Moloi & Strauss, 2005). Fleisch (2008) adds to this argument in a more subtle point by implicating some teachers as contributors to this problem because of their inability to model reading to their learners. Fleisch's argument supports what Meyers (1998) say about teachers modelling reading to learners as indicated earlier on. Pretorius and Mampuru (2007), in a similar study as the one undertaken by Pretorius and Currin (2010, p.10) in a North Sotho school suggest that learning barriers created by poverty can be overcome if learners have access to books and if the school puts extensive reading on the daily agenda.

To summarise, the literature reviewed seems to suggest that extensive reading plays a major role in second language acquisition and the reading problems encountered in the South African context and overseas can be overcome if extensive reading is put on the daily teaching agenda. In my view, as Cunningham and Stanovich (2003, p.39) suggest, teachers and principals should make sure that learners get reading materials at the school because school is the source of knowledge for most learners in disadvantaged communities. In order

to support this idea, for my research project I decided to put reading on a daily agenda through an extensive reading programme.

2.4 ASPECTS THAT ARE VITAL IN ENHANCING EXTENSIVE READING

2.4.1 Motivation

Motivation is viewed as one of the key factors in second language acquisition. It also plays a role in second language learning because learners should have intrinsic motivation and they should believe that language learning is worthwhile. Similarly, research indicates that learners who read for fun or enjoyment are generally those who are motivated than those who are not. Murray (2006, cited in Robertson, 2012) asserts that, “motivation is a critical factor to developing a reading culture” (p. 7). Here, she makes it very clear that learners need teachers and parents to motivate them so that reading can be a norm, both inside and outside school premises. Murray adds that motivation is not something that just happens but something that needs to be generated and sustained. To generate and sustain motivation she says:

Learners need access to interesting and attractive materials at an appropriate level of difficulty. Learners need experience in reading, feedback and encouragement. They also need to see themselves as writers, to invest in literacy, to have their reading and writing acknowledged and praised, to have opportunities to read and write purposefully and to see it making a difference in their lives (p.7).

Most writers who have written on the topic of extensive reading share Murray’s view that access to interesting books motivates learners to read more (Krashen, 1982, Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Waring & Nation, 2004; Stanovich, 1986; Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003). Murray makes an important point here because learners should not only see a text as a piece of writing but as something that will contribute positively to their lives but they need to be motivated to read every day before they can reach that point.

In addition, Dornyei (1998) argues that since motivation is an important factor for successful learning, skill in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness (p. 117). He even suggests “ten commandments” he thinks can help teachers motivate language learners (see Dornyei, 1998, p. 131). To add more to what these writers say, Krashen (1993),

also claims that children are motivated to read when they see other people reading. He further suggests that children should be surrounded with role-models throughout the school day. On this issue of motivation, Krashen (1993) adds that teachers should model reading behaviour and together with parents, should encourage children to read a wide range of texts for various purposes. He believes that this will send a strong message that reading extensively is important.

In addition, research strongly suggests that reading becomes automatized if learners read frequently and this motivates the learners to read more (Johnson, 2001). Shiffrin and Dumais (1981, cited in Johnson, 2001, p. 105) describe automatization as a “fundamental component of skill development” because learners are able to focus on content rather than the language and this motivates them to read more. In addition, Nation (1990, cited in Waring (2002, p. 1) claims it takes between 5-16 encounters or more to learn an average word. This means that giving learners something to read helps them to remember the words and their meaning with ease and this motivates them to read more.

The literature reviewed strongly suggests that motivation plays a major role as one of the vital aspects in enhancing extensive reading. The research on motivation cited above is one of the justifications for this research because my main goal was to motivate learners to read extensively.

2.4.2 The role of the parents

The PIRLS study that was conducted here in South Africa and internationally, by Mullis, Martin, Kennedy and Foy (2007) found that parents have a big role to play in the development of their children’s literacy skills. In particular, this report found that parents have a major role to play in motivating their children to read extensively but the challenge here in our country is that most learners who come from disadvantaged communities do not have the necessary support from parents due to a lack of reading materials at home. The report recommends that parents should play a big role because this would help teachers at school to perform their work effectively (p. 105- 193).

A related study, SACMEQ II by Moloi and Strauss (2005), as mentioned earlier, also made similar findings about the large role parents have to play in literacy development of their children. Both these reports found that educational resources such as children’s books at home bought by parents, and parents’ reading habits and attitudes also play a role in

motivating learners to read extensively and to be frequently engaged in literacy activities outside of school (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy, 2007; Moloi & Strauss, 2005). Laufer (1989) and Liu and Nation (1985, cited in Waring & Nation, 2004, p. 11) agree with Stanovich (1986) that reading has cognitive benefits for learners but they claim that the “Matthew Effect,” as suggested by Stanovich (1986), can be avoided if parents give their children books to read at home. They further claim that if learners read more often, 95% or more words in a text will be known and learners will be able to guess successfully. These writers show that parents can be very influential because they are in a better position to give children books to read at home to make sure that children’s vocabulary is improved.

Research seems to indicate that parents who help children to read and who support their literacy activities tend to be their children’s source of inspiration (Snow & Nino, 1986; Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1995, 1997, cited in Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Also, research suggests that parents at home can play a vital role in introducing emergent literacy to young children because they negotiate how children should handle and use books and this in return helps them develop their literacy skills while they are still young (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Similarly, De Witt (2009) believes that books should be made available to learners at an early age for emergent literacy to take place and parents should read stories to them at home

The literature reviewed indicates the strong role parents need to play in promoting extensive reading and this justifies the reason for my research because my research goal was to help learners to read extensively. The parents, as revealed in the research, played their role in encouraging learners to read the books that I lent them.

2.4.3 The role of the school

Writers like Hirsch, Jr. (2003) view school as the place where learners can use academic time to learn, some disadvantaged learners benefit especially from the school since they are unable to learn outside the school premises (p. 29). Similarly, the school has a responsibility to make sure that learners who have few or no books in their homes are helped to read by using the available resources at their disposal. This argument provides a second justification for this research because the classroom library was aimed at promoting extensive reading in order to benefit both the advantaged (learners who had books at home) and disadvantaged learners (those who did not). Moreover, the nature of action research, as explained in Chapter 3, necessitated that I play an active role as a researcher and an educator to make a meaningful

intervention to develop learners' vocabulary and literacy skills (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Zuber-Skerritt, 2001).

The literature reviewed strongly indicates that the school needs to play a major role in enhancing extensive reading and this justifies my decision to conduct this research because as an educator, my duty was to make sure that learners read extensively.

2.4.4 Exposure to oral texts

Many studies have shown that exposing learners to a wide variety of oral texts is one of the best ways to encourage learners to read extensively. For example, telling stories to learners is seen as an effective way to motivating learners to read a wide variety of texts. In a study of three American communities, undertaken by Heath (1982) in the United States of America, it was found that bedtime stories by parents at home made it possible for children to have narrative skills at school (p. 49-76). Research strongly indicates that narrative skills enable the learners to read independently without supervision and this is likely to encourage them to read extensively. Similarly, teachers are encouraged to employ storytelling in their programmes because this will bridge their learners' already established oracy skills with their newfound literacy skills (Phillips, 1999). Malan (cited in Phillips, 1999), contends that storytelling exposes children to different genres, just like writing, and that it also develops prediction skills that can be used in reading narratives. Consequently, this helps learners read for fun without difficulty.

The literature reviewed strongly indicates that exposure to oral texts motivates learners to develop their prediction skills and this in turn motivates them to read extensively.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF A CLASSROOM LIBRARY, THE READING MATERIAL IN THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXTENSIVE READING

2.5.1 The concept of a classroom library

Some writers agree that a classroom library is generally a corner or place in the classroom where books are displayed and which serves as a library for the learners. Some writers describe it as a place where learners interact with books and choose reading as a leisure time activity (Fractor et al, 1993, p. 480). Some writers suggest that a classroom library should be a well-designed place that entices children to read when given an opportunity to select from a variety of reading material. It is also described as a place that makes books easily accessible

to learners, especially those who do not have access to books at home (Fielding, Wilson & Anderson, 1986, cited in Fractor et al, 1993, p. 480; see also Morrow & Winstein, 1996). Some writers describe it as a place that should be well-managed with the aim of building a community of readers in the classroom (Fractor et al, 1993, p. 477). Jeff Lowe (1998), a teacher and mentor in California, U.S.A who has conducted workshops on building classroom libraries, in his article, *How to build a classroom library*, adds that, “a stimulating library invites students to sit, explore and return.” He agrees with most writers on the issue of reading material because he further contends that the only way of making students return is the type of material in the classroom library (p. 1).

In addition to this, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) in an effort to show the importance of a classroom library say that, “a richly varied classroom collection will enable your students not only to expand their reading abilities but also expand their world” (p. 27). The point they are making here is similar to what Murray (2006, cited in Robertson, 2012) says because the books that the learners are reading should change their world. They also argue that, “a strong collection of books is the foundation for the effective instruction that helps students become competent readers” (p. 27). In a similar claim to show the importance of a classroom library, Diller (2003) claims that providing a variety of books to the students is essential for them to become effective readers. She suggests that teachers should, “take a lesson from the bookstore of the world” and that, “we need to be selling books to kids!” (p. 29). The point she is making here is that we need to allow learners to have access to a variety of books, just like in a bookstore where learners are able to choose and interact with a variety of reading material.

Research indicates that a classroom library should be a place where learners do not just choose a book to look at it, but are taught and have opportunities to select books that are just right. They need to be guided about the books they are reading in the classroom library (Erikson & Markuson, 2007). The importance of a variety of reading material in a classroom library is an important feature because the school library should cater for the needs of all the learners. These writers suggest that fiction and non-fiction books should be added as well as non-book materials (like magazines, newspapers, charts, academic videos, etc.) and they also agree with the idea of Waring and Nation (2004) and other writers that the level of difficulty of the books should be taken into account (Bolan, 2009; Erikson & Markuson, 2007).

A classroom library should not be seen as just, “a book corner” in the classroom where books are packed for the purposes of fun reading, but also be seen as an important tool that we can use to change the way we teach in our classrooms. Wolpert- Gawron (2006), for example, in her article, *The importance of a classroom library*, says:

I believe a classroom library is the heartbeat of a teacher’s environment. It is the window into an educator’s own personality, and it reflects the importance of literacy in the classroom. I believe every teacher- no matter what subject he or she teaches should have one. (p. 1).

Wolpert-Gawron (2006) makes an important point here because she believes that the presence of a library in every class will not only engage learners in reading but will have a positive spin off for content subject teachers as well. Research indicates, as shown earlier, that a classroom library promotes a print-rich environment and therefore teachers need to start classroom libraries so that they are able to use the books and other reading materials and be able to reflect on their effect on learners.

Two writers from United States of America both agree with Wolpert- Gawron (2006) in her belief that a classroom library is the “heartbeat of a teacher’s environment,” and they even suggest some ways that can be used to get books for a classroom library. Newingham (2009), for example, in her article, *How to give your classroom library a boost*, suggests six ways that can be used to get more books for a classroom library (p. 1). Similarly, Nancy Jang, in her 2010 article, *Ten Ways to Get Books*, suggests ten ways in which teachers can get reading material to start a classroom library. Newingham (2009) suggests teachers use modern technology in the classroom library (p. 1). In my view, this would depend on the availability of resources at that particular classroom library. For example, in many African schools here in South Africa, modern technology is a privilege because there is still a shortage of books.

The literature reviewed suggests that the classroom library should be more than just a book corner in the classroom. Many writers describe it as a well-designed place with a variety of books that entices children to read with the aim of developing learners’ literacy skills and improving their vocabulary.

2.5.2 The reading materials in the classroom library

Writers who have written on the topic of extensive reading agree that the type of reading material in the classroom library plays a major role in motivating learners to read for “fun”

(Stotsky, 1983; Stanovich, 1986; Wodinsky & Nation, 1988; Grabe, 1991; Krashen, 1993a, 1993b; Paran, 1996; Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Waring & Nation, 2004). So the type of reading material in the classroom library should attract learners to read. Research shows that the process of organising a classroom library is not an overnight event. Depending on the size of the classroom library but it could take a while to build up (Jones, 2006). After the organisation of the classroom library, learners should be able to choose the right books and the teacher should guide them in this process.

One of the requirements for a classroom library is that it should be print-rich. Research shows that print-rich classroom libraries are necessary for children to learn literacy and by doing that they become completely immersed in English and in the end this will have positive effect on their skills such as reading, writing, thinking and speaking (Allen, 2000; Allington & Johnston, 2001; Krashen, 1993). Writers such as Harper and Perrin (2012) claim that print-rich classroom libraries “expose and engage students in the seven processes of literacy” (p. 2). They claim that these seven processes of literacy are listening, viewing, thinking, expressing through multiple symbol system, speaking, reading, and writing (p. 2). Harper and Perrin (2012) further suggest that classroom libraries should include “child-made books, teacher-made books, picture books, children’s magazines, pictures of children reading, story shapes, books for reference, and walls decorated with children’s work” (p. 2). In a study that was conducted by Lynch (2011) in an elementary school in Canada, he found that in classroom libraries where learners were engaged in books and pictures, they were able to sense what was going on in their surroundings.

In addition to this, Verhoeven & Snow (2001, p. 23), for example, share a similar view with writers like Fountas and Pinnell (2001) because they suggest that the reading material that is added to the classroom library should be relevant to the learners and must reflect their world both inside and outside school. Serafini (2011, p. 31) highlights the modern role that is played by the classroom library. Serafini (2011, p. 31) in particular, suggests that a classroom library should emulate what bookstores have been doing for years and it should reflect and support the types of 21st century readers we have in today’s classroom. He further suggests that classroom libraries need to access to on-line resources, e-books, and other digital content. Here, Serafini (2011) makes a similar suggestion to Newingham (2009) because both of them suggest information technology should be used in a classroom library. However, in my view, this should depend on the type of material that is at the teachers’ disposal. I agree with writers

who feel that the building of a library is a gradual process that necessitates patience (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010; Griffith, 2010).

In support of the above argument, Sanacore and Palumbo (2010), for example, claim that library resources usually take time to build, but they also add that the end result should be a collection of different types of easily accessible materials that relate to the different matters including, “poetry, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, nonfiction, graphic novels, multicultural resources, bibliotherapeutic materials, internet resources, newspapers, magazines, comics and illustrated books” (pp. 180-185). Sanacore and Palumbo (2010) also support the idea that a classroom library should ultimately reflect the modern classroom library as envisaged by Serafini (2011).

In addition to this, Griffith (2010) makes strong claims about the role played by graphic novels. He believes that graphic novels play an important role in vocabulary development of learners and also helps improve their literacy skills (pp. 181-189). Griffith makes an important point here because many teachers usually underestimate the role played by graphic novels in the vocabulary development of learners. His view is that graphic novels should form part of the library collection because of their advantages. Writers like Stall (2000), Schneider (2005), Crawford (2004), McDonnell (2004, all cited in Griffith, 2010, p. 184) share similar views to Griffith (2010) because they also believe that graphic novels play an important role in developing learners’ vocabulary, aid comprehension, motivate them to read, and also benefit learners in the second language. This research study helped me organise some of the graphic novels from the municipal library in order to accommodate learners who were in favour of graphic novels.

Giordano (2011), for example, suggests that teachers should make sure that, “Our Reading “CLICKS.” According to Giordano (2011, p. 181- 189) the acronym stands for: C- Connect, L- Length, I- Interesting, C-Count, K- Know, S- Sense. The word, “ CLICKS” is used by Giordano (2011, p. 181-189) to convince the readers that the reading material in the classroom library should enable the learners to connect with them, the length of the books should be appropriate and the topics should be interesting, learners should be able to count difficult words (there should be few difficult words), learners should know about the topic/author/illustration for successful guessing to take place and most importantly, the books should make sense and be easy to understand. The main point of the writer here is that the

books that are included in the classroom library collection should be interesting and make sense to the learners.

In a similar effort to show the importance of reading material in the classroom library, Miller (2012), suggests that the books and other reading material that are added to the classroom library should provoke questions and expose learners to more genres, authors, vocabulary and background knowledge (p. 88-92). Hughes-Hassel and Lutz (2006) hold the view that parents and teachers should not think that the only legitimate reading is when learners read books. These writers share a similar view to Sanacore and Palumbo (2010), Griffith (2010), Serafini (2011) and others that learners should be introduced to a variety of reading material in the classroom library. In a survey undertaken by Hughes-Hassel and Lutz (2006) in the United States of America to investigate the habits and attitudes of urban middle school students towards leisure reading, it was found that periodicals, including magazines and newspapers were favourite leisure reading materials and their suggestion is that magazines and newspapers should be recognised as legitimate reading materials (p. 39-45). Hughes-Hassel and Lutz (2006) make an important point here because parents and teachers need to know that newspapers and magazines are usually the preferred reading material for learners. Moreover, the definition by Krashen (1993) and Mikulecky (1990) that extensive reading is a “free”, “voluntary”, and “pleasurable reading” is a proof that learners should not just read books but also newspapers and magazines.

The literature reviewed strongly suggests that the reading material that is added to the classroom library plays an important role in motivating the learners to read extensively. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to make sure that the reading level of the books makes it easy for the learners to read the books.

2.5.3 The role played by the classroom library in the development of extensive reading

Most studies confirm that a classroom library plays an important role in the development of extensive reading. Bell and Campbell (1996), for example, in research undertaken in Asia found that the use of libraries, including classroom libraries to advance learners’ reading habits motivated learners to read. In a similar study that was undertaken by Applebee, Langer and Mullis (1988) found that, “in classrooms that contain well-designed library centres, children interact more with books, demonstrate more positive attitude toward reading, choose reading as a leisure time activity, spend more time reading, and exhibit higher levels of

reading achievement” (p. 40). Research strongly suggests that classroom libraries help learners to attain reading achievement and this motivates them to read more (Block et al., 2009)

The nature of the classroom library allows learners to interact with their peers and they also tend to become involved in book clubs, book reports and similar activities (Fenton, 2006). This argument supports the view of writers who say that a classroom library is not just a place where learners read the books but also a place where learners get involved in all the reading activities and form a community of readers (Fractor et al., 1993). Jones (2006) suggests that the learners should be involved in the organisation of classroom libraries because she claims that, “the student-involved classroom library process increases the number of books children choose from their classroom library.” She further asserts that the process of involving learners in the organisation enable the learners to take ownership of it (p. 576). Some writers, like Morrow (cited in Fractor et al, 1993) argue that a key characteristic for building a community of readers in the classroom is the classroom library but learners should have easy access to books and they should select books by themselves (p. 477). Morrow’s view supports what other writers are saying about classroom libraries as places where learners choose books for themselves and read together as a family (Jones, 2006; Watkins, 2005; Griffith, 2010; Fenton, 2006; Serafini, 2011).

Despite this positive role played by the classroom library in the development of extensive reading, studies here in South Africa show that there are few or no libraries in rural areas. There is also little research on what reading materials appeal most to learners in these areas. The study that was conducted by the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA, 2007) in the Eastern Cape here in South Africa, found that in many rural areas there were no public or school libraries and in most cases the classroom libraries usually served as substitutes for both school and public libraries. In a similar study, Libraries for South Africa (2006) also found that the 93% of schools in the Eastern Cape do not have libraries and 60% of schools do not have library materials (see also Czerniewicz, Murray & Probyn, 2000). It is for this reason that teachers in the rural areas should start classroom libraries to encourage learners to read. Research strongly indicates that teachers in rural areas benefit from the presence of classroom libraries because learners are able to interact with the books in the classroom and consequently this motivates them to read more (ISEA, 2007).

Also, in a study undertaken by Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005), it was found that poverty in most rural areas of South Africa is passed from one generation to the other because of illiteracy. This illiteracy in most cases is caused by the absence of valuable resources like books and other reading material. However, research also shows that it is possible for this situation to change in rural areas if classroom libraries are used as one of the tools to motivate learners in their reading (Applebee, Langer & Mullis, 1988; Fractor et al, 1993; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). Intervention programmes like reading programmes can be used by teachers to motivate learners to read and consequently develop their literacy skills (Pretorius & Currin, 2010). The intervention programme, as revealed by this research study, made an attempt to build a sense of community and consequently, this brought learners close to each other and they seemed willing to be active participants in matters than concern them (Watkins, 2005; Fractor et al, 1993).

However, another problem that is experienced all over the world is that there is not enough time to allow learners to read during school hours. Allington (cited in Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010, p. 181) suggests that teachers should allow learners to read during school hours for at least ninety minutes a day. In my view, this is possible if there is a classroom library because the presence of books in the classroom will motivate learners to read. Moreover, the South African curriculum requires teachers to encourage learners to read on daily basis.

Literature has shown that the presence of a classroom library results in learners becoming proficient readers but most importantly, learners need to see a classroom library as a second home where they feel free to express their views and opinions (Fractor, et al, 1993; Brophy, 1983). Some writers have also undertaken comparative studies to compare intensive and extensive reading participants in their studies to study the effects of classroom libraries on extensive reading participants. Al- Hommound and Schmitt (2009), for example, in a study undertaken in Saudi Arabia, compared extensive and intensive reading participants in a challenging environment in Saudi Arabia. Their study found that extensive reading participants (who used classroom libraries to read for fun) reported a more positive attitude towards reading than participants in the intensive reading group (p. 383-401).

Research has also shown that many low-income learners from disadvantaged areas fall behind because they are not proficient readers (Chall et al, 1990; Abadzi, 2008). This is caused by the problem that we have already mentioned - the lack of resources like books. However, research has also shown that it is possible even for disadvantaged children to

perform better at school if learners use valuable tools like classroom libraries at their disposal to improve their reading, vocabulary and literacy skills (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Waring & Nation, 2004).

Finally, the literature reviewed strongly indicates that classroom libraries play an important role in the development of extensive reading. Many writers agree that the presence of a classroom library at the school serves as a substitute for both a public and a school library and that each teacher should make an effort to have a classroom library in his or her classroom. This is part of my justification to carry out this research in my own school.

2.6 HOW EXTENSIVE READING IS REALISED IN THE NEW CURRICULUM

One of the aims of the curriculum is “to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country” (CAPS, 2011, p. 3). In order to achieve this aim, the curriculum has to state clearly what the teachers need to do in the classroom in order to mould the kind of learner that is envisaged by the South African curriculum.

Firstly, CAPS requires learners to practise the strategies modelled in intensive reading and formal text study for extra-curricular independent reading for pleasure and research (CAPS, 2011, p. 31). It also requires teachers to have a reading programme and this should include: allowing learners to have access to libraries and understand book storage conditions, encouraging learners to provide evidence of reading in the form of book reviews, and to allow learners to read/view a wide range of whole texts e.g. books, magazines, newspapers, films, websites, etc (p. 31).

The requirements of the curriculum, as revealed in the research were implemented. For example, I have used a classroom library to enable my learners to have access to books and other reading material. I also showed the learners how books are stored, borrowed and handled. I also encouraged them to form book clubs, as revealed in the research, to make it easy for them to do book reviews and to write book summaries. All these are explained in detail in Chapter 4.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by highlighting the main points that were discussed in this chapter. I started by giving an overview of the literature that reveals the concept of extensive reading, the role it plays in second language acquisition, and some aspects that are vital to enhancing extensive reading e.g. motivation, the role of the parents, the role of the school, and exposure to oral texts. The review also discussed the literature that deals with the concept of a classroom library, the reading material that is supposed to be in the classroom library and the role played by the classroom library in the development of extensive reading. Finally I discussed the significance of this research and its contribution to the existing research and how extensive reading is realised in the new curriculum.

CHAPTER 3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the research design, procedures and analytic techniques used in the study. The chapter explains my choice of a case study approach, describes action research (AR) as a method, and discusses its suitability for my research project. Sampling is discussed as an important aspect of the research, and the choices made are justified. Data collection strategies, including observation, the administration of questionnaires, class discussions, written reflections, interviews and document analysis, are also briefly discussed. The steps that were followed in implementing the extensive reading programme intervention are also discussed. Some important issues of validity and ethics are then considered, before I end the chapter by reflecting on some of the limitations of the present study.

3.2 RESEARCH GOALS AND QUESTIONS

As noted in Chapter 1, my research goals were to:

- Understand how best to promote extensive reading, using the classroom library as a valuable reading resource.
- Implement collaborative action research with my learners in the form of an extensive reading programme and evaluate its progress, using a classroom library.
- Improve my teaching practice as a language teacher by gaining a better understanding of my Grade 8 learners and improving their literacy skills.

As also noted in Chapter 1, it was the following four research that guided me in trying to achieve these goals:

1. How effective is my current practice in using the Grade 8 classroom library to promote extensive reading?
2. In light of question 1, what strategies could be used to improve students' engagement in extensive reading using the classroom library?
3. How do learners respond to the new strategies for promoting extensive reading?
4. How has the intervention supported my professional development as a reading teacher?

3.3 CASE STUDY

This qualitative case study was about exploring issues, understanding phenomena and finding answers to questions about how best to promote extensive reading using a classroom library in a Grade 8 class. My ultimate goal, therefore, was to explore my context with a view to understanding a problem. I had to conduct an analysis both of my learners and of strategies for using a classroom library (Cousin, 2005; Creswell, cited in Van Wynberge & Khan, 2007; Merriam, cited in Phillipson, 1992). Another aim of this case study was to collect and understand the data in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of my context (O’Leary, 2004; Stuurman, 1994, cited in Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 2001). A deeper understanding of the context made it easier for me to work with the learners, in that as I was collecting the data for the research project, I was also uncovering the attitudes, values and beliefs that constructed the learners’ reality (Boheman, 1991; Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990).

3.4 ACTION RESEARCH (AR)

Because I had to convert my ideas into action and combine theory with practice, I turned to the research paradigm of “praxis” in which action research is situated. The term “praxis” was used by the Greek philosopher Aristotle to refer to the art of acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them. He believed that knowledge is derived from practice and that practice is informed by knowledge in a cyclical and iterative process (O’Brien, 2001; Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). This project was aimed at improving my own professional knowledge, as well as helping my learners develop their literacy skills. The cyclical nature of action research encouraged me to undertake self-reflective enquiry, thus allowing me to reflect on my teaching and its effectiveness as well as be an agent of change (Schmidt, 2000; McIntyre, 2000; Koshy, 2005; Miller & Pine, 1990, cited in Schmuck, 2000; Watts, 1985; McFarland & Stansell, 1993). In conducting this research, I followed four basic themes of action research:

- Empowerment of the participants
- Collaboration through participation
- Acquisition of knowledge, and
- Social change.

I made an attempt, for example, to empower the learners who were participants by assisting them develop their literacy skills through the intervention. Collaboration through participation also took place and my learners were active participants throughout the research. The research project was also an attempt to change the status quo and thus

contribute to social change. For example, there was the challenge posed by learners who were not adequately exposed to the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and who were not proficient readers. I had a hunch that part of the problem (of learners who were not proficient readers) had arisen because they did not read extensively. This led me to set about trying to find out how best to promote reading by actively engaging my learners in an extensive reading programme, using the resources available in their classroom library. This was in line with official policy, in that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) is clear on the point that learners should be encouraged to read extensively (CAPS, 2011).

McNiff (1996) argues that action research “leads to spirals of action” (pp. 21-23). I took the following steps in my own “spiral of action”:

- Identification of problem area
- Collection and organisation of data
- Interpretation of data
- Action based on interpretation of data
- Reflection (this allowed me to evaluate my actions)

(Ferrace, 2000, p. 9)

3.5 SAMPLING

This project is limited in scale. I focused on my own school and my own Grade 8 learners. Convenience sampling was used so that I would have easy access to my research site (Cohen et al., 2000, pp. 102-103). Because the samples used in this research do not represent the wider population, it is not possible to make claims about the generalizability of my findings to other sites (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 102). I chose to use my Grade 8 learners for the following two reasons:

- Firstly, the Department of Education requires teachers to plan and implement an effective reading programme for learners who are in Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) so that by the end of this phase learners are able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of reading for enjoyment (CAPS, 2011, p. 40).
- Secondly, since the problem was identified in a Grade 8 class in 2013, the research participants had to be the same class, and this made it easy for me to make sampling decisions very early in my overall planning of the research (Cohen et al., 2000).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

After making sampling decisions, the next step was the collection of data through qualitative methods. These were, in order, observation, the administration of a questionnaire, class discussions which were aimed at planning and evaluating the intervention, written reflections in both the researcher's and the learners' journals, document analysis and focus group interviews.

3.6.1 Observation

Observation is a means of attentively watching and systematically recording what is seen and heard (Schmuck, 1997, p. 52). My observations started in the initial stages of the research when I observed learners' reading behaviour in the classroom. I recorded all the activities that took place in the Grade 8 classroom and reflected carefully on my actions and those of the learners in order to chart the way forward. I used an observation sheet to record all the activities in the classroom library, and this formed part of the data. Below is a sample of an observation sheet I used to record activities (see Appendix 3a-c).

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	OBSERVATION NOTES
04/ 07/ 2013	Interviewing learners about their ages, years in Senior Phase, parental employment and source of income	In my observation, I noticed that many learners were below seventeen years of age. Most of their parents were unemployed.
10/ 07/ 2013	Interviewing learners about their reading tendencies and behaviours and their home backgrounds	In my observation, I noticed that many learners who came from disadvantaged families were the ones who did not read extensively.

A video-camera and a tape recorder assisted me in getting a full record of events. I was able regularly to replay the video and audio recordings in the evenings, noting comments and actions that were not noticed earlier in the classroom.

3.6.2 Research questionnaire

Denscombe (2007) argues that for a questionnaire to qualify as a research questionnaire, it “should be designed to collect information which can be used subsequently as data for analysis” (p. 152). The decision to ask my learners to complete a questionnaire was motivated by my need better to understand the context from their point of view (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). I believed that getting answers from my learners would assist me in planning my intervention. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 4.

3.6.3 Class discussion

Analysing the responses of the learners to the questionnaire helped me to facilitate a class discussion on the value of extensive reading, the learners’ reading interests and desires, how they felt about the classroom library, and how its use could be maximised. The class discussions were important because they helped me to understand the reasoning behind the views and opinions expressed by the learners (Denscombe, 2007). In these discussion sessions I also shared with learners some of my planning ideas and the steps I thought we needed to take to implement the intervention, and gave them the opportunity to make their own input. Discussions were audio- and video-recorded, and the data transcribed.

3.6.4 Written reflections

Written reflections in the form of reflective journals helped me when I was collecting the data because I was able to reflect on issues and processes. I provided the learners with journals to enable them to reflect continually on the intervention, and after they had finished writing in them, I collected them to read their responses (see Appendix 6). From these I was able to make explicit interpretations and reach conclusions (O’Brien, 1998). I was also able to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the reading programme and where to improve it.

3.6.5 Document analysis

Documents were a valuable source of data in this research. For example, observation sheets, reflective journals, transcribed interviews and class discussion notes all provided useful background and contextual information for the project (Koshy, 2005). Observation sheets were analysed immediately after the classroom activities, and learner reflective journals were analysed after the learners had reflected on the intervention. Transcribed data from the focus group interviews and class discussions were analysed after every activity during the research process. I found that such document analysis helped both with data analysis and with charting

the way forward. The conceptual framework of action research steps helped me in this regard, because I was always reflecting on my actions before taking further steps.

3.6.6 Interviews

An interview is “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” (McIntyre, 2000, p. 84). Interviews helped me to gather information directly from my participants through personal contact with them. I held individual interviews with all the learners who were also participants in this study to collect data from them. I also had additional interviews with six learners: two below- average, two average and two above-average. I identified these learners because I had already found that the above-average learners were those who read extensively, the average were those who seldom read and the below-average were those who did not read at all. I also placed the learners in these categories because of their English class marks and their language ability.

Interview questions were pre-planned, and aimed at finding out more about their reading behaviour and what they thought about the classroom library as a reading resource. Before the actual interviews, I asked learners to feel free to express their feelings and opinions because I wanted to create a natural environment conducive to honest communication (O’Leary, 2004). Interviews were audio- and video- recorded and data transcribed (see Appendix 2a-1).

3.7 PLANNING THE INTERVENTION

When I was planning for the intervention, the time of the intervention was very important. The nature of extensive reading that is generally understood in the literature is the one that takes place during teaching time under the supervision and guidance of the teacher. However, my research took place outside the classroom, after hours amongst peer reading groups. The main reason for this approach is that the nature of extensive reading demands learners to choose books for pleasure in their own time. However, the demands of the syllabus and the CAPS requirements made it difficult for me as a researcher to conduct the research during the normal school hours. Before the actual intervention, I observed and recorded how learners were reading and how they were using the classroom library. I also reflected on how to mediate that. I collected data from the participants to gain a better understanding of the problem and what sort of action to take. We jointly decided to have a second discussion, in which we discussed the strategies that should be taken to implement the extensive reading

programme and sought to make sure that these were important and feasible. This discussion was video-recorded and transcribed. The results of the discussion enabled us to adapt our original plan of intervention through an extensive reading programme.

3.8 ACTUAL INTERVENTION (AN EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMME)

3.8.1 Decorating the classroom library and putting books in shelves

The first step was to decorate the classroom library and put the books on the shelves in correct order so as to create a reader-friendly environment. I hoped that this would encourage a more positive attitude towards reading, interaction with books and the choice of reading as a leisure time activity (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988, cited in Fractor et al., 1993). The learners and I decorated the classroom library by hanging pictures on the wall. The learners' projects and drawings were also hung on the classroom walls and this was aimed at promoting a print-rich environment (see Appendix 7).

3.8.2 Designing a register for books and lending books to learners

I designed a register to make it easy for me to control the books. Learners were required to write their names, title of the book and author, date borrowed, signature, returned date and signature. Below is a sample of a register I used to lend books to the learners (see Appendix 5).

Name of the learner	Title of the book and author	Date borrowed	Signature	Returned date	Signature
Learner no.1	No longer at ease- Chinua Achebe	26/ 07/ 2013	Signature		Signature

I lent books to learners and the register helped me to keep a record of these. The main reason for lending books to learners was to enable them to interact with the books and also to get more information about their reading tendencies and reading behaviour. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

3.8.3 Book reviews and summaries

After learners were given books to read, they wrote reviews and short summaries of their chosen books. The reason for allowing learners to make their own choice was to nurture voluntary reading and to create opportunities for students to practise reading skills (Morrow, 1991, cited in Fractor et al., 1993). Another goal for encouraging learners to write book reviews and short summaries was to encourage learners to see beyond the literal meaning of the words on the page, using a variety of clues to understand what the writer was trying to say (Harmer, 2001). For example, learners reported on the following in their book reviews: the title of the book, the name of the author, the publisher, the year, the main characters, the storyline and recommendation (to recommend books to other learners). When I gave them books to read, I hoped they would be able to read the books with understanding and be able to interpret them. However, there were not enough books at their level, as is revealed by the research and reported in detail in the next chapter.

3.8.4 Formation of book clubs

Learners grouped themselves into groups of seven and formed book clubs. Club members' duties were to borrow books from the classroom library, meet at a certain venue after school and review the books. Each book club gave a report after a few days on the books that had been reviewed. Book clubs were formed with the aim of promoting a community of readers and to increase the sense of classroom belonging which would lead to greater relatedness, participation and motivation (Watkins, 2005). This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

3.8.5 Reading for fun as a continuous activity

One thing that was obvious in our class discussion was that most learners were in favour of free voluntary reading and wanted to read for pleasure. In light of this, I gave learners a chance to borrow books from the classroom library, using an accession register. I allowed them to use the classroom library to read if they found it difficult to read at home. I encouraged them to write summaries of each book they had read as proof that they were reading extensively. This happened for the whole term because I wanted them to write a progress report at the end of the term. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

3.8.6 Progress report

At the end of the term, I allowed learners to write a self-reflective progress report in which they reflected both on the strengths of the reading programme and how they had benefited from it, and on its weaknesses and what could be done to improve it. A copy of one learner's

progress report is included in the appendix section (see Appendix 6). This copy was selected because the learner was very honest in his progress report. He wrote about the strengths, the challenges of the reading programme and also gave suggestions as to what he thought should be done.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The cyclical and iterative nature of action research allowed me to conduct data analysis simultaneously with data collection, which helped me to focus the interviews and observations and test the emerging conclusions (Maxwell, 2008).

Firstly, I looked at the data that were collected from several sources and related them to my original expected outcomes. I also looked out for and reported unexpected outcomes (Koshy, 2005, p. 109).

Secondly, the data from the reflective journals and observation forms were typed and tabulated. Data from the video recorder and tape recorder were transcribed into written text. I re-read the entire transcripts to familiarise myself with the content and get a global impression (Denscombe, 2007).

Thirdly, the data were coded and the related codes were categorised. I considered the relationship in meaning among categories, what they stated together and indicated about each other, and most importantly, their relevance to the research question (Henning, 2004).

Fourthly, categories reflecting themes closely related to the research questions were discussed (see Chapter 4).

3.10 SOME ISSUES OF VALIDITY (CREDIBILITY)

Patton (1980) argues that “the credibility of research findings hinges on the trustworthiness of the researcher – whether he or she has fairly represented the experience” (p. 481). In my case, triangulation through different data collection methods helped to make the research more trustworthy and hence valid. Importantly, I was able to collect a great deal of data from the learners before embarking on action.

There was no omission in the transcription of interviews and class discussions, and learners were encouraged to freely voice their feelings and opinions. This also helped validate the data.

Finally, an important part of the validity of this research lay in my own sense of professional growth: how in the process of conducting research with my learners, my understanding of

how to assist them read extensively using the classroom library more effectively was deepened. One of the basic themes of action research is the acquisition of knowledge with the aim of creating change. In this case, my understanding of the learners helped me to make an attempt at changing the situation.

3.11 SOME ETHICAL ISSUES

McNiff (1996) notes that ethical issues include negotiating access, promising confidentiality, the right of withdrawal from the research, keeping good faith and the right of information (p. 35). In my case, I wrote letters to the Circuit Manager at the District Office, the Principal, the School Governing Body and the parents, requesting permission to carry out the research (see Appendix 1a-i).

In the letters, I gave assurances that participation in the research would be on an entirely voluntary basis, and that confidentiality and privacy would be respected and protected. I also gave the assurance that anonymity would be respected – that the school’s name and learners’ names would not be revealed in the final document.

3.12 SOME LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The fact that I was the only observer in the classroom made it impossible to observe everything because I was also a participant in the research. The presence of a non-participant observer or a critical friend could have made a valuable contribution to this research.

Secondly, the nature of action research requires the researcher to undertake self-reflective enquiry in order to improve his or her practice. This means that the reflection and evaluation within and resulting from this research is researcher-specific and not generalisable.

3.13 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to explain the methods (research design and procedures) that I used to conduct this research case study. The research goals and the case study itself were described. Action research and its suitability in this research were explained. Sampling decisions and the qualitative methods that I used to collect the data were also explained and justified. The planning and implementation of the intervention that resulted from interaction with the participants (Grade 8 learners) were described, and data analysis was briefly discussed. Lastly, the limitations of the research were highlighted.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis as the result of the triangulation of data collection methods. I analysed data by employing a thematic approach which entailed establishing patterns and themes which I highlighted with different coloured markers that denoted the patterns and themes. I present the data in words by describing the patterns and themes that emerged from the data. The cyclical and iterative nature of action research allowed me to employ the following steps outlined by Ferrace (2000, p. 10) in conducting this research:

- Gathering of data
- Interpretation of data
- Action based on findings/ implementation of a plan
- Evaluation of results (Reflection)

Critical evaluation and reflection of each activity is done using the following categories:

- The strengths of the activity
- The weaknesses of the activity
- What could be done to improve it?

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNERS WHO WERE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY

This section describes the learners who participated in this research study. I arrived at these descriptions after making a critical analysis of the responses they gave me during interviews. The participants, as mentioned earlier, were Grade 8A learners at my school. They were 34 in total and were between 13 and 17 years of age. 29 learners were younger than 15 years and were in their second year in Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) while 5 learners were older than 15 years and in their third year in Senior Phase. 23 of the learners' parents were unemployed and the source of income was a government social grant. 6 learners' parents were employed and the source of income came directly from their employers. 5 learners' parents were self-employed and the source of income came from their businesses. This information helped me to better understand their backgrounds. Parental employment in this research is used as an indicator of how much reading material was likely to be in their homes.

4.3 COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA BEFORE INTERVENTION

Action research helped me to conduct data analysis simultaneously with data collection and this combination helped me to focus the interviews and observations and I was able to decide how to test the emerging conclusions (Maxwell, 2008). This also helped me to step back and critically analyse situations to avoid bias in order to obtain valid data (Koshy, 2005)

For ethical reasons, the learners' identity has not been revealed. The learners' identities have been protected by the use of numbers. I conducted the first interviews with three learners, Learner 29, Learner 30 and Learner 33 to find out more about their reading habits and their home background. These learners were initially chosen because they were high performing learners in English First Additional Language, with good marks in the subject. Below are some extracts taken from the interviews with the learners:

Interview with Learner 29 (L29)

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 29 : I read almost every day because my father buys me magazines and newspapers. Sometimes I take them after he has finished reading them.

Researcher: Do you have books at your home?

L 29 : My parents have a mini-library at my home because they buy books from the bookshop and we spend afternoons on Saturdays reading these books.

(After the interview with Learner 29, I proceeded to have interviews with other two learners)

The next learner I interviewed was Learner 30 and here is the interview:

Interview with Learner 30

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 30 : My mother is a former teacher but now a businesswoman. She encourages us at home to read more often. She even takes us with a car to borrow books at the municipal library in town.

Researcher : Do you have books at home?

L 30 : Yes. My father is also a former teacher who is now a businessman. He always asks the municipality to donate some of the old books to him and he brings them home.

The interview with this learner, Learner 30 also showed that this learner was reading extensively because her parents supported her reading as they were former teachers who were passionate about reading, judging by her familiarity and confidence with books.

The last interview was with Learner 33 with an extract taken from the interview below:

Interview with Learner 33 (L33)

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 33 : I read every day because my parents are both members of a reading club and they often bring books at home.

Researcher: Do you have books at home?

L 33 : Yes. My parents get books from a bookshop in town at a discount because they have an account there.

The interview with this learner, Learner 33 also showed that his parents supported reading. It was also a clue to why he is also one of the high performing learners.

I conducted the second interviews with learners who were not performing well, judging by their English marks in reading comprehension. The learners were Learner 1, Learner 4 and Learner 7. Below are some extracts of the interviews:

Interview with Learner 1 (L1)

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 1 : To be honest, I do not read at home.

Researcher: Why?

L 1 : My parents want me to do house chores and this takes most of my time after school and on weekends.

The interview with Learner 1 revealed that she did not read at home and her parents did not support her reading.

After this interview, I decided to conduct an interview with the second learner, Learner 4.

Interview with Learner 4 (L4)

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 4 : I only read textbooks when there is a test but if there is no test, I hardly read.

Researcher: Why?

L 4 : My parents and relatives do not buy newspapers and magazines. In fact, they always encourage us to do house chores instead of reading.

The interview with Learner 4 showed there was no parental support at home for reading activities.

The last interview was with Learner 7. Here is an extract from the interview:

Interview with Learner 7 (L7)

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 7 : I do not read at all.

Researcher: Why?

L 7 : My parents have a belief that we should only read books at school during school hours. They say it is not our culture to sit in front of the books for long hours.

In the interview with Learner 7 she admitted that she did not read at all and the cultural beliefs of her parents made the situation worse.

In my observation, the three learners who were reading extensively had the support of their families because there were books at their homes and their parents were also supporting reading. In contrast, the three learners who did not engage in any reading after school hours did not have books at their homes and they did not have family support.

The responses of the six learners prompted me to give each of the thirty four learners a research questionnaire which had all the questions that were aimed at collecting data from the participants. Below are some of the responses from the research questionnaire. Learner 5 wrote the following:

We do not have books at my home except the books that we bring from school. My parents are unemployed and do not buy newspapers and magazines for us. Magazines

are usually used at my home to wrap up something or to make fire. The idea of a reading programme is a good one.

The response by Learner 5 supported the notion that some learners did not have enough books and newspapers at home to read. His view about the reading programme helped me with the data I needed.

Learner 6 wrote this:

The presence of a classroom library is a good idea because most of us do not have books at our homes. We need to think about this reading programme and discuss what should be done to make this work.

Learner 6's response was similar to Learner 5. However, I was not sure what he meant when he said there were no books at home and I could not establish this from his home.

Learner 17 wrote this:

My father and mother do not read in their spare time because they are not educated and also not interested in reading. I think the only thing that will encourage me to read is the presence of a classroom library and a reading programme that will engage us to read every day.

After reading this, it was not immediately clear whether this learner was not motivated to read because of her parents' illiteracy or simply because she was not used to reading. Her views on a reading programme were useful.

After carefully analysing the questionnaire responses, I used the results to facilitate a class discussion with the participants on the value of extensive reading, their reading interests and desires, how they felt about the classroom library, how they could improve and maximise its use, and what could be included to make it a more useful reading resource. Here are some of their responses in the discussion:

Learner 27 said:

Extensive reading is very important for us because we do not have enough reading materials at our homes and this does not motivate us. The school should take the lead by giving us books to read every day and this will motivate us to read.

The response by Learner 27 demonstrated a passive attitude by some learners toward reading. However, his views on extensive reading were valuable.

Learner 28 said:

A classroom library would make it easy for us to get books because the municipal library in town is far away from the township.

This response was also not convincing because some learners were actually going to town for their own personal reasons but they claimed the municipal library was far away.

Learner 19 said:

The only thing that will make the classroom library to be useful to us to have books that are not difficult for us. The books should be at our own level. There should be magazines and newspapers and short story books.

The response by Learner 19 gave me an idea about the kind of books they preferred to be in the classroom library.

29 learners out of 34 felt that there was a need for a reading programme. I advised them about the need to prioritise in writing the strategies that were both important and feasible to implement a reading programme. They suggested working in groups and each group wrote down the strategies that were needed to make a reading programme a success. After writing their suggestions about the strategies to be used in drafting a reading programme, we decided to bring all the suggestions together and plan the intervention together as a class before putting it into action. We jointly decided that the following strategies should be followed when implementing the extensive reading programme:

- Decorating the classroom library and putting the books in shelves.
- Designing an accession register and lending books to learners.
- Book reviews and summaries.
- Formation of book clubs.
- Reading for fun as a continuous activity.
- Progress report (the learners were going to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the reading programme).

4.4 ACTUAL INTERVENTION (EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMME)

After planning the intervention with my learners, the following strategies were followed to make the extensive reading programme effective:

4.4.1 Decorating the classroom library and putting the books in shelves

It was my belief when I was conducting this research that I should involve the learners in the organisation of the classroom library to encourage their interaction with books.

I allowed them to decorate the classroom library walls by hanging their own work on the wall. We hung calendars, weather charts, class rules, images of South African history, maps of South Africa and Eastern Cape and many displays of their own work. The main aim of this was to promote a print-rich environment. I also encouraged the learners to bring whatever they deemed important for the classroom library. Some learners, especially those with books and magazines at home also helped us add more material to the classroom library. Learner 19 whose father was a businessman asked me to write a letter to his father to donate whatever he could. The father donated two boxes full of old newspapers and a new dictionary. Learner 32 whose father was also employed also talked to his employers and the employers donated old books to the school and these also added to the reading material in the classroom library.

Learner 34 even commented:

Whenever I enter this classroom I cannot stop looking at all the pictures and our work. It also gives me an opportunity to compare my own work with others and this encourages me to do my work diligently because I want to hang it on the classroom library wall.

The comment made by Learner 34 gave me an idea that some learners were reading extensively because they were competitive and wanted to succeed.

The principal of the school also commented on the decoration on the wall when he entered the classroom one day:

It is good to see learners' work displayed on the walls of the classroom. I wish other teachers could do the same because this will stop learners from writing bad things on the classroom walls. This also promotes competition among the learners to do well as they know that their work will be displayed on the walls.

The comment by the principal was an indication that the act of displaying work on the wall was supported by the management of the school and it was evident that he wanted other teachers to emulate this example.

I also helped them put the books on the shelves in the correct order in order to create a reader-friendly environment. We did not use the Dewey Decimal System because I was not familiar with the numbering system so therefore this system may have been alienating for them. We only arranged the reading material according to their categories e.g. short stories, magazines, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, and textbooks.

I also audited the number of reading materials in the classroom library. The table below shows the number of reading materials in the classroom library.

Table 4.4.1.1- Sample of the number of reading materials in the classroom library

READING MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY	
Fiction books	185
Non- fiction books	204
Magazines	90
Newspapers	309
Encyclopedias	04
Dictionaries	12

4.4.1.1 What were the strengths of this activity?

Decorating the classroom library and putting the books in shelves with learners encouraged them to be involved in the setting up of a classroom library. It was my hope that this would in the end give them a sense of belonging and they would be in a better position to assume ownership of the classroom library. The learners seemed to be proud of their work that was hung on the walls. It was my hope that the learners would develop love for reading in the end and it would therefore be easy for them to happily choose books they want from the classroom library. However, the limited time scale for this research was not enough for me to be able to eventually see their feelings about reading.

4.4.1.2 What were the weaknesses of this activity?

The fact that Dewey Decimal System was not used in the classroom library denied the learners important information about how to find books on their own because this system would have empowered them (Paton-Ash, 2012).

4.4.1.3 What could be done to improve this?

The situation would be improved once I obtain information about how the system works and I can then teach the learners the “Dewey numbers”. This will happen in the second spiral of this intervention. This situation could be improved if we work with the municipal library to find the best methods for the learners to find books on their own.

4.4.2 Designing a register for books and lending books to learners

In our discussion, learners suggested that an accession register be designed to keep track of the books that have been borrowed by the learners. An accession register records the names

of all the learners and the books they borrowed. I designed this register to control the flow of library books and to keep track of both the learners who were borrowing books for the purposes of reading extensively and those who did not borrow. Below is a sample of a register for books I used to lend books to learners.

Table 4.4.2.1- A sample of a register for books (See appendix 5).

Name of learner	Title of the book and author	Date borrowed	Signature (learner)	Returned date	Signature (learner)
Learner no.1	No longer at ease- Chinua Achebe	26/07/ 2013	Signature	03/08/2013	Signature

Learners who borrowed books were recorded in this register for books and it was easy to see the learners who did not borrow books because all the names of the learners appear on the register.

I asked some learners about the books they had borrowed and below are their responses. For example, when I asked Learner 22, who had borrowed a magazine, why she preferred to read a magazine instead of a book she said:

I was glad when you gave us an opportunity to choose the books that we wanted to borrow and I chose a magazine because I wanted to read about my heroes in television. The pictures on the cover of a magazine give me a clue of what is inside.

This response confirmed the fact that extensive reading is about learners reading for pleasure. However, I was not sure whether her choice of a magazine was because she liked her television heroes or because she was not keen to read books.

I also asked Learner 28 who had borrowed a newspaper why she preferred a newspaper to a book she said:

I get bored when I read books but when I read a newspaper I become excited because I get the latest sport news. Although most of the newspapers are old in this classroom library but the news on those newspapers to me are important.

In my observation, the situation with Learner 28 was similar to Learner 22 but L28's problem was that books were boring her, hence she preferred newspapers.

4.4.2.1 What were the strengths of this activity?

The register for books was the best method to keep track of the books that were lent to the learners. The register also served as one of the data collection tools because it was easy for me to find information about the learners who were borrowing the books and those who were not. It also helped me to know the types of books that were preferred by individual learners. The dates in the register showed me learners who were slower than the others in reading the books. This tool also helped me to know what actions to take after analysing all the information in the register.

4.4.2.2 What were the weaknesses of this activity?

Although learners were able to borrow books from the classroom library, some of the books were not at their level. I also did not advise them on the books to read and not to read. As a result of this, eight learners chose to read magazines and one a newspaper when I first allowed them to borrow books from the classroom library.

4.4.2.3 What could be done to improve this?

This situation could be improved by having more books that were at the learners' level. Although some books were at their level there were not enough for all the readers to borrow books pitched at their own level on a regular basis.

4.4.3 Book reviews and summaries

Book reviews and summaries formed part of the reading strategies suggested by learners. Each learner was expected to tell the class about the title of the book, the name of the author, the publisher, the year, main characters, the storyline and recommend the book to other learners. Learners who had borrowed magazines and newspapers were also expected to review their articles. Learner 6 reviewed a book and this was what she said:

Good day, ladies and gentlemen. The title of the book I have read is- Tales from Shakespeare. The editors of the book are Charles and Mary Lamb. It was published by Penguin Popular classics in 1995. I have read only one story which is about Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Juliet are in love but their families are enemies, but their love unites these two families in the end. But this happens only after their death. But what I do not like about these two lovers is that they were too young to get married and they were stupid because they committed suicide because they loved each other. I do not want ever to be involved in something like that. Thank you.

Learner 10 made the following summary:

Good day, my brothers and sisters. The title of the book I have read is- The Village by the Sea by Anita Desai. I have not been able to read the whole book but the summary at the back of the book tells us that the story is about a poor Indian family who had fallen on hard times. They are so poor that the eldest daughter is forced to drop out of school and look after her younger siblings. Another boy in this family decides to go to Bombay to change his life. What amazes me is that here in South Africa, Indians are so rich that they have many cars and shops but in their own country they are living in poverty.

Learner 22 reviewed a magazine article about his favourite soccer star:

I want to be a famous soccer star just like him. When I saw his picture on cover of the magazine I knew I wanted to read more about him. He also comes from a village but he is now one of the best soccer players in this country. He has proved that a poor background cannot stop someone from becoming a world respected player.

In my observation, although some learners were not used to reading novels and short stories, they were interested in the stories contained in the books. For example, Learner 6 borrowed a book with a collection of plays from Shakespeare but he read only one play- *Romeo and Juliet* and he did not read the other plays. Learner 10 borrowed a novel by Anita Desai- *The village by the sea* but he only read the summary at the back of the book but he was clearly interested in the book. Learner 22 borrowed a Drum Magazine and he only read about his favourite soccer star who was also his role model.

4.4.3.1 What were the strengths of this activity?

This strategy ensured that learners read the books they had borrowed from the classroom library. It also ensured that learners frequently met at the agreed times as book club members to discuss the books they had read. This activity also promoted public speaking because each learner was required to stand in front of the class and review or make a summary of a book.

4.4.3.2 What were the weaknesses of this activity?

Most learners who were shy to stand in front of the class ended up saying only a few things about the books they had read. This was a drawback as it denied other learners an opportunity to hear book reviews from other books they had not read because one of the aims of a book review or a summary is to introduce books to other learners who have never read it.

4.4.3.3 What could be done to improve this?

This situation could be improved if more books at their level were added to the classroom library. When I was analysing the data I could also sense that there was a need for learners to get books that were readable and understandable to them.

4.4.4 Formation of book clubs

Formation of book clubs was one of the strategies suggested by the learners in the original planning of the reading programme. The learners divided themselves into seven groups (five learners in each group and four in one group). I encouraged all the learners to borrow books from the classroom library since they were going to meet regularly for book reviews and summaries. I also advised them to write reviews of the books they had read. Although the idea of book clubs was theirs, this research revealed that some of the learners could not meet to discuss the books and some were unable to read them at their homes.

Learner 2 said:

The idea of forming book clubs was a good idea but we experience problems at our homes because our parents do not give us chance to go and meet with other learners for the purposes of reading. My mother, for example, always forces me to do house chores when I am home and this takes most of my time.

This confession by this learner showed me that the reading programme faced some challenges because learners were obliged to do their home duties and parents were not fully aware of the advantages of this intervention although they had given learners permission to take part in this research.

Learner 5 suggested this:

I think we should rather meet at the school as book club members because some of us are unable to meet and discuss books because of family commitments. For example, yesterday I went to one of my friends to discuss a book but when I arrived at his home his father told me to leave because they were busy milking the cows.

We held a class discussion and I asked the learners why their parents were not allowing them to meet as book club members whereas they had given us a permission to proceed with the research. 21 learners responded by saying that the parents did not necessarily have a problem with them meeting as book club members but they wanted their children to do their duties when they were at home. For example, Learner 14 said:

My father said to me that when I am home I must help my mother because I am the only girl. He even said that priority should be given to the family and I can meet my classmates when I am not busy.

Again, what Learner 14 said was similar to what Learner 2 and 5 said about their parents. I could sense that parents were not fully aware about the advantages of reading programme.

After reflecting on the class discussion I had with the learners, we decided that book club members should spend at least an hour after school hours at the school premises and discuss the books they had read. 23 learners were in favour of this idea because of the problems they experienced previously at their homes. After two weeks I asked the learners about the progress of the book clubs. 27 learners I asked agreed that they felt that the idea of book clubs was working because they were able to read books and discuss them with other learners. Learner 6 said:

The decision we took to meet at the school as book club members was the best decision. Ever since I started to discuss books with my friends here at school, I get a chance to interact with books and I am slowly improving in my spelling.

23 learners I interviewed voiced the same opinion that reading should take place when they were at the classroom library after school rather than at their own homes. However, the claim that was made by Learner 6 (L6) that his spelling was slowly improving could not immediately be established.

4.4.4.1 What were the strengths of this activity?

23 learners, for example, mentioned that it was much easier to understand the books when they were discussing them with their friends. The formation of book clubs also promoted group work and co-operative learning. This also made learners understand each other and also created a sense of belonging among the individual group members.

4.4.4.2 What were the weaknesses of this activity?

20 learners were unable to meet as book club members to do book reviews due to their home duties. Although all the parents had given permission for their children to take part in the research, some of them did not really grasp that this was part of the research when their children had to leave homes and meet as book club members to review the books.

4.4.4.3 What could be done to improve this?

In the second spiral of this intervention, I plan to have a formal meeting with the parents and explain to them about the advantages of the reading programme and how their children would benefit from this exercise.

4.4.5 Reading for fun as a continuous activity

This strategy is one of the strategies suggested by the learners in our initial planning of the reading programme. Literature suggests that extensive reading is when learners “read for pleasure” and “voluntarily” (Mikulecky, 1990; Krashen, 1993). However, in this research, these terms became a little bit problematic in the sense that I could not just let the learners “read for fun” without collecting and analysing the data in order to decide on the emerging conclusions. The nature of action research required me to be a reflective practitioner: to continually collect and analyse data, act on the basis of that information and reflect. I lent the learners books from the classroom library to “read for fun” but I collected and analysed data about their reading. This section will therefore be categorised into the following subheadings:

- Analysis of interviews with the participants
- Analysis of observation sheets and my own reflective journal
- Analysis of participants’ reflective journals
- Analysis of class discussions with the participants
- Action, observation and reflection
- Final observation of the intervention (analysis of reflective journals and class discussions)
- Final interviews with six learners

4.4.5.1 Analysis of interviews with participants

I interviewed the participants to find out how they felt about the idea of “reading for fun” as one of the reading strategies.

When I asked Learner 6 why he thought about the idea of “reading for fun” he said:

When I borrow a book from the classroom library I want to read for fun and for information but I do not want to have the responsibility of reporting to the class what I was reading.

In my observation, the response from Learner 6 showed that some learners were not in favour of reporting about the books they had read.

I asked Learner 18 the same question and he said:

There is nothing that gives me pleasure than to be able to choose from a variety of books from the classroom library. I have noticed a slight change in my behaviour because I no longer go to bed without reading a page of a book.

The response of this learner showed that some learners were responding positively to the strategies aimed at promoting reading. However, his claim that he read nightly could not be immediately established.

One of the things I observed was that most boys preferred to read sport newspapers while the girls preferred fashion magazines. Although some learners borrowed books they admitted that they easily got bored because they were not used to reading. I asked some learners about the types of reading materials they preferred. Learner 28 said:

I prefer reading sport newspapers because the daily newspapers concentrate on politics and I am not interested in politics. I love sport.

The response of this learner showed that some learners preferred particular kinds of newspaper articles. For example, although there were newspaper articles in the classroom library, Learner 28 did not just prefer newspaper articles but sport newspapers.

Learner 24 said:

I prefer magazines because I get information about fashion and celebrities. I easily get bored if I read something serious like a book because I am not used to reading. It will take time for me to get used to the idea of reading every day.

This response showed that some learners were not used to reading books. Therefore, the presence of newspapers and magazines helped to accommodate those learners who were not used to reading.

4.4.5.2 Analysis of observation sheets and my own reflective journal

In the following weeks, I observed how my learners were reading extensively using the classroom library. I recorded my observation on observation sheets and in my research journal for document analysis. I used the reflective journal to reflect on a regular basis. Towards the middle of the term (the project started from the beginning of July to the end of

September 2013) I carried out a review of how the learners were progressing. The following subsection shows how I analysed their reflective journals and the class discussions:

4.4.5.3 Analysis of participants' reflective journals

I asked the learners individually in class to write a reflection of how they thought the intervention was working out. I wrote the following questions on the chalkboard:

- What improvements have been brought about by this intervention?
- Are you enjoying your reading?
- How is the classroom library supporting your reading?
- Are further improvements needed?
- Is everyone taking a joint responsibility?

When analysing their responses, 26 learners thought that there were improvements brought about by the intervention. 24 learners responded that they enjoyed their reading. 27 learners said the classroom library supported their reading. 30 learners thought that additional reading materials could improve the classroom library. Only 6 learners responded that not everyone was taking joint responsibility. Below are some of the extracts taken from the learners' reflective journals.

Learner 5 wrote this:

I enjoy reading the books because at my home there are no books and I get the opportunity to read when I borrow books from the classroom library.

This response showed that Learner 5 was one of the learners who thought the classroom library was supporting their reading.

Learner 30 wrote this:

I like the fact that there is a variety of books to choose from. If I get bored of reading a novel, I take a short story.

Similarly, the response by Learner 30 also showed that he was one of the learners who thought that the classroom library was supporting their reading.

Learner 21 wrote in her journal:

When we meet to discuss books as book club members, I am the only one who is talking and the others listen to me. I do not think they are reading the books because they do not talk.

The response by Learner 21 showed that this learner was one of the learners who thought that not everyone was taking responsibility.

4.4.5.4 Analysis of class discussions with the participants

Action research operates in cycles or spirals because one cycle builds on the other and this leads to spirals of action (McNiff, 1996, p. 21). In light of this, the responses of the learners in their reflective journals prompted me to hold a second class discussion with the learners. The intention was to collect more data from the learners with a view to improve my practice. In my second class discussion with the learners, I asked them the following questions:

- What do you think should be added to the classroom library?
- Which books are more interesting and which are not?
- What should be done to encourage all the learners to read extensively?
- Is there a need to hold a meeting with their parents about the importance of book clubs?
- Is there something else that can be done by the school to improve their reading?
- Should we adapt to our original plan?

27 learners responded that books aimed at their reading level should be added to the classroom library since they were Grade 8 learners. 5 learners responded that they were happy with the classroom library books. 20 learners responded that cartoons, word puzzle books and fable books would interest them. 29 learners responded that they were encouraged by books that were interesting. 30 learners responded that there was no need for a meeting with parents because this was a challenge beyond our control. All 34 learners responded that the school should add more books to the classroom library to improve their reading. All of the learners felt we should adapt our original plan. Below are some extracts from the discussion:

Learner 5 said:

I think what needs to be added in this classroom library is a photocopier that will help us to copy the pages of the books that we like.

Learner 5 was responding to the question: what should be added to the classroom library? It was evident that some learners were affected by the absence of a photocopier machine in the classroom library because some of them wanted to make copies of the books they were reading.

Learner 7 (L7) said:

I do not think our parents have a problem with us meeting as book club members but the only problem is that when we are at our homes they want us to work instead of reading. For example, my father gave permission for me to take part in this research but when I am home he wants me to perform my duties as the only daughter of the house.

This learner was responding to the question whether there was a need to invite parents to a meeting about the importance of book clubs. It was evident that some parents were not deliberately keeping their children from the book clubs but were simply not well-informed that this was part of the research.

4.4.5.5 Action, observation and reflection

In light of the above, action, observation and reflection continued. I analysed the data from the observation sheets, interview transcripts, reflective journals and transcripts of class discussion and we decided to adapt our original plan. We began the cycle again by redecorating the classroom library by adding more pictures to promote a print-rich environment. I wrote a letter to the Local Municipal Manager and the librarian to request a donation of old books and magazines to the school for the purposes of reading and they agreed. Books were delivered and put in shelves by the learners. I used an accession register to control the books. Below are some of the learners' responses:

Learner 5 said:

I am happy now because the books that have been added include the cartoon books and the fable story books which are my favourite books. Although the books are not many but at least this is something.

In my observation, the books donated by the municipality brought some relief to learners who had a problem with difficult books in the classroom library.

Learner 6 said:

I am now able to sit in the classroom library and do word puzzle instead of reading novels which are very long. The municipality should continue to donate because our school is a poor school.

Similarly to what Learner 5 had said, Learner 6, also had a problem with books which were difficult to read but the books from the municipality brought some relief to this learner. To collect data about their reading behaviour and reading habits, I encouraged learners to always reflect in their reflective journals and this went on for the whole term.

4.4.5.6 Final evaluation of the intervention (analysis of reflective journals and class discussions)

At the end of the term I made a final evaluation of the intervention. I asked the learners to write individual reflections in their reflective journals to express their feelings and emotions about the intervention and the classroom library. I analysed these journals and compared them with my own reflective journal with a view to understanding what they thought about the intervention and where I should improve. Below are some extracts from their reflective journals:

Learner 2 wrote this:

I always have a problem of understanding English when reading textbooks in other subjects like Technology and Economic and Management Sciences but I hope that reading the English books everyday in the classroom library will help solve my problem.

In my observation, Learner 2 was very optimistic about the reading programme because she hoped that the intervention would help her with reading comprehension skills.

Learner 3 wrote this:

I have a problem of spelling and punctuating sentences incorrectly. I also find it difficult to construct sentences but I hope reading will help me get used to the words and become better in future.

In my observation, Learner 3 had similar hopes to Learner 2 because he was also optimistic that the intervention would solve his language problems.

The responses of the learners through their reflective journals prompted me to have a final class discussion in an attempt to collect more data from them about the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention and what they thought should be done to improve it. During the discussion I asked them the following questions:

- What do you think are the strengths of the intervention?
- What do you think are the weaknesses of this intervention?
- How do you think we can improve the situation?

Below are some of their responses:

Learner 18 said during the discussion:

When I first borrowed a book I just kept it at home and not read it because I was lazy to read and I was not used to it. The idea of book reviews in front of the class forced me to read the book because I had to report to the whole class about the book. I can say it helped me because I got used to reading and I have noticed a slight change in my behaviour. I love reading now.

This response was an indication of the strengths of the intervention because this learner noticed a change in his behaviour.

Learner 17 said:

When I came to high school from primary school, I had a problem of reading and spelling but I have noticed that as I am reading I am getting used to the words and I can see how they are spelt. Reading has also made me see how the text is written and where to put the commas and full-stops. I am beginning to enjoy reading.

The response of this learner also indicated the strengths of the intervention because Learner 17 was slowly overcoming language problems and was beginning to enjoy reading.

Learner 19 said:

Sometimes I get bored if I read only an English book and if I am tired I want to relax by reading a Xhosa book.

The response by Learner 19 indicated areas for improvements because there were no Xhosa books in the classroom library.

Learner 9 said during the discussion:

I have looked at all the books in the classroom library and I think most of these books are difficult for me. Yes, I know there are books that we get from the municipality which are at least at my level but they are not enough.

The response by Learner 9 also indicated areas for improvement because there were insufficient books at the learners' level.

Learner 34 even asked during our discussion:

What does the municipal library do with the old books when they put new books in their shelves? What does a bookshop like CNA do with the old books when they put new books in their shelves? I think you should write a letter as our teacher and ask them to donate the books to the school.

The questions by Learner 34 indicated an area of improvement that books should be added to the classroom library.

4.4.5.7 Final interviews with six learners

After the class discussion, I decided to have interviews with six learners: two above- average, two average, and two below-average. I identified these learners through observation of their marks and language ability as I was also their English teacher. The interviews were aimed at helping me to understand the learners' perceptions and the role I could play as a teacher to improve the situation. The interviews were aimed to help me capture the views that learners could maybe not express in larger group discussions.

I decided to have the first interviews with two above- average learners: Learner 30 and Learner 33. Below are the extracts from the interview transcripts. See appendix 2a-i.

Interview with Learner 30 (L30)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 30 : For me, it was a good idea because it was a continuation of what is happening at my home. We always read at my home even on weekends. This intervention has helped me borrow the books that we do not have at home.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 30 : To me, so far so good. I think you should just ask the municipality to donate more books to the school.

I went to interview the second above-average learner, Learner 33

The interview with Learner 30, in my view, showed that this intervention has also helped learners who were reading extensively because it was a continuation of what they were already doing.

Below is an extract from the interview with Learner 33:

Interview with Learner 33 (L33)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 33 : I think the idea of a reading programme was excellent because many learners in our class are not privileged as I am because my father buys books for us. For me, it is just to continue with my daily activity.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 33 : I think you should just add more books to the classroom library because I have seen that many of our classmates are now interested in reading.

The interview with Learner 33 showed a similar response to Learner 30 because this learner also said that this was a continuation of his daily activities.

I also interviewed two average learners: Learner 11 and Learner 18.

Below is an extract from the interview with Learner 11:

Interview with Learner 11 (L11)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 11 : I think this reading programme should be something that will continue and not just this year? It has helped me to read a variety of books that we do not have at my home.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 11 : I think you should continue to give us books so that we can get used to them.

As Learner 11 had books at his home, the classroom library helped him to borrow additional books.

Below is an extract from the interview with Learner 18

Interview with Learner 18 (L18)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 18 : This intervention has helped me interact with a variety of books. Although we have books at my home but there are many interesting books here.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 18 : I think you have done more than enough. The only thing we need is to get more books. We do not want to go to the municipal library because it is far.

The response by Learner 18 led me to believe that the classroom library was supporting some learners' reading.

I conducted the last interviews with two below-average learners: L 3 and Learner 4.

Below is an extract from the interview with Learner 3:

Interview with Learner 3 (L3)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 3 : I have a problem of constructing sentences and I have a spelling problem. I think reading more books will help me overcome these problems.

Researcher : What do you think I should do to improve the situation?

L 3 : I think the reading programme should continue because I have a feeling that my problems will be solved.

In my observation, Learner 3 had high hopes about this reading programme because he was optimistic that this would solve his language problems.

Below is an extract from the interview with Learner 4:

Interview with Learner 4 (L4)

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 4 : My problem is that I cannot read with understanding and I am most of the time not able to know what is going on in the book. I think I need to read more books.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 4 : I think you should encourage us to read by borrowing us more books from the classroom library.

Similarly with Learner 3, Learner 4 was also optimistic about the reading programme because he said he needed to read more books in order to overcome his reading problem. That is why he encouraged me to lend them more books from the classroom library.

4.4.6 Progress report (Critical reflection on strengths and weaknesses)

Finally, I encouraged the learners to reflect critically in their reflective journals on the intervention by giving answers to six questions. I wrote the following six questions on the chalkboard which they answered in the form of a progress report.

- What do you think are the strengths of this intervention and how has this improved your reading?
- What do you think are the shortcomings of this intervention?
- What do you think should be done to improve this situation?
- How is the classroom library supporting your reading?
- Do you feel your reading is improving?
- Have you noticed any change in your behaviour since taking part in this research?

When analysing their responses, 29 learners said the intervention had improved their reading. 25 learners responded that the challenge was the shortage of books at their level and these learners thought additional reading material could improve the situation. 25 learners said that the classroom library supported their reading. 15 learners said that they felt their reading was improving. All the 34 learners said they noticed a change in their behaviour since taking part in this research.

In conclusion, I think it is important to mention that improvements in learners' reading ability was unlikely to be noticeable in a single term which was the duration of this coursework MED (ELT) half-thesis research project, but I believed I could expect improvements in the amount and regularity of their reading, the value they placed on reading and their enjoyment in reading during this time.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented a discussion of my data analysis as a result of the data collection methods I employed which included interviews, observation and questionnaires. I explained the steps of action research that guided me to conduct this research. I also discussed the themes that emerged in the form of extensive reading strategies. Critical reflection of each activity was explained. The next and final chapter offers my concluding interpretation of the data and suggests the usefulness of the study to other teachers.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of common issues that emerged as a result of the analysis presented in Chapter 4 of using a classroom library to promote extensive reading in a Grade 8 class at my school. I discuss the strengths of this intervention, its challenges, what I think should be done when planning for the second spiral of this intervention, and a critical reflection of what I have learnt from this research as a teacher of reading . Some limitations of this research are highlighted and suggestions for future research to improve planning and implementation of reading programmes are suggested.

5.2 WHAT WERE THE STRENGTHS OF THE INTERVENTION?

When focusing on the conclusions drawn, I will discuss my findings looking at the strengths of the intervention. When discussing the strengths of the intervention, I will discuss the following:

- The extent to which my practice was effective in promoting extensive reading.
- The strategies used to improve learners’ engagement in reading.
- Learner’s response to the new strategies.
- The extent to which the intervention supported my professional development.

5.2.1 The extent to which my practice was effective in promoting extensive reading

Action research requires researchers to be reflective practitioners. In my case, I had to reflect on how effective my own practice was in promoting extensive reading, using a classroom library?

One of the strengths of this intervention was that as a Grade 8 English teacher, it was possible for me to use the Grade 8 classroom library to promote extensive reading. Since I was doing a small-scale research, action research helped me look at issues deeply in my own practice, gather and assess evidence with the aim of implementing an intervention (Koshy, 2005). The use of multiple collection data methods helped me interact with learners and I was able to use their ideas to implement strategies that were both important and feasible in the intervention.

Involving learners in decorating and putting books on the shelves helped them take ownership of the classroom library and built a community of readers. The reading clubs encouraged them to show enthusiasm and this also kept them on task and productive.

Reading a variety of books and other reading materials in the classroom library also seemed to have positive cognitive consequences because literacy development seemed to take place. For example, Learner 17 in our second discussion, said:

When I came to high school from primary school, I had a problem of reading and spelling, but I have noticed that as I am reading I am getting used to the words and I can see how they are spelt. Reading has also made me see how the text is written and where to put commas and full-stops. I am beginning to enjoy reading.

Therefore, this research revealed that there was an attempt from my side to make my classroom practice effective in using the Grade 8 classroom library to promote extensive reading.

5.2.2 The strategies used seemed to succeed in improving learners' engagement in reading

Action research requires researchers to reflect on the strategies they use to improve their own situation. Therefore, one of the research questions was: What strategies could be used to improve learners' engagement in extensive reading using the classroom library?

An attempt was made to answer this research question because I collected data using different methods in order to understand the best way to promote extensive reading. After analysing the data I was more informed about which strategies to use when implementing an action.

The interviews I conducted with learners to collect data about their background helped me to better understand the learners and I was able to plan the strategies jointly with the learners which succeeded in engaging them with books and other reading materials. This was a very important stage of the research process because this was also my research goal: to use the books and other reading materials in the classroom library to promote extensive reading.

The accession register helped me keep a record of books borrowed by the learners. It also gave me an idea about the books preferred by some learners. The interviews with learners also proved what was contained in the register. For example, Learner 28 said:

I get bored when I read books but when I read a newspaper I become excited because I read the latest news. Although most of the newspapers are old in this classroom library but the news in those newspapers to me are important.

The book reviews by the reading clubs showed evidence of great enthusiasm and there was also evidence of participation and motivation. For example, Learner 6 said:

The decision we took to meet at the school as book club members was the best decision. Ever since I started to discuss books with my friends here at school, I get a chance to interact with books and I am slowly improving in my spelling.

It became apparent that the idea of giving learners books to read for fun was worked for them. For example, Learner 18 responded by saying:

There is nothing that gives me pleasure than to be able to choose from a variety of books from the classroom library. I have noticed a slight change in my behaviour because I no longer go to bed without reading a page of a book.

In conclusion, there is evidence that this research revealed that the strategies that were used succeeded in improving individual learners' engagement in extensive reading.

5.2.3 Learners seemed to respond positively to the new strategies

Action research requires researchers to always reflect on their actions as well as the actions of the participants in order to chart the way forward. Therefore, one of the research questions is: How did learners respond to the new strategies for promoting extensive reading? The intervention, as revealed by the research, seemed to help learners respond positively to the new strategies for promoting extensive reading.

Some learners enjoyed the decoration of the classroom library with pictures and their own work. For example, Learner 34 commented:

Whenever I enter this classroom I cannot stop looking at all the pictures and our work. It also gives me an opportunity to compare my own work with others and this encourages me to do my work diligently because I want to hang it on the classroom wall.

Also, some learners gained confidence by writing book reviews and summaries. This was shown by the three learners, Learner 6, who reviewed a play by Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Learner 10, who reviewed a novel by Anita Desai, *The village by the sea*, and Learner 22 who reviewed a story in a magazine about his soccer hero.

The written reflections by the learners in their reflective journals revealed what the learners thought about the intervention. Most learners (29 out of 34) thought that the intervention brought about improvements. Some learners wrote that they had enjoyed their reading and the classroom library supported their reading. For example, Learner 5 said:

I enjoy reading the books because at my home there are no books and I get the opportunity to read when I borrow from the classroom library.

Also, Learner 2 wrote this:

I always have a problem of understanding English when reading textbooks in other subjects like Technology and Economic and Management Science but I hope that reading the English books everyday in the classroom library will help solve my problem.

Focus group interviews with six learners also revealed that above-average learners were those who had books at their homes and were reading extensively. For example, Learner 30, an average learner, responded by saying this when asked about her thoughts on the intervention:

For me, it was a good idea because it was a continuation of what was happening at my home. We always read at my home even on weekends. This intervention has helped me borrow books that we do not have at home.

Similarly, the research has also revealed that average learners were also those learners who had the support of their parents at home and were reading extensively. For example, Learner 18, an average learner said:

This intervention has helped me to interact with a variety of books. Although we have books at my home but there are many interesting books here.

This research has also revealed that below-average learners were hopeful that the intervention would help them overcome their language problems. For example, Learner 3, who was a below-average learner, said:

I have a problem of constructing sentences and I have a spelling problem. I think reading more books will help me overcome these problems.

When I was analysing the learners' written reflections in the form of a Progress Report, all the learners (34 of them), thought that the intervention was valuable because it gave them the opportunity to interact with a variety of texts. Some learners responded in their journals by

saying that ever since the intervention started at the beginning of the term, they had noticed a change in their behaviours because they claimed that they were beginning to love reading.

In conclusion, this research revealed that most learners responded positively to the new strategies aimed at promoting extensive reading.

5.2.4 The extent to which the intervention supported my professional development

Action research requires researchers to always reflect on their own actions and professional development. Therefore, one of the research questions is: How has the intervention supported my professional development as a reading teacher?

The main reason I chose action research was because I wanted to answer the following question: What do I need to do as a practitioner in order to improve my teaching practice and learning opportunities in the classroom? Therefore, this research has helped me conduct a self-reflective enquiry in collaboration with my learners with the aim of improving my teaching practice.

It has also contributed to my professional growth because the study was qualitative and interpretive. As I was working closely with my learners, my understanding of how to assist them read extensively by using a classroom library more effectively was deepened.

I feel strongly that this research process has had an impact on my professional development.

5.3 WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF THIS INTERVENTION?

Action research requires researchers to critically analyse their own situation. When doing so, they need to reflect on the strengths and challenges of their actions. This section provides a critical reflection on the challenges of this intervention. These challenges are presented in the following seven points:

5.3.1 The intervention mainly took place after the normal school hours

The nature of extensive reading requires learners to read books they have chosen themselves in their own time. Because of this, I had to conduct this research after normal school hours.

However, there were obstacles to this. For example, the idea of having reading clubs was to encourage learners to borrow books from the classroom library and discuss them in their own

time. They were also required to report to the class about the books they had read but some learners experienced some problems at their homes. Learner 2 said:

The idea of forming book clubs is a good idea but we experience problems because our parents do not give us chance to go and meet with other learners for the purposes of reading. My mother, for example, always forces me to do house chores when I am home and this takes most of my time.

Learner 14 said:

My father said to me that when I am home I must help my mother because I am the only girl. He even said that priority should be given to the family and I can meet my classmates when I am not busy.

In conclusion, this research revealed that the intervention taking place after normal school hours posed some challenges.

5.3.2 Cooperation of some parents

As already mentioned one of the problems we experienced was that of some parents who did not understand the importance of this intervention. As a result, they did not want to cooperate with their children by allowing them to meet their classmates for the purposes of reading. For example, Learner 5 said, during a class discussion:

I think we should rather meet at the school as book club members because some of us are unable to meet and discuss books because of family commitments. For example, yesterday I went to one of my friends to discuss a book but when I arrived at his home his father told me to leave because they were busy milking the cows.

These discussions also revealed that some parents were not doing this deliberately but simply lacked information about the advantages of this intervention. This gave me time to reflect on the role I had played in this problem. For example, when I asked the learners to invite their parents to a meeting to explain to them the importance of this reading programme, they felt there was no need because their parents were not being deliberately obstructive. For example, Learner 7 said:

I do not think our parents have a problem with us meeting as book club members but the only problem is that when we are home they want us to work instead of reading. For example, my father gave permission for me to take part in this research but when I am home he wants me to perform my duties as the only daughter of the house.

As this problem was beyond our control, we solved it by allowing those learners who could not meet in the afternoon to meet at school before going home.

The research revealed how culture and belief play a role in society. For example, some parents needed the children to perform their domestic duties irrespective of their school tasks.

5.3.3 Some books were not at the learners' level

One of the challenges that we experienced was that some books were beyond the learners' comprehension level. Although the research goal was to promote extensive reading, the research revealed that although some learners thought the intervention was a good idea, they experienced difficulty in reading the books. For example, Learner 9 said:

I have looked at all the books in the classroom library and I think most of these books are difficult for me. Yes, I know there are books that we get from the municipality which are at least at my level but they are not enough.

This research has also revealed that some learners were not in favour of reading long novels and were happy when the municipality donated some books to the school which were at their level. For example, Learner 5 said:

I am happy now because the books that have been added include cartoon books and the fable story books which are my favourite books. Although the books are not many but at least this is something.

Learner 6 said:

I am able to sit in the classroom library and do word puzzle instead of reading novels which are very long. The municipality should continue to donate because our school is a poor school.

In conclusion, this research revealed that for the intervention to be truly successful, the quality of the reading material in the library needed to be improved and more relevant.

5.3.4 No teamwork during book reviews and summaries

Some learners complained about the absence of teamwork during book reviews as book club members. This research revealed that some learners did not contribute during book reviews. For example, Learner 21 wrote in her journal:

When we meet to discuss books as book club members, I am the only one who is talking and the others listen to me. I do not think they are reading the books because they do not talk.

This research revealed that this problem was caused by the inability of learners to get the opportunity to read at home because of their home responsibilities and that the books were not at their level.

In conclusion, the research revealed that the absence of teamwork among the participants was a difficulty.

5.3.5 Some learners were not exposed to reading books at primary level

All the participants were Grade 8 learners but it was clear that many were not exposed to reading at primary level. This challenge was the main source of the problem because some learners were not used to reading books and therefore reluctant to read books. For example, 8 learners preferred to read magazines instead of books. For example, Learner 24 said:

I prefer magazines because I get information about fashion and celebrities. I easily get bored if I read something serious like a book because I am not used to reading. It will take time for me to get used to the idea of reading every day.

Learner 4 said:

My problem is that I cannot read with understanding and I am most of the time not able to know what is going on in the book. I think I need to read more books.

The lack of exposure to reading materials in primary school is a serious issue.

5.3.6. Reluctance of some learners to give feedback about evidence of reading

Some of the learners were reluctant to report to the class about the books they had read. The original plan was to allow all the learners to borrow books from the classroom library and they were required to contribute book reviews and summaries to the class. This research revealed that some learners were in favour of reading for fun but they did not want the responsibility of reporting books to the whole class. For example, Learner 6 said:

When I borrow a book from the classroom library I want to read for fun and for information but I do not want to have the responsibility of reporting to the whole class what I was reading.

Skehan (2001) asserts that we need to use language through speaking and writing “to force syntactic processes, test linguistic hypotheses and develop automaticity.” In this case learners were reluctant to use language through speaking and this created problems because this activity was meant to “kill two birds with one stone.” This activity was meant to encourage

learners to read their books and report on their progress but on the other hand, develop their speaking skill and to automatize it.

In conclusion, this research revealed that the inability of some learners to give evidence of their reading posed some problems because it became difficult to see their progress in reading.

5.3.7 Classroom library was not well-resourced

Although the books that were originally in the school library were added to the classroom library, they were insufficient to make the classroom a well-resourced library.

Another challenge was that we did not use a Dewey Decimal System when putting books on the shelves but categorised them according to genre, this denied learners the important information about Dewey System that would have made it easier for them to use libraries independently (Paton-Ash, 2012). The absence of a photocopier was also a drawback because some learners wanted to make copies of their books but were unable to do so after the normal school hours.

In conclusion, the research revealed that the classroom needed to be better resourced to prove really useful.

5.4 WHAT I THINK SHOULD BE DONE WHEN PLANNING FOR THE SECOND SPIRAL OF THIS INTERVENTION.

The cyclical and iterative nature of action research requires researchers to reflect on their actions and plan for the spirals of action to follow. This section attempts to solve some of the problems I encountered in the first cycles of the intervention. Action research suggests a number of cycles, in which each phase builds on and tests the success of earlier changes. I therefore offer the following six suggestions:

5.4.1 Incorporate extensive reading in my English periods and in the afternoon classes

Since CAPS requires teachers to plan and implement an effective reading programme for Senior Phase learners, it is therefore my intention to include extensive reading as part of my teaching lessons in order to meet the requirements of the curriculum (CAPS, 2011). When planning for the year, a work schedule for the year will include lessons on extensive reading. Reading, as research suggests (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003) is considered as a large contributor to vocabulary development which is important for these learners as they would be

doing Grade 9 the following year when I implement the second spiral of this intervention. My reading periods in the next school year will include teaching intensive reading and sometimes allow learners to choose a variety of books to choose from the classroom library with the aim of reading for comprehension.

So, according to my plans, the extensive reading programme will continue next year during the afternoons and the reflections from this year's intervention will be taken into account when implementing the second spiral.

5.4.2 To invite all relevant stakeholders affected to a meeting before embarking on intervention

One of the challenges that we experienced at the time of the intervention was the apparent lack of information the learners' parents had about the advantages of the reading programme. Before embarking on a second spiral of this intervention, I plan to invite all the learners' parents to a meeting and explain the reading programme in detail and how their children would benefit by taking part in it. I will also write letters seeking permission to continue with the reading programme in the afternoons.

In conclusion, I also plan to involve other relevant stakeholders like the Circuit Manager at District Office, the School Governing Body and the teaching staff at our school and inform them about my decision to continue with the second spiral of my intervention and how this would benefit learners in the long run.

5.4.3 To ask donations for more books at learners' level

Some learners were concerned about the level of the books in the classroom library and were reluctant to do book reviews and summaries because they found it difficult to read the books. Some preferred to read magazines and newspapers instead. An option might be to alternate between a book review and a magazine article review.

The letters to all the possible donors will be typed and sent to request for donations. I will also work with the School Governing Body to seek financial assistance from the local business people to donate funds for new books for the classroom library. I also plan to send an e-mail to the School Governing Body and staff of our partner school in the United Kingdom, to help donate books to our school for the second spiral of this intervention.

Such efforts will help to add more books to the classroom library and this, I hope, will minimise the problems that were experienced in the first cycle of the intervention.

5.4.4 To model reading behaviour to the learners

During this intervention, learners were reading independently on their own after school hours. However, research had revealed that some learners were not working as teams during book reviews and some did not read the books they were required to read. It was clear that they needed some sort of motivation and therefore I plan to read with them during the afternoons.

In conclusion, I hope to implement this in the second spiral of this intervention and I think this will encourage them to be active participants in the intervention.

5.4.5 Expose learners to all kinds of genres

The National Curriculum expects learners to explore how language is used so that they can evaluate their own, and other, texts critically in terms of meaning (CAPS, 2011). Therefore, exposure to different types of texts is vital in providing them with a basis of knowledge from which to construct their own interpretations and meanings from the texts.

This is particularly important for these learners as they would be doing Grade 9 the following year. Grade 9 is a crucial year in learners' development, as it marks the transition to a much more advanced syllabus in Grade 10. I believe that with enough exposure to various genres, learners will naturally acquire the skills to write different styles. I plan in future to use a text-based approach during my English lessons to expose learners to a variety of genres. By reading large volumes of books, learners will discover the genre elements. This will lay a foundation for critical language awareness. In Grade 10, Critical Language Awareness is included as one of the skills that learners should master so that they are better able to read texts critically and arrive at their own conclusions (Janks, 1993).

5.4.6 To have more oral tasks to develop speaking skills

One of the challenges we experienced during the intervention was that many learners were reluctant or too shy to speak in front of other learners. This research has revealed that the speaking skill of some Grade 8 learners has not yet been developed.

CAPS require teachers to have oral tasks in class in order to develop speaking skills of the learners. For example, Senior Phase (Grade 8 and 9) language teachers are required to have

oral activities in class because this will help develop the speaking skills which will later help the learners in their adult life. Learners with this skill would be in a better position to solve community problems in later life and they would be able to persuade other people with sound arguments.

In conclusion, I plan to have more oral tasks when I implement the second spiral of this intervention. Speaking skills will help them debate issues that are important to them.

5.5 CRITICAL REFLECTION OF WHAT I HAVE LEARNT FROM THIS RESEARCH AS A READING TEACHER

This research enabled me to reflect critically on my own practice, and to make the following comments on it:

5.5.1 The importance of Dewey Decimal System

This research has taught me that Dewey Decimal System is important as a retrieval tool to empower my learners in the library to find information on their own (Paton-Ash, 2012). At the time of conducting this research study, my classification of books and other reading materials was limited to separating fiction from non-fiction, encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines and newspapers. I was not aware about this system and this made it difficult to teach learners about it. I also did not see any need because we used a classroom library and not a school library.

However, when I implement my second spiral of this intervention, I plan to learn more about this system and be able to teach my learners the Dewey numbers to help them find their way in larger libraries in future. In doing this I will also be fulfilling a requirement of the CAPS that teachers should help learners to “access libraries and know book storage conventions” (p. 27).

5.5.2 Putting theory into practice

Many writers agree that, “action research is all about developing the act of knowing through observation, listening, analysing, questioning and being involved in constructing one’s knowledge” (Koshy, 2005, p. 14; see also Denscombe, 2007; McIntyre, 2000; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; McNiff, 1996; Maxwell, 2008). These writers also agree that to be involved means to plan and implement an action and to reflect on that particular action. In my case, from the initial stages of this research I was able to put this theory into practice as reported in

Chapters 3 and 4. This action research has taught me to put the theories of second language acquisition into action by promoting extensive reading for my learners.

In conclusion, this intervention has taught me to always put theory into practice. These theories have helped me gain a greater understanding of what they mean in a rural South African school today.

5.5.3 The role of this research study in fulfilling curriculum requirements

Taking part in this research has also taught me that I was fulfilling the curriculum needs. The CAPS Policy documents emphasize the need for teachers to plan and implement an effective reading programme for learners who are in Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) and this should result in learners who are able to display an understanding of the importance of reading for enjoyment (CAPS, 2011).

This intervention has made me realise that I was not just conducting research with the aim of making a change but also fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum.

I plan to implement this in the second spiral of this intervention when the participants (Grade 8 learners) are in Grade 9.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

After the intervention I reflected on the following limitations of this research:

Firstly, the absence of a non-participant observer or a critical friend made it impossible for me to hear a critical voice. I was both an observer and a participants and this made it difficult to observe everything during the research process.

Secondly, the Grade 8 learners were the only participants in the research study and therefore I was unable to collect data from their parents or other teachers to establish the veracity of some of the information I got from them. I was therefore unable to collect data from other reliable sources.

Thirdly, the limited scale of the study made it impossible to always read with them to model reading to them because the limited time available was spent on observing their reading behaviour and recording my observations. It is however my intention to model reading in the next cycle or spiral of this intervention. It would have been far more pleasurable to read with them.

Lastly, the duration of the research (MEd ELT thesis) was limited to a single term and it only allowed me to implement the first spiral of the intervention. I was therefore unable to implement the second spiral of this intervention. Due to limited time scale, it was not easy to reflect on some of the challenges that we encountered in this research study. For example, since action research is aimed at improving one's practice, the focus was on improving the practice and I am aware that the research did tend to a shift away from pleasurable reading towards compulsory reading. The classroom library could have been a reading hub with different possibilities for learners to enact reading. The contributing role of the teacher would have been more explicit were it not for the need for me – in my dual role of both reading teacher and researcher - to spend a lot of my time observing my learners rather than participating in the reading process. The difficulty the learners experienced in engaging with book talk tasks could have been better dealt with and I realise I should have spent more time modelling this and other aspects of reading for pleasure.

5.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXISTING RESEARCH

Firstly, this research study is significant because it has helped me to better understand how to help my learners to read extensively, using their classroom library as a reading resource. The literature reviewed strongly indicates that learners who are given books to read for fun tend to have an improved vocabulary as compared to those who do not read often, and they also become proficient readers (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; Waring & Nation, 2004). This led to my decision to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library to increase learners' access to a variety of reading material (Fractor et al, 1993; Morrow & Winstein, 1986; Erikson & Markuson, 2007; Bolan, 2009; Serafini, 2011).

Secondly, this research study is significant because I have explored an area seems underexplored in the sorts of context in which I work. Koshy (2005), for example, argues that, "research is about generating new knowledge" (p. 20), and by conducting this action research in my own school, with my own learners, I made have attempted to create new knowledge which may be interesting to others in similar circumstances. Although many writers have explored the area of extensive reading and the effect of classroom libraries in its development, I am not aware of these studies focused on a South African rural context (my own school and my own Grade 8 learners).

Thirdly, this study is significant because it is the first “spiral of action” (McNiff, 1996, pp. 21-23) which I intend will serve as a foundation for further action to come. Even after this half-thesis is completed, the other “spirals of action” will follow, contributing to both my improvement as a reading teacher and my learners’ ongoing development as readers. McNiff (1996) notes that action research is a process of spirals of action, and, as Koshy (2005) observes, “good action research emerges over time in an evolutionary and development process” (p.26). Similarly, Denscombe (2007) describes action research as entailing, “a continuous cycle of development and change via on-site research in the workplace, which has benefits for the organisation to the extent that it is geared to improving practice and resolving problems” (p. 131).

Fourthly, this study is significant because I was able to bring a story to life (Koshy, 2005). This study was qualitative and interpretive in nature. I was working with learners during my research and this helped me understand them better. I was able to move from interpretivism to action (O’Brien, 2001; Zuber-Skerrit, 2001). The nature of action research required that I be a participant and I was not, “distant and detached from the situation” (Koshy, 2005, p. 26). Not only did this help me gain first-hand insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the research project, but it gave me an opportunity to arrive at a deeper understanding of the situation. As Koshy (2005) points out, one of the advantages of action research is that, “there are opportunities for theory to emerge (p.21), although Denscombe (2007) does caution that, “new truths and new theories will unlikely to find foundation in such studies alone” (p. 130).

Finally, although extensive reading programmes are in the CAPS document, as yet little seems to be known about how this might play out in South African contexts as a teaching strategy. This half-thesis makes a contribution to that body of knowledge. Change is regarded as an integral part of action research (Denscombe, 2007), and not only will this research contribute to the change in my own context, but also potentially to the current understandings of extensive reading programmes in South Africa. The international reports on literacy as reported earlier in Chapter 2 show that there is a crisis in our schools (SACMEQ II, Moloi & Strauss, 2005; PIRLS, Mullis, Martin, & Kennedy, 2007). This report of my own small-scale intervention may enable other educators and planners to use similar strategies in their efforts to promote reading.

5.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Looking at the findings from this small-scale action research project, I suggest that the following questions be researched further:

- How do teachers plan and implement an effective reading programme in the GET and FET Phase?
- How do teachers deal with learners who need special attention during reading programmes at school?
- How do teachers at high schools close the reading gap of learners who come from primary levels?
- What in-service training can be given to teachers to help them plan and implement an effective reading programme?
- How do teachers work with librarians to make their classroom libraries effective for the benefit of the learners?

5.9 CONCLUSION

This final chapter has discussed key themes that emerged from the analysis in Chapter 4 exploring how a classroom library may be used to promote extensive reading in a Grade 8 class. I discussed the strengths of this intervention, its challenges, what I think should be done when planning for the second spiral of this intervention, and critical reflected on what I have learnt from this research as a reading teacher. I have also identified some limitations of this research and made some suggestions for future research. In the opening chapter, I explained that because this study was an action research case study with limited time available to implement it, only the first spiral of the process has been reported on here. It is not, however, the end of the process: I intend to proceed with the intervention beyond the completion of this masters' research undertaking.

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APPENDIX 1

Permission letters and responses

Appendix 1 (a) Request letter to the SGB to conduct research

Appendix 1 (b) Request letter to the EDO to conduct research

Appendix 1 (c) Request letter to the Principal to conduct research

Appendix 1 (d) Request letter to the Principal to conduct interviews, class discussions and give learners research questionnaire

Appendix 1 (e) Request letter to the parents to allow children to take part in research

Appendix 1 (f) Request letter to the parents to take still photographs of learners

Appendix 1 (g) Response from the School Governing Body

Appendix 1 (h) Response from the EDO

Appendix 1 (i) Response from the Principal

APPENDIX 1 (a)

01 July 2013

The Chairperson: School Governing Body (SGB)

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH CASE STUDY

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

This research case study is for my Master of Education in English Language Teaching (Med ELT) with Rhodes University. The research intends to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library as a valuable reading resource in a Grade 8 class. Extensive reading is one of the most important aspects in language teaching and is also included in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which was implemented two years ago. This research will help me motivate my learners to read extensively for fun, using a classroom library as a valuable reading resource. It will also help me to reflect on my practice as a reading teacher and to improve my learners' literacy skills.

This research will be conducted after school hours (from 14h30- 16h00) from Monday to Friday on daily basis in the third term. The requirements to promote extensive reading as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2012) will also be taken into account.

The names of 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

Bushula B.S. (Mr)

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (b)

01 July 2013

The Circuit Manager

Education Department: Fort Beaufort District

Fort Beaufort

Dear Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH CASE STUDY

I request permission to conduct an action research case study in my school

This research case study is for my Master of Education English Language Teaching (Med ELT) with Rhodes University. This research intends to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library in a Grade 8 class. Extensive reading is one of the most important aspects in language teaching and is also included in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was implemented two years ago.

This research will help me motivate my learners to read extensively for fun, using a classroom library as a valuable reading resource and to reflect on my practice as a reading teacher. It will also help improve my learners' literacy skills. The research will be conducted after school hours (from 14H30- 16H00) from Monday to Friday on daily basis in the third term. The requirements to promote extensive reading as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2012) will also be taken into account.

The names of 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

Bushula B.S. (Mr)

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (c)

01 July 2013

The Principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH CASE STUDY

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

This research case study is for my Master of Education in English Language Teaching (Med ELT) with Rhodes University. The research intends to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library as a valuable reading resource in a Grade 9 class. Extensive reading is one of the most important aspects in language teaching and is also included in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was implemented two years ago.

This research will help me motivate my learners to read extensively for fun, using a classroom library as a valuable reading resource. It will also help me to reflect on my teaching practice as a reading teacher and to improve my learners' literacy skills.

The research will be conducted after school hours (from 14h30- 16h00) from Monday to Friday on daily basis in the third term. The requirements to promote extensive reading as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2012) documents will also be taken into account.

The names of 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

Bushula B.S. (Mr.)

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (d)

01 July 2013

The principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO HOLD INTERVIEWS, CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND FILLING OF QUESTIONNAIRE TO COLLECT DATA

I request permission to conduct interviews, class discussions and filling of questionnaire with the focus group of students in your school. The learners will be participants in my research case study with Rhodes University in the form of an extensive reading project that is aimed at promoting extensive reading, using a classroom library in a Grade 8 class. The letter requesting a research to be conducted has also been written.

These data collection methods will help me validate the data that has been collected. Since this research will be conducted in the afternoon (from 14h30- 16h00), it will not interfere with the tuition and the smooth running of the school. Interviews and class discussions will be recorded with both a video camera and a tape recorder and these will be transcribed and written into a written text at a later stage. The responses of learners in the form of filled questionnaire will be recorded in the research portfolio.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. The names of 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 consideration.

Yours faithfully

Bushula B.S. (Mr)

APPENDIX 1 (e)

01 July 2013

Dear Parent(s)

REQUEST TO USE YOUR CHILD AS A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH

I, Bushula, B.S. (Mr) a teacher at the above- mentioned school, request you to permit me to use your child as a participant in my research. This research case study intends to promote extensive reading, using a classroom library in a Grade 8 class. This research will help motivate learners to read extensively for fun and also help them improve their literacy skills.

The research will be conducted after school hours (from 14h30- 16h00) from Monday to Fridays on daily basis in the third term. The names of school and the learners will not be revealed in the final document that will be published.

I would like to let you know that this research is on an entirely voluntary basis. If you agree kindly fill in the space provided below.

NAME OF PARENT	AGREE/ DISAGREE	DATE	SIGNATURE

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully

Bushula B.S. (Mr)

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (f)

01 July 2013

Dear Parent(s)

REQUEST TO TAKE STILL PHOTOGRAPH OF LEARNERS

I, Bushula, B.S. (Mr) a teacher at the above- mentioned school, request you to permit me to use photographs with images of your children decorating a classroom library for the purposes of this research. This research case study will publish a comprehensive, detailed report on 15 December 2014 and these photographs will be included in the final document that will be published in the said date.

This research is for my studies with Rhodes University and it was done in a Grade 8 class (where your child is a learner). With these pictures, I want to show that learners were actively involved in the setting up of the classroom library to promote a print-rich environment.

Please indicate below if you agree or not that this picture be published in the final document:

NAME OF PARENT	AGREE/ DISGREE	DATE	SIGNATURE

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

Bushula B.S. (Mr)

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (g)

03 July 2013

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: YOURSELF

I am pleased to inform you that the School Governing Body (SGB) of the above-mentioned school has accepted your request to conduct a research at our school. Since the research will be conducted in the afternoon from Monday to Friday, we do not have any objections because this will not interfere with the normal tuition of the school.

May God bless you in your endeavours.

Yours faithfully

School Governing Body (SGB) Chairperson

.....

Signature

APPENDIX 1 (h)



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT & GOVERNANCE (IDS & G) – SCHOOL MANAGEMENT & **INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (IQMS)** * CAPE COLLEGE BUILDING * Healdtown Road * Fort Beaufort * Private Bag X2041* **FORT BEAUFORT** * 5720 * REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA * Tel: +27 46 645 7842 * Fax: +27 46 6457855 *Cell: 082 0667 202 * Website: ecprov.gov.za * Date: 10 July 2013

TO	PRINCIPAL
CC	SGB
FROM	EDO
SUBJECT	PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
DATE	10 July 2013

INTERNAL MEMO

1. The purpose of this memo is to grant approval for an Action Research to be conducted at the mentioned school.
2. The candidate in fulfilment of his Masters Degree is Mr Bushula, an educator placed at the school.
3. Your support of his academic realisation and enhancing educational performance in education at large, will be highly valued.
4. Best wishes accompany all involved in this refreshing experience.

.....

EDO – CIRCUIT 8

APPENDIX 1 (i)

04 July 2013

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH: YOURSELF

I hereby wish to acknowledge receipt of your letters dated 01 July 2013. It is a pleasure for me to inform you that the School Management Team (SMT) and the staff have no objection in your request to carry out research. Since this research will be conducted after normal tuition hours (from 14h30- 16h00), it will therefore not interfere with the smooth running of the school.

Wishing you success in your research

Yours faithfully

..... (Principal)

.....

Signature

APPENDIX 2

Interviews with learners with the aim to collect data

Appendix 2(a) Interview with Learner 29 (L29)

Appendix 2 (b) Interview with Learner 30 (L30)

Appendix 2 (c) Interview with Learner 33 (L33)

Appendix 2 (d) Interview with Learner 1 (L1)

Appendix 2 (e) Interview with Learner 4 (L4)

Appendix 2 (f) Interview with Learner 7 (L7)

Focus group interviews

Appendix 2 (g) Interview with Learner 30 (L30)

Appendix 2 (h) Interview with Learner 31 (L 31)

Appendix 2 (i) Interview with Learner 11 (L11)

Appendix 2 (j) Interview with Learner 18 (L18)

Appendix 2 (k) Interview with Learner 3 (L3)

Appendix 2 (l) Interview with Learner 4 (L4)

APPENDIX 2 (a)

Interview with Learner 29 (L29) before the intervention

Researcher : Good afternoon, my boy.

L 29 : Good afternoon, sir.

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 29 : I read almost every day because my father buys me magazines and newspapers. Sometimes I take them after he has finished reading them.

Researcher : Do you have books at your home?

L 29 : My parents have a mini-library at my home because they buy books from the bookshop and we spend afternoons on Saturdays reading these books.

Interview with Learner 29 (L29) after the intervention

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 29 : The intervention was necessary for us as Grade 8 learners because we need to read books in order to improve our English.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 29 : Yes, sir. The books in the classroom library helped me to read more because some of the books that are in the classroom library are not present at my home.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 29 : I like novels and short stories. Fortunately, they were present in the classroom library.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 29 : I like them because I want to know about other people's experiences. For example, novels and short stories are about people and their lives. I learn from those experiences.

Researcher : What do you think are the challenges of this intervention?

L 29 : I think the main challenge is that we need to have more books because the books that we have are not enough.

Researcher : How do you think this challenge could be addressed?

L 29 : I think letters should be written to all the relevant stakeholders to ask for money to buy more books.

Researcher : Which books do you think should be added to the classroom library?

L 29 : I think we need more novels and short stories because these types of books keep me happy.

APPENDIX 2 (b)

Interview with Learner 30 (L30) before the intervention

Researcher : Good afternoon, my girl.

L 30 : Good afternoon, sir.

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 30 : I read every day because I live in an environment that supports reading.

Researcher : What do you mean by that?

L 30 : I say this because my parents like to read books and he expects us to do the same. My mother also likes to read.

Researcher : Do you have books at home?

L 30 : Yes. My father has a study room where he keeps a lot of books. I do not know where he gets these books but they are there.

Interview with Learner 30 (L30) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 30 : For me, it was a good idea because it was a continuation of what is happening at my home. We always read at my home even on weekends. This intervention has helped me borrow the books that we do not have at home.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 30 : To me, so far so good. I think you should ask the municipality to donate more books to the school.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 30 : Yes, sir. There are books that are in the classroom library that are interesting to read.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 30 : I like fiction novels.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 30 : I like them because I get information about main characters and other

characters. I also learn things about life.

Researcher : Which books do you think should be added to the classroom library?

L 30 : More novels, especially those about love and family relationships.

APPENDIX 2 (c)

Interview with Learner 33 (L33) before the intervention

Researcher	: Good afternoon, my boy.
L 33	: Good afternoon, sir.
Researcher	: How often do you read at home?
L 33	: I read everything at my home because I am used to reading books.
Researcher	: What makes you to be used to reading books. Can you share that with me?
L 33	: The reason why I say I am used to reading books is because my parents always preach to us that if we want to succeed we must get used to reading books. They buy books and often borrow from library in town.
Researcher	: So, you have books at your home?
L 33	: Yes. There are a lot of books and my father gets them at a discount at a bookshop in town. I think he has an account there. He keeps the books in the sitting room where everybody can take them whenever they feel like reading.

Interview with Learner 33 (L33) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 33 : I think the idea of a reading programme was excellent because many learners in our class are not as privileged as I am because my father buys books for us. For me, it is just to continue with my daily activity.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 33 : I think you should add more books to the classroom library because I have seen that many of our classmates are now interested in reading.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 33 : Yes, sir. As a reading person, it has encouraged me to read more because I am able to borrow books that I have never seen.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 33 : I like detective stories because they are very interesting.

Researcher : How are they interesting?

L 33 : One thing I like about these stories is that one never knows what will happen and the ending is always unpredictable.

Researcher : Which books do you think should be added to the classroom library?

L 33 : Detective novels and short stories for me because I like them very much.

APPENDIX 2 (d)

Interview with Learner 1 (L1) before the intervention

Researcher : Good morning, my girl

L 1 : Good morning, sir.

Researcher : Do you mind telling me about yourself, your parents and your home?

L 1 : Not at all, sir. My mother died while I was doing Grade 3 and we stay with my father. I have four sisters and a brother.

Researcher : Is your father working?

L 1 : He's not working. My father lost his job four years ago in Johannesburg. He was working as a miner. The mine was closed and They were told to go home.

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 1 : I hardly read at home.

Researcher : Why?

L 1 : There are no books at my home besides the school textbooks I bring from school. I read the textbooks only when I have to write a task.

Researcher : What about your siblings? Do they read at home?

L 1 : I hardly see them read because there are no books at my home. They only read textbooks.

Interview with Learner 1 (L1) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 1 : The intervention was good for me but I was struggling to read most of the books.

Researcher : Why?

L 1 : Most of the books were above my level. I am not used to reading and I am struggling as a result.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 1 : Please organise books that are easier to read for us. Although there are some here in the classroom library but they are not enough.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 1 : Yes, sir. In my case, we do not have books at home. So, I get a

chance to interact to interact with books when I am here at school in
in the classroom library.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 1 : I like African stories of Chinua Achebe but my problem is the level
of language which is far beyond my level. For example, I borrowed
a book by Chinua Achebe- No longer at ease but I struggle to read
that book and I was helped by the book club members to understand
its contents.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 1 : When I was in primary school, our teacher used to tell us stories
of Chinua Achebe books in Xhosa and I became interested in
in these books.

APPENDIX 2 (e)

Interview with Learner 4 (L4) before the intervention

Researcher	: Good afternoon, my boy.
L 4	: Good afternoon, sir.
Researcher	: How often do you read at home?
L 4	: I only read textbooks when there is a test but if there is no test, I hardly read.
Researcher	: Why?
L 4	: My parents and relatives do not buy newspapers and magazines. In fact, they always encourage us to do house chores instead of reading.
Researcher	: Do you have books at home?
L 4	: At my home it is not possible to have books. My parents do not even buy newspapers and magazines. The only books that we have are our school textbooks.
Researcher	: Why do they encourage you to do house chores instead of reading?

L 4 : I don't know but we grew up this way. In the afternoons when we are home, we are always given work to do even if we are doing our homework.

Interview with Learner 4 (L4) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 4 : The intervention was good but I struggled to read most of the books because I could not understand what was going on in the books. I ended up reading a magazine because there are beautiful pictures of singers and actors. Initially, I borrowed a book called Pass the Jam Jim but it was not interesting to me.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 4 : I'll be glad if we can get cartoon books with simple English because they are easy to read. I've seen some but they are few.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 4 : Yes, sir. Although I am not used to reading books but I have managed to read a magazine which is something I'm not used to even at my home.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 4 : Cartoon books, magazines and sport newspapers like Laduma.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of reading materials?

L 4 : For me, they are easy to read than novels and short stories. That is why I borrowed a magazine instead of a book when you gave us chance to borrow books.

APPENDIX 2 (f)

Interview with Learner 7 (L7) before the intervention

Researcher	: Good afternoon, my girl.
L 7	: Good afternoon, sir.
Researcher	: How often do you read at home?
L 7	: I do not read at all.
Researcher	: Why?
L 7	: My parents have a belief that we should only read books at school during school hours. They say it is not our culture to sit in front of the books for long hours.
Researcher	: Do you believe that?
L 7	: I don't believe that because one of my cousins is at the Technikon and he spends most of his time reading. I think : they just want us to do house chores instead of reading.
Researcher	: Do you have books at home?
L 7	: There are few books. These are old school textbooks that

	were used by my cousin but we have no short stories and novels.
Researcher	: Do you read these old textbooks left by your cousin?
L 7	: I don't read them because they are Grade 11 and 12 textbooks.

Interview with Learner 7 (L7) after the intervention took place

Researcher	: What do you think about this intervention?
L 7	: The intervention was good for me because I got a chance to read many books.
Researcher	: How many books did you read?
L 7	: I managed to read at least five books but I was helped by my reading group to read with understanding.
Researcher	: What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?
L 7	: I think there should be more books that are at our level. I also think you should monitor the reading clubs because some of our classmates do not meet more often

to discuss books.

Researcher

: Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 7

: Yes. At my home there are only few books that used to belong to my cousin but here there are many books to choose from.

Researcher

: Which books do you like?

L 7

: I like short story books with lots of pictures and magazines.

Researcher

: Why do you like these kinds of reading materials?

L 7

: When I read these books I become interested and I learn English in this process.

APPENDIX 2 (g)

Interview with Learner 11 (L11) before intervention

Researcher	: Good afternoon, my boy
L 11	: Good afternoon, sir.
Researcher	: How often do you read at home?
L 11	: I read whenever I get a chance but it is not every day.
Researcher	: Why do you read when you only have a chance?
L 11	: School work takes most of my time so I only read textbooks. When I have a chance to read I read short stories.
Researcher	: Do you have books at home?
L 11	: Yes, but they are not much. My father brought them from his employer in town.
Researcher	: Does your family support reading?
L 11	: My father is a committed Christian because he spends

	most of his afternoons after work in church but he encourages us to read the books he brings from work.
Researcher	: What type of books do you have at your home?
L 11	: There are few novels and short stories. There are also old textbooks that were used by my older brothers.
Researcher	: Do they support you in your reading?
L 11	: Unfortunately, both of them are working in Port Elizabeth but my parents support my reading.

Interview with Learner 11 (L11) after the intervention took place

Researcher	: What do you think about this intervention?
L 11	: I think this reading programme should be something that will continue and not just this year. It has helped me read a variety of books that we do not have at home.
Researcher	: What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve this situation
L 11	: I think you should continue to give us books so that

we can get used to them.

Researcher

: Which books do you like?

L 11

: I like books about animals, birds and nature. For example, the first book I chose when you gave us a chance to borrow books from the classroom library was titled “ The Snow Goose” because it was about a bird and I was interested in it.

Researcher

: Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 11

: I love nature. I don't know why but I love it.

Maybe it is because we have all kinds of animals at home. We have dogs, chickens, ducks and geese. I have an attachment to them.

Researcher

: What other books do you like?

L 11

: I like short stories with a happy-ending because I don't like it when people suffer.

APPENDIX 2 (h)

Interview with Learner 18 (L18) before the intervention

Researcher : Good afternoon, my boy?

L 18 : Good afternoon, sir.

Researcher : How often do you read at home?

L 18 : Most of the time I read textbooks because of the schoolwork. I read novels only when I am relaxing.

Researcher : Why do you read only when you are relaxing?

L 18 : It is because I do not have enough time to read novels and short stories. Schoolwork takes most of my time. In Grade 8 we have nine subjects and they all need my attention.

Researcher : Do you have books at home?

L 18 : Yes, but they are few. We have many newspapers because my father also uses them in his business.

Researcher : Do you read these newspapers and books?

L 18 : I only read them when I get a chance.

Researcher : Do your parents and family support reading?

L 18 : Yes. My parents encourage me to read the books and newspapers but they are not reading with me because they are busy.

Interview with Learner 18 (L18) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 18 : This intervention has helped me interact with a variety of books. Although we have books at my home but there are many interesting books here.

Researcher : What do you think I should do as a teacher to improve the situation?

L 18 : I think you have done more than enough. The only thing we need is to get more books. We do not want to go to the municipal library because it is far.

Researcher : Did the classroom library support your reading?

L 18 : Yes, sir. For example, in my case, we have few books at home but the reading programme has given me a chance to interact

with many books.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 18 : I like novels with interesting pictures on the cover because they give me an idea about the contents of the book. For example, the first book I borrowed was titled “ Old Mali and the Boy.” I saw this picture of an old man and the boy and I was interested.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 18 : I learn many things about life in these books.

APPENDIX 2 (i)

Interview with Learner 3 (L3) before the intervention

Researcher : Good afternoon, my boy.

L 3 : Good afternoon, sir.

Researcher : Tell me, how often do you read at home?

L 3 : I do not read at all?

Researcher : Why?

L 3 : We do not have books at my home except the school textbooks.

Researcher : So, you only read school textbooks?

L 3 : To be honest, sir. I also find it hard to read school textbooks because I do not understand the contents in the books.

Researcher : I want to you to be clear. What is it that you don't understand? Is it the contents of the book or the language itself?

L 3 : It is difficult for me to understand English and this makes it difficult for me to understand the contents.

Researcher : What do you think has caused this problem?

L 3 : I attended primary school in a farm. We did not read books more often and this made it difficult for me to know English language.

Interview with Learner 3 (L3) after the intervention took place

Researcher : What do you think about this intervention?

L 3 : I have a problem of constructing sentences and I have a spelling problem. I think reading more books will help me overcome these problems.

Researcher : What do you think I should do to improve the situation?

L 3 : I think the reading programme should continue because I
Because I have a feeling that my problems will be solved.

Researcher : Why do you think so?

L 3 : I think if I read every day I will know how many words are spelt. I will also know how to construct sentences by

reading sentences in the books. But we need more books with simple English.

Researcher : Which books do you like?

L 3 : I love romantic books. For example, the first book I borrowed was titled, "Heart of Love" by Hope Dube but it was too difficult for me. I was helped by my reading club members to understand it.

Researcher : Why do you like these kinds of books?

L 3 : I don't know why I love them but I do.

APPENDIX 3- OBSERVATION SHEETS

Three samples of observation sheets

Appendix 3 (a) A sample of an observation sheet before the intervention

Appendix 3 (b) A sample of an observation sheet during the intervention

Appendix 3 (c) A sample of an observation sheet after the intervention

APPENDIX 3 (a)

A sample of an observation sheet before the intervention

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	OBSERVATION NOTES
04/ 07/ 2013	Interviewing learners about their ages, years in Senior Phase, parental employment and their source of income.	In my observations, I noticed that many learners were below seventeen years of age. Most of their parents were unemployed and the source of income at home was the government social grant. Few learners came from rich families. The parents of the learners who came from affluent families were either employed or running their own businesses.
10/ 07/ 2013	Interviewing learners about their reading tendencies and behaviours and their home backgrounds.	In my observations, I noticed that many learners who came from disadvantaged families were the ones who did not read extensively. I also observed that these learners did not read extensively because there were few or no books at home and there was also no parental support to support their reading. Similarly, I have also observed that the learners who read extensively had books at home and were receiving support from the parents.
14/ 07/ 2013	Giving learners research questionnaire to answer with the aim of collecting data	In my observations, I noticed that many learners in their

	for analysis.	responses came from disadvantaged families and only a few came from affluent families. Those who came from disadvantaged families did not have enough books at home and family members to support their reading. Many learners, as I have observed, thought that the idea of a classroom library was a good one because the majority of them said it was going to help them interact with many books.
22/07/2013	Class discussion on the value of extensive reading	In my observation, I noticed that many learners were in favour of an extensive reading programme and they were keen to discuss the strategies to make it effective.

APPENDIX 3 (b)

A sample of an observation sheet during the intervention

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	OBSERVATION NOTES
24/07/2013	Decorating the classroom library and putting the books in shelves	In my observation, I noticed that most learners seemed happy to be involved in the setting up and decoration of a classroom library. They also seemed happy to hang their own work on the walls of a classroom library. They were also keen to interact with many books since many of them had few or no books at their homes.
26/07/2013	Designing an accession register and lending books to learners	In my observation, I noticed that 25 learners had borrowed books from the classroom library, 8 learners had borrowed magazines and 1 learner had borrowed a newspaper. The accession register makes it easy for me to see the books the learners prefer.
04/08/2013	Book reviews and summaries	In my observation, I noticed that although some learners were not used to reading novels and short stories but they were interested in the stories contained in the books. Some learners were willing to stand in front of the class and share the stories they had read in the books. Some were shy to stand in front of the class. The data collected indicated that some parents did not give their children a chance to meet with other learners and discuss books as reading groups. It also became apparent that some parents

		wanted their children to do home chores instead of reading in the afternoon.
14/08/2013	Formation of book clubs	In my observation, book clubs were a good idea because it was a proposal from the learners because they had a belief that this strategy would help them read independently. I observed that the only challenge was the problem of parents who did not want their children to meet for the purposes of reading. I also observed that although these parents gave permission for their children to take part in the research study, they didn't understand that this was something going on even in the afternoons. I also observed that time was not clear to them although it was stipulated in the letters sent to them before the research study took place.
20/08/2014	Focus group interviews	After interviewing the learners, I noticed that those who did not read extensively had few or no books at home and their families did not support their reading activities. After these interviews, I also noticed that these learners hoped that the intervention would make them interact more with books. Those who read extensively felt that it was a continuation of their reading activities.

APPENDIX 3 (c)

A sample of an observation sheet after the intervention

DATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	OBSERVATION NOTES
05/09/2013	Interviewing learners about their views on intervention	Most of the learners I interviewed responded by saying that the intervention was good for them. In my observation, some learners had a problem with some books which were far beyond their level. Some learners also came up with useful suggestions as to how this challenge could be overcome.
21/09/2014	Learners writing a Progress Report to reflect on their reflective journals about the intervention	After analysing the responses of the learners, I observed that most of the learners thought that the intervention was good because it helped them interact with a variety of reading materials. I also observed that the shortcomings of this intervention, through the learners' responses, were the time frame since the intervention took place mainly in the afternoon, and the level of some books which was far beyond their level. In my observation, I also noticed, through the learners' reflections, that the learners who were previously not reading extensively had hope that the intervention would help them change their behaviour. They hoped that the interaction with books every day would help them read more often. I also noticed that the learners who were reading extensively thought

		<p>that the intervention would help them to read books that they do not have at their homes. I also observed that the learners' reflections gave me a challenge to reflect on my own actions and what I needed to do when planning for the second spiral of this intervention.</p>
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APPENDIX 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME OF LEARNER:.....

NAME OF SCHOOL:.....

DATE:.....

GRADE:.....

QUESTIONS

1. Tell us more about yourself.

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2. What do you understand about the term “ extensive reading or pleasure reading?

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.....

3. Are there enough books for you to read at home?

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.....

4. Does your father/ mother/ uncle/ aunt read in his/her spare time?

.....
.....

5. Does your family support reading activities at your home?

.....
.....

6. What types of books do you read in your spare time?

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.....

7. How often do you go to the municipal library in town?

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.....

8. Do you feel that there is a need for a library at the school? Explain.

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9. Do you think there is a need for learners to read for fun? Why?

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10. Is there something that the school can do to promote pleasure reading? Explain.

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11. What do you understand by the term “classroom library”?

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12. Do you think there is a need for a library in a classroom?

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13. Do you think the school is doing enough to use the available resources to promote reading? Explain?

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14. How do you think a classroom library can help promote pleasure reading?

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15. How do you think reading for pleasure can help learners?

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16. How do you think the presence of a classroom library can help learners?

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.....

17. What types of books do you prefer? Name them.

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.....

18. Do you think learners should form book clubs? Why do you think so?

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.....

19. Do you think there is a need to start a reading programme for Grade 8 learners? Why do you think so?

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.....

20. Briefly write the strategies that can be used to make a reading programme a success for a Grade 8 class.

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.....

21. Do you think there is a need to discuss the idea of a reading programme with Grade 8 learners? Why?

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.....

22. Do you have any suggestions about the use of a classroom library to promote reading for fun?

.....
.....

APPENDIX 5- REGISTER FOR BOOKS

A sample of a register for books with the names of the 34 learners that was used to record the books borrowed and the dates.

Name of Learner	Title of the book and the author	Date borrowed	Signature	Returned date	Signature
Learner 1					
Learner 2					
Learner 3					
Learner 4					
Learner 5					
Learner 6					
Learner 7					
Learner 8					
Learner 9					
Learner 10					
Learner 11					
Learner 12					
Learner 13					
Learner 14					
Learner 15					
Learner 16					
Learner 17					

Learner 18					
Learner 19					
Learner 20					
Learner 21					
Learner 22					
Learner 23					
Learner 24					
Learner 25					
Learner 26					
Learner 27					
Learner 28					
Learner 29					
Learner 30					
Learner 31					
Learner 32					
Learner 33					
Learner 34					

APPENDIX 6- LEARNER REFLECTIONS

21 September 2013

Name: Learner 33

Reflective journal

Progress Report about reading Programme

What I think are the strengths of this intervention and this has ~~read~~ improved my reading

This intervention has helped me because I can see other books that I don't have at home. I have been helped because I can read ten (10) pages a day. First I used to read 6 pages a day.

What I think are the shortcomings of this intervention

I think the only challenge we have in this reading programme is that there have to be added books so that we have enough books. I do have books at home but I think they must be added.

What I think should be done to improve this situation

I think the school must write letters and ask donation to the business owners so that we can buy more books. And we have to work with the municipality

is Library and I think they will be able to give us books as a school.

How is the Classroom Library Supporting My reading?

Ever since the reading programme started at the beginning of the term, I was able to read more books. I do have books at home but here there are lots of books. I've seen books that I have never seen before.

Do I feel My reading is improving?

For me, it is too early to say my reading is improved as it was before. What I can say is that reading new books has helped me a lot because I saw many words that I never knew.

Have I noticed any change in My behavior since taking part in this research?

Yes, I have seen a change in my behavior ever since I took part in this research. At first as I have already said, I used to read five pages in a book but now I read ten pages a day. And I have noticed that I enjoy reading books more than before.

APPENDIX 7- PHOTOS OF LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY



