

**Reading habits of grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa,  
KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

Studies have found that South African students lack adequate literacy skills. The problem may stem from a lack of reading material in vernacular languages, the language barrier, educators not being trained to teach literacy and the absence of libraries in some schools and communities. As a teacher of English, I wanted to explore and understand the reading materials which appealed to students and which they read, and their reasons for reading. The interpretive paradigm was used in this study with a qualitative approach. Three data collection instruments were used to bring about triangulation and they included an open-ended questionnaire, written document (reading log) and a visual document (poster). The questionnaire and the poster were administered to the 39 students at school; however, since the reading log entailed students keeping a record of everything they read over a two day period, students had to complete it at home. The study was underpinned by the theory of motivation with a specific focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The findings of the study revealed that the students at Dreamwood Primary read many texts which included: newspapers, school books, magazines, comic books, novels, religious books, posters/ charts, advertisements, mail, TV guide, T-shirts, and subtitles on television. Students read for several reasons. Some reasons include: learning for school purposes, completing homework, and because of their parents or educators instructing them to read. Other reasons for reading include: because they were bored, and/or wanted to pass the time. The findings are important as they revealed the materials the students enjoyed reading, and thus may be included in subsequent teaching and learning. However, since students read mostly to achieve good results, it is possible that educators are focussing on students reading for extrinsic motivation rather than reading for enjoyment (intrinsic motivation). Teachers may need to inculcate and foreground a love for reading and reading for pleasure in classrooms.

## **Keywords**

Reading, Habits, Grade 6, Pre-adolescents, Reasons for reading, Reading materials

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## Chapter One: Introduction to the study

### **1.1 Introduction**

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that some South African students lack adequate literacy skills. As a result, this impacts negatively on their results causing them to fail to qualify to attend a tertiary institution, thereby limiting their job prospects.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the reading habits of grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa. The study sets out to understand what students read and why they read.

This chapter provides a brief motivation for the chosen study. This will be followed by a discussion of the background of the study and will then provide an overview of the literature consulted. Next, I will mention the purpose and objectives of the study as well as the research questions in the study. Lastly, I will outline the research process, de-limitations of the study and the organisation of the dissertation.

### **1.2 Rationale/Motivation**

According to the Reading Policy Guidelines (n.d., p.8), reading refers to “the act of decoding and understanding texts for information and development purposes and enjoyment, “while literacy is the ability to read and understand information from texts.” The aim of the Reading Policy Guidelines (Department of Education, n.d.) is to build a strong reading generation so that the future generation becomes enthusiastic about reading. Bearing this in mind, being an educator, I have noticed that my students lack interest in reading and I wish to avoid making the reading of literature in my classroom a tedious task. Also, since I have taught students from grade four to grade eleven, I can boldly say that more emphasis has been placed on reading at the intermediate phase compared to the further education and training (FET) phase. While the completion of prescribed texts may be strenuous at times, the Reading Guidelines Policy (Department of Education, n.d., p.16) is clear that “the use of literature in further education and tertiary grades should not be so narrowly focused on passing examinations that it kills any pleasure in future reading.” This means that as educators, although we have a curriculum to teach, we cannot aim to complete the curriculum while disregarding the fact that reading must be made fun rather than tedious.

As a result, I wanted to conduct research for professional reasons in order to discover the texts that appeal to pre-adolescents in my classroom so that I may incorporate them in my lessons in the hope that it would promote students to read independently and view reading as fun. Being an educator of English, I have noticed that some students lack interest in reading assigned texts; therefore, I wanted to find out the reasons why pre-adolescents read. I envisaged that this would allow me to find possible ways of making reading a pleasurable and a lifelong habit for students (National Reading Strategy in the Department of Education, 2008). Sometimes, as educators, we tend to teach reading primarily for academic purposes. Therefore I believed that it would be interesting to find out the reasons that pre-adolescents read so that we can make the transition from making reading only as a means to pass to making it a fun and exciting skill so that the next generation is one that is independent and informed (Reading Policy Guidelines in the Department of Education, n.d.). As Machet (n.d.) argues, reading holds so many benefits that those who fail to become proficient readers are unlikely to do well at school and will have difficulty solving problems and be less exposed to ideas and experiences as compared to those who read frequently.

### **1.3 Context/Background**

A study in South African context found that many South African students are not equipped with adequate literacy skills (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2005). The South African Department of Basic Education established through surveys that students do not read and therefore they produce poor results in literacy. One principle mentioned by the National Reading Strategy (2008, p. 11) is that reading “is a foundational skill for all learning.” If a student has poor reading skills, this will affect their writing and comprehension skills, both skills being part of the four skills that the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (Department of Education, 2011) aims to achieve in the subject English Home Language. The Department of Education also found that due to their lack of reading, students were unable to read at age-appropriate levels (National Reading Strategy, 2008). Machet (n.d) found in a study of grade one students conducted in South Africa by the Children’s Literature Research Unit (CLRU) that the students possessed poor literacy skills to the extent of being unable to hold and turn the pages of the book correctly. Possible reasons for students not performing well could be attributed to schools not being equipped with libraries and reading materials, lack of books in African languages and educators lacking the necessary skills to teach reading effectively in the classroom (National Reading Strategy, 2008). As a result, the vision in the

Reading Policy Guidelines (n.d., p.12) is “for all KwaZulu-Natal learners to be enthusiastic lifelong readers for knowledge and enjoyment.”

The CAPS (Department of Education, Intermediate phase, 2011) document aims for students to build skills; one such skill is reading and viewing. English Home Language for the intermediate phase has been allocated a total of six hours per week and 12 hours over a two week cycle. Over a two week cycle, reading and viewing has been assigned five hours which is the most time as compared to any other skill. This reveals that reading and viewing are priorities and the time allocation indicates its importance in the curriculum. The document also ensures that a variety of texts (genres) are to be used in the classroom ensuring that students make use of media materials in the classroom as stated in CAPS (Department of Education, Intermediate phase, 2011). Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy (2014) also point out that the Department of Education has established a range of reading techniques as a means of improving literacy in South Africa by including reading aloud, shared reading and guided reading in the curriculum. According to the CAPS (Department of Education, 2011), students must read texts using the reading process which comprises pre-reading activities, reading and post reading activities. This process ensures that students understand the content and allows for critical thinking. The CAPS (Department of Education, Intermediate phase, 2011) also stipulates the reading material to be used over a two week cycle. In grade six, materials to be used in term one include newspapers, folklore, advertisements, drama and poetry. The incorporation of a variety of texts allows for the students to have an opportunity to engage with core materials, readers and media texts. However, although the vision of the Reading Policy is to make reading a fun and enjoyable activity, the CAPS (Department of Education, 2011) does not allow the educator or students to choose texts independently nor does the policy allocate time for independent reading to take place in the classroom. Unless worked around by educators, this might be a flaw in the document, and might affect reading levels.

Overall South Africa has been identified as a country with students having low levels in reading. In 2001, the problem was so bad that the Minister of Education in that year, Kader Asmal, declared 2001 to be the Year of the Reader (Machet, n.d.). This was done so that South African students would improve their reading skills. In 2005, South African students in the intermediate phase performed poorly in systemic evaluations. The learning outcome for reading and viewing as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the National Reading Strategy was “The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in the texts”

(Department of Education, 2008, p. 7). The results indicated that only 51% of the students achieved results at age-appropriate levels, while the 49% were unable to read and comprehend, and as a result the learning outcome was not achieved (Department of Education, 2008). An international comparative study called Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which took place in 2006 aimed to find out the performance of grade four and five South African students compared to students in other countries (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Du Toit, Scherman & Archer, 2008). Among the 45 education systems, South Africa tested last. The results were surprising since South Africa had five years of formal years at school, the largest number of formal years among the countries tested. Secondly, as compared to other countries, the average age of students in South African grades five and six was 11, the highest age in the study (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Du Toit, Scherman & Archer, 2008). Similarly, primary schools in Durban from Umlazi to Umhlanga were studied by Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy (2014) and they found that the majority of the participants (educators and managers) claimed that their students were below average readers with poor literacy skills.

The Department of Basic Education aims to address the literacy crisis in our country, and create a literate society that is able to gain further skills at tertiary institutions, so that students will be able to participate in and contribute to the country's economy (School Library Strategy, 2012). The National Reading Strategy (Department of Education, 2008) aims to achieve a reading generation by including a reading programme in all schools called 'Drop and Read.' This is whereby the school takes the initiative to incorporate a part of the school day which will be allocated for everyone to read, from the students to the educators and even the principal. Resources are meant to be made available for schools which lack reading materials or a school library, as stipulated by the Reading Policy Guidelines (Department of Education, n.d.). However, not all schools are equipped with libraries and thus students are denied access to suitable reading material. The study by Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy (2014) confirms this.

In addition, in 1999, an audit was conducted and found that schools which had libraries were poorly stocked with books in IsiZulu, the home language of many students in KwaZulu-Natal (Reading Guidelines Policy in the Department of Education, n.d.). Similarly, Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy's (2014) study revealed that a factor which hindered effective reading was the language barrier. Many educators and managers (85.7%) claimed that the common reading problems could be attributed to some of the students being English second language speakers.

Presently, the South African Department of Basic Education is making efforts to address this problem, together with other language problems, through the introduction of various reading programmes.

The South African language policy stipulates that a child may receive instruction in their mother tongue in the Grade R to Grade 3 classrooms, and thereafter a switch may be made to a second language (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2005). In the Nigerian context, Oyetunde (2002) notes that in some instances students are unable to make the switch as a result of several factors and are therefore unable to grasp literacy skills in the second language. This was found when a nine year old Nigerian child who had received four years of primary school and repeated one grade still lacked the skill to identify basic vocabulary (Oyetunde, 2002). This was due to his inability to speak the English language, and as a result he was unable to identify words. Oyetunde (2002) also found that the child did not receive support from parents, and his uncle had taken the initiative to seek help for him. Oyetunde (2002) states that children struggle when making the language shift especially when English is not spoken at home. He terms this an unsupportive out-of-school environment while others call it a language mismatch (South Africa: The impact of language policy and practice on children learning, 2016). Similarly Mostert and Wikan (2007) found in their study in Namibia and Norway that home language does indeed affect reading habits of students. In South Africa, 80% of students study in a second language and the negative effects of this are seen in the progress in the International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2005). The PIRLS test which was conducted in 2006 found that South African students were reading below their age level and thus they were not proficient readers (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2005).

To contextualise this present study, it occurred at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, and the total enrolment for the year 2016 was 338 students from Grade R to Grade 7. Racially, the students comprise Indian, African and a few Coloured students. Dreamwood Primary School currently has a staff of twelve consisting of one principal, one Head of Department (HOD), one secretary and nine educators. Two educators are paid by the school's governing body and the other educators are paid by the Department of Education. Students attend Dreamwood Primary from surrounding areas such as Parkgate, Waterloo, Ottawa, Riet River, Cornubia, Zwelisha and Phoenix. Some students walk to school and the rest travel by public transport and private lift clubs. Every day, after school, educators walk with the students to the gates and help them cross the road safely. This is due to the school not having a security guard

or a scholar patrol. The school has a feeding programme in place which provides underprivileged students with breakfast and lunch daily.

There is only one class of each grade, and, in the study, I worked with the Grade 6 class, comprising 39 students, a class which I teach. Upon informal conversations with students I was made aware that one student resides with an aunt and one student is an orphan and resides with an aunt as well. Five students live with guardians as their parents do not work in Durban. My observation of students' literacy revealed that some students struggle to read at age appropriate levels, while a student in the classroom is unable to comprehend English due to the language barrier. He is only able to greet in English but cannot read the language.

#### **1.4 Overview of key studies dealing with the topic**

While the study was informed by many studies on the topic, the following key studies underpin this study: it is important to note that pre-adolescent reading material will differ because of their personal preferences, access to reading materials, socio-economic factors and gender, as mentioned by Mostert and Wikan (2008) who found that these factors determined the reading habits of the participants in their study. Reading holds many benefits for the reader as discussed by Cullinan (2000), Wong (2012) and Abidin, Pourmohammadi and Varasigam and Lean (2014), found that pre-adolescents read for several reasons. Machet (n.d.) found that students read based on the appearance of a text and the book cover with illustrations. The language that a reading material was written in was also a factor that determined if the material would be read.

A study by Machet (n.d.) and Gammell (2008) found that students read magazines which provided information on celebrities such as pop stars and models. Despite pre-adolescents reading the same material, that is magazines, the content of the magazines differed (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999).

There was also a difference in the types of books which were read by the pre-adolescents. Cornelissen and McMillan (2012) claimed that in a South African study, books predominately comprised of pictures were read by students while fiction books appealed to students in Estonia (Uusen, 2010). Content on religion and school books were the favourite reading materials for pre-adolescents in South Africa (Machet, n.d.). In contrast to Machet's (n.d.) study, Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999) found that in their study schoolbooks were said to be the pre-

adolescents' least favourite reading material. Other materials which were read by pre-adolescents included tags on their clothing (Strommen & Mates, 2004) the mail and pamphlets (Knoester, 2009).

A large number of students in Uusen's (2010) study read for academic purposes and 85.9% in Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander's (2015) study claimed they read to improve their language. It was interesting to see that students also read because they were asked to read by a parent or an educator (Majid & Tan, 2007). Pre-adolescents also gained access to information on topics that were private and personal (Machet, n.d.). Knoester's (2009) study found that pre-adolescents read materials which were similar to their life experience; hence, they found a connection to the content. Similarly in Strommen and Mates' (2004) study, students read in order to escape reality. Other reasons for reading were that the activity was fun and interesting (Totemeyer, Kirchner & Alexander, 2015).

A gender difference was found as the male students in Knoester's (2009) study indicated that they enjoyed reading graphic novels and comic books, whereas male pre-adolescents in South Africa enjoyed reading about sport (Machet, n.d.). In Strommen and Mates' (2004) study, it was found that females read materials such as magazines and storybooks while comics and non-fiction appealed to male students. A more extensive discussion of these, and other, studies dealing with the field is found in chapter two.

### **1.5 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the reading habits of the grade six students in my English class. Apart from gaining knowledge about the materials that students read and reasons why they read, I also wanted the students to learn from the study. From the data collection methods, I aimed to make the students understand that reading is not limited to prescribed texts in a classroom setting but that reading involves engaging in a text about any topic or issue that excites them.

I also understood that reading plays an important role in nation building. The National Reading Strategy (Department of Education, 2008) notes that reading enables the individual to become confident, to act creatively and critically in a rapidly changing world as well as to allow the individual access to knowledge in order for continuous learning to take place. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that many children and pre-adolescents do not read sufficiently and this was revealed when South African students achieved poor results in 2005



when tested for their ability to read at age-appropriate levels (National Reading Strategy, 2008). As outlined by the National Reading Strategy (Department of Education, 2008), some factors may contribute to students not reading enough such as language mismatch, some educators not being competent to teach literacy, no access to libraries, and poor teaching and learning conditions.

From research conducted on students' reading habits, it was clear that materials as well as the reasons why the students read differed depending on the students' personal preference, background, language and accessibility of the materials. Therefore the purpose of this study is to identify the materials read by pre-adolescents at a school in Ottawa, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, and their reasons for reading such materials in order for the texts which appeal to these students to be used in the classroom. By doing so, I hoped to motivate students to read outside the classroom, thus creating a literate society within this specific environment. I went into the study understanding that each student is different and the context plays a role in what would appeal to each one.

### **1.6 Research objectives and questions**

The objectives in this dissertation are to identify the reading materials of grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, and to identify the purposes for which grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read.

This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read?
2. Why do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read?

### **1.7 Overview of the research process**

This study used the interpretive paradigm to qualitatively interpret the responses from the students taking into account their feelings and experiences. The design for my research is a case study and three data collection methods were used. These included questionnaires with open-ended questions, a visual document in the form of a poster and a written document in the form of a reading log. In order for the study to take place, the principal who is the gatekeeper at Dreamwood Primary had granted permission for the study to be conducted. This research respected all ethical considerations and therefore all the students as well as their parents/guardians provided consent for the students to be a part of the study by signing the

respective consent forms. The principal, parents and students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and thus pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation.

### **1.8 Limitations**

Firstly, the study can only lay claim to the findings of one specific school and may not necessarily be generalised. Secondly, the study focuses on one grade only and is not necessarily representative of all pre-adolescents.

### **1.9 Organisation of the dissertation**

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter contextualises the research by providing a rationale by listing the research questions and objectives and by explaining the research methodology used. This is followed by providing an outline of other research which informed this study. The second chapter of this dissertation reviews the literature and unpacks the theory that underpins the study. Chapter three describes the methodology used, and this is followed by chapter four which provides a discussion of my findings. The last chapter concludes by considering the various implications of the study.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework - Literature Review

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework that underpins my study and I engage with the relevant research studies by reading them in terms of my study. The literature discussed is structured into two sections taken from my two research questions which simply put are '*What do pre-adolescents read and why do pre-adolescents read?*' It should be noted that the literature reviewed includes both national and international studies.

### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

I have used the theory of motivation to underpin this research. Motivation as defined by Cambria and Guthrie (2010, p. 16) is the "values, beliefs, and behaviours surrounding reading for an individual." Motivation can also be defined as the ability to be moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A person who is motivated will be energised to follow through the necessary steps to reach the end, while an unmotivated person is someone who is not inspired (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Similarly Gambrell (2011) points to the engagement perspective which sheds light on an engaged reader and a disengaged reader. As Gambrell (2011) puts it, an engaged reader is someone who is intrinsically motivated in terms of reading, whereas a disengaged reader may not read at his/her own free will.

There are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Janes, 2008; Hunter, 2005). Intrinsic motivation is when students read of their own free will because they consider it to be valuable, while extrinsic motivation is when students read because there are rewards involved such as doing well in an assessment or an incentive (Hunter, 2005). This means that while some students may read because they find it an exciting way to pass time, others may read to progress academically. On the same note extrinsic motivation is determined by social demands such as to pass at school or due to parents' or teachers' demands (Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Hidi (2000) cited in Wang and Guthrie (2004) claims that intrinsic motivation is also when the reader (student) reads to explore reading hence the student reads several topics which interests them. A different approach to intrinsic motivation was discussed by Sikszenmihalyi (1978) cited in Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), who described the flow experience. This occurs when an individual is so engrossed in reading (intrinsic motivation) that they may lose track of time due to being completely intrigued by the content. As compared to intrinsic motivation

whereby the student reads willingly and for interest, extrinsic motivation occurs in order for the individual to meet social demands such as good grades, recognition or skills. In addition, Janes (2008) argues that extrinsic motivation can also include deadlines, competitions, goals or anything that the individual perceives as a reward.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is something every human being possesses; from the time we are born we are curious and inquisitive and therefore we have a need to explore, discover and learn new things without expecting rewards. However, individuals are not intrinsically motivated for every activity that they do. Although intrinsic motivation goes against B.F. Skinner's theory on operant conditioning where an individual's behaviour is determined by the reward, Ryan and Deci (2000) claim that when engaging in intrinsic motivation, the reward is actually in the activity. For example, reading because it is fun and entertaining, whereby reading as a source of entertainment is the reader's reward. Unlike intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation relies on external rewards, other than from completing the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, a student may complete his/her reading homework to avoid punishment from the educator. The punishment which was avoided is the individual's reward. However, at times extrinsic motivation causes students to "become more interested in the reward than the learning" (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, p.17).

Benabour and Tirole (2003) argue that extrinsic motivation which they claim has contingent rewards acts as a positive reinforcement as it is given with the intention of the individual continuing with such behaviour. However, the theorist Kruglanski (1978) as cited in Benabour and Tirole (2003) believes the opposite, as this researcher states that rewards in any form may possibly diminish an individual's performance thus resulting in 'negative reinforcement.' They further agree that extrinsic motivation can at times clash with intrinsic motivation. According to Guay, Vallerand and Blanchard (2000), there are different types of extrinsic motivation. It was the theory on self-determination which put forth these different categories of extrinsic motivation. If an individual engages in an activity in order to obtain rewards or to avoid punishment or negative consequences, it is termed external regulation. Identified regulation is another category and this is whereby "a behaviour is valued and perceived as being chosen by oneself" (Guay, Vallerand & Blandchard, 2000, p. 177).

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) mention three factors which facilitate motivation, namely: interest, confidence and dedication. Interest is when an individual takes delight in reading and it occurs

on its own, meaning that materials which are not assigned. A confident individual reads because he or she is able to do it. With regards to dedication, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) claim that although students may be motivated to read, not all types of texts may appeal to them. Unfortunately the curriculum may prescribe compulsory novels and at times these may not appeal to all students. Even those who read due to finding it fun (intrinsic motivation) may pull away from texts they are uninterested in. However, the student may use the motivation for passing (extrinsic motivation) and achieving good grades to read the assigned text (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Similarly Janes (2008) points out the two factor motivational measurement model by Wang and Guthrie. This model includes factors which contribute to the two motivations. According to the model, curiosity, involvement and challenge form part of intrinsic motivation while recognition, grades, competition and compliance form part of extrinsic motivation.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) cited in Wang and Guthrie (2004) provided eleven motivation constructs for reading. These included reading efficacy, importance, curiosity, involvement, preference for challenge, recognition, grades, competition, social, compliance, and work avoidance. Some relevant constructs will be discussed below.

According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), students' efficacy refers to their ability and competence to complete the task at hand. Bandura (1977) as cited in Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) assert that students' efficacy will indeed determine their activity and how persistent they are. As a result it can be said that when students know they are efficient in reading they will engage in reading more frequently as compared to a student who is aware that he/she is a weak reader and therefore as a result they may likely pull away from reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Cambria and Guthrie (2010) term this confidence. They believe that a student's confidence determines whether the reader is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. If an individual is a confident reader, it is likely that the individual will become intrinsically motivated and read (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). On the other hand, students who are not confident about their reading abilities may not read of their own free will due to doubting their reading abilities (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Despite such claims, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) argue that this may not be the case in all instances. Although a student is aware of his/her skill in reading, the activity (reading) may not occur unless there is a purpose which may be intrinsic or extrinsic.

As mentioned by Dweck and Leggett (1988) cited in Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), there are two types of achievement goals namely performance goals and learning goals. In terms of performance goals, this seeks to “maximise favourable evaluations of their ability and minimise negative evaluations of ability” (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p.421). With this goal the students will read to show their skill to others with the intention of obtaining praise and refraining from negative comments. On the other hand, learning goals aim to allow for students to read in order to improve in certain tasks or to be more competent in tasks (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) claim that an individual’s attitude towards reading determines how much reading the individual engages in. Another factor which may influence students to read is the interest they may have in reading itself or the topics they read about. Schiefele (1996) cited in Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) stated that in a study of college students, it was found that those students who were more interested in the content of the material understood the material better than those who were less interested. In another study it was also found that the more the student showed an interest the better the individual comprehended the text despite some texts being difficult (Renninger, 1992 as cited in Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Gambrell (2011, p.172) argues that if students are not motivated to read, this could be detrimental to their levels of literacy as “they will never reach their full literacy potential.” Sadly intrinsic motivation begins in children but as they grow this need to read independently fades away. Guthrie, Wigfield and VonSecker (2000) made reference to other researchers’ findings which inform that younger children who are in elementary school and middle school display intrinsic motivation. However, this motivation declines during the students’ elementary years of schooling. As a result Gambrell (2011) states this type of motivation (intrinsic) should be given priority in the curriculum. A study by Skinner, Wellborn and Conell (1990) cited in Guthrie, Wigfield and VonSecker (2000, p.331) maintains that students’ intrinsic motivation largely depends on the educator in the classroom especially “when they (students) perceived the teacher to provide clear goals and contingencies for learning.”

The theory of motivation would best suit my study since it would assist in explaining why students read. As an educator I would also like to know which of the two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, causes my students to read, since according to theorists such as Gambrell (2011) and Benabour and Tirole (2003), both types of motivation do not hold equal benefits. From researchers’ studies it was clear that intrinsic motivation is by far better since this is when

students have fostered a love for reading and take it upon themselves to read for entertainment, pleasure and interest. Contrary to this, extrinsic motivation is when reading takes place because the students are focused on the reward or end result. Therefore extrinsic motivation provides the reader with ‘happiness’ on a short-term basis and one may question what students would do if the reward was taken away (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). To elaborate my point, if a student wants to read to impress his/her teacher/parent or classmates, what would happen once the student completes formal schooling and there is no such thing as rewards or avoided punishment? This would indicate that the student will stop reading since he/she believes that there is no need to engage in the activity anymore. Gambrell (2010) argues that an unmotivated student fails to reach their full potential.

As educators it is our job not only to impart knowledge to students but also to avoid such issues arising among our students. It all begins in our classrooms. Researchers have found that intrinsic motivation declines as students get older and it is up to educators to prevent this from happening. Educators should instil motivation in students so that reading does not stop when the reward, for instance, is removed.

In my study of the grade six students at a primary school, I would like to find out from the students’ responses if they are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to read, and if so, how I as their educator can maintain their intrinsic motivation to read and prevent it from declining, as Guthrie, Wigfield and VonSecker (2000) claimed it would as they move onto the next grade. Furthermore I need to come up with ways to change those students who are extrinsically motivated to being intrinsically motivated in terms of reading.

It should be noted that reading does not solely take place in the English classroom but literacy skills such as reading, writing and listening occur across the curriculum in all subjects. Therefore it should not just be the responsibility of the English educator to develop a love for reading among students, but is in fact the responsibility of all educators since reading is mandatory in all subjects.

## **2.3 Literature review**

### **2.3.1 Materials pre-adolescents read**

According to the American Academy of Paediatrics (2015), the term ‘adolescent’ focuses on persons between puberty and adulthood. However, it may be broken up into three stages, namely: early adolescents or pre-adolescents who are from the age of 11 to 14, middle adolescence, between the age of 15 and 17 and the last stage which is the late adolescent stage which is between the ages of 18 and 21 (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2015). In my study, I will be focusing on the first stage of adolescence, since the Grade 6 students at the mentioned school are between the ages of 11 and 13 years old. I will also term this group of students in my study as pre-adolescents.

The readings indicate that pre-adolescent reading material will differ because of their personal preferences, access to reading materials and socio-economic factors. On this note, Mostert and Wikan (2008) found in their study in Namibia and Norway that the following affected reading habits of Grade 6 students: gender, availability of reading materials at home, parents reading stories to children while growing up and lastly their home language.

Magazines appear to be a popular choice of reading material for pre-adolescents. They were found to be a popular reading material for pre-adolescents in Connecticut (Spear Swerling, Brucker & Alfano, 2008) and South Africa (Machet, n.d). The participants at a South African primary school stated through questionnaires that their reasons for choosing magazines were due to: value for money, the name of the magazine, a famous face on the cover of the magazine and the way it looked which attracted them to read the content (Machet, n.d). On the same note, Gammell (2008) found that pre-adolescents enjoyed reading magazines which informed them about pop stars and models as compared to reading books by famous authors. In contrast, pre-adolescents in Texas read magazines about vehicles and animals (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). Mostert and Wikan (2008) found that a higher percentage of females (49%) preferred reading magazines to males (43%). However, their study did not mention the preferred topics or the genres of magazines that the participants read. In my study, set in a South African school, I had to ascertain whether the students chose magazines and their reasons for their choices, if applicable.

Snowball (2008) conducted research using focus groups as her methodology to students from seven metropolitan Perth high schools in order to get in-depth discussions from participants as compared to large scale surveys. In her study of 41 teenagers, Snowball (2008) aimed uncover the students’ thoughts on both reading and libraries. It should be noted that although the study



consists of participants between the ages of 13 and 16 years old, Snowball (2008) mentioned each participant's age when discussing their reading habits, therefore I will use only those participants who are 13 years old since that age group pertains to my study. One such 13-year-old informed the researcher of his visits to the public library with his mother where he would borrow graphic novels to read (Snowball, 2008). Graphic novels, comic books and picture books appear to be popular for pre-adolescents in different contexts. In Connecticut popular reads included comic books, fiction books and non-fiction books (Swerling, Brucker & Alfano, 2008). Similarly Knoester's (2009) study had shown that male pre-adolescents also revealed that their preferred reading material was graphic novels and comic books. A 13-year-old in Tveit's (2012) study shared her love for comics such as Nemi and Donald Duck. Picture books were also popular in a township primary school near Cape Town, South Africa. One-hundred books were taken into a classroom consisting of 39 Grade 6 students (Cornelissen & McMillan, 2012). However, when the students were asked to make their independent book choices, one pre-adolescent chose a book titled *Papa Lucky's Shadow* by Niki Daly which Cornelissen and McMillan (2012) regarded as a picture book. The researchers thought that this type of book choice was inappropriate for the Grade 6 student and would rather be a suitable book choice for a Grade 1 student. This could indicate that some children in South Africa might have reading problems since they read books made up predominately of pictures. It is also possible that the learner was a visual learner. In contrast to the South African study, where some students chose books which were simple and possibly contained a few pages, a study in the United Kingdom revealed that a pre-adolescent only read books which were thick as she considered thin books to be boring and as a result she got put off the book (Warren & Maynard, 2011).

Many pre-adolescents read fiction or non-fiction for pleasure during leisure time. In Uusen's (2010) study of reading preferences of the sixth grade students in Estonia, it was found that fiction books were popular among students, so much so that 66% of the participants indicated in the survey that they read a book at the time of the research or they had completed a book prior to the research. Pre-adolescents in United Kingdom enjoyed reading non-fiction content and claimed that they preferred reading diaries since it was about people (Warren & Maynard, 2011). This was in contrast to the non-fiction content based on cooking which was preferred by the participants in Majid and Tan's study (2007). Strommen and Mates (2004) used two groups of students in their study, sixth graders and ninth graders. However, I will only mention the age group (sixth graders) that pertains to this study as it is based on pre-adolescents. One sixth grader shared that she loved reading books and although she did not mention her preferred

genre, she did express that she owned at least 100 books and her love for reading has resulted in her, her mother and sibling to begin a book club (Strommen & Mates, 2004). Pre-adolescents in Strommen and Mates' study (2004) enjoyed reading a book due to it being portable and therefore they could take it along when travelling. Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2015) used a two part questionnaire in their study to find out Grade 6 students' attitudes towards reading, their preferred topic, and what they liked to read about, just to name a few. When asked about characters and themes in storybooks, students mentioned that Bible stories were popular.

However, in terms of the grade six Namibian pre-adolescents, it was found that only 22.4% were readers, which Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2015, p. 19) define as "a person who had some knowledge of the basic types of reading material available, who either spontaneously mentioned reading for pleasure as an activity, or gave reading a priority among various options on which a substantial amount of time was spent after school." Their findings revealed that of the 22.4% of readers, only 3.6% read non-fiction while 18.8% read fiction (Totemeyer, Kirchner & Alexander, 2015).

Some studies focussed on the genre that pre-adolescents read. A study in Singapore revealed that pre-adolescents aged between 9 and 12 years old had preferred reading storybooks and comic books during their leisure (Majid & Tan, 2007), while in Texas the sixth graders' most popular reading materials were scary books, followed by story collections, cartoons and comics (Worthy, Morman & Turner, 1999). In Western Oregon pre-adolescents read the following during their leisure: novels, magazines, comics, short stories, poems, technical books, plays and newspapers (Nippold, Duthie & Larson, 2005). Other reads included series books and humorous novels (Nippold, Duthie & Larson, 2005). Similarly pre-adolescents in Singapore aged between 9 and 11 years old claimed that they enjoyed reading storybooks and comics during their leisure (Majid & Tan, 2007). Female pre-adolescents preferred reading storybooks and magazines while males read non-fiction and comics. Another popular genre among pre-adolescents was books filled with mystery, as one participant states: "I'll go out in my tree house and I'll stay and read books like jungle and mystery and secret agent books" (Strommen & Mates, 2004, p.194). There was a gender difference for reading materials. The pre-adolescent males preferred reading comics, technical books and newspapers while the females preferred to read poems, plays and novels (Nippold, Duthie & Larson, 2005). Similarly in Snowball's (2008) study, a 13-year-old male who did not enjoy reading found a comic titled 'Plastic Man'

by K. Barker which appealed to him during one of the sessions. While studies had found that females read more than males (Machet, n.d.), Chen (2007) pointed out that the reading material also differed between both genders. Male pre-adolescents in Machet's study (n.d.) preferred to read topics on sport, while males in Knoester's (2010) study enjoyed reading comic books and graphic novels. Females in Peterson's (2008) study preferred reading fiction books from the library. Overall, Johnsson-Smaragdi and Jonsson (2007) assert that pre-adolescent girls read more than any other age group. Between the years 1998 and 2002, pre-adolescent girls had spent an average of five hours reading books (Johansson-Smaragdi & Jonsson, 2007).

In South Africa, pre-adolescents favoured reading the following genres: adventure stories, school books and stories based on their religion (Machet, n.d.). It was surprising to see that South African pre-adolescents mentioned that they enjoyed reading school books; while 419 pre-adolescents in Texas stated that their least preferred reading materials were educational texts such as information books about Science and Maths, Encyclopaedias and books on history (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). It was found that materials based on adventure which were read by the South African pre-adolescents were due to the plot, characters and values which they offered (Machet, n.d.). On the other hand, horror stories received only a few reads, while fiction was read often (Machet, n.d.). In Norway pre-adolescents explained that they read books which are based on "big issues in life" (Tveit, 2012). The participants further asserted that their favourite books were titled *Hvis Jeg Blir* which translates to *If I stay* and *Vinterjenter* which means *Wintergirls* (Tveit, 2012). It should be noted that both books are based on death and this concurs with the participants informing the researcher that they enjoyed reading about issues in life. A female pre-adolescent shared in an interview that she once loved reading Goosebumps, however, she no longer reads Goosebumps as she claimed she outgrew them (Goosebumps) (Strommen & Mates, 2004). In Worthy, Moorman and Turner's study (1999), when the pre-adolescents were asked an open-ended question: "If you could read anything", 65 participants mentioned that they would read *Goosebumps*. These findings concur with other research which revealed that pre-adolescents preferred reading scary genres.

Online reading habits have also been studied. Twelve and 13-year-old participants in Knoester's (2009) study claimed they read online materials, but also mentioned that these documents did not count as reading for their school reading assignment. According to Clark (2012), in the National Literacy Trust, the key stage three consisting of 11 to 14-year-olds (68.3%) had read more material through technology, especially text messages as compared to

the younger participants. Struggling pre-adolescents also showed a high rate of reading media texts (Uusen, 2010). Students in Norway and Namibia had also read e-mails and websites, but Mostert and Wikan (2008) did not specify the websites the students explored. Blackwell, Lauricella and Wartella's (2014) study included children between the ages of 8 and 12 years. However, their research divided the children into two groups: younger children between the ages of 8 and 10 and older children who were between the ages of 11 and 12 years. I will only be using the older children as this age group fits my term for pre-adolescents. It was found that 32.8% of the pre-adolescents went online for approximately one to two hours while 14.8% claimed to go online for three hours or more per day (Blackwell, Lauricell & Wartella, 2014). From the online survey, it was found that pre-adolescents preferred viewing the following online: video clips, movie sites, social networking, game websites and screen sites. The sites visited the least were sites for toys, educational sites, games for girls and sport sites (Blackwell, Lauricell & Wartella, 2014). Clark (2012) reported on the findings obtained from the National Literacy Trust which revealed that students read the following outside of class: websites (52.9%), social networking sites (52.5%), emails (49.7%), instant messages (45.3%) and lyrics (42.5%).

The reading of the newspaper has also been studied. Pardun and Scott's (2004) research aimed to find out about pre-adolescents' use of newspapers in the United States. It was found that 62.4% of the participants' parents had subscribed to the newspaper however their preference of newspapers depended largely on regional newspapers. It was also noted that particular sections appealed more to the pre-adolescents such as comics, sports and entertainment (Pardun & Scott, 2004). Only one female participant in Knoester's (2009) study claimed that she enjoyed reading the newspaper but no reason was provided for her preferred reading material. Uusen (2010) found a gender difference in terms of reading certain sections of the newspaper; female pre-adolescents enjoyed reading articles on beauty and fashion while boys preferred to read sports news. One possible reason Pardun and Scott (2004) provided for the younger American generation not reading newspapers was because they owned radios, tape players and compact disc players in their bedrooms and so these modern forms of media had replaced the newspaper. A study in Connecticut by Spear Swerling, Brucker and Alfano (2008) found that the newspaper was not a popular reading material for sixth graders between the ages of 11 and 12 years. They established this by asking the participants the following question: "About how often do you read something in a newspaper for fun (for example, sports page, news stories, and advice columns)." Only 44% claimed to read the newspaper once a week, while

22% indicated never reading newspapers and 18% read the newspaper every day. Newspapers were also the least read material among pre-adolescents in Singapore (Majid and Tan, 2007). On this note, male pre-adolescents in Namibia and Norway shared the same feelings as pre-adolescents in other studies, as a small percentage (35%) read newspapers, while more than half (52%) of the females read newspapers (Mostert & Wikan, 2008).

In addition to the different notions of reading materials, pre-adolescents often considered any form of material that they were able to read as a form of reading, including tags on their clothing (Strommen & Mates, 2004). One pre-adolescent in Knoester's (2009) study mentioned that he had enjoyed reading the mail. It is interesting to note that four of Knoester's (2009) participants between the ages of 11 and 13 had read video game manuals or magazines about video games and one participant mentioned that he enjoyed reading Yi-Gi-Oh magic cards. A pre-adolescent reported that his love for reading often made him late for school. On that note, the pre-adolescent admits to reading just about anything including his mum's pamphlets (Knoester, 2009). Thus it can be seen that pre-adolescents in these studies read anything that they came into contact with, irrespective if it was minor like the tags on their clothing to the materials belonging to someone else.

### **2.3.2 Reasons pre-adolescents read**

Reading generally takes place because the reader requires information from the text, wants to earn a living or to learn or understand what is going on worldwide (Cullinan, 2000). According to Wong (2012), reading offers several advantages such as exposure to new things, improving one's understanding, increasing vocabulary and serving as a tool for communication. Therefore reading holds the benefit of creating a literate society (Abidin, Pourmohammadi, Varasigam & Lean, 2014). However, from reading previous work in this particular area, I found that pre-adolescents read for several reasons which included: the way the reading material looked, academic purposes, leisure, parental encouragement and relevance of content from the material to the reader's life.

Machet (n.d.) explored a pilot study in eight primary schools in South Africa consisting of a total of 1403 participants chosen for the study and it was found that the following influenced the pre-adolescents to read: illustrations, the book cover and the language (Machet, n.d.). Similarly, in their study Warren and Maynard (2011) found that the pre-adolescents were

drawn to the front cover of reading material, pictures and the colour of the material. Machet (n.d.) found it surprising that illustrations still determined whether the book will be read or not, especially in this particular age group which are not supposed to rely heavily on picture books. However, Machet (n.d.) provided a possible reason for such a choice, being that some children are English second language speakers and so the illustrations aid in understanding the content. Secondly, Machet (n.d.) found that a new and attractive cover would appeal to pre-adolescents more than a cover which was old, dull and unattractive. While pictures on the cover appealed to girls, boys were more drawn towards a book with bright colours (Machet, n.d.).

Lastly, the language that a book is written in determines whether the book will be read or not. Male pre-adolescents preferred reading books in their home language, while language did not play an important factor for female pre-adolescents (Machet, n.d.). However, Mampuru and Pretorius (2007) claim that in South Africa there are few books written in the African languages and those which are available are translations from the English language.

Uusen (2010) found that 75% of the pre-adolescents read for school purposes. Similarly pre-adolescents in Namibia claimed that reading gave them knowledge and 85.9% asserted that it improved one's language skills (Totemeyer, Kirchner & Alexander, 2015). It was also noted that pre-adolescents in Singapore shared the same view about reading; it would allow them to obtain better results at school (Majid & Tan, 2007). It was also found that a pre-adolescent mentioned that her reason for reading was because it improved her ability to speak Norwegian (Tveit, 2012). Similarly Grade 4 participants in South Africa with an average age of 12 years stated that they read because it made them clever, helped them pass and gave them knowledge (Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011). This fits with the statement of another participant who claimed that reading would enable them to get good jobs one day (Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011).

While some parents force their children to read, many studies found that parents encourage their children to read by accompanying them to the local library or the parents themselves showing a positive attitude towards reading by reading during their leisure (Strommen & Mates, 2004; Knoester, 2009). Twenty percent of pre-adolescents stated that one of their reasons for reading was due to their parents or teachers instructing them to read (Majid & Tan, 2007). Strommen and Mates (2004) identified keen Grade 6 readers in their study. These students found reading material which interested them and as a result they discussed the

storyline with their family and friends. It was from these conversations that book recommendations were made (Strommen & Mates, 2004). In contrast, the pre-adolescents who showed a lack of love and enjoyment for reading claimed that they did not have the support of family members to share and discuss reading material. They further stated that their parents were often busy and involved in other activities (Strommen & Mates, 2004). Wollscheid (2013) found that parents' reading habits had a positive impact on the pre-adolescents' reading habits and as they grew up, it was the females who were influenced more to read than males. Knoester (2009) found that pre-adolescents often read books that were recommended by older siblings or at times they visited the library to find good books to read. Evidently, from the students' responses, it revealed that they were encouraged to read when members of their family read and reading became a part of the family's daily activity. At times pre-adolescents read topics that were regularly discussed between their parents and themselves. One participant in Knoester's (2009) study claimed to frequently read material on sport since his father was a sport fanatic and so sport set the basis of their conversations. In interviews with participants' parents, Knoester (2010) found that parents claimed that their children read books at this particular school because they were given the opportunity to make independent book selection unlike the time they were in school, where books were chosen for them.

Machet (n.d.) found that reading among pre-adolescents allowed them to gain access to private issues such as pregnancy. They relied on print material to give them good advice and help them understand their body as it changed. Furthermore, Knoester (2009) claimed that in his study, students enjoyed discussing texts that they had found a connection with. A male pre-adolescent in Strommen and Mates' (2004, p. 196) study claimed that he read because reading transported him to another world: "It takes me to places that I always wanted to be. Like, I read detective books and I feel like I'm the person trying to solve the case. Or say I want to go to some undiscovered planet but I'm stuck in my house, I'll just read the book." Similarly Knoester (2009) pointed out that students in his study spoke fondly about reading material that they had a connection with. However, Knoester (2009) does in fact bring to the reader's attention that he was the participants' educator and it could be possible that the students' responses were that which they thought he (a former educator) wanted to hear. Similarly, in my study, I am the students' educator and I needed to be aware of this fact in my construction of the research instruments and data analysis. Unlike Mostert and Wikan's (2008) study which used Grade 6 students and specified their ages, Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander's (2015) study does not make mention of the participants' ages. The researchers in this study allowed the participants

to make independent book choices which were followed by asking the pre-adolescents for their reasons for choosing such materials. It was found that the participants wanted to identify with the characters, as they responded: “It did grip me because it teaches me ... when I’m at high school I will know what’s coming next...prepare me for things ahead.” Another reason for reading is escapism (Strommen & Mates, 2004). A pre-adolescent argued that when you read, it takes you to another world allowing the reader to forget about their problems and focus solely on that particular story.

In Majid and Tan’s (2007) study, the participants claimed that they read because it helped them relax and it was a hobby. Likewise, pre-adolescents stated they read because it was fun and a form of relaxation. Similarly pre-adolescents in United States read because it was fun and opened their imagination (Strommen & Mates, 2004). A sixth grade pre-adolescent claimed that: “You can read and no one tells you how the picture should be. It’s just your mind that’s going with the words and it can be any picture you want it to be” (Strommen & Mates, 2004, p. 196). An 11-year-old female stated that she read books which were turned into movies because the books were more detailed and provided her with much more information as compared to the movie (Grozdanic, 2013). Similarly an 11-year-old added that he preferred reading fiction as it allowed him to be a part of the adventure (Grozdanic, 2013). Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2015) used three types of schools in their study - well resourced (20%), reasonably resourced (47.9%) and poorly resourced (32.1%). However, the discussion of findings included all findings of all three types of schools collectively. Fourteen grade six students were interviewed and from these interviews the students indicated that they viewed reading to be an enjoyment and it was interesting and fun. While other interviewees indicated that reading provided them with information and like the participants in Strommen and Mates’ (2004) study, it took them to another world. Rare responses were that reading made the pre-adolescent feel new and gave them a surprise as one individual (interviewee 3) claimed “there is always something interesting behind it...you get a surprise...” (Totemeyer, Kirchner & Alexander, 2015, p.22). Pre-adolescents in Strommen and Mates’ (2004) study further asserted that reading was better than watching television as you have the freedom to create the setting and atmosphere in your head and this is what makes the story much more fun.

According to Wong (2016), an 11-year-old argued that she was “sick of reading about white boys and black dogs” and as a result this pre-adolescent had launched her own book drive. This echoes other studies such as those by Flood (2016) and Tveit (2012) who also claimed that pre-



adolescents want to read material when the content related to their life. Likewise, a pre-adolescent in Norway stated that reading material was chosen because she wanted to be emotionally involved with the content (Tveit, 2012). Similarly, an 11-yearold was tired of reading the books assigned to her at school since they were based on a specific race and gender, specifically white males (Flood, 2016). Alternatively, she wanted to read about something she was familiar with and which she could relate to. Her mother claimed: “For young black girls in the US, context is really important...to see themselves and have stories that reflect experiences that are closer to what they have or their friends have.”

I needed to consider all these factors when I worked with my participants. I needed to draw on these studies as I made sense of the responses that emerged from my study.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

From the discussed literature review, it can be clearly seen that despite the pre-adolescents being of the same/similar age group, their reading materials and reasons for reading differ greatly. The students’ context and background, among other factors, determine the genre which will appeal to them.

In terms of the South African studies, the issues surrounding poor literacy levels play a role in the materials students read and the reasons they read. The fact that students are choosing books which are far too simple indicates that it is these books which children feel most comfortable reading.

## Chapter three: Methodology

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the approaches I have taken in order to complete my study at the mentioned school. The chapter will begin by discussing the chosen research paradigm, approach and design. Next would follow the data collection methods whereby all three methods of data collection will be discussed as well as the necessary measures I took to ensure that my participants (students) were both respected and protected during this process.

### **3.2 Research paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm would best suit the research topic since this paradigm relies on first-hand accounts; in this case accounts from the Grade 6 pre-adolescents (Blanche & Kelly in Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The chosen paradigm was used to interpret participants' feelings and experiences, which the research aims to achieve through the data collection methods which explored the Grade 6 pre-adolescents' reading habits by interacting with them and posing questions in the form of questionnaires and other documents (Blanche & Kelly in Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Interpretivist researchers believe there is no correct method or single route to the path of knowledge (Willis, 1995 in Thomas, 2010). Data and answers to the research questions are obtained through thorough examination of the research questions. In this study three data collection methods were used in order to provide a wide range of answers. Thomas (2010) claims that this paradigm is underpinned by interpretation, and it is important for the researcher to interpret the data so that it makes sense and allows the researcher to see patterns which may exist.

One feature in this paradigm is that it takes into account several realities and therefore it relies on the participants' knowledge, experiences and views (Thomas, 2010). This was achieved through three data collection methods. This was produced by the participants in the study and provided a detailed account of their reading habits.

Lastly, the relationship between the participants and the researcher is subjective and in my research I am the participants' (students') educator. This had an overall effect on the study.

Firstly from past experiences of teaching at three schools, I have found that students do not trust easily, at first some were hostile but with time trust replaces hostility. With that being said, while conducting my study, my students trusted me since I had taught them for the past few months. As a result, their responses were probably honest and some did not shy away from stating they did not enjoy reading. The students were also aware that I knew their potential and did not try to impress me as they may do to someone who is foreign to them. The students were comfortable with me, so much so that their hands shot up to ask for spelling of certain words when they answered the questionnaire. The grade six students were also enthusiastic about being a part of the study resulting in all students returning all data once they had completed it.

### **3.3 Research approach**

Flick (2014) argues that qualitative research is specific to the study of social relations and social contexts which in my study is a primary school. Since this research will be conducted in an educational context (school), the qualitative research approach would be used as this approach entails a naturalistic setting or the study of a real world situation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It also focuses on participants' activities in their local context (Flick, 2014).

The qualitative researcher aims to seek participants' opinions, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, factors which will be achieved in the discussed research (Flick, 2014). The qualitative approach in my study focused on the Grade 6 pre-adolescents' reading habits, their text preferences and reasons why they read, and so the aim was to discover how the pre-adolescents felt and what they thought about reading (Rao, 2005). Another reason was due to the results being largely interpretive, which is a characteristic of the qualitative approach (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Qualitative research best suited my study, as my knowledge about what pre-adolescents read and why they read is rather limited. Qualitative research also uses sensitising concepts which Bowen (2006) defines as: "ways of seeing, organising, and understanding experience." However, sensitising concepts can be used in order to understand the Grade 6 pre-adolescents' reading habits in order to fully understand the material they read and why, being sensitive to their backgrounds (Flick, 2014).

### **3.4 Research design**

The best suited design for my intended research is the case study. This is because a case study involves investigation in a real life context which in my study is a school in Durban (Ashley, in Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012). The ‘case’ would include one Grade 6 class in which a series of data collection methods took place in order to answer the research questions. It is also noted that there was no previous research done in this particular context and therefore according to the definition of case study, it entails exploring issues where not much is known (Ashley, in Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012).

Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 544) claim that “case studies afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources.” My intended research aimed to both explore what pre-adolescents read and describe their reasons for reading by the use of three data collection methods: open-ended questionnaires, visual documents and written documents. Since three data collection methods were used, this allowed the researcher to avoid looking at the phenomenon through one perspective, but rather it allowed for many facets of pre-adolescents’ reading habits to be understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Yin (2003) cited in Baxter and Jack (2008) states that case study may be used when your research questions seek to find out how and why. As a result, case study was applicable to my research since one of my research questions was: *Why do pre-adolescents read?* Secondly a case study can be used when the researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of the participants which is relevant to my study. I described students’ responses about their attitudes towards reading and the texts that appeal to them in detail (Ashley, in Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012).

To avoid the case being too broad with several objectives, it is important to have boundaries that will limit the researcher so that he/she does not end up with too many objectives in the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). My research has boundaries which limit my study to my school in Ottawa, Durban, with a further restriction of the participants being only those in Grade 6.

Yin (2003) cited in Baxter and Jack (2008) provides several types of case studies such as explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, single, holistic, and multiple case studies. However, my research was a descriptive case study as it described the phenomenon and its real life context.

### **3.5 Data collection**

### **3.5.1 Open-ended questionnaires (See Attached- Appendix C)**

The use of questionnaires in my study was a feasible data collection method since I worked with 39 students, so questionnaires were a quick way of obtaining data from a large number of participants. Questionnaires are designed to extract a substantial amount of information from the participants and a questionnaire does not take a long time to administer and complete (Tymms in Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012). It is also a cheap method of gathering data in an educational context and relies on honesty from the participants (Rao, 2005). Because the questions in the questionnaires were open-ended, it provided the students with an opportunity to elaborate and share their personal experiences or opinions about the questions at hand (Tymms in Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012). Since I am the students' educator, I will use their names on the questionnaire to come to know each response. Using their names, I will know them in terms of age and race because being a form educator entails keeping a record of the students' statistics in terms of their biographical details. However, biographical details had been included in the questionnaire.

### **3.5.2 Visual method (See Attached- Appendix A)**

I used a visual method which required the pre-adolescents to design a poster. Young and Barrett (2001) assert that visual methods to obtain data “gain insights into the context of a child's lived experience” (Young & Barrett, 2001, p.143). It is these methods which allowed the pre-adolescents in my study to create a poster reflecting their reading habits hence the research was with children rather than about children (Young & Barrett, 2001).

My approach entailed the pre-adolescents creating a visual document encompassing both my research questions. Students were asked to design a poster of all the material that they read and reasons they read them. The documents in my study were new material since the participants had to create a visual document being a poster/collage for the purpose of this study (Flick, 2014). As Young and Barrett (2001) claim, the use of visual methodology when researching children seems to make it a fun task for them, as it is child-centred and allows the participants to own the given exercise, which was the poster.

Young and Barrett (2001) claim that in their research of street children, visual methodology was used which required the children to draw, and the drawing allowed the children to express themselves. In my study my participants (pre-adolescents) were asked to construct a poster

using pictures/words/drawings informing the reader of the material they read and reasons for reading them.

By doing this activity, I was able to find out what materials pre-adolescents read and the reasons for reading them. Not only did the participants and the researcher share a researcher-student relationship, but also an educator-student relationship since the researcher is also the students' English educator. Because the students are familiar with me as their educator, their responses appeared to be honest. This activity provided clarity to the answers obtained in the questionnaire, by informing me what texts/material pre-adolescents read.

### **3.5.3 Documentary method (See Attached- Appendix B)**

I also used a documentary method which Flick (2014) terms 'data beyond talk.' Coffey (2014 in Flick, 2014) claims that documents may be rather broad and may refer to official records, state documents, everyday documents such as notes, records, emails or private documents like diaries, letters or even a testimony. This method of gathering data does not include interviews, narratives or focus groups but will rather include solicited documents (Flick, 2014). This means that it will be produced by the participants for the research at hand (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

In my research, the students were asked to keep a reading log for a period of two days in order to gain insight into their reading habits. According to Friesner and Hart (2005), a log has gained popularity in recent years for research purposes. The function of a log is to allow students to reflect on their learning or may serve to extract data for research. The reading log in my research aimed to extract data directly from the participants and prevented it from being "filtered by the researcher at the recording stage" (Friesner & Hart, 2005, p. 120.). The log included all the material that the pre-adolescents read and all the reasons why they read them. This helped to clarify the students' responses in the questionnaires and visual document. Flick (2014) claims when documents are written by the participant during the research, it allows for their true experience to be brought to light beyond their personal views.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

The purpose of data analysis is to describe, compare and identify data extracted from the participants. Flick (2014) adds that at times a researcher may not look at what the participant has said, but must also be able to ‘read between the lines’ for things that have not been said.

In terms of the questionnaire, visual and document method retrieved from the participants, the responses were coded in order for the data to be arranged into categories (Rao, 2005). According to Charmaz (2002, in Flick, 2014, p.373), coding is: “naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorises, summaries, and accounts for each piece of data.” The aim of analysing data in the case of my research was to read the data and assign it into categories in order to make interpretation easier for the researcher (Flick, 2014).

For the first data collection method which was the questionnaires, I used two categories which are currently my two research questions. The first category was: *What do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read?* The second category was: *Why do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read?* The categories were then further categorized using the list of reading materials (school books, magazines, newspapers, comic books, internet/online, novels, entertainment, video games) given to the students in the questionnaire. (Appendix C). These along with a question asking students for other material which they read formed my categories for my first research question. Similarly the question in the questionnaire ‘*Underline the ones that apply to you. I like to read because...*’ (It’s fun, To learn something, to pass time, my parents force me to read, to complete homework/tests, reading ends boredom, my friends like to read, I don’t read) formed the categories for my second research question as well as other reasons which were identified from the data sources.

The visual document, which was a poster, and the documentary method, which was the reading log, were also analysed in the same manner as the questionnaire, by using my two research questions to slot responses into categories. By doing this, I was able to find answers to my research questions.

However, as the research and data analysis continues other categories may evolve and each case must be rechecked and where necessary it can be modified (Flick, 2006).

### **3.7 Sampling**

Sampling in research refers to how participants are selected from the population (Flick, 2014). In qualitative research, the participants are chosen because they meet the criteria for that particular research (Flick, 2014). According to Flick (2014), the sample the researcher chooses for the research must be large enough to extract rich data. In the case of my study, I used one grade six class consisting of 39 students.

In my study I used convenience sampling. As Marshall (1996) notes, convenience sampling is used when the participants are accessible for the researcher. In my research, I as the researcher am an educator at the school and teach this class of students, and therefore the type of sampling will be convenience sampling because it is convenient to gather data from the participants (Rao, 2005). Marshall (1996) further states that since the participants are accessible to the researcher, it saves the researcher time and money.

<b>Information about Grade 6 class</b>	<b>Statistics</b>
Gender	Male– 20 Female– 19
Age	11 years old– 17 12 years old- 18 13 years old– 4
Race	Indians– 18 Africans- 20 Coloured– 1
Language	<u>First language:</u> English- 19 IsiZulu- 13 Xhosa- 4 Shona- 1 Ndebele- 1 Tswane-1 <u>Second language:</u> (Some did not speak a second language) English- 11



	Xhosa- 1 Tamil-1 Hindi-1 <u>Third language:</u> (Most did not speak a third language) IsiZulu- 1
Nationality	South African – 36 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Cape- 1</li> <li>• Eastern Cape- 3</li> <li>• KwaZulu-Natal- 32</li> </ul> Mozambique-1 Zimbabwe- 2
School Reading Programme	Total: 9 students Male- 5 Female-4

**Table 1: Statistics of the Grade 6 class**

From the total number of students (39), 20 students are male and 19 students are female. Their ages range from 11 years old to 13 years old, with 17 students who are 11 years old, 18 students who are 12 years old and only four students who are 13 years old. In terms of race (race classification is still a reality in South African schools), this class of grade sixes are diverse since it is made up of three race groups being Indians, Africans and one child classified Coloured. There are almost equal numbers of Indians and Africans since the first mentioned group consists of 18 students and the second group has 20 students.

From statistics gathered from the participants it was found that 25 of the 39 participants (64%) speak only one language at home, while 13 students (33%) indicated that they spoke two languages and only one student (3%) speaks three languages at home. From those who speak only one language at home it was found that 17 students speak English, six IsiZulu and one student each who speak Xhosa and Ndebele. Also, some students mentioned that English is

spoken at school and their mother tongue is spoken at home. Those who mentioned they spoke two languages at home used mainly their mother tongue with the exception of two Indian students who stated that they spoke English at home and sometimes spoke using their mother tongue, Hindi or Tamil.

This grade six class is made up of national and international students however there are more students (36) who are South African by nationality. The other three students are from Africa, two students are from Zimbabwe and one student is from Mozambique. Of the 39 students, nine students (five males and four females) have been identified as weak readers and have been placed in a reading programme titled 'Remedial Programme' where an educator works with them during the school day on a one-on-one basis in order to provide additional skills that the child may be lacking. Thus far, one student has shown considerable improvement and as a result she was removed from the remedial programme. Currently there are eight students from the grade six class who remain part of the remedial programme.

### **3.8 Ethics**

Flick (2014) notes that the procedures that are used in research need to protect those who participate in the research. There needs to be a code of ethics to ensure a good relationship between the researchers and the participants, where the participant is respected and treated fairly.

My research entailed informed consent, meaning that all participants had given their consent to participate in the research. Therefore, they had to volunteer to be a part of the mentioned research (Bell, 2010). Flynn and Goldsmith (2013, in Flick, 20014, p. 54) claim that informed consent is when the "subjects know and understand the risks and benefits of participation in the research." The participants were assured that their identity would be protected and so both the name of the school and the name of the students were replaced with pseudonyms. By doing this, it would be impossible for others to identify the institution (school) or the participants and bring about harm to them (Flick, 2014).

To ensure participant confidentiality, a form (See Attached-Appendix D) was given to the students to sign which included the terms of the research along with the consent form (Durrheim & Wassenaar in Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Since the participants in my study are

children below the age of 18, they may not fully understand and make an informed decision about being a part of the research. They are therefore termed a vulnerable population (Flick, 2014). For this reason, their parents or guardians also provided consent (See Attached- Appendix E) for the minor (Flick, 2014). The research set out included the principle of non-maleficence. With that being said, the research did not harm the participants physically or emotionally.

Another ethical principle is beneficence which states that research should not be done for the sake of doing research but should rather bring about positive benefits to the participants (Flick, 2014). Similarly Durrheim and Wassenaar in Blanche and Durrheim (1999) inform us that the research at hand should be of benefit to the participants or other researchers in the same field of study. My research was of benefit to the Grade 6 students as their tasks produced for the research were marked and feedback was given to the students. It also benefited the school and educators by informing us about the preferred reading materials that appeal to the students. As a result, we may incorporate such texts our lessons, in an attempt to make reading an interesting and fun activity. Other researchers would benefit from my research as they could conduct this research in another context or attempt to fill gaps which may exist in my research.

### **3.9 Gatekeeper approval (See Attached- Appendix F)**

The gatekeeper in the research environment was the school principal who had granted permission to allow the study to take place. This was done by the principal signing in agreement the form titled ‘gatekeeper’s approval.’

### **3.10 Feedback to participants**

A debriefing took place in the Grade 6 class and the findings based on the participants’ questionnaires and documents (visual and written) were discussed. The main findings revealed to the students what materials they read and why they read. Other findings as obtained from the students’ questionnaires, such as the amount of time the students spent reading, preferred topics and their favourite and least favourite reading materials, were also discussed in the classroom.

### **3.11 Rigour and trustworthiness**

#### **3.11.1 Rigour**

Rigour refers to how thorough one's research is. Firstly, since the context of my study (school) is one Grade 6 class containing approximately 39 students, the number of the participants in the sample was large enough to draw conclusions about the group. My research also used triangulation, more specifically methodological triangulation (Flick, 2014). This refers to the use of more than one data collection method (Flick, 2014). Triangulation allows for the production of knowledge through the use of more than one methodological approach (Flick, 2014). Therefore triangulation adds validity since it increases the scope and depth of the data, thus providing more grounded and sound research (Flick, 2014).

### **3.11.2 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to how reliable the data is in a particular study. Bell (2010) defines reliability as “the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions.” Hambleton as cited in Arthur, Waring, Coe, Hedges (2012) claims that questionnaires cannot be given to the participants twice to check if their responses match and if they were honest. As a result, in my questionnaires I rephrased certain questions in order to determine how true the participants' responses were.

As an educator and from my general observations of the students at my school, I have noticed that at times their minds are often clouded with the previous lesson or the activities during lunch break and so this may affect their responses to the questions in the questionnaire and the production of the visual document. To ensure that the students' responses were honest and not due to incidents which occurred during the school day, I allowed the students a few minutes of silence. This ensured that they cleared their minds and thoughts and brought them to a state of calmness, creating a space to relax and change their thoughts (Lees, 2012). I also began a general discussion before gathering data to create a warm and comfortable atmosphere so that everyone would respond freely and honestly.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This study used the interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach and case study design. The case was one Grade 6 class at Dreamwood Primary School. Three methods of data collection were used as this allowed for triangulation. The three instruments for collecting data were the questionnaire, visual document, which is the poster, and the written document, which is the reading log. In terms of ethics, students and their parents/guardians were asked to complete a

form indicating that they granted permission to be involved in the research. The school and the students' names were replaced using a pseudonym to protect the identities of the students and the school.

## Chapter four: Discussion of findings

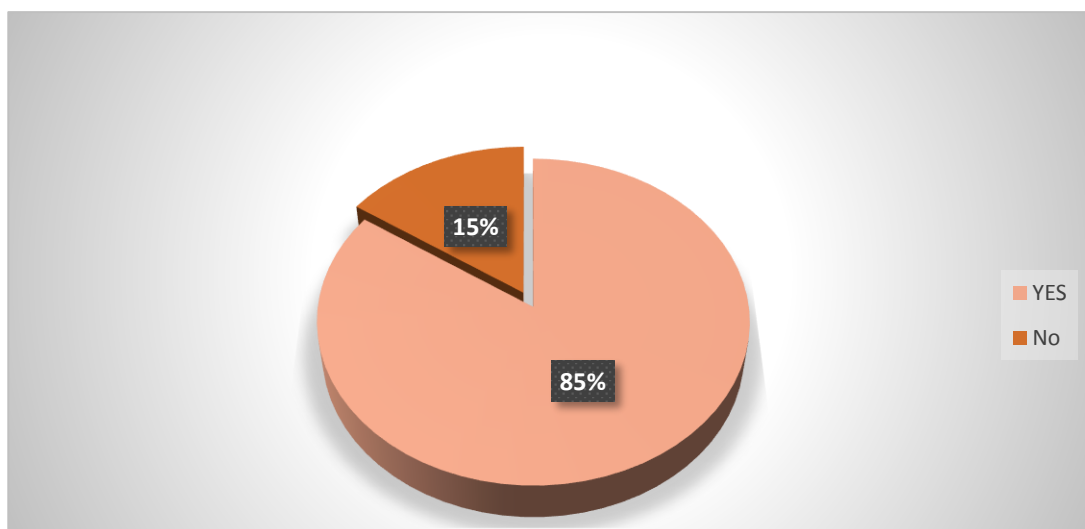
### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the analysis of the data collected by means of a questionnaire, visual document (poster) and written document (reading log). All data was analysed with the intention of answering the two research questions. The questionnaire was first analysed as the questions sought to find out the students' background regarding reading materials. Thereafter, the results from the visual method and the document method will follow.

Before finding answers to the two research questions, it is imperative to know a little about the pre-adolescents' reading habits at the chosen school. Therefore I will discuss students' level of enjoyment of reading, the materials the pre-adolescents have in their households, their favourite and least favourite reading material, their library visits (classroom and school library), the amount of time they spend reading on an average day and their leisure activities. All of the above answers were gathered from the questionnaire (Appendix A). Thereafter, the two research questions will be considered from the three data collection instruments collectively.

### **4.2 Background to students' reading habits**

The first question in the questionnaire wished to uncover the pre-adolescents' attitudes towards reading. The question was "*Do you enjoy reading?*" followed by asking students for a reason for their responses.



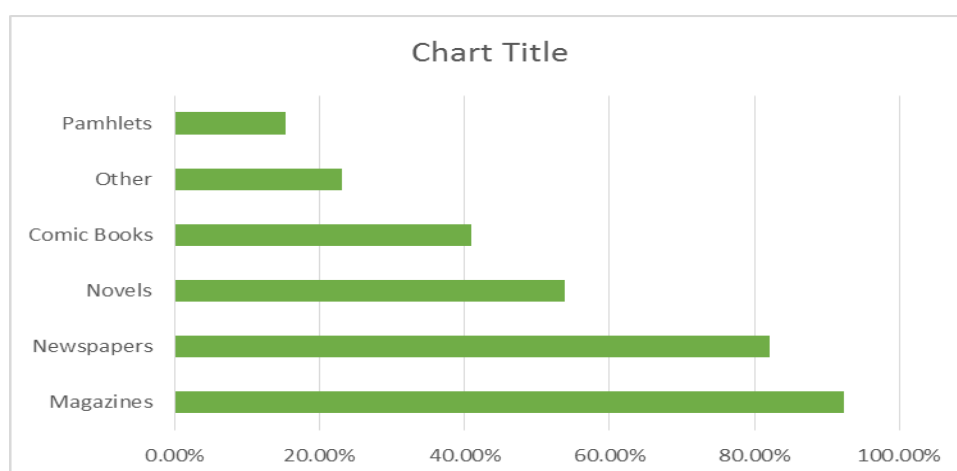
**Figure 1: Do you enjoy reading?**

The above graph shows students' feelings about reading. Of the 39 participants, 33 (85%) indicated that they enjoyed reading, while six (15%) indicated that they do not enjoy reading. It is important to point out that one student, Fanele, had a rather limited understanding of English at the time the questionnaires were given to students to complete. I then decided to ask another student to translate in IsiZulu for him. During the translation, he was told the meaning of the question which was *"Do you enjoy reading? Why/why not?"* To my surprise he immediately put a line through his responses, shaking his head and said 'Haaibo' which means 'no ways' in English and changed his answer from yes to no. There might be many reasons for his response, but it is possible that he equated 'reading' with 'reading in English', and since he struggled with speaking and understanding English, reading English would be very difficult. The participants, five males and one female, who indicated that they did not enjoy reading, gave reasons for their responses. Four students (67%) claimed that reading was 'hard', one student indicated that reading was boring and not exciting, and one student mentioned that she preferred to play rather than read. It should be noted that the one female who indicated that she did not enjoy reading in her questionnaire only listed one reading material for each day in her reading log, unlike the other students. This informed me that she really did not enjoy reading as her reading log had the least reading materials or it could be that she found the task of completing a reading log boring.

Conversely a large number of students indicated that they enjoyed reading and gave the following reasons: 23 students (70%) mentioned that reading was interesting and exciting, and 13 (33.3%) indicated that it enabled them to become educated. Other responses were: three students (9%) stated that they thought reading was important, two (5.1%) of students indicated that reading expanded their imagination and another two students (5.1%) claimed that reading helped them learn new words and the spelling of words. One student (3%) claimed he liked to read because he knew how to read, one (3%) wrote that one learnt new things by reading, and two (5.1%) claimed that reading prevented boredom. From students' responses it was clear that the students read for different reasons and from my theoretical framework, these reasons as mentioned above can be put into the two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. The following reasons, as provided by the students, related to intrinsic motivation: reading was interesting and exciting, it expanded their imagination, reading taught students many things as well as it entertained them. This is because the students' responses gave insight that the students genuinely enjoyed reading as an activity and thus made it part of their lifestyle. Reading for extrinsic motivation included that students considered reading important, perhaps to enable

them to progress, develop their vocabulary and thus they learnt how to spell, and they viewed reading as a means to become educated. According to these reasons, while some students appear to enjoy reading, it can be seen that students are also reading to better themselves at school and ultimately achieve good results.

In the questionnaire, students were given a list of five reading materials namely: magazines, newspapers, comic books, pamphlets, novels, and the sixth option asked students for other reading material which they could find around their home. This question sought to find out the reading materials that the students have in their home which may impact the first research question: *What do pre-adolescents read?* The participants were not limited to responses and they could include as many materials as they had in their homes. It was interesting to see that a large number of students had media texts in their home as 92% indicated that they had magazines, which was followed by 82% who had newspapers. The reason I find this interesting is that when the students were asked to bring in either magazines or newspapers for particular classroom exercises, very few actually did so. Possible reasons for this may be that students considered the type of magazine that appealed to them to be unsuitable for school use or perhaps their parents did not allow them to take material such as the newspaper out of the home since it belonged to the household. Another reason may be that this was not asked of them often and therefore the students simply forgot. Fifty-four percent of pre-adolescents had novels but unlike studies conducted by Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2015) and Warren and Maynard (2011), whose participants specified that they read either fiction or non-fiction, in this study, students simply mentioned they had novels at home. Forty-one percent had comic books, 15% pamphlets and 23% indicated 'other.' The Figure below indicates the materials found in the students' homes.



**Figure 2: Material found in pre-adolescents' homes**



A student in Snowball's (2008) study revealed that he visited the library to borrow a graphic novel as he did not have this type of reading material in his home. This indicates that, should a specific type of material not be available in a student's home, he may need to borrow 'other' such materials which are not available in their homes. The 'other' included religious books, text books, crossword puzzles, video games, and posters. Pamphlets belonging to a parent were read by a student in Knoester's (2009) study, indicating another type of reading material found in the home.

A factor that could contribute to the materials the participants read and the reasons for their choices include their likes and dislikes. Students were asked two open-ended questions in the questionnaire: *What is your favourite reading material? Why? What is your least favourite reading material? Why?* The findings will follow respectively. The participants' favourite reading materials in descending order are as follows: comics/comedy/jokes (26%), magazines (23%), religion/Bible (15%), school books and novels (10%), video games and newspapers (8%). In contrast to my findings, a study in Estonia by Uusen (2010) found that the grade six students' favourite reading material was fiction books (novels) whereby in my study only a small percentage indicated that novels were their favourite reading material. It is possible that students find comics and magazines easier to read and novels might be associated with school.

For the question: *What is your least favourite reading material? Why?* There were 38 responses. For the least favourite reading material, 50% of the participants mentioned that it was the newspaper, reinforcing the findings of the previous question. However, newspapers are a common reading material in the students' households as they are found in 82% of the students' homes. This indicates that despite students having access to the newspaper, the content or format does not appeal to the students and could possibly show that although some students may have access to certain materials, it is their preference which determines the texts that they read. It is also possible that the newspaper is the domain of the adults in the home. Other least favourite reading materials were school books and magazines (13%), online material (11%), novels (5%), and charts, video games and mail (2.63%). Contrary to this finding, a study in South Africa by Machet (n.d.) found that one of the children's favourite reading materials was in fact school books. However, a study in Texas concurs with my finding as the participants also claimed that school books were their least favourite reading material (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). Unlike my students who did not enjoy reading online, students in Blackwell, Lauricella and Wartella's (2014) study had shown that pre-adolescents went online frequently with 47.6% who went online for between one to three hours. It could

be possible that the students in my study possibly do not have access to technological devices and this could be due to their parents' financial situations. It should be noted that some of these students come from poor backgrounds. In addition, the school does not have access to the internet and only has one computer for school use and therefore the students are not exposed to reading online even in a school setting. Alternatively, students possibly did not consider social media or browsing the internet as a means of reading as participants in Knoester's (2009) study also mentioned that reading online was not part of their school work.

It should be noted that Dreamwood Primary has a classroom library in each class. Students may read books from the collection once their work has been completed or they may borrow books to take home. The school library is open to all students once the Grade R teacher dismisses her students at 1.00pm (the Grade R class is housed in the library). I wanted to find out the pre-adolescents' attitudes towards both the classroom and school libraries and if these materials were read. This was done through the questionnaire. It was found that 64% of students indicated that they borrowed books from their classroom library. However, according to my records only eight students (21%) read books during the class and borrowed books. This could mean that the pre-adolescents are not telling the truth or they borrowed from the classroom library prior to my arrival at the school in January. It is difficult to understand why the students would indicate such answers when they know I would have the facts. It is possible that they either misunderstood the question or indicated their intention to borrow.

Thirty-eight of the 39 students indicated that they did in fact borrow books from the school library, although 16% of the participants indicated that they borrowed the books because they were forced to either by the school librarian or their parents. One student who had indicated that she did not enjoy reading wrote: *"All the children in the school borrow. I do not want to be left out."* Others had positive views about the books they borrowed and claimed the following: the books were interesting to read, they enjoyed reading or the library was well equipped with a variety of books to choose from. Surprisingly the last question seeking students' library visits revealed that eight students (21%) did not read the materials that they borrowed from the school library when asked the question: *'Do you read the material that you borrow?'* When the questionnaire was administered, despite continuously urging the students to be honest in their responses as there were no correct answers and there would be no implications from their responses, students were sceptical. For the above mentioned question, students asked me if I would reveal their answers to the school librarian and I assured them

that I would not and their responses would be confidential. As a result, 63% (25 students) indicated that they did not read the books because they were difficult. This may be due to the students choosing the incorrect books, meaning that their book choice was beyond their reading level or perhaps they had limited time in the library to make their book choice. From this, we see that although the students are taken to the library there is little or no assistance given to the students by the librarian in terms of book choices and students are left to their own devices to make independent book choices. It should also be noted that the librarian does not teach this grade and therefore she has no knowledge of the students' reading abilities or the reading material that appeals to this grade six class. Since there is no instruction time between the librarian and the students, they probably do not feel comfortable asking her for assistance. It is also worth mentioning that some students were scared when answering questions pertaining to their library visits, which indicates that the students and librarian possibly do not share a good relationship. Furthermore 16% of the students wrote in their response to the question '*Do you borrow reading material from your school library? Why/ why not?*' that they were forced to borrow books from the school library as one student wrote "*Yes. Because we are forced to borrow.*" Due to the fact the librarian interacts with Grade Rs, she is possibly not equipped with sufficient knowledge about the sort of books that pre-adolescents will be interested in, as 7.7% (3 students) divulged that the books in the school library were uninteresting or they simply did not have time to read. As a result, the librarian is unable to market books to students and inform them of which books are good reads. This disjointed relationship between the students and the librarian does affect their reading habits as students are simply borrowing a book from the library to satisfy the requirements of the school. If these visits were to be conducted by the students' language educators, then they could assist students with their book choice since they are aware of each student's reading ability.

It is also important to know the amount of time the pre-adolescents spend on reading and so one question asked students: "*How much time do you spend on reading in a day.*" Six choices (less than 1 hour, 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, 5 hours or more) were given to the students and they had to choose the one that best suited their reading habits. An equal number of students (35.89%) indicated both 1 hour and less than 1 hour. These findings indicate that students recognise the day to include the time at home only as a time when reading takes place. The graph below shows that as the number of hours increase, the amount of time the participants spent on reading decreases. Seven participants stated that they spent two hours reading while three students indicated having spent three hours reading. No participant spent four hours

reading, however, one indicated that he spent five or more hours reading. This could possibly be due to the student including the contact time at school where reading occurs. Potential reasons for students not spending time reading may be due to media or technology uses, their dislike for reading or they may simply have other or better activities to do.



**Figure 3: Amount of time spent on reading**

A large number of students (72%) indicated having spent either one hour or less than one hour engaging in reading per day. The students' leisure activities as mentioned in the questionnaire correlated with the amount of time spent reading. Thirty-two students (82%) did not mention reading as part of their leisure activities when responding to the question: *'During your leisure, what activities do you engage in? Why?'* This informs us that the majority of the students do not consider reading to be a leisure activity as compared to watching television, playing Playstation /X-box/ Nintendo Wi or playing outside. This could be due to the students perceiving leisure activities to be something fun and entertaining- something that reading does not offer.

Their views on reading could possibly stem from school and the manner in which reading is presented to them. Reading takes place in every subject and as educators, we tend to emphasise its importance but using only prescribed texts, not materials freely chosen by the students. Even library visits become associated with work as the students are forced to borrow books even though the content may not appeal to them. As a result the students view reading to be associated with work and therefore during their leisure time they engage in other activities.

Only seven students (18%) mentioned reading to be part of their leisure activity, four of which gave direct responses to reading such as: *"I use my phone and go on the internet to read an exciting story."* The other three students did not mention reading directly but from their mentioned activities, it indicates that reading does take place since they mentioned the use of the internet as well as the use of social media when communicating with their friends. This could indicate that students do not consider the act of texting or browsing the internet as a means of reading as one student said: *"I go on the internet and look at pictures of animal quotes."*

### **4.3 What do students read?**

From all the data collection instruments (posters, questionnaires and reading logs), students identified all the materials they read and at times also included preferred genres or topics. The questionnaire gave students a choice of eight reading materials that included school books, magazines, newspapers, comic books, internet/online material, novels, entertainment and video games. However, it included a ninth column which allowed students to write down all other materials that they read which were not included in the eight given choices as listed above. It should be noted that of the 39 participants, 34 students (87%) filled in the additional column labelled 'other reading material'. This indicated that the students read other materials besides those listed in the questionnaire. Some also specified the types of materials which they read. From the students' responses gathered from the 'other material', eight 'other' reading materials were established from the questionnaire. The posters reflected the lowest number of types of reading materials as compared to the other data collection methods. Possible reasons for this may be due to the students only including the reading materials which appealed to them or because they only had access to certain pictures since the poster allowed the students to include graphics of the materials which they read. Lastly, the reading log provided a much more detailed list of students' reading habits as it entailed the students keeping a two-day record of the reading materials they had read.

Across all three data instruments, it was clear that some reading materials were preferred over others. The following reading materials were read the most: school books, magazines, newspapers, religious books and novels. Materials which were read the least were: instructions, letters, charts/posters, recipes, competitions and school circulars.

#### **4.3.1 Books**

##### **4.3.1.1 School books**

Data from the questionnaire and the reading log revealed that the most read reading material was school books. According to the findings from the questionnaire, 28 students (71.7%) indicated that they read school books while similar results were found in the reading log. In the reading log, all but one student indicated that they read school books. This means that 38 of the total 39 participants had read some form of school material during the period that the reading log was given to them. The one student who did not include school books in her reading log was one of the six students who revealed that they did not enjoy reading. However, the reading log was given during the school week and some form of school based reading had to take place either during the school day - from the worksheet, chalkboard or textbook or after school when the child was engaging in homework, which is mandatory at Dreamwood Primary School. This indicates that this student possibly simply hates reading since reading takes place during every school day but due to her despising the activity she failed to include it in her reading log. In all questions relating to reading, this student had rather negative things to say about reading such as she would rather play than read. To the question in the questionnaire asking students *'Is reading part of your leisure activity? Why/ Why not?'* this student who does not like reading responded *"No, I would rather draw in my leisure time if I do not have anything to do."* It was surprising that this student stated she did not enjoy reading and she did not read at home since she is a high achiever and excels in her studies. It could be that she did not consider revising for the examination as reading or that she was aware of her potential and therefore she thought it was a waste of time since she knew she would do well in her examinations. It might well be that she does well academically but does not enjoy the process required to get there.

It should also be taken into account that the reading log was given to students to complete during the revision period of the examinations and therefore the high percentage of students (97%) who indicated to reading school books may be due to them studying for the upcoming examinations. Since the reading log required the students to write down exactly what they read and provide reasons for reading, most of the students indicated the subject that they read or revised.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Percentage Read</b>
English (28)	73.6%
IsiZulu (23)	60.5%

Natural Sciences and Technology (15)	39.4%
Life Skills (14)	36.8%
Mathematics (13)	34.2%
Social Sciences (10)	26.3%

**Table 1: Subjects read ranging from highest to lowest**

Table 1 provides the six compulsory learning areas which the grade six students at Dreamwood Primary undertake. The first column lists the six learning areas that the students study. The learning areas are listed from the subject most read to the subject least read. Next to each subject in brackets is the total number of students who indicated having read that subject in their reading log. The next column indicates the percentage of the students who had read that particular subject.

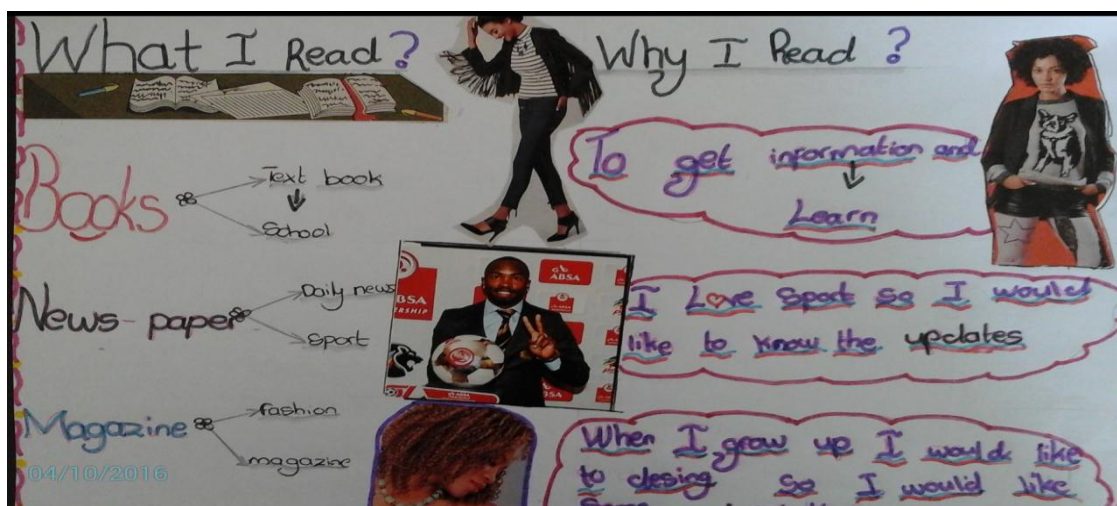
From the above table, one can clearly see that certain subjects are read more than other subjects. There could be several reasons for this, such as the students preferred reading certain subjects over others or due to the examination timetable which informed students which subject would be written first. However, upon closer examination it can be seen that languages were the most read subjects among the grade six students. At Dreamwood Primary School, English is the Home Language and the First Additional Language is IsiZulu. The results for English Home Language and IsiZulu are 73.6% and 60.5% respectively. It was interesting to see that the languages were by far the most read reading material since languages (English and IsiZulu) do not have large amounts of notes or diagrams for the students to study like other subjects, but rather it has rules and application of those rules. Also, to my knowledge and from my experience, English lessons do not get the same positive reaction like subjects such as Natural Science and Technology, which I also teach to this Grade 6 class. Students seem excited in the Science class and sometimes appear bored in the English class. Other subjects such as Natural Sciences and Technology, Life Skills and Mathematics all received reads between 34.2% and 39.4%. The least read school subject was Social Sciences which was read by only 26.3% of the participants. Social Sciences is made up of both History and Geography and it is probable that these subjects may come across to the students as boring as the content focuses on past issues

in History and this may be construed as irrelevant to the students. Possibly, for this reason, Social Sciences is read the least. Similarly, Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999) discovered that the pre-adolescents in their study claimed that their least favourite materials were History books.

In the reading log students indicated that they read worksheets, workbooks (available only for English Home Language and Mathematics) and their revision. It was interesting to see that no student indicated that they read from the chalkboard which is present in each classroom and made use of by most subject educators. This shows that students do not view reading from the chalkboard as a means of reading, but rather only consider materials which are printed in the form of books and worksheets to be reading. It could also be because students are so accustomed to the chalkboard since it has been in use from the time they entered school that even when they are reading notes or questions from the chalkboard and copying this into their books, they fail to view this as reading.

With regards to the students' posters it revealed that students read books which I further categorised into types of books. One type I had found was school books. Only five students indicated that they read school books. This was a small percentage consisting of 12.8% as compared to the results obtained from the reading log and the questionnaire. The poster entailed students creating a visual document including all the material that they read and reasons why they read. As Young and Barrett (2001) claim, the use of visual methodology, which in my research, was the poster, made the task fun for the children to engage in. It could therefore be that the students did not associate the fun task of creating and designing a poster with school-related reading materials and as a result they did not include them in their poster. Of the five students, two students included the words 'school books' and 'workbooks,' one included the word 'textbook' and the other two simply mentioned that they read schoolbooks, including one student who is not fluent in English and wrote down the IsiZulu terminology for school 'ischool books.'





**Image 1: What do students read?**

The above is a poster from one of the students. Under the category titled books, the student indicated two types of books: textbooks and school books. Other posters included the term workbook. A study by Machet (n.d.) echoes the same finding that pre-adolescents claimed they enjoyed reading school books. However in Texas, school books were the material which were least read by the pre-adolescents (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). It could be that South Africa students are keen to read academic texts or that educator's focus solely on reading for academic purposes and fail to spark an interest in students to read other material.

#### **4.3.1.2 Comic books**

According to the questionnaire it was found that 16 (41.0%) of the 39 students claimed they had comic books around their home, while 14 students (35.8%) indicated that they read comic books. This genre was also ranked as the students' favourite reading material when they were asked the question: "*What is your favourite reading material?*" in the questionnaire. Some responses for this question included seven students who indicated they read comic books, two students read comedy and one student read jokes. From students' posters, twelve students (30.7%) indicated that they read comic books. In the students' reading log only seven students (17.9%), indicated they read comic books. This showed that students indicated reading comics in their reading logs but not in their posters. The posters indicated that this genre of reading material was favoured by more male students than female students. Results from Dreamwood Primary concur with Knoester's (2009) study which revealed that male pre-adolescents

preferred reading materials such as graphic novels and comic books. Comics were also read by pre-adolescents during their leisure in a Singaporean study (Majid & Tan, 2007).

<b>Name of comic</b>	<b>Number read</b>	<b>Percentage read</b>
1. Dragon Ball Z	4	33.3%
2. SupaStrikas	2	16.6%
3. The Wizard of Id	2	16.6%
4. Adam at Home	1	8.3%
5. Superman vs Batman	1	8.3%
6. Shoe	1	8.3%
7. Herman	1	8.3%
8. Treknet	1	8.3%
9. Comic (Did not specify)	1	8.3%

**Table 2: Comic books read by participants**

The above table shows a list of nine comics/cartoons that were read by the students at Dreamwood Primary as indicated in their posters. The list is arranged from the most read comic to the least read comic. As shown, the most read comic was Dragon Ball Z which is also a popular children's television cartoon and was read by 33.3% of the students. It can be seen that by the students watching television, they are somewhat influenced to read materials based on what sparks their interest. It could also stem from the colour, graphics and sound from the television which makes the content more appealing and therefore the students want to know more about their favourite programmes. However, if students are watching television programmes about violence, crime or programmes which contain explicit scenes, these issues could also arouse students' curiosity causing them to read more on these matters. Therefore this informs that television content in the case of the students in Dreamwood Primary is a contributing factor to what the students read. Next was the comic SupaStrika which two males

(16.6%) read and one of them noted that he read this comic in the You Magazine. This finding is repeated in the reading log.



**Image 2: SupaStrika comic**

Image 2 is an example of one of the posters of the comic titled SupaStrika. This correlates with the results found in the magazines that students read topics on sports and the most popular sport is soccer. The other comic that received the same amount of reads (16.6%) as SupaStrika was The Wizard of Id. The other comics such as Adam at Home, Superman Versus Batman, Shoe, Herman, and Treknet were read by one student (8.3%) each.

#### **4.3.1.3 Novels/Stories**

Although more than half the students had novels around their homes as gathered from the questionnaire, novels ranked second last as students' favourite reading material. From the questionnaire, 16 students (41.0%) indicated that they read novels. From the posters, only 12 students indicated they read books of various genres. Six students (50%) indicated that they read novels; this included five males and one female. From the six students two students only stated that they read books at home without giving more information about the types of books they read. However, one did include a picture of a young woman wearing a bikini on the beach. This could possibly be the topic that interested him as the pre-adolescents are reaching the teenage years and will probably take notice of the opposite sex, especially those sporting minimal clothing like the picture he chose to include. Another student mentioned that the novels that he enjoyed reading about were based on horror or comedy. Similarly pre-

adolescents in Worthy, Moorman and Turner's (1999) study found that the participants enjoyed reading books which were scary. Three other students were very specific about the novels they read with two even mentioning their preferred author. A student expressed his love for the novel *Rumpelstiltskin* to the extent that his entire poster was based on this fairy tale. The last two students mentioned they read novels by favourite authors. A student claimed he read adventure novels by the author *Justin D'ath*. Likewise, in Strommen and Mates' (2004) study, one participant claimed that adventure books intrigued him hence causing him to read about themes on the jungle or about secret agents. Another student used pictures of horses and birds in her poster indicating that she read novels about animals. She also mentioned she enjoyed reading books by Michael Morpurgo and displayed her love for the mentioned author's novels by including her favourite books by him such as *Alone on a wild horse*, *War horse*, *Peaceful private*, *Born to run* and *The butterfly lion*. This finding in my study concurs with Uusen's (2010) study as the participants also pointed out that they read fiction books.

According to the reading log, 26 students (66.6%) mentioned that they read novels during the two days of keeping a record. From the 26 students, seven were not explicit about the novel or story which they had read as they simply indicated that they read a story or a library book. The rest of the students (19) did stipulate the types of novels or stories they read. Some of the books mentioned were novels or short stories. From all the students' responses, it was evident that students did not share the same preferences in their novel genres. It was interesting to see that three students read Disney stories which were definitely not age-appropriate for this grade. The Disney books included *Winnie the Pooh*, *Snow White* and *Dumbo*.

As discussed previously, I found that some grade six students are reading below their age and grade level. The books or stories that students mentioned they read were to my knowledge books with pictures and were written using simple language, far too simple for grade six students. This finding concurs with a study conducted in South Africa by Cornelissen and McMillan (2012) who discovered that the students' book choices were inappropriate for their grade as they chose picture books. Cornelissen and McMillan (2012) argued that the students' book choice could be due to the reading problems among South African students. To further elaborate this point, students in my study who read these books have been identified as weak readers and are currently in the school's remedial programme. Therefore, they chose such books based on their limited literacy skills and these books are easy to read and understand. Although they are reading books which are far too simple for their age group, it is important to

note that they are reading these books willingly, which Gambrell (2011) terms intrinsic motivation.

#### **4.3.1.4 Religious books**

Religious books were ranked third in the questionnaire in terms of students' favourite reading material. In a study in South Africa by Machet (n.d.) it was also found that pre-adolescents favoured stories based on their religion. Overall 25 students (64.1%) indicated that they read religious books. From these responses 14 students (35.8%) indicated they read the Bible, with one student mentioning that she read the IsiZulu Bible, one student (2.5%) read the Quran and ten students (25.64%) did not specify the religious books which they read but simply wrote 'religious books.' Since religious texts were found to be a popular read amongst the pre-adolescents, it may appear that they read such texts because they wanted to learn more about the subject which was indeed intrinsic motivation (Hidi, 2000 as cited in Wang and Guthrie, 2004).

Although more than half of the participants indicated they read religious books, in the questionnaire, only two students mentioned they read such books in their poster. Similarly in the reading log only six students (15.3%) claimed they read religious books. One reason for the small number of students indicating this may be that although students do read religious books, they might not have read these books during the two days they were required to record the materials they read. Of the six students, five indicated that they read the Bible and one indicated that he read the Bible and also read the Quran which he termed the 'Muslim Book Bible.' This revealed that this student is possibly being exposed to more than one religion at home. A female student wrote in her reading log that she read up to eight religious texts over the two days of recording. Some topics which she read included "*The song of the late Moses, I spy the enemy, The spies escape, David and Goliath, Alone in cave, The first disciples and Joseph and his brothers.*" Another student simply indicated in his reading log that he read scriptures from the Bible but he did not include the scriptures. Bible stories were also popular among students in Totemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander's (2015) study. Since students stated that they read material on their religion, religious texts, of all religions, could be included in my classroom library so that students can read these texts during their leisure at school. This may cause more students to read books from the classroom library and thereby emphasising to students that reading such texts is acceptable in a classroom environment, further promoting intrinsic motivation for the students to read. I could also include such texts in the English

classroom for purposes of reading aloud or independent reading ensuring that students are aware that any material they enjoy reading is allowed in my classroom, once again promoting intrinsic motivation to read among the students.

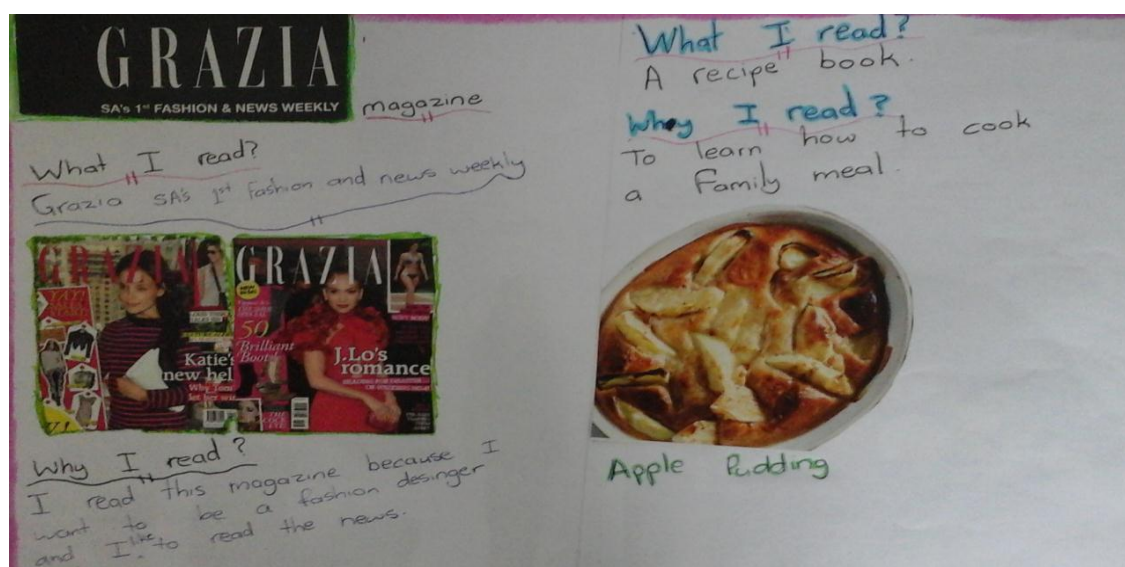
#### **4.3.1. 5 Cook books**

A student mentioned in her reading log that she read a cook book entitled *Indian Delights* and another student indicated that she read a cooking book but did not specify the type of book. She further noted that she read a recipe book containing seafood recipes. A third student also wrote in her reading log that she read a recipe to make a cake. These types of reading materials can be classified as non-fiction which pre-adolescents in a United Kingdom study also read (Warren & Maynard, 2011). However, the type of non-fiction differed; whereas in my study the students read cookbooks and recipes, in Warren and Maynard's (2011) study, the participants preferred to read diaries. In the same way, the students in my study took pleasure in reading cookbooks, so too did the students in Majid and Tan's (2007) study. A male student indicated that he read cook books with his uncle, indicating that the student was raised in a non-stereotypical household where males or females are not assigned particular tasks which determined their reading. This finding informs me that students in Dreamwood Primary might be reading various texts and do not necessarily consider reading material to be gender specific. As a result, lessons can include such materials since it might appeal to both male and female students.

#### **4.3.2 Magazines**

Magazines were found to be the most common reading material around the homes of the grade six students, which was similar to studies in Connecticut by Swerling, Brucker and Alfano (2008) and in South Africa by Machet (n.d.) as their participants also favoured reading magazines. From the questionnaire it was found that 20 students indicated that they had read magazines. This reading material was ranked fourth most popular in the questionnaire after school books, video games and internet/online reading materials, and was read by 51.2% of the students. Since the questionnaire only required students to tick the reading material which they read, it did not reveal the students' preferred magazine. However, the visual document (poster) and the written document (reading log) allowed the students to specify the magazine which they read.

In the poster, 24 students (61.5%) indicated by means of words and graphics that they had read magazines. Taking into account the students' drawings/pictures, name of magazine or the section they read, eleven categories were identified namely: fashion, recipes, magazines dealing with issues experienced by teenagers, mendhi patterns, cartoons, sport, wildlife, cars, comics and movies. Fashion magazines received the highest number of reads, with ten students (41%) reading fashion magazines. Surprisingly, of the ten students, one was a male, indicating that the male student was not a victim of the stereotypical ideology that fashion was predominantly for females. Yet, this male was not afraid to specify that his preferred magazine was a fashion magazine, the *Jet Club Magazine*. This magazine was not only read by the male student but also by two female students as they included a picture of the cover of the *Jet Club magazine*, some trendy fashion styles and a few famous people. The chosen visuals indicated that the students read about fashion since their pictures included clothing and several forms of accessories such as handbags, jewellery and make-up, and the reading logs reinforced this finding.



**Image 3: What do students read?**

The above as labelled Image 3 reveals a poster from a female student. From the student's choice of pictures, it is clear that students are not only drawn towards fashion but also following fashion of famous people. The student's poster included articles from a fashion magazine called *Grazia* which includes two famous female figures, Jennifer Lopez and Katie Holmes. The results concur with the study of Gammell (2008) who also found that pre-adolescents enjoyed reading magazines which informed them about pop stars and models. This shows that students enjoy reading about fashion and celebrities. This may be due to the manner in which these



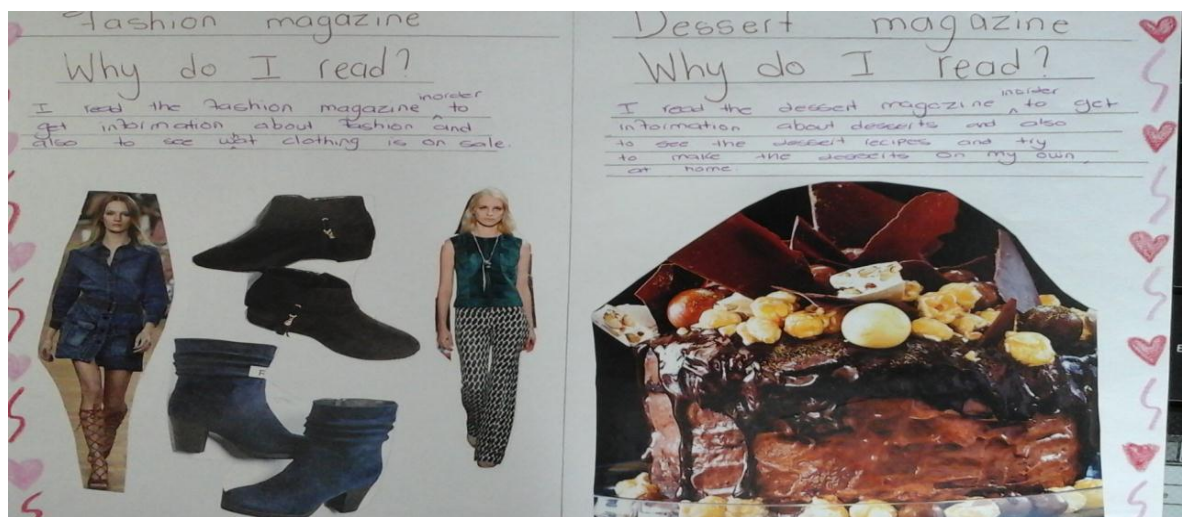
famous figures are depicted through the media. Due to their age, the students are probably influenced by what they see on television and therefore this determines what they read. Celebrities and models are portrayed as being beautiful and flawless in appearance which these pre-adolescents are so fascinated by. This finding would really be helpful in a classroom setting and I can now use materials dealing with celebrities as part of the classwork for the students since I know that this content appeals to them. We could also start questioning and thinking about the representations of such celebrities.

Another interesting finding from the posters was from a male student who mentioned that he read 'drinking magazines'. This could mean that he read magazines about alcohol and it could be the sale booklets put in the form of magazines. It would be surprising that students from this age group read about such issues, however this particular male student is the oldest student in the Grade 6 class as he repeated a grade in the foundation phase making him currently 13 years old, technically a teenager and therefore such materials appeal to him. Alternatively, he may be faced with the stigma of being the oldest because he failed and therefore included such material to potentially shock his peers and educator. Possibly he only included such material which he considers the type of material to be read by an older male who is not in grade six.

Despite the reading log being given to students during the examination period, the students' responses indicated that they did not only read school books but students also mentioned that they read other materials such as magazines, newspapers and novels. Seventeen students (43.5%) indicated they read magazines. However, the results show that a lower number of students read magazines according to their reading logs as compared to the students' posters. Again a possible reason may be due to the upcoming examinations and the students were more focused on reading school material in order to achieve good results. This fits with extrinsic motivation, which informs that the students read school books in order to pass the examinations.

The genre which received the second highest reads in the poster was content on recipes as three students (12.5%) indicated they read recipes in the magazines. It is important to note that all three are female students, seemingly reinforcing the idea that cooking is a female domain. Two students who had read recipes included the magazine in which they found their recipes. These included the *You* magazine and *Your Family* magazine. The third student included a picture of a recipe but did not specify the magazine where she found this recipe.

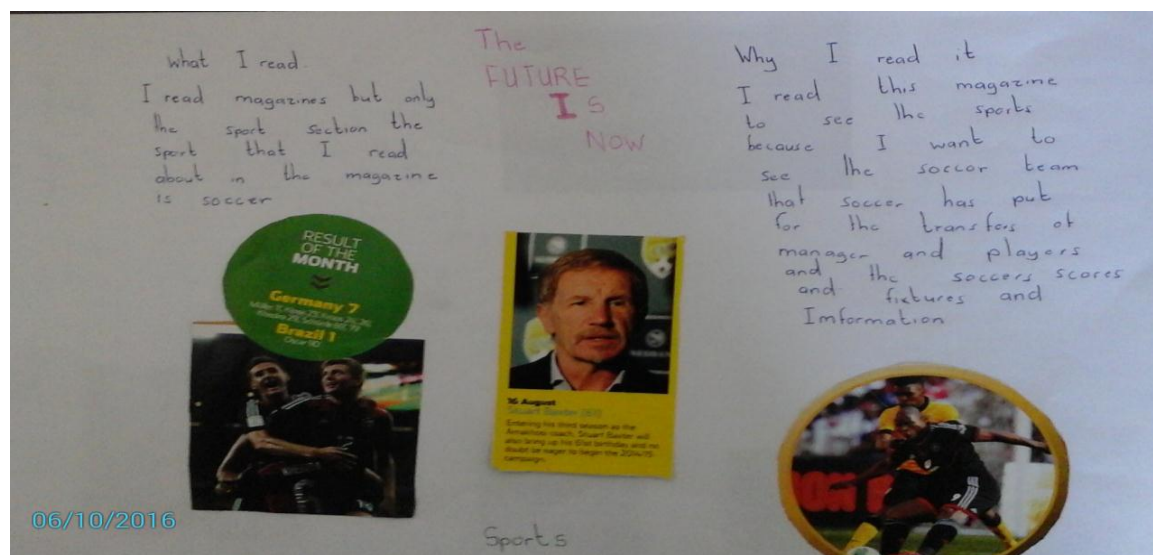




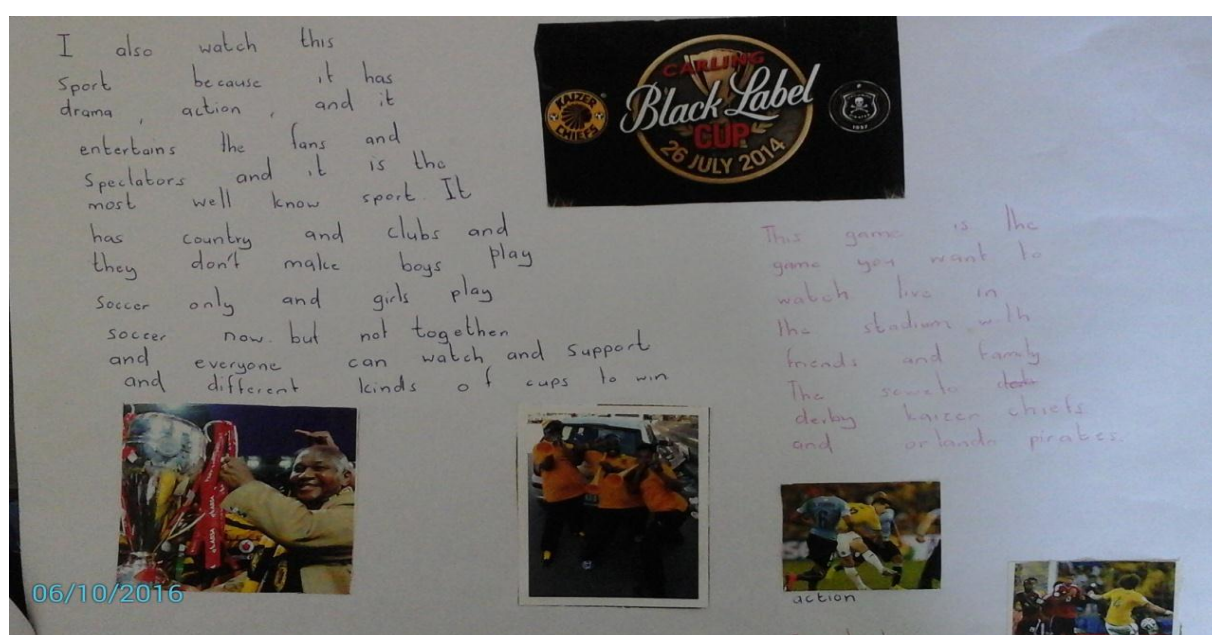
**Image 4: What do students read?**

The above image, Image 4 reveals a poster from one individual who indicated she read recipes. Her poster shows a delicious dessert, unlike the other two students who included pictures of meals. Overall, all three pictures and recipes seemed simple enough for the students to complete successfully as their pictures included bangers and potatoes, prawns and rice, and chicken and rice, foods they possibly enjoyed, were starting to cook, or would like to eat.

Like other studies about pre-adolescents' reading habits, this study agreed that males and females prefer reading different materials. Like Machet's (n.d.) study in South Africa which found that male pre-adolescents preferred to read topics on sport, similar results were found at Dreamwood Primary. Five male students indicated in their poster that they read magazines on sport, specifically soccer. The results indicated that these Grade 6 students enjoy reading soccer news. According to the visuals included, the most popular team was Kaizer Chiefs as three of the five boys included pictures of the team donning their black and yellow kits. Kaizer Chiefs is a South African soccer team and therefore this could be the reason why they were popular among these students.



**Image 5: Sport**



**Image 6: Sport**

The above images 5 and 6 come from a poster from one male student. Each student was given a blank A4 size paper in order to organise their poster. This student along with a few other enthusiastic students asked for more paper hence their poster consisted of two pages instead of one. This informs me that some students become enthusiastic when they are given topics in which they are interested. In this study each student could incorporate texts that they enjoyed reading and therefore they were excited about including their reading habits in the poster since

it was something they knew and enjoyed. This finding is important as I now know how to encourage my students to read, by giving them texts that they are interested in or by asking students to take their favourite reading material to the class. Image 5 reveals exactly what the male students read which is sport, or more specifically soccer. From his poster it is clear that he is definitely a sports fan as he wrote: *"I read magazines but only the sport section."* He chose to include the results from a match played by Germany and Brazil which shows the students read different aspects of soccer including match results. A picture of Stuart Baxter has also been included revealing that students are also interested in reading about the coach of their favourite team, in this case the Amakhosi who are also known as the Kaizer Chiefs.

The second page of the poster which is labelled Image 6 shows that the student also included pictures of fans wearing the colours of the Kaizer Chiefs sporting gear and blowing through the iconic South African soccer instrument, the vuvuzela. From Image 5 we can see that this student reads just about everything based on soccer from the match results, news on fans and the coach. He is clearly a sports fan as he also chose to include an advertisement of the sponsor (Carling Black Label) for Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates. The reading log revealed similar results as three males indicated that they read sports magazines. In this instance, soccer and baseball news was read by the male students.

According to the students' responses, they also read advertisements within magazines. It showed in the posters that the students were specific about the types of advertisements which they read. Three of the four students (which is 75%) included advertisements of clothing and the others included pictures of products along with the cost of each product. Two students included pictures of female clothing, accessories and several kinds of make-up, while the male students included advertisements of male models advertising male clothing. From this we can see that the students do not read just about any advertisements but rather they read advertisements which they can relate to in terms of the products being advertised.

According to the posters, other topics popular with the male students were cars, movies and comics. The reading log shared similar results. Other magazines read by students included *GTI Car Manual*, *Musica*, *Teen Zone*, *Memsaab*, *People magazine*, *Grazia*, *You magazine* and *Barbie magazine*.

Of the 24 participants who read magazines, three participants (two females and one male) claimed in their posters that they read cartoon magazines. The choices of cartoons between

both genders differed. Both females included a picture of the famous children's character *Barbie* as well as the cover of the *Barbie* magazine with magazine titles such as: *Barbie: The pet hotel*, *Barbie: Fabulous story*, *Barbie: Party activities*. These magazine titles could be the ones the student read or those that interested her. Another inclusion of a cartoon magazine was *Frozen*, which is a popular children's movie, as well as animal magazine. This informs us that these students read about cartoon characters which are current. This indicates that the students read magazines of cartoons which screened on television. This concurred with findings in Grozdanic's (2013) study as a student also claimed she read books which were turned into movies. Jeremy clearly noted that he "*read the cartoon movie section*" and he indicated that he favoured cartoons. In my study, a student reads magazines to find out prices of the cartoons in their digital versatile disc (DVD). In contrast to this finding, a student in Norway claimed that she read cartoons such as Nemi and Donald Duck but her reasons for reading such content is purely because she loved animated content such as comics, unlike my student who seeks information to view the cartoon on television. Since it is clear that the students in my study enjoy reading about cartoon characters which they are familiar with, it is possible that with a few resources a well-known animated movie can be screened in our English lesson and thereafter a comic based on that same cartoon can be given to students to read. This activity may bring about motivation for the students to read as they will come to understand that reading does not only entail prescribed texts which some consider dull but also texts which are fun and humorous. By using such material in our lesson, students may become intrinsically motivated to read since they are exposed to a variety of texts.

#### **4.3.3 Newspapers**

The findings indicate that newspapers are easily accessible to the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary School. However, when students were asked to identify their favourite reading material and their least favourite reading material, newspapers ranked last as students' favourite reading material and first for students' least favourite reading material. Results from both these questions supported each other which informed me that the students did not enjoy reading newspapers. Likewise, in Connecticut it was found that newspapers did not appeal to the students from ages 11 to 12 years (Sweling, Brucker&Alfano, 2008). The implication of this finding is that since students do not enjoy reading media texts, they may potentially fail to grasp the format of the text and as a result this may affect them academically as in the English Home Language, the Grade 6 students must write their own newspaper articles. Therefore if students show disinterest in newspapers, they will be unable to understand techniques within

the text such as headlines, witnesses, writer to avoid bias and write for the text to be written in the third person. All of these are found in newspapers. However, as an educator I can turn this around by using topics from the newspaper that students enjoy reading about such as sport, cars, fashion and celebrities in the hopes that due to the content, the students will enjoy reading this text.

Despite these claims, in the questionnaire 43.5% (eight females and nine males) indicated that they read newspapers. This concurs with Machet's (n.d.) study as similar results were gathered from the students' posters. In the poster, 12 of the 39 students (30.7%) indicated that they read the newspaper. Likewise in the poster just as in the questionnaire more males indicated that they read newspapers than females. Results in this study concurred with Nippold, Duthie and Larson's (2005) study as newspapers were predominantly read by the male pre-adolescents. A total of eight males and four females indicated that they read the newspaper in their poster. From the third data instrument contrasting results were found as compared to the students' posters and questionnaire. In the reading log, 24 (61.5%) students indicated that they read newspapers out of the total number of participants. One conceivable reason may be due to the reading log being completed during the school week and to my knowledge when informal discussions with the students took place, I was informed that their cellphones and other technological games had been kept away during the school week and given to the students on the weekend or during the school holidays. Therefore one can assume that students read the newspapers because they did not have anything else to keep them busy. Also as mentioned previously, newspapers were the reading material that most students had around their home, therefore it is possible that students read this material (newspaper) since it was easily accessible to them. One can further assume that students do not necessarily read materials which they like but rather read materials which they have access to. This was found when students claimed they disliked reading newspapers but still read them. With that being said, this could mean that reading materials should be made available to students in their classrooms so that students can read them in their free time during the school day.

According to the students' posters and reading logs, they read the following sections of the newspaper: weather, news, music, cartoons and sale of toys/food and sport. Similarly, a study by Pardun and Scott (2004) found that similar topics appealed to their participants such as cartoons, sport and entertainment. It was found from the students' posters that males and females read different sections of the newspaper. The cartoon section and television guide were read by females only while no male indicated that he read these sections of the newspaper. It

was also found that the male students read the newspaper more widely as compared to the female students since they indicated more sections that they read as compared to the females. The male students indicated that they read the following sections in the newspaper: weather, news, sport, sales advertisements and music. In comparison, the females stated that they read news, sport, the television guide and cartoons. From the reading log, both male and female students claimed they read the weather and news sections of the newspaper. The fact that both males and females read about sport could be because they are exposed to sport at school since the curriculum includes this in their Life Skills lessons. This means that sport is played by everyone during their Physical Exercise sessions.

News is not gender specific and may be read due to it affecting both males and females in their community if they are reading local newspapers, and the data confirmed this. This is unlike Uusen's (2010) study in Estonia where the researcher found a gender difference between males and females. However, one has to recognise that there might have something to do with the content of the newspapers in Estonia and South Africa. Among all students, it was found that the most popular section of the newspaper being read was the news. The posters revealed that five students (20.8%) and the reading logs revealed that 15 (62.5%) students read the news. Once again the results from the reading log are much higher than that of the posters. As already explained, for the students, the poster was probably associated with fun and therefore they included only their favourite or most read reading materials. In contrast, the reading log is an accurate representation of exactly what the students read even though they might not have enjoyed reading it. However, the news that captured the students' attention differed. Looking at the visuals in the students' posters, a female chose to include a drawing of a rhinoceros with the headline *'Stop killing rhinos.'* Another female included an article from a newspaper which was titled *'Solvista debaters are KZN champs.'* Unlike the females who read news on South Africa's current problems and neighbouring schools, a male student drew a newspaper article in his poster based on crime and he claimed *"I like to read the newspaper to see about crime."* His visual confirms this as he has included a picture of a firearm. The trigger has also been pulled as the drawing reveals the bullet being released from the weapon. He also drew drugs and clearly labelled it 'dagga' along with a pipe and smoke being expelled from the pipe. This indicated that students around this particular age are knowledgeable about drugs and are aware that certain things are considered criminal activities. In this case, the male student associates both the firearm and drugs with crime. Similarly a male indicated that he read an article in the newspaper and from his inclusion of the headline *'Say no to drugs'* shows that he, and possibly

others, is eager to read about such topics. Another male supported this as he specified that he read articles about the drugging of sweets. The choice of topics reveals what students are aware of in their communities and what they might be confronted with in their lives. As Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that when reading takes place for the purpose of filling ones curiosity, it allows them to explore and learn about intriguing aspects which arouses their interest. Therefore if one is willing to read based on the above reasons, it indicates that the reader is reading for intrinsic purposes.

The second section of the newspaper to receive the most reads by the students was the section on the weather. From the students' posters two students (16.6%) mentioned that they read the weather in the newspaper. As one student wrote: *"I read the newspaper to know the weather to know if it is going to be sunny or rainy so I know what to do and when to do it."* Three students (12.5%) also revealed in their reading logs that they read the weather in the newspaper. Since students mentioned that they read the weather section in newspapers, this indicates that this text appeals to them. In order to promote intrinsic motivation, I can incorporate such texts in my English lesson so that students will enjoy reading in the classroom. Other students' perceptions of reading may change as they will come to understand that reading is not limited and that a newspaper consists of various sections thereby making the newspaper a material that the students will not pull away from.

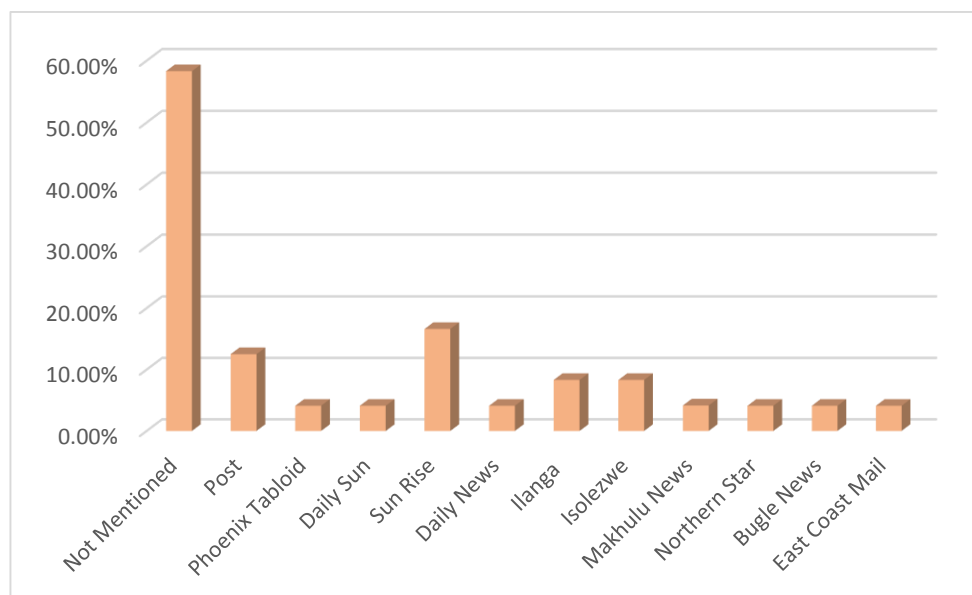
Included in the findings from the posters and readings logs, two students (16.6%) indicated that they read advertisements in the newspaper, focusing on food, toys and cellphones. In the reading log one student (4.1%) claimed to read supermarket specials in the newspaper. From this, I am able to see the genres of advertisements that appeal to students. Instead of using advertisements that students have no connection to, I could use texts about food, toys and cellphones in my lesson. By doing so, this would capture the students' attention since it deals with topics that they like reading about.

Other less read sections in the newspaper included the entertainment section. It was interesting to note that a student indicated she read cartoons in the newspaper including cartoons such as *'Sofia the First, Dora, Micky Mouse, Tom and Jerry and Spiderman.'* However, none of these cartoons are found in any newspaper, but rather they appear on television or in story books. A possible reason this student included these as being read in newspapers was probably because she did not understand the question or did not remember the names of the cartoons in newspapers and therefore she included the names of her favourite cartoons - the ones she could



remember. The second section under entertainment which was read by a student was the music section. A student noted in the poster that he read the music section of the newspaper and he included all the artists that he read about in the newspaper. It can be seen that despite being 11 years old, he not only included artists who are young and current but also those who have been in the music industry for much longer such as Mike and the Mechanics, Queen, Toni Braxton and Creedence. In fact, he included many more older artists compared to the new ones as only two young artists were included. This indicates that this student might be exposed to such music, possibly in his home. One student also included reading about movies that screen on television in her responses on the newspapers.

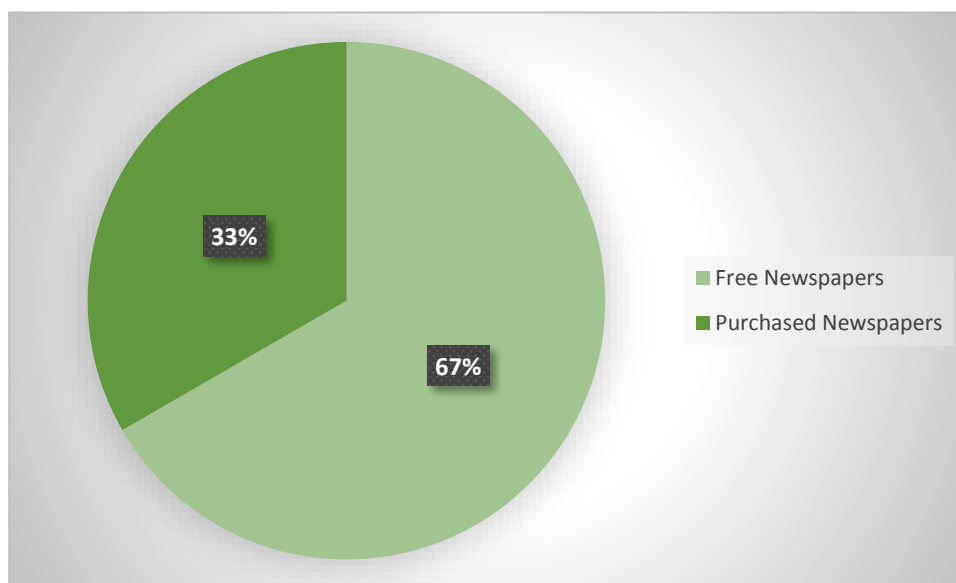
Two students named the newspapers they read: the *Daily News* and the *Post*. The reading log revealed the names of 11 newspapers that students read. The other names of newspapers are found in the graph below. The student in this class who struggles in communicating in English only mentioned that he read the newspaper, but did not indicate the sections that appealed to him. Due to his language barrier, in order to complete the three data collection instruments, the requirements were translated to him in his home language IsiZulu by a fellow classmate. Therefore he understood the crux of the research but due to his limited language skills he was unable to articulate himself well enough to fully explain the content he read or the sections of the newspaper which appealed to him.



**Figure 4: Newspapers read by the students**



A high percentage of students did not indicate the name of the newspaper which they read despite me informing them to record everything that they read. Results from the students' responses as shown in Graph 4, reveal that the most popular newspaper which was read by four students (16.6%) was *Sun Rise* newspaper. This was followed by the *Post* which was read by three students (12.5%) and the newspapers titled *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* which were both read by 8.3% of those who indicated that they read newspapers in their reading log. The following newspapers: *Phoenix Tabloid*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily News*, *Makhulu News* and *Northern Star* were all read by one student (4.1%). When the list of eleven newspapers were put into two categories such as free newspapers and newspapers which were purchased, it was found that more students read the free newspapers. As mentioned previously, students read materials which were accessible to them and since the free newspapers are delivered to their homes, they are easily accessible to the students. The free newspapers included: *Sunrise*, *Phoenix Tabloid*, *Daily Sun*, *Ilanga*, *Makhulu News*, *Northern Star*, *Bugle News* and *East Coast Mail*, while the newspapers which were purchased were *Isolezwe*, *Daily News* and *Post*. It is important to note that four students of the 24 who had indicated they read newspapers in their reading log mentioned they read more than one newspaper.



**Figure 5: Free newspapers versus purchased newspapers**

From the results depicted in Figure 5, it shows that more students read the free newspapers as compared to the newspapers which were purchased. Twelve students (66.6%) claimed they read newspapers belonging to the category 'free newspapers' while only six students (33.3%) mentioned that they read newspapers which are purchased. A possible reason why free

newspapers were read more than newspapers which are purchased is probably due to fewer households purchasing newspapers and more households relying on the free print.

#### **4.3.4 Entertainment**

##### **4.3.4.1 Online/Internet**

In their questionnaire, 22 students (56.4%) claimed that they read from the internet or online. Reading from the internet or online was ranked the third highest reading material to be read by the students at Dreamwood Primary School. Although more than half of the Grade 6 class indicated that they read online, it was interesting to see that no student included reading from the internet or online in their posters. This could possibly be due to students having the belief that reading online was not a form of reading. Similar results were found by Knoester (2009) where the participants in his study claimed they read online materials but also mentioned that these documents did not count as reading for their school reading assignment. Similarly, the students at Dreamwood Primary School did not think it was appropriate to include reading from the internet or online in a school assessment.

Since the reading log required the students to write down exactly what they had read, four students did mention that they read online texts. A student indicated that he read from the internet and further wrote he browsed the internet for pictures. According to Blackwell, Lauricella and Wartella (2014), the pre-adolescents in their study admitted to favouring online material which included video clips, movie sites, social networking, game websites and screen sites. However, the students in my study were rather vague about the online material that they read. One student stated that she read the messages from her cellphone. This finding was in contrast to Clark (2012) who found that a large percentage (68.3%) of children aged 11 to 14 years read text messages and 52.5% engaged in social media sites, whereas in my study only one student claimed to having read messages on her cellphone. This could possibly be due to this particular student coming to realise that reading also constitutes reading the messages on her cellphone or probably the other students in the class simply did not read online material. Since there was a small number of students in my study who claimed to having read online material, the use of technological devices in the lesson may not arouse everyone's interest, however, these students generally get excited when the lesson entails something new. Since the school rules state that students may not carry cellphones to school and the school lacks sufficient technological devices to carry out a lesson, I will have to use my personal device to show the students how to browse the internet, write an e-mail or simply download a game or

song which all constitutes reading. In doing so, students with access to devices at home will learn how to read online more widely and others who do not have access to technological devices will also learn basic computer skills. By engaging in this activity students may probably enjoy reading and understand that reading does not only consist of books and magazines but with the advancement of technology there are many forms of reading. The aim is to change the students' mind-sets and to bring about a love for reading so that intrinsic motivation to read may develop in the students.

#### **4.3.4.2 Charts and posters**

According to the question in the questionnaire which asked students about the materials they read, it was found that six students (15.3%) claimed they read charts and posters. This could be due to the fact that there are many charts and posters around Dreamwood Primary and in each classroom. Therefore as an educator it is clear that students read the content on walls and therefore my advice to educators and schools is to incorporate more reading materials in the form of charts and posters in both the classroom and around the school.

In the posters, no student indicated that they read charts or posters. This could be because students mainly mentioned the materials which were their favourite reading materials in their posters and charts and posters did not form part of the students' favourite reading materials as mentioned in the questionnaire. However, according to the students' reading logs, 14 students (35.8%) mentioned that they read either charts or posters. From students' responses in the reading logs, it was clear that some of these charts and posters were around the school or classroom, as one student said "*chart in class*" under the column *What do I read?*. The charts and posters mentioned also match the descriptions of those on the Grade 6 classroom wall. A few of the charts or posters which were read by the students were charts on hygiene (washing hands), drugs, the structure of the skin, Child Protection Week, chart on protected fish and endangered fish and the world map. Two students also mentioned they read charts and posters on the road such as: '*Ottawa car sales* and *Exquisite car wash*.'

#### **4.3.5 Other materials**

These materials refer to those which were not included as an option in the questionnaire and received a smaller percentage of reads as compared to other reading materials as discussed. In the column indicated 'other' for reading materials to be included in the poster, the students mentioned that they read the following: letters from the post, recipes, competitions, timetable

and the calendar. Letters from the post received the most reads from the list above as five students (12.8%) indicated that they read these. The other reading materials from the above list were read by one student (2.5%) each. This revealed that letters from the post were read more than other materials which was surprising since in this era people make use of e-mails rather than the post. Letters are also generally sent for adults, yet these students indicated that they read them. As previously mentioned, the students' posters did not include all the material they read but rather only the ones they read frequently. This explains why the posters did not contain any of the 'other material.'

It was the reading log which gave a precise account of everything the students read over the two day period. It was through this data instrument that many 'other materials' had been identified. Some of the materials that students indicated they read were brochures, school circulars, subtitles, labels, signs, the dictionary, classroom rules, instructions and messages on their cellphone. Many students wrote that they read labels on food products, beauty products, medication and household products. Of the total number of participants, 24 students (61.5%) read labels. Food labels were only mentioned in students' reading logs which showed that although students read this material they only perceived reading to be the reading of novels, magazines and newspapers. Some of the labels that students read included labels on the Milo container, toothpaste box, cereal box, Pledge (furniture polish), Dove soap, junk food wrappers and many more. Some students stated that they read two or more labels therefore there were a total of 32 responses for labels. The labels had been put into three categories such as food labels, cosmetics labels and household product labels. From the categories it was found that the food labels were read the most due to nineteen different food labels being mentioned by the students. This was followed by twelve cosmetic labels and only one household product label which was Pledge furniture polish. From this it would be safe to say the students at Dreamwood Primary read anything that they come into contact with. This is indeed positive as students are reading products (food, cosmetic and household products) and obtaining information from them. Also students may have been doing this and failed to realise they were actually reading so this study has shown students that they probably read more than they realise, as well as the fact that reading labels constitutes reading. I have come to realise that different labels appeal to different students and therefore in my English lesson I can ask students to bring along their favourite label from any product and allow them to read and engage with the text to bring about the intrinsic motivation to read.

The reading material 'pamphlets' was not included in the questionnaire under the question "Materials that you read" and therefore the questionnaire did not allow for the students reading this material to indicate so, but there was a section provided for students to specify any other materials which they read. Despite the inclusion of other materials student read, no student indicated that they read pamphlets. Most of the students included other material which they read but pamphlets were not one of them. The results correlated with the results from the posters which showed there was no student who read pamphlets. Conversely three students (7.6%) claimed they read pamphlets in their reading log. One student claimed she read a pamphlet on animals, another read a cellphone pamphlet (Cell C) and the last student did not mention the type of pamphlet she read.

According to the students' responses in their reading log, two students mentioned that they read signs or more specifically signs boards on the road, at the tuckshop and those present at Dreamwood Primary. One of the students wrote that he read the signs around the school which said "No bullying" and "No running." Another reading material which was only mentioned by one student was an English dictionary. This was interesting since from my records of text books given to students this year, it showed that 50% of the class received dictionaries and they are supposed to be referring to this material often yet only one student mentioned she read this material. The dictionary is rather large and may be heavy for the students to carry to school daily and therefore they do not refer to it, however, if the dictionary is being kept at home surely the students can consult it when they are completing their homework. Alternatively, students may not know how to use a dictionary which accounts for their classwork activities, homework and assessments having several spelling errors. Not all blame can be put onto the students as this was my first year at a primary school and I took for granted that the students knew how to use a dictionary, but from my findings I can see that it is a possibility that the students are not reading their dictionary because they do not know how to use the material. As a result, I will take it upon myself to educate the students on the correct usage of the English dictionary. During the period the students were given their reading log to complete, the school had given the students a circular to hand to their parents informing parents of the public holidays and school holidays which were approaching. As a result, one student indicated that she read this circular while three other students wrote that they read their timetable. Their timetable could either be their everyday class timetable or the examination timetable. Lastly it was interesting to find that one student indicated that she read subtitles of her favourite shows

on television. This included the subtitles of *Muvhango* and *Uzalo*. Another wrote in her reading log that she read invitations and safety warnings.

#### **4.4. Why do students read?**

In my study I have found that the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary read for several reasons. Some of which included: to complete homework tasks or study for the examinations, to read for fun or interest, to pass time, to alleviate boredom, for information, because parents or teachers asked the students to read or simply because they enjoyed reading. These reasons will be discussed independently below.

The questionnaire sought to find out why students read and required the students to underline possible reasons which applied to them. Eight reasons were given to students such as: *its fun, to learn something new, to pass time, my parents force me to read, to complete homework/pass test, reading ends boredom, my friends like to read and lastly I don't read*. Students were then asked the question "*I like to read because...*" and thereafter they had to underline their reasons for reading. Although eight reasons were given to students as labelled a-h (See Appendix C), I realised that a ninth addition should have been included which would have given the students an opportunity to express other reasons why they read. For this question in the questionnaire only 37 students provided reasons for reading as the other two students who also claimed they did not enjoy reading underlined the option '*I don't read.*' Another student (who does not enjoy reading) underlined two reasons why he read but regardless of providing reasons he still chose the last option '*I don't read.*' This points to the fact that the student did not understand the question or possibly made an error.

##### **4.4.1. Academic purposes**

In terms of reading for academic purposes more than half the class indicated in their questionnaire that they read in order to complete homework and tests. A total of 20 students (51%) claimed they read for this reason. However, in the students' posters only five students (12.8%) claimed they read for school purposes. The responses are as follows:

Student 1 (13 years old): "*To get information and to learn.*"

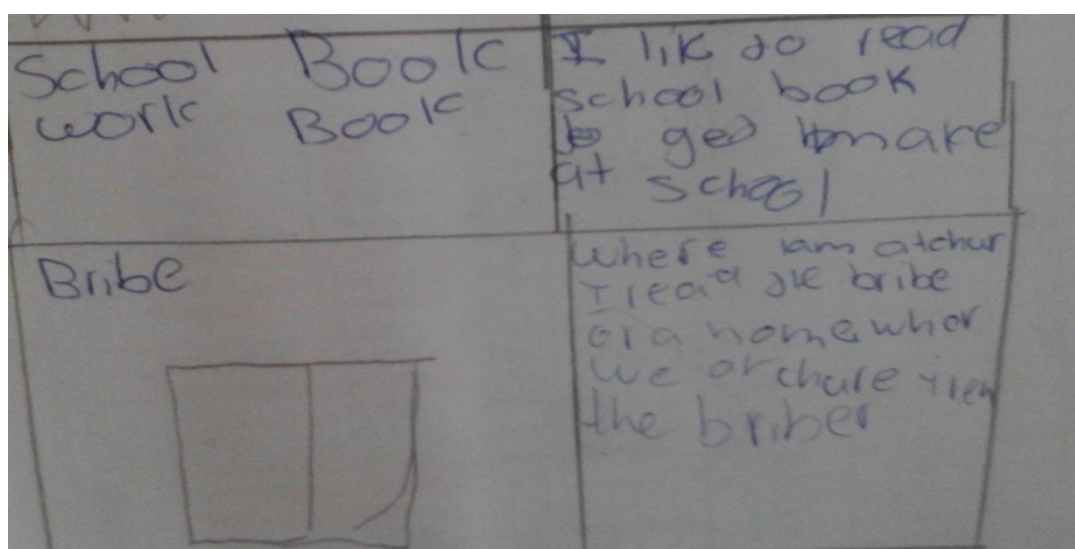
Student 2 (13 years old): "*It's education and very important for us as school children.*"

Student 3 (12 years old): "*To learn more words.*"

The plausible large difference between the results for reading for school purposes from the questionnaire and poster may be due to the questionnaire including the option 'To complete homework/pass tests' for the students to choose from, whereby the poster was the students' own efforts.

It was the third data collection instrument (the reading log) that gave a more in-depth understanding of the reasons students read in terms of academic purposes. In the reading log, ten students (25.6%) indicated that they read to complete homework or classwork activities. From the ten students, two students mentioned that they read because they wanted to find the meaning of words, while others claimed they read because it was a part of their English work, to complete homework or they read Maths in order to solve the given sums. As stated, the reading log was given to the students at the end of the term but before the examinations could commence and therefore this may have affected the results. A possible consequence of this was that 20 students (51.2%) claimed that they read because they wanted to study for the examinations or for a test.

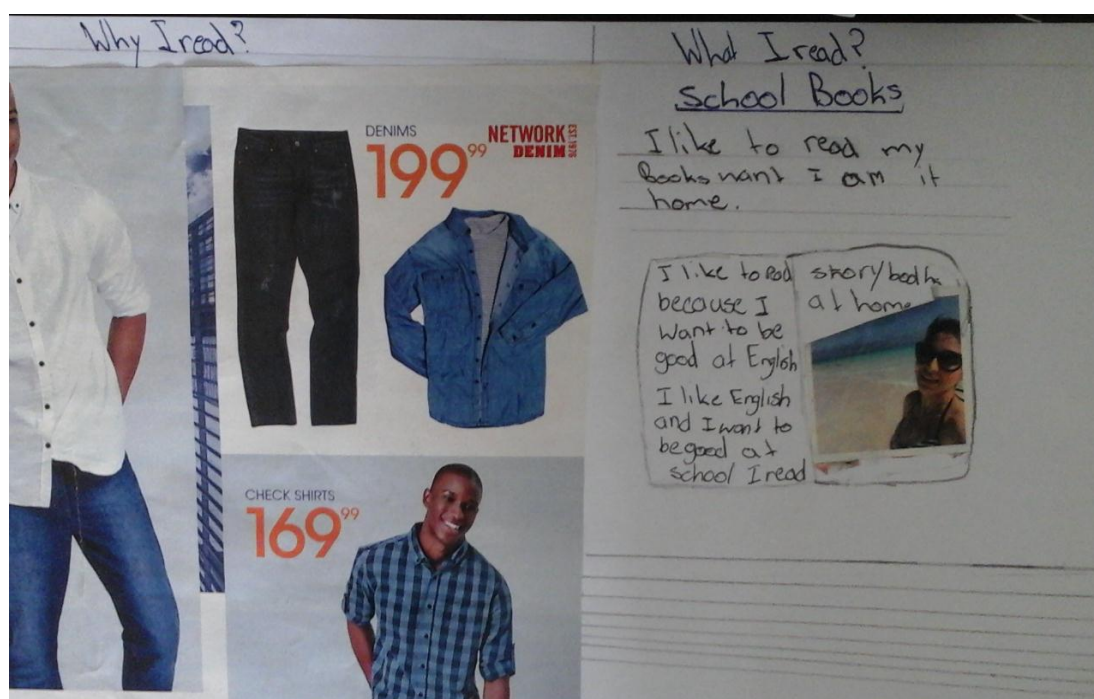
Overall the ultimate reason why students read was either to complete classwork/homework or to study in order to obtain good results and to progress academically. Using the theory of motivation (Janes, 2008; Hunter, 2005), it is clear that the Grade 6 students displayed extrinsic motivation because they read academic texts in order to pass or achieve good results in their tests and examinations which was their reward (Image 7).



**Image 7: Read to obtain marks at school**

Image 7 shows a part of one of the student's visual document (poster) which indicates that he read in order to *"to get marks at school."* Once again this points to extrinsic motivation as the student reads because he will be rewarded with marks which will allow him to progress. The student probably made it his goal to obtain better marks at school, and Janes (2008) argues that goals fall under the category of extrinsic motivation. Others also read in order to complete their classwork and homework in order to avoid punishment by the educator, as Ryan and Deci (2009) claim that avoided punishment is actually the student's reward.

While some students read to achieve good results, others read to improve their literacy skills or language. Three students claimed that their reasons for reading as mentioned in their reading log was to improve academically, as one student said that she read *"To practice my reading"* and another claimed he read so that *"I can better myself."* It should be noted that the first student is from Zimbabwe and although she is able to communicate in English, at times her pronunciation confuses the listener as she is Shona-speaking and English is a second language to her. Likewise another student's visual representation (poster- Image 8) also re-enforces this finding as he claimed that he read to improve his English.



**Image 8: Student reads to improve English**

From the above poster it is clear that this student does indeed struggle with English as a language as his headings *"Why I read and what I read?"* do not correspond with the images and content under each heading. Under the heading *Why I read* is actually the material he reads



and the heading *What I read* gave reasons why he read. This indicates that this student who speaks only IsiZulu and Xhosa at home lacks the skill in English to correctly match his content to his two questions. The student's grammar and sentence construction also supports the fact that he is not fluent in the English language as he wrote "*I like to read books want I am it home.*" The student is aware that he has limited literacy skills in the English language and as a result his reason for reading indicated that he read to improve and better himself in English: "*I like to read because I want to be good at English. I like English and I want to be good at school.*" These findings enforce those of Tveit (2012) who found that a student read because she believed it would improve her ability to speak Norwegian, just like the two students in my study who read to improve their English abilities. This finding contradicts Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) who claim that if a student is efficient in an activity they will be confident to carry out the activity, in this case reading. However, the opposite applies, meaning that if a student is a weak reader, he/she may pull away from reading since they will not be confident enough to carry out the activity. However, my findings reveal that some students who are struggling readers do not pull away from reading but rather continue the activity in the hope that their skills will improve. It should be noted that Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) argue that this may not be the case all the time, such as in my study. Similarly a weak student who is currently in the school's remedial programme had written in her questionnaire that she read the books she borrowed from the school library because: "*I want to be very good at reading so good like children in my class.*"

To my surprise, a student who is proficient in literacy skills claimed that "*some SupaStriker comics are good to practice on if you cannot read.*" This was fascinating since this student is academically proficient and does not need much practice with his reading. Therefore, I can add that some students in the study at Dreamwood Primary also read academic texts in order to improve and better their literacy skills. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) argue that students do not necessary omit the material they do not enjoy reading, especially those which could bring about something positive for the student such as school books. Therefore the students use extrinsic motivation to read the mandatory texts in order to achieve good results just like the students in my study. Despite them not enjoying reading school books, and only 10% claimed that school books were their favourite reading material, many (51%) indicated in their posters that they read such texts because reading these books would provide the students with rewards, that is, better results.

As discussed in research question one: *'What do students read?'* the students' choices of subject's differed and possible reasons will follow. A possible reason for students spending more time reading languages as compared to other subjects was probably because both English Home Language and First Additional Language are allocated six and five hours of instruction time per week respectively. As a result there is more work to cover because there is more contact time with the subject educator as compared to other subjects (Department of Education, 2013). Despite languages being so popular among the students, it was indeed English Home Language which was read the most by the students. This could be due to the fact that I am the student's English educator and so they possibly ideally wanted to impress me by indicating that they frequently read their English textbook, workbook, classwork or their revision. It is also important to remember that English Home Language is the subject where the pass rate has been increased to 50% as compared to other subjects where the pass percentage is either 30% or 40%. This indicated that the students spent more time reading to pass.

According to the Department of Education (2013), Mathematics for the intermediate phase receives six hours of instruction per week which means that the students engage with the subject for six hours weekly. However, despite being given the same time allocation as the Home Language (English), Mathematics was not read as much during the period that the students kept the reading log. Possible reasons for this may be because Mathematics is not a narrative-based subject but rather it is a subject which depends on calculating and so the students did not consider this to be a part of reading. Also, both the English textbook and workbook include many texts in the form of folklore, newspaper articles, poems, dialogues, and short stories which may appeal to students and so they find enjoyment in reading them. Social Sciences follows a similar pattern. Only three hours is allocated weekly for Social Sciences which is the least amount of time as compared to other subjects as listed above (Department of Education, 2013). With this being said, it could be the reason why this subject was read the least by the students in grade six. Being a teacher at this school, I heard students talking about or making fun of certain subjects. The students had used the acronym for Social Science, SS, which they call 'sleeping science'. This shows their negative and poor attitude towards the subject which could possibly be another reason why they do not read Social Sciences as much as they read other subjects. Also since students called this subject 'sleeping science' this shows that the subject may perhaps be boring, so boring that the students may be falling to sleep during the lesson. Apart from the content material, it could also be due to the

educator, who may be doing a poor job and thus her teaching style may be uninspiring to the students making boring content appear even more tedious.

#### **4.4.2 To learn**

The data obtained from the questionnaire, poster and the reading log indicated that the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary read in order to learn. 'To learn' as mentioned by the students does not only point to academics but everything else the students wish to know more about. These included the topics on fashion, beauty, cooking/baking, pets, and also about their religion.

In the students' questionnaires, twenty eight students chose the option that they read in order to learn. Some students' responses on why they read supported this finding as one female student from Zimbabwe claimed: *"I like reading because it gives me knowledge of the past and the present, I also learn from stories and the stories are educating of South Africa and the world."* It was clear from this student's statement that she read so that she could learn more about the country she currently resides in as well as about other countries in the world.

##### **4.4.2.1 Learn about fashion**

The students' posters and their visual documents indicated that the students were fond of reading topics on fashion. Ten students (25.6%) indicated they read in order to learn. There were seven females and three males. Four female students wrote that their reasons for reading were to *"dress according to fashion."* Two female students want to pursue careers in fashion designing and therefore they claimed they read materials on fashion. This meant that these students read so that they can keep up with fashion trends which are constantly changing as one also said: *"to know updates on fashion."* The second student wrote that she reads in order to get inspiration for choosing clothing and footwear. It should be noted that this student only used visuals of African models. This indicated that she found pictures with which she could relate and she probably saw herself as one of the models wearing the latest trends. Another reason why the females read was because the materials they read gave them advice on fashion and beauty tips. From a student's poster, the graphics included make-up (mascara, lipstick, and eye shadow), jewellery and other accessories such as sunglasses. As the student stated, she read because she learnt what to wear: *"It inspired me about what to wear."* Although these female students in the Grade 6 class are pre-adolescents, from their reasons why they read, it can be seen that they want to be fashionable like other teenagers, pointing to their desire to fit in.

#### 4.4.2.2 Learn about celebrities

Another female student's poster was covered with pictures of female celebrities which indicated that she read not just because she wanted *"to learn about fashion and to get advice on fashion too"* as she mentioned in her poster, but also because she read about celebrities and their lifestyles. This showed that the student read material containing information or fashion tips from celebrities so she could imitate the way celebrities dressed. The visuals could also be because the celebrities were all females indicating that the students could relate to them due to being the same gender and therefore they had included their pictures in their posters. Another reason for reading as pointed out by one of the female students was *"to know what's hot and what's not in the fashion industry."* While this student looked up to celebrities for fashion tips, another female student read about celebrities but for a different reason. This student claimed that she read *"to get latest gossip on celebrities."* Some pictures of celebrities included in the student's poster were of Taylor Swift, Jessie, Jada Pinkett Smith, Demi Lavato. She also included (Image 9) celebrities' feet revealing their footwear. This informed me that this student, along with others who included such pictures, read in order to keep up with fashion trends and as a result they read up on celebrities since they are always in the spotlight wearing the latest trends. I could recognise the potential for active engagement in the classroom on these and other issues.



Image 9: Learn about fashion from celebrities

#### 4.4.2.3 Learn about hygiene

It was also found that students read in order to take care of themselves in terms of hygiene since one student included in her poster a picture of the branded skincare range called *Young Solution*. This revealed that this student read to learn more about skincare products which she possibly used to take care of her skin. As evident in the image (Image 10) she chose to include the full range of products in her poster such as oil control toner, moisturiser, exfoliating scrub and body wash which indicated that she is familiar with these products. This magazine also probably provided the reader with directions or tips for taking care of oneself, as the title of the magazine is *Teen Zone*, which means that the content is directed towards teenagers. Since this student is 11 years old she would be experiencing changes in her skin and therefore this may be another reason why she chose to read this particular magazine - to assist her in these changes. This student also indicated in her poster (Image 11) that another reason she read was to get tips on mendhi application, such as patterns, since she included a picture of a female with intricate mendhi patterns on her hands and feet.

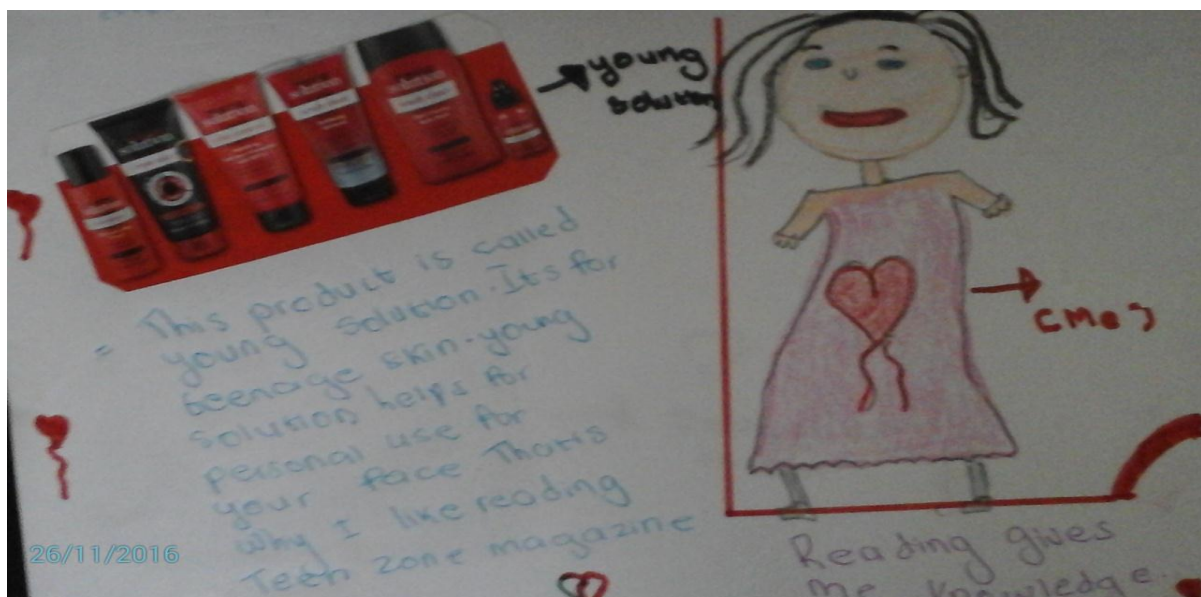


Image 10: Read about hygiene



**Image 11: Read to get mendhi patterns**

#### **4.4.2.4 Learn about cooking and baking**

Another topic that students wanted to learn more about was cooking and baking. Similar to the students who read material because they wanted to learn more about the career they wanted to follow, so too did another female student who claimed she read content on food as she wanted to become a chef when she got older. As a result she read in order to learn how to cook meals which she cooked for her family: *“their mouth-watering recipes and when I try to make them, my family loves it.”* A second female student also indicated that she read content on food so that so could cook her family a meal. When speaking informally to this student she had brought to my attention that her after school routine often included preparing food for her family since they finished work late on weekdays. A male student also indicated in his poster that he read cook books because his uncle liked cooking food with him, especially during the holidays.

The students’ reading logs also supported this finding as four students (10.2%) indicated they read in order to learn how to prepare meals. It was interesting to find that male students also read recipes in order to prepare the food. According to two students (5.1%) who were both females, they wanted to learn how to cook dinner and the others wanted to learn how to make biscuits and sweetmeats from a cookbook. Two other students, both male, read for the same reasons but one indicated he wanted to learn how to prepare a ham sandwich while the other did not mention the food he wanted to prepare but only wrote that he read a recipe. His reason



indicated he wanted to be independent and learn how to make himself something to eat when he was home alone and there possibly was not a snack readily available to him: *“To make at home when nothing is there.”* As an educator of English to this Grade 6 class, I was not surprised that male students also read recipes at their leisure. This was simply because the curriculum called for students to write instructional texts such as directions or recipes and the male students in this particular class were very interested in this task. In addition, I had to remind myself not to stereotype students in terms of activities related to gender and instead needed to embrace students’ willingness to shatter gender stereotypes.

#### 4.4.2.5 Learn about animals

Three students mentioned they read to learn more about animals. This could possibly be because the Grade 6 students are past the age of finding animals interesting and only those with a genuine passion for animals would read in order to learn more about animals. Three students (7.6%) included that they read materials to learn more about animals. However, all three animals they wished to learn more about differed.

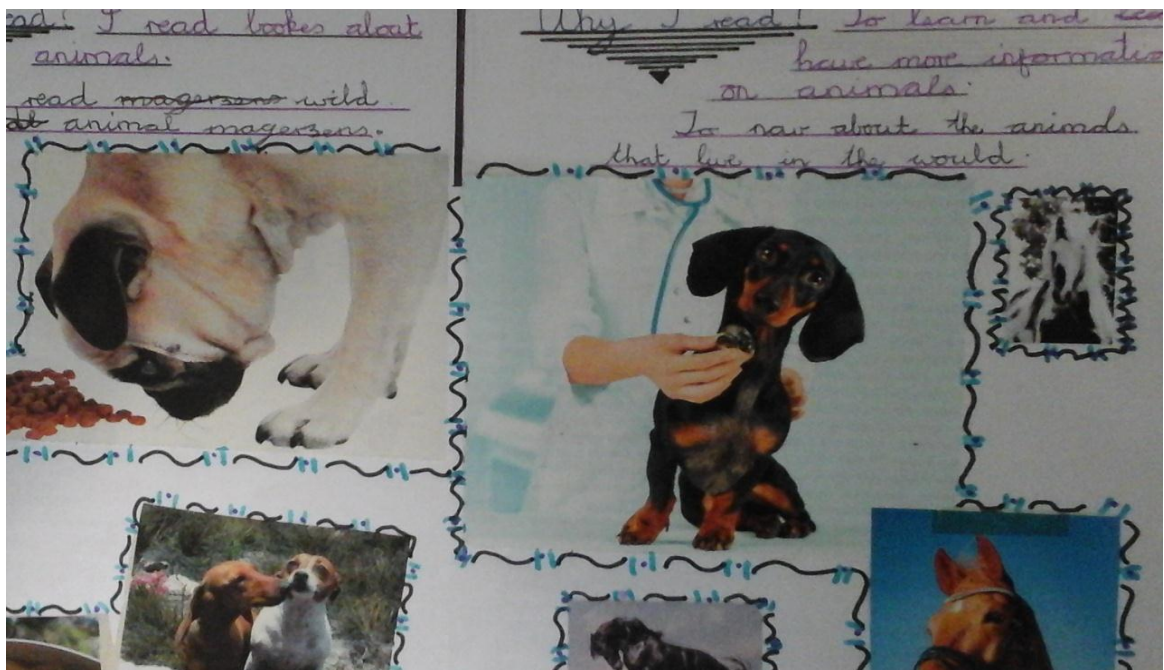
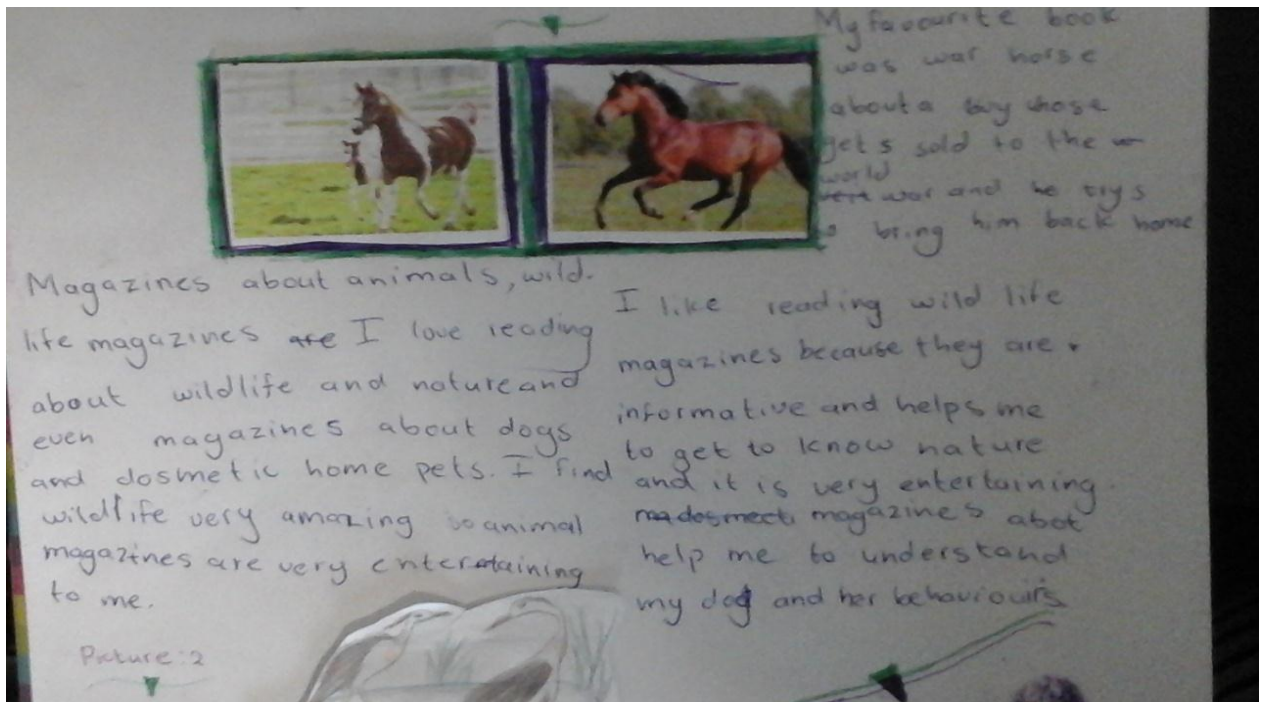


Image 12: Learn about animals



**Image 13: Learn about animals**

Images 12 and 13 above are from two female students and their posters revealed pictures of domestic animals, horses and birds. The poster labelled Image 13 showed that this student read not only to learn about animals but also *“to understand my dog and her behaviour.”* The third student who read to learn more about animals is a male student who indicated he read about snakes because *“my brother likes to catch and play with snakes and then set them free.”* This may be the reason why this student read about such topics (snakes) to probably share the same interest to the person he looks up to.

This finding is supported in the students’ questionnaire as three students (7.6%) indicated in different questions that they were fond of animals. Once again all three students’ responses suggested their love for animals as indicated in their posters. One student responded that she read because she wanted to understand her dog’s behaviour, in the question *‘During your leisure, what activities do you engage in? Why?’* The student (Image 13) and the male student’s responses informed that they used their knowledge obtained from reading more about animals to play and train their dogs. The second female (Image 12) responded to the same question by informing that she went *“on the internet and look at pictures of animal quotes.”* However, these three students did not mention this in their reading logs and possible reasons may be due to them engaging in revision during the period of those two days. Another student did mention in her reading log that she read two folktales because she wanted to learn how the zebra had got its stripes and how animals got their horns.



#### **4.4.2.6 Learn about religion**

In the reading log two students (5.1%) pointed out that they read religious texts to learn about their religion. Not only had one student wanted to learn more about her religion independently but she wanted to study for an upcoming Sunday school test and therefore she read several Biblical stories which were probably assigned to her by her teacher. She also indicated in her reading log that she wanted to know about certain things in the Bible such as “*why Saul hated David.*” She also indicated that she read because she wanted to know more about Moses. The other student also read for similar reasons as he wrote “*to get educated in my religion.*” He further mentioned he also wanted to learn about the “*rules of Christianity*”. While these students read religious texts to learn more about their religion, two other students indicated that they read the Bible because one was instructed to read it by a grandmother and the other student by an aunt. Lastly a student claimed that his reason for reading the ‘*Muslim book Bible*’ was because it was his “*duty*” to do so. This shows that students are aware of the role religion plays in their lives and while some students are instructed to do so, others take the initiative to read when not instructed and may feel obliged to, as a student mentioned it was his duty.

#### **4.4.3 It is fun/interesting**

The results from the questionnaire revealed that 23 students (58.9%) claimed that reading was fun. This finding was again discovered in a second question in the questionnaire which asked the students to provide a reason why they enjoyed or disliked reading. Here it was found that twelve students (30.7%) mentioned that reading was either interesting or exciting. Two students wrote that reading: “*is very exciting and when I read I feel like I’m talking to a friend*” and “*Reading is also a fun thing to do.*” Another student wrote: “*I like to read because it is interesting and it opens your imagination.*”

According to the poster, only six students (15.3%) indicated that they read because it was fun or interesting. The discrepancy between the questionnaire and the poster can be explained by the fact that the questionnaire asked students specifically why they enjoyed reading whereas the poster asked why they read, therefore the students included other reasons why they read. The six students indicated that the following was either fun or interesting for them: novel called *Rumplestiltskin*, superhero books such as *Batman* and *Wolverine*, *SupaStrikas* comic, magazines and newspapers. As gathered from the students’ responses, it was clear that the Grade 6 students had different perceptions of reading material that was fun or exciting to read. The results from the reading logs had shown that only two females (5.1%) read because it was

fun. This could be due to the other students reading for academic purposes as the examinations were approaching and so they did not read for enjoyment. One female mentioned that she read the novel titled *Snow Tiger* and her reason for reading this material was “for fun.” The second female read poetry which she claimed “*was fun and amazing.*” These findings support the results in a United States study by Strommen and Mates (2004) as their participants also claimed they read due to it being fun.

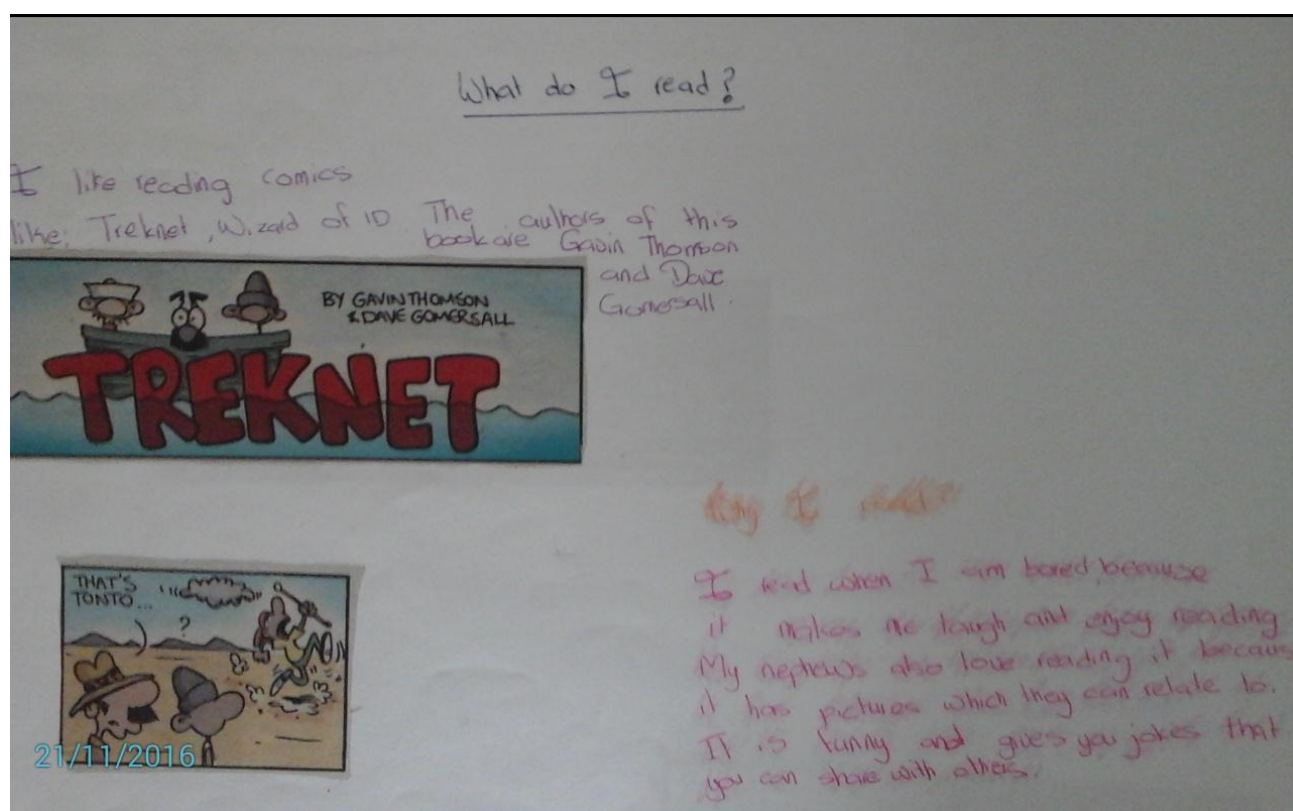
#### **4.4.4 To pass time**

The data from the questionnaires and reading log indicated that the students in Dreamwood Primary read in order to pass time. Results from the questionnaire showed that sixteen students (41.0%) read for this reason while in the reading log ten students (25.6) including four females and five males, read because they wanted to pass time. It should be noted that the reading logs had several responses from students since they entailed a record of all the materials they read. One male student wrote that he read while the teacher was marking the register which indicated that he read to pass time and keep himself occupied. The same male student also wrote that he read because he had “*nothing to do.*” Similarly two other male students and two female students indicated respectively that they read because one “*was doing nothing*” and the other read “*for nothing,*” while both the female students wrote that they read because they had nothing else to do. From these ten students, three students claimed that they read to pass time or as one student put it “*to let time pass.*” I also found that students read on their way to school, as three students (two females and one male) mentioned this. One female said that she read “*when I was in the taxi.*” An interesting finding was that a male student who often gets into trouble for being so distracted and not focused in the classroom claimed that he read as a means to keep himself out of trouble as he said he read “*so I don’t make naughty.*” The students’ visual document (poster) did not support this finding as no student gave “reading to pass time” as a response in their poster. The possible reason for this could be that when students read to pass time, it is often not a thought out reading material as compared to something they would read for fun and therefore they omitted this reason.

#### **4.4.5 Boredom**

All the data (questionnaire, poster and reading log) in my study revealed that many of the grade six students read because they were bored. In the questionnaire twelve students (30.7%) read due to boredom. A 12-year-old student claimed: “*I like reading because reading is something that I do when I am bored*” and an 11-year-old student said: “*It (reading) makes me feel happy*”

*and it will not allow me to get bored.*” While these two students have a positive attitude towards reading, another student indicated the opposite. Unlike the other two students who perceived reading as a means to end their boredom, this student found that reading caused boredom as he wrote: *“I do not like reading because it makes me bored.”* In the students’ posters, seven (17.9%) students mentioned that one of the reasons they read was because they were bored. Three of these seven students simply indicated that they read when they were bored and a set of two students mentioned that they read magazines when they were bored. To the question ‘*Why I read?*’ a student claimed: *“So that I entertain myself when I am bored at home.”*



**Image 14: Read when bored**

The above as labelled Image 14 is a female student’s poster. It is evident from her reasons that this particular material was read simply because *“It makes me laugh.”* Her chosen visual also supported her statement (reason for reading) as one can see from the comics that it was a humorous read. The second comic on the bottom left hand corner shows a character running and screaming in what looks like a desert setting. Also it should be noted that in students’ chosen comics the manner in which the characters (caricature) are drawn may also provide hilarity to a bored individual.

The last data collected was from the reading log and here there were nineteen students (48.7%) who mentioned that they read because they were bored. This finding surprised me as these students were meant to be studying for the examinations, however, it could be that they were taking a break from studying. It was also fascinating to see that some students mentioned that they read because they were bored more than once during the two days of recording their logs. Of the nineteen students, nine students (47%) mentioned once that they read due to boredom. Ten students (53%) were bored more than once ranging between two to four times. Most students wrote either they read because *"I was bored"* while one student indicated that he read a poster on drugs *"just to end boredom."* While all eighteen (94.7%) students read because they were bored, another student read so as *"not to get bored during breakfast."* This finding is positive because the students have found a way to help themselves when in a negative situation. I also noticed that this particular student completed assigned tasks at a faster rate than the other students in the classroom and sits idle. I could put up more reading material in the classroom (charts and posters) and also change the material regularly to curb boredom among students since this finding informs that students want to always be occupied.

#### **4.4.6 Enjoyment**

Since the majority (85%) of the students in this class stated in their questionnaires that they enjoyed reading, it is possible to conclude that the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary have a positive attitude towards reading. One such student claimed in his questionnaire that *"I like it (reading) because it takes me to places I've never been in my imagination."* Similarly a participant in Strommen and Mates' (2004) study claimed that reading transported him to another world, a world where he could be someone else.

With that being said, when the three data collection instruments were given to students, they had a rather positive attitude towards each data instrument. It was surprising for me, as the educator, to get 100% of each of the three data collection instruments back from students because assessments are generally not given timeously, and some do not submit at all. I assume that the students completed and handed in all data because the topics were different or because they really do enjoy reading as the findings indicated or because the methods used (posters, reading logs and questionnaires) were not the norm of what they do normally in class. For my future practice as an educator I will continue with such studies in my classroom with other students, since I have come to learn about the students' reading habits through the data collected and they have learnt that reading can take many forms. They also know from the study that

there are no limitations to reading materials in my classroom and therefore they may be more open to bringing their favourite materials to read during independent reading sessions in our English class.

#### **4.4.7 Students could relate to content**

The reading log and poster provided insight into those materials which the students read because they could relate to the content. Although some students did not mention what news (content) they read, others did. From the reading log, it was gathered that students read newspaper articles which intrigued them or something that they could relate to in some way. One student mentioned that she read an article titled '*Abandoned baby to find new home*' as well as news based on protests at the time the reading log was given. However, she did not indicate any more information about the protests. Similarly, another student read an article about a man who wanted to sell his baby. Similarly, three other students read articles about children. One shared that she read an article about an accident where a child was killed and another read an article informing her about Child Protection Week. This could be due to the students being able to relate to such stories since they too are children, and these stories were talked about extensively in the community. Knoester's (2009) study shared similar results as the participants also claimed that they read materials which they had a connection with. It was also found across all three data collection instruments that when the students were asked what they read, similar topics popped up among certain students - topics that the students read since the stories related to their lives too. It could also be that such issues are a harsh reality since from the students' headlines and overview of the articles, it is clear that all the news they read about was rather negative - an abandoned baby, a parent wanting to sell his baby, a child dying in an accident, potential child abuse and chaos in protests. These articles were possibly read due to students wanting to know more about incidents which may possibly have occurred in local areas. Also, since the topics were negative, it could reveal these students' fears as youngsters growing up in a world full of unimaginable occurrences and as a result these articles were possibly read to educate themselves on such issues and potentially protect themselves from falling victims to child abuse or negligence on the road.

Other recurring topics as gathered from the questionnaires, posters and reading logs were topics on fashion, sport and food which certain students mentioned in all three data collection instruments. In terms of fashion, two females (5.1%) stated that they wanted to become fashion designers when they were older and so they read content dealing with fashion. Another student

who also mentioned her love for fashion said in her questionnaire: *“I like fashion books because you see clothes that you like.”* In terms of sport, one student indicated that he went for soccer training during his leisure and this was the only leisure activity he mentioned. This indicated that he probably spent most of his free time engaging in soccer. It was clear the students were passionate about the sport as one student even specified that he read only the sports section of the magazine. By this statement it appeared this student disregarded other ‘less’ important content or because other content did not relate to his life as much as soccer did. Since these students have such zeal for the sport, soccer is a part of their lifestyles and so they read the content on this subject. This finding can be used in the English classroom to motivate students to read. Instead of students reading about people they do not know or share an interest in, texts based on soccer players can be included in the lesson to bring about a love for reading, thus ensuring students read for intrinsic motivation. Lastly one female student claimed that it was her dream to become a qualified chef and as a result the content she read dealt with food which gave her recipes and new ideas. Other studies also found that students read material when the content triggered an aspect of their lives (Tveit, 2012).

#### **4.4.8 Parents/teachers asked students to read**

To the question in the questionnaire *‘Why do you read?’* five students (12.8%) claimed that they read because their friends read. However, this particular reason did not surface in the other two data collection instruments. As a result I can add that the students possibly did not see this as an important reason to include in their poster and reading log. Four students (10%) consisting of all male students, claimed in their questionnaire that they read because their parents forced them to read. When someone forces you to do something, it means that the one being forced does not want to engage in the activity. In this case, although the parents may think they are doing the child good by forcing him/her to read, they may possibly be causing their children to turn away from reading. However, since the students did in fact read due to being instructed by their parents, they read because they were extrinsically motivated or as Guay, Vallerand and Blandchard (2000) put it, reading took place due to external regulations. The students avoided punishment from their parents for not following instructions. It was also interesting as all males mentioned their parents asked them to read. This could be due to more females reading independently or possibly that these parents took an interest in motivating their children to read. My knowledge about these students indicates that two of these four male students have a negative attitude towards academic tasks overall and this could be a reason why their parents had asked them to read. Although female students did not mention that their parents asked them

to read, in other questions within the questionnaire, one female did mention that she read the book she borrowed from the school library because her parents asked her to read: *“My parents force me to read the books and they say books are the foundation to a successful education.”* Both of this student’s parents are employed by the Department of Education and this could be the reason for them encouraging their daughter to read as they are aware of the importance of education.

In the students’ posters, no student indicated that they read because their parents or family members forced them to. However, one 12-year-old male student claimed that he read with his mother and this activity seemed to be an enjoyable one as he wrote: *“I like a good investigation book to read with my mother.”* Although this student did not indicate that he visited the library with his mother like a student in Snowball’s (2008) study, he did mention reading took place with family members like the studies of Strommen and Mates (2004) and Knoester (2009). He further stated that he also read books with his uncle which pointed to him enjoying reading when he was in the company of others. The fact that this student enjoyed reading points to intrinsic motivation to read especially since he read on a wide range of topics (adventure, cookbooks, and animal books) which aroused his interest (Hidi, 2000 as cited in Wang and Guthrie, 2004). It is also clear that a positive reading environment inspires reading. It was noted in the reading logs that students read because parents asked them to. Due to the reading log being given prior to the examinations, this could be the reason why a number of students were asked to read. The students also mentioned that their subject teachers, guardians and siblings told them to read. Fourteen students (35.8%) indicated in their reading log that one of their reasons for reading was due to being asked to read by an adult. It should be pointed out that unlike the students’ questionnaires where all males were asked by their parents to read, in the reading log more females were asked by adults (parents/ teachers/ guardians) to read as compared to males. According to the reading log, eight females and six males were instructed to read. For me as an educator it was interesting to see that it was the educators who instructed the students to engage in reading more than their parents. Again, as educators, we should inspire reading for the love of it, not just to pass examinations.

<b>Adult</b>	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S1 0	S1 1	S1 2	S1 3	S1 4	<b>Tota l</b>
Parents	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>8</b>

Teachers	3	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	<b>22</b>
Guardians	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>

**Table 3: Number of times students were instructed to read**

Table 3 shows the results from the students' responses in their reading log. Three groups of people have been identified as asking the students to read. The first group was parents, followed by teachers and lastly guardians, which included siblings. The table shows each of the fourteen students' responses as labelled S1-S14, with the 'S' meaning student. Since the students were not restricted in terms of recording in their logs, some mentioned that the individual (parents/teachers/guardians) asked them to read more than once. It should be noted that this table shows the results for both days of recording. As mentioned above, from the figures in the table above, one can clearly see that it was the teachers at Dreamwood Primary who encouraged the students to read much more than their parents as among the 14 students, they wrote 22 times that their teachers asked them to read, possibly for examination preparation.

Reading, as suggested by the teacher, took place for two reasons as indicated by the students: to read or to study. A male student and a female student said the following respectively: *"The teacher told us to learn"* and *"When my teacher tells me to read in class."* As a result the students read because they were instructed to read by someone in authority, and Wang and Guthrie (2004) argue that this type of motivation to read is extrinsic motivation since reading takes place on the teacher's command. However, of concern to me is that if the teacher is in the classroom, instructing the students to either read or study, how is it that only 13 students followed the teacher's instruction since the rest of the class did not mention that the teacher asked them to read, in their reading logs. One female student also indicated that she read religious texts because her Sunday school teacher had asked her to read them. She however did not mention that she was asked to read by any of the above (parent, teacher and guardian) and therefore she was not included in the table since only one individual had asked her to read.

The group that least instructed the students to read was their guardians. I am aware that some of the students in my class reside with guardians, including grandparents and aunts. A male student who lives with his grandparents mentioned that he read because his grandmother had asked him to: *"I was reading a chapter (Bible) because my grandma said I must read it."*



Another male student claimed that he read his T-shirt because his sister asked him to read: *"I read it (T-shirt) because my sister said I must read it."* He however, did not specify if he had to read the print of the T-shirt or the label. It was disappointing that so few parents and guardians asked their children to read especially since the exams were about to commence. This points to a perceived problem the school encounters where parents appear not to be showing enough support in their child's education. Possible reasons for parents' apparent non-involvement could include not knowing what to do to assist their children or being overwhelmed by their own work, among other reasons.

#### **4.4.9 For information**

A female student claimed she read the information on the juice box in order to find out the percentage of sugar used in the product. This could be because she was concerned about her health or because she is being vigilant about what she consumes for weight purposes and wanted to see the sugar content on her beverage. Another male student also indicated in his poster that he read for information to keep fit and maintain his body weight: *"It gives you information how to keep active if you are trying to lose weight."* This really shocked me as both individuals are not overweight nor are they at an age where one stresses about such issues. This points to students being mindful of the realities of life and are knowledgeable about the ways to stay activate and healthy. Lastly two students read food labels to either check the expiry date of the product or to find out instructions on how to use the product.

It was also found that students read because they wanted to know more about famous people or about topics they were probably too shy to talk about. One such individual that two students (5.1%) read about was Nelson Mandela. Both of the students indicated that they read because they wanted to know more about our former president, while one even said he *"wanted to know more about Nelson Mandela's young days."* The same student mentioned that he read a story title *'An unbelievable night'* and his reason for reading this text was to find out what was so unbelievable. A similar case was found in a student's reading log. From her reading log, it was found that she read the following topic: divorce, bullying and about weddings. She stated that she wanted to know more about these topics and even said: *"I needed to know why parents get divorced."* In Tveit's (2012) study, the students also mentioned that they wanted to read about deeper issues in life such as death. By this statement it could be said that this student read this due to personal reasons. As a result, I can incorporate more non-fiction texts on such issues

into our lesson since the findings point to students wanting to read about these topics to possibly get more information.

#### **4.4.10 Socialise**

There was a 12-year-old female whose responses across all three data collection instruments indicated that she had an active social lifestyle and this was a reason why she read. When the student was asked about her leisure activities in the questionnaire she stated she used social media and she specified using Whatsapp and Facebook to talk to her friends. Although she did not mention she read during her leisure activities, it was clear that from texting that reading had taken place. Social networking was also popular with the students in Blackwell, Lauricell and Wartella's (2014) study. A part of the student's poster (Image 8) revealed she read comics but the second part of the poster was not included where she stated that she read comics so that she could share the jokes with others. This is another way of socialising as she would possibly use the jokes and communicate with friends and peers. It should be noted that each child received an A4 sheet of paper to complete their poster but some students were so enthusiastic that they required a second sheet of A4 paper, this student was one of them. Similar results were found in this student's reading log. It was here where she mentioned she read both messages on her cellphone which shows that she wanted to keep in touch with her friends or those whom she communicates with. She went on to state that she read invitations and her reason for reading invitations were *"to know when and where I am invited to."* This again points to the student reading in order to be able to socialise with people.

#### **4.4.11 Escapism**

It was heart breaking as a teacher to see a glimpse of my students' worlds after school hours and the problems they encounter as young as they are. There was one student who mentioned the issues he faced in his response in the questionnaire. To the question *'What topic do you look for when selecting something to read? Why?'* the male student claimed that he preferred topics on food but it was his reason which was so gripping as he said *"I like to read it (topics on food) because where I go to bed without no food."* This definitely points to the student reading such texts in order to forget his problems, which is hunger. It could be that the content and graphics of food he looks at compensates for the lack of food in his body and reading this possibly enabled him to sleep at night. As a result he read such material in order to escape from the reality of being hungry. To my knowledge this child does live in poverty and he is part of Dreamwood Primary's feeding programme and is given breakfast and lunch on school days.

This finding enforced that of Strommen and Mates (2004) as these researchers also found that the students in their study also read in order to forget about their problems.

#### **4.4.12 Understand language**

It was gathered from the data that students read because they wanted to better understand a language. This was found in the students' reading logs where two students (5.1%), a male and a female, mentioned this as a reason for them reading. Prince, who is 11 years old, claimed that he read to improve his language which is IsiZulu. As Machet's (n.d.) study found, language influenced the reader to read the material. According to Dreamwood Primary statistics, Prince's home language is IsiZulu. This informed us that he read to improve his current language skills. Also, IsiZulu is a second language taught to students at Dreamwood Primary and it should be noted that like English Home Language, IsiZulu also tests students' ability to read, write and speak the language. This could mean that although this student may be a speaker of IsiZulu, other skills may be lacking and as a result this student reads in order to improve on skills which he lacked. The second student mentioned that she read subtitles of local soaps because she *"could not understand the programmes' language."* This student's home language is IsiZulu and her second language is English but she uses both these languages to communicate at school and at home. However, one of the soaps she watches is in the language Venda (*Muvhango*) and as a result she reads the subtitles, which enables her to understand the programme. She further stated that she read the subtitles of the soap *Uzalo*, which is in IsiZulu. Therefore I asked this student why she read the subtitles of this particular programme when she knows IsiZulu and studies the subject at school, her response was that *Uzalo* is in accurate IsiZulu which is difficult to understand or as she claimed *'strong IsiZulu.'* There was another female student who mentioned she read because of the language but unlike the other two students she did not read to understand the language but rather she claimed that she read because comics did not have strong language - meaning language which was vulgar - which allowed her to read the material as well as allowed her parents to buy the comics for her.

#### **4.4.13 Protection**

There were three students (7.6%) who informed in their reading logs that they read in order to make themselves more aware and ultimately protect themselves. Reading the poster and newspaper article on child protection actually educated the students and brought about awareness on how to protect themselves, as one student said his reason for reading this particular material was *"ways to protect myself and to stay safe."* The other two students'

reasons echoed the reason as mentioned. As an educator it is delightful to know that students listen when you explain important things and take it upon themselves to further educate themselves on such topics. Another female wrote in her reading log that she read safety warnings *“just to be on the safe side.”*

#### **4.4.14 Other reasons**

It was noticed that students often read topics which interested them. Two (5.1%) male students mentioned that they read about crime and fighting because they loved those topics. Similarly, two male students read material on cars because they enjoyed reading about them. It was interesting to find that reading enabled two male students to fall asleep as one said *“helps me sleep at night.”* A female student claimed in her reading log that she read a chart because it was attractive, but she did not indicate the type of the chart. This points to students reading texts which are beautiful and possibly colourful and as a result it catches their attention. Similarly books which were colourful and contained pictures appealed to pre-adolescents in Warren and Maynard’s (2011) study. On the same note, Machet’s (n.d.) study also found that the manner in which a text looks determines whether students will read it or not. As a result, educators can ensure that material given to students is appealing to the eye especially those texts given to students as assessments as well as books in the library corner of the classroom. The findings reveal that attractive books draw a reader to them, however, in a South African classroom with limited funding, schools may not have the privilege of using new books with bright colours and pictures and therefore this may result in students not wanting to read older books which are dull and gloomy.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed my findings from data collected from the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary. I found that students read materials which were easily accessible to them at home such as newspapers despite it being their least favourite material. They also read school books for academic purposes, such as to improve their language, to expand their knowledge in their second language and also to better their reading abilities, which was in line with my theory of motivation. Female students preferred reading topics on fashion and cooking while male students read comics and about sports and cars. Religious texts were read by both genders and some read this because they were forced to read them by family members, while other students wanted to learn more about their religion. Students also read for several reasons such as because

it was fun, they were bored, for information, because family and teachers asked them to read, to complete homework or simply to learn.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### **5.1 Introduction**

This dissertation has investigated reading habits of grade six students paying attention to what the grade six students read and reasons why they read.

The research was necessary for me as an educator to uncover the texts that appealed to students in order to gain knowledge about which material my students enjoyed reading. In doing so, I wished to use my findings and incorporate such texts in my English lessons in the hope that all students will become more active in the lessons since the reading material was something they enjoyed reading.

Firstly, this chapter will begin by providing a brief synopsis of the findings to both my research questions. This will be followed by briefly explaining the theoretical implications, policy implications, methodological implications and implications for practice as a professional. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the limitations of my study and areas for future research.

### **5.2 Main findings**

#### **5.2.1 What do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal read?**

In my study of the grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary School it was found that the students read various materials. These findings suggest that in general the most popular materials were schools books, magazines, newspapers and novels. However, the genre of the materials differed depending on the students' personal preferences or the accessibility of the material.

One of the more significant findings that emerged from this study is that school books were read by most of the participating grade six students. According to the students' responses, it was found that they read language subjects such as English and IsiZulu more frequently compared to other subjects (Mathematics, Life Skills, Social Science, Natural Science and Technology). This could be due to the students finding the language subjects most difficult to pass or most important.

Female students preferred reading magazines based on fashion and cooking/baking while male students preferred magazines on sport. The results of this study have shown that soccer was the

most popular sport that the male students read about. The evidence from this study suggests that newspapers were the most common material in the students' homes; however students claimed that it was their least favourite reading material possibly due to students finding the content unappealing to their age group. Another interesting finding was that the students read free newspapers more than newspapers which were purchased. This could point to the students' families' financial situation and possibly that they could not afford to purchase newspapers and therefore read the free newspapers, or simply due to free newspapers being local, the content was something they were interested in.

Religious books were also read by the grade six students and while some did not mention the type of religious text, others mentioned they read the Bible and one read both the Bible and the Quran. Students also mentioned that they read comic books, online material, advertisements, charts/posters, competitions, calendars, and school circulars. The evidence from this study suggests that the students read just about anything from road signs, labels on food, snacks, cosmetics and even medication, subtitles on the television, safety warnings, classroom rules, instructions and even clothing items (T-shirts).

### **5.2.2 Why do grade six pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal, read?**

Since a large number of students read for academic purposes and then claimed it was to complete homework or to study for a test, this indicated that students were extrinsically motivated to read. The results from the study indicate that the students read in order to improve their language or their second language, improve their skills in reading or simply to do better in school. These reasons for reading all pointed to extrinsic motivation or to be more specific efficacy, which means that the students understood they were not as efficient as the other students in their class and therefore they read in order to improve their skills. Another reason for reading was due to the students' parents/ teachers/ guardians probing them to read which also caused them to read due to extrinsic motivation as they did not want to get into trouble with the adult and read to avoid the punishment.

On the other hand intrinsic motivation to read was found among the students who read for information, found reading interesting or because they considered it to be fun. It was also found that students read to get more information on particular things that appealed to them such as topics on cars, fashion, music and many more, or as one student mentioned, she read about topics such as divorce which she probably could not ask anyone about and read to get more

information on the matter. Other reasons for reading included that reading prevented boredom or due to the content being appealing to the reader since it dealt with something the students enjoyed such as sport, animals, newspaper articles about neighbouring schools or recent incidents.

It was interesting to see that one student claimed she read so that she could socialise with her peers, and another student read to escape his feelings of hunger. Another reason for reading was due to the text being inviting such as the colour being attractive and appealing to the reader's eye. Reading was also found to assist one student to fall asleep.

### **5.3 Theoretical implications**

It was found in this study that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation worked with the students' reading habits. The results of the research indicate that more students read for academic purposes (to complete homework or to pass tests) than those who read for fun or willingly. Therefore this shows that the grade six students at Dreamwood Primary read more due to extrinsic motivation as compared to intrinsic motivation. As the theory of motivation was discussed in chapter two, it was found that intrinsic motivation was better for students since it fosters a lifelong reader as compared to extrinsic motivation whereby reading occurs on a short-term basis and causes the individual to focus more on the reward.

The question we can ask ourselves as educators is whether we are focusing on one type of motivation in the classroom and giving the other little or no attention. This is because as educators we constantly ask our students to read in order to pass a test or an examination, but are we encouraging our students towards reading unassigned texts for pleasure? Students especially in the language subjects are bombarded with assessment tasks in the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6). Students have to read in order to get marks, all forms of reading such as prepared and unprepared are assigned marks therefore making reading solely an activity to pass and achieve good grades. Even schools with access to a school library 'force' students to borrow books thereby removing intrinsic motivation and making reading - the reading of the book - extrinsic motivation. In my study some students claimed they did not read the books they borrowed from the school library because they simply did not appeal to them but borrowed the book from the school library anyway because it was a mandatory practise for them to be taken to the library to choose a book.



With that being said, as educators we need to change our current practise to ensure that intrinsic motivation is given priority in the classroom just like extrinsic motivation. However, this must be done in a manner that does not conflict with the policy document, CAPS.

#### **5.4 Policy implications**

Although CAPS (English Home Language, Intermediate phase, Grades 4 to 6) does mention that students in this phase must be prompted to engage in independent reading through group reading and pair reading, but there are no clear means for educators to facilitate a love for reading among the students. On the same note, the document does mention that educators are to encourage students to read during their leisure time. However, my problem with this statement is that in my study I found that when teachers asked students to read, they did so, but this meant that they were reading because they were asked to (extrinsic motivation) and not because they wanted to (intrinsic motivation).

Secondly, the CAPS document provides the teacher with sections that must be taught for each term on a two week basis. In the Grade 6 work-plan as stipulated in the policy, the students must read under the section on reading and viewing prescribed texts. From my study of the Grade 6 students at Dreamwood Primary I found that different texts appealed to different students. For example if the students are reading a text on folklore with talking animals, this would be interesting to a few students but boring to others who probably enjoy reading about sport, fashion or food. As a result, in a classroom it would be difficult to get all students to read and love prescribed texts due to the audience being diverse. Therefore we can ask how we as educators can come up with creative ways to satisfy the needs of our students knowing that many classes are overcrowded and have limited resources, and many students experience a language barrier. In addition, in an academic setting, prescribed texts, not individually chosen texts, must be read for the testing process to take place. Further, texts which do appeal to students such as comic strips and cartoons are only engaged with in term three in the Grade 6 work-plan, in terms of reading and viewing. To exacerbate the issue, CAPS does not allocate time in its intensive work-plan for the Grade 6 students for 'independent reading' to take place. Educators may struggle to complete the allocated content and set a time for their students to engage with independent reading with texts of their own choice.

As teachers we must come up with concrete methods and strategies that we may use to instil a love for reading among students within our classroom teaching. This means that students must have a genuine love for reading, making reading a lifelong activity that does not end at the end of one's schooling career. However, if such ideas and methods are concretised into policy, the impact could be greater.

### **5.5 Methodological implications**

All three data collection methods worked well in this Grade 6 classroom. This was because all data instruments were within the ability and interest of the students' age group. The questionnaire was completed in the classroom and the students were extremely interested in answering the questions possibly because this was a different activity for them. They were also assured that there were no right or wrong answers as the responses looked at students' reading habits and they were aware that each student differed in this area. Students are conditioned into believing there is only one correct answer and so knowing that all answers were valued, it seemed to create great enthusiasm.

The posters received gave rich feedback of the students' reading habits. Once again this activity was fitted into the classwork and completed in the classroom. Since the activity entailed students drawing or cutting and pasting pictures that represented their reading habits, it was suitable for their age group and therefore they took delight in completing the poster, so much so they requested early feedback on their work.

Lastly the reading log was a fun activity but due to it requiring the students to keep a record of all the materials they read and reasons why they read it, it had to be completed at home. Although it was taken home, the idea of the students remembering and keeping track of everything they read excited them. The reading log was also kept for a short period of time, being two days, as perhaps a longer period of time would have made the task tedious. Ultimately, the three data collection instruments created interest in the students and made them more aware of their reading habits.

### **5.6 Implications for practice as a professional**

The findings of this study suggest that more students in my study read due to extrinsic motivation as compared to intrinsic motivation. An implication of this is that possibly the students do not love reading and only consider it as an activity that would allow them to

progress to the next grade or avoid punishment. As a result many may not continue reading after school thus learning will not continue.

At a previous school that I taught at, I instructed the students to take along any material that they enjoyed reading- there were no restrictions. However, while the students engaged in independent reading, I walked around the classroom and found that when I approached a student he quickly concealed a comic book. This indicated that despite me informing the students that any material was acceptable, the students still perceived a comic book as being inappropriate material for a school situation. In my study of the Grade 6 students' reading habits, I found that the first two data collection methods (questionnaire and the poster) were somewhat structured providing only materials that they considered to be appropriate for school or suitable to mention to their educator. However, in the third data collection instrument (reading log) it was clear that the students' perceptions of what constituted reading changed drastically. The students now valued anything as reading such as posters on the road and labels on products. This research possibly made the Grade 6 students more aware of how much reading they did daily and they probably did not even realise this until the study was conducted. Therefore language educators could ask their students to keep a record of everything that they read for a period of one to two days as this would reveal to students how much of reading they engage in. By doing this activity with students, students will now value informal reading and possible change their view that reading is only academic texts, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation.

As an educator I find that it is important to ensure that students know that anything that they read, for instance comics, labels or posters, is considered to be reading. If students are made aware of this, then possibly when assessments such as prepared reading are given to students they will feel free to read a text that appeals to them as compared to a text such as a newspaper which does not appeal to them, but they read it to impress the educator. Perhaps once students are made to feel comfortable with reading texts of their choice in the classroom a love for reading will develop thereby allowing the students to read for intrinsic motivation.

Other means educators can use to foster a love for reading among students is by incorporating the use of technological devices in their lessons. Since studies have established that students love social networking educators could use their interest in technology to assimilate reading. The advantage of using technology in the classroom is that the user is not restricted to one text type but rather has the ability to view and read many genres, and depending on the school

situation and the availability of resources, language educators can move away from the old-fashioned novels and include paperless books in their lessons to bring about more student participation.

Educators can also create a love for reading among their students by bringing a diverse range of texts that students may find interesting into the classroom. Since classrooms may be diverse, different texts will appeal to different students and as a result it would bring about a more positive attitude towards reading, as was gathered from my study that different texts and genres appealed to different students. I also find that reading aloud to the students actually entices them to complete the story independently. This also assists due to some students being weak readers and others being English second language speakers. When the educator reads to the students they focus on the content and storyline and not on pronunciations or punctuation. By doing this activity the students will enjoy the story and perhaps read more during their leisure.

In terms of the actual teaching in the classroom, for instance when CAPS indicated that advertisements for example must be read and engaged with, I asked students to each bring an advertisement of their choice to the classroom. After using one advertisement and showing students' technique, I formulated general questions so that the students could refer to their advertisements and answer the questions. It should be noted that the advertisements that the students chose would be based on their likes and therefore reading the text would be fun instead of boring. Thus, as a professional in the classroom, the study made me realise how I could change and adapt to enhance my students' reading habits.

### **5.7 Limitations of the study**

A number of important limitations to the study need to be considered. The current study only examined reading habits of Grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, and therefore the study was limited to a particular age group (11 to 13 years old), one school (Dreamwood Primary School) and one area (Ottawa). Due to the school having small numbers, there was only one class for each grade and as a result only one grade six class was used in this study.

The study was also conducted for a short period of time and the reading log was kept for only two days. Perhaps if the number of participants were increased richer data could be generated. It should also be noted that an extended reading log would have captured more of the grade six

students' reading habits. The study only looked at what the grade six students read and why they read this material, and did not look in great depth into what inspired the students to read.

## **5.8 Areas for future research**

### **5.8.1**

This study could possibly inspire other studies that may build on some of the findings presented. A further study could assess the reading habits of students from Grades 4 to 7 rather than focusing on only one grade.

### **5.8.2**

It would be interesting to conduct a follow-up study of this particular Grade 6 class as they move onto Grade 7 to see if their reading habits had changed, and if so, how.

### **5.8.3**

Since my study was only conducted in one school other primary schools in the Ottawa area could undergo the same research to understand the reading habits of other Grade 6 students.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

As already discussed, South Africa has been identified as a country where many of the students lack sound literacy skills. Despite many factors contributing to this, this study found that some students read with the intention of passing a grade rather than for the pure love of reading.

As educators we need to change our students' perceptions of reading by beginning to change the way we teach and what we focus on in the classroom. We need to enable students to make the transition from being weak readers to being good readers by boosting their confidence which will in turn promote effective, efficient readers.

Rather than focusing on ticking the boxes in the curriculum, we should instil a love for reading among our students taking into account that each student is different and therefore different texts will appeal to different students depending on their language, background and personal preferences. We have to nurture positive reading habits so that our students become life-long readers and life-long learners.

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## Appendix A: Data collection instrument visual method (Poster)

### **Visual Method: (Poster/ collage)**

#### **Instructions:**

Using the paper given, design a poster using drawing/ pictures and words that shows all the things that you read regularly.

You must also include reasons for reading each mentioned material.

For example: *Textbook*- School purposes/ to pass tests and examinations.

Be specific, for example if you read the *newspaper*; provide the name of the newspapers and the sections that you had read.

## Appendix B: Data collection instrument (document- reading log)

### **Documentary Method: (Reading log)**

#### **Instructions:**

Use the reading log given to keep a record of **ALL** the things that you have read in the last two days. In the last column include your reasons for reading such material. **Be specific.**

#### **Reading Log**

<b>Day and Date</b>	<b>Material Read</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
<b>Day:</b> _____	1. _____	1. _____
	2. _____	2. _____
<b>Date:</b> _____	3. _____	3. _____
	4. _____	4. _____
	5. _____	5. _____
	6. _____	6. _____
	7. _____	7. _____
		_____
		_____

## Appendix C: Data collection instrument (questionnaire)

### **Questionnaire of:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

### **Biographical details:**

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

1.1 Do you enjoy reading? \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Why/ why not?

---

---

---

1.3 What reading material do you find around your house? Underline the material from the list below

Magazines

Newspapers

Comic Books

Pamphlets

Novels

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1.4 Below is a list of reading material. Underline the material that you read.

School Books

Magazines

Newspapers

Comic Books

Internet/online

Novels

Entertainment (puzzles, jokes)

Video games

1.5 Write down other material that you read? Be specific

---

---

1.6 What is your most favourite reading material? Why?

---

---

---

1.7 What is your least favourite material? Why?

---

---

---

1.8 Circle the one that best suits your reading. Estimate how much time you spend on reading in a day?

- a. 1 Hour
- b. 2 Hours
- c. 3 Hours
- d. 4 Hours
- e. 5 or more Hours

1.9 Underline the ones that apply to you. I like to read because...

- a. It's fun
- b. To learn something new
- c. To pass time
- d. My parents force me to read
- e. To complete homework/ pass tests
- f. Reading ends boredom

g. My friends like to read

1.9. What topics do you look for when selecting something to read? Why?

---

---

---

1.10. Mention the last reading material you have read during your leisure? How long ago was this?

---

---

---

1.11 During your leisure, what activities do you engage in? Why?

---

---

---

1.12 Is reading a part of your leisure activity? Why/ Why not?

---

---

---

1.13 Do you borrow books from your classroom library? Why/ Why not

---

---

---

---

1.14 Do you borrow reading material from your school library? Why/Why not

---

---

---

1.5 Do you read the material that you borrow? Give reason for your answer

---

---

---



## Appendix D: Consent form for participant

Dear Grade 6 Student

The study will be undertaken by Miss R. Dorasamy who is currently working on a thesis to obtain a Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. You may contact her on 032-5376507. For more information regarding the study, you may contact Miss R. Dorasamy's supervisor Dr. A. Pillay on 0312603613 or email on [PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za). Below is a brief description of my intended study.

**Title of research:** Reading habits of grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu- Natal

The study aims to:

- 1) To identify the materials grade 6 pre-adolescents read
- 2) To identify the purposes for which grade six pre-adolescents read

The grade 6 class was chosen to be part of the research since the researcher is also the students' English educator.

As a participant in this study you will be asked to produce three tasks (Questionnaire, poster and a reading log). Two of the tasks will be done during our English lesson. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions and it will take you about 30-45 minutes to complete whilst the poster should take you 60 minutes. The reading log must be completed at home and requires you record all the material you have read and reasons why you read them. This log is not time consuming and would take you only a few minutes for you to complete for each recording.

This study will benefit you because you will learn about the importance of reading. Tasks will also be taken as assessments for English and therefore feedback will be given to you. Using your responses, I will hold a session informing you about the findings.

You are not forced to participate in this study. It is completely fine if you wish to not participate in this study. Your choice to not participate will not have negative consequences for you. However, when the rest of the class is busy doing the assigned tasks you will also complete them, but your tasks will not be used in the study. If who wish to withdraw from the study during the process, you are free to do so.

All tasks will be kept in a locked cupboard. After using the tasks, it will be kept in a locked cupboard in my supervisor's office. After a period of five years, the tasks will be shredded and disposed of.

Note that in this study, your names will not be used. Instead pseudonyms (false names) will be used. This will be done to protect your identity. The name of the school will also be protected and a made up name will be used instead. All your responses in the tasks will not be disclosed to any person.

I..... (full name of participant)  
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## Appendix E: Consent form for parent/guardian

Dear Grade 6 Parent/Guardian

I, Miss R. Dorasamy am currently your child/ward's English and Natural Science and Technology educator. I am currently studying towards a Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. You may contact me 032-5376507 for further information. For more information regarding the study, you may contact my supervisor Dr. A. Pillay on 0312603613 or email her on [PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za).

For my research, I wish for your child/ward to participate by completing three tasks.

Below is a brief description of my research.

**Title of research:** Reading habits of grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu- Natal

The study aims to:

- 1) To identify the materials grade 6 pre-adolescents read
- 2) To identify the purposes for which grade six pre-adolescents read

The grade 6 class was chosen to be part of the research since the researcher is also the students' English educator.

As a participant in this study your child/ward will be asked to produce three tasks (Questionnaire, poster and a reading log). Two of the tasks will be done during our English lesson. The questionnaires consist of 15 questions and it will take your child/ward about 30-45 minutes to complete whilst the poster should take them about 60 minutes. The reading log must be completed at home and requires your child/ward to record all the material that they had read and reasons why you read them. This log is not time consuming and would take your child/ward only a few minutes to complete.

This study will benefit your child/ward because they will learn about the importance of reading. Tasks will also be taken as assessments for English and therefore feedback will be given to the children. Using their responses, I will hold a session informing your child/ward about the findings obtained from the tasks.

Your child/ward's identity will protected by not using their real names. Instead pseudonyms (False names) will be used.

I..... (full name of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to allow/ not allow my child/ward \_\_\_\_\_ (Full name) from grade 6 to participate/ not participate in the research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/ GUARDIAN

DATE

.....

## Appendix F: Gatekeepers consent

Dear Gatekeeper (Principal)

I, Miss R. Dorasamy am currently undertaking research for the purpose of completing a Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. For more information regarding the study, you may contact my supervisor Dr. A. Pillay on 0312603613 or email her on [PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:PillayA3@ukzn.ac.za).

For my intended research, I wish to use the grade 6 students at your school. They will need to complete three tasks. Below is a brief description of my research.

**Title of research:** Reading habits of grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu- Natal

The study aims to:

- 1) To identify the materials grade 6 pre-adolescents read
- 2) To identify the purposes for which grade six pre-adolescents read

The grade 6 class was chosen to be part of the research since the researcher is also the students' English educator.

As a participant in this study the students will be asked to produce three tasks (Questionnaire, poster and a reading log). Two of the tasks will be done during our English lesson. The questionnaire consist of 15 questions and it will take the students about 30-45 minutes to complete whilst the poster should take them about 60 minutes. The reading log must be completed at home and requires the students to record all the material that they had read and provide reasons why they read them. This log is not time consuming and would take the students only a few minutes to complete for each recording.

This study will benefit the students because they will learn about the importance of reading. Tasks will also be taken as assessments for English and therefore feedback will be given to the children. Using the responses, I will hold a session informing the students about the findings.

The students are not forced to participant in this study. It is completely fine if they chose to not participant in the study. Their choice to not participant will not have negative consequences for them. However, when the rest of the class is busy doing the assigned tasks

the student will also complete them, but their tasks will not be used in the study. Those who wish to withdraw from the study during the process are free to do so.

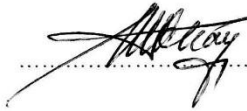
All tasks will be kept in a locked cupboard and after analysis it will be kept in a locked cupboard in my supervisor's office. After a period of five years, the tasks will be shredded and disposed off.

Note that in this study, the name of the students and the name of the school will be protected. This will be achieved by using pseudonyms (false names). All students' responses in the tasks will not be disclosed to any person and therefore the researcher will practice participant confidentiality.

I..... (full name of Gatekeeper) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to grant Miss R. Dorasamy permission to undertake research at this institution.

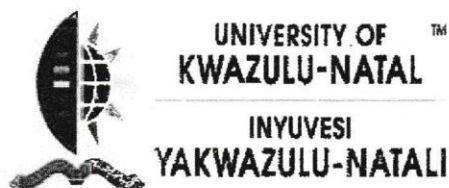
SIGNATURE OF GATEKEEPER

DATE



23/06/2016

## Appendix G: Ethical clearance



11 August 2016

**Ms Rochelle Dorasamy (208509774)**  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Dorasamy,

**Protocol reference number: HSS/1146/016M**

**Project title:** Reading habits of Grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal

### **Full Approval – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received on 27 July 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Ansurie Pillay  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

---

### **Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

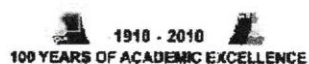
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building**

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Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

## Appendix H: Proof readers letter

### LAUREN WALFORD PROOFREADING SERVICE

24/12/2016

11 Mc Bean Road  
Cowies Hill  
3610

**To whom it may concern**

This is to certify that I have proofread the dissertation by Rochelle Dorasamy entitled:  
“Reading habits of Grade 6 pre-adolescents at a primary school in Ottawa, KwaZulu-Natal.”

I have made any corrections to grammar and spelling which I felt necessary.

Regards,

Lauren Walford  
084 240 9326  
[laurenb@dbn.caxton.co.za](mailto:laurenb@dbn.caxton.co.za)

## Appendix I: Turnitin certificate

### **Turnitin** Originality Report

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Masters (M.Ed.) By Rochelle Dorasamy



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