Using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes

by

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution."

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P. Naidoo

31 October 2019

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Ethics statement

"Pribashnie Naidoo, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. Pribashnie Naidoo declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.*"

The ethical considerations for this study are discussed in detail in Section 1.10.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes in Gauteng. Due to the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners in Gauteng, it has become necessary to explore strategies that can assist the learners in improving their language skills. An interpretivist epistemological paradigm with a qualitative research approach was used. The theoretical framework was sociocultural theory making use of the Zone of Proximal Development which highlighted the assistance learners get when supported by their peers during group discussions.

Two schools were purposively sampled based on the linguistic diversity of learners. This included three teachers, 134 learners, one Grade 4 and two Grade 6 classes. Data collection included non-participatory observations of three comprehension lessons. Semi-structured interviews held with teachers, field notes, teachers' lesson plans and learners' workbooks were also collected. The findings suggest that most teachers employed a quiz-bowl approach in comprehension lessons limiting learner's independent thinking in discussions. However, further analysis indicated that group discussions could be an asset if the teachers were trained to model and scaffold the art of asking questions for learners to observe and learn. The importance of teachers taking on various roles such as the planning of qualitative questions given to learners, employing different strategies and grouping of learners was emphasised to ensure effective group discussions take place.

Group discussions will provide more time for teachers to support learners struggling, thus ensuring that learners become more accountable for their own learning.

Key Terms: group discussion, comprehension skills, support strategy, multilingualism.

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List of abbreviations

ANA	Annual National Assessment
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Acquisition of Language Proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statements
CR	Collaborative Reasoning
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESL	English Second Language
FAL	First Additional Language
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy
HL	Home language
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Language and teaching
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
QtA	Question the Author
SACMEQ	South and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
STARS	School Transformation and Reform Strategy
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

"Language is not everything in education, but without language, everything in education is nothing in education." (Wolff, 2006, p.50)

This statement clearly indicates the crucial role language plays in teaching and learning in our schools today. Using language proficiently allows learners to communicate effectively by listening attentively to others and then speaking and responding to their peers and teachers in the classroom. Language is important for communication allowing learners to interact and learn from each other. A lack of proficiency in language affects academic achievement (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Due to the multilingual nature of society, our classes are culturally and linguistically diverse. Before the 1994 democratic elections, the education systems for learners were segregated. This resulted in different languages being taught and spoken in different communities. After the first democratic elections in 1994, this segregated education system was abolished, resulting in all South African children having an equal opportunity to choose the school of their choice. This resulted in schools having learners with multiple home languages which created a challenge for the new education system (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016).

This new education system for South African schools brought with it both opportunities and challenges that needed to be addressed for all our learners to enjoy and receive an equal but fair chance to education (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2016). These constitutional rights gave parents a right to the school of their choice which led to the migration of learners from a previously segregated schooling system to one of choice (Plüddemann, Xola, & Mahlahela, 2000). Due to the migration of learners into different schools, classrooms became linguistically diverse. Although multilingual classrooms are a reality for the South African educational system, teachers do not have the necessary training to teach learners of different language backgrounds. In most schools, the language of learning and teaching remained English with learners having to give up their home language (hereafter referred to as HL) and switch to English. Learners experienced great difficulties as there was little or no English exposure outside the classroom (Mackay, 2014). "At least 65% of South African schools use English as the Language of learning and teaching" (hereafter referred to as LoLT), (DoE, 2010, p.13).

In some cases, English is the learner's second or third language, yet they are expected to achieve the same promotion requirements as their first language peers. Due to the language barriers experienced by these learners, they are being incorrectly categorised as having a learning disability (Engelbrecht, Swanepoel, Nel, & Hugo, 2013). This impacts on all areas of learning which includes comprehension, which is the ability of the learner to make meaning of concepts being taught. Through social interaction, learners have a better opportunity to learn from their more capable English peers.

Group discussion as a routine in teaching methodology in lessons is prescribed in the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statements (hereafter referred to as CAPS) document and can be made better use of to improve both the learner's language skills and developing their comprehension skills (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

1.2   PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1   Literacy levels in South Africa and internationally

Based on the Annual National Assessment Diagnostic report of 2014, First Additional Language (hereafter referred to as FAL) and HL learners indicated that a significant proportion of learners experienced challenges when responding to questions requiring higher-order cognitive skills (DBE, 2014). Learners were unable to express their own opinions due to them having an insufficient vocabulary to be able to comprehend and understand questions. Both HL and FAL learners were unable to draw inferences from a text and link cause and effect, highlighting their lack of analytical skills (DBE, 2014).

Similar results were obtained from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) of 2016, which assessed the reading comprehension and monitored trends in reading literacy done over five-year intervals. According to Howie et al. (2017), these international systemic assessments offer us an opportunity to monitor and track our learners' reading and comprehension progress set against international benchmarks. This assessment included 12 810 Grade 4 learners and a total of 5 282 Grade 5 learners taking the assessment in Afrikaans, English, and isiZulu. This assessment indicated that 78% of South African Grade 4 learners do not have basic reading skills at the end of their Grade 4 year in contrast to 4% of learners internationally. South Africa is ranked the lowest-performing country out of 50 countries in the study, which indicates the need to implement support strategies in our classrooms to assist our learners. However, these

results must also be viewed against the background factors existing in our South African schools.

These findings are also reported internationally by American 4th graders during the National Assessment of Educational Progress Report indicating 25% of 4th graders could not critically analyse questions given to them (Lee, Grigg, Donahue2007). The level of reading and comprehension rates in both South Africa and internationally is of grave concern. Therefore it is the focus of my research to explore the use of group discussions as a support strategy to enhance comprehension skills amongst multilingual learners.

1.2.2 Group discussions used to enhance comprehension skills

Using learners' HL to develop their second language can be achieved through talk. Talk is brought about by group discussions, and group discussions can be in the form of translanguaging. Translanguaging originated in Wales in the 1980s and gained international popularity with research being done in schools in the United States of America (Lewis, Jones & Baker; 2012).

The initial research by Cen Williams dated back to 1994focused on bilingualism, i.e. integrating English and Welsh with learners making use of both languages to develop a better understanding of the work taught in the classroom (Garcia, & Lin, 2017). Twenty years later, scholarly work has proven the benefits of making use of the learner's full language repertoire to enhance language skills (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Most recently the focus has shifted to the use of more than one language, i.e. translanguaging that allows learners to engage with their peers, using the language best understood by themselves, to retain their ideas within the group discussion process (Makalela, 2015).

Mbirimi-Hungwe's (2016) research in translanguaging focuses on the use of group discussion as a support strategy amongst university students which has been documented in South Africa. However, very little research has been done on the use of translanguaging as a resource amongst learners in intermediate phase classrooms. This study may potentially contribute to the knowledge base on assisting second language learners to develop comprehension skills using group discussion as a support strategy in South African multilingual classrooms in the intermediate phase.

1.2.3 Application of group discussion in multilingual classes

The group discussion process includes both the interactive roles of the teacher and the learner. The initial direction and guidance of the group discussion will be facilitated by the teachers with their role slowly diminishing, allowing for a more learner-centred approach (Kong & Fitch, 2002). Careful scaffolding techniques used by the teacher include the use of creative resources and stimuli, which bring about a lively discussion (Salas, Fitchett & Mercado, 2013). Scaffolding moves encourage learners to ask questions, to clarify uncertainties and prompt learners to think creatively (Lin et al., 2015). The use of quality questions enhances group discussion among learners (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016). The less proficient learner can translate and make meaning of the work given by the teacher by seeking assistance from the more proficient peer in a group (Lerner & Johns, 2015).

The English second language (hereafter, referred to as ESL) learner's motivational levels, gender, age, culture and belief system strongly determines how quickly they attain the "cognitive acquisition of language proficiency" (hereafter referred to as CALP) (Chamot, 2004; Oxford, 2003). The objective of group discussions in multilingual classes is to address fairness, equality in learning, social cohesion and the development of critical thinking in learners (Owen-Smith, 2010).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Multilingual learners sometimes experience difficulty with comprehension in their FAL due to the possible language barrier. According to Cummins (1997), the learner requires two types of language skills to become proficient in a language. One is the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) which require at least two years to acquire. The second is the cognitive academic proficiency (CALP) which is a more formal command of language learning, including rules for written and assessment purposes. According to Cummins (1997), a learner needs at least 5-7 years to master the academic language proficiently. It may be that the FAL learner has difficulties in the CALP; they would try to translate back to their home language to gain a better understanding of concepts taught (Cummins, 1997). However, this is not always possible since certain scientific terms in English are not always available in the African languages (Engelbrecht et al., 2013).

When learners are expected to read and comprehend in a language that is not their HL at Grade 4 level, it impacts largely on the quality of education that the learner will attain.

According to Cummins (1997), the learner requires two types of language skills to become proficient in a language.

Learners make use of their home language to draw on the background knowledge between home and the school as well as to help validate the learners' socio-cultural identity and language ability in a multilingual context (Cummins et al., 2005). These factors play an important role in acquiring a second language (Baker, 2006; Street, 2001). Research has shown competence in a learner's home language further strengthens the transfer of linguistic skills between languages (Giambo & Szecsi, 2015; Reyes, 2006). The learner makes use of these resources to help them understand a given text during comprehension.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the use of group discussions as a support strategy to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classrooms in our schools. Due to the diverse cultural and language backgrounds of our learners, it is important to explore a strategy in the classroom that can assist learners in strengthening their language skills. By learners listening and speaking effectively, their language skills are practised and used meaningfully during group discussion. Learners then have an opportunity to think critically and explore their ideas with their peers. Collaboration amongst peers allows for questioning and critical thinking to evolve (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016). These skills, in turn, could enhance and improve the learner's comprehension ability in the intermediate phase.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1 Primary research question

 How does the use group discussions enhance comprehension skills in multilingual primary classrooms in Gauteng?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

- What is the role of the teacher during the group discussion process?
- How is peer support utilised for group discussions?
- How can questioning techniques be used during group discussions to enhance comprehension?

- Which factors do teachers consider necessary to implement group discussions?

1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

I assume that every child would be able to develop their comprehension skills using group discussion as a support strategy amongst their peers. It is during the group discussion process that the ESL learner can get enough exposure to the listening and speaking of the language, improving their oral fluency, reading, writing and comprehension skills.

A monolingual teacher can employ translanguaging strategies and scaffolding moves during group discussion to develop comprehension skills in learners amongst peers. Teachers should make full use of more capable English-language speakers in the class to assist learners struggling to grasp the understanding of the questions. The teacher encourages more talk time during group discussion to enhance thinking aloud of texts, thereby resulting in comprehension skills being mastered as well (DBE, 2011; MacKay, 2014).

Increasing different types of questions asked could encourage critical thinking in learners (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Questions could build enquiring minds and lead to higher-level thinking skills. The learners are encouraged to give feedback leading to an exchange of ideas and viewpoints. According to CAPS (2011), the introduction of English at FAL level to learners in Grade 2 and 3 are intended to build on the BICS when it is too poorly developed. The learners' spoken and written English needs to be strengthened to allow for improved analytical skills. The aim is allowing the learners greater responsibility for their learning and encouraging independent thinking which needs to be instilled at the primary school level.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.7.1 Group Discussion

Within the context of my study, discussion refers to the interaction between the teacher and learner as well as the learner and their peers clarifying and asking questions (Van der Westhuizen, 2016). Increasing verbal activities in the classroom enhances the learner's speaking, writing and reading skills to develop the learner's comprehension skill (Lerner & Johns, 2015).

1.7.2 Comprehension skills

The ability to understand the text is of vital importance in all reading support (Bouwer & Dednam, 2016). Talking to learners allows the child to improve the academic language which includes being able to read and write thus developing vocabulary, phonics, sight words, grammar and the ability to comprehend a text (DBE, 2011; Lerner & Johns, 2015).

1.7.3 Support and Strategy

According to Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, and Engelbrecht (1999), support can be viewed as "all the actions that educators employ to make it easier for learning" to take place in a classroom. Within the context of my study, the word "support strategy" refers to the group discussion occurring between peers which improves social skills and helps the tutee in the learning process (Van der Westhuizen, 2016).

1.7.4 Translanguaging

Translanguaging can be described as making use of more than one language to access the same content taught. It also describes when a learner can input content in one language and produce output in another language (Makalela, 2015). Within the context of my study, translanguaging allows learners in the classroom to make use of all their language abilities to make meaning of information and to clarify questions during group discussion. Yip & Garcia (2015) define translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (p.283).

1.7.5 Multilingualism

According to El-Sherbini (2016), multilingual is defined as "of people or group able to use more than two languages for communication" (p.2). Within the context of my study, multilingual refers to Grade 4-6 learners, ages 9-12 years, in the intermediate phase who communicate in different languages to be able to access teaching and learning. Using the translanguaging strategy, every learner can communicate freely with their peer's assistance.

1.8   RESEARCH PARADIGMS

1.8.1   Epistemology: Interpretivism

The proposed study used an interpretivist paradigm which sought to explore and understand the use of group discussion amongst multilingual learners' interactions with the peers and their teacher. This paradigm had potential value since it derived meaning through socially constructed experiences and the views of its participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). As social beings, we are always striving to understand better and interpret our interactions within our naturalistic environment and in this case, the classroom where the researcher examines the teachers' and learners' experiences and gives meaning to their interactions to enhance the teaching and learning process. The teacher and learners were actively involved and influenced how the group discussion unfolded (De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom, 2014). Researchers would be using their own background, values and belief systems to shape and interpret the interaction of the participants, which, according to the positivist researcher, is highly subjective (Creswell, 2014)). This limitation of interpretivism could be overcome by careful use of different sources and allowing the voice of the participants to be heard (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Being immersed in the field allowed the researcher to observe the roles of both the teacher and learners carefully during the group discussion process.

"What a child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow." (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211). This statement aptly describes the value of social interaction in the learning processes of children.

1.8.2   Theoretical framework

The chosen framework for the proposed study is the sociocultural theory since it brings the researcher close to the participants to be able to gain a wealth of knowledge during the group discussion process. The sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978) highlights the interaction between the child and a significant other, being the teacher or more capable peer who guides the learner towards developing language proficiency. Similarly, Costantino (2012), points out that it is through these communications that a child can learn language constructs and make meaning of their cultural and social world. The Vygotskian sociocultural theory describes "mediation" as the means of developing

children's higher-level mental ability as they interact in their environment (Van Compernolle & Williams, 2013, p.279).

The first type of mediation includes symbolic tools such as the use of graphs, pictures, and linguistics (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p.418). The symbolic tool used in this proposed study is language. The ESL learner makes use of language through formally structured pedagogical methods such as group discussion as a "practice" amongst learners to share and exchange ideas with each other thus enhancing language development skills which is the "theory" later shaping this support strategy. To align practice and theory is referred to as "praxis" in Vygotsky's theory (Lantolf, & Poehner, 2010, p.12).

The second type of mediation includes the intervention between the learner and a significant other, i.e. the teacher or their peer to guide and support the learner as they internalise concepts in the second language to reach their optimum potential while in their Zone of Proximal Development (hereafter referred to as ZPD). Mediation allows learners to become responsible for their learning and deciding how they make meaning of the knowledge attained (De Vos et al., 2014, p.7). Group discussion amongst learners provided ESL learners with an opportunity to engage with their peers through asking questions, clarifying uncertainties and solving problems (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014, p.58). It is within this social space that learners have an opportunity to engage purposefully to give meaning to language text as realities are being co-constructed (Miller, 2003, p.291).

1.8.3 Methodological approach

The study followed a qualitative approach as the choice of research methodology since it attempted to capture the interpretations and understandings of its participants in their natural environment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher explored and described phenomena by giving meaning to the participants' experiences immersed in the research field (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2014).

An inductive approach allowed the researcher to gain information and draw conclusions as patterns recurred (Cooper & White, 2012; Morgan & Sklar, 2012). The data collection method that was used, is referred to as a triangulation technique to validate and cross-check all data analysed. This technique added value to the trustworthiness of the study.

An exploratory case study design included a convenient and purposive sampling of participants used within a thematic analysis.

1.8.4 Research design - A case study

An exploratory, inductive case study design was used to satisfy the researcher's need for an in-depth study of the teachers' and learners' experiences and interpretations during group discussion. A qualitative approach sought to study the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. This was achieved by closely observing and documenting the questioning techniques used by the teacher. The researcher gained a better insight into the interaction between the participants. A wealth of knowledge was gained within the naturalistic setting (Casanave, 2015; Seabi, 2012).

Due to the researcher's biases, detailed recordings and procedures of the study were rigidly kept. A meeting was held with the educators participating in the research to fully explain the discussion process that took place. This was later cross-checked by follow-up of a reflective journal to ensure no misinterpretations have occurred. (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009).

Qualitative researchers are challenged by their single case research studies resulting in over generalisations; therefore they do not claim representativeness but rather seek to generate new ideas that could lead to future research and theories in the field of study (Seabi, 2012).

Table 1: Selection of participants

School	Teachers	Gender	Experience	Number of learners in the class
School A	X	Female	2 years	36
	Y	Male	4 years	51
School B	Z	Male	6 months	47

According to Niewenhuis (2007), every situation must be seen in its specific context so that the researcher can compare the findings. School A is based in an urban area and is classified as an ex-Model C school consisting of multilingual learners. Learners speak different home languages consisting of IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Sesotho, but English is taught at the HL level from Grade 1. In-School B, IsiZulu is taught at HL level from Grade R with English being taught at a FAL level. School B is situated in the township also comprising of multilingual learners.

Specific participants were targeted to yield more accurate and rich data (Yin, 2016). Learner documents, e.g. classwork and comprehension activity responses, were taken from second language English learners.

1.8.5 Data collection and documentation

The data sources that were utilised in this study included detailed field notes obtained during classroom observations. The researcher, being a non-participant in the classroom carefully observed how the group discussions took place.

Table 2: Sources of data from School A and School B

Sources of data	School A		School B
Classroom Observation	2		1
Semi-structured interviews with the teachers	2		1
Sources of data	**School A**		**School B**
Classroom Observation	2		1
Semi-structured interviews with the teachers	2		1

A reflective journal was kept while interviewing the teachers as well as noting their concerns during our first meeting about what my research was about and their participation in the study. The field notes consisted of transcripts which were obtained from the use of audio recordings during semi-structured interviews with teachers.

A reflective journal was kept by the researcher to constantly make detailed notes on overall progress and monitoring of the sources of information (Creswell, 2014). Document analysis included learners' classwork in each classroom per school. Learners work achieving an average score of between 40%-50 % for English was used.

Analysing the learners' responses when answering the comprehension questions as well as their level of understanding after group discussions had taken place was crucial for the learners' understanding of the various level of questioning in the comprehension activities. Two weeks were allocated for data collection. Three comprehension lessons were observed where learners participated in group discussions before answering their comprehension exercises. Table 2 provides detail on the times allocated to each technique for data collection.

Data was documented using a qualitative approach with the researcher using words to capture the thoughts of the participants. Accessibility to field notes was critical when

validating the research findings. The credibility of the case study design made use of two ways of validating the researcher's findings. These were a triangulation of data sources and theory triangulation (Yin, 2016).

1.9   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

An inductive thematic analysis was used in which the researcher became completely immersed in the rich source of data collected. This involved examining a specific phenomenon and group discussions with great accuracy to obtain a detailed analysis of data (Seabi, 2012). This enabled transferability which was to ensure that each participant's role was clarified against the setting, enhancing the authenticity of the study (Creswell, 2014).

A step by step guide recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used by the researcher. All data collected was transcribed. The data was then read and re-read to become familiar with the transcripts. The next step was to formulate codes from the transcripts, which were then systematically organised and grouped to form themes. Grouping similar themes was crucial, before considering sub-themes and finding relationships within the themes. The themes and sub-themes had to link to the research questions that the study intended to address. Finally, a report, including the themes that formed and a coherent and systematic account of the research done, was then compiled. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In every study, it is the researcher's obligation to respect the rights of all participants concerned (Creswell, 2014). This was achieved by following a structured process. An application for ethical approval to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Pretoria had to be done to obtain clearance for the study. Permission had to be granted by the Gauteng Department of Education for access to the participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from the participating school principals and teachers and parents of the learners that participated in the study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Informed consent forms were signed by all stakeholder, which brought about mutually trusting relationships (Thomas, 2016).

All information regarding the purpose of the study and methods that were used, the expected contribution the study may bring, avoiding possible harm it may cause, how long it would take as well as ways of ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of information received were clearly outlined to all participants (Thomas, 2016).

As a researcher, I took the utmost care not to divulge any information concerning the study ensuring the strictest confidentiality was maintained. The case study design involved a series of observations and interviews thus it was essential that participants understood that their participation was voluntary, and they had a right to withdraw at any time during the study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013)

1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS THAT FOLLOW

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study encapsulating the background and purpose of the research. It highlights the primary and secondary questions this study intends to address, includes the key concepts being used, the research paradigm and methodologies used to guide the study. Chapter 2 consists of a comprehensive literature review of the quality of our education system based on the systemic comprehension results obtained both nationally and internationally. At both levels, similar results occurring in multilingual settings in schools are evident.

Chapter 3 focuses on research design and methodology. It discusses the research process that will ensue. The ethical domains of the study are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 describes the results of the thematic analysis of the data. It includes the data collection process and detailed findings that support the research to be covered. This chapter elicits the themes induced from the data analysis process.

Chapter 5 focuses on the findings from Chapter 4. These findings are compared with the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Limitations of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

"Understanding a text at some level, and thereby responding in some way to its content, must surely be the most fundamental reason for making the effort to read" (Landsberg et al., 2016, p.176)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I have provided a brief overview of how the use of group discussions enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. Using empirical studies and contributions, Chapter 2 will be exploring international and national views related to the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills. The purpose of the chapter is to provide a concise and thorough introduction of the relevant components from the theoretical framework that informs the present study. The concept of comprehension is discussed, making optimal use of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. This theory further highlights the understanding of what a child can do independently representing their actual level of development compared to what a child can achieve beyond their current ability level, referred to as the ZPD. This learning is made possible through the assistance of a knowledgeable other being their teacher, a learner or group of learners in a social, collaborative classroom setting (Landsberg et al., 2016).

2.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS TO ENHANCE COMPREHENSION SKILLS AMONGST MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS GLOBALLY

2.2.1 International Perspective

According to Martin Luther King Jr. (1947, p.10), "The cognitive ability to 'sift and weigh evidence or make incisive decisions are not skills that birth endows, but rather education must provide". Our education system needs to provide effective teaching and learning opportunities to equip our learners with the necessary higher-order thinking skills needed for comprehension. According to the statistics of National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1% of fourth-grade students were unable to find relevant information or were unable to substantiate their answers due to the weak interpretation of the text By the time these students reached 12th grade, 25% were still unable to perform basic comprehension activities (Murphy, Firetto, Wei, Li, & Croninger, 2016). These dismal statistics in comprehension results have resulted in the American government being

proactive in passing an Act called, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), prioritising learner's reading comprehension levels (Tugman, 2010).

Research with regards to the history of teachers' pedagogical skills in enhancing comprehension has come a long way. From teachers teaching learners how to decode to teachers focusing on increasing learner's vocabulary and phonetics to improve reading skills, teachers have explored many methods in trying to enhance learners' comprehension skills (Shen, 2009). Later learners were taught comprehension strategies to be able to predict, clarify and summarise a text (Shen, 2009). Being able to read words has little value if the learner is unable to construct meaning from the text (Klinger, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007). According to Caposey and Heider (2003), an effective strategy is using cooperative learning. It occurs when students form small groups and help one another to learn a specific skill or subject. Students can learn more effectively in a cooperative setting which involves working together towards a common goal (Blickenstaff, Hallquist & Kopel, 2013).

One of the comprehension strategies used in cooperative learning is group discussions. The value of group discussion is dated back to Benjamin Bloom in 1954 with his first book published on the Teaching by Discussion. A meta-analysis of 49 studies done have indicated that the effects of group discussions are still valued and relevant and includes higher-level thinking in comprehensions (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Heck, 1993; Snow, 2014; Soter et.al, 2008; Wilkinson & Reninger, 2005). In addition, research of class observations in a diverse sample of classes involving thousands of 8th and 9th graders, have found a strong positive correlation between the allocated time awarded to learners during a group discussion and to the learners gaining an in-depth knowledge of the work taught (Nystrand, 2006). These results were replicated by Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003), further supporting discussion-based instruction by teachers, significantly enhancing reading comprehension and literature achievement for learners.

Notably, this problem-solving organisation of the classroom has proved to be especially beneficial to the below and average ability level students (Murphy & Edwards, 2005). Quality discussions in classrooms have consistently played a role in promoting vocabulary specifically amongst children living in lower socio-economic backgrounds (Snow, 2014). Van den Branden, (2000) agrees that the benefits of discussions are

especially evident amongst HL and FAL learners which cater for the diverse language and cultural background of learners in multilingual contexts. The greatest advantage is to the FAL learner, who is given more opportunity to learn from their more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978; Murphy, 2017).

The FAL learner can discuss concepts not well understood with their peers before attempting to answer the text, which could enhance their comprehension skills. Learners are grouped according to their ability level, interests or other criteria (Ornstein & Lasley, 1990). It is during group discussion led by peers that text-based clarification is promoted (Wu, Anderson, Nguyen-Jahiel, & Miller 2013), allowing greater learning outcomes to be achieved (Anderson et al., 2001; Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009) and socialisation skills to be enhanced (Webb & Palincsar, 1996). Learners can rethink and be more accepting of other learners' beliefs and opinions (Murphy et al., 2016). Learners can share their cultural and language backgrounds through discussion to be able to give meaning to unfamiliar concepts by sharing information with their peers (Croninger et al., 2017). This is a life skill to be taught early to children, so they become more aware and tolerant of their peers. By initiating these roles, it fosters critical thinking amongst learners during group discussion to enhance comprehension skills (Murphy & Mason, 2006).

"The more students work in cooperative groups, the more they understand and retain content and are able to feel better about themselves and their peers" (Caposey & Heider, 2003, p.21). Research has indicated that this interaction helps children to learn more effectively and has also proven to be successful (Caposey & Heider, 2003). Similar trends concerning the low literacy rates affecting comprehension skills of learners have been noted nationally, which will be discussed below.

2.2.2 National Perspective

As a country, we are twenty-four years into democracy, having made seven curricula changes within this period yet we have made little progress in terms of reading (Facchinetti, 2017). Our country's reading challenge is illustrated by the results obtained from the PIRLS, the Annual National Assessment (hereafter referred to as ANA) results and the South and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (hereafter referred to as SACMEQ) assessments.

According to the PIRLS assessments that were administered to our Grade 4 and 5 learners, it tracked the progress of reading comprehension of our learners set against international benchmarks (Howie et al., 2017). The test was translated into 11 different languages in the nine provinces. South Africa's grade four learners in primary schools were assessed and placed last out of the 50 countries that participated in the study.

According to the results, learners performed better when writing the test in their HL than their FAL. A child making use of their HL was better able to make sense of their world and able to connect better with others (Pandey, 2014). Research indicates that learning is better achieved in cognitive and academic development when learners, learn in their mother tongue for as long as possible (Heugh, 2013; Quane & Glanz, 2011). Sepedi and Tshivenda students made use of their HL to understand the text given better using translanguaging during group discussions. Group discussion as a support strategy allows learners within a social group to talk freely in their HL to understand the instructions given better and make meaning of tasks given to them by the teacher (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016).

Similar research done by Makalela (2013), clearly reveals the effectiveness of the use of HL as a communication tool for teaching comprehension to multilingual learners in a primary and tertiary institution. The findings of his research also include translanguaging used as a support strategy amongst multilingual learners. Learners make use of their HL to discuss in groups while writing their responses in their FAL but to do this requires that the learner have a good understanding of the text (Makalela, 2013).

Researchers have explored how translanguaging can assist multilingual students in understanding a text before attempting to answer questions. It is evident in the literature review that there are numerous benefits to working in groups and how it can be used to assist multilingual learners. My research will highlight the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills amongst multilingual learners within the intermediate phase in primary schools. South African educational policies have tried to support multilingual learners in classrooms, which will be discussed below.

2.3 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION PRINCIPLES IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY

2.3.1 Introduction

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) centrally promotes multilingualism and the optimal use of the country's linguistic resources in our classrooms (DoE, 1997). This policy impacted many teachers in schools since they have not been trained to teach English second language learners. The FAL learners had to adapt to the language of learning and teaching in schools (Plüddemann, Xola & Mahlahela-Thusi, 2000). According to Hlatswayo (2013), "although classroom contexts in urban schools became linguistically diverse, educator's linguistic profiles remained largely unchanged" (p.13). Changes in terms of methodology, different instructional approaches, or even upskilling of teachers are possible solutions to improving our learners' comprehension skills. Learners are one of the greatest resources in the classroom, and if they are used optimally, it could result in self-regulated learning. Although various policies and projects have been developed and implemented to support inclusion as well as addressing the multilingual learners' reading and comprehension levels, it has not improved the results. These results are indicated in the ANA, PIRLS and SACMEQ studies that were done. The various policies and projects are discussed below.

2.3.2 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

In 2012, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), were implemented in the Foundation Phase in South African schools (DBE, 2010) The document had no clear guidelines on comprehension strategies to be used by teachers, i.e. the use of strategies to be used before, during and after reading a text. However, it outlined the requirements of reading comprising of shared reading, group reading, paired and independent reading, including phonics. Emphasis was placed on the thinking and analytical skills to be promoted in learners using low to high order comprehension questions. Teachers were encouraged to make use of Barrett's Taxonomy for the learner to be able to make inferences, evaluate and analyse the text as well as develop an appreciation for the reading content (DBE, 2010). The CAPS for English home language in the intermediate phase Grades 4-6 offered teacher's guidelines in terms of the skills that need to be mastered by learners to acquire the CALP in the grades that followed. The skill of listening and speaking formed the foundation of all learning in all the subjects.

For this skill to be developed competently, learners were required to be able to receive information, understand and make inferences from a given text (DBE, 2011). Mastering the skill of listening and speaking can be developed through group discussion. It is expected of teachers to provide more opportunity for learners to discuss and to build on their language structure and comprehension skill. The importance of this skill to be practised daily should become part of the English teachers' lesson routine for learners to master listening and speaking.

The other literacy projects implemented included Foundations for Learning introduced in 2008 for Grades 1-6 learners, the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS), School Transformation and Reform Strategy (STARS), and in Kwa-Zulu Natal the LitNum strategy (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). The Department of Basic Education also put in place the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), targeting 100 schools in each province which aimed to assess the learners' early reading skills in the Foundation Phase and identifying early reading problems to adapt instructional practices of teachers (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). According to Pretorius & Klapwijk (2016), teaching comprehension to learners in South African schools is not being given immediate attention, especially with regards to teacher training.

South African teachers need to consider a new approach to their teaching perspective; the one-size-fits-all approach is not working in South African classrooms. All learners are important and need to be valued; thus, by accepting and accommodating differences and diversity in our classrooms, we could make learning and teaching more enjoyable and rewarding. By teachers respecting and understanding different cultures, they could be better able to understand the children in their classrooms and the communities they serve (Betts & Letkemann, 2003). The only way one can "address learner diversity is by making the curriculum accessible to all our learners" (DoE, 2011, p.7). Curriculum differentiation must become part of lesson planning to cater for the individual needs of learners.

The use of grouping learners according to their various ability levels, could streamline the various needs of learners. However, they do not need to remain within the same groups but will change according to the different subjects offered (Engelbrecht et al., 2013). This instructional model caters for the large numbers in classrooms, diverse learner groups as well as the different ability levels of learners to be able to access the curriculum

simultaneously (Engelbrecht et al., 2013). To avoid the gaps in knowledge of learners, the teacher would initially begin with one theme for the entire class but design the lesson outcomes to straddle learning, catering for the different ability level of learners in the classroom (DoE, 2011). Straddled learning ensures that all learners begin with their previous relevant knowledge which they have learnt. They then work towards gaining new knowledge but are allowed to work at their own pace. Learners must be involved in guided discovery with the help of the teachers or their peers to engage by discussing, reflecting and debating thereby allowing them to become self-regulated individuals (Engelbrecht et al., 2013). For learners to be able to develop high-order skills for comprehension, a thorough understanding of its definition needs to be discussed which follows below.

2.4   WHAT IS COMPREHENSION?

Comprehension is "an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text" (Lerner, & Johns, 2015, p.355). This process does not automatically develop from mere word recognition but requires learners to learn certain strategies to help them in understanding the text (Lerner & Johns, 2015). The key to reading comprehension consists of the learner's background knowledge, interest and the reading situation, which all impacts on the learner's understanding of the written text. It also depends on the child's ability to integrate new information with what is already known to them (Jennings, Caldwell, & Lerner, 2010; National Reading Panel, 2000).

In addition, comprehension is dependent on the reader's experience, knowledge of the language, recognition of syntax, and redundancy of the printed text that results in their understanding of the passage (Jennings et al., 2010). When a reader is faced with a text which they do not know anything about, no amount of rereading could assist or increase the comprehension of the passage (Lerner & Johns, 2015).

Reading comprehension is a process in which the reader decides on the linguistic symbol to be able to reconstruct it to form a meaningful whole from what the writer intended (Wainwright, 1972). Reading comprehension is the ability to recognise and understand the main idea as well as related details. A good reader who comprehends recognises the ability to read between the lines to get the full meaning of the text. This complex process involves the successful or unsuccessful use of the learner's abilities (Rahmat, 2017).

Similarly, Ness (2010) defines reading comprehension as "a process that involves memory, thinking abstractly, visualisation and understanding vocabulary as well as knowing how to decode properly" (p.25).

Based on the various definitions, we can conclude that reading with understanding in a given text comprises comprehension. This complex activity involves both thought and perception, including making sense of words and sentences within the connected text (Rahmat, 2017). Varied research has indicated some of the underlying causes of poor reading comprehension including the "complex process of learning to read, the type of instruction, a method of decoding, prior knowledge, diverse population and development of vocabulary" (Caposey & Heider, 2003, p.14). Learners with low literacy skills have less access to a normal curriculum and are prone to low self-esteem and low motivation leading to behavioural problems and academic underachievement (Blickenstaff et al., 2013).

The over-emphasis of phonemic awareness in classrooms has led to the breakdown of literacy skills and strategies taught to learners (Blickenstaff et al., 2013). Research conducted by Klinger, Urbach, Golos, Brownell, and Menon (2010), concurs that the teachers focused more on phonological awareness and decoding rather than increasing comprehension strategies in learners. Learners struggling, therefore, require additional and explicit support on how to critically think and extract relevant information from the text (Blickenstaff et al., 2013). One such strategy to assist learners in critically thinking and extracting relevant information from the text is the use of group discussions.

2.4.1 The link between reading comprehension and group discussion
"Guided reading is helpful for students who are fluent readers but lack comprehension skills. It forces them to think what they have to read" (Caposey & Heider, 2003, p.19). Furthermore, proper planning in small group instruction benefits all students as the repetition of the text through their peers allow for consolidation (Blickenstaff et al., 2013).

Techniques to increase reading fluency include choral reading, echo reading, partner reading and reading along silently as oral reading is modelled in the form of poetry or reader's theatre. These techniques can be applied in small groups during reading or three

times a week in an intervention programme in 20-minute intervals (Blickenstaff et al., 2013).

When students share ideas, they become more confident (Jones, 2007). Learners actively participating in a group discussion can learn consciously and unconsciously (Wu, 2008). It is therefore evident that group discussion gives learners an opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts which instils a deeper understanding of the text. Learners are able to discuss the "(1) main idea; (2) detailed information; (3) word meaning; (4) reference; (5) social, function or generic structure" (Siswanti, & Setyaningsih, 2014, p.219) which enables learners to gain a better understanding of the text.

Group discussion can help learners to find the main idea utilising the technique of skimming (Williams, 2000). This must first be modelled by the teacher for the learner to use this type of strategy. They are emphasising the title of the passage, headings, sub-headings, bold, underlined words, reading the first and last paragraph in order to skim for main ideas (Siswanti & Setyaningsih, 2014). Learners skim the text as a group with all learners expressing their ideas and input on what that paragraph is about (Williams, 2000). The FAL learner feels more at ease in collaborating within a group when determining main ideas (Wu, 2008).

Another technique which can be utilised is scanning which is used to find pieces of information quickly from the text (Brown, 2001). This process involves identifying the keywords in the question with the teacher, later using the group of learners to assist each other while scanning the text. By scanning information, one will be able to highlight and comprehend information successfully (Kawabata, 2007). During the discussion, all students have an opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions, helping each other in developing the skill to find the relevant information (Siswanti, & Setyaningsih, 2014).

An important activity is when group members assist each other with words that are unknown to them. This strategy makes use of the context of the learner to understand the words (Rhoder & Huerster, 2002). Students contextualise and have an increased opportunity to think and analyse the text when the discussion is teacher-guided during group discussion (Beck & McKeown, 2006). One of the drawbacks in using group discussion is that the classroom can become noisy and it would become difficult if a

teacher cannot manage discipline in the classroom (Jones, 2007). Even though the discussions can become noisy, literature illustrates that the advantages of group discussions far outweigh the disadvantages.

Code-switching is seen in a negative light due to learners depending on their HL and not utilising their FAL sufficiently, yet this would be one way in which the FAL learner would be able to grasp the content easily (Jones, 2007). The use of the learners' HL used must be closely monitored by the teacher so that it does not cause dependency on the HL instead of English in the classroom. During group discussion, the FAL learners are actively involved in code-switching and it brings about a lively classroom atmosphere. Peers assisting during group discussion make the FAL learner feel more at ease to engage in the discussion, thus improving their reading comprehension (Siswanti, & Setyaningsih, 2014). FAL learners receive assistance from both their teacher and their peers to enhance their comprehension skills. This assistance is emphasised within the theoretical perspective of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory using the principle of the ZPD, which will be discussed below.

2.4.2 Vygotsky's sociocultural theory used by learners during group discussion

Vygotsky, the founder of the sociocultural theory, emphasised the need for social interaction during a child's cognitive development. Vygotsky further explored the principle of the ZPD, which strongly emphasises the utilisation of learners' strengths (Bouwer, 2016). The zone of proximal development lies between information being too difficult to learn and information that has already been learned. Vygotsky believed that higher mental processes occur during the shared activity with an adult. It is through communications and interactions with both adults and peers that the learner gains a better understanding of a given text (Maloch, 2002). However, learning through peer collaboration during the ZPD depends on how students interact with each other, how involved the interaction is and the students' level of understanding of the text (Evans, 2002). Vygotsky is remembered for his emphasis on learning within collaborative groups. He emphasised the importance of the learning process through social interactions and argued that learning through social interaction is how people learn best.

It is evident from this theory that knowledge gained from social interaction becomes easily internalised. When students observe their peers playing a game, a student can learn,

understand and implement the rules of the game played by their peers. The more social interaction a student is exposed to, the more experiences and knowledge is gained by the student (Sternberg & Williams, 2002). My study is premised on the crucial role social interaction plays in a learner's ability to learn from their more capable peers and teachers during group discussions. It draws on the role of conversation sharing amongst peers in a group to gain a better understanding and insight into the text (Tugman, 2010). When students discuss information, their dialogue is on the same level as compared to the discussion held between a teacher and learner. Increased classroom talk amongst students results in a better understanding of the topic (Maloch, 2012).

According to Vygotsky's principle of ZPD, the term, scaffolding refers to "adults or more capable peers helping and supporting children's attempts to achieve a task that would not be attained alone" (Christ, & Wang, 2008, p.198). The aim is to encourage more peer-led discussion instead of teacher-led discussion in the classroom. A gradual shift of instruction leading from teacher-led scaffolding to teacher-learner scaffolding and then learner-led scaffolding will only be realised once greater levels of confidence are felt by teachers (Tugman, 2010).

When teachers practise scaffolding during discussions, learners can practise their discussion skills. They, in turn, can question and encourage their peers by prompting answers (Jadallah et al., 2011). Clarification given by learners allows the FAL learner to critically analyse from the text (Lin et al., 2015). As the teacher releases more control to students, this allows for greater learner participation and motivates them to think creatively (Anderson et al., 2001; Nystrand, 1997). It is only when learners develop their own questions that interest them and respond to questions posed by their peers that critical thinking can occur. (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser & Long, 2003; Soter et al., 2008; Webb, 1989). Learners that are optimally participating in discussions take ownership for the reasoning of their responses to questions and do not rely solely on the teacher (Anderson, Chinn, Chang, Waggoner, & Nguyen, 1998). The roles of both the teacher and the learners for effective group discussions to occur will be discussed below.

2.4.3 Teacher and learner roles during group discussions.

According to Wei & Murphy (2017, p.32) for effective discussion to take place requires various roles to be fulfilled by both the teacher and learner which include the teacher

"being an intentional instructor, fading facilitator and effortful evaluator with the learner being an engaged learner, thoughtful interpreter and reflexive responder." These mutually supportive roles form part of the instructional framework of group discussions.

According to Murphy et al., (2016), theoretical and empirical research reveals that small group discussions support critical thinking. Two important elements that support fostering comprehension skills are teachers' use of an instructional framework during discussions and the learner's characteristics (Murphy et al., 2016). In addition, he argues that the knowledgeable other, who is the teacher in a classroom setting, does not always have the instructional strategies to talk with learners. This often limits learners' thinking during the discussion. It is only when teachers undergo professional training related to high-quality talk will they effectively assist learners to acquire the critical thinking skills needed for comprehension (Murphy et al., 2016). A greater emphasis is being placed on what the teacher and learner do before, during and after the discussion for learners to effectively gain the high-order thinking skills needed for comprehension (Murphy et al., 2016).

For learners to be able to give meaning to a text, they must first understand the text. The teachers' use of pictures or other audio-visual learning material before the discussion helps learners to understand and give meaning to the text. (Murphy et al., 2016). The learner, in turn, makes use of their relevant previous knowledge and personal experiences to understand the text (Murphy et al., 2016). According to Murphy et al. (2016), empirical studies suggest text-based discussions must involve learners having to formulate questions about the text even before the discussion to foster critical thinking amongst learners. Research has shown that learners tend to formulate low-order recall questions where responses can be extracted directly from the text. This practice is overcome by the teachers guiding learners on how to formulate questions starting with low order questions to support learners struggling to understand the text before moving to higher-order questions. Once there is an understanding of the text, further argumentative questions can be generated, promoting critical thinking.

It is during pre-discussion where the FAL learners have an opportunity to share their understanding of the text with a more knowledgeable peer. While engaging during the discussion with the more proficient English learners, the FAL learner can listen attentively and question their peers if they do not understand something. A more learner-centred

small group discussion follows, allowing the FAL learners to gain confidence in asking questions and speaking freely without being ridiculed. During this discussion of sharing of personal experiences, language and culture are exchanged amongst learners allowing them to think critically. As the discussion continues in the classroom, the effectiveness of teaching learners the critical skills of thinking dependents whether the teacher or learner controls the discussion (Murphy et al., 2016).

Both the teacher and the learner use the discussion to promote their cognitive skills that promote quality talk in classrooms (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Initially, the teacher models the discussion process for the students to follow and learn by scaffolding techniques, the learner must then construct meaning during the group discussions (Chinn, Anderson, & Waggoner, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978).

Complete control of these factors cannot be handed over to learners until they practise and understand fully how an effective discussion occurs. The choice of the text is normally prescribed according to the level of the learners' ability and their interests. The control of the discussion and powers of turn-taking can only be relinquished to learners once it has been modelled by the teacher and with the teacher closely monitoring the process. When teachers incorporate different styles of learning it helps to reach various learners. Each learner will be able to access information differently, but increased repetition of the text enhances better understanding.

The skill of the teacher summarising the discussion is crucial for the learners to all conclude their findings of the text (McAlpine, 2004). Post-discussion should include a transfer of oral information into a written form to enhance language skills in learners (Kim, Anderson, Miller, Jeong, & Swim, 2011). By the teacher and learners initiating their roles during group discussions, it promotes critical thinking to enhance comprehension skills.

When determining control of the discussion, it is important to establish "who selects the text, who controls the topic of the discussion, who controls turn-taking and who has the overall interpretive power of the discussion" (Wei & Murphy, 2017, p.31). Following the current practice in schools today, teachers and learners mostly use the Initiate, Respond and Evaluate model for discussion. This includes teachers engaging in whole-class instruction with certain learners being asked questions and the teacher having complete

control over the interpretive responses and power of the discussion. This leads to teacher-centred discussions where learners are restricted in their thinking and rely on the teacher as the only source of information (Wei & Murphy, 2017).

This type of instructional framework limits learner discussions and is less productive in allowing learners to think for themselves, usually resulting in text-based responses. Since learners are exposed only to recall questions, they are unable to make inferences or think critically around the text as they have not practised this skill (Wei & Murphy, 2017). The critical skill of learners having to analyse, synthesise and question the text is lacking; thus learners will be unable to perform this task during formal assessments. Greater use of high-quality discussions between the teacher and learners as a pedagogical tool could be beneficial for the critical skills of comprehension to be enhanced. By encouraging more learner-centred discussions, it gives the learners a greater opportunity to voice their opinions and views, which allows for more critical thinking.

To encourage critical thinking and to gain a better understanding of the text, the questions that are posed by the teacher are crucial. The questions can assist the learners to think how to analyse the text and understand it better. The different types of questioning techniques will be explored using different group discussion approaches.

2.4.4 Different types of questioning techniques used during group discussion

When the roles of both the teacher and learners are implemented during group discussions, it gives learners practise in developing their critical thinking around a text (Wei & Murphy, 2017). High-quality talk amongst learners must first be modelled by the teacher for learners to learn how to construct high-quality questions. Teachers giving clear instructions and reinforcing scaffolding techniques supports learners in developing higher-order thinking. It is only when learners can practise setting good quality questions on a text that they can respond to questions that could develop the necessary skills for group discussion (Wei & Murphy, 2017). For learners to engage in challenging questions being posed on the text they must have a good understanding of its contents.

While the teachers facilitate the group discussions by monitoring the learners' responses, they are better able to guide learners towards setting authentic questions. When learners are better able to ask questions and respond to a text, teachers can give

them more interpretative power and control during group discussions (Wei & Murphy, 2017). As learners practise questioning techniques, the classroom discussions become learner-centred, giving learners the power of developing critical thinking for comprehension.

Collaborative Reasoning (CR) is a type of group discussion which is used to encourage students to critically read and interpret the text (Anderson et al., 1998). CR uses the approach of reasoned argumentation to develop critical thinking in learners (Chinn et al., 2001). This form of discussion is based on the learners' experience, background information, and how the learners challenge each other's points of view in arguments (Waggoner, Chinn, Li & Anderson, 1995). Furthermore, it has increased student participation, decreased teachers' talk with less control of the teacher on the topic (Murphy et al., 2009). The types of questions posed within this type of group discussions are based on learners' backgrounds and how they challenge other learners' points of view. This takes the form of a debate between learners during discussions.

Questioning the Author (QtA) refers to an approach whereby the learner will engage with the text by questioning the author's perspective in relation to the text. The teacher's task is to guide the students through the text by assisting them with the meanings of words and designing questions to make meaning of the text (Beck & McKeown, 2006; Beck, McKeown, Hamilton & Kucan, 1998). As opposed to CR, learners are now encouraged to question the author's point of view instead of their peer's point of view.

Instructional conversations relate to the discussion-based lessons directed towards developing learner's language and conceptual thinking (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, 1989). The teacher's questions posed to the learners are aimed to ensure themes are identified and most importantly, to draw on the learner's relevant previous knowledge (Murphy et al., 2009). The teacher promotes conversation by making use of elicitation techniques and asking for clarification of responses (Murphy et al., 2009). By asking learners for the reason to substantiate their answers, this encourages critical thinking as learners cannot just rely on text-based answers. The disadvantage of this method is that it is time-consuming and requires a lot of teacher preparation (Saunders, Goldenberg & Hamann, 1992).

Questions posed by the teacher are critical within group discussions as this allows the teacher to facilitate the discussions to maximise the benefit received by learners. For group discussions to be effective, numerous factors need to be considered by the teacher. These factors will be discussed below.

2.4.5 Factors to be considered when forming groups for discussion

Important factors to be considered include "the ability level of learners, gender, book choice as well as language, personality and social skills" when forming groups (Tugman, 2010, p.9-10). Studies have indicated that low-ability level learners proved to gain the most when placed in smaller groups during discussions as compared to average-ability level learners (Li, 2017). The smaller the group, the greater the participation and confidence levels of these learners. Learners were inclined to share information more readily and allow other learners a chance to be listened to (Li, 2017).

A further advantage for smaller groups is that it allows the teacher to give more attention to learners according to their abilities, levels and needs (Hausheer, Hansen, & Doumas, 2011). The decision on whether to place learners in either heterogeneous ability groups or homogenous ability groups depends on the learning outcomes the teacher wishes to achieve (Li, 2017). Research indicates that when teachers use homogenous ability grouping with learners, it assists them in pacing their lessons; however, learners placed in heterogeneous ability groups increase their engagement promoting critical thinking (Li, 2017).

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence uses the strengths of each learner when structuring groups (Gallavan & Kottler, 2002). The different personalities which learners have as well as the interest level of the text impacts on the participation levels of the discussions (Murphy et al. 2016). At times the high-ability level learners will completely control discussions not giving the other learners a chance. Teachers must guard against this, so it does not occur. The FAL learner, with time, may start to feel confident enough to participate and contribute to the group discussions (Li, 2017). The practise of talk, both inside and outside the classroom, could promote the FAL learner's expressive and receptive skills. All learners learner bring with them their background knowledge and diverse cultural experiences to share within the group (Croninger et al., 2017). This group setting allows for learners to be more accommodating of others' views and backgrounds

as they are encouraged to listen attentively to each other's points of view. The teacher needs to monitor these group dynamics to ensure that all learners are treated fairly.

The physical arrangement of the classroom may impact on the type of group discussions one intends having. Placement of the desks and tables, e.g. arranged in a circular fashion or placed behind each other, can either hinder or encourage group discussions (Tugman, 2010). Learners placed in a circular fashion sit face-to-face which enables them to participate in group discussions. When learners are placed behind each other, it creates a sense of separation which limits learner's interaction. Some literature indicates a preference for the floor, which allows learners to feel more comfortable and at ease in their learning environment (Raphael, Pardo, & Highfield, 2002). It is within this conducive environment that learners would focus, discuss and form interpersonal relationships.

Literature has illustrated that the ideal setting to encourage group discussions is for learners to be placed in small groups based on their ability levels. Depending on the teachers learning outcomes, they will decide whether they prefer a homogenous ability group or heterogeneous ability group setting (Li, 2017). It has been illustrated that the placing of desks also has an impact on the effectiveness of group discussions.

2.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a comprehensive summary of the reading and comprehension statistics were viewed both nationally and internationally. In line with this globally low performance of learner's various initiatives were implemented with no significant improvement. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, there is significant empirical research done on collaborative learning. Using language as a symbolic tool, children communicate socially with each other. ESL learners have an opportunity to listen and make meaning of their peer's speech to understand and use it (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). When multilingual learners have an opportunity to interact in groups, they learn to speak and practise the language amongst their peers. The emphasis should be on empowering our teachers on the effective use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills amongst primary school learners. Thus, this chapter highlights the roles of both the teachers and learners during group discussions.

When learners effectively gain practise of using critical skills in primary school during comprehension lessons, it could benefit them throughout their schooling. Various factors must be considered for effective group discussions to occur. Large classroom size is seen as a serious challenge for teachers; therefore, with the use of structured group discussions, it could further enhance the teaching and learning in the classroom. Group discussions led by learners target critical thinking skills as well as catering for the unique and diverse linguistic needs of all our multilingual learners. According to the annual report of 2017 by the DBE, an increase in reading time both inside and outside the classroom is being recommended. Other recommendations made by the DBE include the use of longer reading texts for learners to constructively engage with the content, they encourage an increase in the time spent on written work and want to promote reading comprehension and writing exercises. They aim to ensure meaningful access to English across the curriculum and promote reading outside school times, after presenting both the contributions and latest research that supports the use of group discussions in enhancing comprehension skills amongst multilingual learners (Wei & Murphy, 2017; Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). It is important to consider this support strategy for the benefit of our children. For us as a country to reach our National Development goals for 2030, which is 90% of our learners achieving 50% in literacy and numeracy, requires intensive capacity building for our teachers (National Planning Commission, 2013).

A reading nation with a purpose to read involves understanding what it means to comprehend, which is our ultimate vision for every child sitting in a classroom. This vision not only creates independent thinkers for the future but has far-reaching implications for our economy of our country. To reach the National Development Plans, determined goals for 2030 would require forward-minded individuals, who will be ready to make a change in our classrooms.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS RELATED TO THE STUDY

A summary of the methodological decisions related to the study is reflected in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Assumptions in the interpretive paradigm.

Research Paradigm		
Theoretical Framework Vygotsky's sociocultural Theory	**Methodological paradigm** Qualitative	**Meta-theoretical paradigm** Interpretivism
Research Design Case Study		
Research Question How does the use of group discussions enhance comprehension skills in multilingual primary classrooms in Gauteng?		
Purpose Statement Describing the use of group discussions in the Intermediate Phase language classes to enhance comprehension skills in two schools in the Ekurhuleni North District		
Convenient selection of case study One school situated in an urban town and the other situated in the township about 10 km away from each other.		
Selection criteria for the case study Included: • Multilingual learners found in both schools • Intermediate language teachers		
Purposive sampling of participants: Two Intermediate language educators were selected in School A and one Intermediate teacher in School B by way of purposive sampling from the two research school sites in the Ekurhuleni North district.		
Two Intermediate Language teachers School A • Teacher X • Teacher Y	**One** Intermediate Language teacher School B • Teacher Z	

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied to the study and the meta-theoretical paradigm on which the study is based. Section 3.1 provides an overview of the various steps taken during the research process. These discussions will include the research design, participants and sampling method, relating both the advantages and disadvantages of using the case study design. A careful focus on the quality criteria and

ethical considerations are adhered to, and my role as the researcher was strongly considered throughout the research process. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the data analysis procedures, followed by the strengths and limitations of the research methodology used in this study.

3.3   RESEARCH PARADIGM

3.3.1   Interpretive Paradigm

This paradigm allowed the researcher to discover reality through the experiences and understanding of their participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). My study sought to explore the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. The study could illustrate the value of listening and speaking in enhancing comprehension skills in multilingual classes. The interpretive methodology as seen in the table below has provided both the context and has given me the opportunity to observe and interact with the participants who own these experiences and are in a better position to contribute meaningfully to the research (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

The interpretive paradigm, as described by Nieuwenhuis (2007) is based on the following assumptions:

Table 3: Assumptions in an interpretivist paradigm

Elements of an interpretevist paradigm	Related to the present study
1. Human life can only be understood from within	• Working within two primary school settings • Two Intermediate Phase Language educators in School A and one educator in School B were interviewed. • Learners from the intermediate phase classes were observed.
2. Social life viewed as a human product	• The close interaction of both teachers and learners observing group discussions during a non-participatory classroom observation. • Making field notes and reflective notes in my research journal.
3. Human behaviour is affected by the social world. Multiple realities exist to construct the social world.	• While observing group discussions amongst the participants, various other factors must be observed and studiedine.g. the size of each group being formed, how groups are formed, the experience of the educators, the climate present in each school, school leadership and management styles.
4. The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge	• As a researcher, the type of questions posed to the educators during the semi-structured interviews will guide and direct my research. My experience, knowledge, and insights will directly influence the meanings ascribed to the process being researched.

3.3.2 Methodological paradigm

Data collection was mainly concerned "in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their

experiences" (Meriam, 2009, p.5). In this study, I aimed to assess the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills amongst intermediate phase learners in a multilingual context using an interpretive mode of inquiry. The most suitable way to conduct this study was through qualitative research as it is best understood in a practical situation (Creswell, 2007). This reality is socially constructed and constitutes multiple realities that a holistic experience investigates rather than its constituent parts (Morgan and Sklar, 2012). In addition, it further explored the meanings people ascribe to those events. An in-depth understanding considered the various external factors that occur in a specific event. The goal of inquiry is a face to face interaction which is personal, acknowledging the biases and subjectivity of the participants and researcher. However, the richness of data gained and "social facts" is seen to be far more valuable (Ary Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). The goal of the qualitative researcher is to formulate patterns using the wealth of knowledge gained from the pattern of events occurring in their natural setting. Various interpretations are guided by (a) formulation and analysis of patterns, (b) interpreting social situations and actions, (c) understanding the relationship between the situation and outside factors (Ary, et al., 2010, p.421). These interpretations may be constructed into theories or added to the knowledge base of present research being done.

Table 4: The strengths of a qualitative approach

No	Qualitative research	Strengths of this approach as identified by Creswell, (2014)
1.	The research took place at an educational institution, being in two primary schools	• Occurs in the natural setting, including human interaction and behaviour patterns observed
2.	Non-participant classroom observation allows for the researcher to better understand the interactions and meanings that participants attribute to the use of group discussions in enhancing comprehension skills in multilingual classes	• The primary focus is on the participants, as they ascribe meaning to their experiences and interactions.
3.	The use of semi-structured interviews, field notes, and classroom observations	• Data reported in words which are primarily from the participants. The use of photographs and audio recordings from the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations
4.	Flexible design allows for understanding the situation viewed from multiple perspectives	• The researcher gains a multiple -lensed perspective of the various realities as they exist.
5.	Particular emphasis is placed on the use of group discussions and in enhancing comprehension skills in multilingual learners	• Attention is given to particular data and the interpretation thereof
6.	Views, values, and beliefs obtained from participants will make the understanding of the research more valuable	• Makes use of intuitive knowledge gained by participants.

Based on the table above the qualitative researcher's focus is on obtaining rich descriptive data (Merriam, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2007) during research which should enable theory to follow (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The study I conducted occurred in the natural setting of primary schools where teachers and learners interacted in group discussions allowing me the opportunity to observe and listen to the participants. Being able to observe the role of the teacher during the group discussions provided a wealth of information to the researcher. This further, allowed me to collect and analyse my observations of how learners interacted with each other and the teacher during group discussions, whether multilingual peers supported each other during group discussions, as well as allowing me to triangulate data being collected, to better understand the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills. The researcher collected data from the semi-structured interviews with educators and the classroom observations done with both learners and teachers. This qualitative mode of inquiry was used to ascribe meaning to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

According to CAPS, at least two hours have been allocated to listening and speaking in a two-week cycle for learners to negotiate meaning and to master questioning techniques through the communicative approach in the intermediate phase. In addition, various skills and strategies are offered as guidelines for educators to enhance listening and speaking in classrooms. However, a support strategy is required to overcome the challenge experienced by our learners in both the grasping of interpersonal and cognitive academic skills in English. The support needs of learners will have to consider the curriculum needs as well as the requirements needed for higher grades. These standards must be at a level that will prepare our learners for the world of work (DoBE, 2011, p.9).

3.4 CASE STUDY DESIGN

The characteristic feature of the case study is that it explores particular "phenomena in a bounded system" (Merriam,2009; Stake,2005). Working within this definable boundary is the reason I chose this research design which specifically addresses the research aim and questions that guided my study. Based within an interpretive paradigm a case study design was selected to collect a thick description of data from all participants. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), this design allowed the researcher to take into consideration all relevant participants within the context of the study especially the population whose voice is not heard. This inclusion will ensure an in-depth understanding of both the teacher's

and learner's views of the use of group discussions in enhancing comprehension skills in multilingual classes. Observing the group discussions gave the researcher first hand insights into the interaction of the teacher and learners in the classroom. I was able to observe the role of the teacher and highlight the unique factors that are necessary to implement group discussions, as well as the type of questioning techniques used by the teacher and learners to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual learners. This holistic overview includes multiple sources of data to be collected including non-participant classroom observation and documents analysed e.g. learners' English books, assessment books, worksheets used for comprehension lessons, and lesson preparation forms of educators.

3.4.1 Possible advantages of the case study

Case studies viewed as "a step to action" offers a world of action with various interpretations and insights resulting in both self-development and seeking to add value to educational policy formulation. It supports the alternative interpretations that are offered and seen in their complexity and "embeddedness" thus taking all participants' point of views into consideration. Allowing for a "more publicly accessible platform" of the research report that serves a larger variety of audience however, may be a very lengthy process. This in-depth study made use of two different schools to eliminate the element of bias. Its greatest strength is that it is seen as "strong in reality" since its data is "naturally based" yet limited in scope and difficult when arranging the data systematically. In addition to the wealth of descriptive material available, it allowed for the re-interpretation of data that could be of benefit for further research purposes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

3.4.2 Limitations to using the case study design

The results of one's research cannot easily be cross-checked or replicated which can be viewed as biased and subjective. Furthermore, there may be observer biasedness on the part of the researcher, since the situation is viewed through the eyes of participants. Results may not be generalizable due to the limited scope of the research conducted except where other researchers have seen the value of its application.

Table 5: Challenges to the case study design

Challenges to using the case study (Yin, 2014)	Efforts to reduce the challenges in the study
• The results provide little basis for scientific generalisability i.e. same phenomena observed under different conditions	• Two different research sites, i.e. two primary schools. • Same group cohort, i.e. Intermediate phase multilingual learners. • One Grade 4 class and one Grade 6 class in School A • One Grade 6 class in School B
• Lack of rigour, not open to cross-checking, considered to be subjective and biased	• Made use of a research journal to report all evidence fairly and regularly engaged with my supervisor.
• Case study research is a lengthy process	• The limited scope of the study has been considered for the purposes of the mini-dissertation

Case studies favour significance rather than frequency. As pointed out by Creswell (2014), the researcher's ability to be flexible in emerging situations is crucial during case study research. I have been vigilant in allowing the situations occurring in the classroom to speak for themselves rather than making generalisations. Aligning to an interpretivist approach, I relied on the "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of participants lived experiences. I utilised the ability to probe deeper into the underlying phenomena (Creswell, 2014) of group discussions. By being an effective questioner and listener, I was able to probe deeper into the effectiveness of the use of group discussions during teacher interviews. It is through having the ability "to read between the lines" (Yin, 2009, p.70) that I was able to make informed inferences with regards to the study.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides an overview of the research process followed, including "the strategies used during sampling, data collection, data documentation, and data analysis" (Ferreira, 2012, p.36). It guides the research process followed by the researcher. The section that follows describes and discusses the research process, participant and data-selection process. Using a qualitative approach guides the researcher in reaching a "saturation of data" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 82) until all data is collected.

3.5.1 Selection of participants

There were two schools, three teachers and 134 learners that participated in the study. The details of selection and contexts are described below.

Schools

The two schools chosen were purposefully selected since they met the criteria for participation in the study and were easily accessible.

School A accommodated learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The school offered the CAPS curriculum to learners with the LoLT of the school being English HL. The FAL is Afrikaans. Two language teachers, 1 from Grade 4 and the other from Grade 6 were interviewed in School A.

School B is classified as a township school about 10 km away from school A. The school caters for learners from Grade R to Grade 1. The LOLT of the school is Isizulu HL. The FAL is English. One language teacher in Grade 6 was interviewed. School B is also referred to as a full-service school having learner support educators to assist learners with barriers to learning.

Teachers

Teacher X teaching in School A had all three Grade 6 English classes with two years of teaching experience. She began teaching at her present school. Teacher Y was teaching at another school before moving to his present school this year and has four years of teaching experience. Teacher Z is a new educator who started teaching in School B this year.

The sample size of the study is small, consisting of selected individuals "who have the most experience with the studied phenomena" (Ivankova, Creswell, Plano Clark,2007:p.259). Being of limited scope, my study made use of purposeful sampling which fits the qualitative design being used in the study. The following figure highlights the study participants
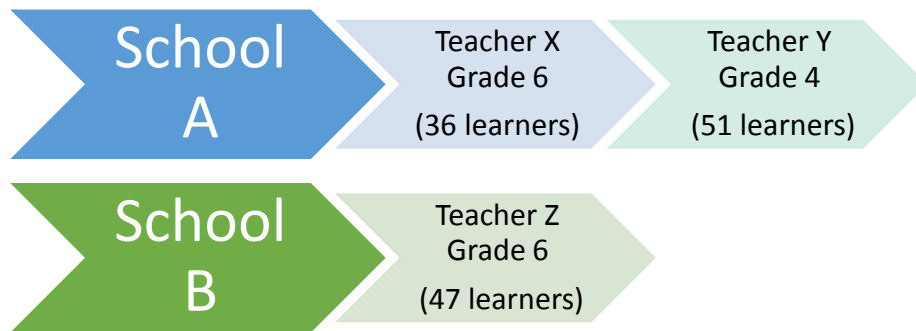
Figure 1: The study participants

3.5.2 Data collection techniques

During the research "bits and pieces of information found in the environment" (Merriam, 1998, p.70) allowed the researcher access to the participant 's views, ideas, and beliefs. This collection of data included non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, field notes and documents. The use of audio recordings, as well as photographs, captured the very essence of participants in their natural setting.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.75), "multiple sources of evidence are used" in a case study design to gain a holistic overview of the participants as "they relate and interact" in their specific environment. To obtain information from various data sources increases the trustworthiness as well as providin an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied (Ivankova, Creswell, Plagno Clark, 2007).

Table 6: Data collection schedules

Data collection Sources	School A	Duration	School B	Duration
Semi-structured interviews	Teacher X Teacher Y	45 min. 45 min.	Teacher Z	45 min.
Classroom observation	Teacher X	45 min.	Teacher Z	60 min
	Teacher Y	30 min		

3.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Teachers where group discussions were observed, were interviewed over two weeks using semi-structured interviews. The educators were each interviewed separately in the staffroom. The unique experiences of each educator using group discussions became easily accessible without one teacher influencing the other educators' views. An interview schedule with a predetermined set of questions was posed to the respective educators. The researcher was able to probe and clarify answers that were not clear to the educators. The researcher had to listen attentively listening during the interview to explore further and verify what was being heard (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). An outline of the questions asked to the educators can be found in Appendix 5. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.87), this technique allows the researcher to "corroborate data that emerge from various data sources". This process gave the researcher better insights into the use of group discussions in multilingual classes in the two schools.

3.5.2.2 Non-participant observations

In total three English lessons were observed, two lessons in school A where group discussions were led by language teachers consisting of Class X and Y in School A and one lesson in School B. (Appendix 6: Transcribed classroom observations). Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.85), points out "thick descriptions of what actually takes place as well as the researcher's reflection of what happens is captured". Furthermore, the role of the researcher as a non-participant needs to be unobtrusive in observing phenomena from a distance (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Data obtained from observations allowed the researcher to answer the research questions posed in Chapter1. However, Nieuwenhuis (2010), points out that there may be limitations to the researcher being a non-participant as he or she may not be fully immersed in the process. Semi-structured interviews with teachers assisted my understanding and proved invaluable in clarifying some questions during my observations in the classrooms (Flick, 2009). In addition, it provided me with a better insight into my prejudice with regards to teachers' use of group discussions within the CAPS curriculum.

3.5.2.3 Selection of documents

Documents provided a valuable source of information in the research process. (Seabi, 2012). It provided the researcher access into the "language and words used by the participants" (Creswell, 2014, p.191). The use of the learner's exercise books and assessment books consisting of the comprehension activities were used as well as the teacher's lesson plans, which were photographed, that led to the group discussion process. The advantage of making use of documents was the provision of written evidence of the participants' work (Creswell, 2014) to validate the use of group discussions in enhancing comprehension skills amongst multilingual learners.

Photographs taken of learners' positioning and interaction during a group discussion in the class is important. Once at the school, this information became readily accessible to the researcher, which was convenient. The use of photographs allowed the researcher access into the participant's reality and environment, providing greater insights into the group discussions and its effectiveness (Creswell, 2014).

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The various qualitative data sources included observational data (field notes, audio recordings, photographs of learners' notebooks, assessment books and teachers' lesson preparation) including verbatim interview transcriptions. The multiple methods of data collection provided a thick description so I could review and make sense of the data collected. This inductive process consisted of organising the information into categories to be analysed across all data sources (Creswell, 2014, p.186).

3.6.1   Thematic data analysis

A step by step guide recommended by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used by the researcher. All data collected was transcribed. The data was then read and re-read to become familiar with the transcripts. The next step was to formulate codes from the transcripts, which were then systematically organised and grouped to form themes. Grouping similar themes was crucial, before considering sub-themes and finding relationships within the themes. The themes and sub-themes had to link to the research questions that the study intended to address. Finally, a report, including the themes that formed and a coherent and systematic account of the research done, was then compiled. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of data began by transcribing all data collected, working simultaneously with the learners' books, photographs, transcripts of the semi-structured interviews and my reflective journal. The table indicates the data analysis used in the study. The table below was adapted from Qualitative Research in Clinical and Health Psychology (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, Terry, 2014, p 95-96)

Table 7: Data analysis Plan

Phase	Explanation
Phase 1 Familiarisation with data	Engaging analytically with the data by continuous reading and being totally immersed in the data collected.
Phase 2 Coding the data	Looking for main ideas to label or code data that links to the research question. Close examination in understanding and interpreting the data allows one to generate codes.
Phase 3 Searching for themes	Grouping similar codes across data items to form themes. Formulating a thematic map of the themes constructed.
Phase 4 Reviewing the themes	Quality review of all themes constructed against data coded.
Phase 5 Defining and naming themes	Ensuring themes addressing the research question can link but are not repeated.
Phase 6 Producing the report	A story is generated from the analysis of data addressing the questions of the intended study.

The results and findings of the data analysis will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

The qualitative research paradigm aims to achieve validity through the trustworthiness of the proposed study. Trustworthiness is ensured through credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability of a given study (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). The quality criteria applied in this study do not take into account the transferability as a criterion as a case study design offers limited generalisability (Creswell, 2014).

Credibility refers to the internal validity of the study carried out. It seeks to measure "*the study's basic theoretical orientation, explaining the process that led the researcher to explore the particular phenomenon, and reporting everything that affected his / her work*" (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012, p.140). I made use of triangulation by obtaining different

sources of data which included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents that provided support for the study (Creswell, 2014).

Similarly, **Dependability** refers "*to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did*" (Durkheim & Wassenaar, 2002, p.64). This was attained through quality recording and transcription of data from the multiple sources of data collected. In addition, I used triangulation to cross-reference the findings obtained from the interviews, document analysis, photographs and observations to ensure reliable results (Maree, 2007)

Confirmability considers the objectivity of data collected during one's study, with specific reference to the researcher's objectivity during data collection and analysis, taking care of possible biases during the research process (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). A research journal allowed me to document my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs during the data collection process. The data collected needs to be kept and available for a certain period if further analysis is deemed necessary or upon request from other researchers (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). In the following section, the ethical procedures that were implemented that guided the collection and analysis data in the study will be discussed.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any research involving human participants must be guided by strict ethical requirements (HPCSA, 2006; Merriam, 2009). The initial step was to apply for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's ethics committee that granted me permission to conduct my research. The key to all ethical behaviour is in protecting and respecting the dignity of all individuals participating in the research (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2010). The guiding ethical principles that were followed in this study included: informed consent and voluntary participation, avoiding harm to participants, confidentiality, and privacy of participants.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Gaining access into the research sites required obtaining permission from the respective heads of institutions which formed part of the process (Ferreira, 2012). I set an appointment with the principals of both schools where I intended to do my research and explained the research to them. Permission was granted by both principals to use their schools as the research sites for my study (see Appendix 1 to 3). A meeting was held

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later with one member from each School Management Team, being the HOD in one school and the Deputy Principal in the other, to discuss the intermediate phase classes and teachers that I would use as part of the research. I then compiled the consent letters stating the purpose of my study, how the information will be collected, the confidentiality and protection of the welfare of participants and the participants having the choice of participating in the study or not and withdrawing at any stage (Elias & Theron, 2012). A learner opt-out form was used for the learners participating in the group discussions during classroom observations.

3.8.2 Avoidance of harm

Every effort was taken to safeguard the welfare and rights of participants during the research (Elias & Theron, 2012). The nature of this study did not expose the participants to any physical or emotional harm or discomfort. My role as a researcher was to observe learners participating in group discussions during comprehension lessons at the back of the classroom. As a result, no harm was anticipated to the participants in the research study.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and Privacy

Extra care was taken that only I had access to both the data and participants' names. The real names of the learners and of the teachers were kept confidential. During the data collection process, all data was viewed confidentially and did not reach individuals outside the research process. All data was stored safely at the University at the end of the study with only authorised people that would have access to it.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the methodology that I utilised to collect and analyse the data gathered in the present study. The findings from the data analysis aimed to answer the questions stated in Chapter 1. The chapter concluded with the ethical considerations taken during the research study. The chapter that follows will present the data analysis and interpretation of the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present the themes derived from the data drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, as discussed in Chapter 3. The themes follow the analysis of data collected from various sources including verbatim excerpts from semi-structured interviews held with three English teachers in the intermediate phase and the researcher, non-participant classroom observations of three English comprehension lessons and document analysis of the teachers' lesson preparation, learners' books with comprehension questions and answers were used. This chapter concludes with the discussion of the findings related to the literature reviewed.

4.2   RESULTS FROM THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Table 8: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Peer collaboration involving multilingual learners	• Support from a more knowledgeable peer
2. Teachers' understanding of their role during group discussions	• Teachers as the instructor, facilitator and evaluator
3. Teachers' use of questioning techniques to enhance higher-order thinking skills	• Different types of questions used by the teacher and multilingual learners to enhance critical thinking
4. Teachers' understanding of their use of different strategies to enhance comprehension skills during group discussions	• Strategies implemented by teachers to enhance comprehension skills
5. Factors teachers should consider when forming groups that contribute to effective group dynamics in discussions	• Group size • The ability level of learners placed in a group
6. Challenges teachers experience when doing group discussions in multilingual classes	• Time constraints and classroom discipline affects group discussions

Six main themes and six sub-themes were identified during the thematic analysis process, which is outlined in Table 8.

Table 9: Sources of data collected

Code	Meaning of Code	Explanation
TI	Teacher interview	Transcripts of interviews from each English teacher
TCO	Transcript of classroom observation	Transcripts of classroom observation of each teacher
DOC	Documents	Documents including lesson preparation, comprehension activity, research journal
(X)	Teacher X	Will illustrate which teacher interview and classroom observation was used with reference to the specific teacher
(Y)	Teacher Y	
(Z)	Teacher Z	
L	Line number	The line within the transcript from which the information was obtained
p	Page number	The page number of the transcript from which the information was obtained

For example: "Some learners cannot express themselves so if they tell the learner sitting next to them what they want to say then that learner can actually be their voice." (TI (X): L108-111, p127)

This illustrates that the quote comes from the teacher interview of Teacher X, and this can be found in lines 108-111 within the transcripts in Appendix 5 found on page 127.

Table 10: Summary of data sources used for thematic identification

Themes	Data sources					
	Semi-structured interviews with teachers	Classroom observations	Reflective Journal	Lesson Preparation	Learners'books	Photographs
Peer collaboration involving multilingual learners	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Teachers' understanding of their role during group discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Teachers' use of questioning techniques to enhance higher order thinking skills	✓	✓			✓	✓
Teachers understanding of their use of different strategies to enhance comprehension skills during group discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Factors teachers should consider when forming groups that contribute to effective group dynamics in discussions	✓	✓	✓			✓
Challenges teachers' experience when doing group discussions in multilingual classes.	✓	✓	✓			

4.3 THEME 1: PEER COLLABORATION INVOLVING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS.

This theme highlights the support given by a knowledgeable peer during group discussions in multilingual classes to develop language skills and improve learners' comprehension skills.

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Support from a more knowledgeable peer	Multilingual learners were placed together to support each other during group discussions	Specific languages spoken by the learners were not identified by the teacher in each group

4.3.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Support from a more knowledgeable peer.

The data obtained from the various sources validate that peer collaboration forms the foundation of this study which is further supported by comments made by the three English teachers that were interviewed.

"Some learners cannot express themselves so if they tell the learner sitting next to them what they want to say then that learner can actually be their voice" (TI (X): L108-111, p127).

"Explain it to each other, so that they understand" (TI (Y): L262-263, p131).

"Help one another to understand the questions" (TI (Y): L267-268, p 132).

"Explore and practice the language" (TI(Z): L452-453, p136).

"Through group work, they come out of their shells" (TI (Z): L464-465, p137).

"Helps weaker learners to shine" (TI (X): L 84. P127).

These comments made by the teachers confirm that learners learn with the help of their peers during group discussion. Group work through talk provides the multilingual learners with an opportunity to:

"voice out their opinions" (TI(X): L 94, p127).

"for everyone to understand" (TI (Y): L 259-260, p131).

so, they "learn from each other" (TI (X): L100, p127).

Figure 2: Showing Grade 6 learners helping each other during group discussion to work out the answer in School B.

In addition, the lesson preparation by the teacher made provision for the listening and speaking skill that learners must acquire during the comprehension lesson. The lesson is aligned to CAPS for English Home language Grades 4-6 (DBE, 2011) which clearly highlights the teacher and learner activities during listening and speaking in the lesson.

Peer support and increased collaboration amongst learners during comprehension lessons were further confirmed by the teachers' comment during the interview that it allows learners to -

"collaborate, how to ask questions, how to use your time effectively, how do you monitor and share tasks and say who is going to write and do different things in a group" (TI (Z): L388-391, p135).

According to the teacher's lesson preparation, a learner should

"Interact positively during group discussions" (DOC (X): L11-12, p. 1), which is one of the aspects teachers should look out for when children are working in groups.
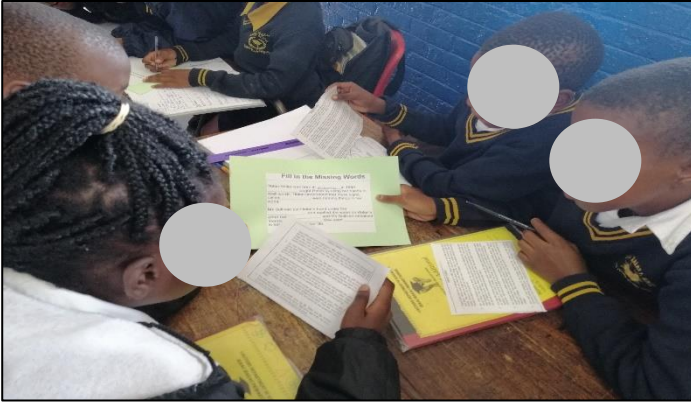
Figure 3: Positive interaction during group work with each learner contributing to the discussions in a grade 6 class in School B

It is important to consider that-

"children are different, do not understand at the same level" (TI (Y): L311-312, p133).

As well as coming from "different backgrounds" (TI (X): L64-65, p126).

As indicated during the interview with teachers, both the schools consist of multilingual classes. According to the teachers, the languages spoken by learners included:

"So, approximately, two languages isiZulu, Sesotho, and English" (TI (X): L25-26, p125), in the Grade 6 class in School A;

"It's four, Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, and English -speaking learners" (TI(Y): L216-217, p130), in the Grade 4 class in School A;

"Some learners are isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, and Shona" (TI (Z): L355-356, p134), in the Grade 6 class in School B.

A closer look at the number of languages represented in each class in School A and B indicated the need for collaboration amongst multilingual learners which would be beneficial to develop their language. Sharing ideas and listening to different points of views amongst learners leads to practising the language and learning how to ask questions to develop the learners' critical thinking skills. The Grade 6 language teacher in school B aptly describes the use of group discussions assisting the FAL learner to develop language and providing further motivation to learn. The comment made was:

It's multi-faceted, some it helps to build confidence e.g. some kids when you want them to give an answer to try to speak the language. If it is in front of the whole class,

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they shy away but if they share with their classmates, it is much better. Even, if I as a teacher can create a very safe space where kids know they can't laugh at each other for trying but you still going to get some of that. So, when its peer-peer and in a group, it's much better, they become freer to try to give answers. Explore and practice the language and monitor one another and that's when even for me as a teacher, its ok. It's sort of a way of attending to everybody as well so that the kids that are stronger are able to step in and kind of regulate the other kids (TI (Z): L442-457, p136-137).

The above comment corroborates the effective use of group discussion by the teachers in multilingual classrooms. The stronger learners can assist the FAL learners needing assistance in mastering their listening and speaking skills which directly impacts on improving their comprehension ability.

4.3.1.1 *Teachers understanding of their role during group discussions. Sub-theme 1.2: Role of the teacher as the instructor, facilitator and evaluator.*

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Teacher as the instructor, facilitator and evaluator	All teachers used group discussion amongst learners in their comprehension lesson	Management support and guidance provided to the teachers on their role during group discussion

It is only through guided discovery with the help of the teacher or their more knowledgeable peers that learners would become self -regulated individuals (Engelbrecht et al., 2013). The classroom observation lesson highlighted the role of the teacher, which was to facilitate the process of group discussions amongst learners. While monitoring, the teacher looks out for learners being constructively occupied on the comprehension exercise. This constructive group discussion should include learners involved in generating questions, clarifying their answers and remaining focused. These were a few comments made by the teachers during the classroom observation and interview.

"I am going around to check if people are really asking, any questions?" (TCO (Z): L683 -684, p158).

Figure 4: Teacher guiding learners in a group as they discussed their questions in Grade 6 class in School B

Teacher Z assisted learners as they did not know what biography was for Helen Keller. He guided learners when they were unable to answer the questions and monitored their progress in answering the questions given.

The use of a time robot ("Here we have a time robot" [TCO(Z): L 518, p154]), helped learners to manage their time effectively during the group discussions.

Figure 5: Instructional role of teacher

Green card = 15 minutes

Orange card = 10 minutes

Red card = 5 minutes

The teacher's role as an instructional leader is to ensure that all learners understand what they are supposed to do. Explicit instructions given to learners during the pre-discussion and post-discussion make it easier for learners to continue independently. A few instructions given by the teachers to learners include:

> "Can we discuss. Let's see, if you can come up with a solution. We are not reading ahead." (TCO (X): L162-164, p144)

> "Wait, discuss with your friend and people you are sitting with. What do you think an orchard is? Before we go to the dictionary let's see if we can discuss and find out..." (TCO (X): L93-97, p142)

> "Did you discuss? Come Maria,[1] put your heads together, let's see and discuss. Did you discuss? Are you giving an answer for the whole group or is it what you think is the answer?" (TCO (X): L119-123, p143)

Clear instructions, guidance and the pace of the lesson must be managed by the teacher. The role of the teacher as a facilitator while learners are involved in a group discussion is to guide the learners' discussions. During the interview, the comment made by the teacher about his role during the discussion was as follows:

> "I avail myself in each group because they might not understand the topic. While I did explain at the beginning, I avail myself to explain to each and every group" (TI (Y): L246-249, p131).

The role of the teacher as evaluator during post-discussion is crucial to evaluate the responses made by the group members. Each learner must be given an opportunity to make input by either adding or challenging their peers' responses. This engagement allows for critical thinking amongst learners and for the teacher to consolidate the lesson. A comment made by Teacher Z in one of the classroom observations after receiving feedback from one of the groups:

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[1] Pseudonyms were used in the interviews

Encouraging and positive comments made by the teacher allows for greater motivation and contribution from all the learners in the class.

Figure 6*:* Learners presenting their feedback after their discussions to the class Grade 6 class in School B.

When learners present their work after the teacher and all their peers have contributed to it, they are both excited and proud of their achievements.

The teacher's lessons must be carefully timed and planned, so learners do not get bored; however, it must cater for the learner that needs support as well. Having different types of questions planned for learners helps to alleviate this problem which will be discussed in the sub-theme below.

4.3.1.2 Teachers' use of questioning techniques to enhance higher-order thinking skills. Sub-Theme 1.3: Different types of questions used by the teacher and multilingual learners to enhance critical thinking

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Different types of questions used by the teacher and multilingual learners to enhance critical thinking	Teachers included different type of questions in their comprehension lesson. The allocation of different level questions is indicated in the CAPS document for assessments.	Level of difficulty of the comprehension passage of the teacher

The biggest challenge, according to feedback from the Diagnostic Report of the ANA results (2014) was the learners' inability to infer or make meaning of a text. In every comprehension lesson observed, teachers made use of both low and high order cognitive skills. The amount of higher-order questions given to the learners was the biggest difference in the comprehension lessons observed. Teacher Z's Grade 6 class in School B had more higher-order questions and modelled high-quality talk throughout his lesson, which allowed learners to practise the skill. This was not evident in Teacher X 's Grade 6 lesson in School A as learners were given more recall type of questions which did not cater for further analyses of the text. Teacher Y's Grade 4 class had different levels of questions, but the teacher did not make the learners discuss all of them. The planning of different levels of questions by the teacher determines the level of critical thinking amongst the learners; as well as, the opportunities given to the learners to generate their own questions to analyse the text critically.

Teachers used leading questions to assist learners to practice higher order thinking skills. This was evident in the questions posed by Teacher X and the responses given by the learners:

"What about making peace with others. What did you learn from the father or from the snake?" (TCO (X): L391-393, p150).

Response from the learner:

"Forgive and forget" (TCO (X): L403, p150).

Teacher Z's leading questions concur with the use of teachers' modelling of higher-order skills providing learners with an opportunity to practise the technique during the group discussion.

"Right now, you have 2 minutes to talk to the people in your group and discuss what question you have for Helen. If you had to meet her now if she walks in here, what would you ask her?" (TCO (Z): L679-682, p158).

Response from learner

"Why choose Radcliffe college?" (TCO (Z): L704, p158).

Another leading question posed by Teacher Z was:

"How do think Helen Keller's' parents felt about her success? Imagine you are born, you can't see and can't hear and then you end up graduating? How is that going to make a parent feel?" (TCO (Z): L852--857, p162).

The teacher allowed learners to respond first:

"happy, proud, excited" (TCO (Z): L859, p162).

High-quality talk was modelled by the teacher asking higher order questions:

"If you were Helen Keller and if you were born blind and deaf. What sign would you want to learn first? Just you?" (TCO (Z): L914-918, p163).

Learners' responses:

"I would want to learn how to say hello",

"How to learn finger spelling?"

"How to speak to people"   (TCO (Z): L920-923, p163).

Teacher's response:

"I would learn how to ask for food. I know I am going to be hungry, so the first thing that I would want to learn to ask for food" (TCO (Z): L924-927, p163).

A closer analysis of some questions posed by Teacher Z and the learners' responses during the comprehension lessons allowed the learners to be able to contextualise their answers. They were able to negotiate meaning and practise making inferences during group discussions.
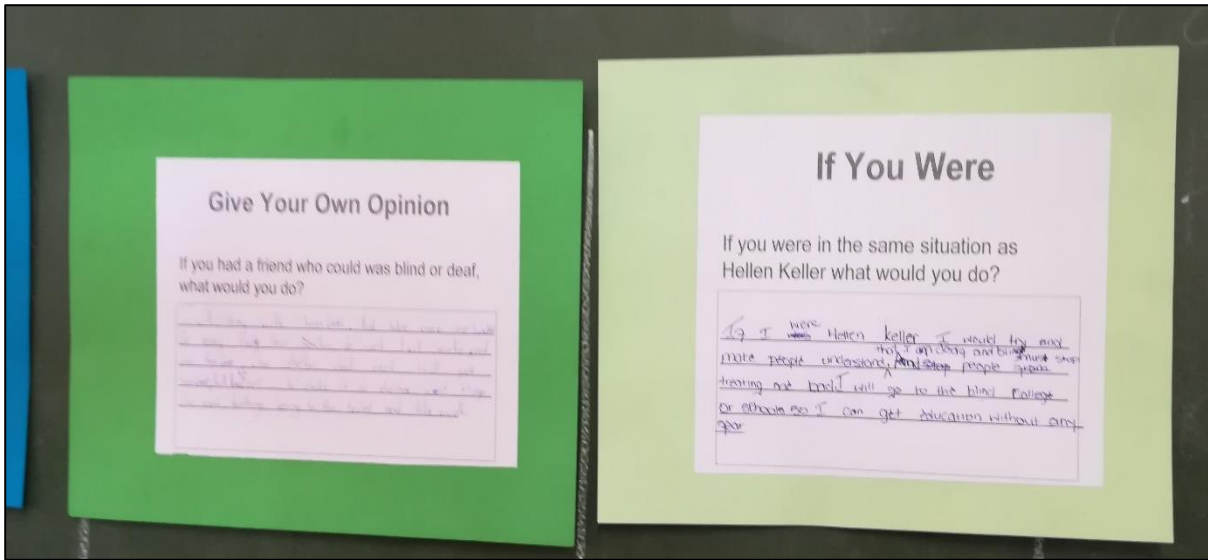
Figure 7: Higher-order questions displayed on chalkboard from Grade 6 class in School B

Certain questions require learners to think creatively.

"Stretch their ideas" (TI (Z): L492, p137), providing learners with the opportunity to apply themselves to the passage, as seen in figure 7 above.

When different types of questions were asked, it provided a greater opportunity for learners to understand the text and practise the skill of supporting their answers. The learners in this Grade 6 class in School B were given enough exposure to different levels of questioning, thus bringing about a more learner-centred discussion as compared to both the teachers in School A. A few comments made during the teacher interviews emphasise the teachers' use of different questions given to learners:

"Barrett's taxonomy. Who are the characters, where is the setting? We start there instead of asking higher order questions. So, I try to use from low to high order of questions," (TI (X): L138-140, p128).

"Simple first, then support their answers" (TI (Y): L291-292, p132).

"Different questioning styles, when they pick up the questioning style, they are able to self-regulate" (TI (Z): L410-412, p136).

However, most of the questions in Teacher X's comprehension passage consisted of text-based answers. Learners made use of the text to support their answers which was evident in the teacher's classroom observation.

An analysis of the type of comprehension questions posed did not allow for critical thinking from the learners in Teacher X 's comprehension passage.
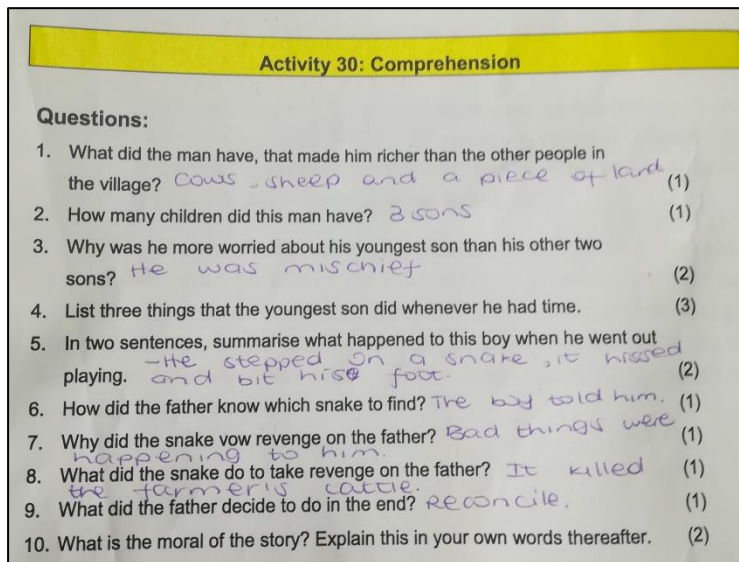
Figure 8: Grade 6 comprehension passage in School A

Nine answers out of the ten questions given to the learners were obtained directly from the text. These recall questions did not allow for much discussion amongst learners during the lesson. Only question 10 allowed learners to apply themselves outside the text.

The questions analysed below are in Teacher Y's Grade 4 comprehension passage in School A, which were not discussed with the learners in the lesson but given to them to complete. Learners could not answer the higher-order questions i.e. 1.13 and 1.14. The answers for these two learners were marked as correct by the student-teacher but is in fact incorrect. It is evident that the Grade 4 learners had difficulty answering the higher-order questions which involved making inferences from to the text.

Question 1.12 was also poorly answered, indicating that learners were unable to arrange the sequence of events that occurred in the diary entry even though they had access to the text. Question 1.9 reflects that learners could not understand the meaning of "to make ends meet" since it was poorly answered by learners. In the Grade 4 class learners only

discussed the recall questions in groups. The higher-order questions were done independently by learners.
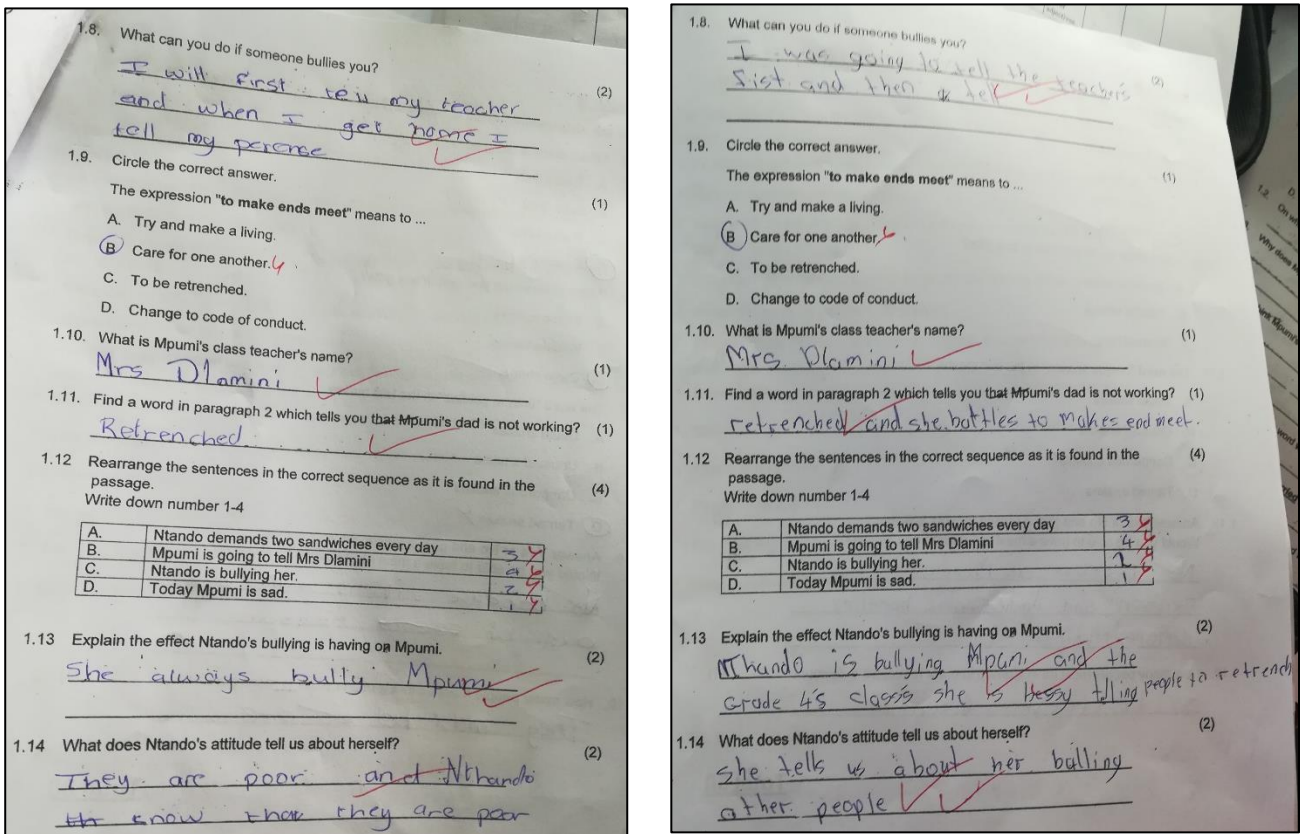
Figure 9: Samples of Grade 4 learners' answers in comprehension passage from School A

The different levels of questions must become part of the English teacher's comprehension lesson for learners to practise and master these skills. Group discussions can be used for learners and only once it has been carefully modelled or scaffolded by the teacher will learners gainfully master the skills of asking and answering questions leading to higher-order thinking.

A learner observing this skill from their teacher or from their more knowledgeable peer can practise and learn from it (Croninger et al., 2017). By both scaffolding and modelling the art of asking questions from either the teacher or peer the FAL learner was able to observe and learn. This was evident in Teacher Z's Grade 6 classroom observation lesson:

"Right now, you have 2 minutes to talk to the people in your group and discuss what question you have for Helen. If you had to meet her now, if she walks in here. What would you ask her? So just talk to your groups now." (TCO(Z): L679-683, p158).

A few of the learner's responses:

"How did she graduate?" (TCO (Z): L692, p158).

"Was she still happy, when her story inspired other people" (TCO (Z): L694-695, p158).

"Why does she go to Radcliffe college?" (TCO(Z): L703, p 158).

In each of these questions, the teacher re-phrased the question, thus modelling ways in which the learners can ask questions more clearly:

"Ok, how did she manage to graduate?" (TCO (Z): L692, p158).

"Or, did you feel happy when your story inspired other people and showed that you are a leader…" (TCO(Z): L696-698, p158).

"Or, maybe, why did she choose Radcliffe College?" (TCO(Z):704-705, p158).

The teacher kept the same question but guided the learners in clarifying their questions. The teacher's role is crucial in facilitating high-quality talk that is productive amongst the learners, so they learn the skill of becoming self-regulated (Wei & Murphy, 2017). As well as exposing learners to different levels of questions during comprehension lessons, they can master the technique of answering questions. The ESL learners have an opportunity to practice the language in smaller groups and learn from their peers. The use of different strategies used by the teacher to enhance comprehension skills is also important, and it will be discussed below.

4.3.1.3 Teachers' understanding of their use of different strategies to enhance comprehension skills during group discussions. Sub-theme1.4 – Strategies used by teachers to enhance comprehension skills.

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Strategies implemented by teachers to enhance comprehension skills	Reading strategies, questioning techniques and translanguaging	No strategies were excluded due to the purpose of the study

It was not only the type of questions asked by both teachers and learners that enhanced the comprehension skill amongst learners but the practising of certain routines in comprehension lessons that made a difference.

> Teacher Z practised certain formats in his English lessons which have proved to be successful. The teacher made use of a hello exercise to ensure that learners always answered in full sentences, practised the 5 W's with his learners and made use of topic sentences when answering the comprehension passage. Most importantly, the action of learners clapping their hands once and twice to indicate a correct response by a learner kept the learners focussed. (DOC (Z): L 89-90, p5).

These strategies allowed the teacher to manage the learners better, and the learners enjoyed the lesson. These strategies, according to the teacher, helped learners to focus and remember the skill better. During the interview with Teacher Z, his comment on what strategies facilitates group discussions included:

> Multimodality is also very important, a lot of pictures, a lot of role play, translations, not translate but code-switching practice in the language. Dedicating time for the learners to practice the language. Focus on the learners that you need to support, those are the learners you call on. Focus more when you are monitoring the class, but you practice. (TI (Z): L401-408, p135)

Teacher X in School A and Teacher Z in School B carefully scaffolded the Grade 6 lessons by making use of a visual stimulus for learners to predict the story. Scaffolding makes use of pictures to support learners to answer questions. The comments below made by the teachers indicate their use of this technique in the pre-discussion activity:

"Ok before we start reading who can just guess what the story is going to be about?" (TCO (X): L21-23, p140).

"Before we start, now we have a picture here. Who can tell me where did you see this picture? What is this picture?" (TCO (Z): L528-530, p 154)..

Figure 10: Teacher X's visual stimulus
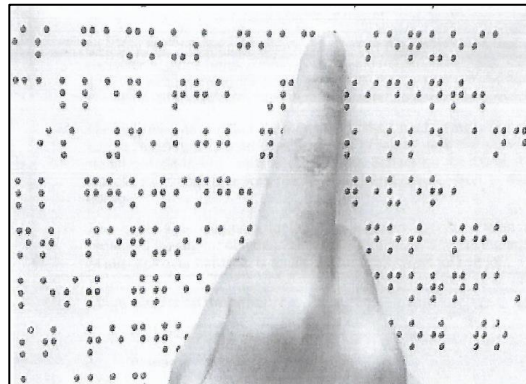
Figure 11: Teacher Z's visual stimulus

Teacher X in the Grade 6 class made use of both the visual stimulus and topic in the picture on the worksheet to ask learners to predict what the comprehension passage was about. Whereas, Teacher Z in a Grade 6 class in School B had a picture on the chalkboard asking the learners to guess what the picture was about. These introductory visuals motivated learners to want to read more about the text.

Various other strategies teachers used to guide learners during their lesson include:

"skimming, scanning, prediction, views, different visual texts, in order to interpret" (DOC (X): L43-46, p1).

Teacher Z's reading strategy while completing the comprehension with the learners included skimming which is described below:

"Right, when you are skimmed reading is like you have 10 seconds and your job is to look at as many words as you can find. To guess what the story is going to be about. I have a picture. You always start with a picture" (TCO (Z): L584-588, p155).

"Before browsing with your eyes, look at the heading. You look at the first line, maybe the last line and see how many other words you can look to get an idea of what the story is going to be about" (TCO (Z): 592-596, p155).

Skimming involves the ability to read information quickly from the first and last sentences, look for anything bold and visuals to get to know more about the comprehension passage. Scanning includes the use of finding keywords from the question to help the learner understand and answer the question posed.

All three teachers employed a read-aloud reading strategy with the learners. They differed in the way it was done in each class i.e. in the Grade 4 class the teacher made the entire class of 51 learners read the text aloud. He read the text again, using lots of expression before beginning with the comprehension lesson. Teacher X in the Grade 6 class chose to read the text aloud herself to all 36 learners, while Teacher Z divided the text into paragraphs for each row made up of between 12-16 learners in a row to read the paragraph aloud. Then he took turns with the learners to read until the entire passage was read. All the learners had to follow closely as the passage was read.

Figure 12: Grade 4 Lesson plan

Reflecting reading strategies for comprehension lesson done by Teacher Y in school A.

The read-aloud strategy gave the learners that had difficulties a chance to hear the way the words sounded, also relating to a better understanding of the text.

According to the teacher's lesson preparation, pre-reading activities must be done as part of the planning for the comprehension lesson allowing for

"prediction based on title and or graphics" (DOC(Y): L41-42, p1).

Good use of the 5W's is observed in the learners' exercise book making use of the spider diagram to understand the main ideas in the comprehension passage.
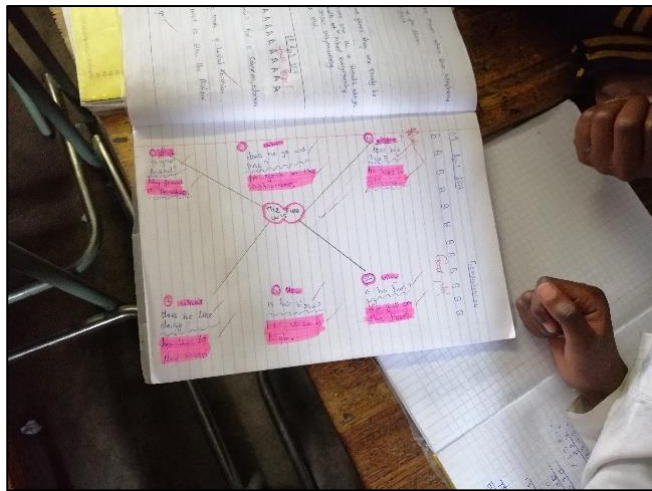
Figure 13: Learners using the 5W's technique
for comprehension in the Grade 6
class of School B.

The above data provides evidence to support the conclusion that when teachers scaffold the comprehension lessons, make use of predictive questions and teach learners certain formats, it is easier for learners to master these skills. These learners are using the technique taught to them by their teacher in a previous lesson to help them answer the question they were given; the who, what, where, when and why technique and brainstorming their ideas also referred to as a story map. Other comprehension strategies include cooperative learning which includes group discussions by learners (Lerner & Johns 2015). The various comprehension strategies teachers use assist them in implementing effective group discussions.

According to the interview with the three intermediate phase language teachers, they all knew at least two vernacular languages each, other than English. This, however, could

not help them in assisting the FAL learner that was struggling to understand the language as their class numbers are too large to give individual attention. In addition, there are many different vernacular languages spoken by the learners. They all used other learners in their classes who were stronger in English as a resource. By pairing the support learners with the more proficient English learners, they were able to learn and understand the language. Evidence of this was indicated in Teacher X's interview:

> "…some learners cannot express themselves so if they tell the learner sitting next to them what they want to say then that learner can actually be their voice" (TI (X): L108-111, p127).

The teachers all agree that even though translanguaging is not officially allowed at schools, they all use it to help the learner struggling to understand English. The researcher observed translanguaging when learners worked in pairs, mainly during group discussions. This was observed in Teacher Y's classroom observation as well as with Grade 4 learners during group discussions. Teacher Z's class was made up of Grade 6 learners, where enough time was given for learners to discuss in their groups. Sharing and comparing their ideas amongst learners in groups of 4-6 learners promoted further understanding of the text. The stronger English learner chose to be the spokesperson providing feedback to the class.

In addition to their planning, there are certain factors teachers must consider that contribute to effective group dynamics during discussions which as discussed below.

4.3.1.4 *Factors teachers should consider when forming groups that contribute to effective group dynamics in group discussions. Sub theme 1.5: Group size and ability level of learners placed in a group.*

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Group size and ability level of learners placed in a group	All teachers used small groups, i.e. 4-5 or 5-6 learners, encouraging maximum participation and interaction amongst learners.	The total number of learners in the class

During the teachers' planning, one of the important roles is to ensure that learners are grouped correctly in class to ensure effective group discussions. When asked how teachers group their learners, these were some of the teachers' comments during their interviews:

I usually put learners from different backgrounds together most of the time. I know them better and also like weak learners and strong learners, so they can suck some knowledge from the other so that's more of the style that I use. Putting strong learners and weak learners so that they can learn from each other. If I can put it that way. (TI (X): L64-71, p126)

…some learners cannot express themselves so if they tell the learner sitting next to them what they want to say then that learner can actually be their voice. So, if we like hinder them, they all do not come from the same backgrounds, some English is even their third or fourth language. (TI (X): L108-114, p127)

According to the teachers in both schools, the placement of learners in groups by teachers ensured that learners cooperated and helped each other. The learners were placed in groups that included a heterogeneous ability level which was used by all three teachers. The size of the groups was important to allow for maximum participation by learners (Li, 2017). All three teachers had group sizes ranging from 4-6 learners seated close to each other which allowed for optimal communication and interaction.

4.3.1.5 Challenges teacher's experience when doing group discussions in multilingual classes. Sub-theme 1.6: Time constraints and classroom discipline affects group discussions

Time constraints and classroom discipline affects group discussions	Constructive noise related to discussions on the comprehension activity.	Total number of learners in the class.

In any strategy, there are always benefits and challenges experienced during its implementation. The information presented thus far has emphasised the benefits of using group discussion to enhance comprehension skills amongst multilingual learners. I intend highlighting the challenges experienced during group discussions as well. The following

comments were made by teachers during the teacher interviews with regards to challenges they experienced during group discussions:

"Time is a huge challenge, sometimes if you have just a one-hour lesson, you have outcomes to meet policy ATP. Now you have to accommodate that, and you also want to explore. Exploring takes time, trial and error, trying to drill that in…" (TI (Z): L:469-474, p137).

"If you say discuss or make a discussion about the title then they'll get carried away because there is a lot of what they want to say, it gets out of hand at least…They have a lot of things to say and sometimes there is no time…There's no time…" (TI (X): L120-127, p128).

It is evident that learners need enough time to explore ideas and challenge each other's views. It is only in this forum that it can be incorporated into the lesson, giving learners a chance to express their thoughts and ideas. Practising this skill could enhance higher-order thinking needed for comprehension.

In addition, the challenge of classroom management was evident from the classroom observations and the following statements that were made by the teachers:

"There are people who are talking. We cannot work like this" (TCO (X): L154-155, p144).

"There are too many teachers in this class" (TCO (X): L4006, p150).

"I am going to kick you out, you are cheating" (TCO (X): L194, p145).

Group work as a classroom strategy can be challenging for teachers, especially when there are large class numbers and too many groups to monitor. The incorrect placement of learners could also be the reason for learners misbehaving in a group setting.

4.3.2 Discussion of findings

According to Vygotsky, learners develop higher-order thinking skills during their interaction with their peers who are better able to make meaning of a given text. (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). During group discussions, ESL learners learn to skilfully ask

questions, make inferences and support their answers. It is during the ZPD that a child can make use of their teacher or a knowledgeable peer to progress beyond their present ability level. The learner gets assistance in understanding the text better while listening and talking, which makes the ESL practice the language and ask questions if they do not understand. During group discussions, learners contribute by sharing their own experiences and background with the rest of the group. The importance of talk is represented by the child's thought processes (Croninger et al., 2017). The ESL learners listen attentively and share ideas amongst their peers; it gives them a better understanding of the text. (Li, 2017).

According to the CAPS document for English HL from Grades 4-6, six hours are allocated for English in a week. The HL is divided into four components namely, listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and language structure and convention. One hour is allocated to listening and speaking, two and a half hours to reading and viewing, two hours for writing and presenting and half an hour for language structure and convention. These hours are distributed with the assumption that all learners are first language speakers which is not the case in most schools. Furthermore, this is based on the assumption that the learners are proficient in BICS to be able to read, write and apply the English language grammar and mechanics at Grade 4 level (DBE, 2011). As the learner progresses to Grade 6 the number of hours for reading and viewing decreases by one hour and this is allocated to writing and presenting information to the learner. While, in the CAPS document for English FAL document, a total of 5 hours is allocated to English. One hour for listening and speaking, two and a half hours for reading and viewing and one hour for writing and presenting and a half an hour for grammar and mechanics (DBE, 2011). This is important when reviewing the amount of time teachers need to allocate for the mastery of the various skills in language in the intermediate phase. When comparing the teacher's lesson preparation in the Grade 4 and Grade 6 classes more discussion is expected in Grade 4 class for learners to master the BICS, in preparation for acquiring the CALP in Grade 5 and Grade 6. The Grade 6 learning outcomes require discussions, but more time is allocated to the written skill that learners must master.

The teacher's planning of the learning outcomes and their role in a classroom affects the quality of teaching and learning experienced by learners (Wei & Murphy, 2017). The

interaction between the teacher and the learner forms the foundations of how learners think and respond to their peers, thus developing higher-order thinking skills.

When teachers make use of high-quality discussion, they promote critical thinking. Various factors must be considered when a teacher plans for effective group discussions making it either learner-centred or teacher-centred. These factors include, whether the teacher or learners get to choose, the text to be discussed, managing the topic of the discussion, controlling the direction of the discussion, controlling the turn-talking during the discussion, evaluating the responses during feedback as well as how the pre- and post-discussion activities would unfold in the classroom (Wei & Murphy, 2017).

Reflecting on Teacher X's comprehension lesson, the comprehension passage was selected by the teacher from the Platinum Grade 6, e -Classroom activity. The teacher followed a quiz-bowl approach which involved the reading of the text to the entire class. She ensured learners understood the text by clarifying all unknown concepts, initiated responses from the learners and evaluated it. The teacher held complete control over the discussion process by providing instructions and asking for responses from certain learners in the class. The use of this approach during discussion limited learner participation and contribution, giving the teacher complete interpretative power. The teacher decided who should respond, whether the learner's responses during the discussion were correct, and thus learners regarded the teacher to be their only source of information (Wei & Murphy, 2017).

The teacher's role as being the only source of information must be transformed. Teachers should model higher-order thinking during their interaction with the learners and provide enough exposure to the skill for learners to observe and use it themselves during group discussions. Maximum engagement amongst learners allowed them to practise the skills the teacher has modelled, following deeper conversations, so they challenge each other's responses to be able to support and qualify their answers (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Group discussions should positively improve the learner's questioning skills to analyse the text better so that they can apply it to their daily lives.

According to Rosenblatt's taxonomy learners make use of their own experiences and their knowledge base to be able to respond to questions (Wei & Murphy, 2017). When

learners make use of the efferent stance, they can recall answers directly from the text. But when a learner uses an expressive stance, personal connection is made for the learner to be able to analyse the text critically. Further engagement with learners during discussions promotes higher-order reasoning and sharing of experiences (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Learners were given enough time to explore and discuss in their groups before they provided feedback to the class.

Effective classroom management is important as a teacher. Teacher Z generated a time robot which assisted the learners in managing their time effectively. The use of this skill taught learners how to pace themselves, so all groups had an opportunity to present their answers. The pre-discussion activities are important during the introductory stage of a comprehension lesson. Good use of predictive questioning at the beginning of the lesson allowed learners to guess what the comprehension passage was about, and the learners were enthusiastic to begin reading the passage. Teacher X ensured that all difficult words were discussed and explained to the learners first while reading the text. The learners could use a dictionary if they could not figure out the meanings of words in the passage. The other phase of the teacher's lesson plan includes the post-discussion.

During the study post discussions in teacher X's and Teacher Y's classes were similar in that they merely asked questions to determine whether learners understood the text. The roles and responsibilities of both the teacher and learner are crucial during the pre-discussion, discussion and post discussion phase of planning (Murphy, 2016). When looking at the learner's language assessment books, they are being assessed at different levels, but when compared to the lesson presented learners were only exposed to text-based questions. Learners are not getting enough exposure to different levels of questions during their informal group discussions. This was, however, evident in Teacher Z's lesson. He allowed learners to present their work in front of the class, making them both accountable and proud of the work they have done. The teacher asked learners to add or challenge the responses made by the group of learners presenting. Learners had to listen carefully to critically question their peers. When learners are allowed to generate their questions, they begin developing the higher-order skill needed for comprehension (Nystrand, Wu, Zeiser & Long, 2003; Soteret al., 2008; Webb, 1989). The teacher himself added to the learners' feedback to guide the learner's thinking while the learners discussed in their groups.

During the study, there were challenges experienced during group discussion. In two of the three lessons, teachers needed more time to complete the lesson. Learners needed more time to explore, ask questions and freely express themselves, and this was viewed as time-consuming by the teachers. Teachers already have a loaded curriculum to complete their Annual Teaching Plans within set time frames. Both time management and classroom management were challenges experienced by Teachers X and Y.

4.4 GOOD PRACTICE AND IMPROVEMENTS

Teacher X in the Grade 6 class in School A made a concerted effort to ensure all learners understood all unknown concepts, which is important in the understanding of the text. Teacher Y in the Grade 4 class in School A selected a text that was topical and relevant, so learners became empowered on how to deal with bullies at school. The comprehension lesson presented by Teacher Z was most organised and was learner-centred. A good comparison could be established amongst these three teachers as each had their strengths and weaknesses when using group discussions in their comprehension lessons.

Although the learners were seated in groups in Teacher X's class, discussion was minimal and only engaged learners to discuss difficult concepts. The questions set on the passage did not allow for maximum participation and engagement amongst learners.

When comparing teacher Y's lesson, learners had access to different levels of questions, the learners only discussed the low order questions and worked independently on the high order questions. The learners had difficulty answering these questions independently as they could not make inferences from the text.

Teacher Z provided enough exposure to high order questioning throughout the lesson. The learners demonstrated their thinking skills through the responses given during their feedback session. As learners engaged with each other about the text, their understanding of the text increased (Maloch & Bomer, 2012).

Many recommendations can be considered to assist our teachers. One of these recommendations include teachers attending workshops on group discussions with explicit instructions on its use. Effective use of group discussions would be beneficial to teachers and learners alike in the long term. This requires the careful planning and pacing

of the teacher's lesson to ensure good classroom management during group discussions, re-visiting the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and learners when using group discussions in class. The use of group discussions far outweighs the challenges experienced. The aim is to produce a generation for the future that will be able to think creatively to solve problems innovatively. Sharpening our young children's minds must take place in the classroom with their peers and the teacher that they spend most of their day with. Collaboration during the ZPD, according to Vygotsky, 1978, indicates that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p.88).

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the results of a qualitative data analysis. The six themes elicited during the analysis of the research aimed to address the research question to describe the use of group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. The following chapter will discuss the findings described in this chapter in terms of the relevant literature on the topic. The research questions posed in Chapter 1 will be addressed through the findings of this study. The limitations and contributions of the study will be described. Recommendations are made for further research to be done to increase the knowledge base in this educational aspect. Finally, concluding comments will be given.

CHAPTER 5
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study of limited scope was to explore the use of group discussions as a support strategy to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. This chapter discusses the findings to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. Existing research is compared with the findings of the study that include the use of group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. The limitations and contributions of the study are discussed. This is followed by the recommendations and conclusion.

5.2   OVERVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 provided the background, purpose and rationale for undertaking the study. Chapter 1 also highlighted the theoretical framework and the methodological paradigm used in this study. This was followed by the literature review in Chapter 2, which explored the existing literature, which focused on using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. Chapter 3 focused on the research process that was used, the research design, and the methodology of this study. Finally, Chapter 4 outlined the results of the study presenting both themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data by using the thematic analysis.

5.3   ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The secondary questions are addressed first as these consequently informed the overall response to the primary question that guided the study.

5.3.1   Secondary research questions

5.3.1.1 Secondary research question 1

What is the role of the teacher during the group discussion process?

A variety of roles have been identified to ensure that effective group discussion occurs in the classroom. The three main roles of the teacher include being an explicit instructor at the beginning of the lesson, a vigilant facilitator during the group discussion and a critical evaluator when feedback is given after the discussions (Wei & Murphy, 2017). The changing roles of the teacher allow an opportunity for the learners to engage optimally and be accountable for their learning. This, however, requires explicit instructions and

practise by both teachers and learners for the teacher to delegate certain powers of responsibility to learners (Croninger et al., 2017).

The teacher as an instructor must plan for the pre-discussion, discussion and post-discussions activities (Wei & Murphy, 2017). The planned activities must motivate learners to use what they already know of the text. The planning done by the teacher includes the teacher providing explicit instructions, scaffolding and modelling to ensure the learners know what is expected of them. When learners make use of open-ended questions, it promotes discussion since the elaboration of answers are needed. During elaboration, greater thought is needed to convince their peers of their argument. While challenging each other's ideas, learners foster higher-order thinking skills which develop comprehension skills.

Once learners understand the instructions, the teacher monitors and guides the flow of the discussion, prompting and modelling when needed. By listening attentively to the learners' group discussions, the teacher helps learners that are struggling to answer or improve their language structure. The teacher will have more time to spend on learners needing additional support. This strategy will also help the teacher to manage the large numbers of learners in the class.

It is during feedback from learners that the teacher would either support or challenge the learners' answers. The roles of facilitator and evaluator allow the teacher to guide the learner in their thinking. Initially, the FAL learner observes how the more proficient English learner provides feedback to the class and in time will be able to do it as well. The post-discussion activities include the practise of learners' writing skills and the consolidation of what the learner did not understand during the discussion.

Findings from the study reveal that the two teachers in School A found it difficult to relinquish complete control to the learners during the group discussion process. In both lessons, their discussions were teacher-led, and learners responded to questions initiated by the teacher only. Responses to questions were only given by learners when the teacher posed questions. When group discussions between learners are limited it does not provide learners with the opportunity to engage with the text. Similarly, according to Wei & Murphy (2017), teacher-led discussions restrict learners' thinking as

the teacher is considered the only source of information. The study revealed when no discussion occurred in the open-ended questions that it was evident that not all learners understood the questions. This was indicated by the written responses given by learners. When learners are involved in open discussions, they become the sources of information, encouraging thinking amongst group members promoting critical thinking (Murphy et al., 2016).

Findings from group discussions held in teacher Z's class were learner-centred and very effective. The teacher modelled and scaffolded some of the questions at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher made sure that learners understood what was expected of them before the group discussions took place. Explicit instructions were provided to the learners and a lot of time was allocated for this. The literature concurs that when clear and concise instructions are given to learners it results in effective group discussions (Wei & Murphy, 2017). It was during the feedback session, when each group presented their questions and answers, that the teacher provided input and asked learners to either support or challenge their responses. The roles and responsibilities of the teacher and learner is crucial during group discussions as it determines the effectiveness of the discussion (Murphy et al., 2016).

Initially teachers model and allow learners to practise questioning skills. By creating a space for open conversation, it increases the contribution by learners to practise, co-construct and negotiate meaning of the text (Murphy et al., 2016). Teachers can monitor and begin relinquishing more control to the learners once they are ready, so that learners take more responsibility for their learning.

5.3.1.2 Secondary research question 2

How can peers assist multilingual learners in group discussion?

Varied literature informs us about the language challenges experienced in South African classrooms today. These challenges can be partly attributed to the large diversity of languages spoken by our learners that are using English as their second or third language outside the classroom. The challenge arises when learners must access the curriculum at Grade 4 level in English in all subjects when they are expected to be proficient at English at an HL level, whereas English is only their second or third language

(Engelbrecht et al., 2013). The ESL learner is expected to meet the same minimum requirements of 50% as their English HL peers. Most of the learners have not mastered the BICS in English at Grade 4 level yet and must acquire the CALP in the Intermediate phase at school (DBE, 2011). This poses a problem for the intermediate teachers that must bridge the gap of the language.

The findings of this study concur with the literature that indicates intermediate phase FAL learners are struggling to cope with the CALP at Grade 4 level (DBE, 2011). The learners had difficulty making inferences from the text. These questions were not discussed amongst the learners but given to them to work on independently. No discussion of those questions took place. In some cases, the teachers of these ESL learners have limited proficiency in English themselves. This could also restrict the amount of support that would be available to the ESL learner, and this restriction was evident in the fact that the marking of both questions by the student-teacher in the class was incorrect which resulted in students receiving the incorrect feedback. Teachers will have to revisit their instructional modes of teaching comprehension to find the best mode that will bring the most benefit to all learners in their class. According to Pretorius & Klapwijk (2016), teachers lack the understanding of teaching comprehension strategies. They need to be given more support and guidance in terms of the before, during and after discussions taking place in the classroom (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016).

Based on the findings in each Grade 6 class, there was evidence of learners translanguaging during group discussion time. It is during group interactions that the learner struggling to understand the text would talk more freely to his or her knowledgeable peer. By making use of their vernacular language, learners can make use of translanguaging, thus creating a space for sharing and comparing their answers. When learners share their own social and cultural beliefs and background experiences it adds deeper insight into the conversation in multilingual contexts (Murphy et al., 2009). The more the ESL learner listened, observed and practised the language spoken in a smaller group setting, the quicker they gained confidence. When learners are able read and discuss a text in one language and are then able to comprehend their answers in another language it leads to greater understanding (Baker, 2011).

The findings from the study revealed that learners preferred to talk in the presence of their peers instead of being exposed to the entire class or teacher for fear of being ridiculed. When learning occurred using group discussions, learners could communicate in one plane and later make meaning of concepts on another plane. According to the social constructivist theory, communication through talk occurs in a social setting amongst groups of learners interacting on an "interpersonal" level. The child requiring help listens to, understands and is assisted by his or her more proficient peer. During the ZPD he or she makes meaning of the information on an "intrapersonal level" (Croninger et al., 2017, p.4).

The sociocultural theory is premised on principles that include human consciousness seen as both social and biological in nature, by making use of a symbolic tool i.e. language and mediation through human activities (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner,2015). Findings of the study reveal when learners shared their thoughts collectively, they had greater sources of information but also could assist learners struggling to grasp the text. Similarly, research suggests that quality classroom talk leads to quality understanding and critical thinking for comprehension (Mercer, 1995, 2002; Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, & Prendergast, 1997). Furthermore, greater collaboration amongst FAL learners increases their cognitive functioning needed for acquiring a second language (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). The FAL learner can be helped by their peers during group discussions to understand the text better and develop higher-order thinking skills (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016). This further highlights the influence that peers have on the ESL learner as they can assist the learner to gain an understanding of the text and in the long term become more proficient in English.

5.3.1.3 Secondary research question 3

How can questioning techniques be used during group discussion to enhance higher-order thinking?

According to CAPS Home language English Grades 4-6, all learners progress at their own pace thus teachers need to cater for the different ability levels of learners. The questions planned for learners in the comprehension lessons must cater for the different ability levels of learners. The focus in CAPS is on the intermediate phase learners in schools to identify learners that have mastered the BICS and is developing the CALP in

their language of instruction (DBE, 2011). Scaffolding and modelling of questioning techniques by the teacher or a more proficient peer provide an opportunity for learners to observe and master the skills of questioning. It is only through asking questions and responding to them correctly that learners are better able to understand the text. When the teacher selects a comprehension passage, it should be according to the learner's ability level; they should consider the learner's interests and offer different ability level questions (Wei & Murphy, 2017). These questions must be practised in group discussions during informal lessons in class for learners to master the skill. When teachers asked learners open-ended questions, it provided the platform for greater discussion amongst learners and learners were able to generate their own questions or even question the author's reasoning for certain aspects (Murphy et al., 2009).

The findings of the study showed that when both Grade 6 teachers included scaffolding in the introduction of the text by using various stimuli, they were able to engage and motivate the learners. Learners made use of their relevant previous knowledge to give meaning to the text. According to Wei & Murphy (2017) learners make use of their prior knowledge to assist them in the understanding of a text. Findings in teacher Z's lesson revealed when teachers model higher-order questions, and when learners gained ownership of the text, they were able to relate and interpret the text better. Literature suggests that when learners generate questions that interest them, they become more engaged in the text and contribute to the discussions (Murphy et al., 2016).

Comprehension questions should begin with the simplest questions (such as surface model questions and text-based questions) and move towards more complex questions (such as situation-based questions) (Croninger et al., 2017). According to Kintsch's construction-integration model, learners constructed a mental picture of their story to gain a better understanding of the text. Findings based on the questions posed by teacher Z indicated the use of the situation-based questions to gain deeper conversations and insights from learners. Through discussions, learners added on to the mental representation to be able to validate and support their answers. Making use of open-ended questions allowed learners to substantiate their answers (Wei & Murphy, 2017), in contrast with the findings of teacher X's lesson, which included answers decoded from the text.

Similarly, the ability of the learners to make inferences in the Grade 4 class was lacking, especially due to limited discussions in all questions from the text. A greater amount of time must be spent on spoken language during group discussions at a Grade 4 level to allow learners to master comprehension skills. According to CAPS, when learners have mastered their listening and speaking skills, they would be able to make meaning and contribute meaningfully to discussions (DBE, 2011).

5.3.1.4 Secondary research question 4

Which factors must be considered by the teacher to encourage group discussion?

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that a smaller number of learners in a group tend to be more effective for greater participation during the discussion. Similarly, studies indicate that learners engage better in small group settings, especially ESL learners that lack confidence in speaking the language. They prefer communicating with their peers sitting close by when sharing their thoughts (Li, 2017). The findings from the study indicated that all the teachers had groups of learners that ranged from 4 to 6 learners which were ideal as they sat close to each other for greater collaboration. The decision on whether to place learners in homogenous or heterogenous ability level groups is dependent on the teacher's planning and outcomes for the lesson. All the teachers in the study preferred a heterogenous ability level grouping in their lessons. The advantages of this arrangement included greater interdependence amongst group members and increased collaborative talk (Li, 2017). However, learners who struggled in English would tend to shy away during discussions, leaving the more proficient learners to take over (Li, 2017).

A heterogenous grouping benefits the learner struggling to observe and learn from their more knowledgeable peer, but studies have indicated that the average ability level learner becomes demotivated (Li, 2017). The teacher needs to know his or her learners very well so that they will be able to place their learners in their respective groups. When teachers select the text for learners, they must ensure it captures the learner's interest, it must be age-appropriate and should allow learners to explore ideas in a discussion (Li, 2017). Sometimes learners tend to go off-topic and discuss other things when the teacher is not watching (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Classroom management can become challenging for

teachers. According to the findings, when expectations are clear from the teacher, it accounts for better management of learners during a group discussion.

5.3.1.5 Primary research question

To what extent does the use of group discussion enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes?

One of the aims in the National Curriculum Statements for Grade R-12 is to produce learners that will be able to "identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking" (DBE, 2011, p.10). To achieve this aim, a learner needs to have mastered the BICS in English by the end of Grade 3 irrespective of whether English is offered at home language level or FAL level at a school. This is not being achieved in most of our schools today since most ESL learners entering the intermediate phase have not mastered BICS in English at HL level (DBE, 2011). It is the task of teachers in the intermediate phase to provide additional exposure of English to learners to strengthen the language in four key areas namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is in this phase that immediate support from all teachers need to be given to develop the foundations of language development for the ESL learner. The curriculum is divided into four main skills namely, listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting, and language structures and conventions (DBE, 2011). The skill of listening and speaking is enhanced through group discussion to engage in productive talk and develops the learner's proficiency in English. The skills of reading and viewing relate to the ability of learners to engage in comprehension questions and develop higher-order thinking. The ESL learner cannot engage in comprehension skills effectively if they have not mastered the skill of listening and speaking. The skill of listening and speaking can be developed using group discussions, and this would assist learners in understanding the text.

According to the CAPS Home language for English and FAL English for Grades 4-6, teachers are allocated one hour in a week for listening and speaking. This is not sufficient time for learners to engage with the language. Discussions amongst learners are prescribed in the teacher's lesson preparation. This practice enables the ESL learner to be assisted and make meaning of the text with the help of their more proficient peers. The policy document encourages teachers to practise listening and speaking as a daily

routine in class (DBE, 2011). When learners are given a space to observe their peers talking, they listen attentively and can master the skill themselves. Learners struggling with the language might feel more comfortable to speak with their peers sitting close to them instead of addressing the entire class (Li, 2017). By using group discussions effectively, learners could understand the text better. To make meaning of the text, learners are required to use their personal experiences to critically analyse and contribute meaningfully to the discussion (Croninger et al., 2017). It is within this social interaction that learners can engage, express themselves and exchange ideas to be able to analyse and develop their thinking and reasoning skills.

When the teacher and the more proficient learner in English scaffolded and modelled questions, it supported the ESL learner The ESL learner would be able to move beyond their ZPD with the help of the teacher or peer. They may be able to understand the text better, answer questions and be able to support their answers. Learners must practise the skill of answering questions and be able to support their answers. When learners felt strongly about their point of view, they challenged their peers which brought about productive talk and higher-level thinking. The learners were challenged by their peers in discussions to gain a better understanding and might even alter their point of view. Similarly, Croninger et al. (2017), concurred that learners do gain a better understanding if they are challenged by their peers.

Reading with understanding includes being able to answer questions in full sentences, supporting one's answers and being able to ask authentic questions to support further thinking amongst peers (Wei & Murphy, 2017). Group discussion offered the ESL learner in multilingual classes a space to communicate and understand the language without being judged. When learners engage collaboratively with their peers, they are comfortable to make mistakes and learn. By supporting each other in small group discussions, learners develop conversation skills. These skills include learning to respect each other's opinions, turn-taking, becoming active listeners and making eye contact (Engelbrecht et al., 2013). These are important leadership skills that learners should acquire that will assist them during teamwork in their future place of work. The findings in this study concur that within a social setting like group discussions, the ESL learner may be able to understand and communicate better in English. Greater exposure to listening and speaking could, with time enhance the learner's CALP, developing the learner's

higher-order thinking skills. The research questions presented in this chapter confirm that there are benefits when using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation was the small number of participants that limited the generalisability of the results. Due to the small scale of the study, the sample was not representative of the broader South African population. The study was, however, intended to include a multilingual group of learners resulting in a purposeful sampling of participants in the study. The current study provided a limited scope and did not allow for a large group of participants.

5.5   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study highlighted the importance of using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. It was found that group discussions can be effective when the roles of the teacher are clearly identified and followed. The importance of catering for the different ability levels of learners in the class was recognised as a key aspect to ensure that maximum participation was achieved and this needs to be carefully planned by the teachers. The role of the teacher was emphasised in the pre-discussion, discussion and post-discussion as a way to ensure that the discussion was most effective to assist learners. The study highlighted how the ESL learners can observe their more proficient English peers speaking the English language and in time the ESL learner would learn how to answer questions and support their answers in English with the help of their more proficient peers. The study also indicated that working in smaller groups would assist learners in discussing and sharing their ideas and thoughts. It was found that only once learners are given enough exposure to practise the skills of asking relevant questions, to listen attentively and respond effectively could quality talk occur in classrooms. These skills must be mastered by learners first before teachers can relinquish complete control to them. Increased interaction amongst learners would result in more talk and questioning that would develop higher-order thinking skills needed for comprehension.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 Teachers

Teachers play a crucial role in the effective use of group discussions in classes. Interactive teacher training workshops would form the basis of effective delivery of group discussions in the classrooms. The roles of both the teacher and learner outlined during the group discussion could ensure its effectiveness. Higher-order thinking skills are possible when learners cooperate and understand their roles. Allowing discussion time gives the shy learner and ESL learner an opportunity to talk in a smaller group without feeling intimidated. Learners observe and can gain exposure to the language and its use. Learners can self-correct and become responsible for their learning. Through collaboration, learners learn turn-taking and improve listening skills through observation. As the teachers take on their role as critical evaluator they will have to listen carefully and allow the other learners to respond before giving feedback.

The pre-and post-discussion must be guided by the teacher's lesson planning. Teachers should ensure that different levels of questions are catered for so that learners develop their higher-order thinking skills. The text must be at the learner's level of understanding, considering the learner's interests and be captivating for even the ESL learner to become motivated. Teachers have the responsibility to bridge the gap of the ESL learner receiving support from themselves or a more knowledgeable peer. For the ESL learner to acquire the CALP with support from the teacher and more proficient peer, effective group discussions must occur. When productive talk is promoted using group discussions it enhances comprehension skills in multilingual classes.

5.6.2 Further Research

This study offers a preliminary view of using group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classrooms. Further research could include:

- A larger study being done focusing on the use of group discussions amongst multilingual classrooms in schools in the different provinces.
- A longitudinal study being done to compare the presence and absence of group discussion before a comprehension exercise is attempted.

- Using group discussions in multilingual classes for at least three terms until ESL learners become accustomed to the higher-order thinking skills before learners are tested.

5.7 CONCLUSION

When teachers use group discussion effectively, it could enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes (Makalela, 2015; Murphy et al., 2016). The knowledge gaps that an ESL learner experiences can be filled during the intermediate phase with the help of the teacher or the more knowledgeable peer. Mastering the CALP in English may require more time allocated to listening and speaking skills. Using group discussions provides the ESL learner with the opportunity to listen and speak English. The ESL learner will be able to develop CALP and questioning technique skills through collaborative learning. The use of group discussions may limit the number of referrals to the District based support teams for learners with language barriers because of seemingly having a language disability. When all teachers, not only the language teachers, model good questioning techniques in classes, learners observe and learn. When group discussions become routine practice in schools it could promote comprehension skills amongst learners in multilingual classrooms.

"What a child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow." (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211).

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Appendix 1**- Consent-Principal**

Date: ……………………

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mrs Pribashnie Naidoo and I am a Master student at the University of Pretoria currently busy with a Masters Mini-dissertation titled: "Using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classrooms". I hereby would like to request permission to visit your school in order to conduct this research. I would like to conduct research with two Intermediate language teachers and their learners. My study aims to explore the use of group discussions during comprehension lessons. This would include observing the learners and the teachers for at least one lesson in each of the two classes per school during their classroom periods over a two-week period. In this time, it is my aim to understand and identify the effectiveness of the use of group discussion to enhance higher-order thinking amongst multilingual learners. I would appreciate the opportunity of observing the learners in their natural setting, allowing data to be collected directly as the discussions unfolds. I, therefore, request permission to take photographs of the learners during the group discussion. I would like to meet with the two teachers in semi-structured interviews to hear their points of view on this topic. Every effort will be taken not to disrupt the normal teaching and learning taking place at the school.

I, _____ the undersigned, in

my capacity as Principal at _____

(Name of school) hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research. I understand that the contribution made by my school will be treated as confidential and anonymous, and that my school may withdraw from the study at any time, if we wish to do so.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the form below. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Signed at _____ on_____2019.

_____   _____

Mrs. Pribashnie Naidoo (Researcher)   Dr Funke Omidire (Supervisor)

Telephone number : 0780677205   Telephone number: 012 420 5506

email: pribashnienaidoo4@gmail.com   email: Funke.omidire@up.ac.za

Appendix 2:- Consent- Teacher

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Date: ……………….

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

TEACHERS

Title of research project: **Using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classrooms.**

Dear Teacher

As part of a research study, I would like to gain an increased understanding of using group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. This study adopts a communicative approach, making use of listening and speaking skills amongst multilingual peers to enhance comprehension. This research study will require that Intermediate learners participate in group discussions during comprehension lessons. A closer understanding of group discussions will be studied. A 45 -minute lesson in each of the two Intermediate classes will be observed during a two- week period. Your involvement will include, the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The interviews will take place at your convenience and will be audio recorded. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes and will be scheduled when you are available. I also request permission to take photographs of documents pertaining to my study as well as learners participating in groups during the lesson.

The information obtained during this research project will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research only. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school, teachers and learners. All information collected will be securely stored in line with the University of Pretoria's

regulations. The documents collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

There are no risks involved in participation. The benefits lie in our further understanding of using group work and discussion in a multilingual context to improve learner's comprehension skills. I look forward to your participation and contribution to this project.

Declaration of consent

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of the school or research participants be disclosed or published to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

 I, _____ (your name), teacher at_____ agree to take part in this research. I agree to allow the researcher to take photographs of my lessons and audio record the interviews for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principals:

- **Voluntary participation,** - participants may withdraw from the research at any time during the study.
- **Informed consent**- research participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes and must give consent to their participation in this research.
- **Safety in participation**- Participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- **Privacy**- meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**, Participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Teacher's name:

_____

Teacher's signature: _____   Date: _____

I, _____ the undersigned, in my capacity as teacher at _____ (Name of school) hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research. I understand that my contribution will be treated as confidential and anonymous, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time, if I wish to do so.

Signed at _____ on_____2019.

_____   _____

Participant   Researcher

Appendix 3:- Learner-Opt-Out Form

LEARNER **OPT-OUT FORM**

Dear Learner and Parent/Caregiver

Using group discussions to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes

My name is Pribashnie Naidoo and I will be conducting research at the …………… Primary School. The research will be on teachers use of group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes. I will be observing the lessons. I have consent from the principal, teachers and SGB to do my research at your school. The information I collect will be confidential and only used for research at the University of Pretoria. No one will be harmed during the research.

If you sign this letter it means that you agree that I can:

- Audio-record the English comprehension lesson.
- Take photographs of the exercise books.
- Take photographs of learners in group discussions (Learner's identity will not be revealed, and learner confidentiality will be maintained at all times)
- Speak to the teacher about the class.

If you do not sign this form it means that you agree that the learner can take part in my research and their information used in the study. If you sign this form it means that you do not want the learner's information to form part of the study.

_____

Opt-Out Slip

_____ (Name and Surname of the learner) will not be part of the research.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Parent/Caregiver   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Name of Learner   Signature   Date

Appendix 4:- Classroom Observation Schedules

Classroom Observation Schedule at School A

<u>**Date:**</u> **4th March 2019**   <u>**Time:**</u> **8:00-8:45**

<u>**Participants present:**</u> **Teacher X**   <u>**Grade**</u>**: 6K**
                                            36 (No. of learners)
                                            Pribashnie Naidoo (Non-participant researcher

                                Hiresha Naidoo (Assisted with audio-recording &

                                photographs)

1. Arrangement of learners for group discussion in the class (sketch of learner's groups)
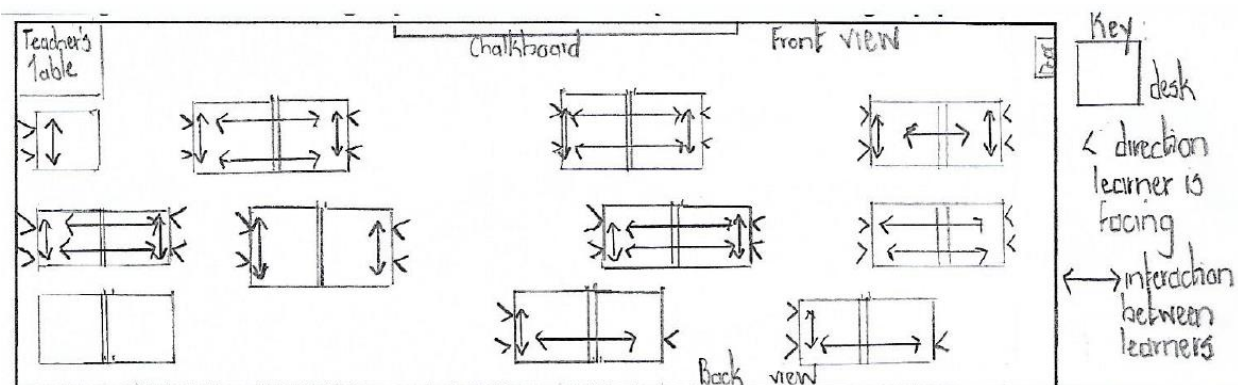
2. What criteria was used by the teacher to place learners in groups in the lesson?

The teacher made a concerted effort to ensure all learners were placed in the groups that she arranged them in. Even though some learners were absent or late since it was the first period on a Monday morning she rearranged them. She queried about the whereabouts of a certain child as well. But she took time to ensure that each child was placed in a group, since some chose to change places, she moved them. When I asked her how she chose their places, she said she knows her learners the ones who needs support to be placed with certain strong learners. (Image: 5048)

3. What strategies did the teacher use to incorporate group discussion into the comprehension lesson?

 The text was taken from the Platinum Grade 6 English Home Language text book (e-classroom) so it was according to the learner's ability and chosen from the annual teaching plan.

The teacher **read** each paragraph of the text **aloud** to the learners, explaining each paragraph until the entire text was complete. At each paragraph where there were difficult concepts the teacher wanted learners to discuss first but certain learners were impatient raising their hands to answer. In some cases, she responded to the learners.   When the entire text was read and explained the teacher went on to the questions.

4. What are the instructions given by the teacher before learners engage in the group?

The teacher introduces the title of the passage to the learners and ask them to guess what the story is going to be about. She reprimanded the learners as some were reading beforehand, she wanted them to guess and predict what the story was going to be about. The teacher realises that some learners may not know the meaning of the word, serpent and she asked the learners for a meaning of the word before continuing.

Once all the children realise it is a snake, they volunteer to answer, using the picture as a clue. There were more learners responding and trying to figure what the story is about.

5. What is the teacher's role during the group discussion?

The teacher provides explicit instructions every time a question is posed to the learners. She read the passage and questions for the learners.

The teacher ensured that all words in the passage that learners do not know were explained to them. Although she said can we discuss each time. She did not allow much time for learners to engage with each other, instead she called on individual learners to respond. (Refer to Appendix 9-Comprehension passage-G1)

The words included: "serpent" (CP:L1,p1),"folks" (CP: L3, p1)"orchard" (CP: L5, p1), "inexhaustible" "mischief" (CP: L8,p1)

Teacher paraphrased, sometimes repeating certain sentences. Like the main sentence where the boy stepped on the snake's tail, so all the learners could relate to the main sentence.

She guides the learners through the passage.

Uses leading questions to model higher order thinking skills amongst learners used three times only, which is not enough for learners to be able observe and learn the skill.

"If you were writing the story, what kind of picture would you put?" (TCO: L46-47, p141)

"Let's assume, if it was you who happen to step on the snake's tail what was going to happen?" (TCO: L164-166, p144)

"What is the moral of the story?" (TCO: L364, p149)

The teacher knows her children referring to them by name and engages with them individually during the lesson.

Discussion amongst learners were lacking in the lesson. The teacher delivered her lesson standing in front for most of the lesson. She walked around twice, during the lesson therefore managing certain learners at the back posed a challenge. (Image:0222)

6. How are multilingual learners benefitting from group discussion in the lesson?

During the discussion learners sometimes spoke in their vernacular to their peers, not all groups just a few. The learners that did not know tend to shy away. But the teacher tried to include them by asking them for feedback during the answering session, which made them either not answer or give incorrect responses. Some learners were laughing when answers were incorrect and the teacher immediately reprimanded them.

7. How are higher order questioning techniques introduced into the lesson?

The teacher makes good use of the title asking learners to use the title and then decide what type of picture they would have chosen. Giving learners the role of author, so they start to think critically (CP: L1, p1)

The majority of the questions posed to the learners were text based. Only at the beginning of the lesson did the teacher give the learners the question on the title. To guess what the story is about. One during the lesson, when she asked, "What would you do, if you stepped on a snake's tail?" and the last one being the moral of the story. She related these questions well with their context. Learners could understand by the responses they gave. (Image:3422)

Learners were not given enough higher-order questions to be able to practice the skill.

8. Which factors promote the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

Teacher guided the lesson throughout. Leading questions were asked which were mainly text-based, they include:

1. What did the man have that made him richer than, the other people in the village?
2. How many children did this man have?
3. Why was he more worried about his youngest son than his other two sons?
4. List three things that the youngest son did whenever he had time?
5. In two sentences, summarise what happened to this boy when he went out playing.
6. How did the father know which snake to find?
7. Why did the snake vow revenge on the father?
8. What did the snake do to take revenge on the father?
9. What did the father decide to do in the end?
10. What is the moral of the story? Explain this in your own words thereafter.

If more higher-level questions were planned for learners, it would encourage them to help one another to work out answers together. Since questions were mainly text based they were competing against each other to answer first. (Image:0432) This would encourage them to challenge each other's answers which promotes critical thinking.

9. Which factors hinder the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

Strong learners did not have the patience to discuss and help others. They sometimes blurted out answers without discussing it with their group members. Learners who did not understand or were shy were being over-powered by other learners.

The comprehension lesson was more teacher-driven than learner-driven as much of the questions posed were between the teacher and individual learners in the class. Although learners sat in groups they hardly engaged in their groups. There were three to four times when time was given time to discuss in their groups before feedback was given.

10. What other classroom aids are used by the teacher to enhance comprehension skills amongst learners?

Worksheets and the dictionary

Chalkboard (Image: 3814)

11. Were learners able to answer the different levels of questions in the comprehension

No, most of the questions posed to the learners were recall where learners could extract answers directly from the text.

(Appendix H:Image-3820) The questions did not make up different level of questions.

New words were discussed using the learner's context so they could make meaning of the words e.g. inexhaustible, the teacher used the example of cell phones when you have inexhaustible funds. Although, they could relate to the cell phone, the explanation to the learners was not clear enough. Teacher paraphrased and repeated certain sentences throughout the lesson for example the main sentence where the boy stepped on the snake's tail so all the learners could relate to the main idea of the story. Then asked them what would they do if they stepped on the snake's tail.

Classroom Observation Schedule at School A

Date: 4th **March 2019**   **Time:** 8:45-9:15

Participants present: Teacher Y   **Grade:** 4R

     51 (No. of learners)

     Pribashnie Naidoo (Non-participant researcher)

     Hiresha Naidoo (Assisted to audio-record & photographs

     Student teacher

1. Arrangement of learners for group discussion in the class (sketch of learner's groups)
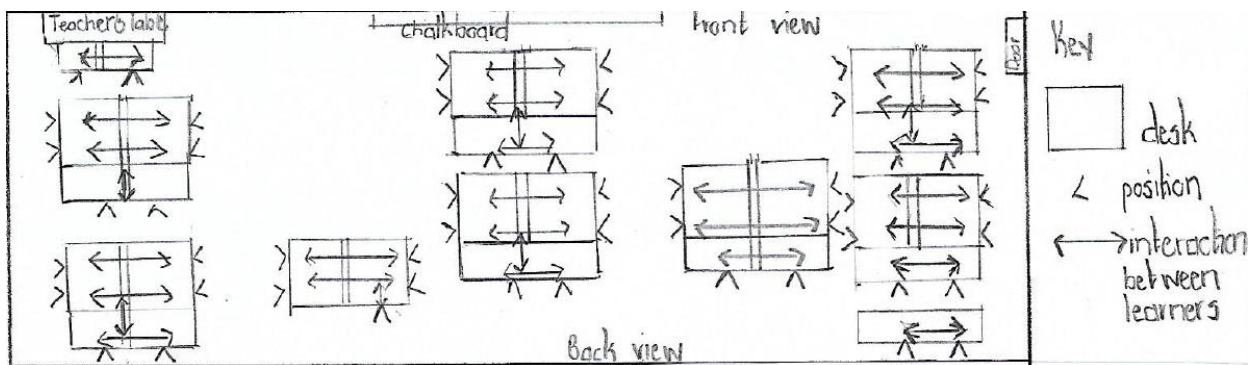
2. What criteria was used by the teacher to place learners in groups in the lesson?

The teacher said that only certain learners were placed while the other learners chose their own groups. The classroom was very small compared to the previous teacher's class. The number of learners were more than 45 in the class. There was hardly room to move in the class. When asked which learners were grouped by him, he said about 6 of them that needed help with English. (Image:4241)

3. What strategies did the teacher use to incorporate group discussion into the comprehension lesson?

Reading aloud in groups. The teacher later, read to the learners again. Repetition enhanced understanding of the passage to learners.

4. What are the instructions given by the teacher before learners engage in the group?

The teacher asked the learners to first read the diary entry together and then he repeated it later. He repeatedly asked learners to discuss their answers first before responding to the questions. The teacher read each question to the class, once a correct response was given from a group. He, then went on to the next question. He told them if the answer to a question was wrong it meant that the entire group did not know the answer. Holding all learners accountable for greater team work "If I ask one person in the group, if the person gives me the wrong answer, it means that the whole group, you do not know the answer" (TCO:L441--445,p151)

5. What is the teacher's role during the group discussion?

The passage was chosen by the teacher. They are using a comprehension from a previous past question paper set by the district. They were preparing for the upcoming examinations.

The teacher ensured that the learners discussed their answers before feedback is given.

This classroom was far too rowdy and lacked classroom management and discipline.

When the teacher read the passage for the second time, learners were quiet and paid attention yet during the lesson the learners were speaking while the teacher got feedback from other learners. (Image:4624)

6. How are multilingual learners benefitting from group discussion in the lesson?

By listening to the passage aloud twice and by them reading it themselves when the teacher read the passage gave the learners a better understanding. They were talking amongst each other in their vernacular to get answers and the learner that was stronger in English would raise their hand to answer and give feedback. So, the shy learner did not answer for the group but chose just to contribute in their safe space.

7. How are higher order questioning techniques introduced into the lesson?

Having a better understanding of the text allowed the learners to be able make sense of the questions that required further thinking

Looking at the marked activity, the learners struggled with the sequencing of sentences.

What can I do if somebody bullies me? Answered well by most of the learners, meaning that they could relate to the passage and make meaning of the passage.

The school probably empowers the learners on what to do if they are bullied at school.

Learners had difficulty with two questions specifically on the worksheet. However most of their answers were marked correctly by the student teacher marking their work.

Explain the effect Nthando's bullying is having on Mpumi?

What does Nthando's attitude tell us about her?

(Image:0143)

8. Which factors promote the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

Leading questions provided by teacher i.e. 1.4. Do you think Mpumi's family is rich? Give a reason to support your answer.

1.7. What emotion do you think Mpumi is feeling and why?

Learners had to discuss before feedback was given

Teacher's giving time for learners to discuss.

9. Which factors hinder the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

Disruptive learners as well as the large classroom sizes impact on classroom management

When there is a lack of discipline for example learners responding to questions together. A child not understanding will merely chorus answers with the rest of the group. A shy learner will become lost in the background.

Learners struggling with language will take time before they contribute in group discussion.

10. What other classroom aids are used by the teacher to enhance comprehension skills amongst learners?

Use of the worksheets provided to learners

11. Were learners able to answer the different levels of questions in the comprehension

According to the marked worksheets, no, as only the low-level questions were understood by the learners. Most learners guessed with the high-level questions. This is evident from the marked work of learners. One of the learner's answers to the following question was

(Image :0043)

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Classroom Observation Schedule at School B</u></p>

<u>Date:</u> **11 April 2019**   <u>Time:</u> **11:15- 12:15**

<u>Participants present:</u> **Teacher Z**   <u>Grade</u>: **6B**

47 (No. of learners)

Pribashnie Naidoo (Non-participant researcher)

Hiresha Naidoo (Assisted with audio-recording & photographs)

1. Arrangement of learners for group discussion in the class (sketch of learner's groups)
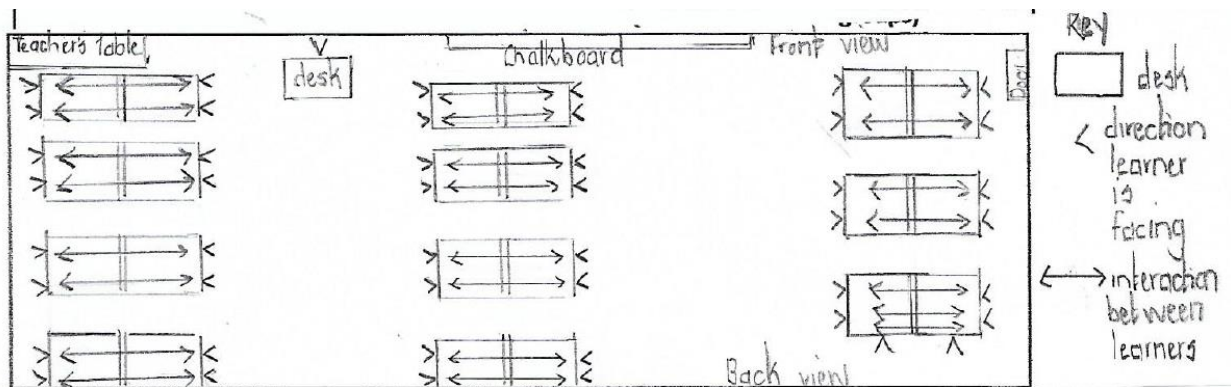
2. What criteria was used by the teacher to place learners in groups in the lesson?

Mr Masilela placed his learners in groups of 4 or 5's, 2 groups had 6 learners with one learner sitting at a separate desk in front of the class. When I asked the teacher, he said this boy tends to interfere with the other learners constantly, so he kept him in front. However, when the teacher began group work he immediately joined the front group and contributed to the lesson. Apparently, learners were placed differently every two weeks said the learners. The teacher says he knows the learners that can help and support other learners that struggle to answer questions. He said by grade 6 most learners do have a basic understanding of the English language, it is more when the questions are phrased differently that they have difficulty. When I asked the teacher why he changes the learner's groups he mentioned that he wanted them to learn to work with every class member and not only with their friends i.e. learning group ethos. This was one of the aspects a teacher must monitor according to the lesson plan, learners "Interacts positively during group discussions" (LP: L11-12,p1)(Image:1547)

3. What strategies did the teacher use to incorporate group discussion into the comprehension lesson?

Relevant previous knowledge as well as recapping the previous days lesson. This is important since learners had to remember the use of the **5 W's** i.e. the who, why, what, when, where in the questioning techniques the teacher taught them when doing the comprehension activities (TCO: L491,p153) The **spider diagram** when planning their work in the paragraph question (TCO:L499,p153) the **hello exercise** was to teach learners to write their answers in full sentences (TCO: L513-514,p153). When learners learn the skill to answer in full sentences it becomes easier when they write their answers. Working together with their peers helps them

remember and practice this skill. The learner that knows the answer but cannot write or phrase it well in English is able to observe and learn from their friend. These learners normally shy away from the stronger learners, but with time will gain the skill as well. How to look for **keywords** in sentences (TCO:L508,p153) These skills helped learners share their knowledge and teach them to become more tolerant to their peers. The learners **clap once, then twice** to responses from peers that are correct. This ensures that all learners are together in the lesson, following and are focussed. When the teacher wants everyone's attention he uses a certain phrase, **direction time** and the whole class says it together, before moving to the next activity. There are certain routines and formats used by the teacher which makes managing the learners in groups easier. The expectations from both the teacher and learners are understood and practiced which helps with classroom management as well.

The teacher introduced skimmed reading to the learners as a strategy to guess what the passage is about (TCO: L584, p155) They used the picture to help them as well Appendix -9: G3(CP:p10)(Image:1821)

4. What are the instructions given by the teacher before learners engage in the group?

The teacher makes use of a picture to introduce the lesson about braille, he then distributes the comprehension passage to all learners. Each learner is given a copy of the passage to follow and read with. Learners are then instructed to practice the skimmed reading introduced by the teacher and to guess what the passage is about. There are 3 rows in which the learners are arranged in the class. So, the teacher asked the first row to read the first paragraph aloud with the rest of the learners to follow. He then takes over by reading paragraph 2 and then allowing the learners in row 2 to read paragraph 3.He then reads paragraph 4 leaving paragraph 5 for the learners in row 3 to read. Once the entire passage is read the teacher asked the learners what the story was about. They need to imagine that they have to tell the class next door that has not read the passage before what the story is about. Paraphrasing, and summarising the text allows learners that did not understand the text the first time it was read, another opportunity to make meaning of the text. Introducing the time robot for time management. (Image:1821)

5. What is the teacher's role during the group discussion?

The teacher's use of a visual stimulus to introduce the comprehension passage was to guide the learners through the text. (Image:1821)

To teach learners about time management, so the teacher introduced the time robot and explained how it works. This helped learners to manage their time effectively as they worked (TCO: L518,p154)

Positive comments made by the teacher during feedback encouraged learners to try. Various learners respond by giving input of what they remembered from listening to the passage, "Clap once, clap twice, wonderful. Other groups what would you like to add to that?" (TCO: L871,p162)

Another leading question posed by the teacher challenges learners thinking for example "If you had to meet Helen Keller right now, what question would you ask her?"

By monitoring and guiding the learners the teacher facilitates effective group discussion. (Image: 1547)

6. How are multilingual learners benefitting from group discussion in the lesson?

By code-switching during discussion time, learners were able to express their ideas where they might not do so in a class. When learners collaborate, they share ideas, thoughts and values from the learner's different backgrounds. Practicing dialogue improves their language and listening and speaking skills. Speaking to their peers in their mother tongue is less intimidating than to address the entire class as they fear to be ridiculed.

(Image: 4243)

7. How are higher order questioning techniques introduced into the lesson?

A visual stimulus is used by the teacher for the learners to **predict** what the picture is about (CP: p10) The teacher allows learners to **guess** what the picture is. After various attempts, he then explains what braille is. He then hands out the comprehension passage for each learner to follow. After both the teacher and learners took turns reading the story, the learners are asked to give a **summary** of what the passage is about to the class next door (TCO: L657-658,p157)

The teacher had different questions for each of the groups to work on:

- ➢ The 5 W's (CP: p2)
- ➢ True and False Statements (CP: p3)
- ➢ Fill in the missing words (CP: p4)
- ➢ List the questions you have for Helen Keller and Ms Sullivan (CP: p5)
- ➢ Quote. All statements given by the teacher are false, correct it by quoting the correct answer from the text (CP: p6)
- ➢ Sequencing- order in which events took place (CP: p9)
- ➢ If you were in the same situation as Helen Keller, what would you do (CP: p8)
- ➢ Give your own opinion: If you had a friend who was blind or deaf, what would you do? (CP: p7)

Should blind or deaf people be treated as less than human beings? Give reasons for your answer.
If learners met Helen Keller, what question would they want to ask her?

8. Which factors promote the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

High quality questions thought of by the teacher during the lesson preparation promotes critical thinking amongst learners

Various questioning techniques practiced with the learners frequently enhances higher order thinking.

When the teacher models good questioning techniques during their English lessons and not only during comprehension lessons it promotes critical thinking.

High quality questions modelled by the teacher gives learners more exposure to observe and learn critical thinking skills.

The teacher should encourage debates, so learners could challenge their own answers.

Learners should be taught how to interact positively during groupwork. (Image:0736)

9. Which factors hinder the group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in the lesson?

Managing learners in groups can be challenging. Only through practice and effective planning by the teacher will effective groupwork be achieved.

The ability of the teacher to relinquish control of the discussion to their learners.

Time constraints is a challenge because of curriculum demands in the annual teaching plan

10. What other classroom aids are used by the teacher to enhance comprehension skills amongst learners?

Time robot

Question cards given to individual groups to answers

Braille picture on the chalkboard (Image:1005)

11. Were learners able to answer the different levels of questions in the   comprehension

Yes, the teacher prepared a good lesson including the various levels of questions for his learners

Expectations were clear to the learners therefore they were able to answer the questions.

The teacher guided the learners when they answered their questions. Assisted them when they did not understand what a biography was.

The knowledgeable other could be both the teacher and their peers to ensure that learners are assisted to answer the higher-levelled questions. (Image:1009)

Appendix 5: Transcriptions of Teacher interviews

	Interview with Teacher X (School A)	Initial Code	Reflections
1 2 3 4 5 6	P: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to interview you. As we discussed I would like to ask you a few questions about how you as an English teacher use group discussion to enhance comprehension in multilingual classes. Is it ok, if, I audio record our conversation?		
7	X: No, that is fine		
8 9	P: For the purpose of the interview can you tell us your name please		
10	X: Zinhle Maseko		
11 12	P: Ok, what is the current subject and grade that you are teaching?		
13	Teacher X: Grade 6 English Home Language		
14 15	P: How many years of teaching experience do you have?		
16	X: It's my second year in teaching	Experience	
17	P: How long are you at your present school?		
18	X: 2 years	Experience	
19	P: What is your Home language?		
20	X: Isizulu	Teacher's home language	
21	P: How many languages are you fluent in?		
22	X: First, sign language, English, Sesotho	Teacher's Language competency	
23 24	P: In, your classes, how many different languages are represented in your class		
25 26	X: So, approximately, 2 languages IsiZulu and Sesotho as well as English	Multilingual classes	
27 28	P: What type of training have you received to be able to teach your subject in your class?		
29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38	X: Whilst I was at varsity, we were advised to go to different kinds of schools hence I also did sign language. So that it trains us to teach learners from multiple backgrounds. We used to go to farm schools like there was Sesotho and IsisZulu speakers so that when we are exposed to such. At Wits, we were advised to go to different kind of schools. So, we were not based in one school. So, for the past 4 years I've worked into 8 different kinds of schools.	Training in multilingual teaching in different schools	
39 40	P: You attended Wits and this is what they enforce?		

41	X: Yes, during the practicals. We were not		
42	allowed to go to one school. But professionally,		
43	there's nothing yet but during varsity days that's		
44	when the training took place.		
45	P: Do you use group discussion when teaching		
46	comprehension in your class?		
47	X: I do use group discussion, however because	Challenge	Furniture
48	of a lack of resources e.g. our desks are not the		
49	same height which makes it very difficult, the		
50	other one is big, the other one is small but usually		
51	we make them sit in pairs and ask the one sitting		
52	forward to turn their back to her, to make up a		
53	group of 4, but it is not like one big table where		
54	they can sit together because of lack of resources		
55	at the school.		
56	P: So basically, they are in 4's		
57	X: Yes, no they are in pairs and we ask the two		
58	to turn when we are doing discussion		
59	comprehension and stuff. So, it is not formal		
60	formal for now. I do not know how long for now		
61	but we are trying our best.		
62	P: What strategies or structures help facilitate		
63	group discussion in your class?		
64	X: I usually put learners from different	Peer	
65	backgrounds together most of the time. I know	collaboration	
66	them better and also like weak learners and	Learner's	Factors that
67	strong learners so that they can suck some	with different	affect group
68	knowledge from the other so that's more of the	ability levels	dynamics
69	style that I use. Putting strong learners and weak	grouped	
70	learners so that they can learn from each other. If	together	
71	I can put it that way.		
72	P: Specifically for comprehension how would you		
73	set them up?		

74	X: Yes, strong with weak. Some can analyse	Teacher's	
75	pictures better while the strong one like can	technique-	Sharing
76	analyse the content better. So, we talk about	use of	answers
77	pictures. We do what before reading, we guess by	pictures.	
78	looking at the pictures. So those ones that are not		
79	well in content will obviously answer better when	Predictions-	
80	we talk about pictures and stuff and when we now	leading to	
81	getting into content then the strong ones will start	critical	
82	helping the weak ones. So, predictions before	thinking	
83	looking at the pictures before we go to content.		
84	So,it also helps the weaker ones to shine out		
85	there instead of just asking like only content. We		

86	also use predictions to help everyone in the class		
87	to participate.		
88	P: So you get maximum participation?		
89	X: Yes, because we are using more strategies	Maximum	Benefits of
90	than just like reading or comprehension only. If	participation	different
91	there is a picture, or heading, then I'll ask if it was	of learners	levelled
92	you, what kind of picture will you put or will go		questions
93	well with the title of the story, so it gives everyone		
94	an opportunity to voice out their opinions before		
95	we engage into it.		
96	P: Thank you. What do you think are the		
97	advantages of using group discussion specially to		
98	assist the ESL learner to develop		
99	comprehension?		
100	X: So, they learn from each other most	Peer	Benefits of
101	importantly and if there is a learner that cannot	collaboration	group
102	express themselves in their Home language then		discussion
103	there is one who can help them. When they have		
104	talks they actually help each other you can hear.		
105	P: Are they allowed to use their different		
106	vernacular languages in the class?		
107	X: Well, they not. But they use it. Ya, they are not	Trans-	Factors that
108	allowed to but like I have just said some learners	Languaging	help group
109	cannot express themselves so if they tell the		discussion
110	learner sitting next to them what they want to say	They help	
111	then that learner can actually be their voice. So if	one another	
112	we like hinder them, they all do not come from the		
113	same backgrounds some English is even their		
114	third or fourth language and here at school its like		
115	their HL but the truth is at home it is not their HL.		
116	P: What challenges do you experience during		
117	group discussion?		
118	X: Ok, they get carried away.		
119	P: How?		

120	X: If you say discuss or make a discussion about	Too much to	Time
121	the title then they'll get carried away because	say	constraints
122	there is a lot of what they want to say. It gets out		
123	of hand at least. So what I usually do, I just		
124	choose one point that they agree on and you see		
125	them voting, they say lets take hers, or so ya. I		
126	think those are the challenges. They have a lot of		
127	things to say and sometimes there is no time.		
128	Time doesn't allow us to get an answer from each		
129	and every one so at least if it's a group they can		
130	choose one answer they all agree on and we can		
131	get feedback. But it's a challenge because		
132	everyone wants to say something. There's no		

133 134	time to get answers from 40 learners when you still have to read and answer questions		
135 136 137	P: What are the various questioning techniques you would use to develop higher order thinking in learners?		
138 139 140 141 142 143 144	X: Barretts taxonomy. Who are the characters, where is the setting? We start there instead of asking higher level questions. So, I try to use from low to high order questions so that as I have said those who just got one name of the characters can also put up their hands and can have something to say	Teacher's questioning technique	Low order leading to high level questioning
145 146	P: What do you think is your role as a teacher during group discussion in a lesson?		
147 148 149 150 151	X: It is to mould their answers. So, while I walk around and then I want to ask their feedback and maybe say it better because you hear what they want to say but they are not putting it right. So I do not know what you call that? When you just…	Role of teacher	Closely monitoring the flow of the learner's discussions
152	P: Guide them, facilitating		
153	X: Guide them, Yes	Role of teacher	Facilitation
154 155	P: Does it help with doing group work with the numbers in class?		
156 157 158 159	X: Yes, if it is group, then already they are asking each and every one. Overall thinking from maybe one person that is going to give feedback from the whole group.	Learner cooperation	Teamwork
160 161	P: How could teachers encourage group discussion in comprehension lessons?		
162 163 164	X: Tough question, H'm I do not know. They just do it. I do not know how they can encourage it but?		
165 166	P: Is it part of your programme of assessment in the CAPS Policy document?		
167	X: No, I haven't seen it.		
168	P: In your opinion?		
169 170 171 172 173 174 174	X: It works, it works. It's enough to say that there are learners who are shy so if you mix them together, they might though it is difficult. I must say that the set up of our classes doesn't allow. Not conducive, hence I was a bit reluctant that this is not the best school for the research because really it is not conducive.	Peer collaboration	Benefits group discussion
176 177	P: I want to thank you, as we have come to the end of the interview. I appreciate you taking the		

178	time to talk to me and give me more insight into		
179	my research. Thank you		
180	X: Ok		

Appendix 6: Transcript of classroom observation

	Teacher Z: Classroom Observation	Initial Code	Reflections
475 476	T: Right, you, have your English books out, ok. Good morning class		
477	Learners: Good morning sir		
478 479	T: Right, everyone has their English book, correct.		
480	Learners: Yes		
481 482 483 484 485 486	T: Firstly, before we start let's recap, what we did yesterday. What lesson did we have yesterday? Talk to me. What did you learn about? What did you do in your classwork? What do you remember, talk to me, yes, Mandla	Recap of previous lesson taught	
487	Learner:5 W's	Questioning Technique	
488 489 490	T: Clap once, clap twice, yesterday we talked about the 5 W's. Do you remember some of them?		
491	Learners: Who, how, why, what, when.		
492	T: Anyone we left out? Right.		
493	Learner: Where		
494 495 496 497 498	T: Those are your 5 W's, everyone says, 5 W's. What else did we learn about yesterday. Did we learn about the 5 W's only and then we were done? We did not learn anything else. Let's hear, what else happened? Yes.		
499	Learner: How to write a spider diagram?		
500 501	T: How to do your planning, how to do your spider diagram. That was one.	Recap of previous lesson	Relevant previous knowledge
502	Learner: We learnt about the hello exercise		
503	T: Yes, we used the hello exercise. Last one.		
504	Learner: how to respect the national anthem.		
505 506	T: Yes, how to respect the national anthem. I am going to take the last two		
507	Learner: Important words in sentences		
508 509 510 511 512	T: It's that keyword, how to look for keywords in your sentences. Whenever you have anything to read a text, any text, story, novel. If you answer questions on it,you have a look for key words and go and find them in your text.		
513 514	Learner: Learning about the hello exercise, you must answer in full sentences.		

515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531	T: Yes, hello exercise, you must answer in full sentences. Right, today, I am going to show you something new. Something we never used before. <mark>Here we have a time robot</mark>. It's called a time robot. Now, when you have an activity today whether in a group or individually. When I have this green one here, it means you have 15 minutes. When I have this one that is orange, it means you have only 10 minutes and when I have this one, that means you have 5. When I take 10 minutes away that means you are left with 5 minutes. When I take 5 minutes, you left with, time is up. Are we together, right. That's your time robot. <mark>Before we start, now we have a picture here. Who can tell me, where did you see this picture? What is this picture?</mark> Who can tell me, where Senzo. Try, let's hear	Time management Lesson begins with a visual stimulus Pre-discussion Teacher strategy	Teacher Strategy <mark>Learners to predict what the picture is</mark>
532	Learner: It shows hands		
533 534	T: Shows hands, ok. Someone wants to add. Let's try with you.		
535	Learner: It shows muslim writing	Teacher allows learners to respond individually	
536 537	T: Someone, thinks its muslim writing. Someone else. What do you think?		
538	Learner: It shows God		
539 540	T: It shows God, ok, maybe. People are thinking religious writing.		
541	Learner: It shows you how to sing.		
542	T: Ok, last one, let's see here.		
543	Learner: Paper you see to read notes		
544 545 546 547 548 549	T: Ok, it's a paper what you use to read the notes. Is that what you think, right. Who has seen this word before. Everyone says braille. Now who has seen this word. Raise your hand, if you have seen this word before. No one has seen this word?		
550	Learner: Yes		

551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575	T: I'll tell you what this word is. Braille is a type of handwriting that you use when you are blind. So, if you are blind, you are going to use braille. You read using braille. So, what you have, you have a paper and then it's going to have all the dots. These dots are alphabets, so what you do, you feel. Maybe, you feel three dots then its maybe an H, depending on how they are joined. That's how you read braille. Have you ever seen someone who is blind, when they read? They run their hands over the text on the paper. They have their paper and then they go like this. (teacher demonstrates). Have you ever seen that, that is braille? So, today. We are going to read a story and it's going to be about braille, ok. What you have to do, you have paper here. You take your ruler. Cut it in half and give it to your partner. Take one and pass like you always do. As soon as you have your paper. All the extras you bring them to the front. Extras bring them to the front. Extras. Raise your hands if you haven't received. Right, fold your arms, when you have your own paper, so I can see who is still busy. Fold your arms.		
576	Learner: Sir they took our books.		
577 578 579 580 581 582	T: Oh, yes, so you going to write on a paper today. Your books are at the office. They are being checked. Ok, we all have our papers, right. Now, let's go to the paper. I am going to show you something called skimmed reading. Everyone says, skimmed reading		
583	Learners: skimmed reading		
584 585 586 587 588 589	T: Right, when you are skimmed reading, it's like you have 10 seconds and your job is to look at as many words as you can find to guess what the story is going to be about. I have a picture. You always start with a picture. So now I am going to give you 10 seconds. How many?	Teacher strategy	Skimmed reading
590	Learners: 10 seconds		
591 592 593 594 595 596	T: Your 10 seconds start now. You look at your paper. Before browsing with your eyes, look at the heading. You look at the first line, maybe the last line and then see how many other words you can look to get an idea of what the story is going to be about. Ok, right, your 10	Teachers Strategy Higher order thinking	Prediction

597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606	seconds starts now. 10seconds Given, to read, to look at your paper and say, ok my title is this, my first sentence is this, let's go to my last sentence. What do you think the story is about? Let's see are there any people here, are their names, then you guess, and we make a prediction, 5 seconds, 3,2,1, right fold your arms. Now based on your skimmed reading. Who can guess, what do you expect the story to be about? Yes	Predictive question	
607	Learner: Helen Keller		
608 609	T: It's about Helen Keller, we've seen that in our title. Another one		
610	Learner: Helen Keller was deaf and blind		
611	T: Clap once, clap twice. right what else	Focussing learner's attention	Teacher strategy
612	Learner: She could not see or speak		
613 614 615	T: That is what she just said, deaf and blind. Another one, try not to read. Remember you are guessing.		
616	Learner; Teaching as a part-time teacher		
617	T: Wonderful		
618	Learner: She was born in Alabama		
619 620	T: Everybody say Alabama, Last one, then we start to read.		
621 622	Learner: Ya, she could not hear, she could not see.		
623 624	Learner: She used sign language to tell people about how to read		
625 626 627 628	T: Yes, she used sign language to tell people about how to read. Now, we read like we normally do, row by row, ok, now. Helen Keller, everyone say Helen Keller.	Connecting the picture to skimmed reading	
629	Learners: Helen Keller		
630 631	T: Right, row 1. Please start reading from the first paragraph. Helen Keller was born. (Learners read aloud)		
632 633	Learners: "Helen Keller was born in Alabama …to guide her."		
634 635 636	T: Right thank you, row one. I am going to read paragraph 2. 'So, Anne Sullivan …they meant." Row 2 let's read paragraph 3.		
637 638	Learners: "One day Ms Sullivan …of everything."		

639 640 641 642 643	T: Right, thank you, so she was so excited. Now I am going to read paragraph 4. Look at your paper. "Ms Sullivan was a gifted teacher … to ever graduate from college. Row 3 lets read the last paragraph.		
644 645 646	Learners: "She used sign language to tell people about her life. Helen and Ms Sullivan … throughout the world."		
647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661	T: Throughout the world, right, so this, ok. Clap once, clap twice, right, so this is a story about Helen Keller, it's based on true life. It's true, can you imagine someone, you are born, who can't see, you can't hear. That's a real person who had to live through that. So, Helen Keller she couldn't see, she couldn't hear but she graduated from college. Can you imagine the power of that? She graduated from college, but she couldn't hear and she couldn't speak. So, from what we just read now. What if you have to go and tell the class next door about a review. What would you say the story is about? They haven't seen the story, you have just read. What did you get from this now.	Constant repetition for learners that do not understand the text. Questioning technique	
662	Learner: The story is about Helen Keller		
663 664	T: Yes, the story is about Helen Keller, ok, add more, yes.		
665	Learner: Helen Keller is blind and deaf		
666 667	T: Yes, she is blind and deaf and then what happens.		
668 669	Learner: She went to school and at the end then she graduated.		
670 671	T: Yes, she went to school and then she graduated. Yes.		
672	Learner: Helen died in 1968.		
673	T: Yes, she died in 1968.		
674 675	Learner: Her parents found someone to teach her.		
676 677	T: Yes, her parents found someone to teach her, right		
678	Learner: She had learnt how to speak		

679 680 681 682 683 684 685	T: Right now, you have 2 minutes to talk to the people in your group and discuss what question you have for Helen. If you had to meet her now, if she walks in here, what would you ask her? So just talk to your groups now. I am going around to check if people are really asking any questions What would you ask her?	Question requires critical thinking from learners Teacher monitoring group discussion	Making sure they are following instructions Some learners speak in their vernacular in their groups
686 687 688 689	T: Right 1minute left. Right direction time. So, let's quickly hear your questions. She's standing at the door, what are you going to ask her?		
690	Learner: When was she born?		
691	Learner: How did she graduate?	Learner's own questions	
692 693	T: Ok, how did she manage to graduate, ok, yes.		
694 695	Learner: Was she still happy, when her story inspired other people.		
696 697 698	T: Or, did you feel happy when your story inspired other people and showed that you are a leader, ok, yes.		
699	Learner: How did Helen die?		
700	T: Yes, let's have one per group.		
701	Learner: How did she graduate?		
702	T: That's the same		
703	Learner: Why does she go to Radcliffe college?		
704 705	T: Or, maybe, why did she choose Radcliffe College? Last one.		
706 707	Learner; When was Helen Keller blind and deaf?		
708 709 710 711	T: Ok, because she was born. We already know the answer, if somebody asks, when did she get blind or deaf. We already know because she was born. Last one.	Not quite right	Incorrect response from teacher
712	Learner; Is it difficult when she learnt	Applying insight Question technique	What challenges did she encounter

713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732	T: Thank you, the rest of you, hands down, you can come talk to me when it is break. Now, I have groupwork that you are going to do, which is different. Remember, I said to you, you learnt the hello exercise, you will be able to answer in a full sentence. Now I am going to give you time. I'll tell you how much time you have and depending on your group. What we are going to have all the group work you are doing. I am going to hang up in the class and see how other group members answered and we get to rotate it and you write it in your book. But first, we are going to sit in our groups and discuss based on the questions we have. Some questions, we learnt, who, where, what reading from a different story. Now, we going to have different questions, some to quote, some to order according to the story. So now, what you learnt about keywords and all of that, but the most important thing is to discuss. Is what?	Teacher instructions to class. Different questioning technique Use of keywords	Introducing group work activity 5 W's Some to quote, some to order.
733	Learners: Discuss		
734 735 736 737 738	T: I want to see you talk to each other, discuss according to your question. Then before the class ends, I am going to set 15 minutes. So, you can have one representative per group. How many?	Peer-peer collaboration	
739	Learners: one		
740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756	T: Who will stand up and tell us and discuss what their group had to answer, are we together, right. So, the first part here. You are going to list. Ok, let's start with this one, right, one group is going to answer if you were in the same situation as Helen Keller, what would you do? You have four lines here, you have to discuss in your group. Don't tell me your answer. So, you ask your group members. Only your group members are the ones you supposed to talk to. So, you write the same answers as a group and ask your group members what would you do? What would you do? And then when you are done come and write down one paragraph that you are going to tell the whole class if you were Helen Keller. If I were Helen Keller I would something really like	Consult with all group members first Teacher spends time to explain clearly what each group	Teacher role

757	not wanting to go to school. So, what would you	members need	
758	do, would you go to school or would you try to	to do	
759	go to college, what would you do with your life?		
760	Would you be discouraged. So, one group is		
761	going to answer this one. Then we have this		
762	one, where you give your own opinion. Say		
763	give your own opinion		
764	Learners: Give your own opinion		
765	T: So, if you give your own opinion, your	Higher level	Viewing your
766	answer you will not find in the story. You will	questioning	opinion
767	find it from discussing. If you had a friend who		
768	was blind and deaf, what would you do? What		
769	would you do to help your friend. Would you be		
770	friends and why? Would you stop being friends,		
771	ok. You discuss that as a group. Should blind		
772	or deaf people be treated as less than human		
773	beings, give reasons for your answer. If you		
774	saw a blind person who is also deaf would you		
775	pretend that they are not a human being and		
776	not want to even talk to them. So, you have to		
777	tell me why? Why would you treat them with		
778	respect and all of that? Then you have to fill in		
779	the missing words. So, in your group, you read		
780	to each other, you discuss and then you go to		
781	your story. Use your knowledge for keywords to		
782	answer here, ok. So, one person is going to	Electing a	Delegating roles
783	stand and give us the answer. Then, where you	spokesperson	in a group
784	have to quote, where you are quoting, all these		
785	statements are wrong. A, B, C, D is wrong, so		
786	you have to sit with your group and say what		
787	happened first in the story, what came after		
788	that, what came third and what came last. Then	The teacher	Teacher's role
789	you organise, when you organise, then you	takes time to	
790	take your trend. If you think number one, is this	explain every	
791	one, then you write, if you think the next one	question clearly	
792	was here, you write number 2, number 3 and		
793	number 4, ok. Then you have sequencing. Ok,		
794	for this one I made a mistake for quoting you		
795	have to go and look to your story and find the		
796	right answer, for example Helen's parents did		
797	not want her to learn. Is it true. No,don't learn,		
798	don't do anything, sit at home and sleep.		
799	Learners: No		
800	T: So, if you are saying no, you have to look		
801	now as a group for the correct answer and then		
802	sequencing is the one I just said 1,2,3,4 you		
803	going to have to go and look at which one is		
804	correct. Then these are your 5 W'Ss		
805	Learners: 5 W's		

806 807 808 809 810 811	T: Then, you have a list, when you list, you list in bullet points. Right if you have a list of things. Right in a question or whenever for the June Exam, they ask you to list. You do the bullet points, or you use an asterisk. Everyone says asterisk		
812	Learners: asterisk		
813 814 815 816 817 818 819	T: Right, you do not call it a star. People call it a star, it is not a star, it is an asterisk, ok. So, you always list down all the questions you have for Helen Keller. The one's you were discussing, now to add them there. You can add five, good for you, you can add 6, good for you, are we together.		
820	Learners: Yes		
821 822 823 824 825 826 827	T: So here, this group and the minute I give you, your paper you start discussing, you have 15 minutes to discuss, then I will give you 5 minutes to write. Here, you see sequence, quote, true or false, fill in the missing words. 15 minutes to discuss and the last 5 minutes, you write.	Some learners are speaking in their vernacular when discussing with their peers	
828 829 830 831	Learners given a chance to discuss. Teacher guiding each of the groups towards their answers. You have 10 minutes, to start writing. You are allowed to use a pen.		
832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841	T: Raise your hands if you are still busy. When you are done, whoever is going to present you will help them. I'll start with this group. Raise your hands if you are still busy, direction time. Let's start. Can I have everyone, sit down. Listen up, 18 minutes. Let's start with group 1. Let's start with Mabunda's group. Rest of the class, you are paying attention now listening to this group. Tell me what question you have first and then what your group answered		
842	Learners: 3 W's (could not hear the learner)		

843	T: I am going to hang this here? I am going to		
844	wrap up what she was saying. They had 3 W's.		
845	They didn't know so I helped them. What is a		
846	biography? Book written about a person's life.		
847	Imagine all the teachers they come and can't		
848	teach a blind and deaf child. But, then comes		
849	Ms Sullivan and changes her life. She helps		
850	her, she is a gifted teacher. She came, and she		
851	helped her, she's gifted because she helped		
852	her on how to read braille, yes. How do you	Questioning	Expressive
853	think Helen Kellers' parents felt about her	technique	stance
854	success? Imagine you are born, you can't see,		
855	and you can't hear and then you end up		
856	graduating. How is that going to make a parent		
857	feel? Another group, how would it make her		
858	parents feel?		
859	Learners: happy, proud, excited		
860	T: You see all these good things, I'm going to		
861	end this one. Did you have the W's, no, let's		
862	have a different one. This group, you can stand		
863	there. The rest of you can listen up.		
864	Learner: Should blind or deaf people be treated		
865	as less than human beings. Give reasons for		
866	your answer.		
867	No, because they are all human beings and we		
868	do not want to call other people names. We		
869	must treat them with kindness, nicely, like other		
870	people.		
871	T: Clap once, clap twice, wonderful. Other		
872	groups what would you like to add to that? If		
873	you had that question what would your answer		
874	be. How would you treat them?		
875	Learner: Treat them nice because the person is		
876	the same person as you.		
877	T: Wonderful, clap once, another one. Last one,		
878	who wants to go, after, this is what they had.		
879	(Learner was not audible, so teacher assisted)		
880	Can I have your question. What would you do?		
881	Who wants to go after. You next at the back.		
882	This is what they had. They had to quote. Read		
883	your instruction.		
884	Learner: Quote, the following statements are		
885	false, correct it by quoting the correct answer		
886	.After, Helen Keller worked with Ms Sullivan		
887	they went their own separate ways. When		
888	Helen got older, she went to Perkins School for		

889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896	the Blind. Then she went to Radcliffe College. B. Helen's parents did not want her to learn. Her parents decided that she needed someone to guide her. C. Helen Keller was 50 when she died. Helen Keller died in 1968 at the age of 88. D. Helen Keller could not read and write her whole life. She taught Helen by using her hands to spell words.		
897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907	T: Right, clap once, clap twice, those one's, the main questions there, the key thing was for them to go back to their story. They had to go back to their story and read and then discuss which one they think is correct. So, there they only asked me how to quote and then I helped them with quoting. I showed them how to use quotation marks. Before, you go for break you must come see how they look like. Next group stand here. You want to join, come stand here. Listen up then.	Peer collaboration before answer is decided on Teacher guided the learners to answering	Role of the teacher
908 909	Learner: Write down a list of questions you have for Helen Keller and Ms Sullivan.		
910 911	T: Here are their list of questions, the one you all did.		
912 913	Learner: Number one, what sign did you learn first?		
914 915 916 917 918	T: Ok, lets pause there, if you were Helen Keller and if you were born blind and deaf, if you wake up tomorrow, you are blind and deaf. What's the first sign you would want to learn. Not Helen Just you?	Learners are thinking critically	
919	Learner: I would want to learn how to say hello		
920	T: How to say hello		
921	Learner: How to learn finger spelling?		
922	T:How to read finger spelling		
923	Learner: How to speak with people		
924 925 926 927	T: How to speak to people. I would learn how to ask for food. I know I am going to be hungry, so the first thing that I would want to learn to ask for food. Ok, next one.		
928 929	Learner: Number 3, what would you do if you were Helen Keller?		
930 931 932 933	T: Anything else, clap once, clap twice, go ahead, hang. How many groups left. Do you want to join. Listen up class. Can you hear at the back. I'll start with this one.		

934 935 936 937 938 939 940	Learner: If you had a friend who was blind or deaf what would you do? I will stay with him and take care of him. Do everything that he wants, do what, I will make food for him. When she wants food I will give him a bell to say if he wants food and bathing, going to the toilet or taking a walk.		
941 942 943 944 945 946 947	T: Right, so that's one way, you can do it. Clap once, clap twice. But there are other ways as well. Next group, can you step forward. Only the group that is presenting. Come forward .Are you in the same group, all three of you in the same group? You guys can go back. Right everyone, listen up. Give them a chance.		
948 949 950 951 952 953 954	Learner: If you were in the same situation as Helen Keller what would you do? If I were Helen Keller I will try and make people understand that I deserve a life and people must stop treating me bad. I will go to the Blind college or school, so I can get an education and learn.		
955 956	T: Wonderful, clap once, clap twice. Next group.		
957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970	Learner: True, false statements, Ms Sullivan changed Helen Keller's life? Our answer is True. Ms Sullivan was not a gifted teacher? Our answer is False. Ms Sullivan was a gifted teacher and she worked hard to help Helen learn. Helen Keller went to Perkins School for the Deaf. Helen Keller was blind, but she could hear. Our answer is False. Helen Keller was blind, but she could not hear and see A light had suddenly turned on: The statement means: to see and understand things in a different way.	Different questioning technique Incorrect response by learner	
971 972 973	T: Right thank you, that's all. Next group. Go ahead. Clap once, clap twice for the group. Next group		
974 975 976 977 978 979	Learner: Fill in the missing words, Helen Keller was born in Alabama in 1880.Ms Sullivan taught Helen by using her hands to spell words. Helen understood that these signs called finger spelling, were naming things in her world. Ms Sullivan put Helen's hand under the water	Various types of questioning techniques used by the teacher	Teacher encourages higher order thinking using group discussions

980 981 982 983	pump and spelled the water on Helen's other hand. Helen and Ms Sullivan remained friends for 49 years. She used sign language to tell people about her life.		
984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995	T: She used sign language to tell people about her life. We still have 2 minutes, you can go. Learner: We are talking about sequencing. The sentences below tell us about Helen Keller. Number the sentences from 1-4 in the blocks to show the order in which they appear in the text. T: Ok, just to save time, sorry guys,they had this, they had all of them so I checked their answers it was correct, so you are going to come and see it during your free time. That's the last one. I checked them, they are correct, you must have a look.		
	Lesson ended		

Appendix 7: Reflective journal

Reflective Journal Notes

School: A   Date: 4 March 2019

Present: Pribashnie (Researcher), Hiresha (Assistant to take photographs)

I arrive at the school at 7:30 am. The school requested I be there at 7:45 when the first period starts. We were received at the entrance of the staff room and the teacher asked if we could wait in her class as they are in a staff meeting.

The teacher arrived at 08:05 to receive the learners. Learners greet and take their respective places. It seems as if they were assigned certain places. Before, beginning with the lesson the teacher checks if all learners are in groups and seated accordingly. She takes time to make sure each child is placed correctly. Some learners are not pleased to move as certain learners are absent or according to the learners late. There are 2 announcements made over the intercom during the lesson.

Learners are eager about the lesson and want to answer which sometimes is a problem as the teacher wants them to discuss first. The teacher does not allow to much time for learners to discuss as some learners become restless and rowdy.

The teacher hands out the passage they are going to do. Immediately when receiving it, she tells them that the title is 'The man and the serpent". She asks them what they think the story is about? Now look at the picture, using the picture try to work out what the story is about. The learners respond. Then she asks them but what is a serpent? One learner responds saying it is a snake. Then more learners tried giving various ideas as to what they thought the story is about.

The teacher read each passage out loud for the learners. When there was a word learners did not understand she asked the learners to work in groups to work it out. For example, folks, orchard, which they are numerous tries were able to answer. Although she has the dictionaries on each table for learners to share, she wanted them to first try to see if they could find the answers amongst their group members.

Some learners were too impatient wanting to give the correct answer, which affected the group discussion. Teacher asked individual learners. Repetition of certain words and sentences helped learners to recap what was going on in the story. One learner raised his hand to find out what inexhaustible was? The teacher explained the term using the cell phone, when one's funds do not run out, so it is inexhaustible.

She discussed each paragraph with the learners until the end of the story. The teacher went on clarifying certain aspects until learners clearly understood the text. Repeating the main ideas so all learners understood the text. Then the teacher went on to the questions. The majority of the questions were text based where learners had to merely recall and use sentences from the text to support their answers.

Appendix 8:- Example of coding data

(1)

Purpose of group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes

- everyone to understand (Y-265)
- children are different, do not understand at the same level (Y-317)
- Learn from each other (X-100)
- voice out their opinions (X-94)
- some learners cannot explore themselves in their home language (X-103)
- Explain if to each other, so that they understand (Y-261)
- Improve communicate (Y-214)
- Different language (Y-281 + 323)
- Different backgrounds (X-65), (X-114)
- help everyone in class to participate (X-87)
- Discuss, choose one answer (X-182)
- Help one another understand the questions (Y-272)
- Collaborate, use time effectively, how to ask questions, sharing tasks, delegating duties (D:396-399) (Y:312)
- build confidence (D:452)
- create a safe space (D:458)
- peer-peer - free to answer on their own (D:461)
- Able to answer (Y:278)
- Already asking each + everyone (X-161)
- Practice (cinguage) (D:414)
- Explore + practice language (D:463)
- Through group work, they some out of their group skills (D:476)
- helps weaker learners to shine (X-85)
- peer-peer collaboration

Use of group discussion to enhance learners shared in group discussion

Before: Place along with weak learners (X-69), answers (p-448), seating arrangements (D-374)
Mixing shy learners (X-174), (D-44), Different backgrounds (D-448)

During: Monitor the discussion (Y:350) (D:416) (514)
Avail myself in each group (Y:2, 291)
Guide them (X-157) (Y-303)
Code switching (Y:334) (D:412), (X-150)
Mould their answers (D:411) (D:501)
Group guided reading (D:375)
Role play
focus on support learners (D:4) (X:161)
Multi modality (D:410)
4 micro-skills (D:516)
types of questions (D:375)
changing groups (D:406)
Select a leader (Y:236)
Guess using a picture (X-78)
Group work ethos (D:390)

After: How to support and quali their answers (D:509) (Y:296)
Create a debate (D:530)
learners get to practice (D: 53)
Sketch their ideas (D:504)

Grouping of learner
Role of teacher
Comprehension strategies

Use of questioning techniques to improve comprehension skills

Questioning techniques to improve comprehension and their order

5imple first, then support answers (Y:296)
talk about pictures (X-80)
Prediction of title of story (X-83)
how to high (X-93)
Asking each other questions (X:161)
Different questioning style (D:419)
'rhetorical questions' (D:499)
Hypothetical questions (D:500)
6 w's - (D:546)
Write questions on the board. (Y:308)

(3) **Challenges in multilingual classes**

learners get carried away (X:120)
Do not fully participate (D:488)
Explaining takes time (D:484)
Lack of resources (X:48)
No time (Y:289)
out of topic (X:130)
Playin their groups (Y:286)
Initially shy (D:492)

Time
Discipline

Questioning techniques
Role of teacher
Comprehension strategies

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Purpose of group discussion in multilingual classes.

- everyone to understand (80)
- develop language and communication (94-95)
- children are different, do not understand at the same level. (130)
- learn from each other (247)
- voice out their opinions (243)
- some learners cannot express themselves in the multilanguage (314)
- time does not allow to accept
- learners answers (275)
- collaborate, use time effectively
- how to ask questions, sharing
- delegating duties (372-374)
- build confidence (422)
- create a safe space (427)
- peer-to-peer - free to answer (431)

Questioning techniques for comprehension.

- talks about pictures (225)
- Predictions (235)
- title of story (242)
- how to higher order (287)
- Asking each other questions (303)
- Different questioning styles (393)(502)
- rhetorical questions (463)
- Hypothetical questions (464)
- closed-ended questions (464)
- 5 W's. (504)

Challenges

- learners get carried away (265)
- Lack of resources
- each of time. (447)

teacher strategies used during group discussion.

Before: Seating arrangements (353)
- Place strong with weak (223)(46)
- Different backgrounds (216)
- Mixing shy learners (316)

During: Avail myself in each group. (104)
- Monitor the discussion (113)(477)
- Guide them (114)(299)
- Code switching (147)(353)(386)
- Mould their answers (293)
- Guided group reading (354)
- focus on support learners (389)
- role play (385)(465)
- Multi modality (38A)
- A - micro-skills. (516)

After: How to support/qualify their answers (474)(488)
- Create a debate (491)
- learners get to practise (492)

use of group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes.

Appendix 9:- Comprehension Passages

G1- Teacher X

COMPREHENSION

The Man and the Serpent

1 Years ago, there was a small village by a beautiful river. The people of this village were
mainly poor folks who farmed in others' lands or in whatever land each of them had
themselves. Among them was a man who was richer than the others. He had more land
than the others, ten cows, twelve sheep and a little orchard. He had a loving wife and three
sons to look after him.

2 But he was always worried about his youngest son, who happened to be naughtier than
his siblings, and was always full of mischief. This boy seemed to be full of an inexhaustible
supply of energy and was always out of the house, roaming in the fields, jumping into
ponds and climbing hills and mountains, whatever the time was.

3 But misfortune struck one day, when the boy mistakenly trod upon a serpent's tail during
one of his adventures. The furious snake hissed and bit on his foot. The boy limped back
to his parents, crying out of pain. But his helpless family members could do nothing to
save the poor boy, for the lethal venom killed him within minutes. However, the boy
informed his father about the whereabouts of the snake and how he had been bitten
before he took his last breath.
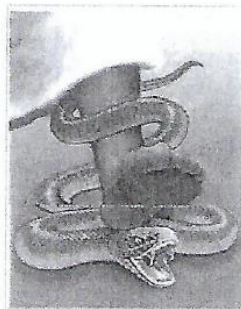
4 The incensed father took out his axe and hunted down the serpent who happened to 17
reside in a small hole beside a tree. Again and again did his axe fall upon the serpent who 18
somehow managed to escape each blow until one powerful stroke cut off part of its tail. 19
Bleeding and crying out of pain, the snake carried its body with great difficulty and 20
slithered into one of the holes between the roots of the huge tree   21

5 "First they trampled my tail. Then they dared to cut it off?" muttered the creature 22
painfully. It vowed revenge against the man.   23

6 Thereafter, the snake began to cause losses to the farmer. In a fit of rage, it began to 24
sting several of the farmer's cattle, leading him to suffer a huge loss.   25

7 "I had already lost my son, now I have to see my cattle dying. It is best to reconcile with 26
the serpent before it does any more harm to me or any of my family members." the man 27
thought.   28

8 With this purpose, the farmer went to the serpent's lair with food and honey and offered 29
him the treats saying, "You know, we should let bygones be bygones. There was no 30
enmity between us as such. So why don't we forget and forgive each other and be friends? 31

9 "It can't be", replied the snake, "take your gifts away. Neither can you forgive me for the 32
death of your son, nor can I forget the loss of my tail."   33

Injuries may be forgiven, but not forgotten.   34
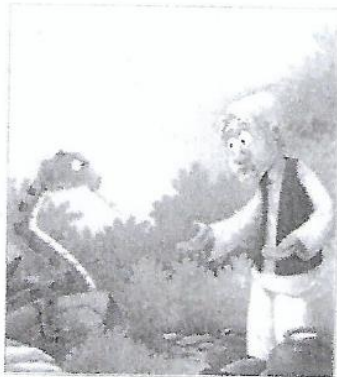
Class list no.

Name: _____

Grade: <u>4</u>

Marks: <u>50</u>

Examiner :

Moderator:

Task 2 Activity 3

Surname: _____

Subject: English HL.

Time: <u>60 minutes</u>

Total no of questions: <u>29</u>

Date: _____

<u>Section A - Comprehension</u>

Read the following Diary entry and answer questions 1 - 13.

Dear Diary

13 April 2015

1. Today I am so sad. Nthando is still bullying me. She made me carry her bag of   35
    heavy books all the way home. My shoulder is sore. In the morning she   36
    embarrassed me by saying, "Dear Mpumi, you are so hairy. My dear you will   37
    frighten a fairy." All the learners in my grade 4 class laughed. I really thought   38
    this would be my last day at Thakalani Primary School.   39

2. I think it is unfair to take extra sandwiches to school every day. Nthando is very   40
    greedy and demands that I give her two sandwiches every day. Mum was   41
    concerned because all the cheese was finished within two days. Dad has been   42
    retrenched and she battles to make ends meet. I dislike Nthando.   43

3. She says she is the boss of our class and we must obey her. I think I need to be   44
    strong and report her to the teacher. Mrs Dlamini is very kind. She always says   45
    we need to be kind and caring to one another. I know she will be upset if she   46
    knew the way Nthando behaves. Every child has the right to be happy at school.   47
    It says so in the school's code of conduct.   48

4. I can't wait for tomorrow. Yes. I am going to tell Mrs Dlamini and the principal   49
    about her behaviour   50

Source: Diary of a 10 year old.
By: Kagiso Education

Word count: 228

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Question 1

1.1 Circle the correct answers:

1.1.1 Whose diary entry is this? (1)

    A. Mrs Dlamini's

    B. Nthando's

    C. Dad's

    D Mpumi's

1.1.2. What grade is Mpumi in? (1)

    A. Grade 4

    B. Grade 1

    C. Grade 12

    D. Grade 5

1.2. On which date was this diary entry written? (1)

_____

1.3. Why does Mpumi have to take extra sandwiches to school every day? (2)

_____

_____

1.4. Do you think Mpumi's family is rich? Give a reason to support your answer. (2)

_____

_____

_____

1.5. Provide an **antonym** for the word **weak** in paragraph 3. (1)

_____

1.6. Provide a **synonym** for the word **worried** in paragraph 2. (1)

_____

1.7. What emotion do you think Mpumi is feeling and why? (2)

_____

_____

_____

G3- Teacher Z

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION

ENGLISH FAL

MARKS: 40

TIME: 1 hour

QUESTION 1: Comprehension

Read the passage below carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Helen Keller

1 Helen Keller was born in Alabama in 1880. Before the age of two she became deaf   51
and blind. Helen could only learn about things around her by touching with her   52
hands. She made up signs for a few things like yes, no, come and go. She felt   53
lonely because she could not hear, see or speak. Her parents decided that she   54
needed someone to guide her.   55

2 So, Anne Sullivan came to teach her. She had a very difficult time with teaching   56
young Helen. She taught Helen by using her hands to spell words. She would use   57
sign language by signing a letter with her own hand, and pressing her hand into the   58
palm of Helen's hand. Helen soon learned to make the same signs with her hands,   59
but did not really understand what they meant.   60

3 One day Ms Sullivan put Helen's hand under the water pump and spelled the water   61
on Helen's other hand. Finally, Helen understood that these signs, called finger   62
spelling, were naming things in her world. It was as if a light had suddenly been   63
turned on. She was so excited that she wanted to know the names of everything.   64

4 Ms Sullivan was a gifted teacher and worked hard to help Helen learn. She also   65
taught Helen how to read Braille, groups of raised dots that stand for letters. When   66
Helen got older, she went to the Perkins School for the Blind. Then she went to   67
Radcliffe College. She was the first blind and deaf person to ever graduate from   68
college.   69

5 She used sign language to tell people about her life. Helen and Ms Sullivan   70
remained friends for 49 years. Helen Keller died in 1968, at the age of 88. Her story   71
of success over hardship is an inspiration throughout the world.   72

1.1 Where was Helen Keller born?

A Perkins

B Alabama

C Radcliffe

D Gauteng

(1)

P.T.O.

Who, What, When and

Why? (How)

1.Who is the story about?   2. Where was Helen Keller Born?

3. How Long did Helen and   4. Why was Helen Keller
successful

Ms Sullivan remain friends?   successful in life?

5. How old was Helen Keller

When she

1.What is a Biography?   2. Why do you think Helen Keller's
Parent's felt about her success?

3. Why do you think Ms Sullivan   4. How do you think Helen
was a gifted teacher?   Keller's parent's felt
about

her success?

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True or False

Statements

1. *Ms Sullivan changed Helen Keller's life?*

2. *A light had suddenly turned on*

The statement means:

a. The light was now shining bright.
b. To see and understand things in a different way.
c. The light was turned on.

3. *Ms Sullivan was not a gifted teacher.*

4. *Helen Keller was blind but she could hear.*

5. Helen Keller went to Perkin's school for the deaf.

Fill in the Missing Words

Helen Keller was born in _____ in 1880. _____ taught Helen by using her hands to spell words. Helen understood that these signs, called _____, were naming things in her world.

Ms Sullivan put Helen's hand under the _____ and spelled the water on Helen's other hand. _____ and Ms Sullivan remained friends for _____. She used _____ to tell people about her life.

LIST

Write down a list of question you have for Helen Keller and Ms Sullivan.

QUOTE

The following statements are false, correct it by quoting the correct answer.

A. After Helen Keller worked with Ms Sullivan, they went their own separate ways.

B. Hellen's parent's did not want her to learn.

C. Hellen Keller was 50 when she died?

D. Hellen Keller could not read and write her whole life.

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Give Your Own Opinion

If you had a friend who could was blind or deaf, what would you do?

Should blind or deaf people treated as less than human beings, give reasons for your answer.

If You Were

If you were in the same situation as Hellen Keller what would you do?
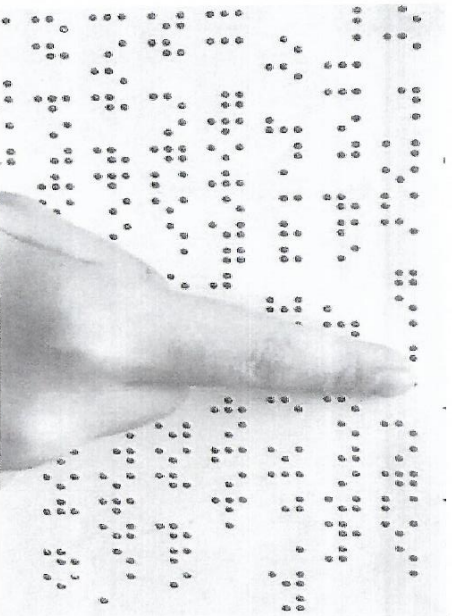
SEQUENCING

The sentences below tell us about Helen Keller. Number the sentences from 1 – 4 in the blocks to show the order in which they appear in the text.

She became deaf and blind.

Helen Keller died in 1968, at the age of 88.

Helen Keller was born in Alabama.

When Helen got older, she went to the Perkins School for the Blind.

Appendix 10: - Comparative table of group discussions

Using group discussion to enhance comprehension skills in multilingual classes				
Factors	**X**	**Y**	**Z**	**Improvements**
Small groups	(4-5)	(4-6)	(4-5)	Small groups preferred
Ability level grouping	Strong learner placed with weaker learner placed by teacher	Teacher placed only 6 learners that need assistance with stronger learners	Teacher changes groups every time he does comprehension. Strong with weaker learner	Heterogenous grouping (mixed)
When was passage read	Throughout lesson	At the beginning	At the beginning	Depends on strategy used
Who read	Teacher only	All 51 learners read aloud repeated by the teacher	Teacher read one paragraph aloud and then 16 learners each time taking turns	Learners should be included
How many times passage is read	1	2	1	Depending on the learner's ability level in each class
Repetition of keywords and sentences	Observed	Observed	Observed	To ensure all learners understand
Dictionary use	Observed	Not observed	Not observed	Learners must use dictionaries
Highlighting difficult words	Teacher made learners discuss and give feedback or she explained the term	No difficult words in the passage	No difficult words picked up in the passage	Designated area of the chalkboard (5 new words for learners to learn each week)

Were instructions clear and followed through	In most cases, but not always	Clear instructions not followed through	Explicit and followed through	Teacher's instructions has to be clear
Lesson plan	Yes	Yes	No	Must be present
Was teacher preparation evident?	Yes	No	Yes	It is important that lesson preparation be done so that if the teacher is absent, a substitute teacher can do the lesson
Who led the discussion	Teacher Most of the questions were posed to each group with learners responding	Teacher Most of the questions were posed to each group with learners responding	Learners Each group of learners worked on the a question given by the teacher	Learners should begin to control discussion once guided and practiced the teacher can facilitate
Was a copy of the passage given to each learner	Learners shared In pairs	Learners shared in pairs	Each child had their own copy of the passage but the instructions to group work they shared.	Every child should have their own passage with questions
Did learners relate to passage	Yes, there were able to understand and answer the questions. "Forgive & forget"	Yes, it dealt with bullying, so they found it easy to relate to	Yes, the passage was about a blind person and how she made a difference in her life.	Passage should be interesting and at the correct level but allow the children to stretch their thinking
Were there sufficient high -level				More high -level questions during lessons for

questions to promote critical thinking in the lesson	No, see questions based on text	No, but there were three good questions in the worksheet that was not discussed in the lesson	Yes, the teacher provided lead on questions from the beginning of the lesson	learners to challenge each other through talk

Which questions were mainly asked	Text-based- seen from the text book	Text-based seen from the worksheet	A variety seen from the teacher's instructions to each group	Well thought out questions and varied
Effective use of visual stimulus to introduce the lesson	Yes, on the first page of the comprehension passage	Not needed, it was a diary entry	Yes, the teacher introduced it at the beginning of the lesson (picture of braille)	Different resources used by the teacher during a lesson helps learners to understand better
Time	Not enough, teacher started the lesson late	Not enough, called out of class	Not enough, yet teacher started on time. Asked learners to meet during break	It is a challenge
Discipline	Challenging sometimes. The minute discussion began. The teacher monitored learners mainly from the front of the class	All the time. Teacher had a student teacher in the class. Poor classroom management	Not a problem. Expectations were clear, classroom rules and routines were established already	Expectations to learners must be clear
Classroom routine established	Evident, but learners had to be constantly reminded to	Not evident, teacher found it difficult as the	Evident, learners knew what the	Classroom routines help the teacher and learners not

	follow instructions	learners had to change classes	teacher expected	waste valuable teaching time
Did the lesson start on time	No	No	Yes	Teacher and learner punctuality are important
Learners interacting positively during groupwork	Not always evident.	No	Yes, learners interacted well in groups	Has to be practiced with learners
Reading Strategies used	Teacher read the passage only	All 51 learners read the passage out aloud, then the teacher read it again	Teacher allowed each row of learners making up four groups of learners i.e. 16 learners to read a paragraph. He also read two paragraphs	Reading aloud allows learners to follow and practice pronunciation of new words when listening to the passage. Reading the passage twice is advisable depending on the reading abilities of learners in the class
Comprehension strategies used by teacher	Teacher only explained words not understood in the passage. Used discussion in groups sometimes	Discussions used in groups. Learners discussed before feedback was given	5 W's- who, what, where, why, when Hello exercise-answering in full sentences Skimmed reading Keywords Time robot	Learners should at least know the basic who, what where questions to ask. Know how to look for the main sentences

			Relevant previous knowledge	
Was there translanguaging during discussion time	Yes, learners in a few groups spoke in pairs when translanguaging during discussion time only. The learner contributed but did not want to give feedback. The stronger learner was chosen at the end, but the teacher included these learners in the feedback.	Yes, very few as most of the learners spoke English. Questions in the beginning of the lesson was directly from the passage. No difficult words in the diary entry	Yes, the minute the teacher allowed discussion time. Learners spoke to each other in their vernacular. They all contributed and asked the teacher when they did not understand the question. The learners that had the question on the quote and the group that did not know what a biography was.	Giving all learners a voice to express themselves freely. Translanguaging is used by learners but not encouraged by teachers all the time. It is only used to support the struggling learners.
Role of teacher- **Instructor,** **Guider/ Monitor** **Evaluator**	Instructions were clear. Sometimes learners did not listen i.e. when learners were asked to discuss first. Guiding the learners as they discussed was evident. Yes, the teacher did evaluate the merits of the learner's answers. She discussed feedback with	Instructions were clear, and learners followed through all the noise. The teacher went to all groups to guide and listen to their discussions. The teacher evaluated the merits of the answers given from the learners	Explicit instructions given to learners. Each group of learners received a question in which they had to answer. The different types of questions were discussed with the entire class. As learners discussed in groups the teacher listened,	The three main roles by the teacher i.e. to be a good instructor, then learners understand what they have to do. Walking to each group and listening to their discussions to guide them in quality talk is crucial. When learners give feedback to evaluate their

	the entire class as a whole		guided them and helped in each group before feedback was given by the learners. When each group presented. Learners had the opportunity to add and ask questions.	answers with the entire class.
Does the teacher model good questioning techniques	The teacher tried	Not sufficiently	Yes, this was evident from the beginning to the end of the lesson. The teacher promoted and encouraged critical thinking when presenting the lesson	When a teacher models good questioning technique throughout the lesson children will observe, learn and master the skill.
Is the teacher aware of all learner's contributions in the lesson	Yes, she asked for feedback individually.	Yes, but not of all learners. Discipline posed a tremendous problem	Yes, he went to each group and observed their input. He guided them and noted each learner's input during the feedback session.	Teachers need to be vigilant. Groupwork can encourage some learners to sit back, by guiding them in groups one can pick up learners that are not contributing or not understanding.
Are learners tolerant of other learners when learning	No, sometimes giving answers without discussing with the group members	No, not listening to feedback from other learners. Classroom too rowdy	Yes, each group was given a chance to be heard. Other learners could add or challenge their answers.	Teaching respect, tolerance ,team work during group work is important

Arrangement of desks	Distributed well, enough space. Desks are of different heights and size	Too many learners, not enough space to move around	Mostly arranged in groups of fours, learners facing each other. There were lots of space in the front of the class. Better use of the space could have been arranged.	Learners must have sufficient room to work and move around
Feedback	Provided by the learners sitting in their groups. Teacher evaluated their responses only.	Provided by the learners in their groups. Too much noise for learners to challenge the other learners' answers	Learners engaged well. They were asked to come to the front of the class to present feedback to the entire class. Teacher asked the other groups to add and give further input.	Learners themselves should provide feedback. Relinquishing some control to learners. Teaching them leadership skills. They were asked to place their work on the chalkboard in Teacher's D class for everyone to observe and learn from. Learners begin to take accountability for the work they present.

Was accountability given to learners to learn	No, more opportunity should be given to the learners	No, maybe not so much in a Grade 4 class. However, they should begin here.	Yes, learners had to account for the feedback they gave to the class as a whole.	Learner-driven more than teacher-driven
What worked well in the lesson	Teacher explained unknown concepts well using context for learners to understand better	Passage was topical-Bullying, learners related well.	Strategies used by the teacher were good Time robot, hello exercise, 5-W's	