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Parent, teacher, and learner perceptions of teaching *Harry Potter* in English Home Language classrooms

by

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Supervisor

Dr Gerhard Genis

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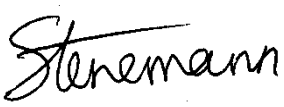
Declaration

I, Simone Michaela Stenemann (15095127), declare that this dissertation titled *Parent, teacher, and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms*, which I submit for the degree of Master in Education in Humanities Education, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Signature: 

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To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that I, Dr Gerhard Genis (staff number: 91321124), edited the thesis, *Parent, teacher, and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms*. I am also the supervisor of this study.

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Dedication

I dedicate my work to my mother and my father, **Leonie and Michael Stenemann**. You have always believed in me and taught me to believe in myself. You have inspired me to work hard and love what I do. You encouraged me to read and instilled an incredible passion in me. Thank you for your love, always.

"Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?"

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

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Finally, thank you to my parents, **Leonie and Michael**, and my partner **Mel**, for your help, guidance and encouragement. Your belief in me never faltered. Thank you for your love, your hugs and your ears.

"You sort of start thinking anything's possible if you've got enough nerve."

Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince

Abstract

The *Harry Potter* novel series is a world-wide phenomenon that has resulted in enormous fan bases of all ages, races and genders. However, the popularity of these novels is controversial as indicated by book burnings and banned lists in various countries.

As an English teacher, with a love for these novels, I was interested in discovering the perceptions of the series and if it could be considered as a set work in English Home Language classrooms in South Africa. As South Africa is such a diverse and multi-cultural country, a series consisting of euro-centric ideals, events and characters may be regarded with some hesitation from teachers, parents and learners. This study aimed at identifying what the perceptions of these educational stakeholders are, and whether these perceptions would allow, or not allow, the introduction of the *Harry Potter* series in South African classrooms. This study also considered the similarities of these novels compared to other novels taught at school. Themes such as teenage angst, friendship and death occur frequently in the *Harry Potter* novels as well as other novels taught at the research site. The research site for this study was a small private, IEB school, in Johannesburg.

The conclusion of this study indicates that this series is loved by many readers of various ages (learners, parents and teachers). Participants held the view that reading a series such as *Harry Potter* has various benefits such as fostering creativity and imagination, and it allows children to read and experience new values and ideas. However, the lack of multicultural representation in the novels is problematic in a South African context. Some parents referred to negative racial profiling in the series. Furthermore, the participants were aware that negative perceptions (including witchcraft) of the *Harry Potter* series problematise its reading in schools. Therefore, the research indicates that these novels should be read for enjoyment and entertainment, and should not necessarily to be studied in English Home Language classrooms.

Key Terms:

Education, literature, young adult, perceptions, religion, English, Harry Potter, reading, South African classroom

"Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury and remedying it."

Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows

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Chapter One
Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

"He'll be famous – a legend … every child in our world will know his name!" (Rowling, 1997, p.15). This quote stems from the first *Harry Potter* novel: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* written by Joanne K. Rowling. When Rowling wrote these words in her first book, she did not know how true they would become. Her seven novel series is a worldwide bestseller, which has been translated into eighty languages, has sold more than 500 million copies internationally and has been transformed into eight films (Bloomsbury, 2020). These stories have touched the hearts of many individuals, mine included.

The first *Harry Potter* novel titled *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, written by Joanne K. Rowling, was published in the United Kingdom in 1997. The final novel of the seven-book series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, was published in 2007. This novel became the fastest selling novel in history with 2.65 million books sold within twenty-four hours in the United Kingdom. (Bloomsburg, n.d). *Harry Potter* has become a worldwide franchise and could be regarded as literature that all learners should recognise.

The *Harry Potter* series has become an international phenomenon, which has influenced children and adults alike. Taking into consideration how incredible the popularity of these novels is, they are a viable and realistic literary option for the English Home Language classroom. My dissertation will focus on teacher, parent, and learner perceptions and beliefs of the *Harry Potter* novels and their incorporation in the English classroom.

1.2 Background and rationale

The *Harry Potter* novels have been a love of mine since my childhood and ignited my passion for reading. The series allows readers to use their imagination because they are transported into a magical world where dreams can come true. *Harry Potter "*can teach you how to bewitch the mind and ensnare the senses … how to bottle fame, brew glory, and even put a stopper in death" (Rowling, 1997, p.102). As a teacher, specifically an English teacher, my aim is to teach and inspire all of the learners in my classes. An effective way to do so is through literature as "it helps students develop emotional intelligence and creativity; it nurtures growth and development of the student's personality and social skills; and it transmits important literature and themes" (Crippen, 2012). Literature allows children to escape to a magical place where anything is possible. These texts have become a platform for different people to come together.

Those of my learners who have come across the *Harry Potter* stories, whether in a book or on the television, have become as passionate about the franchise as I have. These novels have allowed me to bond with my learners, which is an important part of the relationship between teachers and learners. I have also been able to refer to the novels in order to explain concepts during my English lessons, which makes the lessons more interactive and accessible, and which fosters better understanding.

These novels are accessible and available to individuals in public and school libraries across the world. They are used internationally to teach people of all ages a wide range of topics and themes. Due to the popularity of these novels, I am very interested in investigating the perceptions and beliefs of South African teachers, parents and learners, as these relate to the *Harry Potter* series. The excitement some of my learners show towards the franchise made me wonder why these novels are not taught in South African schools. My hypothesis was that this may have to do with the perceptions of the parents and their dislike of magic or witchcraft, which is an important theme of the *Harry Potter* novels. In Africa and South Africa, there are many cultures and religions that have anti-witchcraft morals and values, and superstitions (Tenkorang, Gyimah, Maticka-Tyndale, & Adjei, 2011, p.10). These beliefs could directly influence what is taught in school and how the Harry Potter novels are perceived. However, even though witchcraft is often associated with negative connotations, the *Harry Potter* novels refer to witchcraft as the magical abilities of witches or wizards. In this world, witchcraft does not have a negative connotation and is dependent on the witch or wizard who does the magic. I was, therefore, interested in understanding these perceptions. My research has provided me with an answer as to whether or not these novels could or should be taught in South Africa, keeping in mind the various religions and cultures in the classrooms.

1.3 Study participants and study location

In my study, the participants were members of South Africa's school community. They included twelve learners in Grades 8 and 9, their parents, as well as four English teachers. I have a trusting relationship with these various parties and, therefore, trusted them to provide me with their honest opinions, feedback, and perceptions. The research sites included the homes of the participants where they completed the questionnaires and a school in Johannesburg, Gauteng. This school is referred to as the Maerua School (pseudonym).

Maerua School is a private school with parents and learners from lower, middle, and upper socio-economic backgrounds. The learners and parents are predominantly white, however,

there are other communities that include black and coloured learners and parents. Maerua School is a non-denominational school, which does not prescribe to a specific religion; therefore, it has a variety of religions that include Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The English teachers at Maerua School are all white South Africans.

1.4 Problem statement and focus

As stated above, reading literature is very important for children (Elkin, 2007) and I believe that the *Harry Potter* series can be used as a platform to inspire children to read; hence, it is a big motivational factor for my research, Research has been conducted on various topics concerning *Harry Potter* as discussed in the literature review. However, this phenomenon is not widely researched in South Africa. This study specifically investigates the teaching of *Harry Potter* in the South African English classroom. Therefore, my Master of Education dissertation was as an opportunity to research an under-researched phenomenon that I am passionate about and to share my findings with colleagues, parents, and children.

The focus of my research is to explore parents', learners', and teachers' perceptions and beliefs of the *Harry Potter* novels and to determine their thoughts on these novels, as teaching and learning material in the South African English classroom. For the purpose of this study, perception is defined as, "a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem" ("perception", 2022), and "Perception involves the way one sees the world" (Mcdonald, 2012, p.3). In this instance, belief should include religious beliefs as these may strongly affect a person's perception of a phenomenon. The purpose of my research was to determine the perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels among South African learners, parents, and teachers and if these perceptions may be the reason why they are not a popular choice as a setwork. The perceptions of the teachers, parents and learners have allowed me to understand this.

1.5 Research questions

Three research questions were formulated to address the focus and purpose of this study:

1. What are the perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels in South African English classrooms?
2. How do the perceptions of learners, parents and teachers affect the teaching or lack thereof of the novels in South African schools?
3. How can *Harry Potter* be integrated in the South African English classroom?

1.6 Situating the study in literature

The *Harry Potter* novels introduce readers to a new world filled with adventure, mischief, and magic. Readers are exposed to spells, witches and wizards, mermaids and centaurs, amongst other fantastical creatures, and to exciting activities and characters. However, even though the novels revolve around a fictional world, the themes and challenges discussed are real-life social issues experienced by people all over the world (Walters, 2015, p.8). These social trials make the texts relevant to children in schools as they discover and go through similar challenges of their own.

Themes such as hope, loss, friendship, and love encompass the storyline of the series (LitCharts, n.d.). These themes are prevalent in other literature taught in schools such as the plays by Shakespeare, including *Macbeth* (1623) and *The Merchant of Venice* (1600). Teaching these themes to learners and teaching them how to deal with challenges such as loss is vital in any English classroom: "Rowling might get at the beautiful, sobering mess of life in a way that could have a meaningful impact on our children's collective character." (Stetka, 2014). Besides these themes, the novels discuss multiple adolescent challenges that include familial relationships and love interests, and less complicated issues such as completing homework on time (*Harry Potter* series).

Research by Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, and Trifiletti (2014) on the magic of *Harry Potter* champions the benefits of reading *Harry Potter*. Due to the complexity of the *Harry Potter* world, it is understandable that within it exist different types of people and cultures. It is a world where "pureblood wizards" feel superior to "half-blood" or "muggle born" (witches/wizards born from non-magical parents) and where your "blood status" has a bearing on your social status (Rowling, 1999, pp.115-116). In the classroom, this type of prejudice can be compared to South African apartheid or the Holocaust. These prejudices can be taught in a contrasting way as the different "blood statuses" in the wizarding world have a direct impact on the social standing and treatment of characters. Similarly, this can be related to how different races were treated unjustly during apartheid, or the cause for the Jewish people's suffering during the Holocaust. Therefore, "*Harry Potter* can be used as a tool for improving attitudes towards stigmatized groups" (Vezzali, et al., 2014, p.1) because of the awareness it creates and the ability of the characters to overcome these prejudices. In addition, because these people and cultures are fictional, "their message can be easily applied to several stigmatized categories" (Holland, 2014).

However, there has also been opposition to the *Harry Potter* series, which reached unprecedented levels of rejection in the history of children's literature: "[The series] inspired numerous book burnings across the globe by people who thought it a satanic or evil book" (Sibanda, 2017, p.218). These opinions from the opposition provide an interesting juxtaposition of the different perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels, which are based on religious beliefs in the case above. This perception is significant, as it would affect a person's perception of whether or not the *Harry Potter* novels should be taught in classrooms.

The *Harry Potter* series may be classified as Young Adult (YA) fiction, which is aimed at readers between the ages of twelve and eighteen. YA fiction characteristics and concerns encompass complex social issues discussed in a simpler register. It is coming-of-age stories with vivid descriptions and addresses immediate social concerns, including family issues, death, and love (Tomson, 2016). An example of a simplified discussion of a social concern is the topic of "dementors" in *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban* (Rowling, 1999). These figures are symbolic of depression, which is a difficult concept for children to comprehend. The "dementors" have been described as beings that "glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them... get too near a Dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory will be sucked out of you" (Rowling, 2000, p.140). Including this theme in a novel read by young children and young adults allows challenging topics to be more accessible.

Significantly, *Harry Potter* books also appeal to a mature audience as the plot and themes become darker as the series progresses. An example of this is the death of an innocent classmate, Cedric Diggory (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Rowling, 2000*). This character is murdered in front of Harry and then transported back to Hogwarts where the rest of the students witness the tragedy. This is a completely unexpected death in the series, which affects the rest of the characters and taints their innocence. These more serious themes appeal to a more mature reading audience. Crucially, this may serve as a link between home and school literacies as parents may enjoy reading the books with their children at home. Linking stories read at home and stories read at school is crucial in the development of children as their prior-knowledge and interests are merged with the new knowledge that is gained in the classroom (Pahl & Rowsell, 2013). The more exposure learners have to literature and stories both in and out of the classroom the more their reading skills improve (Elkin, 2007). The more adult themes in the series may also appeal to the teachers' life-worlds and may serve as encouragement to use the books in the classroom.

Including YA literature in the classroom is imperative as high school learners "[are] engaged by the themes and issues that [speak] directly to them and their experiences" (Mitchell, 2001, p.23). An example of such an experience is teenage angst (Mitchell, 2001, p.55), which includes anxieties experienced by teenagers about their lives or situation. This is very relevant to the *Harry Potter* series as we read about the characters as they grow up and go through biological, emotional, and psychological changes. The three protagonists, Harry, Ron and Hermione, grow as characters and experience friendships, romance and heartbreak commonly associated with teenage angst. By reading this series, learners are given a platform to engage with these experiences in a safe and nurturing classroom environment that could encourage them to participate eagerly in class. In addition, because of the timeframe of the series, the readers grow at the same pace as the *Harry Potter* characters. The series can be taught to readers from the ages of eleven to eighteen, as this is the age range during which *Harry Potter* begins and ends his adventures at Hogwarts. A *Harry Potter* novel can be taught every year as the characters and readers mature at the same pace and experience many of the same life events.

The teaching of *Harry Potter* in an English classroom is not only relevant to teachers of English but also to lecturers at tertiary level. Vanderbilt University in the United States of America has a course titled "*Harry Potter* and Child Development", which covers child development and behaviour in psychology studies (Troseth, 2018). Professor Troseth first read *Harry Potter* to her son and while reading, made psychological connections to the stories of the *Harry Potter* characters and to psychological theories. She discusses how her university students were able to understand psychological theory when applying it to the novels, as they are "a simulation of social life" (Troseth, 2018). The following topics were covered during her course:

1. Institutionalised orphans
2. Child resilience
3. Trauma
4. Grief
5. Empathy
6. Prejudice

These topics are important for students and high school learners to understand, and they are a strong motivator for the benefits of using *Harry Potter* in the classroom. These are real-world themes, which can be understood and/or taught within a fictional context.

Another example is the course "*Harry Potter* and Politics" at Babson College in the United States. The lecturer, Stephen Deets, used the *Harry Potter* novels to "[teach] politics through popular culture … [in order to] tap into the ways undergraduates are increasingly experiencing

politics" (Deets, 2009, p.741). Once again, these students were familiar with the *Harry Potter* series, which made the college course and political theory more approachable. Deets (2009, p.741) explains that "students are both familiar with the wizarding world and yet have enough distance to examine it dispassionately". This is his reasoning for creating the course, as students were often too invested in their country's politics or too unfamiliar with the politics of other countries. Professor Deets used the series to discuss the following:

1. Ethnic conflict
2. Political power struggles
3. Dysfunctional bureaucracies
4. Globalisation
5. Institutional behaviour
6. Identity

Therefore, the *Harry Potter* series has a plethora of themes and topics that can be taught in a multitude of ways to a variety of age groups. In terms of the curricula in South Africa, the above topics identified by Troseth (2018) and Deets (2009) are evident in subjects such as Life Orientation, History and Geography.

The participating school for this research is a registered Independent Examination Board (IEB) school, and does not write the same Grade 12 final examinations for government/public schools. The IEB follows the curriculum designed by the government: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). However, the instruction, analysis and testing of the curriculum topics are different, as the IEB emphasises independent and creative thinking. Chapter Two provides examples of how the themes discussed by Troseth (2018) and Deets (2009) in relation to *Harry Potter* can be taught in conjunction with the curriculum taught at the research site.

Upon investigation, there are no sources that provide evidence that schools in South Africa teach the series even though it is found on bookshelves all around the country. After researching book lists of both public and private schools and speaking to a variety of language teachers, I concur that it is not a popular set work at schools. In accordance, not much research has been conducted with regards to *Harry Potter* and the field of education in South Africa.

1.7 Overview of theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of a study is the "foundation from which all knowledge is constructed" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p.12). A framework provides researchers with the tools to formulate the rest of their research, including the research questions, methodology as well

as data analysis. It is regarded as the lens through which a study is interrogated. The lenses through which my study was conducted include the para-social relationship theory of Horton and Wohl (1956) and the Reader Response approach by Thomson (1987).

1.7.1 Para-social relationship theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956)

When interacting with a certain text, specifically when reading a novel, readers become invested in the story and its characters; this is similarly the case with films or television series. Readers have psychological responses to the text and develop one-sided relationships with these characters (Schmmid & Klimmt, 2011, p. 252). This phenomenon is referred to as para-social interaction and para-social relationship.

In education, learners read multiple set works a year and are required to understand the actions of characters of these set works. Learners may subconsciously build relationships with the characters. They become attached to them and start to personify them the more they read. This is relevant to my study, as I have determined the perceptions, i.e., the relationships of participants with the *Harry Potter* franchise.

1.7 .2 Reader Response approach (Thomson, 1987)

The aim of my research is to determine and understand the perceptions of teaching *Harry Potter* in the South African English classroom. This required thorough engagement with my participants and with their opinions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions of including *Harry Potter* as a set work in English classrooms. Their perceptions were closely linked to their experiences and cultures as revealed in the findings. Due to the involvement of participants and their reading experiences, a Reader Response approach was suitable for my study.

A Reader Response approach is "based on the assumption that a literary work takes place in the mutual relationship between the reader and the text" (Mart, 2019, p. 78). This theory suggests that readers respond to a text in a specific way based on their own personal experiences and beliefs. This implies that reading is an intricately subjective activity during which "readers endeavour to arrive at an interpretation" (Mart, 2019, p. 84). Reader Response is a relevant approach for my study because I am interested in how teachers, parents, and learners respond to the *Harry Potter* series and if there is a viable reason as to why it is not taught in the South African English classroom.

The para-social relationship theory and the reader-response approach are conceptually linked, as para-social relationships are formed as a consequence of how the reader responds to a text.

This is crucial for my study as the literary text is *Harry Potter* and I have engaged with the reader responses of my participants.

I hoped, through my research, to determine if any of the participants created para-social relationships with characters from *Harry Potter*. If not, I wanted to identify why not. I discovered what kind of responses my participants have towards the literature. My findings, discussed in Chapter Five, provide answers to these questions.

1.8 Overview of research design and methodology

My research approach is qualitative in nature, as I analysed the data collected from a small group of teachers, learners and parents. The quantity of my sample is not important, only the participants' thoughts, opinions and perceptions, hence the use of a qualitative approach. The data collected were based on personal perceptions and are, therefore, subjective in nature. Qualitative researchers aim to understand "the meaning people have constructed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13) of a specific phenomenon within a socio-cultural context. I used these opinions to form an understanding of the participants' perceptions of the *Harry Potter* series and determined if that could be an indication as to why it is not taught in South African schools.

This qualitative study on the perceptions of teaching *Harry Potter* in the South African English classroom seeks to understand learner, teacher, and parent perceptions of teaching the novels in the classroom. It may potentially suggest a reason as to why these novels are not prescribed set works. This phenomenon was researched through Reader Response theory and an analysis of para-social relationships linked to a phenomenological approach. My methodology contains interactions (focus groups and questionnaires) with learners, parents and teachers. The interpretations of the data collected are qualitative in nature.

My research study design is a case study. A case study design analyses a "contemporary phenomenon set within its real-world context" (Yin, 2009, p.18). This is relevant to my study as my phenomenon is the perception of *Harry Potter* and my context is the South African English classroom. My research also focuses on a specific group of people, which allows the study to be specific and focused.

My case study is descriptive as I am focusing on a phenomenon (perceptions of *Harry Potter*), as it exists in the classroom today (Niewenhuis, 2020, p. 90). It is also intrinsic as I am specifically interested in the topic of *Harry Potter* in the English classroom and not in a broader topic of study (Nieuwenhuis, 2020, p. 90).

In addition to this, my research is also phenomenological. Phenomenology focuses on "the meaning that certain lived experiences hold for participants" (Nieuwenhuis, 2020, p.85). As discussed, I am curious as to the perceptions (i.e., lived experiences) of my participants. Phenomenology is a subjective research effort due to the importance of the research subjects (Qutoshi, 2018, p.215). Therefore, I was cautious to ensure the trustworthiness of my research by including various research methods.

1.9 Research site and sample

The school that I collected my data from is the school at which I presently teach. The school is a small, private school in Johannesburg, Gauteng. I have decided to use this school as I have a working relationship with the parents, teachers, and learners. Therefore, I was confident that they would give me their honest opinions and answer my questions truthfully. I used purposive sampling to collect data. Purposive sampling includes choosing participants for a study due to their knowledge and experience of a particular phenomenon (Dolores & Tongco, 2007, p.147). In terms of my research, I needed participants who approved as well as disapproved of the *Harry Potter* series. Furthermore, the participants needed to be familiar with the novels and the content in order for the data to be meaningful. Eleven learners, four teachers and five parents took part in the study.

1.10 Overview of data collection

I collected data through closed- and open-ended questionnaires, and two focus group discussions. I handed out or emailed questionnaires to Grades 8 and 9 learners, their parents and four high school English teachers at Maerua School. Questionnaires were completed by four teachers, five parents and twelve Grade 8 and 9 learners from Maerua School. I made use of closed-ended questions such as multiple choice to collect data on the following aspects:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Familiarity with the *Harry Potter* franchise

Open-ended questions form the majority of prompts on the questionnaire, as I was interested in the perceptions of the participants and, therefore, needed them to answer openly and in detail. Once I analysed the answers, I grouped the participants into those who were familiar and those who were unfamiliar with the novels. This was done with all three participant groups, which ultimately included five parents, twelve learners and four teachers from Maerua School. The participants then had the opportunity to discuss their perceptions and beliefs of the *Harry Potter*

series during focus groups. One focus groups included three teachers and the other, five learners. My aim was to understand from where their beliefs and perceptions originated.

Participants who attended focus groups were asked probing questions and they discussed the questions amongst themselves. I used a funnel structure where participants were asked less structured questions to ease into the discussion and to make them feel comfortable enough to interact with one another and to share their ideas and perceptions (Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen & Plano Clark, 2020, p.111). I conducted two focus groups: one with five learners and one with three teachers. This allowed the participants to converse freely within their own age groups. The focus groups were recorded (with the permission of the participants) and transcribed by me thereafter. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all participants kept to social distancing measures and wore masks.

The transcriptions from my focus groups were first coded: "Coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units" (Creswell et al., 2020, p.136). The coding type I used is open (emergent) coding where "codes are drawn from the text" (Blair, 2015, p.16), in this case my transcriptions. Using this method of coding is advantageous as it allowed me to be objective and not enforce my own perceptions on the data. This type of coding closely links to inductive thematic data analysis where "little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework is used to analyze *(sic)* data; instead, the actual data itself is used to derive the structure of analysis" (FoodRisC, 2016). This allowed me to arrive at objective conclusions through the inductive themes, as little was known about the perceptions of *Harry Potter* in the English language classroom. The questionnaires were coded in the same way. All of the above were done with my original research questions in mind. Thereafter, the findings were thoroughly discussed.

1.11 Quality assurance and ethical considerations

Trustworthiness is vital in qualitative research. For my research to be trustworthy, I took various aspects into account. The first was ensuring that I conducted a detailed description of my research, including my research and data collection and data analysis methods. In addition to this, I also ensured that my research and analyses were objective as far as possible, and that I did not force any of my personal biases onto my participants. In addition, I included multiple methods of research (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.135) also known as triangulation (Le Grange & Beets, 2005, p.116). I did this by using questionnaires and focus groups.

In order to collect data pertinent to my study, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committee. Thereafter, I met with the principal at Maerua School in order to request her consent to collect data. Once I had received the above, I selected my participants. When they agreed to participate, they signed all necessary documentation (consent and assent letters). I ensured that all parties involved were aware that participation was voluntary. Due to everyone's right to privacy, I reassured the participants that their contribution would remain anonymous and that all research materials would only be used for this study. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time without any adverse repercussions. By conducting my research in an ethical way, I aimed to mitigate risks such as invasion of privacy, break in confidentiality, and not being transparent and truthful.

1.12 Conclusion

My study focuses on teacher, parent, and learner perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels and their possible inclusion in the English classroom in South Africa. This study stemmed from my passion for teaching and literature and I aimed to understand how the opinions of others could influence what is taught at schools.

My understanding of the above was formed and framed through an analysis of para-social relationships and the use of Reader Response approaches. The participants of my study i.e., teachers, learners and parents, provided me with the relevant data to analyse and from which to draw conclusions based on my research topic and research questions. In addition, the information discussed in my literature review, specifically the benefits of reading *Harry Potter* and teaching this series in various classrooms, further guided me in drawing appropriate conclusions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on section 1.6. *Situating the study in the literature*. As stated, the *Harry Potter* series is a well-known and beloved series and there is a variety of literature concerning the series. This literature review discusses and analyses these. This chapter also discusses the importance of reading children's literature and YA literature in the classroom and indicates why the *Harry Potter* series could be an apt choice for the classroom, as suggested by the literature. Global and South African school literature set works and themes are also relevant to understand educational stakeholders' perceptions of the *Harry Potter* series, and are, therefore, considered.

2.2.1 Importance of children's literature

Reading is a skill required by all individuals to adapt to their different life worlds (Anstey & Bull, 2018). Reading may be as simple as reading road signs or an email, reading current affairs or reading for leisure. Crucially, it is a school's responsibility to encourage fluent reading for academic purposes (Castles, Rastle & Nation, 2018). Furthermore, it is vital for children to read children's literature, as it is the ideal platform from which to launch their learning and reading enjoyment and to expand their imagination. Children's literature is filled with fictional and fantastical stories: "Children know perfectly well that unicorns aren't real, but they also know that books about unicorns, if they are good books, are true books" as they speak to the child's heart (Le Guin, 2018). Therefore, children's literature increases learners' imaginative creativity through their emotional immersion in storytelling. The same can be said about the *Harry Potter* books; children know that magic is not real, yet it does not mean that they cannot appreciate the imaginative world to which they are transported when they read magical stories.

Elkin (2006, pp.152-171) adds that reading children's literature in the classroom assists learners in becoming multiliterate. This implies that reading and reflecting on children's stories enhance learners' language, grammar and writing skills, critical thinking and social skills, and expand their life worlds and socio-cultural horizons. Including children's literature in the classroom also has a psychological benefit, as it indicates to learners through the actions and thoughts of characters how to navigate through childhood and teenage identity, and how to deal with angst and depression (Elkin, 2006, p.159).

In a South African context, home language acquisition and learning are conveyed through traditional folk tales, riddles, games, and storytelling. This highlights the importance of teaching African cultural practices, including African literature, to African learners to enhance their self-confidence and to restore their pride in their heritage (Chimuse, 2021; Ned, 2019).

2.2.2 Young Adult Literature

It is equally important for young adults or teenagers, who range from the ages of twelve to seventeen, to continue reading. Their chosen literature may be more advanced and with more complex themes than children's literature for pre-teen children (Kiefer, n.d.). Owen (2003) identifies *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) as the first Young Adult Literature (YAL) novel. The text covers the themes of young adult angst and alienation. Owen (2003) adds that these and various other themes that shape the life-worlds of young adults have been incorporated in YAL across the world: "in YAL there is virtually no topic that is off-limits. Readers can vicariously explore gay love, AIDS, rape, teen parenting, depression, violent acts (physical and psychological), passionate vampires and fairies, [and] suicide" (Owen, 2003, p.12). Therefore, YAL exposes young adults to a variety of age-appropriate social themes, issues and topics, which they may explore and grapple with in a safe and neutral environment: "The themes in Young Adult literature attract Young Adult readers because they reflect the reality of Young Adults' lives, do not portray false optimism and are not didactic in nature." (Too, 2006, p.42). Therefore, the importance of exposing young adults to these themes is clear and supported in the literature.

Similarly, the *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age story), like *The Catcher in the Rye*, is a genre that covers young "human development and formation" (Brantlinger & Thesing, 2002, p.279). In the *Bildungsroman*,

> The protagonists… will in many cases suffer a loss or experience some form of crisis, which initiates their journey away from their home or familiar setting early on in their development. They move from a state of 'innocence' (in childhood, adolescence) to one of 'experience' (in approaching adulthood). (Kane, Byrne & Scheepers, 2014, p.120)

The *Bildungsroman* is, therefore, also a psychosocial quest narrative involving a young person. Consequently, it closely relates to YAL as it covers the development and formation of adolescent characters, such as *Harry Potter*, and the students at Hogwarts school. An example of a *Harry Potter* character that exhibits immense growth is Neville Longbottom. Neville's

parents were cursed by Death Eaters shortly after Neville's birth – a completely innocent child's life was altered by circumstances beyond anyone's control. He was then forced to live with his grandmother. Due to the fate of his parents, he begins life as a terrified child and teenager, who only through adventures, friendships and experiences discovers what it means to be brave while growing up. He became one of the heroes in the series by defeating Voldemort's snake and thereby helping Harry Potter kill Voldemort, a wizard and archetype for evil.

YAL has become an ever-growing and popular genre of novels. *The Hunger Games* and *The Fault in Our Starts* became so popular that they were turned into films, which generated vast profits. It is debatable whether all these texts can be classified as good literature, however, Garcia (2013, p.14) believes that "*Harry Potter* is much more than simply 'the boy who lived'. For many readers he is a vibrant symbol of the power of Young Adult literature". This popular genre is consumed and enjoyed by readers, young adults in this case, because "the authors and publishers of YA provide lessons and models for thinking, acting, [and] being" to these young readers (Gracia, 2013, p.132). One may question whether this – providing life and lived examples to impressionable persons – is necessarily positive. However, as discussed above, teenagers learn from their experiences and from what they read. One cannot expect them to develop into their own if they are not provided with examples of socially accepted ideologies, experiences, morals and characters (McNeely & Blanchard, 2009, p.52). Teenagers require positive role models, who understand them or who are similar to them and YAL provides these examples.

2.3 Literature taught at schools

As discussed, there are various advocates for teaching the *Harry Potter* series. Young adults are comforted by the series and by the familiarity of the story, regardless of the unrealistic literary elements such as "dementors" or flying cars that become invisible (Rowling, 1998). Teaching with the series is fortuitous because:

> Many students in secondary schools exist on the margins because of disconnects between their own cultures, languages, and social practices and those valued in schools. These challenges and others faced by students and teachers in the world of magic parallel those we face in our own. As a result, reading the *Harry Potter* series through a professional lens can provide preservice teachers with entertaining, yet serious,

> opportunities to critically examine issues of education and schooling. (Fabrizi, Coombs, Ostenson, & Sommerville, 2016)

Incorporating YAL, including the *Harry Potter* series, assists teachers, in this case English teachers, in guiding their learners through a variety of topics that they encounter in their daily lives. This facilitates the linking of home literacies with school literacies. Learners can associate with the teaching content as it relates to their own life-worlds and the learning artefacts (*Harry Potter* in this instance) are relevant to their socio-cultural experiences (Pahl & Rowsell, 2013). At this study's participating school, teachers aim to make literature accessible to a variety of learners. This is done through open discussions and periods of reflective writing.

2.4 Teaching/learning with *Harry Potter*

As mentioned in Chapter One, Troseth (2018) and Deets (2009) are both lecturers at universities, who use *Harry Potter* to teach various themes:

Table 1: Comparison of Harry Potter Themes Taught at Two Universities:

Deets (2009)	Troseth (2018)
1. Ethnic conflict	1. Institutionalised orphans
2. Political power struggles	2. Child resilience
3. Dysfunctional bureaucracies	3. Trauma
4. Globalisation	4. Grief
5. Institutional behaviour	5. Empathy
6. Identity	6. Prejudice

Many of these themes are included and prescribed by the South African government's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), as well as by the Independent Examination Board (IEB). Due to the complexity of the English Language classroom, teachers and learners have the opportunity and a platform to discuss many challenging socio-economic themes. The themes discussed by Deets (2008) and Troseth (2018) are often covered within the walls of an English classroom, inspired either by the literature that is taught or by current affairs. The *Harry Potter* series grapples with these coming-of-age and finding-your-place-in-the-world themes, and exposes learners to these *Bildungsroman* concerns, as revealed in the Deets (2008) and Troseth (2018) studies.

The tenet of developing and discovering the self in the YA *Bildungsroman* generally and in *Harry Potter* specifically is emphasised in the South African Life Orientation curriculum; it is a compulsory subject until Grade 12 in both IEB and public schools. According to the Life

Orientation CAPS document, one of the topics is "development of self in society" (2011). The following is covered under this topic:

Table 2: From Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Life Orientation, Grades 7-9 (DBE, 2011, p.10):

	Topic	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
1	Development of the self in society	• Concept: self-image • Changes in boys and girls: puberty • Peer pressure • Concepts: personal diet and nutrition	• Concepts: self-concept formation and self-motivation • Concept: sexuality • Relationships and friendships	• Goal-setting skills: personal lifestyle choices • Sexual behaviour and sexual health • Challenging situations: depression, grief, loss, trauma and crisis

Table 3: From Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Life Orientation, Grades 10-12 (DBE, 2011, p.15):

	Topic	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
1.	Development of the self in society	• Self-awareness, self-esteem and self-development • Power, power relations and gender roles • Value of participation in exercise programmes • Life roles: nature and responsibilities • Changes towards adulthood • Decision-making regarding sexuality • Recreation and emotional health	• Plan and achieve life goals: problem-solving skills • Relationships and their influence on well-being • Healthy lifestyle choices: decision-making skills • Role of nutrition in health and physical activities • Gender roles and their effects on health and well-being	• Life skills required to adapt to change as part of ongoing healthy lifestyle choices • Stress management • Conflict resolution • Human factors that cause ill-health • Action plan for lifelong participation in physical activity

The topics listed above link to themes such as identity and power struggles (Deets, 2009) and prejudice and child resilience (Troseth, 2018), which are also found in *Harry Potter*. Some of the CAPS (2011) topics overlap those covered by the IEB curriculum. Similarly, these topics link to themes of identity, conflict and globalisation (Deets, 2009), and resilience and empathy (Troseth, 2018):

Table 4: From Subject Assessment Guideline Life Orientation (IEB, 2021, p.10):

Topic	Grade 10	Grade 11
Development of the self in society	• Self-awareness, self-esteem and self-development • Power, power relations and gender roles • Value of participation in exercise programmes • Life roles: nature and responsibilities • Changes towards adulthood • Decision-making regarding sexuality • Recreation and emotional health	• Plan and achieve life goals: problem-solving skills • Relationships and their influence on well-being • Healthy lifestyle choices: decision-making skills • Role of nutrition in health and physical activities • Gender roles and their effects on health and well-being
Social and environmental responsibility	• Contemporary social issues that impact negatively on local and global communities • Social skills and responsibilities to participate in civic life	• Environmental issues that cause ill-health • Climate change • Participation in a community service addressing an environmental issue
Democracy and human rights	• Diversity, discrimination, human rights and violations • National and international instruments and conventions • Major religions • Ethical traditions and/or religious laws of major religions in South Africa • Indigenous belief systems in South Africa • Biases and unfair practices in sport	• Democratic participation and democratic structures • Role of sport in nation building • Contributions of South Africa's diverse religions and belief systems to a harmonious society

Significantly, literature can be included in the Life Orientation curriculum to teach diversity and indigeneity (CAPS, 2011; IEB, 2021). Furthermore, including YAL and a Bildungsroman like *Harry Potter* in the curriculum enhances the teaching of life skills in the English classroom. Reading contributes to the young person's social, educational and psychological well-being, and connection with the world through the para-social relationships that are formed with a myriad characters and settings (Elkin, 2006, pp.153-155, 158-159).

The IEB taps into these reading benefits for the young reader. It does not prescribe any English Home Language set works until Grade 12. The independent schools and the teachers, therefore, select their own literature to study in Grade 8 to 10. The following is an excerpt from the English Home Language, IEB Subject and Assessment Guideline (2021) for the EHL curriculum:

1. Broaden and deepen language competencies developed in the General Education and Training band, including the abstract language skills required for academic learning across the curriculum, and the aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment of texts, so that learners are able to listen, speak, read/ view and write/ present with confidence. These skills and attitudes form the basis for life-long learning.

2. Express and justify their own ideas, views and emotions confidently in order to become independent and analytical thinkers.
3. Use language and their imagination to represent and explore human experience. Through interacting with a wide range of texts, learners are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences and to consider alternative worldviews.
4. Express reasoned opinions on ethical issues and values. In order to develop their own value system, learners engage with texts concerning human rights and responsibilities such as the rights of children, women, the disabled, the aged and issues linked to race, culture, ideology, class, belief systems, gender, HIV/AIDS, freedom of expression, censorship and the environment.
5. Interact critically with a wide range of texts. Learners will recognise and be able to challenge the perspectives, values and power relations that are embedded in texts.

These outcomes relate closely with that which are prescribed by the DBE for English HL, Senior Phase (Grades 7 – 9) (DBE, 2011, pp.9-11). The *Harry Potter* series, as well as the novels taught at Maerua school (listed below), can successfully address these outcomes. Learners are given a platform to engage with different types of texts, which contain a variety of voices. The themes, as discussed below, are not dichotomous – learners can engage with ethical issues and values as well as understand the human experience.

At Maerua school, some of the literature studied in Grade 8 and 9 include:

- *I am Malala*, Malala Yousufzai
- *Homecoming*, James Ward
- *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare
- *The Reckoning*, James Ward
- *Animal Farm*, George Orwell
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare

These texts include a variety of themes, which are similar to those in *Harry Potter*. *I am Malala* concerns the importance of education, and the rights of young girls. In *Harry Potter*, the school is the predominant setting of the series, where the rights of various characters, such as muggles and house-elves, are portrayed. For example, house-elves are not given any rights in the series; their only purpose is to serve their masters. This way of treating others is problematized and readers of the *Harry Potter* series are able to reflect on the inhumane treatment of the house-elves. Furthermore, Hermione Granger starts an organisation titled The Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare (S.P.E.W.) where she questions the treatment of these creatures

and attempts to better their lives (Rowling, 2000). *The Reckoning* exposes learners to issues of abduction, sangomas and muti-murders – these topics are as contentious as the ones concerning witchcraft and wizardly in *Harry Potter*. Additionally, the famous *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes themes of magic, love and rebelling against authority. These themes are paralleled in *Harry Potter* in the topoi of witchcraft and the events where the protagonists rebel against the corrupt Ministry of Magic. With reference to the CAPS and IEB curricula, these novels, as well as the *Harry Potter* series, include the prescribed topics of diversity, empathy, life-lessons, relationships and gender roles.

2.5 Negative perceptions of *Harry Potter*

In contrast to the popularity of the *Harry Potter* series, there has also been public uproar against the franchise. The novel series has been banned or censored at various schools and libraries in the United States of America. Schafer (1999)[1] notes that after 1980, book censorship became prevalent in the country: "Children's books were burned, pulled from shelves and removed from required reading lists. Selected passages and illustrations were cut out or inked over." The reasoning behind such censorship is

> they [those promoting censorship] label targeted books dangerous because they claim the stories provide bad examples for impressionable children. Protesting parents say books like *Harry Potter* are subversive [by encouraging witchcraft and magic] and do not promote family values. Many school administrators quickly appease censors to avoid awkward publicity. They condemn the *Harry Potter* books as potentially threatening [the conjuring of demons and spirits]. Opponents argue that censorship is detrimental to students' intellectual development. (Schafer, 1999)

Schafer (1999) continues to state that censorship is simply paranoia and disingenuous, and that the banning of books only increases their popularity. A pastor from a Catholic school in Nashville, USA removed the *Harry Potter* series from the school library and publicly stated that "these books present magic as both good and evil, which is not true, but in fact a clever deception" (Farzan, 2019).[2] He held that "The curses and spells used in the books are actual curses and spells; which when read by a human-being risk conjuring evil spirits into the presence of the person reading the text" (Farzan, 2019). These examples make it clear that a person's religious beliefs shape perceptions held of a text. In South Africa, with its many

[1] This is an electronic source without page numbers.
[2] This is an electronic source without page numbers.

religions and cultures, one finds people with similar perceptions (Sibanda, 2017, p.218). However, there is no evidence that suggests that the "curses and spells" used in the *Harry Potter* novels are real (Farzan, 2019).

These perceived heretical and bewitched texts are sometimes burned at the stake. In March 2019, a Catholic priest in Poland, Father Jan Kucharski, held a public book burning where the *Harry Potter* books and the *Twilight* series were burned. The priest stated, "We know what's [*sic*] harmful to our faithful so that's why we held an event like this. I'd even call it evangelical" (Special Broadcasting Service, 2019). The first recorded book burning occurred in China in 213 BCE and has become a regular event across the world (Schwartz, 2010). Schwartz (2010) published a list of twenty-two book burnings that took place between 1946 to 2010. Some of these include the burning of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in Germany in 2006 by five men in their twenties as well as the burning of the *Harry Potter* series at the Christ Community Church in New Mexico in 2001. Rebecca Knuth is considered an expert in book burnings. In an interview with Abe Books (2003), she explained that "Books are also highly symbolic. Destroying a group's books is a highly effective way to humiliate, weaken, or enrage your enemy" (Knuth, 2003).[3] In the case of the burning of the *Harry Potter* series, the enemy is perceived as devilish witchcraft. Sibanda (2017, p.218) mentions a burning of *Harry Potter* books at an unnamed South African high school. It is conceivable that many of these book burnings took place at South African schools due to the strong religious and anti-witchcraft belief in South African society. The South African government promulgated the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957, "To provide for the suppression of the practice of witchcraft and similar practices" (South Africa, 1957). This act has been amended as recently as 1970. The act relates to the various reported beliefs of witchcraft in Venda (a then Bantustan in northern South Africa). In an article written by various researchers from the Human Sciences Research Council in 1991 (shortly before the *Harry Potter* phenomenon), 167 individuals laid charges with the police under the Witchcraft Suppression Act during July 1989 to July 1990 against people who were accused of being witches (Minnaar et al., 1991). Minnaar et al. (1991) continue to explain that people, especially women, who were suspected of witchcraft were killed without proof of guilt. In 2007, the South African Pagan Rights Alliance (SAPRA) appealed against the Witchcraft Suppression Act because

[3] This is an electronic source without page numbers.

> the act violates the right to religious expression guaranteed in the South African constitution…in other words, Wiccans and other Pagans fell into the same category as those who are more traditionally considered Witches in sub-Saharan Africa, a place where the word "witch" is often associated with people who use supernatural powers to cause harm. (Ward, 2016)[4]

There is no new information available regarding the appeal of this group. However, South Africans are still being killed for witchcraft. A recent newspaper article discussed the killing of a 92-year-old woman because four individuals believed she was a witch. They locked her up in a house and set it alight. The four men were sentenced to 17 years in prison (Tshikalange, 2022).

The American Library Association releases regular lists of the "Most Challenged Books". This list contains the top ten books that have been reported and challenged as being insidious by citizens in the United States of America. These challenges/public objections are reported to the Office for Intellectual Freedom that defines challenges as an "attempt to remove or restrict materials or services based on content" (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2019). The list below is the most recent published by the association:

Table 5: Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2022, compiled by: American Library Association (2020)

Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2020
1. ***George* by Alex Gino** Reasons: Challenged, banned, and restricted for LGBTQIA+ content, conflicting with a religious viewpoint, and not reflecting "the values of our community"
2. ***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds** Reasons: Banned and challenged because of author's public statements, and because of claims that the book contains "selective storytelling incidents" and does not encompass racism against all people
3. ***All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely** Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity, drug use, and alcoholism, and because it was thought to promote anti-police views, contain divisive topics, and be "too much of a sensitive matter right now"
4. ***Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson** Reasons: Banned, challenged, and restricted because it was thought to contain a political viewpoint and it was claimed to be biased against male students, and for the novel's inclusion of rape and profanity
5. ***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie** Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity, sexual references, and allegations of sexual misconduct by the author
6. ***Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard, illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin**

[4] This is an electronic source without page numbers.

Reasons: Challenged for "divisive language" and because it was thought to promote anti-police views

7. ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** **by Harper Lee**
   Reasons: Banned and challenged for racial slurs and their negative effect on students, featuring a "white savior" character, and its perception of the Black experience
8. ***Of Mice and Men*** **by John Steinbeck**
   Reasons: Banned and challenged for racial slurs and racist stereotypes, and their negative effect on students
9. ***The Bluest Eye*** **by Toni Morrison**
   Reasons: Banned and challenged because it was considered sexually explicit and depicts child sexual abuse
10. ***The Hate U Give*** **by Angie Thomas**
    Reasons: Challenged for profanity, and it was thought to promote an anti-police message

The *Harry Potter* books have made it on this list four times:

Table 6 adapted from: American Library Association (2001, 2002, 2003, 2019)

Year	Position in Top 10	Reason
2019	Ninth	banned and forbidden from discussion for referring to magic and witchcraft, for containing actual curses and spells, and for characters that use "nefarious means" to attain goals
2003	Second	occult/Satanism
2002	First	occult/Satanism, violence
2001	First	anti-family, occult/Satanism, religious viewpoint, violence

It is clear that the perceptions and opinions of novels, and the *Harry Potter* novels particularly, are contentious. This is evidenced by the strong stance against these books taken by organisations or institutions and by religious priests and people across the globe, including South Africa.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated and analysed various examples of perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels throughout the world. The *Harry Potter* series is classified as children's literature as well as Young Adult Literature, and it is an example of a *Bildungsroman.* These novels teach readers, young and old, various lessons and morals, all through various themes. Perpetual themes such as love and hope are prevalent in the novels. These themes are also similar to themes and contexts that various South Africa curricula prescribe. However, the perceived darker themes of magic, evil, death and loss are contributing factors to the negative perceptions surrounding the series, which have led to the burning of *Harry Potter* books and their inclusion on the Challenged Books list in the USA.

Chapter Three

Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

My theoretical framework is the lens through which I analysed, interpreted and understood the data. It is the "foundation from which all knowledge is constructed… [and it] provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p.12).

My theoretical framework consists of the Reader Response approach. It is the "assumption that a literary work takes place in the mutual relationship between the reader and the text" (Mart, 2019, p.78). In this case, it is the mutual relationship among teachers, learners and parents, and the *Harry Potter* novels.

In addition to the above, I included para-social relationship theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956). It "describes and attempts to explain imagined social relationships and interactions with people who are distant from us and who do not reciprocate individual communication or interest." (Stever, 2017, p.1). This theory links to the *Harry Potter* characters, with whom readers form imagined and imaginative relationships.

3.2 Reader Response approach (Thomson, 1987)

Reading elicits an emotional response from readers (Elkin, 2006). The Reader Response approach focuses on examining what kind of responses readers have to a text. In the instance of my study, I identified how teachers, learners and parents perceived *Harry Potter*. The Reader Response approach

> views the reading process as a transaction between the reader and the text in which the reader, with his past experiences, beliefs, expectations and assumptions, interacts with the perspectives in the text, and meaning is determined as the result of this transaction. (Spirovska, 2019, p.12)

This approach examines how reader beliefs and experiences, along with the text, create a unique and individual response. Figure 1 below conceptualises the Reader Response approach as a funnel: the reader's perceptions, beliefs and experiences mix with the text to create a response.

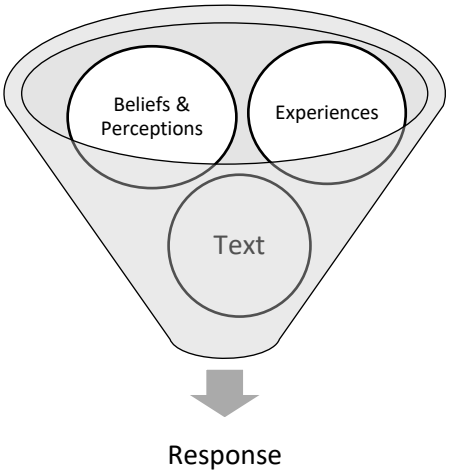

Figure 1: Reader Response Funnel (design by the author)

Thomson (1987, cited in Spirovska, 2019, p.25) identified six levels of Reader Response development:

Table 6: Six Levels of Reader Response Development, adapted from Spirovska (2019, pp.25-26)

Level one: Literal understanding	Understanding the information presented in a text.
Level two: Empathy	Personalizing the text, relating the text with students' own lives.
Level three: Analogy	Readers learn about their own lives through making connections with characters.
Level four: Reflection	Deeper understanding of other people and their motives, during which the readers think about the events and the behaviours in a text.
Level five: Evaluation	Analysis of author's social and cultural values and comparison with readers' values.
Level six: Recognition	The readers are aware of the textual functions of the reader and the author, consider the relationship between those functions, and explore their identities as readers.

Some of the levels demonstrated above assisted in interpreting the responses the participants in my study had to the text, as discussed in Chapter Five (presentation and discussion of findings). The above levels provided for an understanding of the connection formed between the participants and the literature. Yet, not all of the levels were apparent in my study, as discussed in Chapter Five.

3.2 Para-social relationship theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956)

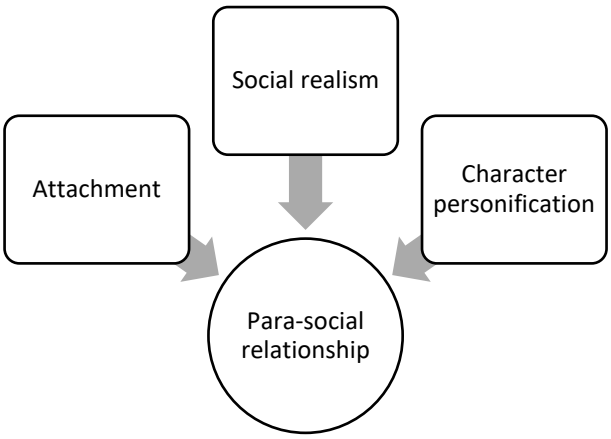

Figure 2: Para-social Relationship Building (Adapted from Bond and Calvert, 2014, p.269)

Figure 2 demonstrates how attachment, social realism and character personification all lead (see the arrows) to para-social relationship building. It identifies the levels of para-social relationship building between media figures and children/young adults. Character personification is understood as "similarity identification" (Bond & Calvert, 2014, p.288), whereby children identify with characters who have similar personalities and interests. They bond or form an attachment with these media figures, with whom they can associate and to whom they relate. In this study, this relates to whether my participants felt safe with, related to, and associated with, and thereby created an attachment with characters from *Harry Potter*.

Social realism describes the likelihood that literary figures could come to life. This aspect of para-social relationships is unlikely when linked to literature. This may suggest that relationships built with literary characters are not as stable as those formed with media celebrities. The fantastical figures and characters in the *Harry Potter* world cannot come to life. Therefore, in this regard, social realism does not exist from the perspective of the literary characters, as one can only associate with the actors who portrayed characters in the films. However, from the perspective of the readers, social realism is evident. A valid example of this is the extraordinary *Harry Potter* fan base or fandom. *Harry Potter* fans often dress up as their favourite characters or even name their children after characters from the series (Shabazz, 2019). In this way, *Harry Potter* fans have created tangible examples of social realism in order to satisfy their desire to associate closely and form attachments with the characters. Similarly, one may assume that learners have the ability to build subconscious relationships with characters that they read about in English classrooms and, therefore, create a one-sided bond with characters in the literature to which they are exposed (Dewa, 2021).

The two theories discussed above (para-social relationships and Reader Response) interact with the text. Literary texts elicit reader responses from learners, which create para-social relationships between the characters in the texts and the readers (as illustrated in Figure 3).

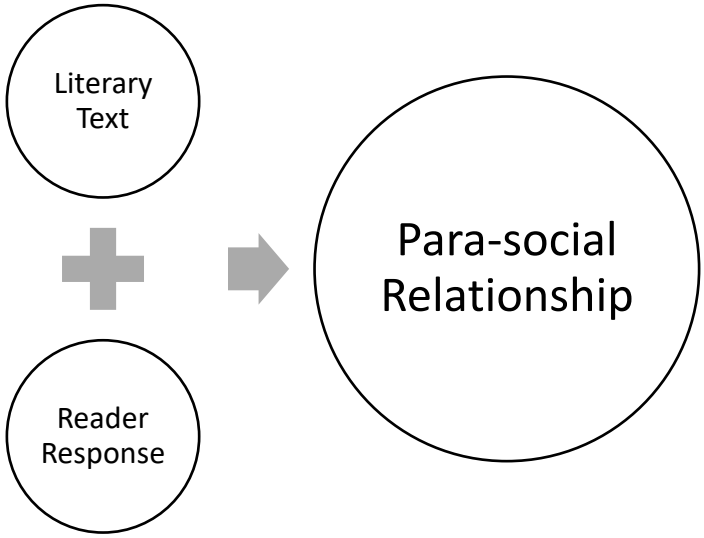

Figure 3: Creation Of Para-Social Relationships Through Literary Texts and Reader Response (design by the author)

3.3 Conclusion

This study's theoretical framework is the lens through which I analysed my research in order to transform the raw data into knowledge that is valid and credible. The Reader Response approach by Thomson (1987) was a suitable framework for this study on the perceptions of readers of the *Harry Potter* series. I aimed to understand how and why participants responded to the series, as these responses were based on their personal perceptions, assumptions and beliefs. The para-social relationship theory illustrates how the participants were emotionally invested in the literary characters that created a specific response. This is evident in some of the participants' (teachers, learners and parents) responses, who had a great fondness and appreciation for the novels – as discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four

Research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines my chosen research design and its methodology. My study followed a qualitative research approach, supported by an interpretivist epistemology. My data were generated through questionnaires and focus group discussions with educational stakeholders (teachers, parents and learners). These questionnaires and focus group discussions were transcribed, coded and interpreted.

This chapter explains the reasoning and purpose of each of the strategies used. It further explains the quality assurance, COVID-19 protocol and ethical measures I implemented while collecting and analysing the data.

4.2 Research Approach

As discussed briefly in Chapter One, my study is qualitative: "Qualitative research aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans' lives and social worlds" (Fossey, Harvey, Mcdermott & Davidson, 2002, p.717). Therefore, the goal of qualitative research is to "To gain insight; explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon" (UMSL, n.d.). Similarly, my study focused on research participants and their beliefs and perceptions of a specific phenomenon (*Harry Potter* in the classroom). Quantity is not the concern in qualitative studies, but the quality of the participants' rich responses is. A qualitative research approach allowed me to form deeper insights into the participants' beliefs and perceptions. It is, however, necessary to note that there are various advantages and disadvantages of this research approach. In order to ensure that my work is valid, I had to take the advantages and disadvantages into consideration.

4.2.1 Advantages of qualitative research

There are various advantages to qualitative research. RaHmman (2016) argues that this research approach "understands the human experience in specific settings" (RaHmman, 2016, p.104), which is a suitable approach for my research as I examined the perceptions/beliefs (human experiences) relating to *Harry Potter* in a specific educational setting. In addition, qualitative research also "has abilities to understand different people's voices, meanings and events" (RaHmman, 2016, p.104). Likewise, I interpreted individual perceptions/beliefs and focused on the participants to reveal their unique and individual perceptions.

4.2.2 Disadvantages of qualitative research

A disadvantage of qualitative research is that this approach is limited by the small number of participants (Harry & Lipsky, 2014). It is argued that smaller sample sizes are subjective or cannot be an accurate representation of the phenomenon. My focus was on a small number of participants' individual perceptions, as these related to their detailed feedback. This is further discussed in Chapter Six.

4.3 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a view or guideline of how research should be conducted. A paradigm can follow one of two directions: the positivist approach or the interpretivist approach. My research follows interpretivism. It recommends specific research methods and has its own ontology and epistemology.

4.3.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a paradigmatic epistemology used for qualitative research: "Interpretivists state that reality is multi-layered and complex. They believe that people are creative and actively construct their social reality" (Dammak, n.d.). This paradigm therefore follows the belief that humans are individuals, and their beliefs and experiences cannot be assumed or generalised. Interpretivism focuses on the understanding of human action within specific socio-cultural contexts (Connole, 1993, p.19). Therefore, this epistemology holds that understanding the actions of others within a specific real-life context will provide a view of reality. This paradigm allowed me to form deeper insights into my participants' perceptions and beliefs related to the teaching of *Harry Potter* in the South African English classroom. Additionally, this epistemology provided me with a lens through which to interpret the perceptions of the participants and to identify the impact literature has in the English classroom. Interpretivism closely links with Reader Response theory, because it correlates to how readers respond to and create relationships with others/characters from reality/their set works. This includes the concept of observer intersubjectivity (Gough, 2000, p.5). Intersubjectivity refers to shared understanding, and perceptions held between the research participants and myself. In addition, it takes an empathetic standpoint (Gough, 2000, p.5), which allowed me to interpret the experiences of these individuals.

4.3.2 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with theories of reality as well as "what is the nature of the knowable?" (Gough, 2000, p.4). The nominalist ontology was followed in this study and states that everyone understands and names the world in different ways. The assumption is that reality is subjective and based on our own positionality and experiences, which are related to class, race, gender, culture and religion. My research aimed to understand the subjective reality of individuals (the participants), which allowed me to comprehend their reality as a whole in a similar setting (school environment).

Based on these epistemological and ontological considerations, I chose a descriptive case study as my study design. I have researched the *Harry Potter* series as a phenomenon within a real-world environment (Maerua school). The case study aspect of the research focuses on the perceptions of a specific group of people (learners, teachers and parents involved in the EHL classroom). The benefits of this study design is its simplicity – it "allows the researcher to study and describe the distribution of one or more variables [or phenomena], without regard to any causal or other hypotheses" (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019, p.34). Therefore, the descriptive case study describes the complexities and mutability of a natural phenomenon in real-life contexts (Maree, 2020).

4.4 Sampling and data generation

As mentioned previously, data were collected through questionnaires and focus group discussions. As the research site is the school I work for, it was relatively easy to approach possible research participants. I sent out an email to all Grade 8 and 9 parents explaining my study and asking if they would be prepared to participate in my study. I also approached each of the relevant classes and explained my research to the learners and teachers and if they would be interested in participating and assisting me. I created a list of the purposively selected sample and randomly selected participants using an excel formula [=rand()]. This formula allowed me to generate a completely random list as it allocated numbers between 0 and 1 randomly to the list of participants. After the random population had been identified, I copied these as values and sorted them from smallest to largest and selected the participants in that way. This allowed me to create a completely unbiased sample population. Qualitative studies generally use purposive sampling to select purposefully members of a sample to represent the population (Maree, 2020). Therefore, purposive sampling includes choosing participants for a study due to their knowledge and experience of a particular phenomenon (Dolores & Tongco, 2007,

p.147). The selected participants were then contacted and asked to read and sign the consent/assent forms. Eleven learners, four teachers and five parents participated in the study. This method was simple and effective due to the size of my research site. As mentioned in Chapter One, I have a positive relationship with the stakeholders at the site and found it easy to approach them.

4.4.1 Open-ended Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be used in qualitative research to gather information from participants in a non-threatening way. Face-to-face interactions, such as interviews, can make the participant feel pressurised and constrained to time. I chose to include open-ended questionnaires in my research as they allowed the participants to answer the questions without the pressure of someone waiting for and watching them. In addition, open-ended questions "offer respondents an opportunity to provide a wide range of answer" (Hyman and Sierra, 2016, p.3). This method of data collection allowed me to generate rich data. The four English teachers from Grades 6 to 11 eagerly completed the questionnaire. Due to the small size of the site school, I involved teachers from these grades as the Grade 8 and 9 EHL classes are taught by only one teacher. Their responses are discussed in Chapter Five.

After approaching the English teachers, I announced and explained my research to the Grade 8 and 9 classes. My research sample was small, and only included two Grade 8 classes and one Grade 9 class with approximately sixteen learners per class. I asked the learners to indicate if they were willing to participate. The names of the learners who wanted to take part in the study were added to a list. This list was created on Excel and allowed me to select randomly from the purposively identified sample. This allowed me to avoid personal biases in the selection process. Once their names had been selected, I gave them assent letters to sign, while their parents provided their consent for their children to participate. The completed questionnaires are analysed and discussed in Chapter Five.

I followed a similar approach for parent participants. I sent an email with all the relevant documents to the parents of Grade 8 and 9 learners. The parents who were interested sent an email reply, stating they were willing to participate. They then signed the consent letters and returned the questionnaires via email. However, some parents who indicated their willingness did not return the questionnaire. Five parents of Grades 8 and 9 learners completed the questionnaires.

4.4.2 Focus groups

Focus groups are a qualitative research method that allows the researcher to gather information from various subjects at the same time. Having a group of people discussing the research is beneficial as it allows the participants to interact with others in a relaxed and conversational manner: "The focus or object of analysis is the interaction inside the group. The participants influence each other through their answers to the ideas and contributions during the discussion" (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, 1998, p.2). Through focus groups, researchers also "collect an appropriate amount of data in a short period of time" (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, 1998, p.4), which is an added advantage.

However, as with any research method, focus groups have advantages and disadvantages.

Table 7: Advantages and Disadvantages of the Focus Group. (Based on Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1988), as cited from Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, (1998, p.4))

Advantages	Disadvantages
• It is comparatively easier to drive or conduct • It allows to explore topics and to generate hypotheses • It generates opportunity to collect data from the group interaction, which concentrates on the topic of the researcher's interest • It has high "face validity" (data) • It has low cost in relation to other methods • It gives speed in the supply of the results (in terms of evidence of the meeting of the group) • It allows the researcher to increase the size of the sample of the qualitative studies	• It is not based on a natural atmosphere • The researcher has less control over the data that are generated • It is not possible to know if the interaction in group he/she contemplates or not the individual behavior • The data analysis are more difficult to be done. The interaction of the group forms a social atmosphere and the comments should be interpreted inside of this context • It demands interviewers carefully trained • It takes effort to assemble the groups • The discussion should be conducted in an atmosphere that facilitates the dialogue

I conducted two focus groups in my study – one with three participating teachers, and the other with five participating learners. In terms of the advantages listed in Table 7, the group interaction from my teacher focus groups was insightful, as the teachers interacted with each other, expanded on ideas and at times questioned each other. With regards to the disadvantages of focus group sessions, I found it difficult to assemble the groups – these took place before school, so, not all the learners who had completed the questionnaires took part in the focus group. The teacher participants had busy schedules, therefore, it was challenging to find a time that suited all of them. Due to this, one teacher participant was unable to attend. Finally, as mentioned previously, I decided not to hold a parent focus group session due to the difficulty experienced in receiving replies from them. The two focus group sessions were recorded, with

permission from the participants, and then transcribed. Thereafter, I coded and analysed the discussions that took place.

4.5 Data analysis

Data were analysed through inductive thematic content analysis, which described the data collected in terms of themes (Maree, 2020). The findings are rich in detail, as the research is qualitative and consisted of questionnaires and the transcribed learner and teacher focus groups. It was my responsibility to understand the data and to present and discuss the themes that had been identified (Anderson, 1997). I effected this by carefully reading, coding and analysing the collected data. Thematic content analysis includes open or emergent coding, reading for meaning and grouping of themes. These steps were followed to analyse the open-ended questionnaire questions and the transcribed focus group discussions. The following themes were identified:

1. Religion and witchcraft
2. Race
3. Imagination
4. Bildungsroman
5. Academics/education

4.5.1 Transcribing

When transcribing the focus group recordings (which were recorded on my cellular device), I had to maintain professionalism and ethics in my work. This includes maintaining the confidentiality of my participants. I therefore refer to the participants as Teacher One, Teacher Two and Teacher Three; and Student one, Student two, Student three, Student four, Student five, Student six and Student seven. Prior to conducting the focus groups, I reminded my participants that their participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The transcriptions were written verbatim, with only the names of the participants removed. Transcribing of the focus groups was a long process and needed to be completed carefully: “The transcriber therefore has to make subjective decisions throughout about what to include (or not), whether to correct mistakes and edit grammar and repetitions” (McMullin, 2021, p.2). As mentioned, the transcriptions were completed verbatim, I therefore aimed to be as objective as possible by not making any corrections or edits.

4.5.2 Coding

Saldaña (2013)[5] indicates that "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data". Therefore, coding is the process of identifying and grouping themes in qualitative research. As discussed above under data analysis, I identified rich themes in relation to my research topic and questions through thematic content analysis (the description of data based on correlating themes). I first grouped the answers/data according to questionnaire questions to simplify the analysis process. While reading, I used highlighters of various colours, and created a key-code with themes with assigned colours. As I read, I highlighted words or phrases according to the themes that were mentioned by the participants. This method was also used to analyse and code the themes in the focus group transcriptions.

4.5.3 Graphs

I chose to include graphs as visual representation of my questionnaires as they are effective tools for readers to understand and comprehend information. Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013, p.360) mention that it is important for visual displays to be uncomplicated and to include only the most important information. I believe the use of pie charts and tables does so effectively, as one is able to determine at a glance what the majority of the research participants believe.

4.6 Quality Assurance

In order for a research study to be successful, trustworthiness needs to be established. My study establishes trustworthiness through the following concepts: validity, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

4.6.1 Validity

The widely accepted definition of validity is "[that] a test measures what it is supposed to measure" (Le Grange & Beets, 2005, p.115). Therefore, I need to ask if my research is valid with regards to my research questions. There are various notions of validity. The first is content validity. This notion looks at how accurately the test, in this case research questions, represents the domain it is supposed to cover (Le Grange & Beets, 2005, p.115). My research is content

[5] Electronic source with no page numbers.

valid as the research tools I used related to one phenomenon, for example, I purposefully asked participants for their perceptions of *Harry Potter* and no other novels or set works.

The second notion of validity is face validity, also known as member checking. This is a very reliable way of checking validity. This can be understood as the "sharing [of] either a brief summary of the findings or sharing the whole findings with the research participants" (Statistics Solutions, n.d.). I discussed the transcriptions with the participants to confirm that my interpretation was correct.

4.6.2 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with whether "research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p.121). My findings are based on the coding of the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon.

4.6.3 Transferability

Transferability is whether research and findings can be applied to another study or be generalised (Creswell et al., 2020, p.144). Due to the specificity of my research, it is unlikely that my research phenomenon can be generalised. However, aspects such as Reader Response theory and the correlation to para-social relationships are transferable.

4.6.4 Dependability

Dependability questions the ability of research to be replicated (Shenton, 2004, p.71). The voice recordings of my focus groups are readily available as proof that the transcriptions are accurate and dependable.

4.6.5 Confirmability

This concept ensures that the researcher remains objective and does not include any conscious or subconscious biases in her research. (Creswell et al., p.145). Confirmability requires the researcher to stay neutral. Aspects of validity are helpful when ensuring confirmability as it encourages strategies such as member checking.

In summary, I am aware that in order for my research to be trustworthy and reliable, I needed to ensure that it successfully and carefully covers the above areas, and I believe that I have done so.

4.7 COVID-19 Protocol

Due to the fact that my study revolved around human subjects, it was vital to consider the possible implications of COVID-19 and to follow the necessary protocols. The participating school was sanitised and fogged regularly. The on-site participants (teachers and learners) were therefore in a clean location. The questionnaires ensured that there was no need for physical interaction. The questionnaire and other documents were emailed to parents, as off-site participants, which mitigated any chances of spreading the virus. The two focus groups took place in person at school. During the discussion sessions, each participant wore a mask and sanitised regularly.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Jones and Bartlett (n.d.), ethics includes doing what is morally and ethically right. They continue by explaining that there are four ethical considerations to deliberate when conducting research:

1. Ethical ramifications
2. Harm to others
3. Privacy concerns
4. Voluntary participation

These measures are discussed in section 1.11 of this dissertation.

4.9 Conclusion

A researcher has to introduce various processes and steps to ensure that data are collected accurately and ethically. My data collection and interpretation were done objectively. I coded my data and a clear understanding was compiled through thematic content analysis. This chapter has described in detail the various steps I followed in collecting and interpreting my data. The ethical and methodological considerations were listed and discussed. This also included COVID-19 protocol, which is vital in today's climate.

Chapter Five

Presentation and discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five is the presentation and discussion of my findings. I have broken this down into three sections (teacher data, parent data and learner data) so that it is clear to the reader that each sample group, which is of similar age and educational role, is discussed individually as to ensure that generalisations are avoided.

Every closed-ended questionnaire question is represented in graph form so that it is more accessible to the reader. Where appropriate, the graphs are accompanied by tables that illustrate the individual answers. These have then been coded. These graphs and tables are attached as APPENDIX H, I and J and have been coded. This chapter analyses the codes and themes identified and illustrated in the above-mentioned appendices.

Similarly, the focus group recordings were transcribed and coded and attached as APPENDIX L and N. They are discussed in depth whereby I illustrate and discuss the identified themes, and then interpret them in relation to my research questions.

5.2 Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels in South African English classrooms?
2. How do the perceptions of learners, parents, and teachers affect the teaching or lack thereof of the novels in South African schools?
3. How can *Harry Potter* be integrated in the South African English classroom?

5.3 Discussion of questionnaire questions

Questions 1a, 1b and 1c in the questionnaire are demographic related questions (race, gender, religion). I included these as introductory questions in order to get a socio-cultural understanding of my participants. It was necessary to determine whether participants with the same demographics (for example the same religious beliefs) had similar perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels. Questions 2a to 2l are open-ended questions; participants were encouraged to go into as much depth and detail in answering these questions. These are the questions that required coding and thoughtful discussion.

5.4 Participant demographics

Below is a tabulated summary of the demographics of my participants:

Table 8.1 Learner Demographics:

Name	Gender	Race	Religious belief	Familiar with *Harry Potter*	Participated in Focus Group
Learner 1	Female	White	Christian	Yes	No
Learner 2	Female	White	Christian	Yes	Yes
Learner 3	Female	White	Other	No	Yes
Learner 4	Female	White	Atheist	Yes	Yes
Learner 5	Male	White	Atheist	Yes	Yes
Learner 6	*Not answered*	White	Satanist	No	No
Learner 7	Male	*Not answered*	Muslim	No	No
Learner 8	*Not answered*	Prefer not to say	Christian	No	Yes
Learner 9	Male	White	Christian	Yes	No
Learner 10	Male	White	Christian	Yes	No
Learner 11	Female	White	Jehovah's Witness	Yes	No

Table 8.2 Teacher Demographics:

Name	Gender	Race	Religious belief	Familiarity with *Harry Potter*	Participated in Focus Group
Teacher 1	Male	White	Christian	Yes	Yes
Teacher 2	Female	White	Atheist	Yes	Yes
Teacher 3	Female	White	Other	Yes	Yes
Teacher 4	Female	White	Christian	Yes	No

Table 8.3 Parent Demographics:

Name	Gender	Race	Religious belief	Familiarity with *Harry Potter*
Parent 1	Female	White	Christian	No
Parent 2	Female	White	Christian & Spiritual	Yes
Parent 3	Female	White	Christian	Yes
Parent 4	Female	White	Atheist	Yes
Parent 5	Female	Asian	Christian	Yes

5.5 Thematic content analysis

During the coding process, various themes and/or ideas presented themselves. The predominant themes that emerged were the following:

1. Religion and witchcraft
2. Race
3. Imagination
4. Bildungsroman
5. Academic/Education

These themes arose from both the questionnaire data and the focus group data.

5.5.1 Religion and witchcraft as theme

The data collected during the questionnaires and focus groups revealed that some parental participants worried about the perceived negative impact *Harry Potter* had on their religion, and the religious beliefs of their children. They also indicated that their religious upbringing had hindered them from reading the novels.

Parent One	"No, I grew up in a Christian household protected against magic and [esoteric] type books."
Parent Five	"Yes I tried reading them to my children, until I could no longer explain the use of witchcraft within the context of Christian parenting."

The word "protect" used by Parent One is of interest. The idea that children need to be protected against magic or any genre that is 'obscure' is an interesting phenomenon as these stories are intangible, and therefore cannot cause physical harm. Similarly, Parent Five responded, "No. The spiritual clashes were too much for me" when participants were asked if they would recommend the books to children. In addition, when asked if children should read the *Harry Potter* series in class, Parent Five responded: "No. The exposure to the elements of witchcraft is too much for Christian children if they are mandated to read the books, and if they are not given a choice to say no." Parent Five also explained that "spiritual tug of war internally is of grave concern" and that "teachers who have strong religious views about these books may have a hard time teaching the material". Parent Five unfortunately did not explain, or did not have the opportunity to explain, how *Harry Potter* was perceived to undermine their Christian beliefs.

These parents had a negative Reader Response (Thomson, 1987) to these novels. As per my theoretical framework, religious beliefs and experiences created a response, which is opposed

to the reading and learning of the *Harry Potter* novels in the classroom. Thomson's (1987) levels of Reader Response development is not complete in these instances. These parents had a literal understanding (level one) of the *Harry Potter* series and its content and they resisted to "learn about their own lives through making connections with characters" (Spirovska, 2019), as these specific characters did not represent their religious beliefs. These parents shared similar opinions to organisations, institutions and religious priests and people across the globe, which had led to the banning of the *Harry Potter* series, as reported by the American Library Association (2001, 2002, 2003 and 2019), for reasons of witchcraft, occultism/Satanism and religious viewpoints.

During the focus group discussion, Learner Four explained that "mom told [me] it was evil. [My] mom told [me, I] wasn't allowed to read it because it was bad". Learner Four explained that her parents believed that the *Harry Potter* novels were evil (level five – evaluation), and they therefore did not want her to read them. This correlates with the American Library Association's reports on the reasons for the banning of the *Harry Potter* novels. In this instance, it is clear that parental perceptions influence the child's desire and/or ability to read a certain novel. Other parents, who also selected Christianity as their religious belief, did not share the same strong opinions and feelings – their responses were more open minded in terms of their acceptance and appreciation of the series. They were not concerned that the *Harry Potter* series negatively impacts or goes against their religious beliefs.

In comparison, none of the teachers that completed the questionnaire or participated in the focus groups, and who were religious, mentioned that the *Harry Potter* series was problematic from a religious perspective. During the teacher focus group, I told the teachers that some parents found the *Harry Potter* series problematic from a religious perspective, and they were surprised. Teacher Three believed that these parents were "underestimating their children".

Teacher Three stated:

> *I think they're underestimating their children. And I think it's like banned books. It's better to read them than not read them. Because, yeah, find out why they don't want you to know what they don't want.*

Teacher Two added:

> *Yes. But that's the same way this Krugersdorp story went about with Devil's Dorp where music was being banned; where books were being burned simply because they don't*

> *actually know what it is about. They've got this idea in their heads that, oh, it's bad. The same way, this is bad or that is bad, but it's not because they're interpreting the Word of God differently to how it's supposed to be interpreted…*

These two responses are very important to consider. People, in this case South Africans, have banned various forms of media in the past because of the fear associated with that media. In the TV series *Devil's Dorp*, it is explained that music by the heavy metal band *Slipknot* was banned due to the fear that it influenced people's actions in a negative way. Teacher Two explained that media was censored by individuals due to personal interpretations and assumptions. This links to Teacher Three's comment above who indicated that it was important for people to experience controversial media and form their own opinions. This implies that learners should have the opportunity to read and experience literature for themselves and make their own decisions.

Teacher One agreed:

> *I am a Christian, and my child will read Harry Potter, even though I'm not a fan. And that I know, my child will enjoy that protagonist, and seeing the struggles he goes through. And I think it's a wonderful story. … And I can tell you, it depends on how progressive you are. And there are different levels of Christian, there's one every word is blasphemies, and ones who don't give a damn about blasphemy and worry more about being kind. So, I think the more the wider your frame of reference, and the more emotionally and culturally intelligent you are, you will not have a problem with that.*

Teacher One, who was also a parent, was able to separate his personal feelings and perceptions of the *Harry Potter* series when considering the education of his son. He recognised that his son would enjoy the literature even if he did not. This separation is lacking for many parent participants who would not let their children access the series due to their personal perceptions, which links to my research questions on how perceptions influence the reading and teaching of *Harry Potter* in the classroom. In addition, Teacher One suggested that individuals who were accepting of various forms of literature and/or media were more open-minded and "emotionally and culturally intelligent". The question is whether access to different forms of literature, such as *Harry Potter*, enables readers to become more "emotionally and culturally intelligent".

Teacher Three concurred:

> *… So, you either creating a child who was not comfortable with literature outside of a very narrow band of Christian literature, or you're creating someone who's going to find out answers differently. And I would rather have my child ask me those tough questions about any book, not even just the Harry Potter books, because I mean, what's happened is that there are masses of books now that children should be asking questions.*
>
> *And if they are able to, if you are banning books in your house, that would make me want to read it. It would make anyone want to read it more, and if you're not creating that safe space, your child's going to ask someone else. Yeah. And find out the information anyway. And if your teachers teaching it, at least that teacher is coming to the book, with a certain level of academics a certain level of thematic knowledge, a certain level of psychological…psychological knowledge. So, you have someone who's gatekeeping it anyway. Who is warning them about, you know, depending on the teacher, of course, and depending if it's taught at a level that that works and is appropriate, you know, if you're not gatekeeping, because you're teaching your kids Harry Potter at a much younger age, then there's a problem? Yes, but if you've got a teacher, even grade 5, grade 6, grade 7, who is mediating the experience, rather that than your child reading it and never asking those questions, you know, and then feeling alienated from Christianity or alienated from parents or alienated from the culture.*

Teacher Three agreed that children should be able to experience the literature for themselves and make up their own minds. She added that learners should feel comfortable in their educational surroundings to ask questions if there were new or strange experiences in the literature they read. As mentioned in my literature review, teachers, and specifically the English classroom, can provide learners with a safe space to ask questions. Teachers have content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which equip them to help children deal with their curiosities as well as their insecurities – teachers can "mediate the experience" of reading the *Harry Potter* series.

The above quotes by the three teachers demonstrate clearly all six levels of the Reader Response approach (Thomson, 1987). These teachers revealed their ability to literally understand the text, empathise with the text by relating it to the lives of the learners, provide analogies between the learners and the characters, teach reflection and understanding, evaluate the context and circumstances of the novels as well as recognise the actual function of the text

(Spirovska, 2019). Teachers one, two and three believed it was important to allow children to draw their own conclusions – they should be allowed to funnel their own beliefs/perceptions of the text and their experiences to create their own Reader Response. As stated in the literature review, the English classroom should provide a safe space for learners to experience and question what they read – this view was supported by the teacher participants.

The teachers who participated in the focus group recognised that magic and witchcraft are important African themes, and that there is a need to teach these to children from a multicultural perspective:

> *Because certainly in a number of the African cultures magic has very strong it was witchcraft. Magic, you know, magic in witchcraft is an incredibly strong motif in not only in the stories but also in cultural practice.* (Teacher Three)

However, Teacher Three indicated that there is a difference between the magic and witchcraft in African cultures compared to the magic and witchcraft in *Harry Potter*.

> *The idea of witchcraft is much stronger in African communities and African belief systems and, and so I think in that respect, the messages might be different. Yeah. In terms of what's coming through, like, you know, we talked about very narrow-minded Christians, but you know, the joke about it being witchcraft is not often a joke. You know, spells are real in many, many African cultures.*
>
> *I don't know if there is a distance because the characters are white or from England or from some place that is not South Africa. But I don't know if all the same messages would come across…*

Farzan (2019) believes "The curses and spells used in the [*Harry Potter*] books are actual curses and spells; which when read by a human being risk conjuring evil spirits into the presence of the person reading the text." However, Teacher Three questioned the difference between a spell and a prayer. This teacher did not elaborate on this – she simply posed a rhetorical question whether or not there truly is a difference between a prayer and a spell.

In summary, these teachers felt that children should be exposed to a variety of literature, including *Harry Potter*, so that children can determine what their beliefs are, and not simply uncritically follow the beliefs of their parents. Additionally, learners should be given opportunities to ask and learn in a safe space. These teachers also touched on the idea that

perhaps people/parents who are opposed to these types of texts may not have read them or are so opposed to them, that they merely make assumptions.

5.5.2 Race as a theme

The *Harry Potter* novels are set in the United Kingdom and written by a British author and therefore contain multiple European concepts. Race as a theme is important when deciding what literature should be taught to children in a South African classroom (Chimuse, 2021; Ned, 2019). Unfortunately, the learner participants did not comment on race or representation in their questionnaires or during their focus group. One may wonder why that is, and how race and representation should be emphasised in the English Home Language classroom according to the learners of this study.

When asked if the *Harry Potter* novels should be recommended to children over the age of eleven, Parent Five commented:

> *No. …With race relations the way they are in the world today, perhaps children should be taught the truth about colonialism and how to be proud of their race, particularly in a country where 70% of the population has no sense of identity or pride in who they are. … It is difficult, as it has always been, for children of colour to identify with European ideas and characters, even if the cast of characters are diverse.*

This parent stated that *Harry Potter* should not be taught in the South African classroom, as the novels are set in a western and European context. This parent wanted children to read literature from the perspective of Africans in order to instil a sense of pride in their ancestry and heritage, and would like children to read about people and places familiar to them. Ned (2019) agrees with this sentiment. However, Chimuse (2021) indicates that it is also important for learners to understand the histories and cultures of people globally by including both western and indigenous texts in the classroom. When considering the literature taught in schools across South Africa, it is problematic that African literature is not the main subject matter. As mentioned previously, the IEB teachers have the freedom to select their own set works and there is, therefore, no one regulating or encouraging the reading of African literature.

Parent Four mentioned:

> *My least favourite part of the entire series was the way the author describes race only when the character she is describing is not white.*

This parent found it problematic that one would or should assume that all the characters in the series are white unless stated otherwise. This approach in the novels alienated this parent, who although white, thought this a racist approach in the text.

Interestingly, Teacher Two commented that perhaps reading a novel with these kinds of flaws is ideal for teaching and learning:

> *I've found I've had a lot of very meaningful conversations with my learners, because they're able to ask me questions that they can't ask at home, because they immediately shut down, especially when it comes to topics like race, because the moment you introduce a book, and you're like, there's prejudice, this is racism, the amount of conversations you can have with kids, because you've picked a book that you think can get them engaged in something they're not familiar with.*

According to this teacher, the more opportunities teachers provide learners to discuss and question various texts, the better they will be able to engage with challenging topics. It is therefore necessary to teach learners that not everything they read or are presented with is valid and fair. This is especially important in today's society:

> *We do live in a Hamilton world now. What Hamilton the musical has done is, it's not saying we cannot have a Harry Potter who is black. Not saying we can't have a Hermine who's not mixed race. And so, Hamilton has changed everything. So yes, kids now can engage. For example, Annie - now my kid goes and watches Annie … his version of Annie is black.* (Teacher One)

In today's society, representation is incredibly important. The South African classrooms are microcosms of the diversity in the country and therefore the literature should be a reflection of this. Teacher One is advocating for representation in literature and for exposing learners to characters that look like them. The musical *Hamilton* is relevant because the major roles are played by black or biracial actors: "This is a story about America then, told by America now, and we want to eliminate any distance. Our story should look the way our country looks" (Miranda, 2020). When considering the third research question of this study, *How can Harry Potter be integrated in the South African English classroom*, the teachers suggested the

deconstruction of race by reading *Harry Potter* in class. Teaching these novels in South Africa could provide an opportunity to engage with stereotypes, race and racism as well as prejudice. The participating teachers wanted to have these "meaningful conversations" with their learners.

5.5.3 Imagination as a theme

As stated previously, it is important for children to have imagination. The more children read, especially within the genres of fiction and fantasy, the greater the imagination of the child will be: "Children know perfectly well that unicorns aren't real, but they also know that books about unicorns, if they are good books, are true books" (Le Guin, 2018). Leaners Three, Four and Six believed that *Harry Potter* fosters imagination and creativity, and they, including Learner Eight, thought that this was the reason why *Harry Potter* should be taught at schools. Learner One agreed: "They provoke imagination and take you on an adventure for all ages". Two parents agreed that *Harry Potter* is ideal to enhance imagination in children:

Parent Two	"*Harry Potter* and his world creates such different ways of life that really taps into their imagination and fosters a love of reading from an early age."
Parent Four	"I do believe the *Harry Potter* books are important to read because they are entertaining and an opportunity to expand young imaginations."

When I attempted to discuss the above during the focus groups, the learners required more prompting, and simply answered "yes" when asked if the novels help with imagination. They were unable to explain how imagination improves education. As discusses in the previous sections, teachers believed that reading the novels engages learners' critical thinking and reasoning skills. It also opened the learners up to a world of fantasy and enchantment.

5.5.4 Bildungsroman as a theme

The *Bildungsroman*, or coming-of-age story, allows children and learners to experience and learn from characters of a similar age, who go through similar events and challenges (Kane, Byrne & Scheepers, 2014, pp.120-121). Parent Four agreed that *Harry Potter* can be seen as a *Bildungsroman* and should be read by learners aged 11 and older: "I would recommend these books not only because I, and my children enjoyed the books but Harry's age in the first book is 11 which allows children to grow and learn with Harry." Parent Three also reasoned that children benefit from reading this series because "It's a coming of age story about children finding themselves and seeing that their dreams can come true. It gives children hope." As

mentioned previously, the themes explored in the novels are beneficial to learners because they experience much of the same: "Life lessons explored by these teens in the books are much like those my children have already been exposed to" (Parent Two). Similarly, the teacher and learner participants agreed with the parents in this regard and said that the series teaches life lessons that learners can identify with such as the importance of friendship and the significance of trusting your values, and the necessity of treating everyone equally and with dignity. One of the learners (Learner Three) indicated, as recorded in the focus group, that *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age story as "it's people [their] age how they struggle with these problems they have and how they have to solve them". This learner emphasised the benefits of reading the *Harry Potter* series because of the relevance of real-life themes and topics to children of a similar age. The learners, however, did not discuss what kinds of problems exist in coming-of-age stories.

5.5.5 Academics/education as a theme

As the focus of this study is the perceptions of *Harry Potter* in the classroom, it is important to consider academics and education as a theme. One parent commented that they read *The Color Purple* at school, which was "ideal, thought provoking and fostered an interesting debate in the classroom at the time, however due to a parent campaigning we were unable to finish the set work" (Parent Four). It is a pity when literature that is thought-provoking is banned. Similarly, as discussed previously, the *Harry Potter* books have been banned and burned in various states in America.

During the learner focus group discussion, Learner Five agreed that these novels are valuable academically as they can assist with essay writing. The language and syntax that learners are exposed to while reading can greatly improve their own writing. In addition, during the focus group, Learner Five explained that he could relate to the novel as the characters are also in school (level one – literal understanding). Learner Three indicated that she enjoyed reading literature that is serious and captivating (level two – empathy).

Learner Eight said that these books include some lessons, such as "be careful who you trust". However, this learner also stated that the perception of school in the *Harry Potter* series is unrealistic – when reading *Harry Potter* children are not reading about realistic education at all, and that magic does not exist. Importantly, Learner Four did not believe that learners should have a say in the books that are taught at school because:

> *If you, for example, are reading something that you are really against, suicide or something, that could trigger some people. Or if it's like about another, like mental illness or something like that, it could trigger some people who might get upset with something like that.*

Due to the fast-paced world children are exposed to through social media, it is important for learners to be taught how to deal with difficult subject matter such as suicide or mental health. As mentioned previously, the classroom provides a safe space for learners to deal with these topics that might trigger trauma. The learners in this study were clearly concerned about topics such as these, and these topics should therefore be addressed.

The teacher participants in the study indicated that *Harry Potter* should be recommended to children over the age of eleven because:

Teacher One	Children can relate to so many things in the books.
Teacher Two	Brilliant storyline and excellent standard of English.
Teacher Three	Simply because young people in my extended family and among my friends' children who have excelled academically, many of which have been fans of the *Harry Potter* books.
Teacher Four	They encourage reading and pose interesting questions for young people to grapple with.

When asked whether these books should be taught at schools, the teachers responded:

Teacher One	It is well written, good English, relatable to both kids and adults.
Teacher Two	Too many parents will be upset.
Teacher Three	*Harry Potter* is possibly the most successful series of books in history. Yes it should be taught in schools. The success of the book is so significant that it could be taught in English but also in Drama, Business and History.
Teacher Four	They are lovely books that children enjoy, there are good lessons, and they are easy to read. However, I think that schools should open up a child's knowledge of other series.

Therefore, the teachers believed that all children should read these books, but two indicated that they should not be taught at school, primarily because of the themes of magic and witchcraft. Yet, it is necessary to include that one teacher stated that the decision to teach the

novels should not be based off the negative perceptions of parents. Teacher Three indicated that it is beneficial to introduce *Harry Potter* in the curriculum, as it could be used to teach across the curriculum in different subjects. During the focus group, Teacher Three elaborated that the series could be used to discuss aspects of business studies such as the impact the series had on the publishing field:

> *In business and that, when you look at it in publishing, it was a significant moment in publishing. It did what no other book had done for a very long time, I don't think any book but other than a certain book [Fifty Shades of Grey], since then, actually did in terms of the volume of sales. In terms of it's a franchise that has made billions and will continue to make billions for generations.*

Teacher Four is an advocate for the *Harry Potter* books, yet she did not believe that they were the only books that could be used as a successful teaching tool. She indicated that there were a plethora of novels available that could be more applicable and appropriate to the South African learner. Teacher Four did unfortunately not give examples or indicate why they would be better.

During the focus group discussion, the teachers stated that the novels were valuable only up to a certain age group or grade:

Teacher Two stated:

> *Up to a certain point, they are very well written, English is good. They, they follow all the correct English rules, which I like, but also only up to a certain point because the the English is great when you're doing it in grade 4, 5 and 6. After that, like, like I said, there's no more value to the language because it stays at the same level. So, it doesn't, it doesn't introduce new language; doesn't introduce new words; where where there might be a bit more challenged, but for the beginning for, for speaking good English, I do believe it is valuable*

The aim of my research has been to consider if the literature is valuable for Grade 8 and/or 9 learners. If qualified educators believe that the language is not intricate enough for those grades, then perhaps the *Harry Potter* series is not ideal. As discussed in my literature review and in the data analysis above, the series is appropriate due to the lessons and themes presented. However, to be a successful educational tool, the literature needs to be appropriate and valuable

in all aspects – learners in the English Home Language classroom need to be able to engage with and learn from the language used, and this is not possible if the language is too simplistic for their age group.

Teacher Three added:

> *I think there is definitely value and with the language, but also their cultural phenomenon, understanding that cultural phenomena, understanding the references subsequently, most definitely. But the language then becomes very staid, it doesn't develop further. If you think about what we're teaching, even grade 9 level. The level of language is different.*

This quote concurs with the quote and discussion above. However, the literature holds value in terms of the lessons taught, as indicated by the teachers. The series is also important because of the "cultural phenomena" surrounding it and it is referenced frequently in other literature and media today, but the learners have to be able to learn from the language they read.

Furthermore, Teacher One said that the *Harry Potter* novels are relevant to other subjects, not only English:

> *… So really, I, when I give talks that I created, a talk called Fred talks, we spend at least 15 minutes talking about Harry Potter alone in publishing and the impact it had. ... And yeah, so there's a lot of value in other things, in terms of other things, and also her [JK Rowling's] life story. And what she went through and how she had to… yeah, yeah, so there's not just an English, it goes beyond that. It's a very inspirational story about innovation and your… they said, this is not a children's book. This is too thick to be a children's book. It's too complex, it's too dark and everything. And she went ahead with it anyway. And it basically changed the game.*

The perception that the series is dark links to my literature review. The concern was that the *Harry Potter* novels are too dark to be considered as children's literature. However, by the incredible number of sales the series has had – over 500 million copies by 2018 (Wradmin, 2021) – it is clear that it has been a huge success as children's literature. The dark subject matter within the series provides learners with a safe space to discover these themes and subjects, and teaches them how to deal with them, rather than allowing learners to experience such dark content in their own lives with no support and guidance.

The above also corresponds with the university lessons of Troseth (2018) and Deets (2009). Teacher One recognised that there is value in this franchise beyond the study of English literature and English grammar. Teacher One indicated that the series holds value in the teaching of globalisation and psychology, and in discussing the importance of franchising and good business management in the classroom. Professor Deets (2009) taught bureaucracy and globalisation through *Harry Potter*, and Teacher One held that these novels could be used to teach Business Studies (another subject provided by the Department of Education and the IEB) and publishing.

A point that many learner participants made, was that learners should be given a say in the literature they read because "the books read at [eleven years old] in school are unbelievably boring, and while they may learn a lesson from them, they'll never remember, but they will remember Harry Potter for the rest of their lives" (Learner Eleven). A response such as this suggests that learners want to create para-social relationships with the characters in the texts they read (Horton & Wohl, 1956) because they want to become invested and involved in what they read – they do not want to be bored in their classrooms. When asked what their least favourite part of the novels was, four of seven learners who provided valid answers said that it was when a specific character died. This proves that readers become personally invested in what they read – they create a Reader Response, which is dependent on the one-sided relationship they have formed with these characters. This was emphasised by Learner One, who indicated that these books should not necessarily be taught at school, because "there would be tears everywhere".

5.6 Summary of findings

The parent participants indicated that they were concerned with the impact of the *Harry Potter* novels from a religious perspective. They held the view that novels read in class had to correspond with the teachers' and learners' religion. Overall, the teachers believed that the novels should be read, regardless of religion, and that it was the responsibility of the teacher or parent to explain, clarify and guide the learner; that learners should have the opportunity to read outside the parameters set by their cultural norms to gain a better understanding of the world. The findings coincide with the information collected and presented in the literature review. As a whole, the participants were aware that negative perceptions of the *Harry Potter* series have an impact on the religious beliefs of individuals; however, participants also held the view that reading a series such as *Harry Potter* has various benefits such as fostering

creativity and imagination, and it allows children to read and experience new values and ideas. However, participants also indicated that these novels are not the only pieces of literature that can accomplish these outcomes. Furthermore, Parent Four and Parent Five referred to negative racial profiling in the series.

Academically, the participants agreed that the *Harry Potter* novels can foster creativity and imagination and are relatable to learners because they are *Bildungsroman.* Young readers can relate to and understand the characters, themes and experiences of the characters as they are of similar ages. The language use is suitable for learners from Grades 4 to 6. However, the themes of death and darkness become stronger later in the series, which may not be suited for learners in Grades 4 to 6. Yet, these themes may be interesting or entertaining to older readers. In addition, the novels could also be taught in the Business Studies classroom. Learners can get an understanding of marketing, publishing and franchising from the series.

The three research questions also need to be considered in this chapter. The first question, *What are the perceptions of the Harry Potter novels in South African English classrooms?* has been answered in the questionnaires and focus groups. The data provide clear evidence of how the individual participants perceived the *Harry Potter* novels. The teachers all agreed that these books should be taught in the South African English classroom. Three out of five parent participants, and nine out of eleven learner participants agreed that these novels hold educational value in the classroom. The second question, *How do the perceptions of learners, parents and teachers affect the teaching or lack thereof of the novels in South African schools?* has not been answered in its entirety. I have not identified a specific reason as to why it is not a set work. This may be due to the small sample from only one participating school. The parent participants, and the research in the literature review, have, however, alluded to the answer by stating that the themes in these novels, including witchcraft, may go against the religious beliefs of many South Africans. Parent participants also indicated that these novels do not contain sufficient racial representation. Finally, the third question, *Can Harry Potter be integrated in the South African English classroom?* has been answered as there were various suggestions and recommendations made to this affect.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has identified and discussed themes identified within the questionnaire and focus group responses of the learner, parent and teacher participants. The themes identified are:

1. Religion and witchcraft
2. Race
3. Imagination
4. Bildungsroman
5. Academics/Education

These themes have created a deeper understanding of the perceptions and beliefs of the participant groups concerning the teaching of the *Harry Potter* novels within the English Home Language classroom. The themes have been linked to the research questions of this dissertation, the literature review and the theoretical framework.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this dissertation includes a summary of the research and the study, a reflection on the limitations of the study and suggestions and recommendations for future studies. The aim of this study was to identify and understand the perceptions of educational stakeholders, specifically Grade 8 and 9 learners, their parents and English Home Language teachers of incorporating the *Harry Potter* novels as literature in their classrooms.

6.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One of this dissertation signposts what will be discussed throughout. This chapter introduces the reader to the impact that *Harry Potter* has had globally since its first release. The success of this series has fostered a love for the novels within many children, and adults. My passion for the series has been an inspiration for writing this dissertation.

Within the diverse culture and demographic of South Africa, it is important to consider the lives, values, beliefs and perspectives of all children. Unfortunately, due to the size and type of school chosen for the research, the sample size is limited.

Chapter Two analyses the literature dealing with the teaching of *Harry Potter*. Chapter Two identifies that there are university professors in the United States who use *Harry Potter* to teach their courses on child development (Troseth, 2018) and politics (Deets, 2009). The themes of the *Harry Potter* novels not only correlate to these university lecture topics, but also correspond with topics found in the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement and the Independent Examination Board Subject Assessment Guideline of Life Orientation. This chapter also identifies the negative perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels, whereby these books have been included on banned book lists and have even been burned. The series has also been on the 'most challenged book' list four times, as recently as 2019.

Chapter Three of this dissertation explores the theoretical framework of the study. The Reader Response approach (Thomson, 1987) holds that readers develop an emotional response to the characters that they read about in novels. Thomson (1987) identified six levels of this development within readers. In relation to the study, one might assume that those who truly enjoyed reading the *Harry Potter* novels would have created emotional responses to the characters.

In addition, this chapter discusses the para-social relationship theory by Horton and Wohl (1956). In relation to the Reader Response theory, when a reader creates a positive response to a text, it is likely that a para-social relationship is formed. This entails attachment, social realism and character personification. These three facets of these relationships create a one-sided bond from the perspective of the reader.

Chapter Four discusses the research design and methodology. The research paradigm is an interpretivist epistemology, and the ontology includes nominalism. This study followed a qualitative research approach, and the methods include questionnaires and focus group discussions. This chapter also considers the relevance of quality assurance and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five encompasses the presentation of data and the discussion of findings. The data are illustrated in graphs and tables (and included as appendices). Five themes were identified and discussed accordingly. It became clear that some parents were opposed to the teaching of *Harry Potter* in the South African English classroom for religious reasons and because of the lack of representation of African children, cultures and beliefs in the series.

Some learners enjoyed reading the novels and believed it taught them creativity and how to improve their imagination. Some also revealed that their parents were opposed to them reading the novels. The teacher participants all agreed that the novels hold value and should be read by children, yet not all teachers believed that they were ideal for the classroom. This relates to the level of register, and the fact that parents would be opposed to *Harry Potter* as a set work.

6.3 Limitations of the study

It is necessary to consider the limitations of the study in order to determine how future studies could improve on it. Upon reflecting on the process of writing this dissertation, it has occurred to me that I should have created a timeline for the completion of my work, as well as specify timelines for various parts of the dissertation. At the start of this journey, I felt I had ample time and opportunity to work on this dream, yet I underestimated the size of it, as well as the other personal obligations I had. Had I put more thought into the planning and organising of the study, I strongly believe that I would have finished as planned and would not have had to apply for a short extension.

In addition to time constraints, cooperation from some of my participants was problematic. The teacher and learner participants were eager to participate and assist. However, I had difficulty

in making contact with the parent participants. I regularly sent emails to parents, yet seldom received a response, especially once I had sent them the questionnaires. I appreciate the time the parent participants spent on answering the questionnaire in detail, yet I did not receive replies from many parents and therefore my learner to parent participant ratio is slanted. This could be seen as problematic as I have an unequal representation of answers. In addition, due to the difficulties I experienced with the parent participants, I decided not to convene a parent focus group. Again, this is potentially problematic as I was unable to discuss and collect more data from the parents. However, the data that I collected during the learner and teacher focus groups are rich and informative. It is necessary to add that not all of the learners and teachers who had completed the questionnaire participated in the focus groups due to absenteeism at school due to COVID-19.

During the data collection process, I realised that my research participants do not accurately reflect the diversity of our country as there is a lack of representation of different races and religious beliefs. At the start of this study, I recognised that this might be a hindrance. However, now I acknowledge that it is important for my study to reflect on the perceptions of all types of people, cultures and beliefs or else I cannot create a fully inclusive understanding of the beliefs of educational stakeholders. Yes, my subject pool and site are small, but this emphasises the fact that schools in South Africa have to work on improving inclusivity and representation.

6.4 Recommendations for future studies

Ideally, this study should be conducted within a much larger site, with a more diverse group of participants. It would be beneficial to extend this study into classrooms, where extracts of the novels could be taught and analysed to determine how the children, teachers and learners feel in the moment. Further research should be done by analysing the effects of reading the text – do the language skills and imagination of the learners truly improve? It would also be valuable to observe these lessons to determine what kind of questions the learners and parents pose, and how the English Home Language teacher responds to such questions.

6.5 Conclusion

Based on the information that stemmed from the questionnaires and focus groups, I have determined the concerns of teaching the *Harry Potter* novels within academic environments. I do believe that, as discussed, there is value in reading these novels. However, due to the lack of representation and relevance to children within Africa, it would be more apt to read novels that discuss magic and witchcraft from an African perspective.

Yet, I do also believe that children should be encouraged to read these books independently – whether at home or during reading time at school. Children should feel comfortable in their home and educational environment to ask questions if they are unclear or uncertain of certain themes in the novels. It is our responsibility as adults to provide safe spaces for children to explore; to make sure their minds are not closed off to circumstances that are unfamiliar to them.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms

Google dictionary

1. Franchise: “a general title or concept used for creating or marketing a series of products, typically films or television shows”
2. Fandom: “the state or condition of being a fan of someone or something”
3. Genre: “a style or category of art, mus*ic*, or literature”

Glossary of *Harry Potter* Terms

https://harrypotter.fandom.com/wiki/

4. Witchcraft: “the practice of magic”
5. Blood status: “also called purity of blood, is a concept in the wizarding world that distinguished between family trees that have different levels of magically-endowed members”.
6. Muggle: “a person without magical powers”
7. Half-blood: “refers to those wizards and witches who have magical and muggle ancestor in their family trees”.
8. Pure-blood: “the term applied to wizards and witches who have no muggle blood, muggle-borns, or half-bloods at all in their family tree”.
9. Dementors: a gliding, wraithlike Dark creature, widely considered to be one of the foulest to inhabit the wizarding world. Dementors feed on human happiness and thus generate feelings of depression and despair in any person in close proximity to them”.

APPENDIX B

Research Study Questionnaire *S Stenemann*

Parent, teacher, and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms

This questionnaire will be handed out to the following people:

1. *English Home Language teachers at Maerua School*
2. *Grade 8/9 learners at Maerua School*
3. *Parents/Guardians of grade 8/9 learners at Maerua School*

Prior to the completion of this questionnaire, all participants will have signed letters of consent or assent in the case of children under the age of 18.

The questionnaire questions are based on the research questions below. Please do not answer the research questions, only the questionnaire below.

Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of the *Harry Potter* novels in South African, English classrooms?
2. Do the perceptions of learners, parents and teachers affect the teaching or lack thereof of the novels in South African schools?
3. Can *Harry Potter* be integrated in the South African English classroom?

Questionnaire

1. Please tick the relevant box
   a. Race

      ☐ White, ☐ Black, ☐ Coloured, ☐ Asian, ☐ prefer not to say

   b. Gender

      ☐ Male, ☐ Female, ☐ Other, ☐ prefer not to say

   c. Religion

      ☐ Christian, ☐ Hindu, ☐ Muslim, ☐ Atheist, ☐ Other

      Please specify:_____

   d. Familiarity with *Harry Potter*

      ☐ Yes, ☐ No

2. Please answer the questions in the spaces provided.

   a. Have you read any of the *Harry Potter* books? If not, please specify why not/If yes, how old were you and why did you read these books?

_____
_____
_____

   b. Would you recommend these books to children of 11 years and older? Indicate/motivate why/why not.

_____
_____
_____

   c. Do you think that it is necessary/important for children to read the *Harry Potter* books? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

   d. What was your favourite part of the story?

_____
_____
_____

   e. What was your least favourite part of the story?

_____
_____
_____

   f. Do you agree that *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age story that children can read as they grow older? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

   g. Do you believe that these books should be taught at schools? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

   h. List three books you have read at school.

_____
_____
_____

i. Were the books that you read at school well selected / ideal for the classroom? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

j. Do you believe that parents should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

k. Do you believe that teachers should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

l. Do you believe that learners should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for taking part in this study.

Your answers will remain anonymous.

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

4 March 2021

Dear Teacher,

Research Consent Letter

My name is Simone Michaela Stenemann and I am currently a Masters student in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Gerhard Genis at the University of Pretoria's Department of Humanities Education. The title of my study is: ***Parent, teacher, and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms.***

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions that educational stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, and learners) have on the *Harry Potter* novel series. These novels are not a preferred setworks in South African English Home Language classrooms and I would like to determine if there is a correlation between this and the perception of the stakeholders.

I would like you to participate in my study. Your participation will include the completion of a questionnaire as well as possible participation in a focus group discussion with other teachers. The discussion will take place after school as not to disturb the teaching and learning at your school. The discussion will be held at a place and time suitable to you, and will last for approximately 1 hour.

Participation is voluntary and participants 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 electronically for 15 years as regulated by the University of Pretoria. The audio recordings made during this time will only be heard by myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcasted to any third party now or in the future. There are no risks involved in participating in this study.

With regards to COVID-19 protocols, the focus group will take place with all necessary regulations in place including the wearing of masks, taking of temperatures, sanitiser readily available and two metre distance between all participants. In the event that there will be another lockdown, the questionnaires will be emailed to all participants to complete and returned to me. The focus group will take place on Zoom.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:
Simone Michaela Stenemann
0829790650
simistenemann@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr Gerhard Genis
gerhard.genis@up.ac.za

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 to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (teacher) agree to take part in this research. I agree to allow the researcher to audio record the focus group discussions for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

● **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 be harmed in any way.

● **Privacy** - the confidentiality and anonymity of human participants will be protected at all times.

● **Trust** - participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or when publishing the outcomes.

Teacher's name: _____

Teacher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

4 March 2021

Dear Principal,

Research Consent Letter

My name is Simone Michaela Stenemann (951204 0164 084) and I am currently a Masters student in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Gerhard Genis at the University of Pretoria's Department of Humanities Education. The title of my study is: ***Parent, teacher and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms.***

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions that educational stakeholders (i.e. teachers, parents and learners) have on the *Harry Potter* novel series. These novels are not a preferred setworks in South African English Home Language classrooms and I would like to determine if there is a correlation between this and the perception of the stakeholders.

I hereby ask for permission to conduct my research at Seren House Cottage School. My research will include handing out questionnaires to four English Home Language teachers, sixteen randomly selected learners from grades 8 and 9 and the parents/guardians of the learners. Hereafter, I would like to hold three focus group discussions – one per participant group. The data collection processes will take place after school as not to disturb the teaching and learning at your school. Each focus group discussion will last for approximately 1 hour.

The name of the school and participants will not be revealed. The information obtained during this study will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research. Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school, parents, teachers and learners. All information collected will be securely stored electronically for 15 years as regulated by the University of Pretoria. The audio recordings made during this time will only be heard by myself

and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcasted to any third party now or in the future. There are no risks involved in participating in this study.

With regards to COVID-19 protocols, the focus group will take place with all necessary regulations in place including the wearing of masks, taking of temperatures, sanitiser readily available and two metre distance between all participants. In the event that there will be another lockdown, the questionnaires will be emailed to all participants to complete and returned to me. The focus group will take place on Zoom.

We also would like to request your permission to use the data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:
Simone Michaela Stenemann
0829790650
simistenemann@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr Gerhard Genis
gerhard.genis@up.ac.za

Declaration of consent

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

I, _____ (your name), principal at_____ agree to allow my school to take part in this research. I agree to allow the researcher to audio record the focus group discussions for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

● **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 be harmed in any way.

● **Privacy** - the confidentiality and anonymity of human participants will be protected at all times.

● **Trust** - participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or when publishing the outcomes.

Principal's name: _____

Principal's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

4 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Research Consent Letter

My name is Simone Michaela Stenemann and I am currently a Masters student in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Gerhard Genis at the University of Pretoria's Department of Humanities Education. The title of my study is: ***Parent, teacher and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms.***

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions that educational stakeholders (i.e. teachers, parents and learners) have of the *Harry Potter* novel series. These novels are not a preferred setworks in South African English Home Language classrooms and I would like to determine if there is a correlation between this and the perception of the stakeholders.

I would like you to participate in my study. Your participation will include the completion of a questionnaire as well as possible participation in a focus group discussion with other parents. The discussion will be held at a place and time suitable to you, and will last for approximately 1 hour.

Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school, parents, teachers and learners. All information collected will be securely stored electronically for 15 years as regulated by the University of Pretoria. The audio recordings made during this time will only be heard by myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcasted to any third party now or in the future. There are no risks involved in participating in this study.

With regards to COVID-19 protocols, the focus group will take place with all necessary regulations in place including the wearing of masks, taking of temperatures, sanitiser readily available and two metre distance between all participants. In the event that there will be another lockdown, the questionnaires will be emailed to all participants to complete and returned to me. The focus group will take place on Zoom.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:
Simone Michaela Stenemann
simistenemann@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr Gerhard Genis
gerhard.genis@up.ac.za

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 to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (parent/guardian) agree to take part in this research. I agree to allow the researcher to audio record the focus group discussions for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

● **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 be harmed in any way.

● **Privacy** - the confidentiality and anonymity of human participants will be protected at all times.

● **Trust** - participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or when publishing the outcomes.

Parent's/Guardian's name:

_____

Parent's/Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

5 April 2021

Dear Learner,

Learner Assent Letter

My name is Simone Michaela Stenemann and I am currently a Masters student in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Gerhard Genis at the University of Pretoria's Department of Humanities Education. The title of my study is: ***Parent, teacher and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms.***

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions that teachers, parents and learners have of the *Harry Potter* novel series. These novels are not preferred setworks and thereby not taught in South African English Home Language classrooms and I would like to determine if there is a link between this and the perceptions of teachers, parents and learners.

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and possibly take part in a focus group discussion with your peers. This will take place at a safe venue after school, as not to interrupt the teaching and learning at school, and will last for approximately 1 hour.

If you would like to participate in this study, your parents will be asked to sign a letter of consent which gives their permission for you to participate.

The information gathered during this study will be treated with confidentiality and will be used only for this research. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms (aliases) will be used to protect the identity of your school,

your teachers, your parents and you, the learner. All information collected will be securely stored electronically for 15 years by the University of Pretoria. The audio recordings made during this time will only be heard by myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcasted to anyone else. There are no risks involved in taking part in this study.

With regards to COVID-19 protocols, the focus group will take place with all necessary regulations in place including the wearing of masks, taking of temperatures, sanitiser readily available and two metre distance between all participants. In the event that there will be another lockdown, the questionnaires will be emailed to all participants to complete and returned to me. The focus group will take place on Zoom.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the property of the University of Pretoria. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or my supervisor.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:
Simone Michaela Stenemann
simistenemann@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr Gerhard Genis
gerhard.genis@up.ac.za

Declaration of assent

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your assent. 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 (that is you) be revealed to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (learner) agree to allow the researcher to use my questionnaire as well as audio record the focus group discussions for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

- **Voluntary participation** - I may withdraw from the research at any time during the study.
- **Informed consent** - I will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes and must give assent to participate in this research.
- **Safety in participation** - I will not be placed at risk or harmed in any way.
- **Privacy**- my confidentiality and anonymity will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**- I will not be deceived or betrayed during the research process.

Learner's name: _____

Learner's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

4 March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Research Consent Letter

My name is Simone Michaela Stenemann and I am currently a Masters student in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr Gerhard Genis at the University of Pretoria's Department of Humanities Education. The title of my study is: ***Parent, teacher and learner perceptions of teaching Harry Potter in English Home Language classrooms.***

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions that educational stakeholders (i.e. teachers, parents and learners) have of the *Harry Potter* novel series. These novels are not a preferred setworks in South African English Home Language classrooms and I would like to determine if there is a correlation between this and the perception of the stakeholders.

I hereby ask for permission for your child to participate in my study. If you allow this, they will be asked to complete a questionnaire and possibly participate in a focus group discussion with their peers. This will take place at a safe venue after school, as not to interrupt the teaching and learning at school, and will last for approximately 1 hour.

Participation is voluntary and participants 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 electronically for 15 years as regulated by the University of Pretoria. The audio recordings made during this time will only be heard by myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcasted to any third party now or in the future. There are no risks involved in participating in this study.

With regards to COVID-19 protocols, the focus group will take place with all necessary regulations in place including the wearing of masks, taking of temperatures, sanitiser readily available and two metre distance between all participants. In the event that there will be another lockdown, the questionnaires will be emailed to all participants to complete and returned to me. The focus group will take place on Zoom.

We also would like to request your permission to use the data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact me or my supervisor.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:
Simone Michaela Stenemann
simistenemann@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr Gerhard Genis
gerhard.genis@up.ac.za

Declaration of consent

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

I, _____ (parent/guardian) agree to allow my child to take part in this research. I agree to allow the researcher to audio record the focus group discussions for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

● **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 be harmed in any way.

● **Privacy** - the confidentiality and anonymity of human participants will be protected at all times.

● **Trust** - participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or when publishing the outcomes.

Parent's/Guardian's name:

_____

Parent's/Guardian's signature: ____ _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H

Compiled and Coded Teacher Questionnaire Data

The data collected from the four questionnaires completed by the four English Home Language teachers are below. The closed ended questions have been illustrated with pie charts, which display the percentage of the answers for easy comprehension. The longer or open-ended answers have been tabulated as a summary of the findings. A key has been used to code the data.

Key:

Religion

Witchcraft

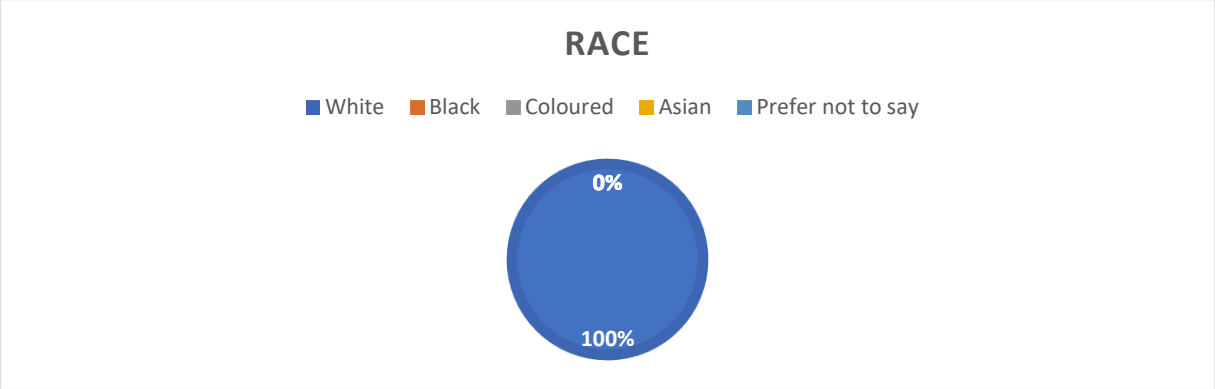
Race

Imagination

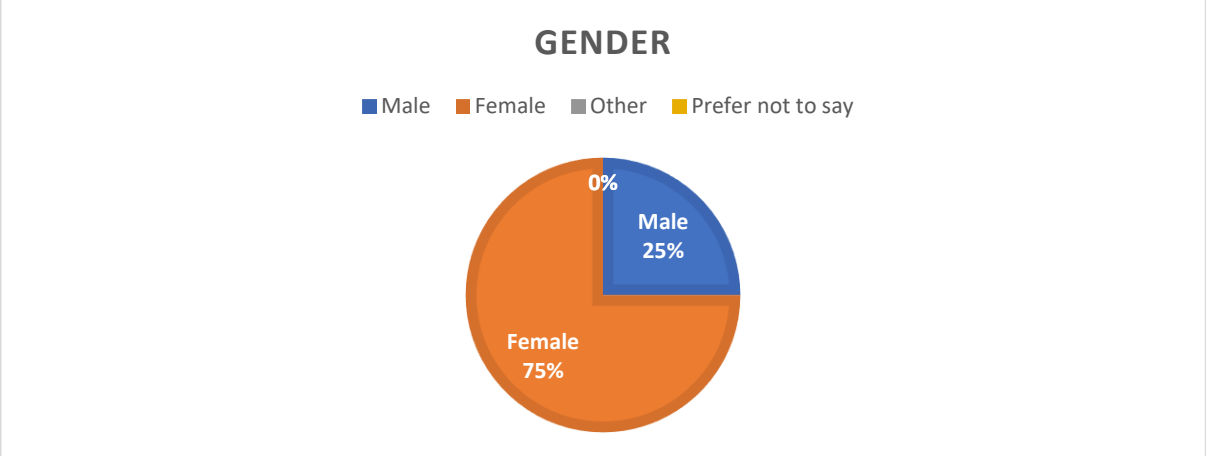
Bildungsroman

Academics/Education

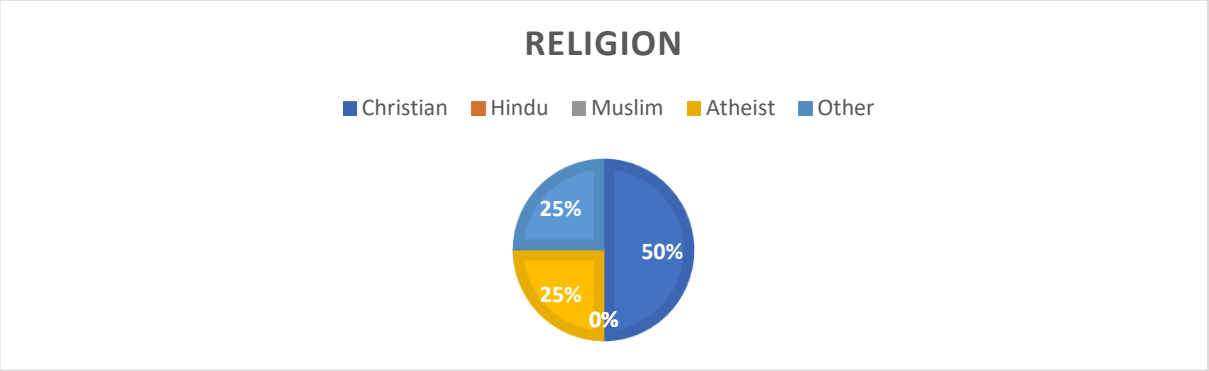
Question 1a



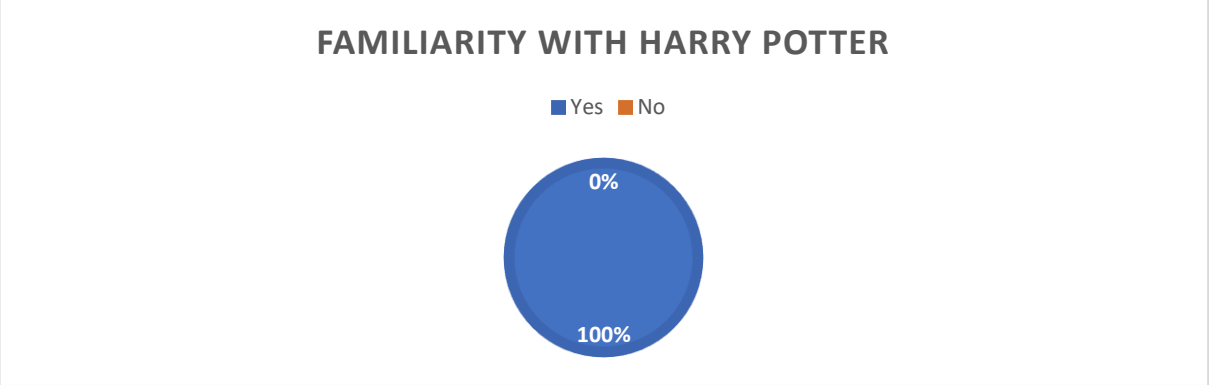
Question 1b



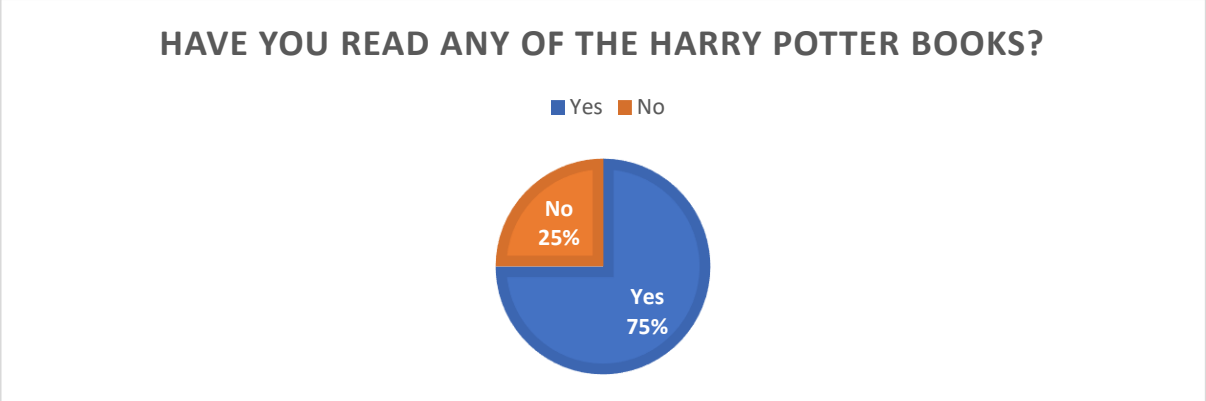
Question 1c



Question 1d



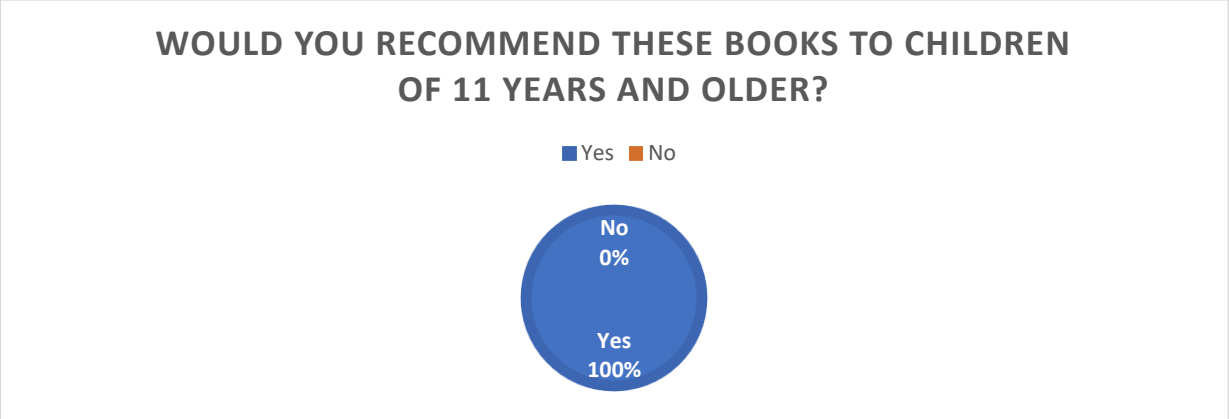
Question 2a



Have you read any of the *Harry Potter* books? If not, please specify why not/If yes, hold old were you and why did you read these books?	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: I started reading the books in grade 5. I received the first 3 books as a gift. TEACHER TWO: Am an english teacher and loved them. TEACHER FOUR:	TEACHER THREE: The books have never been of interest of me. I however watched some of the movies and I remember falling asleep while watching.The commercial success of the franchise and its profound effect in terms of publishing are of huge interes to me.

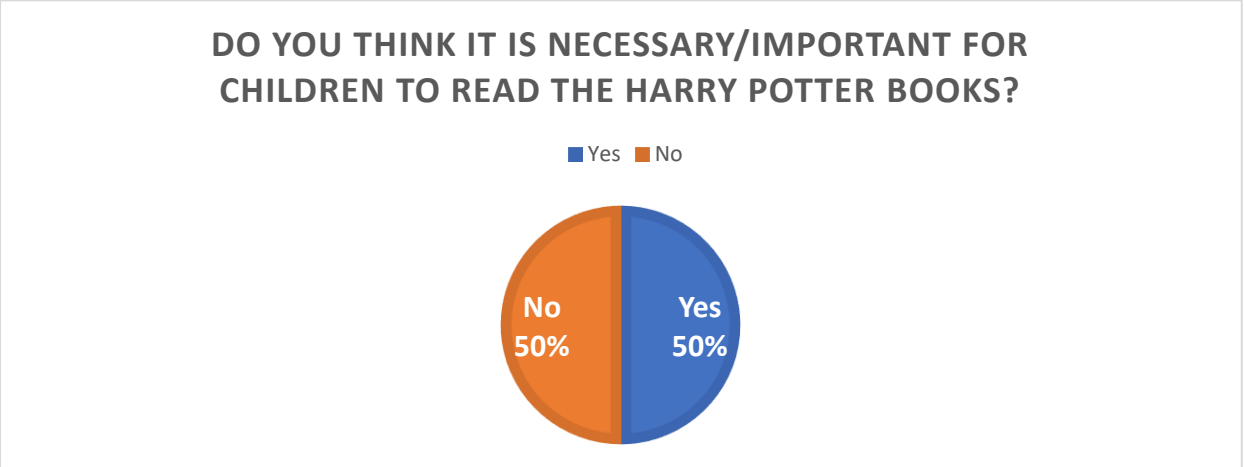
First time as a university student (-+19-25) as they were released. Second time with my son who is 9.	

Question 2b



Would you recommend these books to children of 11 years and older? Indicate/motivate why/why not.	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: Children can relate to so many things in the books. TEACHER TWO: Brilliant storyline and excellent standard of English. TEACHER THREE: Simply because young people in my extended family and among my friends children who have excelled academically, many of which have been fans of the *Harry Potter* books. TEACHER FOUR: They encourage reading and pose interesting questions for young people to grapple with.	

Question 2c



Do you think that it is necessary/important for children to read the *Harry Potter* books? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
TEACHER THREE: It is important for children to read. *Harry Potter*(from book sales figures alone) is a book that children enjoy reading and a series that they continue reading until the end. So yes it is important for children to read *Harry Potter* it grips the attention of children and keeps them reading. TEACHER FOUR: It has become part of the culture, also I think the series has opened the door to a much greater choice of childrens literature more authors are writing in this genre for young people.	TEACHER ONE: Don't think it is important, but I believe that children will love to read the books. TEACHER TWO: Not everyone's choice, so much literature to choose from.

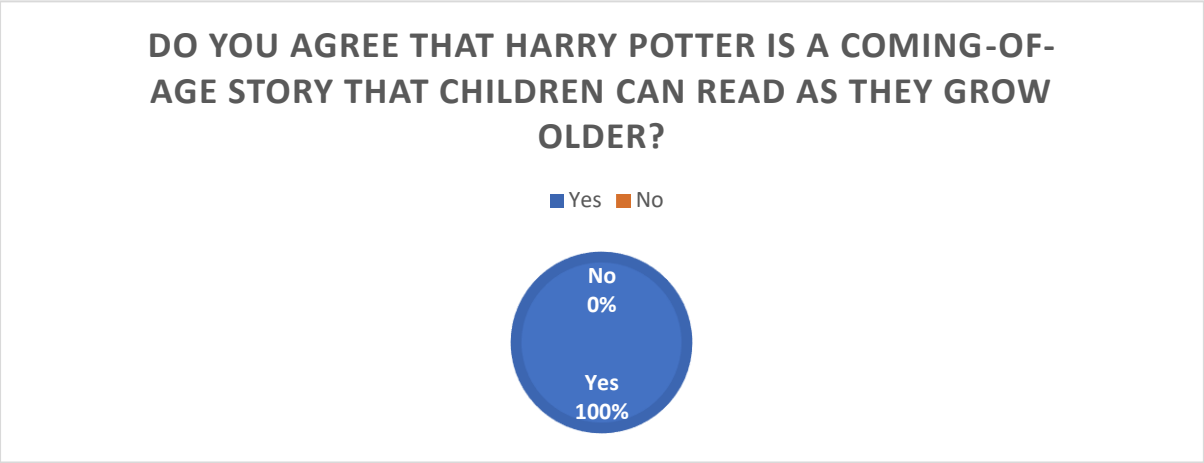
Question 2d

What was your favourite part of the story?
TEACHER ONE: When harry found out that Sirius was his Godfather/Guardian. TEACHER TWO: Cannot remember. TEACHER THREE: Not applicable. TEACHER FOUR: The relationship between the characters and the magic in a real world.

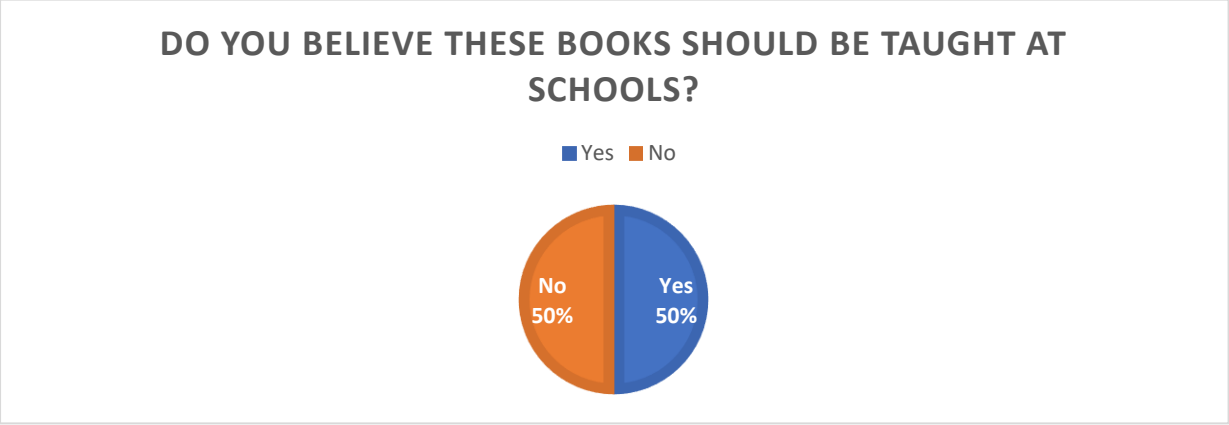
Question 2e

What was your least favourite part of the story?
TEACHER ONE: The deaths of multiple characters (Dumbledore, Sirius, Dobby, etc) TEACHER TWO: Cannot remember. TEACHER THREE: Not applicable. TEACHER FOUR: I found the last part of the series quite harrowing particularly the idea of soul splitting.

Question 2f



Do you agree that *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age story that children can read as they grow older? Why/ why not.	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: Yes! Because the characters in the book are also growing up and changing. TEACHER TWO: life lessons are fabulous. TEACHER FOUR: Many children can identify with Harry or Hermoine or Ron as well as the idea of the school.	



Question 2g

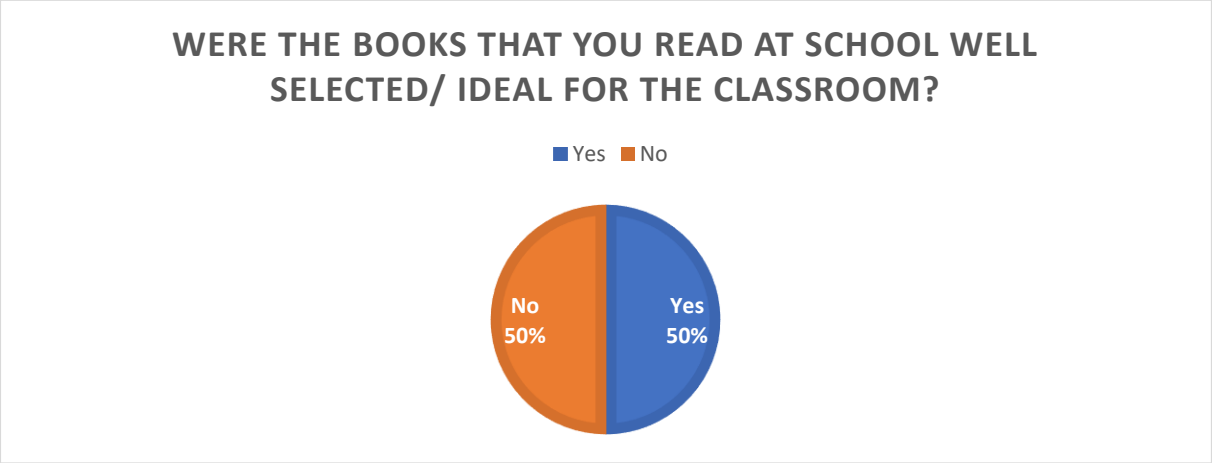
Do you believe that these books should be taught at schools? Why/ why not?	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: It is well written, good english, relatable to both kids and adults. TEACHER THREE: *Harry Potter* is possibly the most successful series of books in history. Yes iut should be	TEACHER TWO: Too many parents will be upset. TEACHER FOUR: They are lovely books that children enjoy, there are good lessons, and they are easy to read.

taught in schools. The success of the book is so significant that it could be taught in English but also in Drama, Bussiness and history.	However, I think that schools should open up a childs knowledge of other series.

Question 2h

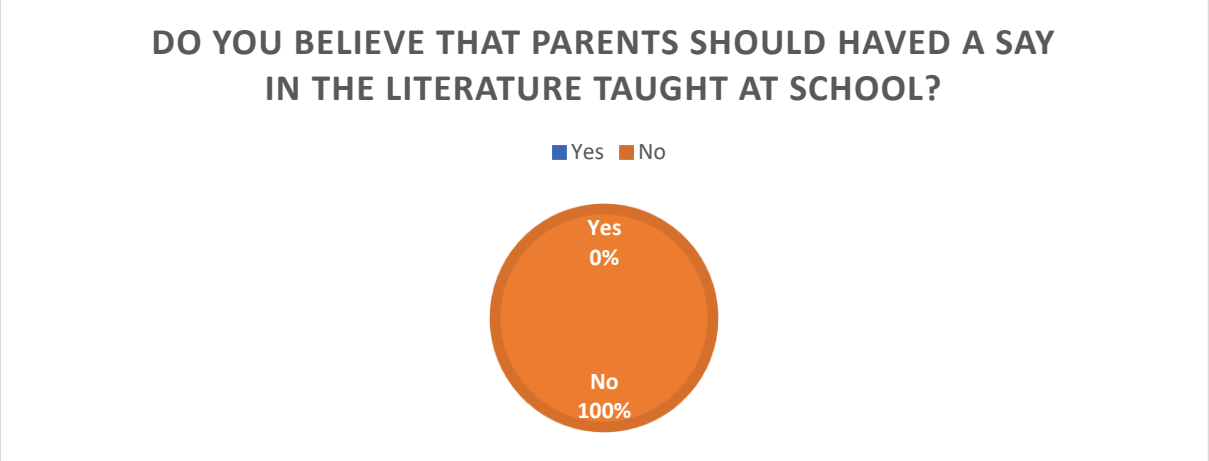
List three books you have read at school.
TEACHER ONE: 1. Bridge to Terabithia 2. Goodnight Mr Tom 3. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. TEACHER TWO: 1. The pearl 2. Of mice and men 3. Hamlet. TEACHER THREE: I cannot remember I was a fool with no interest in reading. TEACHER FOUR: 1. I heard an owl call my name 2. Tale of Two Cities.

Question 2i



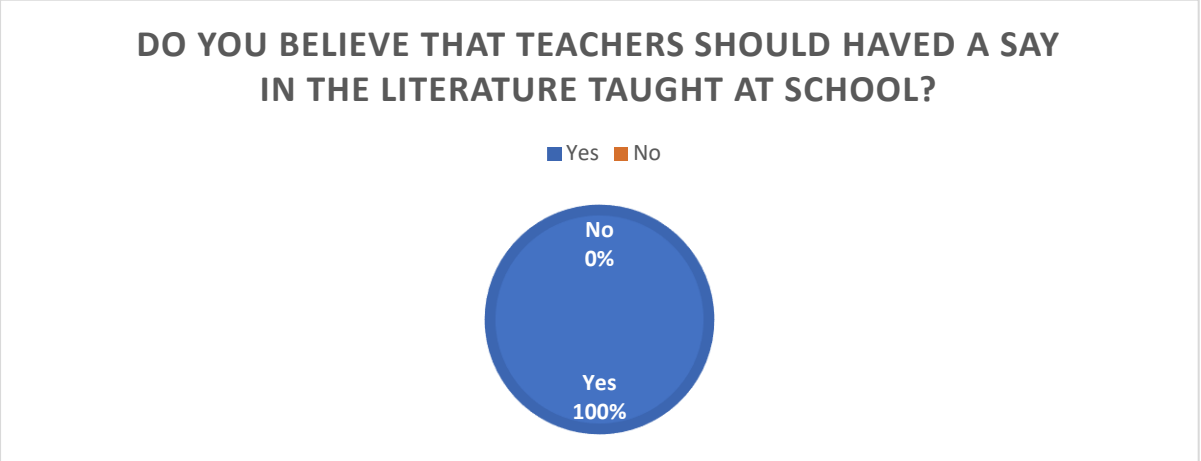
Were the books that you read at school well selected/ideal for the classroom? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: Most of the time they were. TEACHER FOUR: Although Charles Dickens was a little hard it opened up a world I knew nothing about.	TEACHER TWO: Poor content. TEACHER THREE: They bored me and I didn't feel like reading the books.

Question 2j



Do you believe that parents should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
	TEACHER TWO: They will never agree TEACHER THREE: No, unless the parent is involved in the teaching of literature as part of their profession. TEACHER FOUR: While parents can give their opinion it should not be something that should affect your childrens experience of a range of different literature.

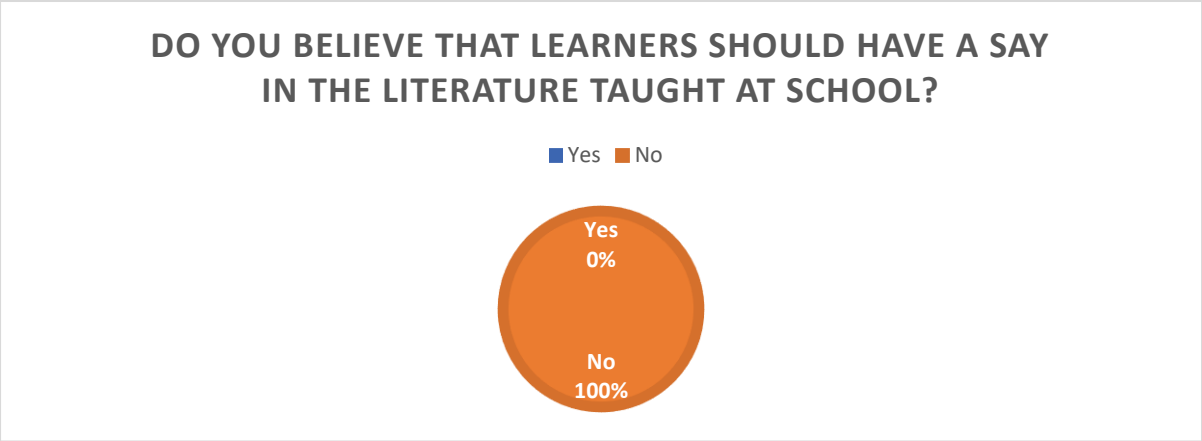
Question 2k



Do you believe that teachers should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
TEACHER ONE: Because they have to teach it.	

TEACHER TWO: The passion should show in their lesson TEACHER THREE: Teachers are educational specialists who spend a signifiant amount of the time with learners and can therefore choose appropriate content that will both engage the learners and have educational value. TEACHER FOUR: Teachers often knw their classes best and should be allowed to use this knowledge in selecting.	

Question 21



Do you believe that learners should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
	TEACHER ONE: It depends on their age. I would not allow for a grade 5 to choose what they want to read. Learners can make suggesstions that are then looked at by the english teachers. TEACHER TWO: They will never agree TEACHER THREE: They are to young and inexperienced to understand just how complex education and learning is. Choosing what is to be taught in literature requires significant experience, knowledge and skill. TEACHER FOUR: They can give their opinion but don't necessarilly have the scope to give an accurate or solid suggestion.

APPENDIX I

Compiled and Coded Parent Questionnaire Data

The data collected from the four questionnaires completed by five parents of grade 8 or 9 learners are below. As above, the closed ended questions have been illustrated with pie charts which display the percentage of the answers for easy comprehension. The longer or open-ended answers have been tabulated as a summary of the findings. A key has been used to code the data.

Key:

Religion

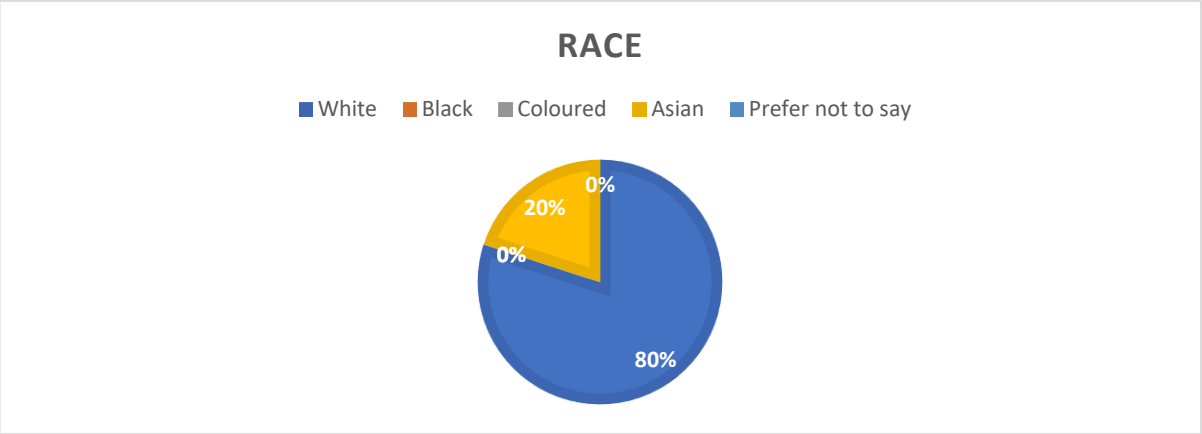
Witchcraft

Race

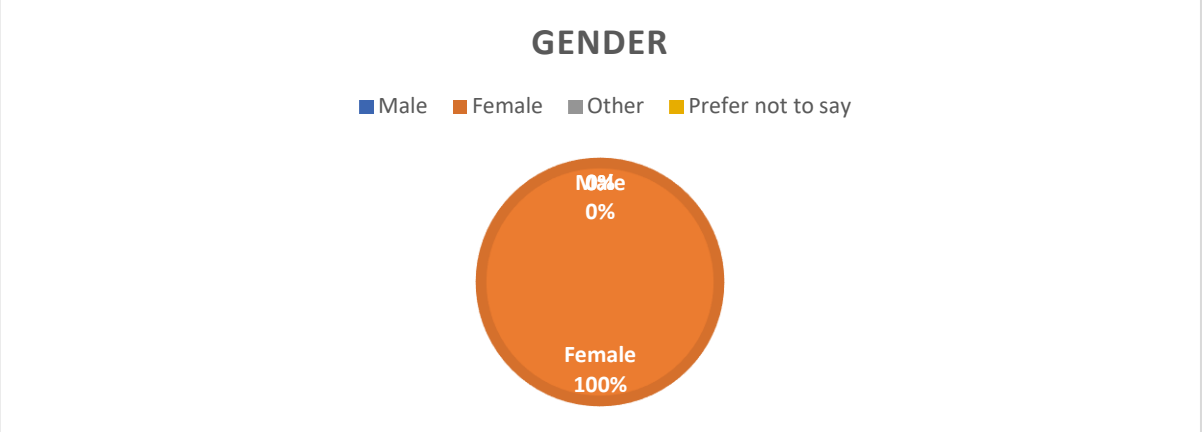
Imagination

Bildungsroman

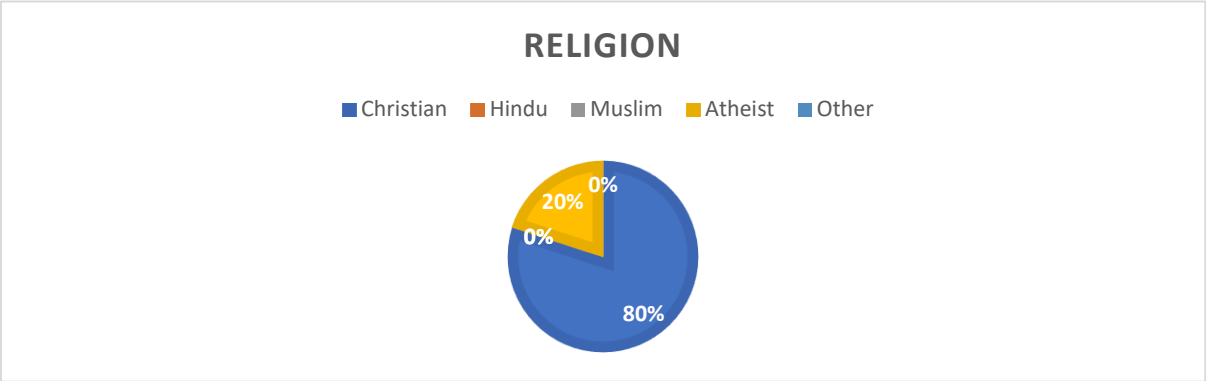
Question 1a



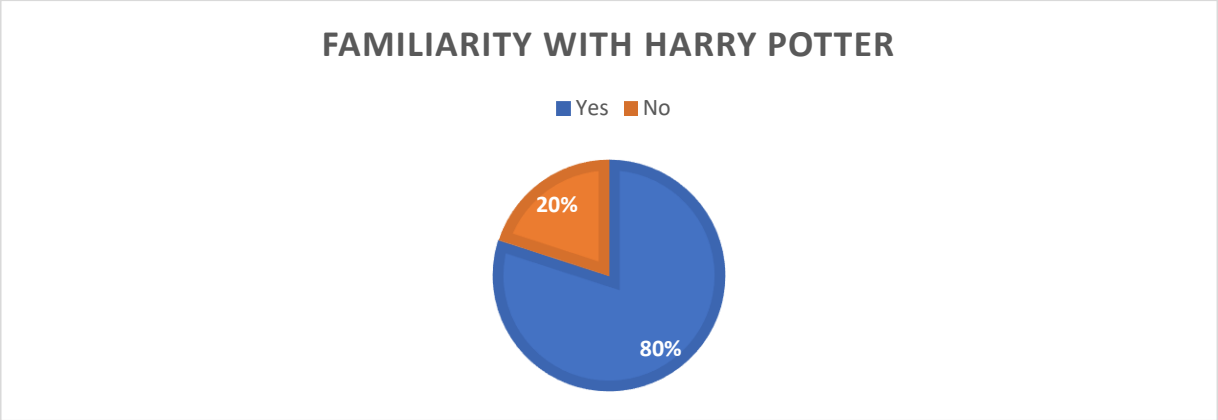
Question 1b



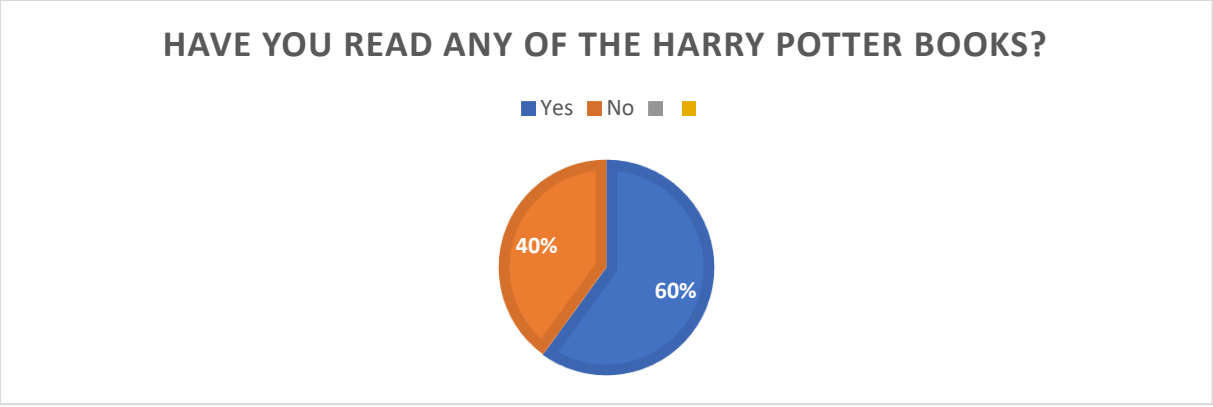
Question 1c



Question 1d



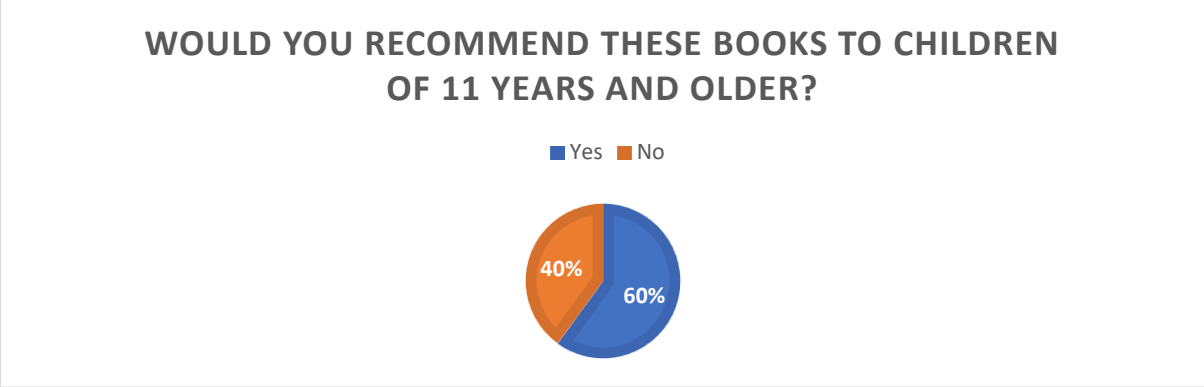
Question 2a



Have you read any of the *Harry Potter* books? If not, please specify why not/If yes, how old were you and why did you read these books?	
Yes	No
PARENT TWO: Yes, all of them. From approximately age 34 to current (just finished reading them again!) *PARENT FOUR*: Yes, I have read all the books, I read the first book in 1999 rendering me 17 years of age,	*PARENT ONE*: No, grew up in a Christian household protected against magic and esoterec(*sic*) type books *PARENT THREE*: No. The genre does not fall in my field of interest

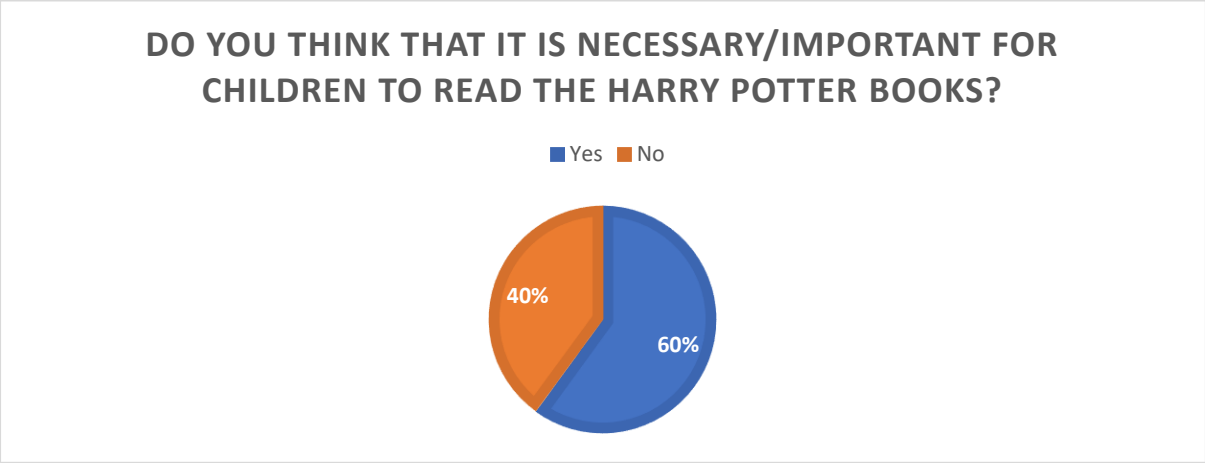
read these because the were newly released and very popular at the time. *PARENT FIVE*: Yes I tried reading them to my children, until I could no longer explain the use of witchcraft within the context of christian parenting.	

Question 2b



Would you recommend these books to children of 11 years and older? Indicate/motivate why/why not.	
Yes	No
PARENT TWO: Yes I would. *Harry Potter* and his world creates such different ways of life that really taps into their imagination and fosters a love of reading from an early age. The lessons about friendship, bullying, loyalty, honesty and integrity no matter what are also lessons I feel are very important to learn. *PARENT THREE*: Yes. The use of language is good. It gives a glimpse into the magical world. *PARENT FOUR*: I would recommend these books not only because I, and my children enjoyed the books but Harry's age in the first book is 11 which allows children to grow and learn with Harry.	*PARENT ONE*: No, strong magic conected(*sic*) to esoterec(*sic*) *PARENT FIVE*: No. The spiritual clashes were too much for me. With race relations the way they are in the world today, perhaps children should be taught the truth about colonialism and how to be proud of their race, particularly in a country where 70% of the population has no sense of identity or pride in who they are. Imstead of life lessons from British children, based on books shrouded in controversey because of its subject matter. If African children are going to learn about witchcraft, let it be from the perspective of their own history and ancestory. It is difficult, as it has always been, for children of colour to identify with European ideas and characters, even if the cast of characters are diverse.

Question 2c



Do you think that it is necessary/important for children to read the *Harry Potter* books? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
PARENT TWO: Very necessary see above. *PARENT THREE*: Yes. It's a coming of age story about children finding themselves and seeing that their dreams can come true. It gives children hope. *PARENT FOUR*: I do believe the *Harry Potter* books are important to read because they are entertaining and an opportunity to expand young imaginations.	*PARENT ONE*: No, they should read other books. *PARENT FIVE*: No. The exposure to the elements of witchcraft is too much for Christian children if they are mandated to read the books, and if they are not given a choice to say no.

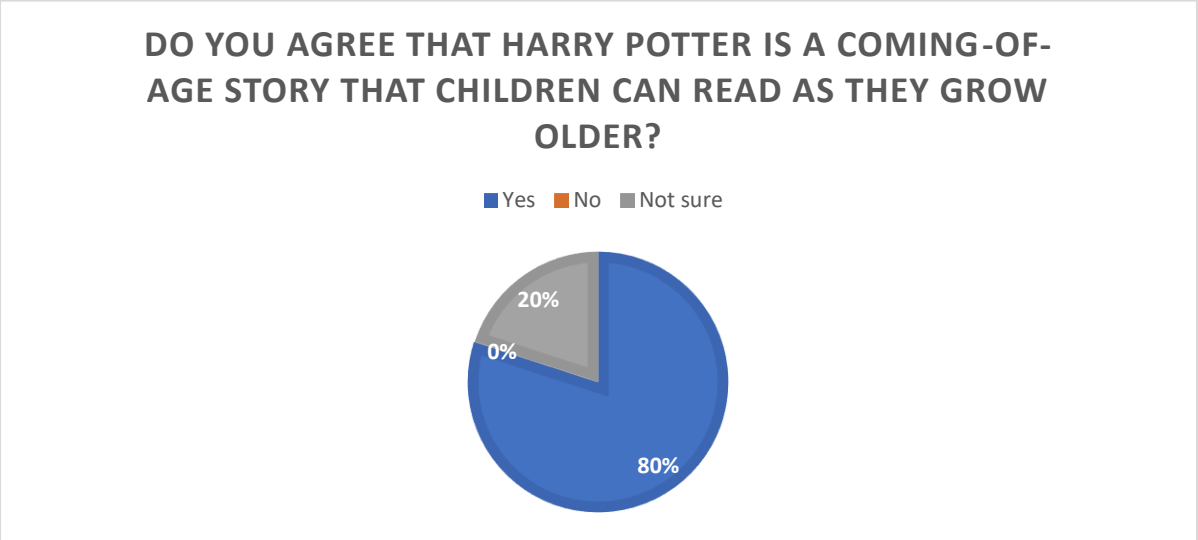
Question 2d

What was your favourite part of the story?
PARENT ONE: N/A *PARENT TWO*: So many to mention! When Buckbeak was rescued, when the 4 main characters first met on the train, the arrival of the champions for the cup, Ron and Hermione falling in love, when Umbridge meets her fate…. The list is endless. *PARENT THREE*: The portrayal of how friendships are formed. *PARENT FOUR*: My personal favourite part of the story was when harry discovered he first had money to spend and decided to share his bounty with his friend Ron on the Hogwarts train snack trolly. *PARENT FIVE*: Hermione's kindness and acceptance of her friends.

Question 2e

What was your least favourite part of the story?
PARENT ONE: N/A *PARENT TWO*: When Dumbledore dies *PARENT THREE*: When Voldemort re-enters the wizard world in a phys*ic*al body. *PARENT FOUR*: My least favourite part of the entire series was the way the author describes race only when the character she is describing is not white. *PARENT FIVE*: The very detailed and informed views on witchcraft.

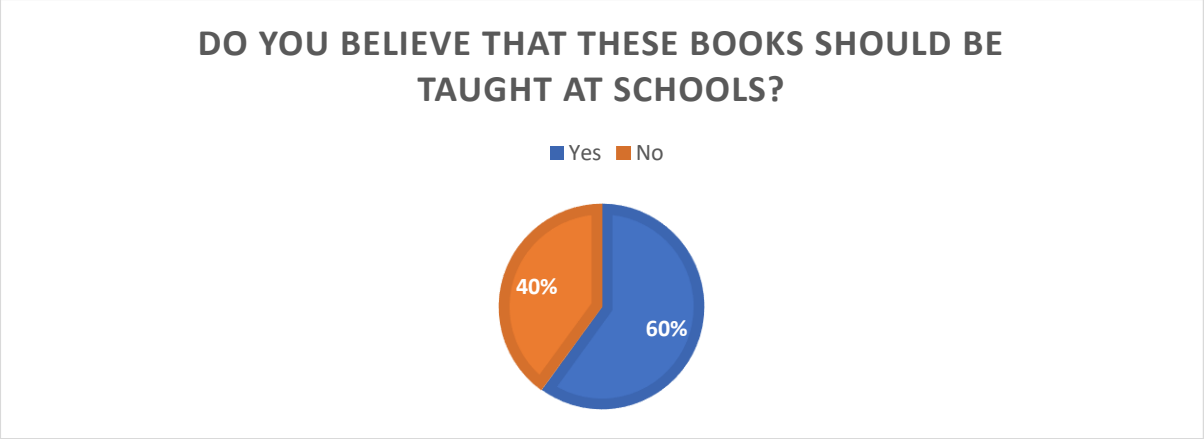
Question 2f



Do you agree that *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age story that children can read as they grow older? Why/ why not.	
Yes	No
PARENT TWO: Yes, the child characters enter Hogwarts at 13 which is when maturity begins, and the last book portrays their final year. Life lessons explored by these teens in the books are much like those my children have already been exposed to. *PARENT THREE*: Yes, it portrays the social and emotional challenges that teenagers face. *PARENT FOUR*: I do belive the books are a coming of age story (as stated in question 2b), children allow themselves to bond , grow and learn with our characters as they age.	

PARENT FIVE: It is a coming of age story which may be beneficial to children as they grow, however the spiritual tug of war internally is of grave concern, if the children are not given the opportunity to choose to read these books.	

Question 2g



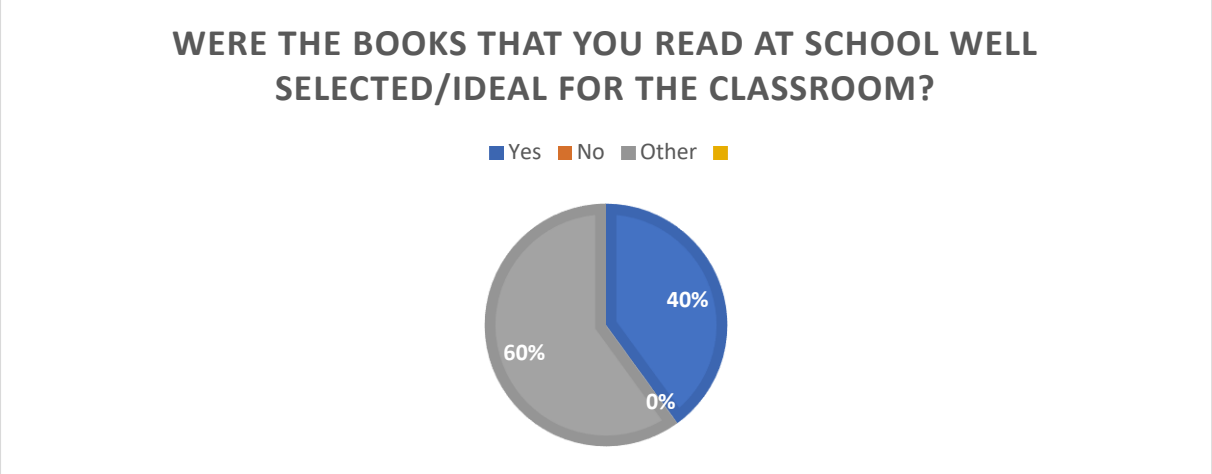
Do you believe that these books should be taught at schools? Why/ why not?	
Yes	No
PARENT TWO: Yes, they're beautifully written inspire imagination and I believe would create animated discussions in class! Each character has something to offer by way of experience. *PARENT THREE*: Yes it uses imaginative language with an interesting subject matter. *PARENT FOUR*: I do believe these books should be taught at schools, I do not look back fondly on the literature I was given in high school and something like *Harry Potter* novels could be an escape from the stress and boring material I encountered in my schooling years.	*PARENT ONE*: Not keen on it but if required we will. Just no good. *PARENT FIVE*: No, I don't believe they "should" be taught at school. I believe they can be offered as options for children/parents who wish to learn from these books, as well as teachers who wish to teach these concepts. To choose to read the books, whether you are christian or not, is very different to being mandated to read it as part of the educational experience for christian children. It is a matter of choice, and whether or not the choice to say no will exist for learners/parents with strong views about these books.

Question 2h

List three books you have read at school.
PARENT ONE: 4. Alkamist(*sic*) 5. Zombi Apocplist(*sic*) 6. Nova *PARENT TWO*: 1. Fiela se kind *PARENT THREE*: 1. *Animal Farm*

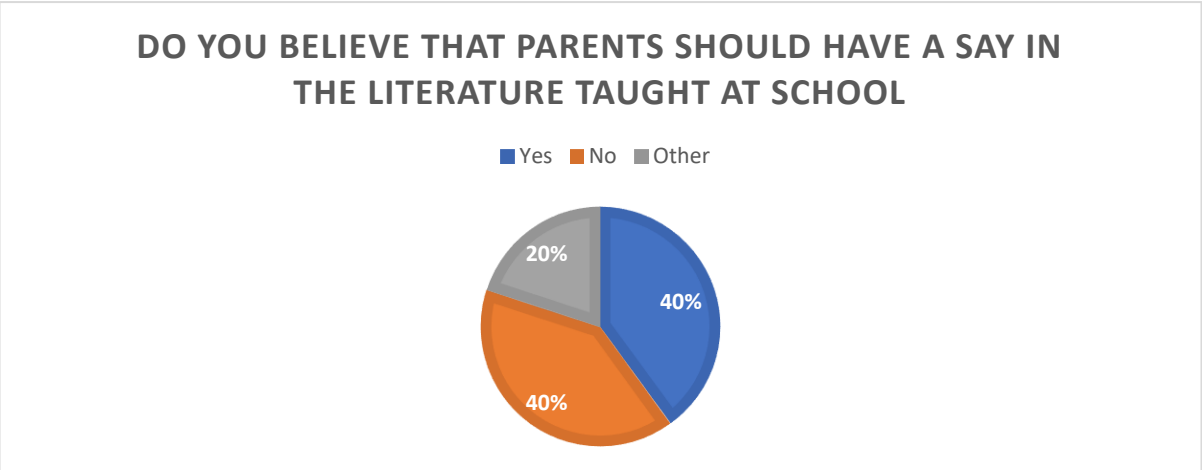
2. Lord of the flies 3. To Kill a Mocking Bird *PARENT FOUR*: 1. Colour purple 2. *Macbeth* 3. Othello *PARENT FIVE*: N/A

Question 2i



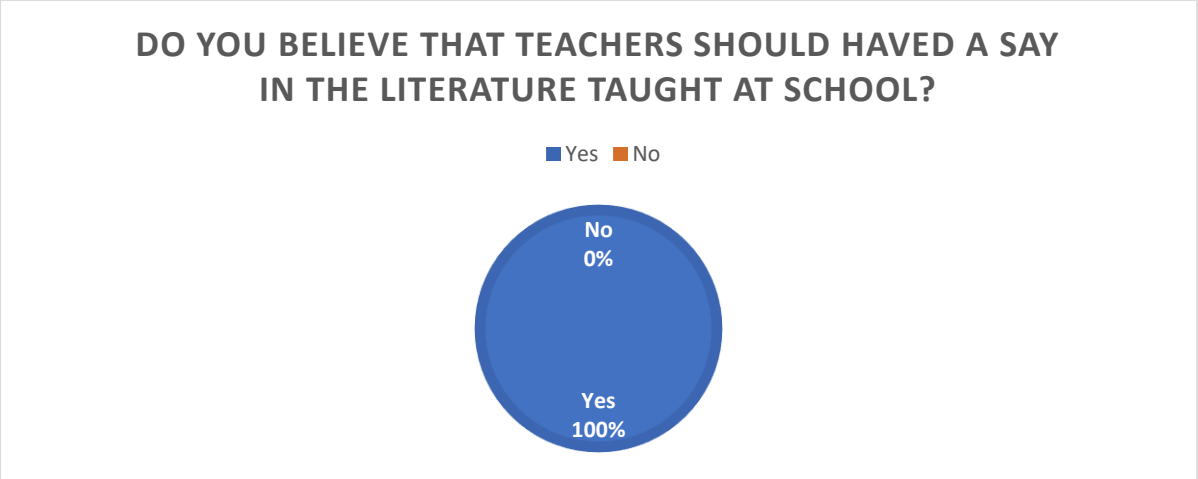
Were the books that you read at school well selected/ideal for the classroom? Why/why not?		
Yes	No	Other
PARENT THREE: Yes, it created awareness of topical issues but at times it was very heavy subject amtter. *PARENT FOUR*: The colour purple at the time was ideal, thought provoking and fostered an interesting debate in the classromm at the time, however due to a parent campaigning we were unable to finish the set work.		*PARENT ONE*: It was the first book that I saw *PARENT TWO*: I cant remember that far back! *PARENT FIVE*: N/A

Question 2j



Do you believe that parents should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?		
Yes	No	Other
PARENT TWO: Yes, school set works have , in my experience, been boring and unrelatable. As a parent I want my children to be enthralled and excited by books, especially those they get marked on. *Harry Potter* is perfect for this *PARENT FIVE*: Yes. Because the views influenced by these books must be managed in the home as well and if care givers are not included in decisions which may have a profound impact on the home, it could make the home life quite difficult, if the child was given the choice to decide whether or not they want to read the books.	*PARENT THREE*: No, Parents tend to control all aspects of childrens field of experiences. It is important to broaden childrens scope. *PARENT FOUR*: I do not believe parents should have a say in the literaturetaught in school, because then parents personal beliefs can infringe on the childrens education.	*PARENT ONE*: It would be nice, but would be difficult to get all to agree.

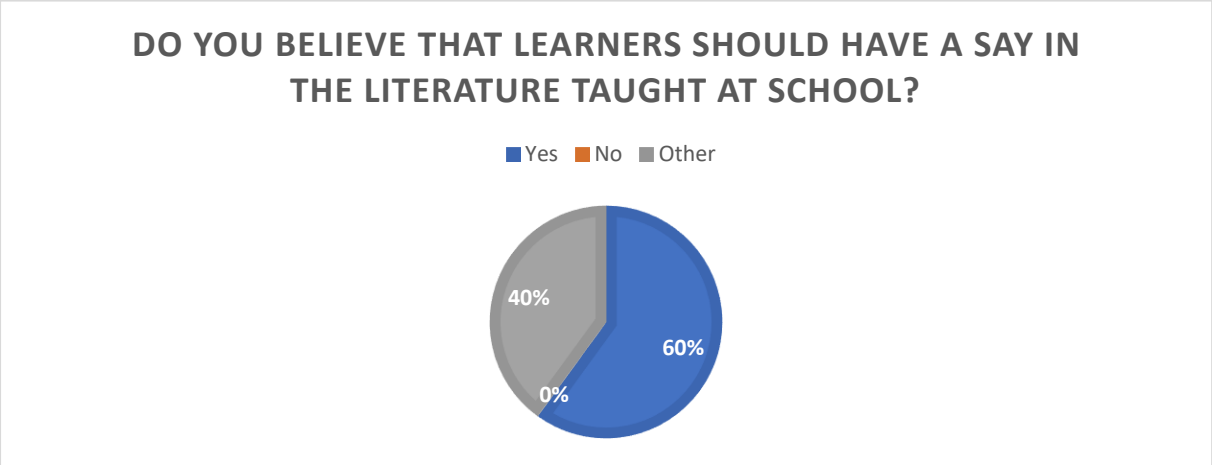
Question 2k



Do you believe that teachers should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
PARENT ONE: Yes, the(*sic*) understand direction to take child in and which books will help. *PARENT TWO*: Yes! Same reason as above, and also because it must surely get boring to go through one and the same book year after year. I feel the more interested and excited the teacher is about teaching it, the better the children will learn. *PARENT THREE*: Yes, teachers are in contact with children on a daily basis and they understand which input the children need.	

PARENT FOUR: Yes, I do believe that teachers should have a say in the literature being taught, with the input of the classroom and the genres that the children are currently interested in. *PARENT FIVE*: Yes off course. I Imagine teachers who have strong religious views about these books may have a hard time teaching the material.	

Question 21



Do you believe that learners should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?		
Yes	No	Other
PARENT TWO: YES! Above reasons as mentioned in j and k and because they are the ones whose marks depend on the book and how they percieve it. *PARENT THREE*: Yes, children want to feel heard and they have interesting viewpoints. *PARENT FIVE*: Absolutely. The most interesting part will be when parents/ children/teachers disagree. While I am vehemently against teaching *Harry Potter* at schools, I have no problem with it being offered as an option; and if my children then choose to read them as part pf the learning experience, I trust that they will take the learnings from the books and make informed choices as far as religious aspects are concerned. What I am against is, if I as the parents, and my children are not given the opportunity to choose whether or not we want to have the books incuded in their own learining experience.		*PARENT ONE*: S hould select out of preselected appropriat(*sic*) books. *PARENT FOUR*: Partly, I believe with discussion in the classroom, relevance to theme and a shared open mindfulness from both teacher and student a like an appropirate set work can be chosen for the class.

APPENDIX J

Compiled and Coded Learner Questionnaire Data

The data collected from the four questionnaires completed by eight learners from Grades 8 or 9 are below. As above, the closed ended questions have been illustrated with pie charts, which display the percentage of the answers for easy comprehension. The longer or open-ended answers have been tabulated as a summary of the findings. A key has been used to code the data.

Key:

Religion

Witchcraft

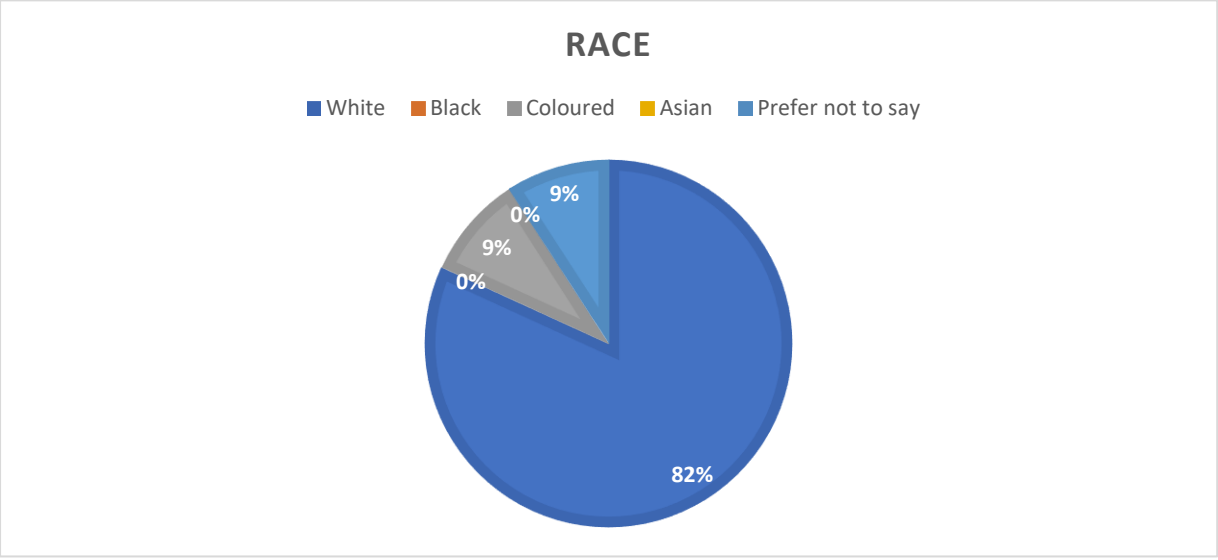
Race

Imagination

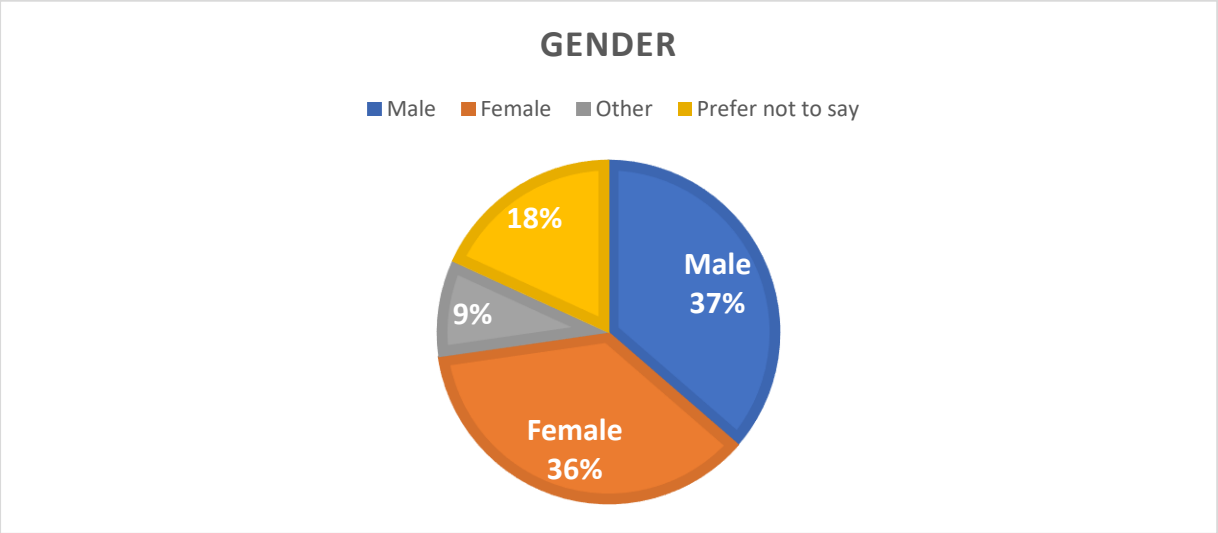
Bildungsroman

Academics/Education

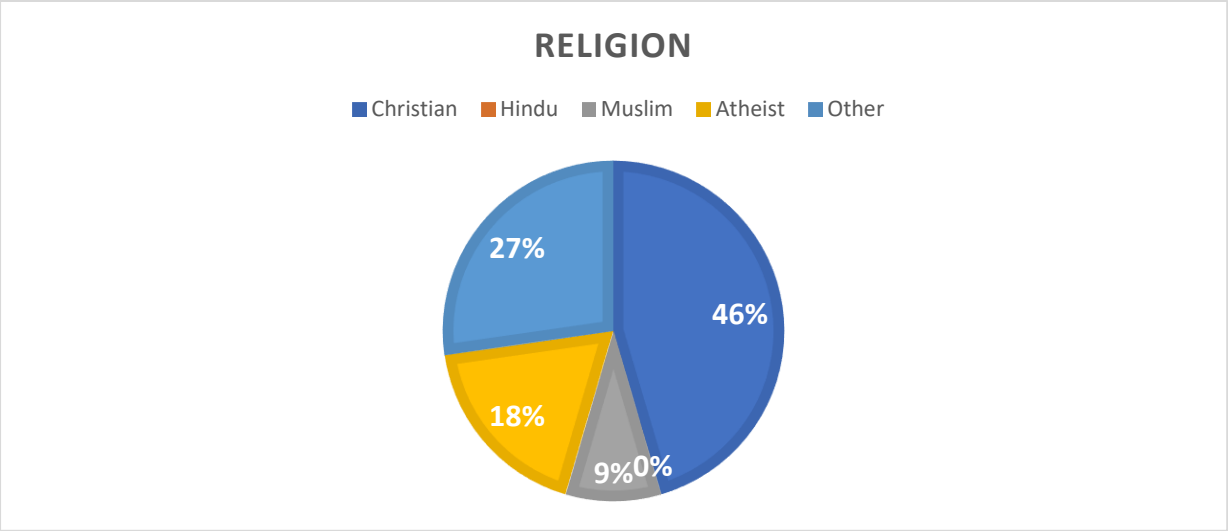
Question 1a



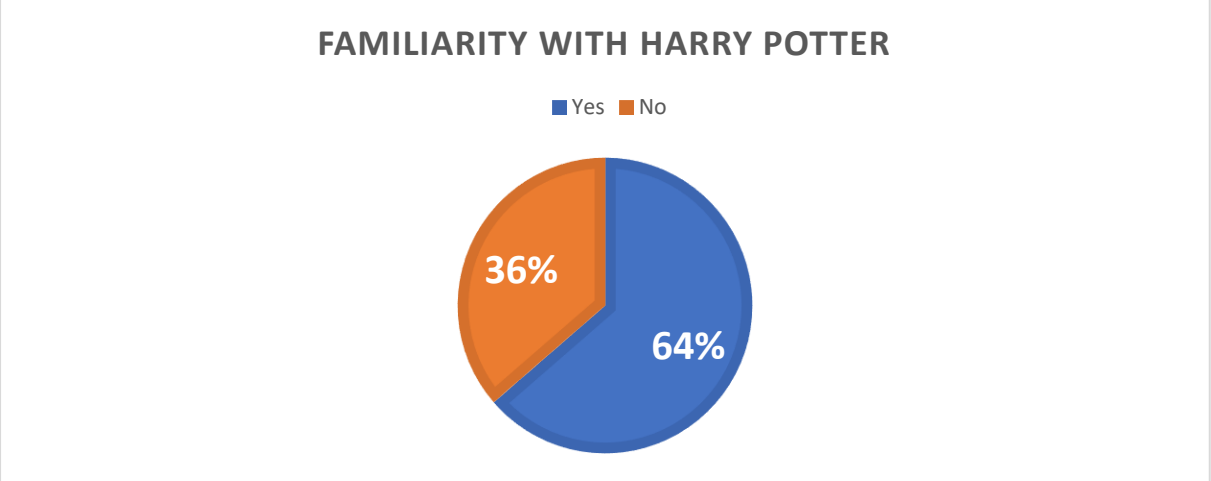
Question 1b



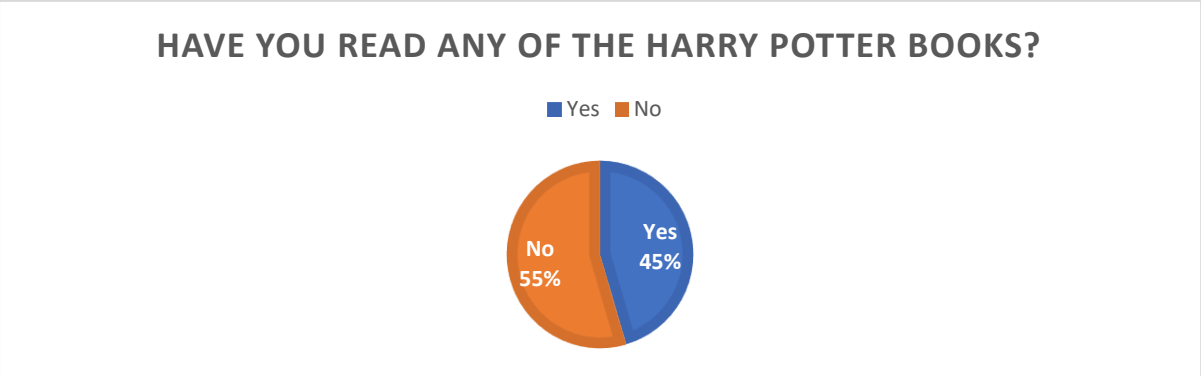
Question 1c



Question 1d

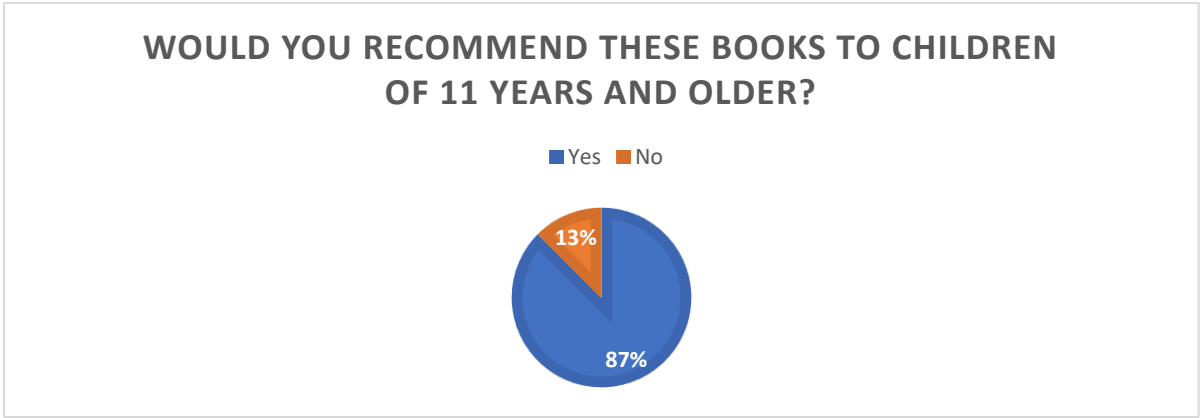


Question 2a



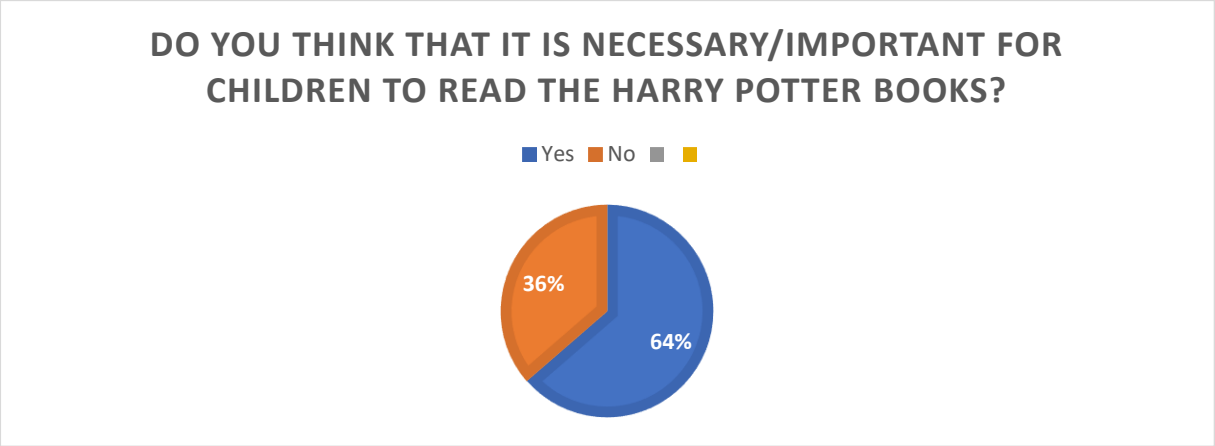
Have you read any of the *Harry Potter* books? If not, please specify why not/If yes, hold old were you and why did you read these books?	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Yes, I was around eleven years old, and I read it because a friend recommended it to me. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes, I was seven years old. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, I have read all of the books but I don't know how old I was and I read them because they are interesting and fictional. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, I started in about grade 3 so I was 9. I read the books because my parents said they were good, and continuned because I thought they were fantastic. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* I have indeed read a *Harry Potter* book. I do not know my age when I first read them or why.	*LEARNER TWO*: I have not read the books but I watched the movies around the age of seven. *LEARNER THREE*: No, my parents are very religious and don't agree with witchcraft. *LEARNER FOUR*: No, I have just never had interest in them. *LEARNER SIX*: No, Im not the reading type, but I hear it is good. I watched the movie. *LEARNER SEVEN*: No, *Harry Potter* hasn't really interested me and I havent really been exposed to it. *LEARNER EIGHT*: No, it doesn't seem that interested (*sic*)

Question 2b



Would you recommend these books to children of 11 years and older? Indicate/motivate why/why not.	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Definitely. They provoke imagination and take you on an adventure for all ages. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes, the books are intristing(*sic*) and exciting and very adventurious. *LEARNER THREE*: Yes, it increases imagination and teaches children to be creative. *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, it helps with imagination (which teenagers don't really have). *LEARNER FIVE*: yes becuus(*sic*) they have an interesting storey(*sic*). *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, all books or reading matireal(*sic*) is good for the mind. *LEARNER SEVEN*: From some of the movies I remember it wasn't to bad, so yes. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, they have a really good story line and the charatercters are well thought up. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, because 1. It is a well written and planned book and 2. Because it has wonderful little lessons within the book for all ages e.g. don't judge a book by its cover. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* I would recommend these books to children of 11 years or older because of its interesting plot.	*LEARNER EIGHT*: No it does not teach them about the real world.

Question 2c



Do you think that it is necessary/important for children to read the *Harry Potter* books? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Yes. It makes you think and can help with vocabulary and the ability to imagine. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes, they can learn some lessons like stick up against people, be there for your friends, and even if your told wrong still do it. *LEARNER FOUR*: yes, I think it helps with imagination *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, very important it will increase your creative mind. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, they can learn a lot from the series like the value of friendship. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, because it would help them learn new things. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* I believe it is important because you can learn valuable lessons from the book while having fun reading about them, and the book is full of action so they'll never get bored.	*LEARNER THREE*: Not really necisary(*sic*), if it's not wat(*sic*) they are into they don't have to read it. *LEARNER FIVE*: No becuus(*sic*) they might not be intrested(*sic*) *LEARNER SEVEN*: I think it would just depend on the interests of the child. *LEARNER EIGHT*: No there are other books that are more on the real side.

Question 2d

What was your favourite part of the story?
LEARNER ONE: I loved when Remus and Sirius' friendship was mended and Harry, Hermione and Ron's character development.

LEARNER TWO: I don't have a favourite part I enjoy all of the things happening.

LEARNER THREE: When he learn't(*sic*) how to fly a broom.

LEARNER FOUR: I didn't read the book.

LEARNER FIVE: My favorit(*sic*) part is when they discover the chamber of secrets.

LEARNER SIX: Order of the Phenox(*sic*)

LEARNER SEVEN: I haven't read the story.

LEARNER EIGHT: I have not read the book.

LEARNER NINE: I have no real favourite part but I do like when Fred and George terrorise Umbridge.

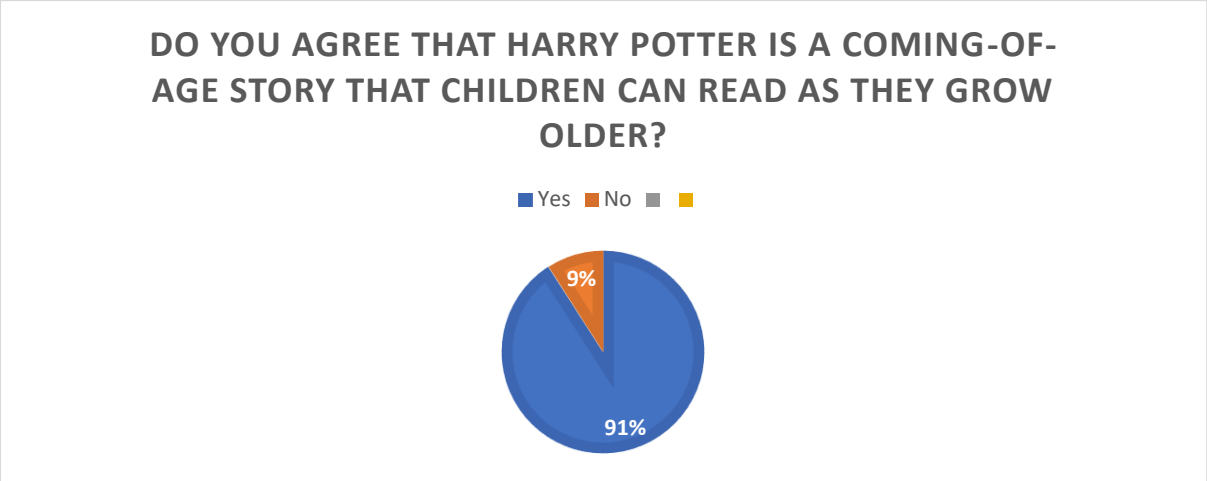
LEARNER TEN: When Voldemort (He-who-should-not-be-named) died

LEARNER ELEVEN: I loved reading the part of the Order of the Phoenix where Voldemort took over Harry's mind.

Question 2e

What was your least favourite part of the story?
LEARNER ONE: When Remus and Sirius died. *LEARNER TWO*: When Sirius black got hurt. *LEARNER THREE*: Don't remember *LEARNER FOUR*: I didn't read the book. *LEARNER FIVE*: the quiditeh(*sic*) world cup *LEARNER SIX*: When Dobby died. *LEARNER SEVEN*: I haven't read the story. *LEARNER EIGHT*: I have not read the book. *LEARNER NINE:* I don't have a least favourite part. *LEARNER TEN:* When Delores Umbridge lived. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* My least favourite part of the story was when Dobby died.

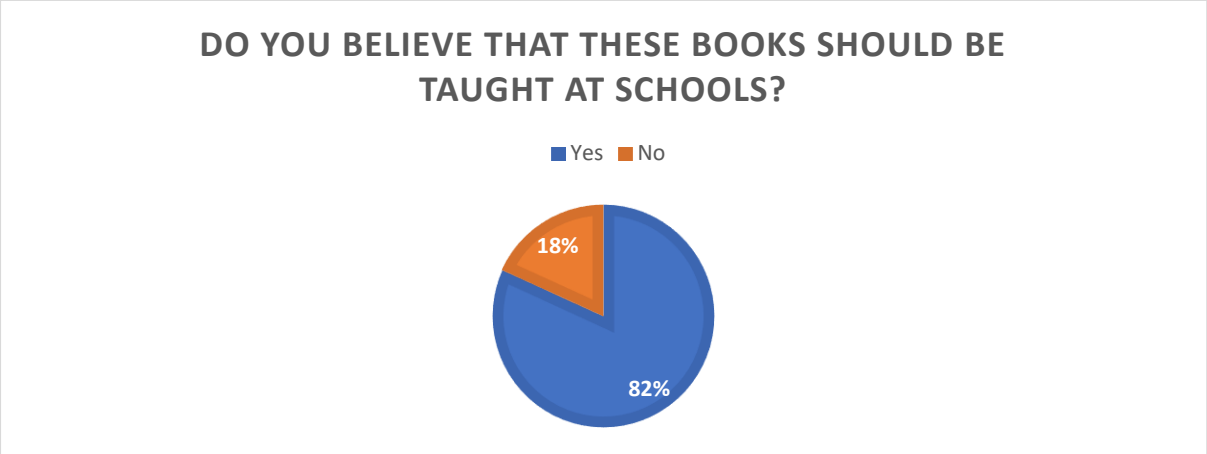
Question 2f



Do you agree that *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age story that children can read as they grow older? Why/ why not.	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Yes, it is a journey for all ages and is written with easy vocabulary. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes, it teaches you many lessions(*sic*). *LEARNER THREE*: Yes, they learn different responsobilitys(*sic*). *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, its Harry's journey as he grows up and goes through school. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becuus(*sic*) it gets more sereus(*sic*) as it continues. *LEARNER SIX*: Yes. *LEARNER SEVEN*: Yes, *Harry Potter* is fictional but also realistic, from the qoutes(*sic*) that I have read it has a good meaning. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, because as they grow older they can relate more to the books. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, because the story will remain intruiging.	*LEARNER EIGHT*: No life is not so magic with flying things in it.

LEARNER ELEVEN: Yes, because when you read the book it is taking you on a journy that starts when the characters are 11, so you grow and learn at the same time they do.	

Question 2g



Do you believe that these books should be taught at schools? Why/ why not?	
Yes	No
LEARNER TWO: Yes, they teach lessions(*sic*), not only about magic. *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, I believe the books are good for imagination. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becaus(*sic*) it can make people think more creativley. *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, they are intresting(*sic*) and you can learn a lot from the characters. *LEARNER SEVEN*: I believe that learners should be able to vote to select the set book. *LEARNER EIGHT*: at young schools yes because kids must have an imagenation. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, they teach many good lessons about the real world.	*LEARNER ONE*: No, as I believe there would be tears everywhere. *LEARNER THREE*: No because some people are very against magic and it could affect them.

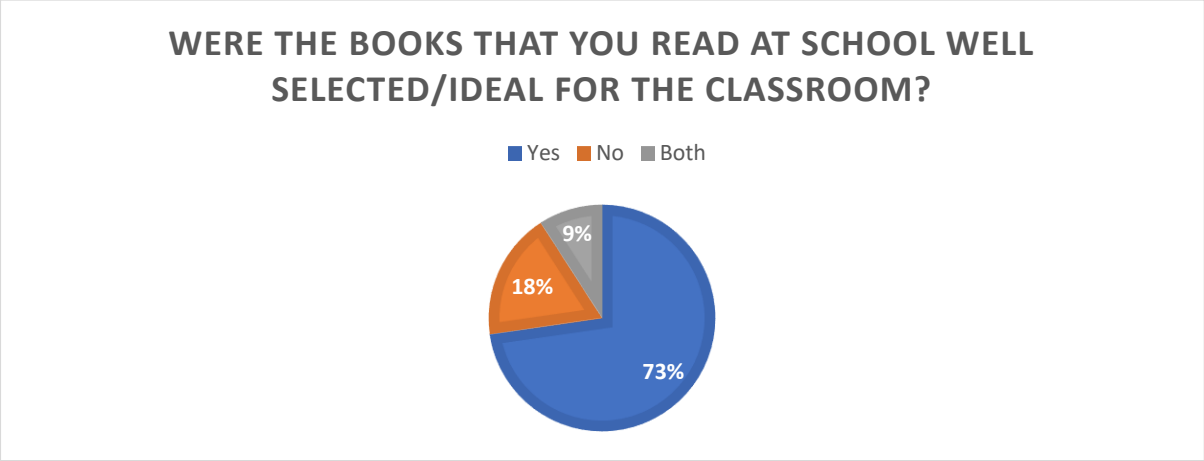
LEARNER TEN: Yes, because they could show the mistakes that the author made. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* I strongly believe these books should be taught at school, because the books read at 11 in chool are unbelievably boring, and while they may learn a lesson from them they'll probably never rememeber, but they will rememeber *Harry Potter* for the rest of their lives.	

Question 2h

List three books you have read at school.
LEARNER ONE: 1. Holes 2. Animal Farm 3. The Chronicles of Narnia *LEARNER TWO*: 1. Romeo and Juliet 2. I am Malala 3. Homecoming *LEARNER THREE*: 1. The girls ive(*sic*) been 2. T is for trespass 3. Tulip touch *LEARNER FOUR*: 1. I am Malala 2. The Homecoming *LEARNER FIVE*: 1. The homecoming 2. The reconing(*sic*) 3. Animal Farm *LEARNER SIX*: 1. Malala 2. Homecoming 3. The boy in striped pjs *LEARNER SEVEN*: 1. I am Malala 2. The Homecoming 3. The Recohing(*sic*) *LEARNER EIGHT*: 1. Hansel and grettle(*sic)* 2. The good thieves 3. Asasins(*sic*) creed *LEARNER NINE:* 1. *Harry Potter* series 2. Percy Jackson series 3. Blood of Olympus series *LEARNER TEN:* 1. Animal Farm 2. The Homecoming

3. The Reckoning *LEARNER ELEVEN:* 1. Romeo and Juliet 2. The Homecoming 3. Animal Farm

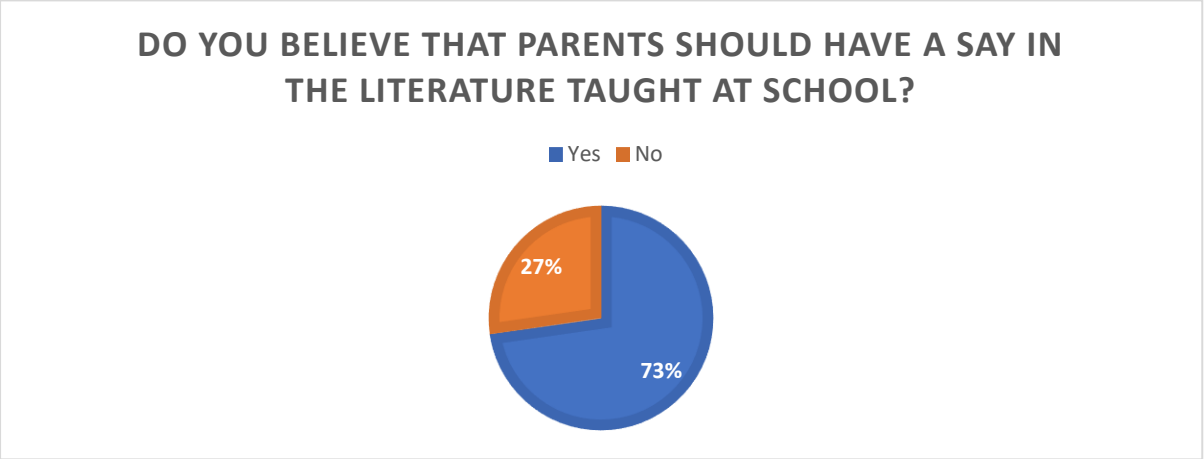
Question 2i



Were the books that you read at school well selected/ideal for the classroom? Why/why not?		
Yes	No	Both
LEARNER ONE: Yes, they were thought-provoking and have a diverse range of adventure/characters *LEARNER TWO*: There(*sic*) well selected and they teach u(*sic*) lessons. *LEARNER THREE*: Yes, it tought(*sic*) us a lot about school and life. *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, they helped educate me on issues I wouldn't of known about, if I hadn't read the book. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becaus(*sic*) moste(*sic*) of the books are close to South African things. *LEARNER SIX*: They were boring but did teach me somethings.	*LEARNER EIGHT*: No we all read different books. *LEARNER TEN:* No, because two of the books had many errors.	*LEARNER ELEVEN:* I believe "Animal Farm" was fantastic, but the others not so much. The one was very boring, and there is only one or two children in my class that may have slighlty enjoyed Romeo and Juliet.

LEARNER SEVEN: Some I enjoyed more than others personally I prefer South African literature. *LEARNER NINE:* Yes, they are all very interesting books.		

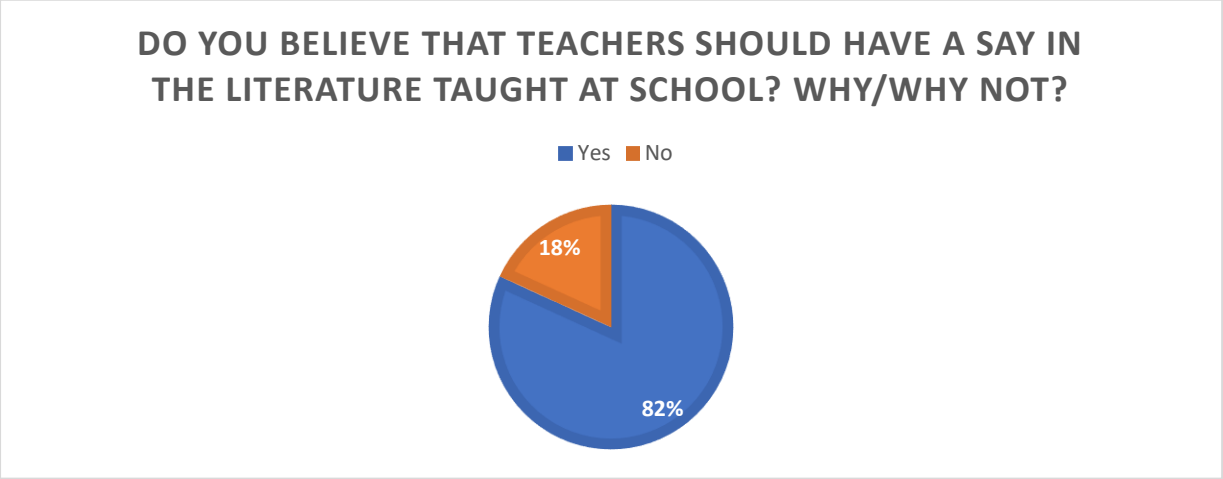
Question 2j



Do you believe that parents should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: I believe they should as some books may have an impact on mental health. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes, they also have an opinion and so have hopes for there(*sic*) children. *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, they should have a say in what their children are taught, they are our parents and know about our lives. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becaus(*sic*) they might not beleve(*sic*) in it. *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, they are the persons sending you here too learn *LEARNER SEVEN*: Religious reasons and maybe they feel it goes against their family values.	*LEARNER THREE*: No, because then they read what the parents wants and it's not a good things. *LEARNER NINE:* No, because of the parents that will ruin everything fun because they are selfish. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* No, because they are not learning it, therefore they do not have to learn, write down and do activities about it, so why should they have a say in what we learn?

LEARNER EIGHT: yes there(*sic*) child could read somthing(*sic*) that's a bad influence. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, because they could have good suggestions.	

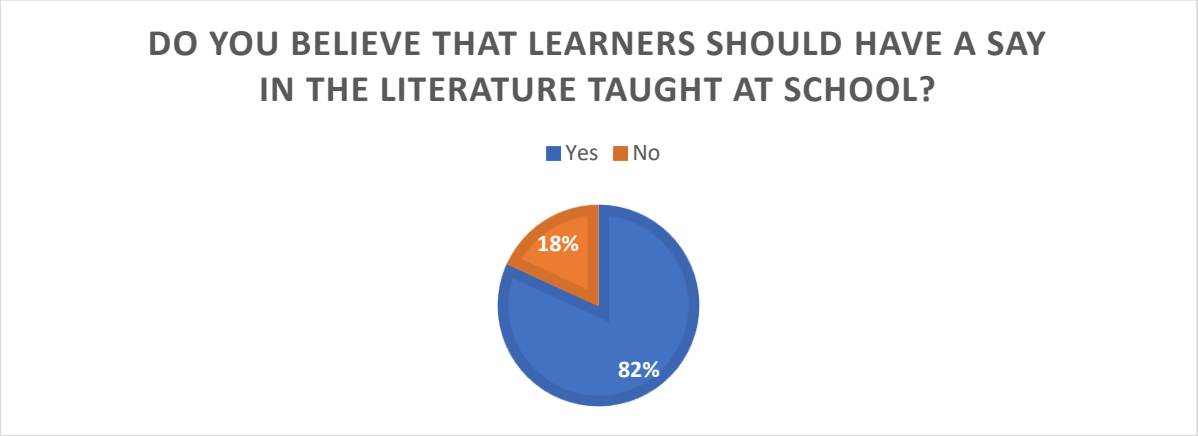
Question 2k



Do you believe that teachers should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Yes, as they have been taught specially to make these choices. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes, they also teach the children and should be interested. *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, they studied and know what's right for children. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becaus(*sic*) it might be more relevant to what they are teaching. *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, they are teaching it to you. *LEARNER SEVEN*: Teachers should have a say because the book has to be relavant(*sic*) *LEARNER EIGHT*: Yes they might belive(*sic*) in the stunent(*sic*) to learn somthing(*sic*) else.	*LEARNER THREE*: No, they teach us boring subjects and we need to learn things that are esyer(*sic*) for us. *LEARNER ELEVEN:* No, because while they might read it, there is also no obligation for them to learn it, so it is still the children that have to do all the learning.

LEARNER NINE: Yes, because they teach the lesson and get to know the children. *LEARNER TEN:* Yes, because they still are in charge of the school.	

Question 21



Do you believe that learners should have a say in the literature taught at school? Why/why not?	
Yes	No
LEARNER ONE: Yes, as future generations will hold a lot of power, and literature may change ones' point of view. *LEARNER TWO*: Yes the(*sic*) also want to do things interesting in school. *LEARNER THREE*: yes, we need to be able to learn things we under stand(*sic*) *LEARNER FOUR*: Yes, we would learn more if we were interested in the subject. *LEARNER FIVE*: Yes becaus(*sic*) they are the ones learning it so it sholde(*sic*) be close to ther(*sic*) intrests. *LEARNER SIX*: Yes, they are learning the literature. *LEARNER SEVEN*: Yes, because learners are more likely to focus and learn things they enjoy.	*LEARNER NINE:* No but they can give suggestions, the learners will choose books that suit them and not the other learners. *LEARNER TEN:* No, because they may suggest things that are inappropriate.

LEARNER EIGHT: yes the might not want to read or learn somthing(*sic*). *LEARNER ELEVEN:* I do, because the learners are actually supposed to learn and understand the book, so why can't they have a say in which type of book they will read?	

APPENDIX K

Learner Focus Group Questions

1. Who introduced you to the HP series? Teacher, friend, parent etc.?
2. How do your parents feel about the books?
3. How do your friends feel about the books?
4. How do you feel about the books? (prompts: what lessons did you learn / with which character do you associate / what do you like about the books / what do you dislike about the books etc.)
5. If you have not read the HP books, will you read them in future? Why/why not? You have indicated that the books don't seem interesting – why?
6. Why is it important for children to have an imagination?
7. Would you watch the HP movies rather than read the books? Why / Why not?
8. *Harry Potter* is a coming-of-age series – what lessons does it teach you?
9. When thinking about books that you have read at school, is HP similar to any of them? Why / Why not?
10. Do you think your parents should choose the books you read at school? Why/why not?
11. Why should learners have a say in the books they read at school? Will you only recommend books that you have already read? Why / Why not?

APPENDIX L

Learner Focus Group Transcriptions with Codes

Simone:	Okay, here we go. Question number one: who introduced you to the *Harry Potter* series? Was it a teacher or friend or a parent?	
Learner 2:	My dad.	
Simone	Your dad, okay. Did he read the books?	
Learner 2	He read all the books and then when I was younger, I watched all the movies.	
Simone:	And did you enjoy them?	
Learner 2:	Yes	
Simone:	Okay, so it was a good experience. Learner 3?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am, my mom gave me the books that she read when she was younger.	Family
Simone:	And did she enjoy them? And you enjoyed them?	
Learner 3:	Yes Ma'am.	
Simone:	When did you read them?	
Learner 3:	In the December holidays	
Simone:	Like recently?	
Learner 3	Yes ma'am.	
Simone:	Oh, that's lovely. Did you read all of them, and did you read them quickly?	
Learner 3:	Yes ma'am.	
Simone:	That's very cool. Learner 4?	
Learner 4:	I think Learner 2 introduced me, she was like 'you should watch this' and I was 'okay'. And I watched all of the ones in one night.	
Simone:	Did you love them? Or not?	
Learner 4:	They were okay.	
Simone: Learner 4:	They were, okay? Do you want to read the books? No	
Simone:	Why not?	

Learner 4:	I don't know, they just don't seem like something I would like.	
Simone:	What do you like if that's not something you like?	
Learner 4:	Lots of things. I don't know.	
Learner 2:	She likes romantic movies.	
Simone:	Romantic books?	
Learner 2:	No, Dramatic.	
Simone:	Ooh dramatic, and romantic?	
Learner 4:	Ja, sure.	
Learner 2:	She doesn't have any romantic books	
Simone:	Okay. Learner 5?	
Learner 5:	I think one day in, like, in school, like, a long time ago, I don't remember. One of my friends said something about *Harry Potter*. And I went to my mom. And then she like went out and bought all the books, and then I read all of them.	Friends
Simone:	Oh, that's wonderful, Good.	
Learner 8:	My mom introduced me as she thought it would help me with my learning paces.	Academic
Simone:	Do you think it did?	
Learner 8:	No	
Simone:	Why not?	
Learner 8:	Because it doesn't really teach children that like, schools. School's so easy, and it's so…everything like that. And magic doesn't really exist. So therefore, it's not really realistic.	Academic
Simone:	Yes. Okay. So, you want rather a book that teaches you about actual school rather than a fake school and a fake place?	
Learner 8:	Yes	
Simone:	Okay. No, that makes sense. Okay. So how do your parents feel about books? A lot of parents are against it. What do your parents think? I mean, a lot of your parents bought you the books. Do they think it's a good thing to read or a bad thing to read?	
Learner 8:	Good thing to read	
Learner 2:	Both my parent think it's a good thing, my mom doesn't really like fantasy, but my dad does.	

Simone:	Okay, cool.	
Learner 4:	My mom told me it was evil. My mom told me I wasn't allowed to read it because it was bad	Evil
Simone:	Okay, did she say why?	
Learner 4:	No, she just said it was scary. But it wasn't.	Parental influence
Simone:	Does she know you watched the films?	
Learner 4:	Laughs* I don't know.	
Simone:	Okay, do you think she would say the films are also evil?	
Learner 4:	Probably	
Simone:	Okay. Learner 3?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am, my mom doesn't, but my dad is a little bit against it because its evil.	
Simone:	Evil in what way?	Evil
Learner 3:	Witchcraft.	Witchcraft
Simone:	Okay?	
Learner 8:	My mom liked it, but my dad was against it.	
Simone:	Why?	
Learner 8:	Because my dad just felt like it wasn't really like helping with anything.	Academic
Simone:	Thank you, Learner 8. Ah okay, so I was wondering if you feel like the books taught you any lessons? Like any I don't know life lessons about friends about family about school. Like what Graham was saying earlier? Learner 5, any lessons? Or not? Really?	
Learner 5:	No, I didn't like the books.	
Simone:	Okay, Learner 4?	
Learner 4:	I didn't read the books, but the movies didn't really teach me anything.	Academic
Simone:	Do you think there's a difference in watching the movie and reading the book for any series?	
Everyone:	Yes	
Simone:	Do you think it's better to read the book or the series?	

Learner 2:	Both	
Learner 4:	I would say both	
Simone:	Learner 3, anything you liked or disliked?	
Learner 3:	The rat man: I didn't really like him.	
Simone:	In the second, third one? Okay. Anything else? Something you really really liked or really didn't like?	
Learner 4:	Draco - he annoyed me.	
Simone:	He annoyed you, okay. Learner 5?	
Learner 5:	I feel like Hagrid was like really nice.	
Simone:	Hagrid, yeah. How do you feel Learner 8?	
Learner 8:	Uhm, I felt like there were a bit of lessons, like be careful who you trust. But that's basically it.	Lessons
Simone:	Okay, so there is a little bit of a moral. Okay, cool. Uhm, okay a lot of you have said, also some of the people who are absent, have said that the books teach children imagination. Do you agree or disagree?	Lessons Imagination
Learner 8 and Learner 4:	Agree.	
Simone:	Okay, so all of you agree.	
Everyone:	Yes.	
Simone:	Okay. Do you think it's good for children to have an imagination?	
Everyone:	Yes.	
Simone:	All of you agree, okay. Learner 3, why?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am because it helps you at school to imagine, I don't know how to explain it ma'am.	Imagination Academic
Simone:	Okay, that's fine, Learner 5 anything to add?	
Learner 5:	I was going to say the same thing with the school it can help with essays and stuff.	Imagination Academic
Simone:	Essays, Ja. Learner 8?	
Learner 8:	It gives them opportunities so that they know more what they want to do.	
Simone:	Good. Girls, anything?	

Learner 4:	Can help you socially as well.	Lessons
Simone:	Socially? How?	
Learner 4:	Helps me go around and tell people about the goals that I have.	
Simone:	Okay that's interesting. Do you think as you get older that your imagination fades?	
Everyone:	Ja	
Simone:	Why do you think that is?	
Learner 2:	Because you stop acting like a kid. When you young you read children books which help with your imagination. When you get older you start watching more realistic stuff.	Imagination
Simone:	Do you…do you think it's also dependent on the novels or the books that parents read? It's not creative, like *Harry Potter*.	
Everyone:	Ja	
Simone:	Do you think parents should read more children's books?	
Everyone:	Yes	
Simone:	Yeah, all agree. Okay. Um, do you know what it means to be a coming-of-age series or story?	
Learner 4:	Yeah	
Simone:	Learner 4 what do you think?	
Learner 4:	Um, a book you read that's about people your age, and how they like find themselves, how they go through their like childhood, how they come out of it.	Bildungsroman
Simone:	Do you think this is a coming-of-age story?	
Everyone:	Yes, Ja.	
Simone:	Why, Learner 3?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am, because it's people our age how they struggle with these problems they have and how they have to solve them.	Bildungsroman
Simone:	Yes, together like with social lessons that you learnt Learner 5? Nothing else? (Shakes head) That's fine. It's fine. Learner 5? (Shakes head) Okay, Learner 4? Learner 2? (Shakes head) Okay, so coming of age story, we agree. Then any books that you've read at school with your English teacher or before at other schools? Do you think they have any similar themes that *Harry Potter* does? Do any of them… because you said some of your parents have said something	Witchcraft

	about witchcraft? Do any of the books that you read at school have anything to do with witchcraft.	
Learner 3:	With the teacher? Or at school?	
Simone:	With the teacher so as a set work.	
Learner 3:	Ma'am like sometimes in English, we would do like some like comprehensions and like stuff like that.	
Simone:	Okay, so in comprehensions, but not necessarily in a book. That's a good point. Okay, Learner 5?	
Learner 5:	Like, the whole, like, with the whole stole or kidnap the child. Yeah, that was for (inaudible sounds).	
Simone:	So, they are related themes. So, do you think because *The Reckoning* isn't a very well-known book, do you think…do you think your parents would? Those of you whose parents don't like *Harry Potter*, do you think they would be against books like The Reckoning?	Witchcraft
Learner 5:	No. Because it's not that well known. They won't know if it's a good book or a bad book.	
Simone:	So, then it's up to the teacher to decide. Okay, Learner 3?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am as long as they don't know what's in the book	
Simone:	Do you think your parents should know what's in the books?	Parental influence
Learner 3:	Ja	
Simone:	Okay. So, do you think your parents should have a say in the books that are taught at school?	
Learner 3:	NO.	
Simone:	Why not?	
Learner 3:	Because ma'am, it's our education	academic
Simone:	Your education; good. Okay. Anything else? You're welcome to disagree, you think your parents should know that? Learner 8?	
Learner 8:	They [teachers] chose the books for a reason because they're good books, and they teach a lot.	academic
Simone:	Okay, so you trust the teachers' choices. Okay.	
Learner 4:	The teachers that are teaching you have a bit more experience than our parents, but my parents would be chill with it.	parental influence
Simone:		

	Okay, then, lastly, lastly, do you think you should have a say in the books that are taught at school?	
Learner 8:	No	
Learner 4:	I think so if you for example are reading something that you are really against, suicide or something. That could trigger some people. Or if it's like about another, like mental illness or something like that it could trigger some people who might get upset with something like that.	Academic
Simone:	Okay, Ja valid. Learner 3?	
Learner 3:	Ma'am, I feel like it all based on people's different taste in books. Because if we choose it and other people don't like it then it's our fault.	
Simone:	Yes. Yeah. So, it's a lot of pressure. Learner 5, what do you think?	
Learner 5:	Ma'am I think there are good and bad things for students in books, but then they might, like one book might have a really good example of some type of thing that like their students should know. So, it's like basically (inaudible).	
Simone:	Okay, so maybe the teacher should have like a recommendation option?	academic
Learner 4:	Ja	
Simone:	Yeah. So obviously, we teachers might not want to give you a book that you've already read, because then you're not learning anything new. So, teachers are wanting to expose you to books that you wouldn't have chosen yourself ordinarily. Okay. That was the last question that I have for you. Thank you so much.	

APPENDIX M

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. Have you read the books? What age were you? (If not, why not?)
2. How do you feel about the books? (Prompts: what lessons did you learn / with which character do you associate / what do you like about the books / what do you dislike about the books etc.)
3. If you have children, have they read the books? Did they enjoy/not enjoy it? Why?
4. Do you think the idea of witchcraft is problematic? Why/why not. Many parents commented on this as a negative theme/topic.
5. Is there an educational value to teaching these novels? What do you believe are the benefits of children reading these books? What do they learn?
6. Are these lessons they should be learning in the classroom? Why/why not?
7. Do you believe these novels would be a valuable tool in the English classroom? In South Africa particularly. Which grades should read these?
8. Are there any novels that you currently teach that may have similar themes to the HP novels? (Such as death/loss, friendship, social class, magic/fantasy).
9. When thinking about books that you have read at school, is HP similar to any of them? Why / Why not?
10. Do you think parents should choose or have a say in the books read at school? Why/why not?

APPENDIX N

Teacher Focus Group Transcriptions with Codes

Simone:	Okay, so, first question is: Have you read the books? If you've read them, what age were you? And if you haven't read them, why haven't you?	
Teacher 1:	I haven't read them.	
Simone:	Okay.	
Teacher 1:	They don't interest me because they came out when I was much older. And those things didn't interest me anymore. Though I know lots of people who read them and kids who love them.	
Simone:	Hmm, and that hasn't changed your mind to read them?	
Teacher 1:	No.	
Simone:	And have you read them to your kid? Do you have a kid?	
Teacher 1:	Our kid will read them.	
Simone:	Okay	
Teacher 1:	Ja, when he's old enough.	
Simone:	How old is old enough?	
Teacher 1:	Eleven.	Age
Simone:	That's a good age, ja.	
Teacher 2:	Agreed.	
Simone:	Teacher 3?	
Teacher 3:	Yes, I have read them. I read them at first year varsity and since.	
Simone:	Again, and again?	
Teacher 3:	Not again and again, as they were coming out as that was when they were coming out, in second year varsity and then I read them consecutively as the came out. And now I am re-reading them to my child, who started when he was seven. (Laughs a bit)	Age
Simone:	That's cool too.	
Teacher 3:	But he has also only read them per year.	
Simone:	Yes, as they get darker.	

Teacher 3:	Yes, they get darker, so he is only on book four.	Dark
Simone:	Okay.	
Teacher 3:	So, we haven't gone onto book five, six, or seven. Because they start getting very dark	Dark
Simone:	But even in book four with Cedric's death…	
Teacher 3:	Ja, even then, but it wasn't badly written, or it wasn't…	
Simone:	Shockingly?	
Teacher 3:	Wasn't shockingly written. So, it wasn't about…	
Teacher 2:	It was right at the end.	
Teacher 3:	Right at the end.	
Simone:	Ja	
Teacher 3	It was quite…it was quite encased. It was not quite as violent as it is in book seven.	
Simone:	(HHMM In agreement)	
Teacher 3:	Ja.	
Simone:	Okay, Teacher 2?	
Teacher 2:	I have read the books many times.	
Simone:	And audio books you have listened too.	
Teacher 2:	I listened to the audio books. I read the first four, I got them for Christmas when I was in grade 4. What's that eleven? Twelve?	Age
Simone:	Ten.	
Teacher 2:	Ten, I was ten. Got the first four books and I only read them when I was in grade 5. And then I had to wait for the next books to come out, and I don't remember how many years I waited. But every year when the book was released, I was in the queue to get them, and they are just fantastic.	
Simone:	And you still read them as an adult?	
Teacher 2:	Yes, of course.	
Simone:	Okay.	
Teacher 2:	I just finished them now, a few weeks ago.	
Teacher 1:	Can I just add to hers?	

Simone:	Yes!	
Teacher 1:	I was in London in 2007 and I was there for a month doing some work and stuff. I was there when a book was being released and kids were camping outside the bookstore, of course you can do that in London - camped outside all the bookstores dressed as all the *Harry Potter* characters and it was the most ridiculous thing I have ever seen. And I was like wow this is significant. And I was then very ignorant then of of of the books and everything that had been around.	significant
Simone:	Ja.	
Teacher 1:	But to see those kids waiting in anticipation. A day before already!	
Simone:	Yes.	
Teacher 1:	Beginning to start to camp, that was quite significant.	
Simone:	In the questionaries that I was typing up, someone mentioned that *Harry Potter* has become a part of culture.	culture
Teacher 2:	(HMM in agreement)	
Simone:	And I think that whole thing is an example of it becoming a culture	
Teacher 2:	Ja, it was even in South Africa. I remember Exclusive Books was open and at midnight that day they released the 6th and 7th book. And I was in the queue and also, we were all dressed up, and we all got a copy there and then. So…	culture
Teacher 1:	And just look it up, I think there was a big dispute. Because Pick n Pay was also telling them to sell the books. I think it was it was it was *Harry Potter* as well back in 2007 as well. They said we are going to buy all the books and sell them as well to get foot traffic.	
Simone:	That's very cool.	
Teacher 3:	(Hmm in agreement).	
Simone:	Uhm, Teacher Three… Have you watched the films?	
Teacher 3:	Yes	
Teacher 2:	Yes	
Teacher 1:	I fall asleep in the film every time.	
Simone:	Why?	
Teacher 1:	They just don't appeal to me.	
Simone:	Okay, but I think…	

Teacher 2:	But the music is incredible in it.	
Simone:	They have soundtracks with orchestras	
Teacher 2:	(Hmm in agreement)	
Teacher 3:	(Hmm in agreement)	
Simone:	Kay, Teacher 3?	
Teacher 3:	I have watched all the films. I am trying to think…and then of course most recently number four.	
Teacher 2:	Cause you watched them with your son?	
Simone:	Yes	
Teacher 3:	Because now I watch them with William. Because I need to monitor what he's watching.	Parental influence
Simone:	(Hmm in agreement)	
Teacher 3:	Uhm…. Yes, I enjoyed them? I think I got less interested as the films went on. So, I enjoyed number one and number two.	
Teacher 2:	Ja.	
Teacher 3:	It is definitely the music, but as they went on I…I watched them because I needed to see, it became part of finishing it off rather than uhm actually because I was... I don't remember the other films as closely as I remember the first couple.	
Simone:	Teacher 2?	
Teacher 2:	Ja, I watched the films, uhm definitely agree with Teacher 3 the first two are much better. Because then it just gets dark and gloomy and too much is left out.	dark
Teacher 3	Yes!	
Teacher 2:	But I was also obsessed with Daniel Radcliffe. I was going to marry him so, so obviously I watched it.	para-social relationship
Teacher 3:	Until you saw him in Equus?	
Teacher 2:	Uhm no until the older, agh more recent films. Short, short and awkward.	
Simone:	(laughing)	
Teacher 2:	(giggling)	
Teacher 1:	So, when the films came out there was a band called *Neon Anthems* in Grahams Town. They were guys who did shows and everything. They wrote a song called "OOOH Hermione".	culture

	And the pubs in Grahams Town during the festival and that this is the song they would call. HERMIONE, HERMIONE, HERMIONE. And they would sing this song they were the worst band ever, but Hermione. But I always thought it was how they loved Hermione; how they wanted to marry Hermione. But they were.	
Teacher 2:	(laughs)	
Simone:	(snorts)	
Teacher 1:	Cause they are all in love. And every would shout. STOP THIS WE WANNA HEAR Hermione, Hermione the song!	Para-social relationship
Simone:	That's very cool	
Teacher 3:	Ja	
Simone:	Ja	
Teacher 1:	So young people that looked like *Harry Potter* Fans as well.	
Teacher 2:	Must be.	
Teacher 3:	So…uhm Hermione went to the school that is where I was uhm working in oxford.	
Teacher 2:	HA!	
Simone:	Hmm.	
Teacher 3:	And so, she went to the girls' school there in Headington, and so she was actually at one of those *Harry Potter* events. Uhm at Oxford, one of the book launches and then you had to book your book	
Simone:	Yes!	
Teacher 3:	You had to go to Waterstones and book your book, and because I was in Oxford and because I was in London and because Hermione was going to be there.	
Simone:	JAAAA!	
Teacher 3:	I did do that. So, I did join the culture, but I think it was partly because it was part of the thing you had to do you know.	culture
Simone:	(Hmm in agreement)	
Teacher 2:	(Hmm in agreement)	
Teacher 3:	Rather than, but I had a little girl that stayed with me because I had houseshare and she loved Hermione and she would tell me often that she'd seen her. Obviously, Hermione had been older, what's her face's name? I can't think of any.	
Simone:	Emma Watson	

Teacher 3:	(laughing)Emma Watson, Ja.	
Teacher 1:	Thank you.	
Teacher 3:	Was older than, quite a bit older than her. But she use to tell me that she had seen Emma at school, that day and…	
Teacher 2:	That's cute	
Simone:	That's exciting, ja.	
Teacher 3:	That's my…well that's not really my closest to *Harry Potter*…. Oooh! We saw the place where Hagrid's house was filmed in Scotland, while they were filming it.	
Teacher 2:	That's cool.	
Simone:	Do you think that some of the themes in the Novels or the films ideally the novels, uhm are beneficial for children to learn? Like themes like death, love, loss, friendship, social class even.	
Teacher 3:	Uhm, can I answer quickly?	
Simone:	Hmm	
Teacher 3:	Yes and no. Yes, in the first couple of books definitely .Uhm I found that those becomes where even with loss, even Cedric Diggory dying. Uhm it was and and and his parents, and and and I think there was a lot of that. I think later on it became. The themes became very dark and uhm she didn't allow. They are very dark for a children's book. Uhm things like soul splitting and that is not something I would be comfortable with, it's something that isn't evil or anything. But it is something that is very	Themes Dark evil
Simone:	Heavy?	
Teacher 3:	Heavy and uhm if you don't understand it or are able to explain it or are. That's why I read the books with William, cause I need to when we come to those things eventually. There's something we need to talk about its not just something that can be passed on. Uhm and I don't know at what age you are able to talk about those sorts of things. Uhm because it is. It goes into that whole psychopathic, I mean Voldemort becomes a lot more psychologically interesting. But I am not sure he is psychologically. I am not sure it is appropriate at a certain age. Like I don't know how. SO, kids that have read it at a very young age I don't know if that is very beneficial to them, uhm Ja. I actually had a fight with a junior teacher and, so all foundation I think she must have taught grade 3 or grade 4 in the UK and she was reading the seventh *Harry Potter*.	Parental influence appropriate
Simone:	In grade 3?	
Teacher 3:	Ja, to her kids. But they had read all the others. I actually had a big fight and said to her ah-ah. At that stage I dint have children and wasn't a teacher either, so I was speaking as a journalist. But I said to her how can you be reading, I said if I had a child there is no way I want to hear that my teacher is reading that to them.	

	I said I read it and I was uncomfortable with what I was reading. I said if you cannot explain what it is that you are reading to children, they shouldn't be hearing it at that age. And I had a big fight they even wrote in my wedding card, its lovely to get to know you Teacher 3 even though you hate *Harry Potter*.	
Everyone:	(laughs)	
Teacher 3:	So, I obviously made a very big impact. I was really, I was really. Not aggressive, but I was quite forthright in those days. And I did say that I think those last books are just too dark for young kids. Uhm and they were being read by young kids that was, that is the problem still, I think. I mean if you look [child's name] who's in grade 5 parents are reading those books in grade 3 because [child's name] was reading them and so she was reading them as well. And I don't know whether or not, I don't know what the impact that has on someone. But it has a very dark, which those last books have. There is just something very uncomfortable about them	
Simone:	In the research that I was doing, it suggested that you would start book one and two in grade 5, then three and four in grade 6 and then as the characters mature. The children should age and mature.	
Teacher 3:	And I agree with that up until those last two books.	
Simone:	Hmm	
Teacher 3:	Up until those last 2 books I would say yes that is definitely the case. Those last, certainly seven. I can't remember six or seven. When they start going into the soul splitting and they start going into the horcruxes in six. Those are very mature themes. Although they made them to soften or couch this teenage drama. Uhm they are still very mature themes for your audience at that age.	mature
Simone:	Teacher 2?	
Teacher 2:	SO, for me it was because when I read the books, I was growing up with the books so like I said I had the first four books, but I didn't read them all at one go. I would read one, because at that stage I wasn't yet obsessed with it. So, I read the first one, then the second one and then waited a while before I read the third and fourth one. So, I was growing up the same way the characters were growing up. So, for me it was, I wasn't. I didn't have them all readily available. So, you had to wait until the next one came out. Which automatically meant that you were a year or two older, which meant that you had matured. Where it is nowadays the kids have access to all seven of the books in one go, and they start reading it. Really enjoy it and then they have all the others that deal with quit traumatic events. I mean I still struggle with some of them, its emotional. So, for a growing up story its fantastic. If you can pace it out. You read the first one in fifth grade. You read the second one in sixth grade, the same way Harry and all the other characters grow up. When you do it like that it makes a lot more sense. But I do agree with Teacher 3 where the sixth and seventh one. And they have to grow up a lot quicker than anyone else needs to, because what they are facing. Uhm, but ja.	Mature Grow up
Simone:	So, you think books sixth and seven shouldn't be taught at school?	

Teacher 3:	No. Uhm, you see, there's a tricky thing there because I would say only our grade 10s grade 11s would be able to engage with that material properly. Because and but they kind of have moved past *Harry Potter*. Yeah, in terms of and move past the level of language in terms of the *Harry Potter* books. So, I mean, I think yeah, I'm sure that you know, maybe I underestimate kids, but I also think we should still be gatekeepers to a certain level. Whether it's parents or teachers like I know like kids face a lot more and see a lot more and and experience a lot more in other animation in other books. And I mean, I think what *Harry Potter* did was open up what could be written about in terms of that, whether it's magic or trauma or growing up, or kind of darker areas, so I think kids are probably more accustomed to it now. So maybe they are. It's not so violent. No, maybe it's not so traumatic now, because they've experienced, I mean, they have things like, you know, they've, you know, so. So perhaps it's different now. I think I think it probably is. I mean, we're looking at 20 years now. Since the first one.	NB Academic Parental influence
Teacher 2:	That was the film 20 years ago. Yes. So, the books came out and in what 1997?	
Teacher 3:	Yeah.	
Simone:	As English teachers, besides looking at themes or characters, do you think there's possibly another value or of teaching *Harry Potter*?	
Teacher 2:	Yes, I believe they are. Up to a certain point, they are very well written English is good. They, they follow all the correct English rules, which I like, but also only up to a certain point because the the English is great when you're doing it in grade 4, 5 and 6 after that, like, like I said, there's no more value to the language because it stays at the same level. So, it doesn't it doesn't that introduce new language doesn't introduce new words where where there might be a bit more challenged, but for the beginning for, for speaking good English, I do believe it is valuable.	academic
Teacher 3:	And I think in terms of the cultural phenomenon that's very valuable as understanding that cultural phenomenon, what happened with her it console wide, and what it's done since	culture
Simone:	Because it's very referenced continuously on tvs shows, films	
Teacher 3:	Yes, it is referenced in lots of things. The interesting thing is that it references so many books before it all the adult not Yeah, sometimes adult books. She referenced a lot of like a lot of that researchers is written about elsewhere. So, there is those kinds of value to it. And that she wasn't completely useless. They are writing on a writing of pats, you know, she did do certainly in the beginning, she did do some the research is there. And she borrowed from lots of sources. Yeah. So, yes, I think there is definitely value and I with the language, but also their cultural phenomenon, understanding that cultural phenomena, understanding the references subsequently, most definitely. But the language then becomes very staid, it doesn't develop further develop, if you think about what we're teaching, even grade 9 level. The level of language is different.	culture
Teacher 2:	Yes.	
Teacher 1:	There's other value as well, not just in English, in business and that, when you look at it in publishing, it was a significant moment in publishing, it did what what no	Academic

	other book had done for a very long time, I don't think any book but other than a certain book, since then, actually did in terms of the volume of sales, in terms of it's a franchise that has made billions and will continue to make billions for generations even just so as as as a grade 8 to grade 9 project. So really, I when I give talks that I created a talk called Fred Talks, we spend at least 15 minutes talking about *Harry Potter* alone in publishing and the impact it had. And about that 11-year-old 11- or 13-year-old has saved *Harry Potter*, when. Was about to be rejecting the she came dad where is the rest. And yeah, so there's a lot of value in other things, in terms of other things, and also her her life story. And what she went through and how she had to, yeah, yeah, so there's not just an English it goes beyond that. It's a very inspirational story about innovation and your they said, this is not a children's book. This is too thick to be a children's book. It's too complex, it's too dark and everything. And she went ahead with it anyway. And it basically changed the game.	Business value
Teacher 3:	It did change the game in terms of what's come out. You know, you have spin offs of *Harry Potter*, but you also have really, really interesting magic-based books and yes, you know, kids' reading, and that was what the fact that kids started reading again.	
Teacher 2:	It was the reason why I started enjoying to read I hated reading. It was one of the books that I just really enjoyed, and I couldn't stop.	
Teacher 3:	No, I think I think you're right. I think they opened up huge children's publishing. So, the children's publishing, I think was very stagnant. Yeah, before *Harry Potter*. And suddenly, it was a marketed. And I mean, she certainly paved the way for people like *Gangsta Granny*, David Walliams and, and those books, whether they're not about necessarily the same themes, she opened up children's publishing in ways that I don't think had ever been done before.	meaningful
Teacher 1:	And I think she also paved the way for the Authorperneur. Because after that, within that next 10 years would come, Amazon would come to Self-Publish authors and everything. So, there was a much wider range to write about, and publishers more open to a much more diverse thing was because of the phenomenon that was *Harry Potter* didn't just reject everything anymore. They said, Hold on. Yeah, let's look at it from a different angle. And I think it dominated until 2012.	value
Teacher 3:	And how did that I forget now, so you might, I might probably stand to be corrected, but Lord of the Rings. So, when I was it *Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter* first in terms of the films.	
Teacher 2:	They both came out in the same year, I think.	
Teacher 3:	Did they?	
Teacher 2:	Because I remember what did you see that? My mom said, No, you're too young. For me to see *Harry Potter* or *Lord of the Rings*. I still went.	Parental influence
Teacher 3:	I think that you've got suddenly in the epic films like taking, taking a series of books and turning it into something like you get these epic films now *Lord of the Rings*	

Teacher 1:	Film franchises. Start of the film franchises. So before gone in 60s now before Fast and Furious. Came the *Harry Potter* franchise came Yes, the *Lord of the Rings* franchise, then marvel started making franchises. If you investigate you will see that Marvel and Disney and all that. It started but it split a whole lot of things that we've had to study. Just quite incredible.	
Simone:	Are they in the with the setworks or the novels that you teach? Are there any themes, or characters or any sort of relation that you could put together with what we teach our children now, versus what's in the novels?	
Teacher 1:	I think the thing, the thing from watching the movie was the whole thing of Muggles. And then pure bloods for me, resonates with me from my own life met. And in some of the books read like *Malala*, and things like that, especially in Kite runner, when the guy said, we are Pashtun you are this, it's a big thing. And kids experience…	themes
Teacher 2:	Even how the house elves are treated in comparison to just wizards how the house elves are treated you know, like slaves and you can treat them however you want. And then Hermione going on the whole rights for the you know…	
Teacher 1:	There's a lot of messaging in it. That is very positive, especially in our world.	Messaging
Simone:	Something that the parents commented on, a lot of them were concerned about it in their questionnaire was the issue of witchcraft. To me, there's a difference between witchcraft and magic, or witchcraft and fantasy. But to the parents, it seemed. What they had said was that witchcraft goes against their religion. That is why they don't want their children to read it. Or the the topics are too difficult for Christian child to comprehend.	Witchcraft religion
Teacher 1:	Really?	
Teacher 3:	I think they're underestimating their children. And I think it's like banned books. It's better to read them than not read them. Because, yeah, find out why they don't want you to know what they don't want. And the question is, what's the difference between a prayer and a spell?	religion
Teacher 1:	Exactly. Good point. I go to church on Sunday, there's a chance in the Anglican Church or they are very much like what I'm reading in the Scottish play. You know, it's like hectic when you read it. It's not and…I'm not going to ask who, but it's like, really? I hope you record this. I hear that and it just irritates me. I'm sorry. You know, they'll say something about witchcraft never then gave in another way. No, no, no.	religion witchcraft
Simone:	Do you think it's parents who didn't read the novels who are making assumptions?	
Teacher 2:	Yes. But that's the same way. This Krugersdorp story went about with *Devil's Dorp* where music was being banned where books were being burned simply because they don't actually know what it is about. They've got this idea in their heads that, oh, it's bad. The same way, this is bad or that is bad, but it's not because they're interpreting the Word of God differently to how it's supposed to be interpreted and just putting it. And like Teacher 3 said, it's way better to let them read it and	religion

	make the decision for themselves that oh, this is this, this is not something I think is good, or this is something that it's a story, its fiction, it's, it doesn't encourage you to start worshipping some other god	
Teacher 1:	I go, I go to church every Sunday, just get an extra hour school for my child week, for free. But no, I am a Christian, and my child will read *Harry Potter*, even though I'm not a fan, and that I know, my child will enjoy that protagonist, and seeing the struggles he goes through. And I think it's a wonderful story, boarding school story. That's a boarding school story. Growing up boarding school stories were very appealing because there were kids we could relate to into a different environment. And essentially, it's a boarding school story, my child will read it he goes to Sunday school. And I can tell you, it depends on how progressive you are. And there are different levels of Christian, there's one every word is blasphemies, and ones who don't give a dam about blasphemy and worry more about being kind. So, I think the more the wider your frame of reference, and the more emotionally and culturally intelligent you are, you will not have a problem with that.	religion NB
Teacher 3:	I think I think this isn't it. It's parents who are concerned about I don't necessarily believe they've read the books. Or perhaps have read the books. And I don't know if I bought the wrong idea or read the forms or watch the film. But I find his reason to think you're making a problem for yourself. Because when you're creating your child if they read it. So, you either creating a child who was not comfortable with literature outside of a very narrow band of Christian literature, or you're creating someone who's going to find out answers differently. And I would rather have my child ask me those tough questions about any book not even not even just the *Harry Potter* books, because I mean, what's happened is that there are masses of books now that children should be asking questions.	religion
Simone:	Yeah, they can ask it in safe space	
Teacher 3:	And if they are able to, if you are banning books in your house, that would make me want to read it. It would make anyone want to read it more and B if you're not creating that safe space, your child's going to ask someone else. Yeah. And find out the information anyway. And if your teachers teaching it, at least that teacher is coming to the book, with a certain level of academics a certain level of thematic knowledge, a certain level of psychological psychological knowledge. So, you have someone who's gatekeeping it anyway. Who is warning them about, you know, depending on the teacher, of course, and depending if it's taught at a level that that works and is appropriate, you know, if you're not gatekeeping, because you're teaching your kids *Harry Potter* at a much younger age, then there's a problem? Yes, but if you've got a teacher, even grade 5, grade 6, grade 7, who is mediating the experience, rather that than your child reading it and never asking those questions, you know, and then feeling alienated from Christianity or alienated from parents or alienated from the culture. They brought up in, you know, kids sort of rebel against that stuff, anyway. Yeah, at a certain age. You've banned books again. You're going to rebel against it.	safe academic
Simone:	The *Harry Potter* books. The most recent ban in America was in 2019. So yeah,	
Teacher 1:	State ban or a national ban state?	

	State ban.	
Simone:	State ban.	
Teacher 3:	And where?	
Teacher 1:	In like a school?	
Teacher 2:	In the state in the libraries and in the schools. They banned in 2019	
Simone:	You must look at the list and that list is quite hair raising also books like *I Heard*,	
Teacher 3:	and *i'll call my Name*, *Anne Frank* was also banned *The Colour Purple*.	
	The Colour Purple was banned? That is definitely out of bounds.	
Teacher 1:	One of the parents had said that they read *The Colour Purple* in school. They didn't	
Simone:	get to finish it because parents complained and then the school withdrew it.	
	Agh shame. That's awful.	
Teacher 2:	So then, do you think parents should have a say in the literature that is taught at	
Simone:	school?	
	No.	
Teacher 1:	No	
Teacher 3:	Because my kids wouldn't be reading *Malala*. My kids wouldn't be reading *The*	
Teacher 1:	*Kite Runner*. Which they should read. They'd be reading what's ideal to the community that live. Yes, let's say you influence that, or something that community and that narrative is going to be pushed. And the kids are never going to learn anything but other cultures, other races and dynamics, because everybody's done bad. Everybody's done bad to everybody. And you need to acknowledge where you're wrong is and what has been done wrong. Should not decide because parents have another agenda as well.	Lessons academic
	Yes, yeah. I agree 100 percent	
Teacher 2:	My son, some other night I'm not going to say what he asked my wife a very, very	
Teacher 1:	interesting question. And my wife answered it fully, fully, you know, she framed well, and everything, but it was like, I said, should we have done that? And she said, yes. Because I want my child to be comfortable to ask me questions. Yes, I want my child not to, when he's confronted with a situation where I'm not there I want him to be streetwise. And I want him to know, and I want him to have the emotional intelligence to react in the correct way. And, yeah, in a way, but I agree with the Teacher 3 and what Teacher 2 said about, yes. Those books came out in stages, like you had to wait, that's the reason I started reading Game of Thrones was because it took time, I got frustrated waiting for a way to read the book, and then the book stopped. And that, but that was good for *Harry Potter* is because it created that delay. And that through the whole publishing process, the writing editing process it created. Now there's an issue with that you can read it all at once. That does pose a big problem. I never thought about that.	Lesson

Teacher 3:	Oh really? And the problem is going back to that is that it's not being read all at once by the appropriate group of the age group. It's been all at once by younger, grade 6, to 5, to grade 4 now.	
Teacher 2:	But also, with the parents. Yeah, with with parents having to say, if they had a say, they would choose a book. And like Teacher 1 said, it's, it's not going to be dealing with any difficult concepts. And i've found i've had a lot of very meaningful conversations with my learners, because they're able to ask me questions that they can't ask at home, because they immediately shut down, especially when it comes to topics like race, because the moment you introduce a book, and you're like, there's prejudice, this is racism, the amount of conversations you can have with kids, because you've picked a book that you think can get them engaged in something they're not familiar with. Because at home, they don't get you can't you get shut down? And that's it. So, no.	Academic race
Teacher 3:	They should never have a say and just shut down. It doesn't come into conversation. So, you're not made aware of it. You're not made aware of what racism is, what prejudices is.	
Teacher 2:	Even things like loss.	
Teacher 1:	Exactly	
Teacher 2:	And a lot of that is you don't want to often have those conversations with your parents about how you feeling about this imaginary character.	
Teacher 3:	And I think parents don't have those don't want to have those conversations with their children.	
Teacher 2:	Exactly. Yeah. And they can have those with the teacher, you know,	
Teacher 1:	In South Africa just remember, so Africa has to in context. Now we live in a very bubble society, like behind high walls, and then people study essentially almost lived in in a protected state, where they will hang around with the same culture, the same race, the same religion, most of the time, if not all of the time, outside of the school environment. So those those books might not be, they might not be exposed to that. I mean, the conversations we had about *Malala* in my class, were amazing, because they could ask questions openly and they could ask foolish questions. Yeah. And they we're open to being corrected or being helped to see a different perspective. And this, this book, especially, that's why the part I loved when I didn't fall asleep was the whole Michael dynamic and the different the prejudices.	Lesson
Simone:	So then, my final question: Should *Harry Potter* be taught in schools in South Africa? So, we've spoken about schools in general, but like Teacher 1 saying, with the bubble that's South Africans live in is it beneficial for South African children?	
Teacher 2:	Depends on the school I also think	
Simone:	So rural school versus urban school or what?	

Teacher 1:	Depends on representation. Essentially, it's an English story with English concepts. And there's no real I mean, you there's no real there's no real black character Central, and that they might on the periphery in the movies and all that so becomes I mean, Chris Rock did that whole story about Lord of the Rings? He did that joke. He said, you know what, all I see in Lord of the Rings for three to four hours is white people. And then I realized it's written by a white South African that used to, if it was written by a white South African, they would have gone in one minute and said "Maria waars die ring?" Where's the ring and it would have come out. So, he makes a whole joke about it. So, in terms of representation, it becomes an issue, but it has value in the language, because i've seen lots of kids of colour engaging with spud. You know, John there are characters of colour in there as well. But not really central. Well, there's some. So yeah	Race representation
Teacher 3:	I also think that while JK Rowling deals with prejudice, in the wizarding and non-wizarding world, she leans on stereotypes in her writing, Cho Chang is a particular example. That is like the ultimate in stereotype if you want to look at that character. There are no black characters, there aren't black characters in the.	stereotyping
Simone:	A parent has mentioned that. When the characters are described, their race isn't described until it's a black character, then the black characters races mentioned,	race
Teacher 2:	Who are the black characters in *Harry Potter*? No one jumps to mind. Dean is in the in the film, but I don't think they may. I don't think it's even mentioned that the only reason we know Chang is because of her name. And then the film, obviously, also people would have been very confused had they have cost blonde American girl, you know,	race representation
Teacher 1:	However, we do live in a Hamilton world now what Hamilton the musical has done is it's not saying we cannot have a *Harry Potter* who is black? Not saying we can't have a Hermione who's not mixed race. And so, Hamilton has changed everything. So yes, kids now can engage, for example, Annie now My kid goes and watch Annie and he sees in Annie who's white and red hair, his version of any is black. Yes. I don't think I think then the representation thing might be odd things too valuable to reject in South African context, I think we can, in a way, link it in certain ways to say like, this character is similar to the sky, or you know, you can link it.	
Teacher 3:	And very interestingly, it is. What is it? I think I was talking to you. There is a black author who's writing a book on magic. And it happened last year, I'm sure maybe COVID. Yeah. But she is looking at, so she is writing for a black audience with looking at magic and kind of a very similar vibe to *Harry Potter*. Because certainly in a number of the African cultures magic has very strong it was witchcraft. Magic, you know, magic in witchcraft is an incredibly strong motif in not only in the stories but also in cultural practice. So, I think there probably is definitely a connection to that. Whether that connection is positives though would be I'm not sure. I don't know if that there would be a positive connection made. And as I said, I think I said to you because there's a there is an author that has written a story that is very similar in the Matic the similar to *Harry Potter*, it's set in a black context, when African concerns with witchcraft and all sorts. But I, I think there is a certain like, the idea of witchcraft is much stronger in African communities and African belief systems and, and so I think in that respect, the messages might be different. Yeah. In terms of what's coming through, like, you know, we talked	Magic witchcraft

	about very narrow-minded Christians, but you know, the joke about it being witchcraft is not often a joke. You know, spells are real in many, many African cultures. In Indian cultures, black magic, sorry.	African culture
Teacher 1: Teacher 3:	But like light was the last the word sangomas like that, you know, and so I think there is a I don't know if there is a distance because the characters are white or from England or from some place that is not South Africa. But I don't know if all the same messages would come across, in, in *Harry Potter* in the same way as *Macbeth* there. Witchcraft is viewed very differently. And so, *Macbeth* when it's cast on stage, and that in an African context is a very, that the witchcraft and *Macbeth* sorry, the witchcraft in the Scottish Play is highlighted differently. How it is done in, in in the Irish context. Because we stopped burning witches while we haven't really but the witch, the concept of witches have been has been quite a bit softened. We brought it into the public culture, the idea of witchcraft is not so powerful anymore in English culture, because we've created a culture around the idea of witchcraft, like, you know, we've got all these teenage witches and films and things like that. So, it's not as powerful. We don't as I think many. In many African cultures, it still is powerful. Yeah. So yeah, I don't, I don't know, I can't answer that fully.	witchcraft
Teacher 1:	And it wouldn't just be Orthodox Christians, it would be Muslims as well. Major problems with it. I mean, I come from a dominant Muslim family were the secular Muslims whose parents were like an anti-apartheid struggle to drink whiskey and dealing with them by religion. Their kids read *Harry Potter*, they kids' reading *Harry Potter* from a very young age, and that, but you find more orthodox people, like Orthodox Christians will have problems with it. So, and in our multicultural society, and that, especially in a private school system, where you've got a strong presence of Muslim families and Christian families, and they're from all backgrounds, and that you are going to encounter that sort of problem. Yeah, resistance and resistance. Thank you to the right word. And yeah, I mean, for the 20 years, i've heard stories of black magic and things people do, believing Christians do, and that to ward off black magic, and that is, it's crazy. So Ja people also are very scared. I think also, in our society now, with people's minds. I mean, in certain, like, very intelligent, we don't see Satanism as a bad thing. It's just as something different. And something that's that is anarchistic or different to to the norm to the status quo. I think it would be valuable teaching *Harry Potter*, like we do an *Animal Farm* with with with *Nothing but the Truth* in sound term sections of *Harry Potter* with another book based in African traditions, now even comparing them or Indian.	religion religion
Teacher 3:	You know, I think there are a number of books. And I can't say his name, but he wrote *Petals of Blood* comes very much to mind. In that case, where magic is dealt with, and story is dealt with. We I think we also underestimate the power of story in terms of African culture, because an African culture story is very important, very, very important. Allegorical story. And fable is probably more dominant in African cultures than it is in Western culture. We kind of put it in a book and leave it there, but it forms a lot of the cultural stories. And so perhaps in that sense, if *Harry Potter* is taught in a certain way, yeah, with that looking, you know, with a focus on the allegory and the focus on the Yeah, focus on the allegory and a focus on the story behind that the the moral story behind it.	magic

	When you look at Ben Okri magic is mentioned. In India, Africa and south America as well.	
Teacher 1:	So, you could teach *Harry Potter* by allowing the children to see what's potentially problematic or potentially different and then relating it to their culture?	
Simone:	I think so. I certainly think it has those nibbles too. And then of course, it has so many other benefits, other levels, like to marketing and to Yes, and the cultural	Academic
Teacher 3:	norms and things like that, I think it opens up so much debate, it opens up a lot of debates, most recently with the author, do we? Do we read a book where the author is problematic? Can we read a book where the author has shown? Prejudice? You know, do you? How do you respond to that? Do you separate the author from book?	author
	Are you talking about her comments about the trans community?	
Teacher 1:	Yeah. And her her whole stance at the moment is? Well, not at the moment, but last year was was quite interesting. And what ended up happening was you got to	
Teacher 3:	split, and you got a lot of people saying, they will no longer they have read *Harry Potter* since they were 12. And they will no longer look, I will never buy another film.	
	Not a product, nothing.	
Teacher 2:	Not a product product. So, you had that kind of backlash. Which opens all the culture…	
Teacher 3:	If you read the article, I mean, I read the article, I do feel some of the points had some sort of validity in terms of how, how people are being persecuted somebody	
Teacher 1:	for expressing something, I don't know. Validating parts. I she wasn't keeping quiet about certain things. Yeah, I mean, i've seen it. And that	
Teacher 3:	Cancel culture is real. Something that else came out of *Harry Potter* is that is that I don't think she will ever lose her money or her following her. A weight. However, she the cancelled culture, the idea that you can't separate the product, or the literary product from the person was very interesting. Because how do you like how do you save to separate them? Yes. It's very difficult to do you know. And it's it is that sense of reading certain books that we like Salman Rushdie, Salman Rushdie wrote books that were very controversial. Can you separate him from his books? I'm not saying. I love his books, but he he was controversial in the same way as his things like the hand. Handmaid's Tale. Like do you put those values onto that author? No. You know, you can't. And then I can say my Salman Rushdie, you can't. That is something that's come out of *Harry Potter* very strongly because of the backlash and very, very, very public backlash. I mean, I haven't seen an author that received quite so much backlash. Probably it's when Salman Rushdie started getting all his death threats. Yeah. And the other thing is genre breaking. You know, fantasy doesn't fit into the canon. Yeah. So, you know, fantasy doesn't fit into the canon, the books we read the books we choose, or not? They fit into the canon. And it was very interesting that grade 11 were asking me about how if you're very, Ethan's question was no, but we were talking about the salon. So, the salons that are similar to the canon, this is the art that is good art, everything	Fantasy Canon

	outside of it is not considered art. And this was in the 19th century, as far as explaining to them what canon meant and what it can and what it means when a book is in canon and what it meant to be out of canon. And the fact that at certain points, you had to be a male to be writing in Canada. George Elliot with George Eliot. And, and that is also very important that you are that you're reading a book that is fantasy. And the importance of that fantasy is a very big genre. It's a very important genre. Yeah. And it's dismissed as being Yeah. Yeah, it was dismissed as a waste of time and a kid's thing or, you know, the kind of guys in their mom's basement type of thing. And I think that needs to change is how we view literature. And so, they in that sense, *Harry Potter* plays a valuable role, because it was out of canon, and it is fantasy and it had brought children to read. And that's very, was very telling	fantasy canon
Teacher 1:	My wife, and I believe, and you can relate as a theatre person, there was a stage in the early 2000s, where I honestly believed Mark Lottering was more important to theatre than *Athol* Fugard in South Africa at the time, because nobody wanted to watch *Athol* Fugard, except the ones with master's degrees in theatre. But Pete Mark Lottering sold out. And people came to the theatre, and they were theatre elements and what he did, and he's a brilliant stage performer and a brilliant actor. And people got very angry with us for saying that. And because I honestly believe that what was and that's what, my wife in a playwright is, she writes something that the plumber can appreciate, as well as the person with a master's degree. Well, so you get things you get, you get, like, you get silver striker who I think is wonderful. I take my friends. And they would say that was weird. I didn't get that. You know? Yes, it's brilliant is using some brilliant mind stuff as well, I love it. But the ordinary man can't always appreciate it or get it. Whereas I think in *Harry Potter* was more accessible for so many more people in that in the language in the story in the themes. It was just my opinion. And guess you might differ with me, but it's just I do believe it was very important to literature.	accessibility
Teacher 3:	Yeah, no, I agree, I think, and I think you have to first and then I'm going to relate it to dance now. So, you have to first get people to like, what anyone who watches dance finds very twee, empowering. Before devil like the contemporary stuff. Yes. So, and it's the same in literature. Like if someone falls in love with *Harry Potter*, they may attempt to read something else. But you're never going to get them to enjoy *Wuthering Heights*, if there haven't got a background of reading. And so, you it's kind of the, you know, the Scottish play. Like if you've got that background as *Harry Potter* you can step into other literature more comfortably without feeling intimidated by that is a very interesting. And, you know, we talk about all our work that is in canon, but at the same time, Canon isn't accessible to your and isn't accessible to your children at the bottom of your pile of kids in a club. Even *Malala* for instance, I had one child say the book looks boring. And that tells me she hasn't read that she hasn't she's not comfortable reading because you would know that stage shadow because not boring based on the cover you know, and I think and so I think in that respect, pulling towards the end, and it's like the faraway treat the magic far away. Yes. And lower level. The *Magic Faraway Tree* has fantastic bar all that stuff with Enid Blyton because she is another one that's now very Problematic. And but she pulls children in Yeah, so they, they listen to those first stories, but then they want to start reading, then want to read the faraway tree and the magic chair and everything that follows with it. And so, it opens the door to literature. And I think going right back to where *Harry Potter* was important is there was nothing that stopped. There was nothing off to Enid	Canon Accessibility

	Blyton for kids. So, you had the meeting the *Magic Faraway Tree* and the *Silver Chair*, I think it's called the *Silver Chair* I can't remember exactly enough at a junior level. And then they kind of got swept into reading really tough books, in front in in middle affects, you know, books that are quite dull, that they didn't necessarily relate to do which is why I think having David Williams books in the curriculum, while in the UK there's it's there's a divided whether it should be taught because again that's it's having those books that are inaccessible so that you can get from the *Magic Faraway Tree* to *Harry Potter* to *Uprun*, you know, or to *Macbeth* that the Scottish or to a you know what I like and I think a lot of for a lot of intermediate kids. There wasn't anything in the middle for long. I remember what we read it from standard three to standard five I think it doesn't feature I can't remember what I read to that I only remember from matric from grade 12 from standard eight.	
Teacher 1:	It's actually right now an issue the kids doing Afrikaans are having a problem with their saying, sir, there's this Afrikaans book *Suurlemoen* and it was when it was old school and it's just bad. We just don't want to read it. Is there no other book? There's nothing for them. That's why they can't stand Afrikaans. I think it's because there's no great literature. I mean, we have great books	
Teacher 3:	There is not great literature included in schools, and not great literature by great literature, rather accessible literature, accessible, good, teachable literature that's not necessarily top literature or not necessarily Charles Dickens or George Eliot's or the Brontës, but it's literature that they can they can access the writing is good. That, you know, there's Yeah, that that's that there's something because I think you can't jump from your faraway tree into Charles Dickens. You know, grade 12. You can't do that. So, I think *Harry Potter*, and everything that *Harry Potter* opened up, like for David Walliams, and all the other books that opened up in the value was in that in that, and people started writing children's literature. So, literature that wasn't twee and and kind of dumbed down, people started writing good literature where they engage with an audience that they respected the audience's level of understanding. As I say, I do think JK Rowling might have started writing for her adult audiences. And i've always felt that she started writing for her adult audiences with the last two books. But the rest of the rest of the series, there is a different respect for her level of reader. And like I said, I don't know why she killed of all the characters, but she kind of went into a darker adult reader. And I think she was trying to cater for the adults and the growing fanbase all those reading her books, trying to please both and I think she, she lost those two books because of that.	Value Dark
Teacher 1:	But in terms of business, again, children's literature became a going concern. I think it hadn't been the 80s or the 90s. So, more people want to write in their genre. Exactly. Like now vampires is a thing. So, everybody's trying to write some vampire things people writing on Amazon, they will look what is the most popular seller and they might not even like that genre, they will write in that genre, because that genre is making the money so it will be the thrillers will be the romances it will be will be fantasies, they will look for the genre. And also, you might also look into *Harry Potter* and its influence on fanfiction that it started fanfiction because fanfiction became a huge thing. And from fan fiction came Wattpad. And Wattpad now all our kids read Wattpad. And it's problematic. But also, it's a changed publishing as well. Yeah, and they wanted to write and they willing to get feedback from people saying This is rubbish.	Business

Teacher 3:	The other interesting thing is that although you say people are writing to what's making money, there are also within that group, there are good writers who have now got access to a far more open publishing industry. The industry was very closed before *Harry Potter* very, very closed. And so even people who say, now, you've got people, you've got people who are writing maybe genre-based work, but who actually have the potential to become more and, and are likely to produce really good work at a certain stage. You know, I mean, there are now, and I know you guys are *Harry Potter*, very big *Harry Potter* fans, but there are now magic based books that are far more intricate, far more intelligently written than *Harry Potter*. And I say this with the greatest respect. But there are books that are more interesting, that are more exciting, have gotten a certain and they're not as popular. But they're read and, and those authors are coming to the fall. And that is really great.	
Teacher 1:	Also, they took a big step. It was a big step in democratizing publishing. Yes, that the *Harry Potter* series I mean, the fact that all got rejected so many times and then it happened. People realize they need to go back to the slush pile. And check what they had reject in the past because there are many authors who wrote great books who died with their books, that book Never got published. And that, and then it started changing and then eventually Amazon would evolve. And now Wattpad and things. To Yeah.	Business
Teacher 3:	And you have that author hero. Now, you know, before you didn't have that author hero, that's really interesting, you know, the JK Rowling's, you know, you then, if you think of before authors, were kind of separate from the others. You know, now these authors have followings. They might not have a culture, but to have an author, like a person who writes books have a following is huge. Yeah. You know, it's not just a movie star that's got a following. It's an author, who writes books. And so then, if you haven't read the books and everyone in your class is really has them. It's a little bit of a push to get kids reading. You know, and I think that is very, very, very important. So, whether or not it becomes hyper curriculum, I think it should definitely be allowed at the school. You know.	Author hero Academic
Teacher 1:	I mean, the mean, in drama, for example, the costumes, the characters, you came up with just in a, in a cross theme from English to drama to EMS, and that it's a wonderful opportunity. I mean, we just have an author as well. I mean, we've gone from architects now to starchitects. You know, the big architects are now rock stars and that. Authors are now rock stars, some of them. So, it was a significant moment in publishing history and in the history of the English language. What if you look at Joanne, she did a masters at WITS they studied Mills and Boon for like five weeks, because that's still part of the culture. It's part of the English literature whether you hate it you say its rubbish. They studied it because they wanted let's understand this, where did this come from? And where there's no real value, although, okay, but but those books are also well written. There are two formulas, genre novels, but they studied master's degree level at Wits for a significant amount of time. Five weeks is significant.	Academic Author hero
Teacher 3:	We studied *American Psycho* at honours level. It was fun.	
Teacher 1:	Sorry, we like speaking.	

Simone: Teacher 3:	No, thank you so much. That was very valuable. And lots of time Sorry.	