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Reading Re-recognized

Fostering collaborative reading pedagogies to
reconstruct reading teaching practice with
secondary English teachers

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January 2022

Submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

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Abstract

Approaches to the way reading is taught in UK secondary schools are disjointed, frequently lack a research basis and are sometimes counterintuitive to teachers' beliefs. Mixed messages, which have been systematically imposed on English teachers through historical policy decisions, have made encouraging students to read for engagement difficult. When set structures are imposed on teachers, teachers' professional autonomy is diminished and critical reflection is discouraged. An agentic and dialectical element has been historically absent from dominant models of professional development relating to the teaching of English, and to the teaching of reading in particular, for UK English teachers.

This research explores the relationship between research-informed reading pedagogies and classroom practice among a small group of secondary English teachers in a single institution. A participatory action research (PAR) research design emerged from the search for a creative way to help teachers contribute to the democratization of knowledge and its production, and to translate new knowledge into practice. The longitudinal qualitative research was conceived in three phases with multiple data collection points. The reconnaissance phase involved collective exploration of the existing pedagogic practices and cultures surrounding reading in teachers' classrooms and across the department, by gathering survey responses from students and discursive responses from teachers. In the second stage the study supported teachers' knowledge and reflections about the teaching of reading and fostering reading engagement through systematic reading and study-group research discussions. Participating teachers explored their existing ideas and beliefs about reading, read articles and research papers and wrote in reflective journals. The third stage involved teachers changing or enriching their practice by choosing to implement a range of the research-informed ideas agreed in the group's 'reading manifesto', and considered changes in the classroom and beyond. The key theoretical frameworks underpinning the research relate to propositional knowledge, tacit knowledge, the importance of theory about reading, and the nature of situated learning, with critical pedagogy for teachers' learning providing the lens through which these frameworks were explored. Qualitative data-collection methods (semi-structured interviews, observations and focus group

discussions) were used throughout to collect the views of teachers and students. Teacher participants supported the collection of data and were involved in the preliminary stages of data-analysis, using thematic analysis.

By considering teachers' reading ideologies through a participatory action research (PAR) approach, the findings suggest that teacher development comprises an independent journey, within a community of practitioners; and that teachers are transformed through extended active engagement with values and beliefs about reading and education, in order to reconsider, and reconstruct, both pedagogy and teacher identity. Alongside opportunities for teacher engagement with theory and research, using a framework of critical pedagogy, this approach forms a more powerful route to teacher agency and enhanced pedagogy than the current dominant forms of professional development allow. I therefore argue for change to the current 'what works' approach to continuing professional development for English teachers.

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Acronyms

A-level	Advanced level General Certificate in Education qualification usually taken at aged 18
APP	Assessing Pupil Progress. An initiative launched in 2008 which provided criteria against which judgements could be made about pupils' progress in relation to National Curriculum levels
AR	Action Research
EAL	English as an Additional Language
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education qualification usually taken at aged 16
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITE	Initial Teacher Training
KS2	Key Stage 2 - students aged between 7 and 11 years old
KS3	Key Stage 3 - students aged between 11 and 14 years old
KS4	Key Stage 4 - students aged between 14 and 16 years old
NC	National Curriculum
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NLT	National Literacy Trust
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PP	Pupil Premium
Progress 8 score	Tool used by UK government to measure and compare schools, based on students' attainment in their best eight subjects at GCSE and the progress made from the end of Year 6, when the Key Stage 2 SATs in Reading and Maths are taken
SEND	Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SSR	Sustained silent reading

Overview of thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and rationale for this research and the way in which it evolved towards a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology. The individual, local and national contexts are outlined, and some terms that are often used interchangeably in relation to reading are defined.

The literature review follows in chapter 2, divided into four main areas drawn from the problems and hunches introduced in the opening chapter, and two further sections introducing the theoretical approach and supporting methodological framework. Firstly, an exploration of what reading is and how perceptions of reading processes and theories about reading have changed over time; then, how reading has traditionally been taught and how policy has influenced pedagogical shifts in reading teaching; thirdly, research into student motivation to read. This is followed by a consideration of the factors influencing teachers' theoretical understanding of reading. The fifth section in the literature review explores 'how' teachers learn, taking into account the way in which beliefs and identity are bound up with pedagogical approach within their situational contexts. The final section explores ideas about critical pedagogy in relation to teachers' learning, and considers the appropriateness of a PAR methodology.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this research in greater detail and justifies the decision to undertake a form of PAR design.

Chapters 4 to 6 are the data analysis and findings chapters. Chapter 4 explores the nature of the reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College at the start of the project, and what teachers knew at the outset of the research about reading and how this may have shaped their practices in the English classroom.

Chapter 5 is the second data analysis chapter and presents findings about teachers' professional learning when they undertake sustained engagement with theory and research.

In Chapter 6, the third findings chapter, the specific changes to classroom practice which occurred are explored.

Chapter 7, *Conclusions*, presents the discussion and implications arising across all areas of the findings, and explores the ways in which the nature of reading pedagogy has changed for participating teachers. This last chapter also argues for change to existing models of professional development for English teachers, alongside limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTS

This thesis is an account of an action research project undertaken at Readborough College, a mixed, secondary comprehensive school in the UK, in 2017-2018. The project aimed to consider the ways in which the theoretical and pedagogical reading knowledge of secondary English teachers might connect to practice: reading strategies used and habits developed in and beyond the classroom at Key Stage Three (KS3), and how both aspects might be developed. This chapter explores the inception of this research from 2015, through some of the institutional and national contexts and issues that my English teaching colleagues and I encountered at that time.

1.1 Readborough College

Readborough College is a fully comprehensive, mixed secondary school with sixth form, situated in a rural location in the South of England. The school had approximately 1600 students on roll at the time of the research, with below average levels of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium (PP) grant (available to students who have received free school meals in the last six years, or those who are in or who have left local authority care), at 2%. Readborough College also had below average levels of EAL (English as an Additional Language) students at that time; but above average designation of SEND (Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), at 24%.

In 2014 new National Curriculum requirements (NC, DfE, 2014) were confirmed, and required to be introduced into the classroom by 2016. The requisite changes were compounded by reforms to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in English Language in preparation for first examination in 2017, which required 50% of marks to be awarded for 'reading'. I had been appointed as Head of the English Department at Readborough College in September 2010, just as the previous round of changes to GCSE English, (along with mathematics and ICT), were being implemented. A senior leader at that time, a non-English specialist, exasperated by inconsistencies in

GCSE English Literature results, demanded, 'Why can't you just teach students the *right* interpretation of their GCSE texts to get them through their exams?' I was caught off-guard by the non-sense of the question, but it solidified a quiet concern I held, relating to the possibility that we might have, inadvertently, been doing just that: attempting to teach some kind of 'right' interpretation of texts to pass examinations. I wondered to what extent, as a department, we were teaching 'reading' when 'books' featured so prominently on the English Literature curriculum. I had always conceived of reading as the place where two visions meet, that of the author and that of the reader, and 'become something else' (Berry, 2021, p. 6). I had not theorised the complexity of the crossroads that was created when a third vision, that of the *teacher*, was introduced. The relationship between theory and practice in relation to the teaching of reading is problematic in nature since many teachers feel the concerns of theory are beyond them, or irrelevant to their situation; yet at the same time practice can never be natural or neutral; there is always a theory in place underpinning pedagogy, even if that theory operates at a subconscious level (Scholes, 1985; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The notion of bringing theories surrounding the teaching of reading out in the open for scrutiny is central to the research. Scholes (1985) argued for an overhaul of the subject of English itself, more than thirty years ago, suggesting that any rebuilding of the subject must begin by asking what exactly teachers mean when they proclaim themselves teachers of literature. Gibbons, (2017), asks a similar question following what he identifies as twenty years of political de-professionalisation in education in the UK, since such circumstances threaten to negate any requirement for a personal philosophy about what teaching English means. Yet clarity about what actually constitutes the subject of English and what its purpose in the education of children should be is a necessary foundation for any teacher of English. Without that clarity, it becomes someone else's philosophy or ideology which is performed. When the boundaries of teacher autonomy are restricted by political, historical and institutional forces, teachers are 'increasingly reduced to the status of technicians denied any control over their classrooms or school governance structures' (Giroux, 2020, p.176). Pedagogy itself becomes mechanistic and test-oriented. This study invited teachers of English to openly consider their own practices in relation to the teaching of reading and observe how they become more successful when rooted in a coherent vision of the subject, thereby moving beyond the status of mere 'technicians'.

1.2 The trouble with reading

Bold, dramatic claims are frequently made about the power of reading: that it can transform lives, reduce inequality, ward off loneliness and delay the onset of dementia (Hilhorst, 2019). Reading in large amounts can help to counteract the detrimental effects of aging (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). Reading widely correlates with adult success and eminence and is associated with more prestigious careers (Simonton 1988, Taylor 2011) or ‘more fulfilling and rewarding’ ones (DfE, 2015, p.4). Such reading is regularly recognised in compelling association with academic achievement (Stanovich 1986, 2000; Clark 2016; Clark & Douglas 2011). Even the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) pledged, in 2016, to raise the profile of reading because children who enjoy reading ‘will have better literacy levels and a greater chance of success in life’ (BBC, 2016, p.9). Reading is seen as an important contributor to the development of many language and cognitive skills, and a central key to accessing the curriculum. The National Literacy Trust claims a positive effect on children’s spelling and mathematical skills (Lawton et al., 2015). Krashen (2011, p. 4-5) is unequivocal about the links between reading for pleasure and attainment, asserting that those who read more, read and write better, have better vocabularies, read faster and more fluently, spell better, have greater ‘cultural literacy’ and greater grammatical competence. The picture is a complex one, however, since the correlation is not always consistently reported. In 2003, for example, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found that students’ reading attainment in England was high, but their pleasure in reading was low (Twist et al., 2003). On the other hand, other large-scale studies have shown that reading for pleasure between the ages of 10 and 16 is the key indicator in relation to academic attainment overall, considered more important than influences before the age of five and socio-economic factors combined (Sullivan & Brown, 2015, p.971). Reading may have a role as ‘an irreplaceable container of life experience in a complex and unpredictable world’ for our most deprived students (Heinemeyer, 2017, p.3), since reading for pleasure has been claimed to increase empathy and is a factor in raising ambition (School Library Association, 2021). For some, reading is important because it is enabling and liberating; ‘we read and write our world as well as our texts, and are

read and written by them in turn' (Scholes, 1985, p.xi). In short, reading is often seen as the answer not just to educational failure, but to all society's problems.

At the same time there is a burdensome factor as far as secondary teachers of reading are concerned: similarly dramatic claims are made in relation to measures of persistent reading *decline* during adolescence. Students in the UK currently hold less positive attitudes than previously towards reading, and fewer children are reading for pleasure or as a leisure activity outside of school (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Cleverdon, 2017; Cremin, 2007; Fletcher, 2011; Laurenson et al., 2015). The 2019 National Literacy Trust survey reported 'an increasingly stark picture of children and young people's reading habits' and the lowest ever recorded daily reading levels, with only 25.8% of children saying they read daily in their free time in 2019 (Clark et al., 2020). The 2018 PISA survey showed that 75% of UK boys reported reading either nothing at all or for less than 30 minutes a day. By contrast, 43% of girls reported that they read for at least half an hour per day (OECD, 2019). This perceived gender gap is long-standing and indicates a further compounding factor for teachers to grapple with in relation to reading and the teaching of reading.

Moreover, some of the important terms connected with reading are, unhelpfully, often used interchangeably and indiscriminately as 'commingled conceptions' (Unrau & Quirk, 2014, p.260). The most troublesome, for the purposes of this research, I have attempted to define here. The term *reading for pleasure* is used to refer to any form of reading for its own sake that is not tied to particular curricular tasks or learning objectives, or used to practise a set of prescribed skills or identify textual features (Cremin et al., 2008, Laurenson et al., 2015). Students who are reading for pleasure will do so in order to find personal meaning and purpose related to the human need 'to make sense of the world, the desire to understand, to make things work, to make connections, engage emotionally and feel deeply' (Cremin, 2007, p.6). Reading for pleasure involves choice. It may take place in school, but is more likely to take place, or to be continued, during students' own leisure time. It is undertaken by individuals voluntarily, and anticipates a form of satisfaction that will arise from the reading (NLT, 2006).

Reading for pleasure is distinguished from *independent reading*, which I have used throughout the study to refer to reading which takes place during classroom time when students have access to their own choice of book, rather than periods of ‘independent’ reading that might occur, for example, during a shared class reader. In independent reading, material is often self-selected, but students are encouraged, or in some way compelled, to read. Independent reading is what might occur in an old-fashioned ‘library lesson’; what Krashen refers to as ‘Sustained Silent Reading’ or SSR (2011). It is different from ‘reading for pleasure’ in the sense that there may well be some monitoring of what and how much is read, and it takes place during lesson time.

Reading engagement and *reading motivation* are two further terms that require some disambiguation. ‘Engagement’ and ‘motivation’ as concepts are difficult to pin down within an educational setting since they are used frequently across multiple contexts. Both are employed variously as a kind of shorthand for inspiration, enthusiasm or excitement in teaching terms (Bennett, 2020), and as such their usage in reading has also become blurred and ambiguous, in the literature itself as well as in discussions of practice. Reading for engagement and reading motivation frequently lack conceptual clarity. They are therefore not simple terms to define, but I separate them along the lines proposed by Unrau & Quirk (2014). The notion of ‘reading engagement’ refers to the *doing* of reading, while ‘reading motivation’ pertains to the *attitude* to the doing. Engagement manifests as involvement in the activity of reading and entails a relationship between the reader and their environment in order that reading takes place. With reading engagement there are indicators of action in, and interaction with, the environment, such as number of words read, evidence of comprehension, and actual strategies used in the reading process.

Nevertheless, engagement and motivation are necessarily linked. High levels of reading engagement are likely to be supported by similarly high levels of internal reading motivation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Since reading is an activity that requires effort and purpose, and often involves choice and perseverance, motivation is an important factor (McGeown, 2013), and operates as a prerequisite or facilitator to engaged reading. Reading motivation constitutes the internal processes of a reader that instigate and sustain reading activity of their own volition, generating the *will* to read. Indicators

would include the reader's self-perceived reading competency, the value they attribute to particular reading tasks, and the ability to succeed at them (Unrau & Quirk, 2014, p.263). Motivation may therefore be considered more easily susceptible to manipulation or shaping than engagement, although 'you can't make someone read' (Pennac, 2006, p.13). Yet making students read is precisely what secondary English teachers *are* asked to do by current UK policy: the National Curriculum for English (NC) foregrounds the fostering of a 'love of literature' through 'widespread reading for enjoyment' (DfE, 2014, p.14).

In summary, the accrued sense that reading is beneficial, combined with the awareness that it is happening with less regularity and perhaps enthusiasm for students, was situated alongside curriculum and policy pressure to impose reading on students who, in many cases, seemed reluctant to do it. Moreover, a lack of reading competency will prevent access to areas of the curriculum beyond English for weaker readers, given the circular associations already noted between reading engagement and high levels of reading proficiency (e.g. Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). By reading more, students become better readers, and when they read more competently 'they tend to read more and enjoy reading' (EACEA, 2011, p.27). In the light of the DfE's proclaimed sustained focus on eradicating educational inequality, as measured via the PP grant, there were further internal institutional pressures to narrow the achievement gap through reading since encouraging reading for pleasure is seen as a way of contributing towards raising educational standards while 'combating social exclusion' (Clark & Akerman, 2006, p.1). Within these broad contexts I first became more interested in *how* reading is taught, and how it might be better taught, amongst the teachers in our Readborough English Department particularly, and in the secondary English classroom more broadly; because if nothing changes in the classroom, then, in short, nothing changes (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021). Across experiences of more than twenty years in the education system (as a classroom teacher since 1997), I had witnessed a significant shift towards 'evidence based' and 'evidence informed' approaches to teaching, correlating with ever-increasing demands for accountability; what might be conceived as a movement closer towards traditional positivist paradigms (Giroux, 2020). Certainly, when I first began to conduct the research, the landscape was very much what Biesta (2010, p.48) describes as educational discussion 'restrained to technical questions about "what works"', guided

by the search for ‘reliability, consistency and quantitative predictions’ (Giroux, 2020, p.36). Part of the problem with this approach is that the evidence base for ‘what works’ is limited and often transfers ineffectively between the highly contrasting contexts of educational settings, partially as a result of inadequate infrastructure for teachers to engage with evidence and access support with research (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021). Nevertheless, this was the position from which I began the study: acting on a desire to find out ‘what works’ in relation to the teaching of reading. It was the start of a doctoral journey that did not go in the direction first envisioned and resulted in very different parameters, methodology and considerations.

1.3 Student survey and library loans

As members of the English Department team at Readborough College, we were in the early stages of planning for the impending new National Curriculum back in 2014 (DfE, 2014) and there was a moment in which to pause and rethink. Our internal curriculum had, for a number of years, been built on the assumption that children arriving at secondary school are already able to read independently. Acknowledging this ‘belief’ allowed us to examine its cogency, and also encouraged us to look afresh at what we meant by ‘teaching reading’ in our role as English teachers. It was an opportunity to evaluate priorities in designing a new curriculum, and invited the exploration of *what* exactly was being taught currently in terms of reading skills and comprehension at Key Stage Three (KS3, 11-13/14 years), in order to examine how that might translate into preparation for a reading paper for the English Language GCSE for Key Stage Four (KS4, 13/14-16 years), with the proposed 50% of marks awarded as a test of ‘reading’. The national overhaul offered a rare occasion to revisit our teaching approaches entirely. An element of this process, prior to embarking on any formal research, was to survey beginning KS4 students (at Readborough College, Year 9, 13-14 years) about their attitudes, habits and experiences of reading in their lives. One of the first things students were asked about in this online survey was their early experiences of reading; then about what they remembered and enjoyed from primary school. Next, students were canvassed about what they had enjoyed reading at KS3 in the last couple of years at Readborough College. The replies about recent enjoyment were exiguous and therefore concerning, though I worked among what I considered to be a department of

passionate, committed teachers, excited about the novels, plays and poetry that they taught as 'literature'. Those teachers were given extensive choice about which novels to teach for KS3, via a long and regularly updated list of available books. Teachers could select based on personal preference and professional decisions about what they considered an individual class might best enjoy and be challenged by. Between us, we had taught contemporary novels such as *Private Peaceful* (Morpurgo, 2003), *A Monster Calls* (Ness, 2011), *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2008) and *Maggot Moon* (Gardner, 2012); books that were popular choices for class readers at KS3, much-loved by the teachers who chose them, and at the time were comparatively up to date.

Yet more alarming than the reported lack of enjoyment in the survey was the majority of students admitting that they were unable to remember reading *anything* in their English lessons at KS3. They seemed unable to recollect reading novels *at all* during the entirety of their KS3 experience. Students could remember books from primary school readily enough: *Kensuke's Kingdom* (Morpurgo, 1999), *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson 1977), *Holes* (Sachar, 2000), and *Mr Stink* (Walliams, 2009) were all titles repeatedly referenced by the surveyed students, but it was as though somehow the last two years of reading at Readborough College had been entirely erased from their minds. Very few students identified themselves as readers, and most were only able to reference fond reading encounters that were a long time in the past and far removed from their secondary experiences of English lessons.

We noticed a similar correlation with aspects of both students' attitude towards independent reading, and reading for pleasure. Firstly, there was the small number of students who identified as readers, less than 21%, far lower even than national figures at the time: the NLT reported figures of 41.4% of students reading daily outside of the classroom in 2014 (Clark, 2015). Secondly, there was additional data from the school library. The English Department worked very closely with the school librarian at Readborough College. Recent budget cuts in the library had been discussed at length since the financial situation would impact on new stock, resulting in fewer books being available on the shelves. The senior management team had justified the cuts by using the phenomenon of falling library loans from the school library, and it was difficult to

argue with their figures. Data from the school library indicated a corresponding fall in the overall number of student library loans. Not only were the number of fiction loans across cohorts of students (with an average cohort size at the time of 250 students) dropping dramatically between Year 7 (11-12 years) and Year 11 (11-16 years), they were also reducing year on year.

Academic Year	Year 7 Fiction Loans	2014-2015 Year Group	Fiction loans
2013-2014	935	Year 7	557
2014-2015	557	Year 8	369
2015-2016	498	Year 9	133
2016-2017	353	Year 10	135
		Year 11	17

Table 1.1 Annual school library fiction loans recorded by Eclipse

What was the underlying story behind these numbers in Table 1.1? What had caused a drop from 935 to 557 fiction loans amongst Year 7 students from the previous year to 2014? How could only 17 books have been borrowed by Year 11 students? I tried to reassure myself that during a period of rapid digitisation and rise in the use of kindles and e-readers, it might simply mean that students were finding their reading materials elsewhere, but I suspected that did not adequately explain such a dramatic fall. I could not help but connect what appeared on the surface to be a worrying decline in reading for pleasure with our disturbing survey findings about perceptions of KS3 classroom reading. Besides this, a whole range of reading-related events and activities were taking place across Readborough College's library and English Department during the period over which these statistics were recorded, each designed to encourage reading for pleasure and increase levels of reading engagement beyond the classroom, particularly at KS3. A typical academic year might include six or more author visits, participation in a number of book awards, World Book Day celebrations, a 'Giant Literary Quiz', student shadowing of the Carnegie Book Award and an 'Extreme Reading' photography competition. Was it possible that these initiatives were having little or no effect; or worse, the opposite to their intended effect? On the surface there was the appearance

of a lively reading culture, but the survey and library data told a different story. Our school culture seemed to be responsible for creating an unintentional devaluing of books and reading in spite of the best intentions. My troublesome conclusion was the possibility that these kinds of activities, particularly when they were undertaken on a voluntary basis, benefitted a certain type of student - one who was already a reader - and failed to engage those for whom reading was not a pleasurable pastime.

1.4 Poisoned books

It is perhaps apposite to use an example from fiction in order to help frame a research narrative that concerns itself with ways that the reading of fiction is managed in the secondary classroom, and approaches to the way in which reading is taught. In Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, (1980) a fourteenth century murderer manages to make a book into a murder weapon by covering it in a poisonous ointment. Readers who lick their fingers whilst turning the toxic pages die an agonising death. It is a clever trap since 'the victim poisoned himself when he was alone, and only to the extent that he wanted to read' (Eco, 1980, p. 472). The fictional plot is not as outlandish as it might immediately appear. Nearly forty years after the publication of Eco's novel, similarly 'poisoned' books were discovered amidst the University of Southern Denmark's library collection. Three volumes, dating from the 16th and 17th century, were found to harbour potentially lethal concentrations of arsenic in the green pigment on their covers (Holck & Rasmussen, 2018). Since the toxicity of arsenic is largely undiminished over time, skilled bookbinders, unaware of the fatal properties of the pigment, involuntarily threatened the lives of readers centuries away from them.

Both the real and the fictitious poisoned book examples arise from attempts to 'protect' the texts and, together, they serve as a useful metaphor for thinking about classroom practice in relation to books and reading. Eco's antagonist does not actually destroy a book, 'but simply guards it and makes sure no one touches it' (Eco, 1980, p.466). The medieval bookbinders likewise applied arsenic to the books in order to preserve them against insects and vermin. Both actions engender potentially tragic consequences. As I became more interested in the specifics of teaching reading, I began to suspect that perhaps well-intentioned teaching practices might actually be responsible for creating a

toxic atmosphere around the very act they sought to celebrate and promote. Meek (1982, p.124) perceives a strange irony that in some institutions where reading is taken very seriously and where 'teachers are most anxious to increase the reading ability of their students the activities performed seemed almost to be anti-reading'.

Similar adverse reactions to books and celebrations of reading occurred in my own classroom. There was, for example, an unexpected reception from Year 11 students to a decorative book arch that I created to enhance a reading display. When students entered the classroom after its installation, rather than being inspired by this labour of love, there was accusation: 'Miss, you've *murdered* the books!' Of course, the words were meant in jest, and one potential interpretation might even be to view the response as one of veneration for the books which I had undermined by drilling holes through them. However, it triggered further thinking about all the implicit messages about reading that are present in school, and within curriculum and policy decisions, and the myriad other ways in which teachers unintentionally 'poison' or 'murder' books.

1.5 The trouble with policy

A perception of diminishing reading was not simply a local problem at Readborough College, but replicated a pattern of national, widely reported reading decline. Some endemic factors presented themselves alongside the internal department circumstances; though not all of them, unfortunately, were clear to us in 2014, since classroom teachers, alongside curriculum developers, 'in general, have been unaware of the historical nature of their own fields' (Giroux, 2020, p.45). In 2012 the phonics check was introduced to all primary school students in Key Stage One (KS1), aged five to seven years, across England. (Since education in the UK is devolved, this does not apply to schools in Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland, and the test is not compulsory in independent, fee-paying schools). This early selective approach which labelled pupils' reading skills at seven, only in terms of phonics, and after less than two years in the education system, was seen by some to have a secondary negative or cumulative effect in relation to reader identity or 'self-concept' as pupils moved through the key stages (Glazzard, 2017). This is important since students' reader identities, the extent to which they believe they are capable of comprehending texts and the value they place on

reading (Hall, 2012), form an essential component of their reading engagement (Protacio, 2017). Reader identity and self-concept are further damaged by the unconsciously deleterious representation of readers in schools by teachers themselves. The very language that is used to describe the most-able readers as 'bookworms', and the adjectives which frequently accompany this moniker: solitary, lone, distracted, for example, may be inherently problematic. Cliff-Hodges (2016) notes the way in which teachers and adult facilitators in one study use the same derogatory terminology as the students, even as group leaders of a reading scheme, considering the isolation and unsociable nature of reading to be troublesome for some participants. Something as seemingly innocuous as describing someone as always having their 'head in a book' sends the detrimental signal that they are somehow not quite fully present in the real world and forms part of a hidden curriculum of unwritten values and perspectives that are presented to students in relation to reading.

The imposition of two particular curricula initiatives on English teachers, the National Literacy Strategy (NLS 2001-2009) and the Assessing Pupil Progress framework (APP, DCSF, 2003) with its reductive reading strands, created circumstances of restrictive reading teaching approaches in which novels are 'viewed as set texts instead of narratives written to be read for pleasure' (Cliff-Hodges, 2015, p.93). Novels are chosen as preparation for GCSE and are necessarily read in very specific and highly constrained ways; often 'simply mined for literary techniques' (Cliff-Hodges, 2017, p. 48). There is an increased focus on 'subject terminology' which detracts from authentic reading (Bleiman, 2020). Teachers prioritise teaching atomised analytical skills, separate from the text itself. In this climate of high-stakes testing and school accountability, reading comprehension has regularly become 'distilled and defined as a set of skills that can be delivered in a predictable order and subsequently tested' (Chambers, 2018, p.139). As Cliff-Hodges (2017, p.46) observes, 'many schools appear to treat the middle years as simply a waiting room for examinations, not a living room in which to grow up'.

When the boundaries of teacher autonomy are restricted by political, historical and institutional forces in this way, the status of teachers is reduced to that of 'technicians denied any control over their classrooms or school governance structures' (Giroux,

2020, p. 176). Teachers propagate a pedagogy that has itself become mechanistic and test-oriented.

As well as the effect on teachers themselves, the test-oriented approach to reading has further skewed the relative 'value' of reading and writing through the way that each is quantified within the education system. Meek (1994) suggests that reading and writing are two halves of the same process, and yet the secondary system has systematically separated them in recent decades through APP approaches and in the organisation of GCSE examinations. An assumption that only 'what children write reflects the nature and quality of their reading' (Barrs & Cork, 2001, p.35) permeates the system, since reading is measured through a written, not oral, response. Though reading and writing are separated as discrete skills, students are expected to respond to their reading using very specific kinds of highly controlled written discourse. Narrative knowledge, as conceptualised by Bruner (1996), is similarly marginalised by current policy. A comparison of the relative status in league tables between English Language and English Literature as subjects at GCSE in England confirms this. GCSE Literature has become the 'poor relation' of the more functional and 'transactional' GCSE English Language, with students who do not achieve a grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language being required to resit the examination the following year. Yet reading and writing are 'complementary acts that remain unfinished until completed by their reciprocals', argues Scholes (1985, p.16), as part of his plea for the consumption and production of texts to be 'thoroughly intermingled' (ibid., p.20).

Thus, in 2014 when the English Department at Readborough College began its journey to rethink and redesign the English curriculum, a number of tensions presented themselves and served to highlight the contradictory roles and social functions that teachers undertake within the classroom, as well as some of the less desirable outcomes that performance of those contradictory roles engendered. I have deliberately drawn attention to these factors here, in order to foreground the melting pot which gave rise to the research, and will address some of them in greater detail in the literature review.

1.6 The trouble with teaching

A surface culture of celebrating reading and reading interventions in Readborough College seemed not to be supported by a deeper culture and commitment to engaging all readers in reading activities in class. I returned to the notion that what was happening in classrooms must be at the heart of the issue. Assumptions about reading and how it was carried out needed further exploration. I was convinced that our unexamined and untheorised teaching approaches must be a contributing factor. As the Head of Department, I felt the weight of responsibility for that. Biesta (2010, p.34) reminds us that 'being a student is not an illness, just as teaching is not a cure', and I wondered if we had been guilty of a 'take your medicine' approach to the teaching of reading. Taking medicine might be useful when one is seeking to soothe an ailment, or prevent the spread of infection, but is perhaps less helpful when attempting to inculcate a love of literature. After all, in spite of knowing it is good for them, none of my own children delight in a spoonful of cough syrup. Biesta explains that education generally cannot be understood as an 'intervention' or 'treatment' partly because of the 'noncausal and normative' nature of educational practice. He posits that educational professionals 'need to make judgements about what is educationally desirable' (ibid., p.47). Prior to undertaking the research, neither I, nor my colleagues, seemed to be in a strong position to do that. Early introductions to theories about reading during my own Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course were long forgotten, having been left to lie fallow for much of my teaching career. It became clear that some of the ideas relating to the way in which students processed text represented a significant gap in terms of my own pedagogical content knowledge, or PCK (Shulman, 1986). I possessed neither the content knowledge about reading, nor the general pedagogical knowledge required to teach it. Across the domain of reading, I lacked ways of representing and formulating it in a theorised way to make it comprehensible to others (ibid.). As I began searching for further articles and information, I found that the majority of easily accessible texts about reading surfaced in relation to foreign language acquisition rather than in books for secondary English teachers. My first encounter with 'the Simple View of Reading' model, for example, came via Grabe & Stoller (2002) *Teaching and Researching Reading*, a text primarily aimed at second language learning, though the principles outlined in the first chapter are attributed to reading in both first and second languages. It seemed that,

without university library access, the information was difficult to acquire in the first instance, however hard one might be looking for it.

This uncomfortable realisation, coupled with our department's early involvement in the University of Sussex Faster Read mixed-method research project (Sutherland et al., 2021; Westbrook et al., 2019) continued to give energy to my growing interest in the nature of reading itself. The rationale for the Faster Read project was that struggling readers needed to read and engage with more whole texts, while being taught requisite comprehension skills, using rich, whole-class and group talk, to simultaneously develop their reading skills and engagement. It required teachers to read two whole challenging novels over twelve weeks, and the aspect which resonated with me, beyond the headline figures that students made 8.5 months' mean progress on standardised tests of reading comprehension, with 'struggling readers' making 16 months' progress, was related to the idea that half of the teachers received additional training in teaching reading comprehension. The qualitative data showed that the teachers receiving the additional theorised training 'provided a more coherent faster read and better supported poorer readers' (ibid., p. 60). It reinforced my suspicion that there was something problematic and limiting about the way we were teaching and prioritising reading in English at Readborough College.

1.7 Creating a living room through critical pedagogy

Initially, I was inspired by the desire to find ways to recreate a 'living room' rather than the 'waiting room' for KS3 students (Cliff-Hodges, 2017, p.46) in the English department at Readborough College. I hoped to create conditions to develop the teaching of reading that related to the specifics of reading pedagogy itself, in spite of the contradictory internal and external pressures. It was this need to critically address some of the local, national and institutional constraints under which teaching takes place that first led me in the direction of critical pedagogy as a tool for teacher learning and agency, and which began to shape the participatory direction that the research would ultimately take. Critical pedagogy invites the examination of enduring historical forces in educational discourses, practices, and values (McLaren, 2020). Through understanding the connection between power and knowledge, critical pedagogy emphasises critical

reflexivity (Giroux, 2020). In addition, critical pedagogy seeks to work with teachers directly, in order to create conditions for teaching which challenge learners to examine power structures and patterns of inequality within the status quo. Thus, critical pedagogy is usually applied as an approach between teachers and students, in the context of children and young people rather than, as in this study, solely the teachers themselves and their learning. I was not aware, at the very outset of the research, that we were collectively undertaking critical pedagogy since those enduring historical forces were not a focus of and in themselves, to begin with. Yet, as time went on and I became more interested in the 'why' as well as the 'what' of reading, the framing of reading within English historically became an important component in understanding, and subsequently challenging, the contemporary ideologies at work in the shaping of policy and current practice. Supporting teachers to recognise how de-professionalised, powerless and lacking in agency they may have become was a route to the restoration of agency and underpinned the way we worked.

A critical pedagogy approach sits comfortably with a participatory action research (PAR) methodology, since it offers a framework which seeks to break down distinctions between researchers and the researched (Rappaport, 2020); an important consideration since I was researching with colleagues with whom I considered myself to be on an equal professional footing. Indeed, although I started the research as Head of Department, I relinquished this role during the course of the research (see 3.2). Working collaboratively was undertaken more or less automatically as the natural way to research with peers, but as time went on, I began to more consciously situate my own research within the larger political framework of PAR in terms of teacher development. In generating research which sought horizontal relationships between myself as researcher and my colleagues and students as researched, privileging their knowledge (ibid., 2020), I took sustenance from the work of Fals Borda (1988) and Freire (1970), even while our political, social and economic circumstances are completely different.

1.8 Research Questions

The initial reconnaissance phase of the research involved an in-depth examination into the existing culture, generating the research questions:

1. What is the nature of the reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College?
2. What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom?

The second phase considered how that might change over time through a form of participatory action research to consider:

3. What happens to teachers when they undertake sustained engagement with theory and research, and why?
4. What happens in the classroom as a result of sustained teacher engagement with theory and research, and why?

Of course, underpinning the entire research was a concern with the implications of our findings for theory, practice and policy, including Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers.

Influenced by ideas about 'living theory' in relation to educational action research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), I removed early references to teacher 'improvement' from the research questions. This was important because it seemed to imply the imposition of my own will and negate intellectual freedoms, when the intention of the study was to influence teacher's learning through their engagement with theory and research.

Additionally, 'improvement' has connotations of performativity and the 'what works' agenda, which the research sought to challenge. I sought to offer resources that would help teachers 'create their own ways forward' (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 117) while generating opportunities for critical reflection to support teachers to develop insights about the nature of their own ideas and practices about reading.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

‘Reading’ and ‘reading pedagogy’ form a vast and complex domain. Some of that complexity arises from the currency of reading: words themselves, and their inherent capacity for ambiguity and multiplicity of interpretation by their users. Finding an appropriate model to adequately explain what is predominantly an internal process also presents significant difficulty. Locating a pedagogical position on these shifting sands is inherently problematic, since the history of theories and models of reading is intertwined, too, with the account of more general educational and psychological theories alongside policy implementation in education. The aim of this ‘narrative’ literature review (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016) is to inform the primary research into the teaching of reading, considering both quantitative and qualitative research, including relevant literature from different disciplines, for example, cognitive psychology and sociocultural studies in education. It was conducted using initial combined search terms such as ‘reading attainment’ and ‘secondary students’, for example; also ‘reading comprehension’, ‘reading motivation’, ‘reading engagement’, and ‘reading pedagogy’. Exploring reading pedagogy led to consideration of how teachers learn more broadly. I was interested in findings from large-scale meta-analysis of reading research, but also from small-scale studies that might be similar to the scope of my own. Once the initial searches had been conducted and a starting set of papers collated, the literature review ‘snowballed’ from further studies cited within the literature, identifying additional papers, supplemented by further recommendations from supervisors.

This review of literature is organised into five broad areas, based on the problems introduced in the opening chapter of this thesis, which constituted my initial search terms. Firstly, I present an exploration of what reading *is* and how perceptions of reading processes and theories about reading have changed over time; next, how reading is and has been taught according to these theoretical bases; thirdly, how policy has influenced pedagogical shifts in reading teaching; following this, I explore how teachers learn about reading and reading pedagogy; and finally, offer a consideration of critical pedagogy for teachers as learners as an appropriate framework for the research.

2.1 What is reading?

Reading is a phenomenon which is difficult to observe and capture since it is experienced internally. The only visible manifestation of it is generally someone facing a text. Research into vision, often focused on tracking eye movements (known as regressive and progressive saccades), and the pauses between them, or fixations, were an initial consideration (for example, Oakhill & Garnham, 1988; Rayner, 1998).

However, as physical processes, they are largely reactive and offer less scope to be able to be redirected in meaningful ways by classroom teachers, since, although teachers may note a sense of students reading and engaging by their eye movements, it is not enough on its own to determine whether students fully comprehend the text before them. Additionally, it is not an aspect of the reading process that can be easily isolated and people do not generally possess ‘good introspective awareness of how their eyes move across a page’ (Oakhill & Garnham, 1988, p.8). While some more recent research on eye-tracking claims to be of use in identifying weaknesses in decoding for younger struggling readers (Miller & O'Donnell, 2013), of greater value for reading in the secondary classroom is research on the psychological processes that are experienced while decoding and comprehending. Researchers, therefore, tend to rely on ‘reader representations’ of the reading process (Cliff-Hodges, 2016, p. 34). Thus, I began by exploring different models of reading that have informed educational approaches over time, with a particular focus on reading comprehension and engagement, the primary foci of this study, rather than decoding, the other key component of reading, of greater relevance for younger readers.

2.1.1 Simple models of reading

The reading process involves a text and its reader, and some kind of interaction between them. The operation of decoding the symbols or letters, usually on a page or screen, must be combined with a means of comprehending the resulting words and assimilating meaning from them, or moving from ‘vision to semantics via phonology’

(Willingham, 2017, p.55-56). The false conceptualisation of reading as a linear process of movement between decoding and comprehending paved the way for the ‘reading wars’ of the 1980s and the ideological differences between advocates of ‘bottom-up’ processing and those who supported ‘top-down’ processing. A ‘bottom-up’ model inadequately views reading primarily as a decoding process, prioritising a focus on the text and requiring a phoneme-awareness approach to the teaching of it. Mastery of letters, and of letter-sound relationships, forms the primary goal (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). A ‘bottom-up’ model thus emphasises graphic decoding as the lower-order first stage of the reading process and has led to policy-makers’ preoccupation with synthetic phonics in UK primary schools, where young readers are taught how to break up words into component sounds, in order to blend into whole words (DfE, 2013a).

However, the knowledge *about* language that is required in order to provide the foundation for reading comprehension develops before children have any formal reading instruction (Oakhill et al., 2014). Human beings have been users of language to communicate for millennia, but only in written form for centuries. A ‘top-down’ or ‘cognitive’ model views language more holistically and places the reader (rather than the text) at the heart of the reading process. Reading for meaning becomes the primary objective of reading, rather than mastery of letters and letters-sound relationships. One of its founding theorists, Goodman (1967, p. 127) suggested that reading was a more selective process than the bottom-up models allowed, explaining that efficient reading skill requires ‘selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time’ and involves an interaction between thought and language rather than from ‘precise perception and identification of all elements’ (ibid., p. 128). This ‘top-down’ model therefore incorporates the idea of reading as psycholinguistic speculation whereby a reader receives input from the text, makes predictions (based on conceptual abilities, background knowledge, and language processing skills), then tests and confirms or revises those predictions. This method foregrounds what is known as a ‘whole language’ approach to teaching reading, which conceptualises reading as a process that children would absorb and acquire naturally if ‘immersed in high-quality literacy environments and exposed to meaningful, authentic literacy experiences’ alongside ‘high-quality’ literature (Tracey & Morrow, 2017, p. 67). Literacy-rich environments are certainly crucial to comprehension and, by immersion in

whole texts, children begin to develop their oral comprehension organically through interaction with vocabulary, and initially through listening to and telling oral stories, rhymes, poems and learning how they work in the stages of emergent literacy (Nag et al., 2014), alongside the acquisition of increased world knowledge. Yet even though children demonstrate awareness of printed text in their earliest connections between written language and with spoken language (ibid.), it becomes problematic to characterise the unlocking of the arbitrary, written code of reading as a ‘natural’ process. Young readers still have to decode syllables or whole words rapidly, their eyes moving automatically over letters and words at pace, in order to free up cognitive space to make those predictions and guesses. Thus, there is strong evidence that grapheme and phonemic understanding needs to be explicitly taught (Oakhill et al., 2014).

‘Interactive’ models, therefore, attempt to combine the above two approaches, while acknowledging the importance of prior contextual knowledge. Rumelhart (1994) conceives that there are instances during reading in which lower-order processing affects higher-order processing and vice versa. Observing that syntactical knowledge and semantic knowledge may play as much of a role as orthographic or lexical knowledge in the way readers arrive at interpretation, he conceptualises them as functions which operate simultaneously. This, accordingly, leads to a rejection of the idea of either ‘bottom up’ or ‘top down’ linear models of reading.

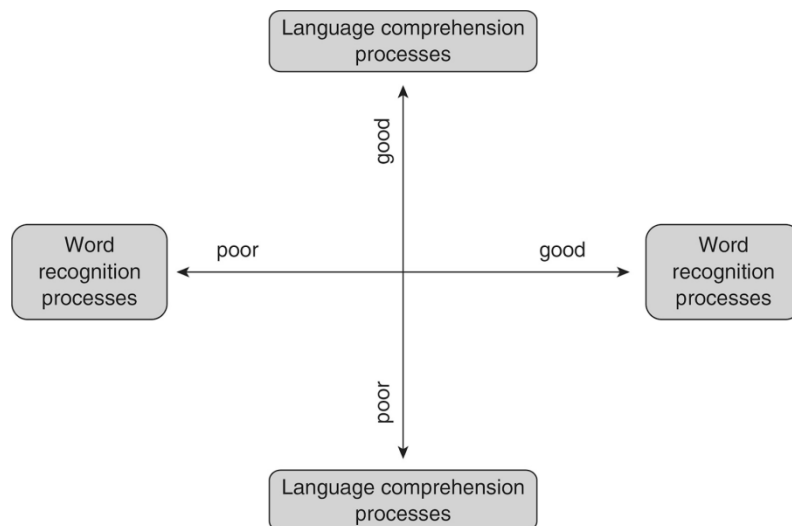


Figure 2.1: Representation of Tunmer & Gough's 1986 Simple View of Reading - from Rose (2016).

Variations of this interactive two-step depiction have subsequently become known as the Simple View of Reading (SVR), originally proposed by researchers Gough and Tunmer (1986). The Simple View of Reading allows that skilled reading is actually a combination of both word recognition and language comprehension. The two processes are interdependent and exist in continuous dimensions. Today, they are often represented in the form of four quadrants (as in Figure 2.1) and applied to the teaching of early reading. From a pedagogical perspective, SVR should enable teachers to identify which side of the process they are ‘seeking to advance at any given time’ (Rose, 2016). Thus, reading is conceptualised as a cognitive process which may look and feel effortless to competent and experienced readers, but nevertheless operates under intense time constraints since word recognition and language comprehension must happen simultaneously. Fluent reading comprehension is often defined in terms of the processes that are activated when an individual reads. Any problems with decoding and word reading put limitations on the mental resources that would otherwise have been spent on comprehension (Oakhill et al., 2014; Stanovich, 1986). Processes of comprehension do not work so effortlessly when readers encounter texts and undertake accompanying tasks that offer too great a level of challenge for them. This circumstance might arise when readers lack adequate background information, vocabulary or the relevant linguistic processing abilities (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Oakhill et al., 2014). SVR continues to be relevant to practitioners since it helps to demonstrate that the two important components of reading may not necessarily develop at the same rate. Decoding and language comprehension are also ‘selectively associated’ with other cognitive factors (ibid., 2015). Topic knowledge and background knowledge *about* words are associated with language comprehension, while vocabulary breadth may be considered important to support decoding (Oakhill et al., 2014). Speed of orthographic recognition, capacity of short-term and long-term memory, and awareness of spelling probabilities are further examples of cognitive factors which influence reading fluency (Murphy & Murphy, 2018).

These models and distinctions remain relevant since they inform current debates in relation to the teaching of reading. Murphy and Murphy (2018, p. 37), for example, would prefer to ‘discredit whole language completely’ though it retains an influence in

contemporary classrooms with some teachers and indeed theorists (see Dombey, 2010). Advocates of explicit vocabulary teaching (Menzies et al., 2020; Beck et al., 2013) prioritise the decoding quadrants of SVR. Certainly, *where* beliefs are situated at this fundamental level will influence approaches to teaching and the kinds of interventions which are employed at secondary school for readers reading less fluently than their peers. Theorists continue to differentiate between lower-level processes, such as lexical access and working memory activation, and the higher-level processes of text comprehension, associated with the kind of mental models that readers create as they comprehend text (Kintsch, 1998). These mental models are, moreover, themselves dependent on other factors, such as background knowledge, inferencing, and executive control processes (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Yet it is perhaps the reader's awareness of how language operates that is the key to unlocking reading processes. Therefore reading, as well as being a personal and private pursuit, is also one in which meaning is constructed through social activity: there is a sociolinguistic dimension as well as a psycholinguistic one (Wallace, 1992).

2.1.2 Reader response models of reading

Since a written text is a more formal and complex form of language than spoken discourse, it is likely to contain vocabulary and structures (embedded relative clauses or participial phrases, for example) which would sound artificial or occur far less frequently in ordinary conversation. Knowledge about how language operates in written form, as opposed to spoken utterances, is therefore an important, further layer of knowledge required for successful reading, including factors such as syntactic processing or parsing and the 'coreference' between sentences which might be triggered through anaphoric links such as pronouns, or synonyms, or category-instance relations (Oakhill et al., 2014, p. 20). Additionally, familiarity with the conventions of different text genres will not only offer encounters with repeated patterns of language use, but also provide a supporting framework of expectation. Readers of fiction enter a narrative world that is more complex than can be explained in terms of word processing and language comprehension; more than activation of knowledge of generic conventions or syntax. The process is greater than the sum of these parts isolated in this

way. Comprehension of a text goes beyond the composite of understanding individual words, their place within sentences and how each sentence is semantically connected to the next. There is a more complex cognitive shift from the early phase of 'getting into a story' to the point of becoming 'lost' in the secondary world of the fiction (Benton, 1992, p. 53) through the resulting layers of interpretation that are activated. SVR explains the beginnings of the reading process and is useful in identifying some aspects of what strengths and weaknesses individual readers might possess, but is unable to adequately account for the act of reading in its entirety. Other theorists have attempted to explain aspects of what is happening beyond SVR. Perhaps reading 'is not just a question of what we do to texts, but of what texts do to us' (Furniss & Bath, 2007, p. 538). When readers read fiction, in particular, some kind of mental picture is built up from words on the page: a representation which clearly goes beyond the literal words (Oakhill et al., 2014).

Iser (1980) explores the interplay between text and reader, noting the dynamic nature of what happens between the two partners in the process of making meaning: a process that is temporal and thereby inherently non-linear. He systematically explores a number of different theories of reading as he moves towards establishing his theory of 'Aesthetic Response' (1980) and constructing a more fully developed account of the reading process. Arguing that literary texts initiate performances of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves, the polysemantic nature of text means that any interaction between a reader and the text carries the unique singularity of a theatrical performance. This may be expressed as a variation on the philosophical idea attributed to Heraclitus that no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man. Iser (1980, p. 32) usefully observes that any analysis of reading or text-processing requires more than a simple linguistic model. He constructs the notion of an 'implied reader' and suggests that the reader's role is pre-structured by three basic components: the different perspectives represented in the text, the perspective from which the reader joins them together, and the 'meeting place' where they converge (ibid. p. 36). Reading is both an active and a creative process, since it is the reader's 'ideation', generated by the structure of the text, which creates mental image sequences to be realised in a reader's consciousness. Inevitably, the construction of these mental images is shaped by the reader's own museum of experiences. The

concept of the implied reader therefore 'offers a means of describing the process whereby textual structures are transmuted through ideational activities into personal experiences' (ibid., p. 38). Iser also distinguishes between determinate and indeterminate meaning in text. Determinate meaning relates to events in the plot or physical descriptions, while indeterminate meaning, or indeterminacy, refers to 'gaps' in the text; actions that are not clearly explained or that seem to have multiple explanations which allow readers interpretive freedom. The number of possible inferences from a given text is 'perhaps infinite' (Oakhill et al., 2014, p.39). Readers must at times, then, actively *constrain* inference-making, in order to ensure comprehension while continuing to embellish their developing mental model. If an author was somehow able to present a story in its entirety, the reader's imaginative role would be redundant; it is precisely because a text necessarily has these unwritten implications or indeterminacies that its reader can be active and creative in the meaning-making process. Partly this occurs because, when confronted with a series of images or ideas, readers automatically attempt to resolve them into coherence, according to '*Gestalten*' or patterns of expectation (Iser, 1980) informed by previous reading experience. Readers naturally assume that there is a 'coherent pattern' to be uncovered in the text, so reading then becomes an active process of 'consistency-building rather than a positive recognition of a coherence which is simply there in the text' (Furniss & Bath, 2007, p. 536). It is this consistency-building habit which informs our comprehension and interpretation of a text. A reader is incapable of absorbing the entirety of even a short text in a single moment, let alone the narrative of a lengthy novel. Neither does the fictional world created within a text pass in any kind of linear fashion for a reader. What happens goes far beyond word-recognition and language comprehension. The cognitive process involves a complex form of foreshortening of the entirety of the textual world as it is brought alive in the mind and the memory during reading. A fictional text consists of a series of words and sentences, but active readers establish a dynamic space, occupying a perspective that is continually shifting: modifying and adjusting according to the way sense is being made of the accumulating fictional world that is being accessed. Although there is an endless possible range of meanings, the reader has to reduce these, eliminating some of the most elaborate, in order to produce a coherent, global reading of the text. Moreover, the shifting process,

or 'wandering viewpoint' described by Iser happens very differently for different readers and forms the basis for theories associated with reader response.

Schema theory builds on Piaget's (1936) claims that knowledge emerges from initial structures necessary to make sense of the world. It explains how knowledge is created and used by readers, who organise everything that they know into individualized knowledge structures or 'schemata'. This has important implications for reading since it highlights the central role of existing knowledge for readers in processing new knowledge acquired during the act of reading. Individual readers will undergo vastly different reading encounters of the same text due to the unique nature of their background 'life' experiences that have led to their individualized schematic construction (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The notion of individualized construction underpins Rosenblatt's (1988) transactional reader response theory, whereby ranges of feeling, verbal and symbolic links, and emotional states are 'stirred up in the linguistic reservoir' (Ibid., p9) as a reader reads. If the reading process involves the text and the reader, and some kind of interaction between the two, reader response theories displace the autonomous text from the centrality of the discussion and focus instead on the reader, foregrounding the reader's recreation of that text in the transaction. Thus, 'with the reader's creative participation as the central tenet, perception is viewed as interpretive' (Benton, 1992, p. 4). Rosenblatt's work emphasises a distinction between two types of response that readers have to texts: 'efferent' and 'aesthetic' responses. In order for a transaction to occur effectively between a fictional text and reader, the reader must prioritise the aesthetic approach. A reader's own assumptions provide the 'tentative framework' for interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 8). When a reader responds in the aesthetic mode, an emotional stimulus is exercised, which establishes a personal relationship to the text. In efferent mode, the focus is primarily on the information contained in the text: the 'blueprint' of facts and ideas. Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic responses can be likened to Iser's (1980) sense of determinate and indeterminate meaning. Rosenblatt's efferent approach accordingly depends entirely on determinate meaning, while the aesthetic approach depends on both determinate and indeterminate meaning (Mambrol, 2016). The notion of an aesthetic response prioritises what the reader brings to the text; something which is sometimes sacrificed in narrower, analytical classroom reading.

Beyond the semantic ambiguity of individual words, one of the ways of accounting for the 'wandering viewpoint' and multiplicity of interpretation lies in the fact that individual sentences within a text may be inherently difficult to distinguish from one another in terms of the textual perspectives they establish. Iser (1980) identifies quotation marks as offering the most striking example within an extremely limited repertoire of signals which more often give homogeneity to the appearance of text on a page. Quotation marks serve the function of denoting that a sentence is in fact the utterance of a character. Indirect speech, however, is less clearly indicated, and there are no specific markers to indicate the intervention of the author, the development of the plot, the author's evaluation, or the reader's perspective. No such helpful graphological signifiers exist to distinguish these very different points of orientation from one another. The importance of such differentiation can be gauged from the way that authors 'insist on different lettering (e.g. italics) to draw distinctions which would not otherwise have emerged from the sequence of sentences' (Iser, 1980, p. 113).

Iser was writing in the 1980s and it is interesting to observe that many contemporary texts aimed at young adult readers in YA fiction *do* now seem to make increasing graphological distinctions between author and/or character perspectives - some of which may be as a result of the technological revolution and proliferation of media texts that has occurred since Iser's analysis. *A Song For Ella Grey* (Almond, 2015), *There Will Be Lies* (Lake, 2015) and *Run Rebel* (Mann, 2020) are three good examples. Each use layout and font to indicate switches in perspective. In *There Will Be Lies* as the main character enters 'The Dreaming' there are a number of pages with single words or lines capitalised alone to indicate the transition. *A Song For Ella Grey* achieves the same using increasingly graphic fonts to mark the 'descent' of characters into a metaphorical underworld. *Run Rebel* employs grey-shaded papers to indicate perspectives other than the protagonist, Amber's, and belongs to a growing list of verse novels in YA fiction which make use of the playful interaction of white space and text on the page, drawing attention to theme through acrostic techniques, for example. In *The Short Knife* (Caldecott, 2020) flashback chapters are differentiated from the main narrative by a marginal notation in the design of a rope (perhaps binding present to past). *The Black Flamingo* (Atta, 2020) is another good illustration of this evolving genre where black pages reflect bleak thoughts, and some pages are constructed to represent file paper for

internal monologue and private thoughts of the narrator, while others replicate a screen for text message exchanges between characters. Though this is not original (Laurence Stern used a black page to mark the death of Parson Yorick in *Tristram Shandy* in 1759), it is certainly reflective of increasingly prolific practice in contemporary YA texts.

The interpretative importance of these kinds of organisational strategies becomes all too evident the moment they are dispensed with, according to Iser (1980). This happens, for instance, when plays or novels are summarized, or poems paraphrased. 'The text is practically disembodied, being reduced to context at the expense of effect' (ibid., p86). The theory has significant repercussions for English teachers who, in the interests of differentiation, may do exactly this kind of summarising or paraphrasing for set texts, and indeed *more so* for students perceived as being less able or disengaged from reading in some way. The proliferation of simplified adaptations of classic texts, often originally intended as aids for readers with English as a second language, are currently used as short-cuts to GCSE English Literature success for some groups of secondary readers, perhaps to the detriment of the reading experience and the development of a student's comprehension abilities.

Benton (1992) builds on elements of Reader Response theories to outline ten 'paradoxes' that are reflected during the experience of reading which enable the creation of a secondary, fictional world in the process. In summary, he argues that reading a story is simultaneously detached and committed; it entails belief in an acknowledged illusion or willing bisociation; is individual yet cooperative since 'the reader creates with the product of two imaginations, his or her own and the writer's'; narrative reading is simultaneously monologue and dialogue, and both active and passive: readers are active in the construction and coherence of the secondary world they create, 'yet they are passive recipients of the effects of this world, essentially submissive to its power' (ibid., p. 17). Finally, reading a story is a form of recreation and, at the same time re-creative. Benton champions this 'useful ambiguity' since recreation suggests play, and positions reading as a pleasurable pastime; while re-creation 'suggests effort and labour to remake the story' (ibid., p. 18); reading a story is unique yet repetitive; entails both abstraction and filling in; is both ordered and disordered; and, finally, is at once anticipatory and retrospective.

Post-structuralist reading theories argue that the complexity of language itself is such that the text may 'mean' many different things simultaneously and that the very notion of there being a universal reading is untenable (Barthes, 1977). There is no definitive answer of what any example of language in action might mean (Belsey, 2002). Any 'meaning' of a text is also subject to change over time, as different critical lenses dominate different literary eras, generating quite different assumptions about what literature even *is*. This explains how interpretations of the 'same' texts' can be markedly different across time periods. Any reader of a text is unable to do so without interpreting it from a theoretical perspective of one kind or another, whether they are aware of it or not. Critical pluralism is a way of explaining this problem, allowing different explanatory models to coexist simultaneously. Pluralism therefore 'negates the idea of teaching a literary text as if it had only one meaning which all students simply have to recognise and reproduce' (Furniss & Bath, 2007, p. 541). Or, more simply, reading is always 'something of a game' (Meek, 1982, p. 95).

Variations of reader response theories have shaped the practice of generations of English teachers in England through the way in which they affirm the importance of understanding the processes by which students make meaning as readers in the classroom. Reader response theories insist that literary texts are junctural. They are not static 'like paintings or sculptures - but consist of sequential patterns that are experienced by a reader in a temporal fashion' (Bath & Furniss, 2007, p. 84). This notion underpins much of what English teachers 'do' in the classroom, again whether they are aware of it or not. The wandering viewpoint of the implied reader establishes that there can be no one single interpretation of a poem or novel or play, or indeed any text according to the theories elaborated above. Language cannot operate in the same way that subjects like mathematics or geometry do, where the associated signs and concepts have single and exact definitions agreed on by all users, since discourse is often interpreted in contexts which unpredictably affect meaning (Wallace, 1992; Furniss & Bath, 2007). This context-affected dimension is complicated further when those words are on a page to be read internally and not spoken aloud. Additionally, highly skilled readers are sometimes actively resistant and 'rebellious', refusing to allow interpretation to remain 'simple or universal' since 'alternatives are forever emerging' (Lemov et al., 2016, p. 100).

2.1.3 Text world models of reading

Text world theory (Werth, 1999) has a similar central premise to reader response theories: that every reader engages with and perceives textual figures differently, but offers further insight into the question of what happens when we read by exploring more deeply the ways in which language, grammar and structure create meaning for a reader. Drawn from the field of Cognitive Linguistics, text world theory deals with the way an individual understands and experiences texts by creating conceptual spaces (Gavins, 2007). It incorporates context and individual responses to a text as well as the way in which grammatical structures within a text generate world-building elements. Cushing (2016, p.1) explains that the ‘mental imagery’ created in establishing the text world, akin to Benton’s (1992) ‘secondary world’, is a combination of a reader making sense of language, but also of tracking the movements of characters, events and locations through grammatical information; and it is this which helps to explain the feeling of total immersion that readers recognise as being lost in a text. Readers create not just one mental model or representation, but many of them, currently, and can ‘populate’ narrative worlds with ‘living, breathing, thinking characters’ capable of executing complex series of physical and psychological actions in ‘authentic material surroundings’, even if that world employs a taxonomy that is far-removed from the reader’s own experiences (Gavins, 2007, p. 10).

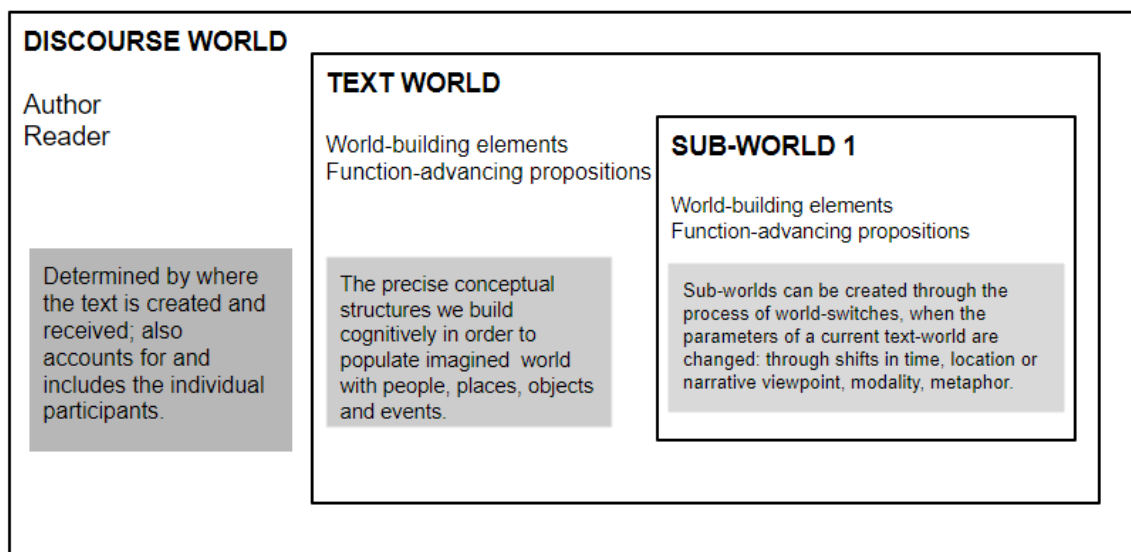


Figure 2.2: A representation of world-switching, Cushing (2016)

Cushing usefully represents this process as three concurrent ‘worlds’ of reading, which are traversed by a reader interacting with a text. They can be represented diagrammatically as being framed by one another, to show the way in which ‘switches’ occur through the reading process (as in figure 2.2). There is the discourse world, the text world and (potentially multiple) sub worlds to be negotiated within any fictional text. All readings begin in the discourse world, the physical space where readers are located and interact with the text. Words and phrases are processed which establish spatial and temporal boundaries in relation to the reader, triggered through schematic activation dependent upon the reader’s background and cultural knowledge. The text world represents the precise conceptual structure/s we build in our minds based on world-building elements and function-advancing propositions within the text. Sub-worlds can be created through the process of ‘world-switches’, when the parameters of an existing text-world are changed in some way, ‘perhaps through shifts in time, location or narrative viewpoint, the use of negation, modality or metaphor’ (Cushing, 2016, p. 2). Text world theory is therefore useful in accounting for the relationship between a reader’s background knowledge and their individual process of making meaning from a text (Giovanelli, 2010). Consequently, it provides a model for teachers, and for students themselves, to consider what underpins the interpretation of textual detail in a particular way.

2.2 Reading in the classroom

Stanovich (1986, p.381) examines some of the cognitive processes that are connected with the skill of reading, but links them more directly with behavioural and motivational factors in the classroom, through exploration of the phenomenon of ‘Matthew Effects’ in reading. The gap in reading skills between good readers and less-skilled readers from the first few years of education in primary schools (based on their phonological understanding), means that as students progress through secondary school and up through the key stages, the ‘rich’ (good readers) get richer and the ‘poor’ (weaker readers) get poorer. The skill gap thereby widens. This happens for a

combination of reasons: firstly, and most straightforwardly, it arises from the lack of practice in reading. Underdeveloped skills in decoding mixed with the cognitive demands of challenging reading materials result in unsatisfactory early reading experiences which are unrewarding and, in turn, lead to less involvement in reading-related activities. The resulting lack of exposure to print and practice on the part of the less-skilled reader then delays the development of automatic word recognition and speed at decoding. That slowness is capacity-draining for working memory and means that word-recognition processes require cognitive resources that *should* be allocated to higher-level skills to do with text integration and comprehension. Consequently, by the time students arrive in secondary school, reading for meaning is hindered for poorer readers, unrewarding reading experiences multiply, and practice is avoided or merely tolerated without real cognitive involvement. The downward spiral continues, and has further far-reaching consequences. Better readers more rapidly attain a stage of proficiency where decoding skill is no longer the primary determinant of reading level. When word recognition becomes less resource-demanding (by taking place via relatively automatic processes of visual and orthographic access) levels of more general language skills become the limiting factor on reading ability.

2.2.1 Reading more

Much of the literature suggests that since reading practice helps students become better readers, more time should be spent reading in classrooms (e.g. Gambrell, 2011; Merga, 2015). This would reduce the reading deficit that is a primary determiner in ‘Matthew Effects’ (Stanovich, 1986). Westbrook et al. (2019) also found, in their mixed-method study involving 20 English teachers across different schools in the South East of England, that exposure to print volume was important in developing the reading of secondary students, alongside engaged reading practices and knowledge of reading strategies to support comprehension, since those categorised as ‘struggling readers’ typically experience whole-text engagement far less frequently than their more accomplished peers. The authors found that comprehension can be significantly enhanced by increasing ‘the speed, volume and engagement of reading whole, challenging texts’ using measurement in standardised tests to show that poorer readers made a surprising 16 months progress over just 12 weeks of a faster ‘immersive’ read

(ibid., p2). The impact of reading faster may be because, as Bleiman (2020, p. 81) also points out, comprehending texts relies on readers being able to grasp the 'big picture' much more than it demands understanding every word or even understanding every individual sentence (something that is particularly difficult for students who read slowly). Physically speeding up reading, as in the 'faster read' model, overcomes the problem of slower processing, helping students towards the big ideas within the narrative without getting bogged down in the minutiae of word and sentence level decoding. Linked to the Faster Read findings but focusing on the qualitative data, Westbrook et al. (2019) explore the damaging effects of a policy focus on extracts at the expense of narratives in their entirety, claiming that 'individual parts of a text cannot be understood outside of the whole' (ibid., p42). These studies seem to confirm other studies (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McGeown et al., 2015; Wigfield et al., 2008; Snow, 2002; Unrau & Quirk, 2014) demonstrating that motivated readers possess a dedication towards coherence and understanding that leads them to overcome comprehension difficulties and to persist with reading, which in turn, causes them to develop their skills and become better readers. Unmotivated readers lack this drive for coherence, which is part of the reason why they tend to give up, rather than persisting with trying to overcome comprehension problems, another significant factor in 'Matthew effects' (Stanovich, 1986).

Some researchers are critical of the rationale and practice of secondary reading lessons devoted to the act of reading independently, and claim that simply encouraging students to read does not necessarily result in improved reading: committed readers would have found their own opportunities to read anyway, while nothing has been achieved towards improving the reading of the more reluctant (Snow, 2002). So, while encouraging students to read more is 'intuitively appealing', there is still insufficient research evidence to support the idea that 'such efforts reliably increase how much students read or that such programs result in improved reading skills' (US National Reading Panel, 2000, p.13). Even though multiple correlational studies find that the best readers read the most and that poor readers read the least (Clark 2015; Clark & Douglas, 2011; DfE, 2012; Krashen, 2011), the US National Reading Panel (2000) was unable to find a positive causal relationship between strategies that only focused on encouraging large amounts of independent reading and improvements in reading

achievement. Likewise, an IEE-funded Word Rich Readers project in which I participated also indicated that reading a greater number of whole books as a whole class did not, on its own, improve reading outcomes for students (Gooda, 2019). This was a small-scale mixed methods study involving 90 students and four teachers. Reading scores were collected pre and post-intervention using online reading tests and compared at the end of a single academic year. The control group read two class texts, while the intervention group read a total of six novels over the same period. Because the groups had been matched as closely as possible not just for perceived reading abilities of participating students but also for teacher experience, it was observed that two groups in the study did seem to make greater progress: those who were taught by more experienced reading teachers, that is, teachers who had a depth of understanding of how reading skills are built (Gooda, 2019).

On the other hand, Merga (2015) argues, along with Westbrook et al. (2019), that it is only possible to communicate the value of book reading by devoting significant class time to it. Moreover, 'quality reading requires quantity reading' (Lemov et al., 2016, p. 210) and 'reading practice is generally recognized as an important contributor to fluency' (NRP, 2000, p. 12). Cremin (2011, p. 1) additionally claims that 'providing ways to foster independent reading is one of the most effective ways to leverage social change'. For disadvantaged children who may not have a culture of reading at home or, indeed, access to books, it may be their only opportunity for this activity. Omitting to include any opportunities for sustained silent reading (SSR), as implied by the latest NC (DfE, 2014) is likely to have a profound impact on the reading levels of these students. Indeed, Krashen (2011, p. 84) finds that SSR 'typically produces results superior to traditional instruction' in terms of progress in reading. Moreover, time spent in reading in the classroom may have value beyond the increased encounter with text that it offers. Merga (2015), for example, advocates communicating the value of independent reading by devoting class time to the practice as part of a process of increasing the social capital of the reading experience itself and foregrounding the sociolinguistic dimension explicitly. She argues for teachers and schools to provide an expectation that reading will occur, in order to raise reading's status as an activity, and indicate its practice as important 'beyond passive access to a library' (Merga, 2015, p. 209). She points towards the difference between the ways in which reading seems to be conceptualised in

primary and secondary education as a limiting factor. After the transition to secondary level, reading opportunities are often irregular and fragmented, with the independent reading lesson in English, assuming that there is one, perhaps providing the only time for sustained reading (Nunn, 1993; Snow, 2002; Merga, 2015).

The literature suggests overall that independent reading is not effective when used as the 'only' type of reading teaching, but is beneficial as part of a wider framework of pedagogical strategies. Reading more, both in independent or shared contexts, is desirable, alongside other methods, providing an argument for increased reading of whole texts while teaching further metacognitive strategies to support reading comprehension. Westbrook et al. (2019) showed that increasing the volume of reading practice alone is not enough to improve reading comprehension. It is more effective alongside other, metacognitive approaches, such as explicit teaching of reading strategies and use of collaborative peer talk, and, crucially, it is dependent on teachers having a theorised understanding of reading comprehension so that they use the pedagogy knowledgeably and flexibly for their classes.

2.2.2 Other reading strategies

Many attempts have been made to break down reading skills into different components that readers can be explicitly taught to develop in the classroom. The National Reading Panel (2000), identifies seven such strategies, including cooperative learning and story structure as methods of reading instruction that have an impact on levels of reading comprehension, although they recognise that the skills are often working in tandem with one another, and acknowledge that 'questions remain as to which strategies are most effective for which age group' (NRP, 2000, p. 15). McEwan (2007) also identifies seven strategies of highly effective readers to include activating (recalling relevant prior knowledge to support the construction of meaning from text), inferring, monitoring and clarifying, questioning, searching-selecting, summarizing and visualizing-organizing. For Westbrook et al. (2019), qualitative findings revealed that when teachers adopted a metacognitive approach to reading teaching (emphasising inference, story-structure, comprehension-monitoring and peer talk), while emphasising the value of the reading-models being used, classroom responses were richer and demonstrated deeper levels of

comprehension. Oakhill et al. (2014) stress the importance of using inference to connect up ideas in a text, prioritising the need for readers to fill in the gaps left by the writer. This particular facet of reading is linked with comprehension monitoring since it relies on a reader's 'own awareness of conflicting information interfering with understanding and activates a reader's need for inference to fill the gap' (ibid., p. 20). Comprehension monitoring thereby enables comprehension repair through application of one or more strategies. The researchers also note that some students who are identified as having problems with comprehension may often be 'very competent, even highly fluent, at word reading' (Oakhill et al., 2014, p. 25). These students may, therefore, be described as 'hyperlexic', since they are capable of delivering answers to factual questions about the text that has been read, but problems arise from the requirement to integrate information from different parts of the text or to apply their knowledge of the world to information in a text. Additionally, they are likely to find it difficult to make predictions about narrative development and conclusion; explicit reading support may therefore be particularly advantageous in the areas of prediction and application of knowledge about the world.

2.2.3 Choice

The notion of choice features prominently in the literature, in connection with motivation for reading: 'teachers who give students choices, challenging tasks, and collaborative learning structures increase their motivation to read and comprehend text' (Snow, 2002, p. 41). Cremin (2014, p. 5) agrees that choice is critical, since 'many studies show that when children select texts for themselves, this enhances their motivation and self-determination'. Cremin (2014, p. 6) further argues that all readers 'deserve to encounter texts which have particular salience and interest to them, so that they can come to value the experience and be caught in a web of fiction or non-fiction which inspires and motivates them to return'. This is because reading, as Britton (1982, p. 7) suggests, is built on 'a legacy of past satisfaction'. Small scale studies such as Laurenson et al. (2015) also support the notion of choice as a motivator for post-primary students. Additionally, Lemov et al. (2016, p. 43) suggest that increasing the level of challenge by encouraging students to read 'resistant' texts (that is, texts which

have an increased level of ambiguity or uncertainty and may require greater levels of inference to reach comprehension), is crucial for promoting reading comprehension. Similarly, 'texts that teach' are ones which challenge and make demands on readers (Barrs & Cork, 2001, p. 36) because they require readers to become active and involved in the world of the text. Both characterise challenge beyond merely lexical, evoking texts which may also have a syntactic, narrative or thematic complexity to them.

2.2.4 Reading aloud

A strategy which features prominently in the literature as a beneficial practice for primary students is reading aloud. Because it is a practice more often associated with beginning readers it currently has less currency in the secondary classroom, yet there is a growing body of research suggests that there are advantages for more experienced readers, too. Barrs & Cork (2001, p. 72) endorse the notion of teacher as performative reader, noting that this was fundamental to the practice of the Year 5 teachers in their small-scale study exploring links between writing and reading. They characterise this performative reading as forming a social act which enables the 'voice' of the author to be more strongly present. Cliff-Hodges (2017, p. 20) advocates reading aloud to secondary age students, arguing that fluent readers have learnt from reading aloud 'how to dictate the pace of the narrative, imagine the characters or hear the voices for themselves', and that continuing to do so may support even proficient readers 'when they encounter more challenging texts', advancing that process of enculturation while supporting those who have not had the benefit of being read aloud to regularly to make up for what they have missed. Creating drama in the reading of a passage provides an aesthetic experience and forms a Vygotskian (1978) example of a more experienced reader lending their consciousness to a less experienced one. Listening students are freed from the requirement to grapple with decoding but still develop experience of world-switching (Gavins, 2007; Cushing 2016), managing the wandering viewpoint (Iser, 1980), the challenge of resistant texts (Lemov et al., 2016) and the immersion in narrative that results from engaging with the story world (Benton, 1992). At the same time the process of enculturation into a reading community is fostered.

2.2.5 Reading communities

Alongside explicit teaching of these strategies, many researchers advocate building a 'community' of readers or 'culture' of reading within the school or classroom emphasising, like Merga (2015), the sociocultural dimension to reading. The notion of community may be variously constructed around elements such as: collaboration, shared pleasures, choice, challenge and individual goal-setting. A primary aim of such communities is often to encourage an affective response to texts on a personal level. Creating such reading communities enables a greater degree of authenticity in replicating what skilled readers do naturally or automatically. Brown et al. (1989, p. 36), for example, argue that much school work undertaken is in some way inauthentic since many of the activities students engage in bear little resemblance to the activities of practitioners and 'would not make sense or be endorsed by the cultures to which they are attributed'. Defining all learning as a process of enculturation, the authors suggest that as students gain more self-confidence and control, they enter a 'more autonomous phase of collaborative learning, where they begin to participate consciously in the culture' (ibid.), replicating ideas and belief systems through conversation and collaboration. Certainly, 'real' readers would be unlikely to undertake focused linguistic and structural analysis of lone passages of text, for example, without some authentic purpose; and therefore, 'if a novel is never going to be examined as part of national exams, why . . . treat it as if it is?' (Bleiman, 2020, p. 158). Specific to a reading culture might be shared pleasure in allusions, imagery, 'being in the know', things that Meek (1982, p. 156) describes as being 'exclusive literary skills . . . that are not taught in exercises or practice'. Reading communities create authentic situations for reading inside the classroom; providing not just the time and space to do so, but offering some rationale for the compulsion to read. Less-manufactured activities surrounding the process of reading in turn promote intrinsic motivation to read, creating the conditions for developing a reading community should therefore be prioritised in secondary English classrooms (Gambrell, 2011).

2.3 Reading and Responding

Secondary English teachers are tasked not just with teaching and enhancing reading skills, but with encouraging students to respond to what they have read in highly specialised ways by the time they come to sit public examinations. Teachers must find ways to ensure that approaches to engendering enjoyment of reading become more than tokenistic, and are 'woven through the fabric of school life' (Cremin, 2014, p. 150). Engendering reading communities creates a classroom challenge because 'reading' at KS3 and beyond inevitably constitutes more than the act of reading itself. It also seems to mean responding to reading in some external way; ultimately in writing. For the secondary English teacher, this means inducting children who are less experienced readers, or have different literacy practices and understanding, into practices specifically associated with reading as an academic discipline in school. It means translating some of the reading theories into practice, and finding a way to navigate policy and curriculum demands that may be informed by contradictory ideas about reading itself. As Lemov et al. (2016, p. 18) argue, in some institutions reading has come to be tacitly defined as 'the act of asking and answering questions about a text' or simply the pursuit of 'right' answers (Cliff-Hodges, 2010), which, given the impossibility of locating fixed meaning is inherently problematic. It leads to an apparently irreconcilable difference between the notion of reading for pleasure and reading for progress and attainment; a dichotomy that is not new. Britton (1982) characterises this as an ancient controversy. It arises, in part, because teachers cannot 'see' progress in reading without accompanying oral or written evidence. A further problem is created by the fact that, as Bleiman (2020) points out, current educational research, not only in reading but more broadly, is constrained by the limited parameters of what is easily measurable in quantitative terms and exists as part of a reductive and prescriptive conceptualisation of language (Cushing, 2020). Bleiman (2020) offers ten reasons why English teachers might read novels with their students that range from building on the narrative continuum between everyday anecdote, through storytelling as a way of making sense of our lives, up to the experience of a literary novel. Each type of narrative focuses as an entry point to providing a shared, sustained experience across a class upon which other debates might be built based on thematic ideas within the text. The final reason she finds, however, is simply to prepare students to answer questions about novels under

examination conditions. Bleiman notes that, in line with many aspects of the curriculum, the way in which we teach novels has, for at least the last decade or so, been 'distorted' by just the last of these ten reasons (ibid., p. 155). 'Teaching to the test' in this way further contributes to the de-professionalisation of teachers by coercing them into overtly test-focused pedagogies and reflects a neoliberal paradigm in which education policy is chiefly concerned with data and international standings (Cushing, 2020).

Jamshidi (2016) argues that the assessment objectives currently driving many GCSE courses in the UK do not require students to actually read the set texts in order to succeed, since manufactured readings are prioritised due to the limited weight given to personal response. Students can satisfy the criteria by relaying a teacher or critic's understanding of the text. This is recognised by some examination boards, who note that a significant number of candidates demonstrate 'insecure knowledge of the text' (OCR, 2018a, p. 11) and prioritise close linguistic analysis, frequently at the expense of depth of knowledge of the texts (OCR, 2018b, p. 5). It seems that pressure to meet assessment objectives reduces opportunity for thorough engagement with texts (Goodwyn, 2012). Giovanelli (2015, p. 43) likewise argues that within the high stakes assessment systems prevalent in the current UK climate, manufactured readings of texts can fare just as well, if not better, than 'authentic' ones given that teachers have greater control over what is perceived to be the correct way of responding to any given text. The very nature of the examination system for English may therefore, in its essence, be anti-reading. Tests themselves are also instrumental in contributing to the ideology about language and reading (Cushing, 2020), and thus, the nature of examination questions inevitably influences approaches to reading. Significantly, GCSE examiners repeatedly call for less formulaic responses from students, arguing in their annual reports that teachers over-scaffold and responses therefore become increasingly homogenous and uniform (AQA, 2015; OCR, 2018b). This forms part of the tension and contradiction inherent within the testing system: teachers respond to the pressure to get results by scaffolding and constraining student responses into an accepted mould, rather than risking their students responding authentically and not meeting the rigid assessment criteria. Something is lost in the process, as Cremin (2014, p. 3) argues, in concentrating on developing knowledge about particular linguistic, structural or lexical aspects of text, and so 'it appears that the reason for reading the text in the first place

may have been seriously neglected'. Again, these are not new problems. Brown et al. (1989, p. 34) similarly argue that students may pass examinations and follow practices that form a distinctive part of school cultures and yet still not be able to 'use a domain's conceptual tools in authentic practice.'

2.3.1 Early readers

In addition to the pressure of public examinations at one end of the educational spectrum, some of the literature finds the problem in attitudes towards reading rooted much earlier, in Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2). The introduction of the phonics screening check (PSC) to all primary schools in England in 2012 (DfE, 2011), recently updated and reinstated (DfE, 2021), has increasingly become associated with reductive approaches to the teaching of reading. While in systematic reviews the introduction of the test was shown to raise reading accuracy (Torgerson et al., 2006), it failed to support reading comprehension. Rather than reading being conceptualised as a process involving a complex combination of skills of word recognition, comprehension and fluency, it was reduced to a truncated focus on accurate sound recognition. To accommodate the primacy of the phonics test, approaches to the teaching of reading accordingly narrowed. Consequently, instead of being seen as involving a complex combination of skills, reading became primarily about decoding. The PSC has altered how teachers organise their classes and curriculum in Year 1, (children aged 5-6). This is seen to have had a knock-on effect on secondary students in relation to reader identity or 'self-concept' (Glazzard, 2017). Then, as students progress through the education system, the substantial pressures on English teachers to combine motivation of readers with attainment of high scores in public examinations along with the limiting factors of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS, 2001-2009) and reductive reading strands of the Assessing Pupil Progress framework (DCSF, 2008) further narrows reading teaching approaches. Students have been accordingly manoeuvred into a position of diminishing reading engagement, and correlating decline in enjoyment.

More than three decades ago Meek made the case for the more universal benefits of reading for pleasure and the requirement to 'move beyond a utilitarian view of literacy'

if teachers are seeking competent and sensitive readers who will 'live more richly' and contribute more effectively in society as a result (1982, p. 18). In this work Meek drew on her own experience of teaching and parenting to help parents understand what is happening when a child is taught to read, building on earlier longitudinal research. Beyond this abstract and idealistic vision of living more 'richly', Meek boldly proclaims that reading for pleasure is the key to developing the competences demanded by assessment; the reader has to learn that the stories in books not only bring pleasure and delight, but scaffold a way of looking at the world to the extent that 'all else in literacy will follow' (Meek, 1982, p. 23). West (1994) likewise argues that there is not a dichotomy between reading for pleasure, and reading attainment, but a harmony: 'Both history and experience demonstrate what is generally overlooked by the zealots of prescription: that without pleasure few of the other supposed benefits [of reading] accrue' (1994, p. 129). It is a tension that remains difficult to negotiate in the contemporary educational climate.

2.4 Moving from theory to practice

Reading in the secondary classroom requires meeting the needs of students at vastly differing stages of a complex journey. No single approach to reading is infallible or can meet every student's needs (Meek, 1982; Cliff-Hodges, 2016). The teaching of reading therefore needs to be approached from multiple dimensions if teachers are to acknowledge and accommodate its complexity. Moreover, the application and shaping of these ideas in the secondary classroom demands further synthesis. Fals Borda (Rappaport, 2002, p. 7) argued that theory and practice exist in an oppositional relationship and exploring the tension between them is a daily reality for teachers. Bringing that exploration into the open and making it explicit offers the additional dimension that is required to negotiate that tension more successfully, if English teaching is to avoid becoming 'deracinated' (Bleiman, 2019, p. 1).

2.4.1 Teachers' learning

How English teachers learn about reading, and how they develop as professionals during the course of their career, is a significant focus of this research. Alongside other professionals, teachers value and draw on practical knowledge and experience: the accumulated knowledge and skill which enable them to manage their classrooms effectively (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021, p. 62). Eraut (2004) identifies a range of different types of knowledge which are involved in the complex professional work that teachers do, noting that the natural tendency for professionals is to communicate the more explicit aspects of knowledge in the classroom, while the tacit knowledge which is vaster, is less easily identified and quantified. Knowledge about students is likely to be recorded periodically through numeric data collection (performance in assessments, for instance) but understood rather as a series of uneven episodes and encounters with individuals and groups. The relationships which arise as a result of these episodes and encounters are 'critical' (ibid., p. 255) in the decision-making process of classroom interaction. Much of the learning that takes place is informal and occurs as a by-product of other aspects of practice. Techniques such as routinisation of practice lead to knowledge becoming less explicit and more tacit, and therefore far less easily identified, shared or valued. In addition, situational understanding of classrooms becomes so ingrained as to be taken for granted. Building on theories of experiential forms of knowledge, Heron & Reason (2011) usefully identify four different 'ways' of knowing, differentiated as experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. Experiential knowing arises from values, beliefs and experiential engagement. Presentational knowing comes from the creation of meaning from those experiences, perhaps through story, metaphor, explanation. Propositional knowing is what might more familiarly be called intellectual knowledge, or knowledge *about* something, while practical knowing concerns knowing *how* to do things. English teachers' propositional knowledge might encompass subject knowledge: about grammar, literary criticism, or debating, for example. It is likely to be broader than that gained solely through academic, scholarly activity, and incorporate private cultural experience (Hickman & Gooda, 2020); this will overlap with their practical knowledge about reading. These forms of knowledge are interrelated, but more powerful when they are concordant: when 'knowing' is grounded in experience, expressed through individual stories, understood through personal theories, and manifest in practical action (Heron & Reason, 2011, p. 6). The forms are

more powerful still when that knowing can be made explicit. Through 'cooperative inquiry', such as action research, typically conducted by practitioners, Heron and Reason argue it is possible to draw out and disentangle these four kinds of knowledge and to consider their use in more intentional ways. This enables the creation of a virtuous circle where skilled action catalyses enriched encounter, encouraging the generation of greater conceptual models, and thereby more developed practice. A further useful theory of learning comes from Lave and Wenger (1991), who consider that learning is not individual and isolated, but emerges from our own actions in relation to those of others as we participate in communities of practice: their theory of situated learning. A similar and important finding from Eraut's (2004) work relates to the way in which the quantity and quality of informal learning may be enhanced by increasing opportunities for teachers to find occasions to work alongside one another and engage in discourse within temporary groups. This was influential in helping to shape some of the research design.

Yet the burden of teacher knowledge can itself be perceived as disadvantageous to learning. For Giovanelli, because reading becomes defined as the elemental human need to 'make sense of the world' by exploring connections between what is found in the reading and students' own museum of experience, including other texts (Giovanelli, 2015, p. 42) then reading must be born from 'an individual's own process of unmediated interpretation' (Giovanelli, 2015, p. 42), and not be imposed by the teacher. For students to engage in authentic reading, it is argued, the teacher must find ways for them to have space to interpret the text and to experience it for themselves. Otherwise, if interpretation is provided for a student, 'the resultant reading is likely not to be authentic, but manufactured' (Giovanelli, 2015, p. 42). Readers need to apply their knowledge of the world to texts in order to achieve even basic comprehension, and interpretation becomes, therefore simply a necessary extension of this process. A problem arises because the classroom becomes a place where students who lack 'rich narrative schemas' for a text or class reader are guided through it by a teacher in possession of a 'highly accreted narrative schema', and this discrepancy inevitably leads to teachers prefiguring students' interpretations of text (Giovanelli, 2015, p. 46). But these comments are in relations to texts, specifically, rather than the process of reading itself. Britton puts it more apocalyptically:

To have children take over from their teachers an analysis of a work of literature which their teachers in turn have taken over from the critics or their English professors – this is not a short cut to literary sophistication; it is a short circuit that destroys the whole system (Britton, 1982).

Enjoyment in the reading process may be said, therefore, to have been systematically marginalised by both policy and practice, to the extent that the explicit requirement for teachers to ensure that students ‘love’ literature is necessary in the most recent National Curriculum orders (DfE, 2014).

2.4.2 Teachers’ theoretical understanding

A range of researchers have identified gaps in English teachers’ theoretical understanding of the reading process (Snow, 2002; Dean, 2003; Cremin, 2014; Sutherland et al., 2021). It is perhaps the ‘propositional knowing’ (Heron & Reason, 2011), the knowledge about ideas and theories, specifically in relation to reading, which is problematic for some secondary school teachers in the UK, and, arguably, the US, in spite of Shulman’s (1986) work exploring the fundamental connections between knowing and teaching and the way these have been artificially separated by standards and assessment. In parts of Europe and other areas of the world there exists a greater tradition of ‘didactique’ (Hudson & Schneuwely, 2007), which combines subject knowledge with theoretical understanding and incorporates an epistemological dimension. This classification seems more systematic than the conceptualisation of pedagogical content knowledge in the UK. The Finnish initial teacher education programme is a well-documented international example of a system in which all teachers are required to produce a masters level thesis on an educational topic (Crehan, 2017). The process of training to become a teacher is research-based from the outset, integrating educational theories with research methodologies and practice, and is linked with higher levels of trust in the education profession (Sahlberg & Walker, 2021). There is a strong evidence base to suggest that a working knowledge of theories of reading, from SVR through reader response theories such as those outlined in 2.1, is needed for teachers to develop students’ reading, and enable reading progress. For

example, the European Commission Report (EACEA, 2011, p. 14) concurs that a firm foundation in research and theory during initial teacher education is 'crucial to the development of excellence in the teaching of reading'. They advocate 'a balanced and consistent approach to theoretical knowledge and practical experience' (EACEA, 2011, p. 14) as important for prospective reading teachers and suggest that, ideally this should be strengthened later on through professional development involving a long-term perspective which provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own work from a research-oriented perspective. The US National Reading Panel research from multiple studies indicated clearly that 'in order for teachers to use strategies effectively, extensive formal instruction in reading comprehension is necessary, preferably beginning as early as preservice' (NRP 2000, p. 16). Korthagen (2010), in describing the practice of teacher-training, employs a three-level model to show how beginner teachers develop their pedagogic abilities, moving from 'gestalt', to 'schema' to 'theory'. The last level is generated by teachers when a coherent arrangement is created from the knowledge acquired previously and different schemata are linked into one comprehensible perspective. The model emphasises practical situations as being at the root of knowledge and theorisation. Only *after* one has reached the schema level, might 'the need for a more profound understanding and thus for theory...present itself (Korthagen, 2010, p. 103). It may take years, rather than the months of initial teacher education courses to reach this stage, and explains why much of the theory presented to teachers in ITT programmes is seldom used in practice. It needs to be strengthened during the course of a teacher's career, since, according to US researcher Snow (2002, p. 9), 'We know that teaching is so complex that the current teacher education programs cannot adequately prepare novice teachers to engage in practice that reflects the existing knowledge base about reading'.

Some further causes of the theory-practice divide are explored in Korthagen's (2010) situated learning perspective. The first layers of teacher learning begin with 'gestalt', the reactive awareness to what goes on in the classroom that is formulated without any systematic reflection. During reflection, a previously 'unconscious gestalt' may develop into 'conscious schema' (ibid., p. 99) through accommodation and assimilation, whereby what underpins momentarily triggered feelings, or causes underlying behaviours become more apparent and understood. Teachers who are aiming to develop a more

theoretical understanding may arrive at a third state in which logical ordering is constructed between conscious schemata that are then connected into coherent theory, but Korthagen argues that practitioners do not often reach this theory level because they are so frequently focused on taking action in any particular situation (*ibid.*), a state which prevents this level of reflection. Teachers who demonstrate a strong proclivity for reflection benefit more from this as they gain additional experience rather than during the earliest stages of their teaching journeys.

Since teachers are in the classroom where the research evidence has to be gathered, they have important expertise about these processes; perhaps the gestalt and schema that Korthagen describes. Too often, however, as Meek (1982, p. 23) laments, teachers are given ‘inadequate models or explanations of the reading process and they trade their own good insights for the doubtful experience of others’, which they then impose on their students. The RAND Study Group in the US have drawn similar conclusions more recently, where their summary review of research and research-based practice in reading comprehension has shown that a teacher’s expertise makes a big difference in student outcomes, ‘yet, few teachers receive adequate pre-service preparation or ongoing professional development focused on reading comprehension’ (Snow, 2002, p. xii). Current education policy implementation in the UK suggests that while greater freedoms have been given to schools to enable them to manage teacher development, in practice the monopoly of Government as the source of ‘orthodoxy in educational practice’ has not yet been broken (DfE, 2013). In fact, the ‘doing’, the practical element of teaching in the classroom, must be combined with space, time and the opportunity to explore ideas alongside peers if it is to enable deep, reflective thinking, since learning is a social, constructed process (Vygotsky, 1978). Otherwise, teachers themselves are subject to the banking concept of education (Freire, 1970), a model which positions learners as containers into which knowledge must be put; in this context, the teachers themselves being the learners.

However, as Korthagen (2010, p. 106) argues, theory can only become useful if teachers themselves develop the wish for a more profound understanding. Unfortunately, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) data (2018), the most prevalent forms of professional development for teachers of reading are short, one-off courses,

workshops or conferences, whereas ‘more fruitful long-term and ongoing forms of professional development, such as conducting research or networking, are far less common’ (EACEA, 2011, p. 15). Guskey (2002, p. 389) proposes finding more creative ways to help teachers translate new knowledge into practice, and argues for the opportunity to explore the specific teacher attitudes and beliefs ‘most crucial to professional growth and development, and to find better ways of measuring these variables’, while Snow (2002) suggests that the most effective professional development is subject and content-focused and provides teachers with theoretical understandings of subject matter.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) commissioned a report with the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA), synthesising the research evidence on the research literacy of teachers in the UK. The BERA/RSA (2014) report found that one of the ways to improve teacher knowledge is through engagement with research, ranging from reading scholarly and research-based articles and drawing on this in their teaching, to being involved in some kind of structured research activity in school (Beauchamp, et al., 2013). Cliff-Hodges (2016, p. 10) likewise contends that teachers who undertake research into reading alongside their classroom teaching gain ‘deeper understanding about reading as a concept and hence extend their pedagogical reach’. Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p56) conceptualise ‘generative power’ as an explanation for the kind of transformational endeavour which can be located during action research. Like Korthagen’s (2010) movement from gestalt through schema to theory, this is the idea that educational theory, once absorbed, contains elements which enable it to apply to a range of situations and propel a teacher towards the realisation of pedagogical potential:

The development of educational knowledge can be seen as the process of an individual's ever-increasing consciousness, which is encouraged by the parallel processes of other expanding consciousnesses with whom we are in conversation (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p56).

Once again, the conceptualisation of theoretical development is seen as cumulative, gradual, and not something which can be acquired in one go at the beginning of a teacher’s career. The literature suggests that teachers need to become more theorised

about reading processes in a sustained and informed way over time, while undertaking situated research in their own professional context: concepts which further underpinned the research design.

2.4.3 Teachers' beliefs, identity and pedagogy

In order to consider teachers' pedagogy and knowledge of reading, it is also necessary to return to beliefs, since these form part of the process of understanding how teachers shape their work. The notion of identity is complex because it lacks singularity and individuals are, arguably, engaged in a constant process of becoming (MacLure, 2003). It is also a highly contested area. A full discussion of identity and its construction for individuals is beyond the scope of this project; I therefore draw on the helpful post-structural conceptualisation of identity as fluid and multiple and produced through contextual intersections of a decentered subject (Drzewiecka, 2017). Teachers' beliefs and the way they are bound up with identity form a complex relationship with enactment in the classroom. Biesta et al. (2015) describe the origin of teacher beliefs as forming the 'iterational dimension' in relation to the way in which teachers are able to achieve agency in the classroom. This is a dimension which incorporates both life histories and professional histories. The 'practical-evaluative dimension' includes the relationships, roles, power and trust levels existent within social structures as well as cultural ideas and discourses and the resources and physical environment, while the 'projective dimension' incorporates future goals, both short and long term (Biesta et al., 2015, p. 627). Due to their entrenched nature, core beliefs are closely tied to individuals' sense of identity.

Because of their deeply-rooted essence, core beliefs are highly resistant to change (Rokeach, 1968; Pajares, 1992). It is therefore important for teachers to be aware of their underlying beliefs about reading development in order to establish fertile conditions that will enable change. Since teachers value the knowledge and skill accumulated through experience which enable them to manage their classrooms effectively (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021), routinisation, which renders that knowledge tacit, rather than at a conscious level, enables a reduction in cognitive loads (Eraut,

2004). However, this practical, tacit knowledge is, consequently, difficult to alter, and means that there is a tendency towards inflexibility. Korthagen observes that educational knowledge cannot be simply 'transmitted' to teachers as a way of improving their actions (2010, p99), but must be internalised fully and made part of their practice. Eraut (1994), likewise acknowledging the multifaceted acquisition of theory by teachers, distinguishes between 'public' and 'private' theory, contending that public theories known by a teacher may not necessarily be enacted by them in practice without opportunity to fully engage with them (Brant, 2006).

2.5 Knowledge, power and critical pedagogy

The desire to engage with core beliefs about how teachers learn, within the context of a political and historical narrative of de-professionalisation in English teaching through a theory-poor diet, drew me towards a closer examination of power and knowledge, and to a framework of critical pedagogy for teachers as learners.

Foucault's (1977) metaphor of the Panopticon as a regulatory mode of power and knowledge is useful in consideration of the relationship between systems of social control and the power-knowledge concept. Power and knowledge, as conceptualised by Foucault (*ibid.*), are acquired through observation of others, since knowledge engenders power and observation of others generates new knowledge. The 'circular' panoptical design creates circumstances of disciplinary power through the mechanism of observation, of the kind which exists in institutions such as schools and the education system, where much is supervised and monitored. Power is sustained through surveillance and the use of hegemonic discourses that naturalise oppressive societal structures, making the oppressed complicit in their own oppression by internalising and reproducing these structures. The formation of knowledge and the increase in power reinforce each another in a circular process, a process which 'supports, reinforces, [and] multiplies the asymmetry of power' (Foucault 1977, p. 212). The result is practitioners' complicit acceptance of regulations: a normalisation of certain modes of operating. Appropriate behaviour and responses are achieved through panoptic discipline which negates the need for total surveillance by inducing a population to

conform through internalisation of the accepted reality. Individuals are not simply repressed by the social order but created within it (Foucault, 1977). When only certain people or groups of people control knowledge, oppression is a possibility. A power-structure of knowledge production of this kind exists in schools and amongst English teachers. Giroux (ibid., p. 6) makes the case that in the US, public school teachers were deskilled 'as one national political administration after another embraced a stripped-down version of education'. He suggests that the central goal was to promote economic growth and global competitiveness, which resulted in a narrowing of pedagogy. As has been shown, a similar attempt to homogenise education has taken place in the UK, and it has been particularly problematic in a domain such as English whose subject matter sits on shifting sands (Hickman, 2020) and whose history is contested (Gibbons, 2017). Choosing critical pedagogy was a way of attempting a version of consciousness-raising for teachers, albeit on a modest scale.

The concept of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) as a mode of awakening critical consciousness in order to effect change, emerges from a more radical Marxist-rooted politics than I sought for the research. Critical pedagogy is nearly always used in the context of what teachers do when teaching children and young people or adult learners who are learning to read in basic education programmes. It is an approach that has been used since the 1970s in the UK and internationally, to raise the consciousness of oppressed and marginalised people, typically, working-class students or workers, to this oppression, in order to create a more socially just world. However, it could be possible to use critical pedagogy to apply not only to students but to teachers who are currently lacking in agency and power by the current system in order to raise consciousness about those structures. Moreover, perhaps 'radical' has simply assumed greater connotations in contemporary terms than it once held. The term has its origins in *radicalis*, or 'roots'. Freire himself associates 'the radical' with someone who 'perceives historical contradictions in increasingly critical fashion' (1974, p. 10), thus exploring the 'root' of things and becoming aware of the resulting implications of such historical contradictions. Like Freire, I am committed to - 'solutions with the people and never for them or imposed upon them' (ibid., p. 13) while desiring a form of education which enables individuals to reflect on themselves, their roles and responsibilities, 'indeed to reflect on their very *power* of reflection' (ibid.). Critical pedagogy develops

from Freire's ideas of the 'critically transitive' consciousness, that is characterised by depth in the exploration of issues and problems (Freire, 1974, p. 15). Critical pedagogy, then, is a self-reflective practice which illuminates the ways in which classrooms embody selective values by acknowledging the historical, political and institutional forces that limit autonomy within them. Giroux (2020), draws on Freire's (1970) ideas about the ways in which people must critically recognise the causes of oppression in order to change them and create a new reality. It is through appropriate pedagogy, dialogue, analysis of the use of particular words and images, that the road to reorientation and seeing anew lies. Critical pedagogy is necessarily always rooted in individual contexts, can never be viewed as an '*a priori* discourse to be asserted' or methodology to be implemented, nor 'a slavish attachment to forms of knowledge that are deemed to be quantifiable' (Giroux, 2020, p. 186). It can be argued that a critical pedagogy framework is also potentially useful in supporting teachers' learning and development because it may enable them firstly, to become aware of their powerlessness and lack of agency within the current education system; secondly, to recognise that current methods of developing reading may disadvantage those in most need of support in reading. Giroux also argues that classrooms regularly function as modes of social, political and cultural reproduction in the context of which, pedagogy is reduced 'to a transmission model of teaching and limited to the culture of conformity and the passive absorption of knowledge' Giroux (2020, p. 3). Since this research sought to empower teachers to move beyond transmission models of teaching, critical pedagogy seemed a suitable theoretical framework to support this movement. It is a way of disrupting the status quo from which a narrow, reductive and test-focused curriculum emerges (described in 2.3 above), and ultimately to resisting the commodification of education. Critical pedagogy is a key element in drawing attention to the question of who controls 'the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and classroom practices' (Giroux, 2020, p. 4) since it problematizes the inherent and frequently contradictory ideologies that come into tension in the classroom.

Using a framework of critical pedagogy therefore serves to bridge the gap between the needs of individual teachers and micro and macropolitical concerns. It embraces the social contexts in which relationships are formed, rejects a skills-deficit approach in teachers and students, and invites authentic learning for both. According to Giroux

(2020) it is a method of resisting attempts to reduce classroom teaching to a single technique or method: a framework which invites a participatory approach to the research methodology. A form of PAR was therefore chosen to frame the research design, though not without some initial reservations.

The legacy of Fals Borda (1988) and Freire (1970) is important to this research, but it is difficult to claim a similarity in terms of broad objectives. PAR traces its roots to work in predominantly low-income developing nations in the 1960s and 1970s as part of a politically progressive movement towards social reform, often via activism (Rappaport, 2020). One of my major hesitations in embarking on a participatory and critical pedagogy approach was the connotations of the words themselves, with their inherently grandiose-sounding ideals. Words and phrases like ‘social reform’, ‘politically progressive’ and ‘activism’ felt far-removed from the kind of research I set out to achieve. Moreover, in a rural school in the wealthy South East of England, the radical language used by Freire or Fals Borda may seem incongruous. Instead, it was some of their guiding and underpinning principles that drew me in this direction: the focus on process rather than product, exploring the interstices between action and research, placing practitioners’ knowledge on a parallel with academic knowledge and orienting small-scale intense research relationships within a single institution, and encouraging teachers to use pedagogy that is in the best interests of all students.

2.6 Summary of literature review

In summary, therefore, theories of reading suggest that historical reading models and distinctions, simple reader response and text world models of reading, for example, remain important since they underpin the different methodologies and (sometimes latent) ideologies towards the teaching of reading, which continue to dominate current debates. Put simply, secondary English teachers need to know about reading.

Pedagogic theories of reading suggest that teachers should find ways to capture responses to reading beyond the constrained ways required in examination and address the distorted ways in which novels have been taught in recent years.

The key theoretical frameworks underpinning the research on reading teachers' professional development are presented in figure 2.3. They attempt to show how I used critical pedagogy in a new way, to apply to teachers who are marginalised by their lack of power and agency within a constraining educational system, rather than as more typically used to apply to working-class students suffering more obvious forms of political oppression. Since teachers' professional autonomy has been diminished by the set structures and mixed messages which have been systematically imposed on them through historical policy decisions, critical reflection is discouraged.

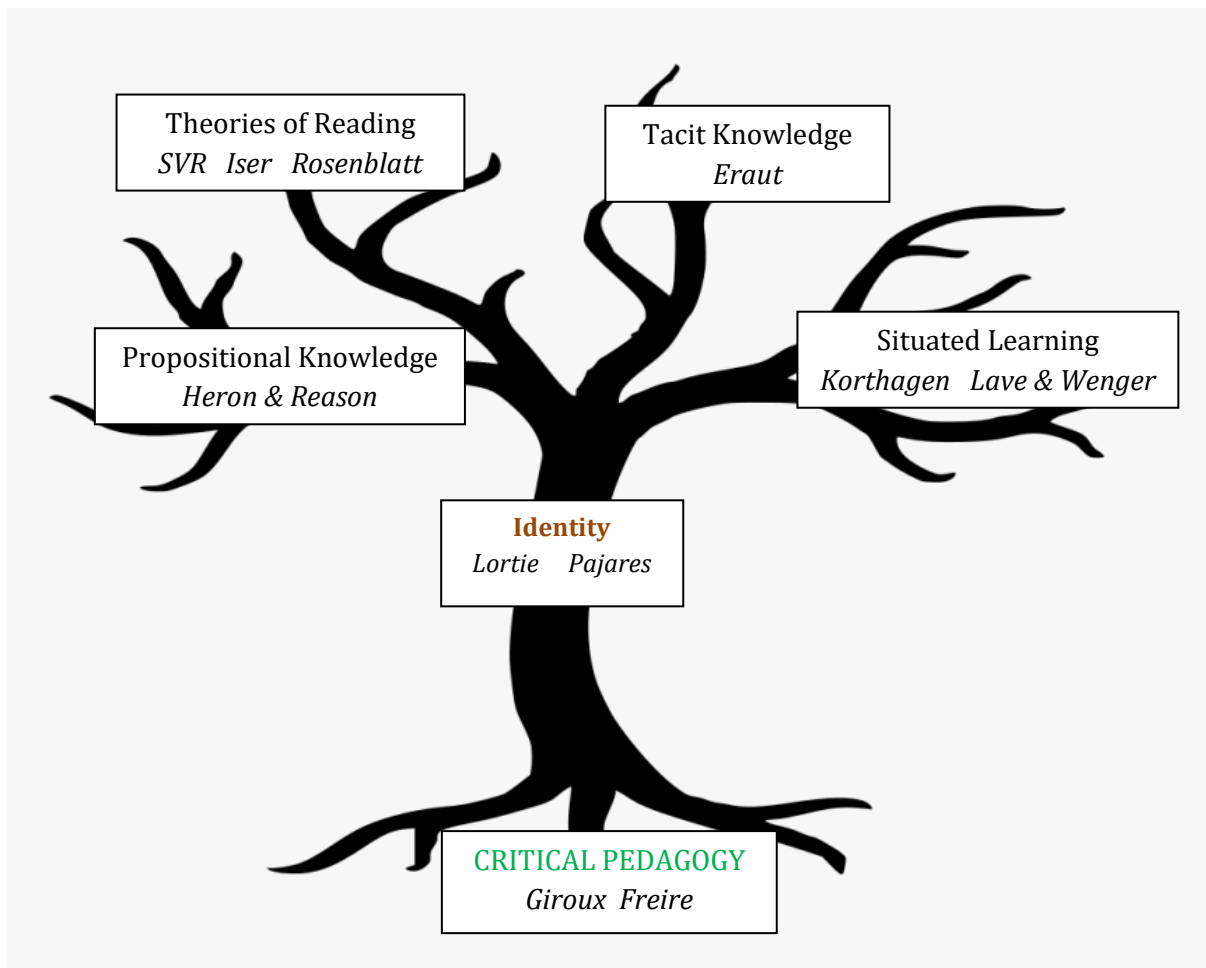


Figure 2.3: Theoretical frameworks underpinning the research

Using a framework of critical pedagogy offers the potential for a powerful course back towards teacher agency, first through exploration of teacher and teacher-reader identity, and the way that these are created through the growth and interplay between

propositional knowledge, tacit knowledge, the importance of theory around reading, and the nature of situated learning. These four branches operate together in my conceptualisation of this research; at times they are entwined and not easily separated. Participating teachers developed and extended their understanding about reading and reading pedagogy, through bringing aspects of teacher and reader identity into the open, with critical pedagogy as the root and route to this exploration. In order to consider how teachers acquire professional skills towards membership of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), it seemed important to explore teachers' reading ideologies through active engagement with values and beliefs in order to make tacit knowledge explicit. Opportunities for teacher engagement with theory and research help to support development of propositional knowledge. How teachers negotiate the theory-practice divide, how they find ways to even challenge the notion of a divide itself, but instead discover methods of inhabiting the 'hyphen' between the two, became an important area of the research.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodological approach underpinning the research is outlined. This is followed by a description of the research design, and why a form of participatory action research was chosen, including explanation of the decisions made about the selection of methods. Pryor (2010) and Dunne et al. (2005) conceptualise methodology as inhabiting six paired dimensions: ontology and epistemology, micropolitical and ethical issues, and macropolitical and practical considerations. Each is considered in the framing of my chosen methodological approach. Throughout, decisions relating to methodology were informed by continuous consideration of the research questions:

- What is the nature of the reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College?
- What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom?
- What happens to teachers when they undertake sustained engagement with theory and research, and why?
- What happens in the classroom as a result of sustained teacher engagement with theory and research, and why?

Section 3.1 explains my ontological and epistemological position to justify the decision to undertake qualitative research and further situate this as a form of inclusive participatory action research. This is followed by a discussion and problematisation of my positionality as the researcher operating within my institution alongside colleagues and students in Section 3.2, along with the selection of research participants. The specifics of the research design are explained in Section 3.3, including the necessity of overcoming some practical issues. The selection of research methods is detailed in Section 3.4, followed by an interrogation of the data collection process in Section 3.5. The process of data analysis is presented in Section 3.6, followed by an exploration of ethical considerations (Section 3.7). Finally, issues of reliability and limitations are explored in Section 3.8.

3.1 Researching within an interpretivist paradigm

Ontology refers to the conceptualisation of existence and what it means to function as part of a living, social world; a philosophical position and theory of being which shapes the way individuals perceive themselves in relation to their environment, and in their interaction with other people. Ontology is the essence of 'how things are in themselves' (Dunne et al. 2005, p. 14), a way of considering and interrogating the nature of reality itself. Reality, for me, is necessarily socially constructed as humans exist in constant interaction with, and in relation to, others (Silverman, 2011). It is not a static entity but something that is constantly transforming (Freire, 1970). Experience of the world is itself subjective: any given moment or event is construed differently by those who experience it, even when involved in the same activity at the same time. Participants understand and experience the same event differently, and have different contributions to make to it (Wells, 2001). Social reality is also a construct that is multi-dimensional, ever changing and dependent upon an individual's frame of reference (Burton et al., 2008) and is therefore constantly interpreted and reinterpreted. The world we inhabit exists as a complex place to be described and explored, rather than one which can be predicted or controlled as in the positivist view (Cohen et al., 2007). The subjective nature of being creates multiple layers of experience that can never be fully apprehended; nevertheless, the individual dimension to that experience is valued.

Epistemology is linked directly to ontology since ontological position determines understanding of how knowledge comes into being, how it is created or constructed. It encompasses 'the nature of our claims to know things about ourselves and the world' (Dunne et al. 2005, p. 14) and, accordingly, helps identify the ways in which we justify those claims. Since every person perceives reality in a different way, it becomes impossible for a researcher to locate a sense of a single 'truth', except by consulting the perceptions and perspectives of all participants involved in the social context: in this case, the context of a school. Truth is not something that can be described in universal terms because it is perceived on an individual, subjective level, according to an interpretivist outlook, a paradigm which, in essence, attaches greater importance to interpreting and understanding the meanings that people attach to their actions (Dunne

et al., 2005). Knowledge, therefore, is something both individual and co-created, developed in company with other people who are also creating their own knowledge; knowledge that comes in different forms. Heron & Reason's (2011) different ways of knowing, (experiential, presentational, propositional and practical) are more powerful when congruent with each other. Knowledge is not fixed and independent, but constructed between people. The process of interaction by participants within the research is a means of understanding phenomena better by viewing them from multiple perspectives and accepting the intersubjective nature of reality. Knowledge is continually constructed and reconstructed between participants as they work towards the 'collaborative achievement of goals that emerge in the course of their activity' (Wells, 2001, p. 180).

A definitive critique of positivism has long been established in social scientific research: theorists (e.g. Kuhn, 1977; Lather, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) have been championing paradigm shifts over the last few decades; and yet positivism retains its hegemony over much secondary education policy and therefore practice. Within the evidenced-based climate that we currently inhabit, with its strict adherence to the testimony of quantitative data and results, positivism has arguably made a stronger return than ever to education research (Dunne et al., 2005; Biesta, 2015) particularly under the banner of 'accountability' (DfE, 2013) , and as such, continues to disproportionately influence educational policy makers (Gorard, 2007; Biesta, 2010). The culture of renewed positivism, moreover, serves to undermine the pedagogy itself, reducing education to a narrow focus on outcomes while undermining the role of teachers as 'engaged and critical public intellectuals' (Giroux, 2020, p. 47). Positivistic assumptions in evidence-based education have continued to feed the 'managerial agenda' of schools and decreased the scope for what counts as 'effective' in education (Biesta, 2010, p. 32).

Consequently, my research emerges from an interpretivist framework. Its aim is thus to explore perspectives and shared meanings, in order to develop insights and gain deeper understanding of phenomena arising in the world through the collection of predominantly qualitative data. Qualitative methods focus on the whole of human experience and the meanings ascribed by individuals living the experience, thereby

offering broader understanding and deeper insight into complex human behaviours (Macdonald, 2012).

My understanding of ontology and epistemology has also been influenced by my theorisation about the nature of reading. Just as each of us experiences reality uniquely, so each reading experience is individually constructed. Reading constitutes a social practice; one in which there is a transaction between the reader, the writer and the text itself, building on Iser's (1980) theories outlined in the literature review: 'meaning' from a text is created by the interplay between the reader and the text. If reading is constructed as a collaborative practice, 'an event forged by a transaction between one or more readers and an authored text' (Cliff-Hodges, 2016, p. 85) then, as Iser explains, the experience of the text is brought about by an interaction which cannot be understood as private or arbitrary. 'What is private is the reader's incorporation of the text into his own treasure-house of experience' (Iser, 1980, p. 24).

Subscribing to this belief encouraged a research design that enabled the development of knowledge about reading processes, reading pedagogy and reading classrooms to arise through *action*, as part of an iterative process, rather than seeing knowledge and action as separate entities; since it is in this 'situated knowing' (Wells, 2001, p. 181) which incorporates both action and reflection together that the knowledge of more 'expert' others comes to make personal sense. This required a collaborative form of action research, which valued the knowledge of practitioners, the teachers within the department, and created a space in which they might actively participate by sharing their knowledge; a type of research where the journey of the teachers was paramount in the conceptualisation and development of practices in the teaching of reading.

This necessarily also led to the adoption of an insider, participative approach to the research, alongside a thorough exploration of the mutuality and equality of influence within the relationships created between myself and the other teacher participants, explored further and problematized in Section 3.2, given that my own values are necessarily inherent in all aspects of the research. Instead of deflecting the attention away from the pivotal role of myself as researcher in analysing and interpreting data, therefore, the aim was to make use of reflexivity to monitor and account for it within the

fluid social conditions in which the research account has been constructed (Dunne et al., 2005, p. 87).

Any kind of action research differs fundamentally from conventional research in that it involves intervening in the 'real' world to try to improve it in some way, while at the same time also creating deeper understanding and knowledge about the world. This makes it messy and complex, since it is not a passive, observational form of research, but one that it is dynamic and reactive (Pine, 2009).

3.1.2 Action Research

Action Research contrasts with earlier research paradigms, by insisting that the ancient classical distinction between 'action' or 'practice' and 'research' or 'theory' is false. It seeks to create a form of research that values both simultaneously, generating improved practice and enhanced knowledge about a given context, free from a hierarchy that, for centuries, valued theory over practice (Gustavsen, 2001). The invention of action research is generally attributed to Lewin in the 1940s and was originally conceived of as a three-step spiral process offering insight into how practice might be improved through a reconnaissance or fact-finding stage, a period of taking action and then further fact-finding about the results of the action. Practical improvement is thus supported by theoretical understanding (Noffke, 2012). It differs from traditional research because it requires action as an integral part of the research process itself and since it requires practitioners to research their own practice it is insider (McNiff et al., 1996). It unites the propositional and experiential forms of knowing identified by Heron and Reason (2011) as explored in the literature review, and thereby aims to improve educational practices for all.

Though AR has always operated as a method of systematic enquiry that teachers undertake as researchers of their own practice, in its earliest forms data collected in classroom action research were analysed from a broadly positivist perspective and relied on quantitative proof of improvement in outcomes for students based on causal analysis (Hammersley, 2019). However much educational action research latterly

evolved within an interpretive paradigm, using a fluid, organic design and avoiding the rigidity of 'testing' fixed hypotheses (Altrichter et al., 1993). This more fluid, flexible approach enabled examination of the research questions by allowing for open-ended exploration of the nature of the reading culture at Readborough College and probing teacher knowledge about reading while simultaneously seeking pedagogical development through engagement with theory and research in order to change classroom practice from the inside out. AR connects with the tradition of reflective practice developed by Schön (1983), the process through which professionals learn from experience through making manifest their implicit knowledge base through reflection in action. Influenced in turn by the work of Stenhouse (1975), there exists a long tradition of this kind of research in English departments in the UK. Richmond (1982) and others, led the way by encouraging teachers to transform their own classrooms 'into arenas for serious research into pedagogy in English teaching' (Bleiman, 2020, p. 182). Thus, action research can provide an unparalleled route to structured personal reflection for teachers in relation their own practice, which makes it a highly appropriate model for this present research. For teachers, knowledge is enacted *through* change. As Schön (1983) conceptualises it, 'our knowing is in our action' since 'the workaday life of the professional depends on tacit knowing-in-action' without separating thinking from doing (Pollard, [Ed] 2014, p. 5).

This kind of AR classroom research by teachers is therefore valuable in understanding a complex social situation enabling hypothesis to be derived from the depth of exploration (Hopkins, 1993). Moreover, action research formalises a process that aligns with teachers' experience. Teachers collect information about what happens in the classroom as they gain experience, and repeat schemes of work with different students over the years. They find solutions to issues by trying something out to improve the situation. Daily trials and successes are addressed in order to support or counteract what is happening based on perceived judgements about its success or effectiveness, This is the lived experience of 'reflection-in-action' as described by Schön (1983). Though he characterises it as an 'extraordinary' process, it is, he argues, not rare but for reflective practitioners, 'the core of practice' (Pollard, 2014, p7). Where Stenhouse (1975) equated teaching with enquiry, Hammersley (2019, p177) allows 'overlap' but refuses to equate them, or allow a claim of isomorphism. Of course, there is oscillation

between practice and inquiry, though at times they are happening simultaneously as they are enacted in the classroom. The level of action research that we developed therefore built on processes that occur as part of reflective teaching practice in new, systematic and invigorating ways.

Hammersley (2019) offers an unconvincing critique of action research by positioning it as a fundamentally flawed type of research. This conceptualisation is based on the etymology of 'action' and 'research', since their roots in *praxis* and *theoria* relate to different ways of life according to their ancient Greek formulation, thereby denoting an 'absolute distinction' (ibid.,169) between them. The former involves 'detachment from' while the latter demands 'immersion' in the 'flux of ephemeral events that makes up human social life' (ibid., 167) which creates, for Hammersley, an inherent contradiction, therefore denying the possibility an 'intimate relationship' between action and research and proposing that they are in constant tension with each other. Since the idea of a hierarchy between the theory and practice has continued through the Middle Ages and beyond, and 'theoria' has retained a higher status, Hammersley recreates an ancient dichotomy: 'To tie research to action in the world would be to conflate two quite different ways of life, as well as to betray the higher nature of *theoria*' (ibid.,168). Thus, on this, rests his contention of an unhappy union between the two within the contemporary manifestation of action research. As Hammersley sees it, the primary goal governing much action research is to bring about change in the world 'rather than to produce knowledge about it' (ibid., p. 175). Yet, for teachers, and myself as researcher-teacher, it is entirely unhelpful to separate the two, as well as being undesirable and unrealistic (Wells, 2001). Teachers operate from within classroom action and not from outside it (Brant, 2006). Moreover, it is precisely in the tension between action and theory that the strength of action research lies: it is not detached or contemplative, but an involved, reactive, exploratory and dynamic process.

Beyond this, action research *is* inevitably a more 'democratic' process than other traditional forms of research, precisely because it dissolves the hierarchy of researcher and researched, making practitioners into researchers and valuing practitioner knowledge. Action research seeks to develop practical knowing about worthwhile human purposes (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 1), and it is a mode of enquiry which also

seeks to bring about ‘the flourishing of individual persons and their communities’ (ibid. p. 1). The participatory action research (PAR) framework that I chose for this present study is valuable because it encourages teacher agency in generating new practical knowledge but also new abilities and routes to creating knowledge. It attempts to listen to the different voices of participants, rather than pursuing the single perspective of the main researcher. Because it is the practitioners themselves who generate knowledge, and they do so through experimentation and implementing change, this results in development of a teacher’s professional expertise alongside; teachers deepen their understanding of education while at the same time stimulating routes to critical thinking. Nevertheless, action research remains a contested area. Noffke (2012, p. 9) explains that the professional dimension of AR requires consideration of the way in which, in addition to producing knowledge, whether it also comprises a different way of knowing, ‘one that can bridge theory and practice, but also thereby generate new ways of understanding practice’.

For this ‘bridging’ possibility, a form of action research, drawing on participatory methodology, was selected in order to discover more about reading in the classroom: the nature of the reading culture in school, what teachers currently knew about reading and their practices in the English classroom, and then to consider what happened to teachers when they undertook sustained engagement with theory and research, alongside consideration of what changes occurred in the classroom as a result of the opportunity for sustained teacher engagement with theory and research, since ‘one cannot talk of students learning without talk of teachers teaching’ (Lather, 1991, p. 1).

Finally, another important notion of action research rests on the idea of experiential knowledge; that the kind of theory that is most appropriate for explaining its processes exists already within the practice, and emerges from the practice as the research develops. Practitioners generate their own ‘living educational theories’ as they experience the research process (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006, p. 2). As Reason & Bradbury put it, engaging in action research is the ‘living, evolving process of coming to know rooted in everyday experience’ (2001, p. 2). It is action in the classroom while reflection continues (Smith et al., 2010). Theories are described as *living* in the sense that they are theories of practice, generated from within existing, evolving practices; ‘our present best thinking that incorporates yesterday into today, and which holds

tomorrow already within itself' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006, p. 2). Moreover, Whitehead and McNiff explain that action researchers who work within a living theory tradition tend to embrace 'humanitarian values of care and compassion' while advocating freedom and 'the right of all to make up their own minds about how to do their research . . . in negotiation with others who wish to do the same' (ibid., p. 24). Since this research was not about imposing a way of working on the teacher-researchers but instead about providing opportunities for them to decide what was important about reading for them, it is appropriate for us to be working within this tradition. Moreover, within this framework, the research process should aim to be grounded in democratic principles, where participants share equal status as far as possible, both with each other and with the researcher so that no single perspective is prioritised over another (Burton et al., 2008; Wells, 2001). However this more participatory mode is hard to achieve, given inherent power relationships between researcher and participants (Smith et al., 2010).

3.1.3 A movement towards Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research is a form of action research as described above, but one that has more ambitious aims that seek transformation in practice rather than merely technicist or small changes to it. It moves beyond an investigation into 'what works' in a mechanistic way by involving participants in its search, and by attempting to eradicate distinctions between the researcher and the researched (Rappaport, 2020). PAR has a more radical, political philosophy underlining it than is associated with other forms of action research since it is typically conducted with members of an oppressed group or community, certainly as Freire (1968) conceived of it, who identify and act upon a particular problem to find solutions which will promote social and political transformation within that community (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Moreover, PAR offers a challenge to the power-structure of knowledge production.

Unlike many PAR researchers, I am not allied with any kind of social movement, and English teachers may not automatically be perceived as an 'oppressed group' within society. English teachers have though, as part of the literature review has attempted to

show, been subject to a systematic de-professionalisation over time that threatens to obscure teachers' personal philosophy (Gibbons, 2017), a characteristic which Freire (1968) recognises as symptomatic of the ideology of oppression. Furthermore, according to McTaggart, (1997), the aim of participatory action research is to alter practices and social structures which are responsible for maintaining injustice and unsatisfying forms of existence. Today's PAR researchers working in UK schools may not use the same kind of radical language that Freire (1968), Fals Borda (1988) and others used in the in the context of oppressive regimes in Brazil and Columbia from the 1960s onwards. Nevertheless, they are likely to engender intense research relationships that are geared towards profound change of institutions, values, and behaviours in order to create more just conditions within the participatory community (Rappaport, 2020).

To position teachers as knowledge generators is a stance which challenges 'hierarchies of knowledge production' and the power relations they inevitably maintain (Noffke, 2012, p. 14). My intention to help 'theorise' teachers, enabling us to deepen their thinking and change our practice by giving ownership of choosing *what* to change and *why*, fitted with some participatory action research ideals and principles. Teachers are often powerless at the level of policy and decision making, and lack agency in their own classrooms through the imposition of an accepted educational ideology which focuses on testing students through unchallenged perceptions of academic achievement (Biesta, 2015). The same ideology seems to ignore other criteria for 'success' in education (developing children's capacity to think for themselves, to interact with others, to engage with reading and life-long learning, to understand others, to flourish as human beings, for example). A research design which has its root in PAR is, arguably, capable of challenging the status quo and thus enabling teachers to be more 'critical', in a Freirean definition, about what education, and in particular reading education, is and might become. It signals a commitment to more equal control of the research process. Fals Borda (1988) likewise identifies a number of 'strategic tensions' that continue into the neoliberal era and that present a strong justification for a participatory approach. The first is the relationship of theory to practice; then of subject to object (managed in the attempt to establish symmetrical rather than hierarchical relationships between

teacher participants), and finally between different forms of knowledge (Rappaport, 2020).

My design could be described as action research, drawing on participatory methodology, rather than pure PAR. Participation was at the heart of its design, which allowed participating teachers to ultimately make their own decisions about changes to practices in their classrooms; and a project which emphasised the importance of process above product (Rappaport, 2020). The flexible, participatory research design encouraged teachers to learn in ways that were intended to encourage greater teacher agency, alongside changing classroom experience for students. The design cannot, of course, claim to be fully participatory since there were limits to the teachers' agency: I drove the early stages of the PAR design, choosing the focus on reading rather than agreeing on a focus with the participant teachers. Working within an already collaborative department, participatory action research became a collective activity that aimed to extend and formalise the generation of knowledge between participants, since the interpretation and understanding of experience is more 'trustworthy' when it is collaborative; when 'trying to change things impacts on others . . . their consent and help is needed' (McTaggart, 1997, p. 6). Change is, therefore, political and individuals cannot change anything unless they undergo change themselves.

Once the focus for the research was established, teachers collectively made decisions about the kinds of interventions they wished to undertake in relation to the experience and teaching of reading within their classrooms and thereby began to 'share control of the research process' (Nind, 2014, p. 531). In addition, they had continuous access to the data that was collected, and were regularly invited to provide member checks, including the review of transcripts, as well as supporting with preliminary coding and interpretation of the data. Crucially, however, the research questions and the initial stages of the research design were considered before the participants themselves were engaged in the process.

Students were also not centrally involved as co-researchers because, although their voices informed and helped shape the directions that the teachers took, students did not instigate change for themselves. There were ethical reasons for designing the research in this way. With a three-year KS4 structure at Readborough College, a number of the

participating students (those in Year 9) would already be embarking on their public examination path of GCSE study and therefore it was not appropriate to encourage them to be co-researchers. For Guskey (2002), teacher development is directly related to the enhancement of student outcomes. According to his theoretical model, significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs generally occurs as a result of observing evidence of improvement in student learning. Demonstrable results in terms of student learning outcomes are therefore the 'key to the endurance of any change in instructional practice' (ibid., p. 383). In addition, many teachers would want to see a range of impacts as evidence of success beyond attainment measures, such as student engagement, for example. Taking this into account, it is important that teachers perceive their actions as having a beneficial outcome on learning and engagement including outcomes for their students, and this also shaped the decision to include student voices in the research. So, while the experience of teachers is foremost in the research design, the response of students was sought in order to support accounts and contribute to the robustness of the study. Their voices were heard throughout the study, making it more inclusive, collaborative and relevant (Nind, 2014). Therefore, although the research design is collaborative, involving students, and teachers responding and adjusting actions in the light of students' views, the role of students was more akin to respondents; a further reason the research cannot claim to be entirely participatory.

Finally, the requirements of a PhD and the imperative of going through ethical review, meant that a fully participatory design would be difficult to achieve in practice. The study therefore drew on participatory approaches and aimed for a more inclusive framework as part of a 'cooperative enquiry' (Heron & Reason, 2011, p. 3) that other forms of action research might not invite. Teacher participants contributed to the democratization and production of knowledge using a participatory platform (Smith et al., 2010). PAR deliberately avoids a prescriptive approach or particular set of methodological tools. Every PAR project is different and its form evolves over time through the dialectical relationship established between participants (Rappaport, 2020).

3.2 Positionality

In my role as Head of the English Department at Readborough College at the outset of the research, with an intention to research the reading culture and the teaching of reading *alongside* my colleagues who wished to participate, voluntarily, there was a complex and problematic positionality afforded by both that institutional hierarchical structure, and in being a researcher-teacher within my own school: operating simultaneously as both insider and, arguably, outsider; or at least with an outsider dimension given my affiliation to the university. These roles and tensions need to be clearly acknowledged and operate alongside a range of other important considerations and emerging methodological issues in my navigation of a terrain of power dynamics. Recognition of these power dynamics is crucial in ascertaining a measure of neutrality and transparency in qualitative research (Kvale, 2006; Dunne et al., 2005). Positionality relates to the quality of having a position in relation to other things, and therefore involves reflexivity about my own multiple roles, as well as my assumptions and beliefs as a researcher, which inevitably also involves consideration of ideology, gender, social class and existing relationships within the group. Although I worked within a *team* of English teachers to explore the nature of the current reading culture of our school and how we might enhance this, the hierarchical structures already existent within the institution meant that this could not be achieved on an 'equal' footing, however much I might wish it to be. Exploration of the different roles was crucial to understanding the tensions between the various different factors influencing and impacting my research position.

Institutions provide and promote particular ways of speaking about life and experience. They are 'social forms that provide distinct patterning for our thoughts, words, sentiments and actions' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 26). This patterning is an important part of how teachers present themselves, and something that we needed to consider in order to understand our own beliefs and values; alongside what Wells (2001) describes as teachers' 'vision': the belief-informed reference points which influence practitioners' behaviour and decision-making in the classroom. Exploration of beliefs and vision was a salient starting point. Documentation of the tensions and problematization of the power relationships being negotiated through the process was another important way through this complexity. Within the educational setting teachers

exist as 'everyday actors' (ibid.), locked into a performance of strategically playing out roles within the particular circumstances in which they find themselves, struggling with their own complex positionality, management of identity and interpolation of micropolitical factors .

Firstly, I found it necessary to acknowledge and then try to find ways to overcome the strange tensions involved in being both an 'insider' and an 'outsider' simultaneously. As a classroom teacher, I struggled with the same classroom issues as my colleagues and research partners. And yet at the same time I occupied a secondary role as a doctoral student, endorsed by an external educational institution, and was thereby responsible for steering the research. It was important to foreground subjectivity as a legitimate matter of investigation in relation to experience and knowledge. As a doctoral student, it was probable that I had amassed a greater amount of pre-reading around the substantive topic of reading. I was also likely, therefore, to be in a position of greater theoretical 'knowledge' than my research partners. If the research was to be truly collaborative then I was researching 'me' as part of 'us'. That in itself was uncomfortable at times, but a necessary by-product of being unable to remove myself from the pivotal role in the research. I made the not unreasonable assumption that I worked amongst professionals who, like me, wanted to get better at what they do, and ultimately generate better experiences and outcomes for students in relation to their reading. Education is frequently associated with moral purpose that characterises teachers to see new challenges as the basis for self-improvement as part of a wider responsibility to their students (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021).

Secondly, undertaking this research as Head of Department in a school presented some practical and ethical concerns in relation to power dynamics that required close consideration to address the spaces created by the power differential in reflexive ways (Dunne et al., 2005). The usual aspects of instrumental power that the title 'Head of Department' commands, such as responsibility for managing the team on a daily basis, leading on curriculum design and organisation, behaviour management and pupil progress, all remained. In addition, I was involved in annual appraisals, and in this particular instance, leading the professional development of staff. The current educational climate seems to consist of a culture of 'stealth' appraisal and institutional surveillance (Foucault, 1977), where everything counts in a system of disciplinary

power, with the onus of appraisal decisions resting with school leaders (DfE, 2019). This is deeply problematic for the ethical integrity of the research and my trusting relationships with participants. Additionally, of course, it was problematic for eliciting the kind of 'honest' responses that were desired from participants in a system where performative discourses are frequently internalised (Foucault, 2002). Since dialogue was to be at the heart of the meetings between teachers as part of the research, it was necessary for participants to feel that no such appraisal was occurring in relation to opinions and practices and for me to be reflexively aware of the inherent dangers of 'judging' my co-researchers. The Head of Department position has a great deal of power in terms of judgement and scrutiny and there may have been quite understandable concerns about a casual comment to the Headteacher, or a decision not to promote someone if it seemed in any way connected with my greater surveillance of the classrooms of participating teachers through the research. Indeed, this aspect of ethical consideration is subtle and complex. As a researcher-teacher and Head of Department I may not even be aware of the internalised shifts in my views of these teachers over time. The kind of privileged access to their practice through multiple observations, discussions, interviews and access to their reflective journals would be far more detailed and intrusive than would be afforded in normal practice. To this end I had to ensure that I was as open as possible about my own pedagogic journey and reflections. I attempted to achieve this removal of authority through clear statements to that effect and led by sharing my own misunderstandings, fears and vulnerabilities with teacher collaborators. In addition, I stepped down from the role of Head of Department during the research process (primarily in order to concentrate on data analysis and writing up the research), but it meant that participants could be assured that I no longer wielded that kind of instrumental power although I remained teaching within the department.

Concerns about the 'exploitive potential' within the dialogic process also arose, since so much of the action research was dialogue and interview based. The validity of the research rested on participants feeling able to say what they really meant and felt, and not to consider that underhand judgements might be being made in relation to performance; but I was aware of the complexity of this, given how much judgements may be internalised and not operate on a conscious level. PAR depends upon the effective establishment of an environment of trust (Smith et al., 2010).

Thirdly, a further concern arose in relation to the 'ownership' of knowledge. Hierarchies of knowledge, and the opportunities they create for disruption in the trajectory to 'knowledge democracy' (Cook et al., 2019) mean it is difficult for a lead researcher not to dominate or be seen as the 'expert'. During my own days as a newly-qualified teacher, I did not feel comfortable challenging an idea or opinion of a senior teacher, regardless of what I believed; nor, perhaps, for some years after qualification. This perhaps demonstrates an aspect of this problematic perceived-hierarchy. It is significant because the research group initially included one newly-qualified teacher (NQT) and three teachers in very early stages of their career (ECT) alongside more experienced colleagues. The notion of voice itself is problematic since, in addition to the temporary, complex nature of being, voice is created, 'both deliberately and unconsciously', in dialogue with the other voices around us (Fielding, 2007, p. 305). This kind of dialogue must be 'actively embraced' by all participants in order to avoid the dangers of imposition (ibid.).

Attempting to ensure that each member of the research team had space to articulate their views was important but challenging to achieve, particularly in an AR design that draws on PAR principles, and particularly in encouraging less-experienced teachers to talk honestly and openly about what was happening in classrooms and about their own subject knowledge in relation to reading, in the presence of a group of teachers of varying degrees of seniority.

Building on a social constructivist approach to education and utilizing ideas from Bakhtinian dialogism (1981), namely that dialogue is a social process whereby meaning is established through dialogue which comes from the relation between self and 'other', it is evident that many factors act on that relationship. The words we choose in any given moment have a specific spatial, temporal and social context (Hynes, 2014). Any given response in conversation is always 'relational' since it emanates from the uniqueness of the position occupied by each of us, but there is also more than one 'voice' present in any speech act. An individual's speech and thoughts always incorporate the words of others, since 'our words carry traces and hues from a host of influences, including sociolect, profession, gender, generation, education, context, year, date, time' (Hynes, 2014, p. 73).

A further Bakhtinian principle is that of responsivity; the idea that dialogue both responds to preceding utterances and is formulated in anticipation of a further response. The notion of 'dialogism denotes discourse that explicitly acknowledges the ways in which it is defined by its relationship to other instances, in the past, the present and the future and removes the suggestion of an unquestionably authoritative participant in the conversation (Shepherd, 2011). It was essential to devise a research instrument that would enable an environment of trust and responsiveness so that participants could speak freely and respond to each other's views, without feeling inhibited or fearful. Likewise, to create a way of encouraging participants to avoid, merely saying what they believed I or the other research participants might expect or want to hear, whether that be intentional or not (Kvale, 2006). To achieve this required a research instrument which moved beyond an interview or focus group in order to help capture some of these complexities and enable the diverse teachers in the study to be able to voice their opinions safely. The participants and I agreed that we would use study group research discussions (SGRDs) to achieve these aims. Cognizant of ways in which both the ongoing relationship and the broader social and institutional contexts affect responses, the SGRDs emphasised the possibility of moving closer to equality of voice through dialogic talk. Their composition is discussed more fully in 3.4.2.

3.2.1 Sample and selection of participants

All thirteen teachers in the English Department of Readborough College were invited to participate in the research as part of twilight Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions as organised by the school. Attendance at twilight sessions was a requirement, but a free choice of sessions was available. Staff were invited to join a 'personal learning group' (a term used inside the institution), one of which on offer was this research project. The project was described as a way to consider reading theory in order to investigate KS3 students' engagement in the literature read in class for English lessons, and in students' engagement with independent, wider reading. Participants therefore volunteered within existing institutional structures for professional development at the school, and this provided the time in which the research could take place, not impinging further on heavy workloads. The research participants, therefore,

were self-selecting: those who were interested and volunteered to join the group. Initially I, alongside six other teachers, became the group that formed the SGRDs during the first year of the research. Those teachers were Philippa, Rowena, Joshua, Owen, Bridget, and Nathan (all pseudonyms). Micropolitical factors continued to play their part and precluded Bridget (who was not timetabled any Year 8 or Year 9 English classes in the second year of the project); and Nathan (who left the school to teach in another school locally), leaving four remaining teachers for the second year of the study: Philippa, Owen, Joshua and Rowena; though Nathan and Bridget's views are included in the data analysis of the SGRDs. Ages and years of experience are tabled in Figure 3.1 below.

Teacher	Age at start of research	Years teaching at start of research
Philippa	20-30	7
Rowena	20-30	2
Joshua	20-30	2
Owen	31-40	10
Bridget	51-60	9
Nathan	20-30	1

Figure 3.1: Age and experience of participating teachers

Philippa and Owen, commensurate with their greater years of teaching experience, also held positions of responsibility within the department at the time of the research. Philippa had, in addition, already undertaken some prior work with me in supporting the Faster Read research in 2015 (Westbrook et al., 2019), which had been one of the catalysts for this project. These differences in status and experiences contributed to the inner struggles and contradictions encountered as we each negotiated multiple identities with respect to power (Smith et al., 2010).

Thus, in inviting colleagues to work within a participatory action research group, a 'personal learning group' was created for which participants volunteered within existing institutional structures for professional development at the school. The time commitment comprised six meetings of 1-2 hours duration each, over the course of a

single academic year, evenly-spaced at two a term. Participation was voluntary, but part of a wider choice of learning initiatives for teachers in school. It was important that participation offered a rich experience for the teachers involved in order to justify their investment of time within that micropolitical framework.

While the institutional categorization of the research as a form of professional development for the participating teachers did not preclude students from the study, it did create a micropolitical constraint to work primarily with teachers, at least in the first instance. So, as befitting the loose PAR model selected for the research design, in addition to researching themselves, each teacher collected survey data from their classes and identified three students across the ability and motivational range within their group. There was an attempt to secure a degree of diversity, by choosing a mix of genders and socioeconomic backgrounds. These students were then invited to take part in a series of focus group interviews to enable a closer focus on student voice. Focus group students were invited to discuss their attitudes towards reading, and to consider whether there have been shifts in the classroom or in their own approaches and attitudes to reading over the course of the year.

3.3 The research design

The PAR research design emerged from the search for a creative way to help teachers contribute to the democratization of knowledge and its production, and translate that new knowledge into practice. Problematising positionality, alongside an awareness of the need to explore the ‘specific teacher attitudes and beliefs most crucial to professional growth and development’ (Guskey, 2002, p. 389) we sought a framework for a ‘mutually acceptable and productive’ mode of collaborative inquiry (Wells, 2001, p. 15). While acknowledging the complexity of classrooms as organisms, in that they are the sum of far more than atomic components and their inter-relations, we also considered the complexity of teaching as an activity. Finding out about the impact of different elements of education on reading would inevitably involve longitudinal, attitudinal research; it is not something that is measured through quick data-driven tests (Bleiman, 2020). The research cycle for this study was structured over a long

period of time (two academic years) to enable the focuses to be fully realised. Since all learning, including that of adults, is socially constructed (e.g. Dewey, 1965/1904; Lave and Wenger, 1991), and this research positioned participating teachers as learners, they were invited to control their own acquisition of knowledge while also using previous experiences to generate new meaning.

We established that we would collectively consider levels of inclusivity in relation to the teaching of reading, students' levels of engagement with reading and any areas that its participants – students and English teachers – felt could be further enhanced. Having gained a deeper understanding of the reading culture at the school at the start of the project, teacher participants engaged with existing theories about reading and current reading research in the CPD discussion groups with the aim of collaborating, designing and selecting their own interventions to reinforce or enhance this culture. The aim was to change practice through a cycle of dialogic, professional conversations with colleagues. The focus on knowledge and understanding about reading and its relationship with classroom practice thereby encouraged teachers to think deeply about reading practices and pedagogy and, through critical reflection, uncover their tacit knowledge about reading with the aim of raising this to a level of consciousness. Essentially, the group created a space for self-monitoring and accessing this tacit knowledge (Eraut, 2010). At the same time, readings from the literature enriched ideas and supported teachers in arriving at a deeper understanding of teaching reading. Moreover, there was a need to defamiliarize the researchers from the object of research: as insider action researchers we wanted to look afresh at practice, developing the ability to critique and understand this in the process of trying to improve it. A key way to do this is through enhancing the process of critical reflection on practice, which we hoped to achieve through the combination of teacher reflective research logs, extended readings and SGRDs. As practice evolves to become more repetitive and routinised through increased experience in the classroom, pedagogical knowledge and understanding becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous. Without space for critical reflection, a practitioner might overlook important opportunities to think in depth about what they are doing (Schön, 1983) in order to differentiate between reflective and routine classroom action (Brookfield, 1995). Critical reflection, at the same time, enabled the potential for greater voice and agency as well as helping participating

teachers to reveal broader assumptions about their beliefs and ideologies in education and reading (Guskey, 2002). We also hoped that sustained professional development would occur as a result of the cooperative, collaborative enquiry we engaged with for an academic year, which aimed to position teachers as active agents of change and reform within the department (Fielding, 2007; Giroux, 2020; Snow, 2002). Participating teachers might both conceptualize and enact reform by being offered regular space, time and resources (the professional learning sessions, the shared articles and reflective logs) as well as the opportunity to decide on specific interventions with groups of lower secondary school children in English lessons. Our journey as teachers was an important focus of the research, given that we were crafting and maximising roles for teachers in conceptualizing and enacting reform (Snow, 2002) as part of an opportunity for sustained professional development through collaborative enquiry. It was important to 'portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts' (Cohen et al., 2007).

Action research cycles generally combine a substantive act with a research procedure (Hopkins, 1993) and are typically represented in four continuous stages, integrating a period of observation. The four continuous stages are, more accurately, envisioned by McTaggart (1997), as a spiral, with the implications of each round of the plan-act-observe-reflect moving participants to a 'deeper' level as they navigate the spiral. Both representations of action research emphasise the cyclical nature of this kind of research. The 'narrative' of arriving at the decision to undertake research within the department in which I already worked, outlined in the opening chapter, demonstrates that it is difficult to identify a firm starting point for the research since, by the very nature of our work within a department, collaboration in the form of shared thinking, ideas and practice was already taking place. Reading 'about reading' was already underway. In fact, the journey might be said to have first begun with a prior piece of research, and our department's early involvement in the Faster Read project (Sutherland et al, 2021; Westbrook et al., 2019). This required teachers to read two whole challenging novels over twelve weeks in order to enable struggling readers to engage with more whole texts, while being taught requisite comprehension skills and using collaborative peer talk to explore these. We were therefore already operating within a 'research-sensitive' school (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021). In 2014-2015,

participating teachers in that earlier research, some of whom remained within the departmental team, had received additional theorised training in teaching reading comprehension, which had a knock-on effect across the department. Significantly, then, in the context of Readborough College, teachers were already primed to be thinking about reading and the teaching of it, and discussion in department meetings was already centred around reading and recent research. Indeed, it had been increasingly so since we began thinking about revising the curriculum back in 2014. Teachers were already reflecting on practice and those who chose to participate formally in this present research, may have been, as individuals, at very different points around the ongoing AR cycle at any given moment. For example, while I was writing a proposal for the project, I also shared some of my preliminary reading with colleagues in formal and informal ways and therefore, arguably, the process had already ‘begun’. Having declared the influences and circumstances that led up to the research, the starting point is therefore conceived of as the first group discussion of teachers (SGRD) described below. Altrichter et al. (1993, p. 57) argue that clarification of the starting point for action research is problematic, since in some ways it is the task of the whole research process: ‘if we aimed for absolute clarity about all aspects of a situation before beginning, we would never start at all.’

3.3.1 Action Research cycle, year 1, including reconnaissance

Given that the design draws on some ideas from participatory action research but is not a wholly PAR methodology, the first stage of the inclusive action research cycle involved teachers in collective reconnaissance about the existing pedagogic practices and cultures in teachers’ classrooms and across the department through gathering survey responses from students. The second stage was about supporting teachers’ knowledge and reflections in relation to the teaching of reading and fostering reading engagement. The third stage involved exploring the way that teachers might influence students’ engagement with reading in the classroom and beyond and reflecting on the changes that occurred. During the six SGRDs in the first academic year, participating teachers discussed ideas and beliefs about reading, undertook reading of articles and research

papers and had time to write in reflective journals, according to the structure outlined in figure 3.2.

Meeting Date	Meeting Content	Articles discussed
20 th September 2016 (SGRD1)	Outline of project Introductory card sort questions Individual reading histories and ITE Reflective logs	Cremin, T. (2007). <i>Revisiting reading for pleasure: Delight, desire and diversity</i> . In: Goouch, Kathy and Lambirth, Andrew eds. <i>Understanding Phonics and the Teaching of Reading: A Critical Perspective</i> . Berkshire, UK: McGraw Hill, pp. 166–190.
3 rd November 2016 (SGRD2)	Discussion of articles Focus on student experience – what do students ‘see’ in relation to reading in the English Department. Reflective logs	Fletcher, J., Grimley, M., Greenwood, J. and Parkhill, F. (2011) <i>Motivating and improving attitudes to reading in the final years of primary schooling in five New Zealand schools</i> Literacy Volume 46 Number 1 April 2012 3 Merga, M., (2015) <i>Access to Books in the Home and Adolescent Engagement in Recreational Book Reading: Considerations for secondary school educators</i> English in Education Vol.49 No.3 2015 DOI: 10.1111/eie.12071
17 th January 2017 (SGRD3)	Watching schema theory video from Readingwise website	Cushing, I. (2016). Words on the page, worlds in the mind. <i>The English and Media Magazine</i> (71) 26 – 29. Murphy, J. (2017) <i>Reading is Knowledge</i> . https://thinkingreadingwritings.wpcomstaging.com/2017/01/15/reading-is-knowledge/ Readingwise. (2016) Comprehension Strategy 3: Prediction Connections https://readingwise.com/blog/comprehension-strategy-3-prediction-connections?utm_source=ReadingWise&utm_campaign=4f0c94b79c-RWE_WEEKLY_3&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ba1f036fa9-4f0c94b79c-339268601
27 th March 2017 (SGRD4)	Discussion of articles Reading of transcripts from earlier meetings Sharing of YA fiction Creation of student reading surveys Reflective logs	Benton, M. (1992) Chapter 4 from <i>Secondary Worlds Literature Teaching and the Visual Arts</i> Buckingham: Open University Press Cliff-Hodges, G. (2011). Textual Drama: The Value of Reading Aloud. <i>EnglishDramaMedia</i> , Issue 19, 19-26.
6 th June 2017 (SGRD5)	Discussion of chapters Sharing of student reading autobiographies, and of classroom developments.	Oakhill, J. Cain, K., Elbro, C. (2014) Chapter 1: What’s it all about from <i>Understanding and Teaching Reading Comprehension, A handbook</i> . Lemov, D. Driggs, C. Woolway, E. (2016) Excerpts from <i>Reading Reconsidered A Practical Guide to Rigorous Literacy Instruction</i> . Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
11 th July 2017 (SGRD6)	Creation of reading ‘manifesto’, selection of priorities, and establishing observations for 2017-2018	Tracey, H. & Morrow, L. (2017) CHAPTER 1 Introduction to Theories and Models from <i>Lenses on Reading Third Edition An Introduction to Theories and Models</i> New York, The Guilford Press

Figure 3.2: The content of the Study Group Discussions (SGRDs) in Year 1

The SGRDs in the first year of the action research were evenly spaced over three terms. Early discussions involved delving inwards: teachers were encouraged to identify their own reading histories and reading practice within the broader culture of the school, and

the wider, macropolitical implications of educational policy and curriculum requirements. Cliff-Hodges (2016, p. 37-38) articulates the way in which it can be 'highly instructive' for researchers and teachers to interrogate themselves about their perceptions of reading, based on their own experiences of learning to read and reading at school, and whether they conformed to or resisted the prevailing approaches to reading at the time. Beliefs are affected by situated events and it is therefore important to make these explicit in order to move forward in a process of activating tacit knowledge. Topics for discussion and written reflection included questions such as:

- What do you remember about the process of learning to read?
- What do you remember about reading in secondary school and through teenage years?
- What knowledge do you have about the process of reading?
- What beliefs do you hold about the teaching of reading?
- What do you think are the best ways to teach reading?
- How much training have you had in the teaching of reading?
- What else might you need to know in order to become a more effective teacher of reading

Teachers were also invited to explore and investigate their own practice explicitly, and, in collaboration with colleagues, to consolidate classroom approaches rooted in the evaluation of their own experiences of reading. English teachers are likely to be proficient readers and proficiency in an area sometimes limits recall of the effort and specifics of the process that enabled it (Christodoulou, 2016; Brown et al., 2014), making it important for teachers to remember and extricate key stages in that journey. In the middle SGRDs, there was further reading of research and articles as outlined in figure 3.2, with a focus on consolidating the ideas that had already been raised in earlier SGRDs through revisiting transcripts from earlier meetings in order to identify recurring important themes and ideas. We also shared recent reading of YA fiction. The latter stages of the SGRDs included sharing of student reading autobiographies, and of classroom developments before moving towards creating the collaborative 'manifesto'

of ideas for changing practice and culture in the classroom, and the selection of priorities for individual teachers, alongside more discussion of research articles and establishing observations for the following year.

3.3.2 Action Research cycle, year 2

The second year of the research project was a holistic intervention for four Year 8/9 (KS3) classes as a result of collaborative ideas building on the first reconnaissance, learning and reflection phases. Though the process draws on elements of PAR as established in 3.1.3, I steered the first part of the research design, by selecting the focus of inquiry and the actual design, so that it was collaborative rather than fully participatory AR. The research therefore begins with a more structured design but then allows the AR to evolve in a suitably organic form thereafter. I planned the outline of the sessions by providing theoretical readings and research to support teachers' knowledge about reading, using these as a platform for discussion and for deepening ideas as a group. This was tightly structured in advance (figure 3.3). However, once the teacher meetings were in process, teachers were then able to take on a more active role in the collaborative AR: they planned and agreed on the interventions that they wished to implement with selected Year 8-9 classes, from September 2017 to July 2018. This is how our manifesto was created (see Appendix 8.5.) They were also involved in data-gathering (e.g. through their research journals and small-scale reflections on classroom practice) and preliminary data analysis in finding themes from the transcripts of the first three SGRD meetings and considering the survey data.

The longevity of the research period was one of its strengths, and allowed teachers the space to make long-term changes to their teaching over the course of two academic years, rather than short, contained interventions. It also provided the opportunity for pedagogical shifts to become firmly embedded; thereby counteracting the notion that it 'may be inevitable that the adoption of a new and barely internalized teaching strategy is initially less effective than the way one previously taught' (Hopkins, 1993, p. 57). Development in teachers and practice takes time to occur and is difficult to see in the short term. The longitudinal nature of the research additionally enabled the collection

of multi-layered data over a longer period of time, as outlined in figure 3.3 where the colour-coding of the text reflects the overlapping nature of the plan, act, observe, reflect stages of the AR design. Often different facets of each were being enacted simultaneously. Figure 3.4 breaks down the different stages across the six terms. This multi-layered data capture spread across the entirety of the project and occurring at many different points helped to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings (Cohen et al., 2007).

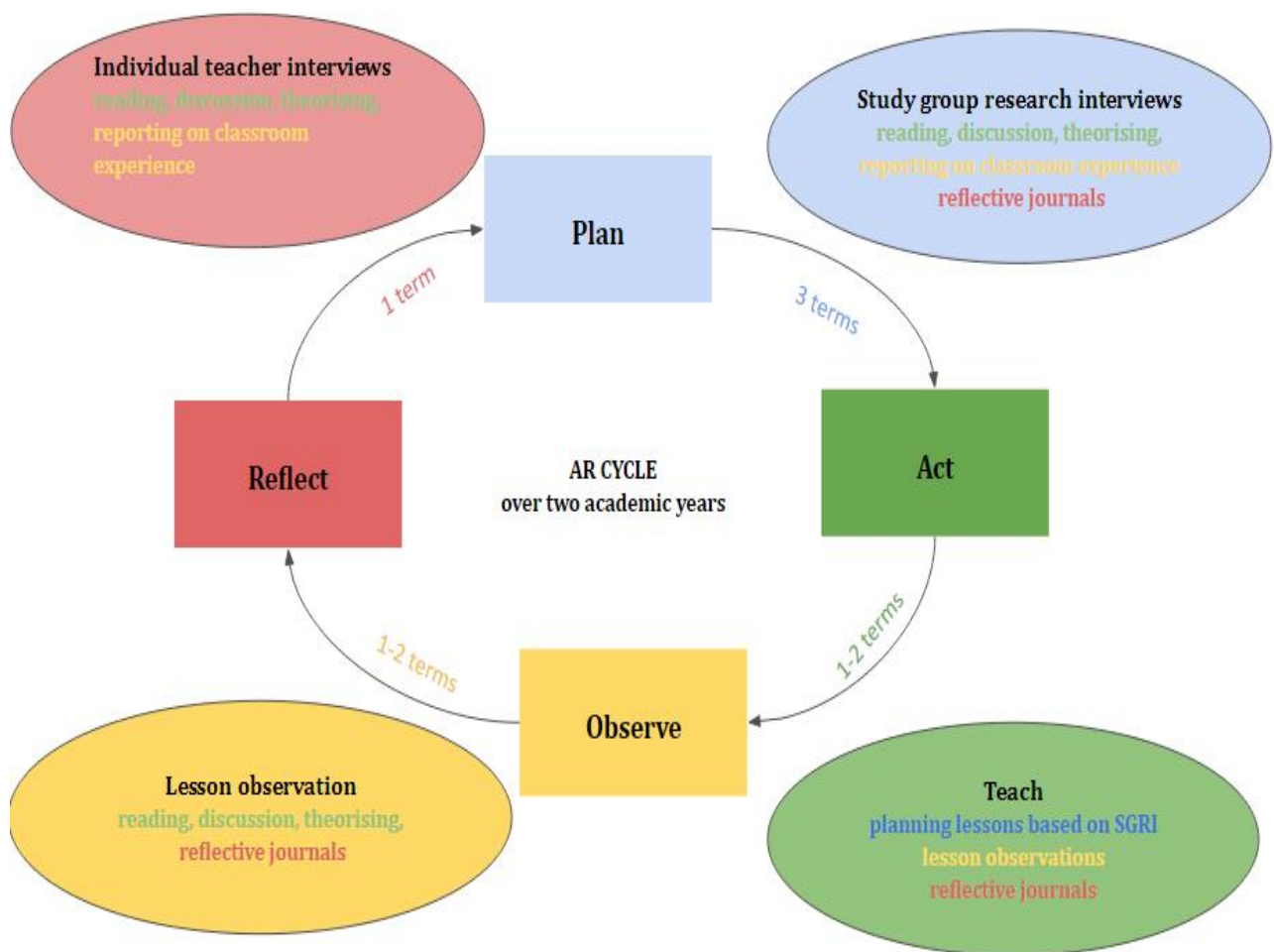


Figure 3.3: AR Cycle envisioned in overlapping phases

Term	Phase	Actions
Year 1: 1	Plan/Observe	SGRD Y7-Y9 Student Surveys Reflective Journals
2	Plan/Observe	SGRD Reflective Journals
3	Plan/Observe	SGRD Reflective Journals
Year 2: Term 4	Act/Observe	Teach Lesson Observations Student Focus Group Reflective Journals
5	Act/Observe	Teach Lesson Observations Student Focus Group Reflective Journals
6	Reflect	Individual Teacher Interviews

Figure 3.4: Action and research organised over six terms

3.4 Research methods

Methods are the systematic means, or actions, by which something is accomplished, and denote the ways in which data are produced and interpreted (Dunne et al., 2005). The word itself has its etymology in the Greek *meta* (after, beyond) and *hados* for progress, or figuratively, mode. The selection of ‘methods’ was, of course, informed and shaped by the methodology. Any intervention that increases reading engagement is complex (Wigfield et al., 2008) and this research was especially so since the intervention itself was essentially decided through the collaboration of teachers based on their increased

reading and theoretical understanding and positioning. The different methods, each elaborated below, had features which appeared highly suitable for the design.

3.4.1 Summary of research instruments

The following research instruments were used:

- six teacher meetings, of 1-2 hours each, audiotaped (SGRDs)
- attitudinal reading survey completed by 387 KS3 students across Years 7-9 (11-14 years)
- two individual, semi-structured teacher interviews per teacher, audiotaped (during the observation, and near the end of the project)
- eight semi-structured lesson observations of the four participating classes (two per class) across Year 8 and Year 9 to enable exploration of changing classroom practice.
- teacher research logs and my research journal
- eight focus group interviews with three students each, two from each of the four participating classes

Each method was selected to suit data collection with my research questions and overall interpretivist and social constructivist epistemological position and is outlined in greater detail below. Figure 3.5 offers a visual representation of the research methods and the way they interconnected across the study.

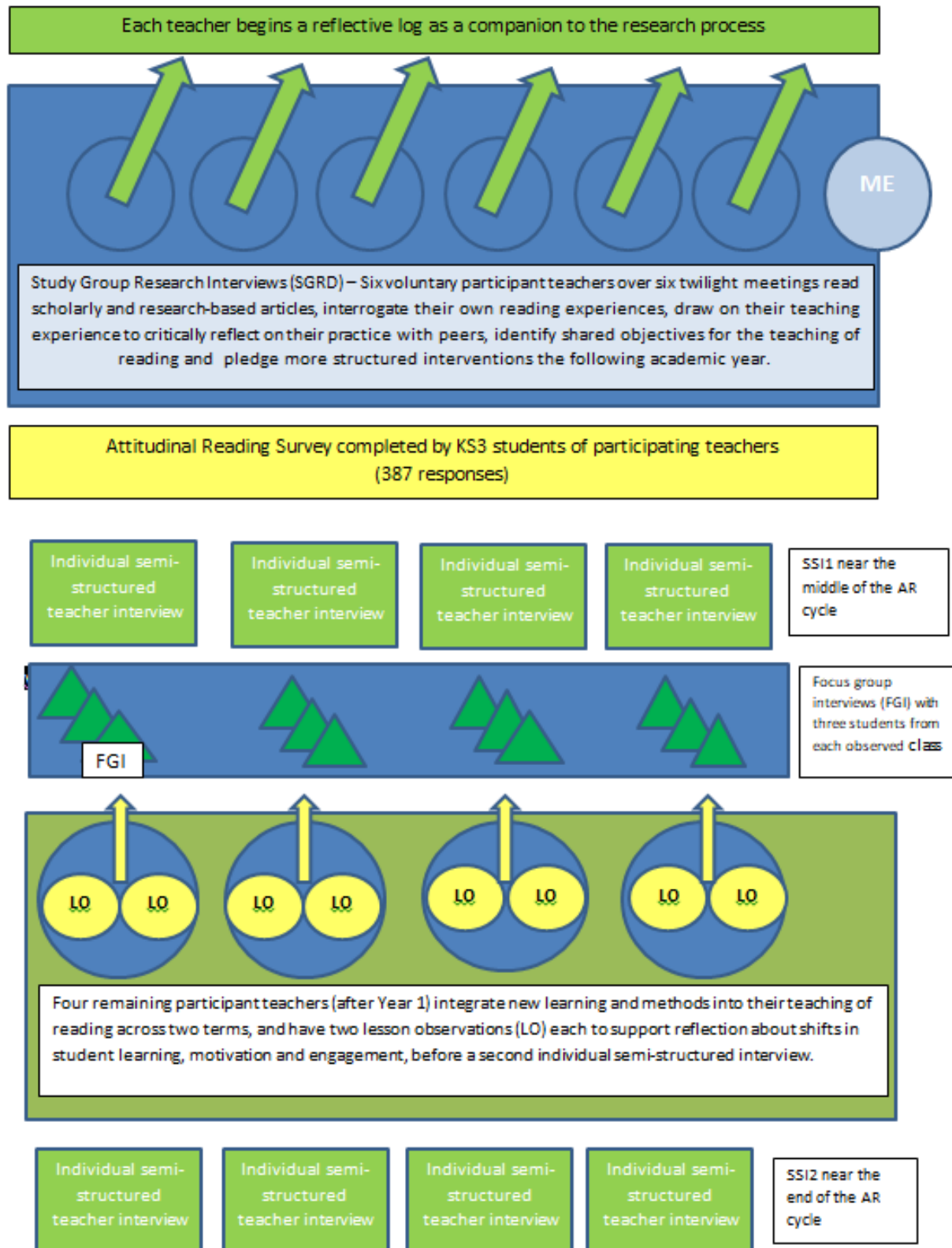


Figure 3.5: Visual representation of research methods

3.4.2 Study Group Research Discussions

Since the research cycle required teachers to engage collaboratively with the literature, a focus group interview was not enough to capture and explore the kind of pedagogical learning and reflection that took place. Modelled on some of the practices of ‘co-operative inquiry’ in its reflective phases, as identified by Heron and Reason (2011), we created a ‘study group research discussion’ (SGRD). The nature of the inquiry required that the co-inquirers be open to encounter with each other, and the SGRDs were created with an exploratory and open-ended structure which allowed, at the same time, focused and inquiring investigation. Practical ways of achieving an exploratory, dialogic space within the sessions included:

- beginning with question cards during the first session, selected at random by different members of the group in order to ensure that it was not one person (me) who was asking the questions directly
- using a semi-structured design for each session informed but not limited to the different topics arising from the literature
- creating a space for shared reading and reflective writing time that did not impinge on other aspects of the working day.

SGRDs were built around discussion but supported by reading about the substantive topic of reading; a socially legitimised occasion for participants to engage in ‘retrospective introspection’ (Bloor, 2001, p. 5-6) to attempt to collectively tease out assumptions that might previously have been taken for granted as a way of encouraging critical reflection. The SGRD was a space to make our knowledge and thinking explicit, uncover ideas and bring them to the level of consciousness alongside introducing a series of readings and theories about reading. Research interviews are often referred to as ‘dialogue’ with all its suggested mutuality and egalitarianism. Yet, Kvale argues this is misleading, preferring ‘a conversation with a purpose’ (Kvale, 2006, p. 496). He goes further and claims that in actuality it takes place for the purpose of just the one part: the interviewer. Yet the design of the SGRDs was much less structured enabling more authentic dialogic discussion, as in focus groups generally, where the power shifts from researcher to the group. Professional development was at stake here for all participants

alongside a shared purpose. Whilst it would be disingenuous to claim that this invitation to an 'egalitarian dialogue' came from anyone other than the one at the top of a hierarchical relationship (ibid., p. 490), I gave careful consideration to the development of the SGRD as a methodological instrument in order to facilitate more fluid, exploratory dialogue.

Building on Bakhtinian (1986) principles of the dialogic, Fielding (2007) argues that post-modern notions of self-identity are constructed on the often temporary, and inevitably complex, nature of our being in the world. Voice is 'created', both unconsciously but also deliberately constructed, in dialogue with other voices. This was an important idea informing the development of the SGRDs as a methodological instrument. In order to counter the expectations associated with the academic research role, it was necessary to direct considerable energies towards ensuring 'reciprocity and symmetry of relations' within the group (McTaggart, 1997, p. 33). A number of varying status and power differentials existed among participant teachers, as outlined in 3.2, and the study group had to be constructed as a space where such differentials could be suspended. Consideration was also given to existing relationships within the group, and with me. Not only was it a pre-existing professional, and indeed social, group, but there were Key Stage co-ordinators within the voluntary team who also wielded a greater degree of instrumental power than their colleagues; influential power structures created hierarchical relationships within the group that we attempted to break down (Bloor, 2001, p. 7). One way to do this was to mitigate the silencing of 'deviant experiences' at points in the discussion (ibid., p. 8) and to continually encourage an 'ecology of knowledges' (de Sousa Santos et al., 2007, p. xx). For example, moments where teachers shared uncomfortable revelations (such as those surrounding their own adolescent reading experiences, discussed in 4.1.2) were drawn out, and I made a point of exposing my own vulnerabilities in an attempt to lessen my perceived role as 'authoritative researcher' in the group.

In essence these study group research discussions formed a cycle of conversations that moved away from and beyond the format of a typical focus group interview, partly because of their iterative nature and regularity each half term. They became instead a form of group interview where participants share and make use of 'narrative material

from a broader range of discursive environments than any single one of them might muster to account for his or her experience alone' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 28).

Participants, therefore, become much more than informants; they were valued colleagues and partners and co-researchers in the research. Kvale et al. (2006) warn of being 'so immersed in a dialogical culture that it may be difficult to see its specific modes of power exertion' (ibid., p. 489). I was mindful of this throughout. SGRDs offered the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and the generation of new questions. The randomly selected question cards, for example, were merely the starting point in a process of defamiliarizing the familiar in our work environment, and a device to facilitate the employment of a metalinguistic 'middle voice' to illuminate the business of classroom teaching.

While acknowledging that there never can truly be a 'dominance-free dialogue between equal partners' (Kvale, 2006, p. 484), we took measures to reduce any perceived dominance. The group was trusting and time-limited, in order to begin creating the right environment in which this exchange could take place, where discourse was more symmetrical and emphasised a more fundamental sense of the shared task at hand. It was conceived as a form of collaboration in the production of meaning (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). As described in 3.1.3, participants had continuous access to all data, including the recordings and transcripts, and were regularly invited to provide member checks, including the review of transcripts, as well as supporting with coding and interpretation of the data within the framework of the SGRDs themselves. Clearly there are limits to any attempt like this to 'equalize' the role of researcher and subjects or collaborators, or participants; not least since I retained 'sovereign control' of the interview-produced knowledge later on (Kvale, 2006, p. 486), and this is further problematized below in 3.8.

The SGRD was understood as a conversation which stimulated all parties to formulate ideas about the research theme of reading, with the potential to increase our knowledge of a common theme of interest (Kvale, 2006, p. 486). It was constructed as Socratic maieutic, with the aim of bringing participants' latent ideas into clear consciousness and to 'propose and not to impose' (Kvale, 2006, p. 486). The constructive nature of the knowledge generated through collaborative interaction in the research conversations

was emphasised throughout. It drew attention to the question of who controls the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and classroom practices (Giroux, 2020) and it was this consideration of conflicting and competing ideologies through the structure of knowledge co-construction which enabled a movement towards critical pedagogy. Equally, it might be conceived that the SGRDs constituted part of the 'plan' stage; and yet reading, theorising, structured discussion and journaling, which all took place within the SGRDs, might also just as easily be conceived of as 'actions' in themselves.

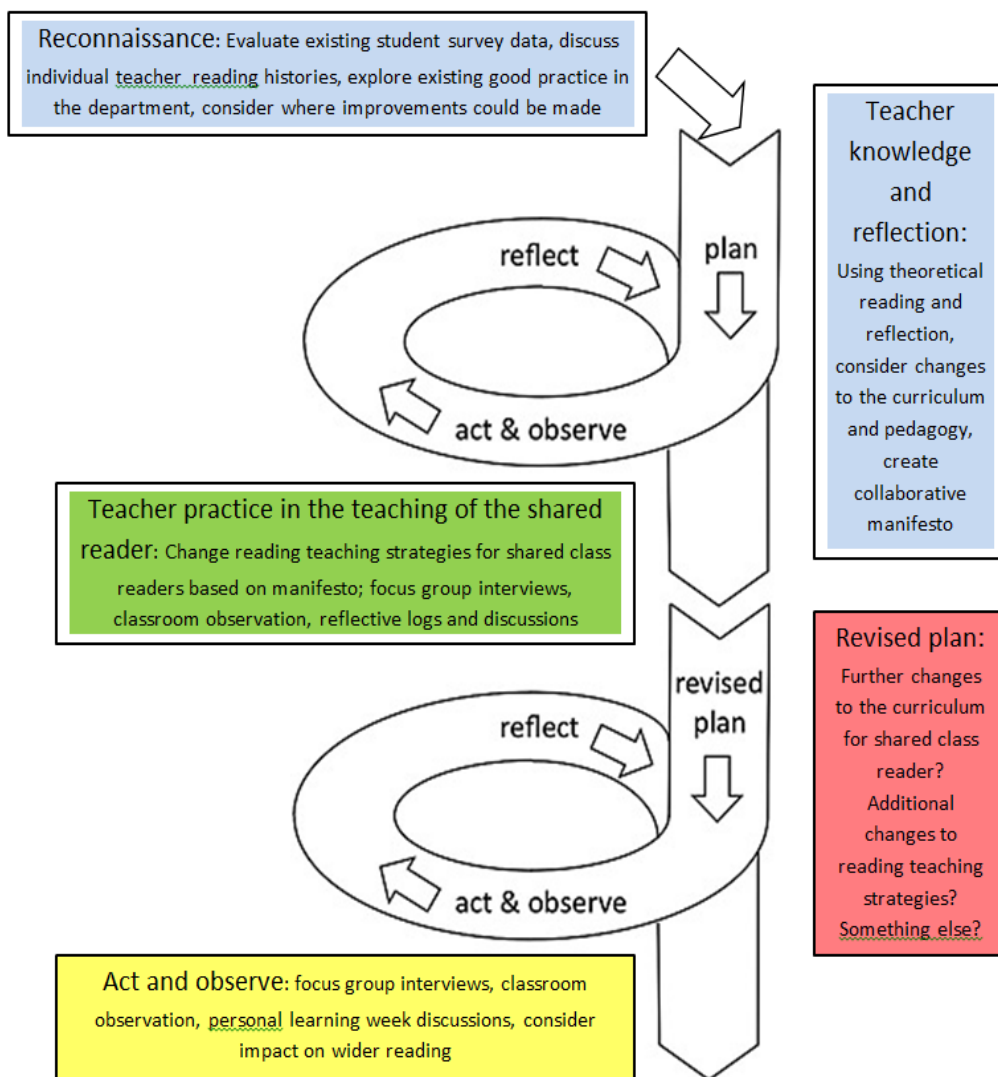


Figure 3.6: AR cycle envisioned as a spiral. Adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1988, p.14)

While the research can therefore be conceptualised in the continuous cycle outlined in Section 3.3.1 above, it might be helpful here to offer a chronological structure of the

overall shape of the project with these elements represented within a single cycle to offer a sense of the time frame for the different stages of the research. Alongside reflective consideration of classroom pedagogy and practice preliminary readings, theory and research were also introduced within the SGRDs to ensure sustained engagement with historical and contemporary research. According to Snow (2002, p. 52), effective teacher professional development is ‘content-focused and provides teachers with theoretical understandings of subject matter’, in order to facilitate enduring change. Teachers, through their teaching experiences and classroom routines, may have developed established ways of thinking about reading in their classrooms and implementing the teaching of reading; ways that might be resistant to change (Pajares, 1992). Through the experience of the SGRDs, teachers collectively identified key pedagogic strands emerging from the research and individually identified the kinds of long-term changes that they wish to make to their teaching for themselves to construct what we described as a ‘manifesto’ of change (Appendix 5).

3.4.3 Student surveys

For most teachers, becoming a better teacher means enhancing student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002; Hattie, 2012). In fact, for Guskey (2002, p. 384), ‘demonstrable results in terms of student learning outcomes are the key to the endurance of any change in instructional practice’. And, within education, as already noted, there is a strong pull towards realism and positivism, at odds with my ontological and epistemological perspective. As Dunne et al. (2005, p. 171) observe, this causes a problem for many researchers in that it appears ‘intellectually impossible to address the social within postmodernity using the tools of modernity.’ It was important to harness student voice in the project. Learning ‘outcomes’ need not be measured in a reading ‘score’, but could be construed as student motivation for learning and attitudes towards reading rather than traditional assessment outcomes. We therefore created the student surveys as a tool to capture responses about reading habits and attitudes towards reading.

In developing the survey questions as a research instrument, we drew loosely on Wigfield & Guthrie’s (1997) Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), originally

created to assess different aspects of student's reading motivation. We adapted questions from the MRQ, designed to reflect the 11 different constructs of reading motivation, covering efficacy, challenge, curiosity, involvement, perception of importance, element of competition, recognition for reading, academic achievement, social reasons and compliance (See Appendix 4). The original MRQ asks students to respond in terms of strength of statement agreement; we adapted our survey to invite a mixture of narrative responses and more open questions, generating a rich quantity of qualitative data. As outlined in 3.4.1, it was jointly created by participating teachers during the SGRD series. Each class teacher invited their students to complete the survey near the beginning of the implementation phase. McTaggart (1997, p. 13) explains that validation in participatory action research can only be achieved when 'there are appropriate communicative structures in place'. In order to mitigate student respondent unreliability in the questionnaires, participating teachers emphasised anonymity and clarified the purpose of the survey with their students and their role within the research. The data generated from the survey was used to inform the first of the research questions and formed a starting point in the SGRDs, helping to shape our conceptualisation of the nature of the reading culture at the school.

3.4.4 Classroom observations

Two semi-structured lesson-observations (of 50 minutes each) were conducted during the observational phase of the AR cycle. Observation in the classroom seemed a compelling research method, firstly since it is the 'natural' tool of the educational profession as part of a monitoring process that teachers are constantly engaged in (Burton et al., 2008), as well as providing deep, rich data about what is actually going on in classrooms and allowing comparison with what the teachers said. This was crucial for considering the final research question: What happens in the classroom as a result of sustained teacher engagement with theory and research, and why? It helped to further explore how classroom practice was affected as teachers engaged with theory and research about reading.

The design of the observation schedule (Appendix 1) was semi-structured with space given in the main body of the observation schedule simply to record responses from both students and teachers. The qualitative nature of this response section frequently proved the most interesting part of the observation data, providing rich, multi-layered reflection on a complex, situated activity.

The schedule also drew on some elements of structured observations in that different types of reading activities were listed as particular aspects for observational focus and the time that students spent participating in these were collected. While this might suggest a tension with my ontological and methodological position in relation to the subjective nature of being, nevertheless, the teacher-researchers had themselves prioritised aspects from the collaborative ‘manifesto’ created during the SGRDs. All had expressed a desire to increase, for example, the amount of time that they spent reading in lessons overall. Consequently, it seemed judicious to collect this information alongside the more qualitative observations relating to multiple layers of experience within the lessons themselves. Just as with the student surveys, observational schedules and frameworks for lessons were collaboratively developed as part of the SGRDs in order to enable a cooperative and systematic collection of data during this phase of the AR cycle. The timings were useful in determining the way that practice had shifted from the start of the project, as explored in Section 4.3.1 below.

We considered the teachers reporting back on their own classrooms as part of the participatory action research cycle, but observed Altrichter et al.’s (1993, p. 91) ‘paradoxical’ finding that most teachers ‘know too much to make good observers in their own classrooms’. It would also have imposed additional time burdens on the teachers, which I was anxious to avoid. There were two opportunities for lesson observation per class selected (a minimum of eight lesson observations in total). The aim of the observations was to evaluate the extent of student engagement with the literature read in class, and ideally in relation to shared class reading during the intervention; and to review implementation of teachers’ pedagogic priorities from the project and the impact on students, which were collated as their ‘manifesto’. Two observations were manageable at an institutional level and enabled observation of both teacher practice and its impact on students, particularly in relation to reading engagement.

A brief outline of the different classroom observations which took place is listed in figure 3.7 below. The original plan was for all the observations to occur in the first term when two class readers were selected by each teacher for their class. In the event, the weight of other micropolitical factors meant that the Autumn term proved extremely busy and observations, requiring my classes to be covered, were difficult to organise. This initial delay then necessitated further waiting until some further reading took place in the spring and summer terms, and meant that Philippa's final observation did not actually take place until the following Autumn, when the (same) students were in Year 10. While this initially seemed problematic, actually it perhaps provided a more realistic barometer of long-term teaching practice, since we were no longer immersed in the SGRDs.

	Teacher	Date	Topic
1	Owen	14/03/18	<i>A View From the Bridge</i> (Miller, 1955) reading and creative responses to the play with Year 9 students
2	Owen	16/03/18	<i>A View From the Bridge</i> (Miller, 1955) rereading and responding to the end of the play with Year 9 students in preparation for writing
1	Rowena	10/05/18	Reading <i>12 Years A Slave</i> (Northup, 1853) responding in reflective journals with Year 9 students
2	Rowena	29/06/18	Reading <i>Vergissmeinnicht</i> (OCR, 2014) and undertaking creative responses with Year 9 students
1	Joshua	29/06/18	Reading assorted children's books in preparation to write own with Year 8 students
2	Joshua	18/07/18	Reading <i>Children of Willesden Lane</i> (Golabek & Cohen, 2002) as class reader with Year 8 students
1	Philippa	18/07/18	Gothic reading project with Year 9: independent reading choices after reading <i>The Woman in Black</i> (Hill, 1983)
2	Philippa	14/11/18	Reading and responding to <i>An Inspector Calls</i> (Priestley, 1947) with Year 10 (same students as for previous lesson in the summer)

Figure 3.7: Details of lesson observations

3.4.5 Individual teacher interviews

Following the classroom observations came the opportunity for discussion in an individual, semi-structured interview with participating teachers. As a research tool, the

interviews were conceived of as semi-structured in order to allow room for teachers' own concerns and interests to be followed, while maintaining a focus on the main research questions (Kvale, 2006). The combination of observation and immediate follow-up interview is powerful because it enables a deeper understanding of the observation through being able to look into and further pursue particular moments, hearing what the teacher intended to do at a given point in the lesson and comparing this with observations of their practice, while also looking at what teachers *do* as well as what they say, or think they are doing, which may not be the same (ibid.). The aim of the individual teacher interviews was to generate dialogue that more closely resembled conversation (Brown & Dowling, 1998), and the semi-structured nature of the schedule allowed space to follow up, for example, individual ideas generated in response to the priorities identified by each participant, in the second interview, for example. The final stage of the PAR cycle involved all teacher-researchers moving more formally towards reflection so that the final individual semi-structured interview with each teacher invited them to consider what they felt had changed about their teaching, and in particular their teaching of reading since the start of the project. They were also asked to identify which reading or readings or discussion ideas they felt had been most influential in prompting change (see Appendix 2).

Clearly, a problematic aspect of interviews is that participants are not necessarily able to be consciously aware of all the motives informing their behaviour and are 'engaged in their own process of reconstruction in answering the questions' (Altrichter et al., 1993). In addition to inviting reciprocity, we moved towards dialectical theory-building while attempting to avoid theoretical imposition so that each interview becomes 'a site for interactive knowledge production' where assimilation of new knowledge demanded that researcher and participants 'reflect critically on theoretical as well as methodological positioning' (Dunne et al., 2010, p. 37). The voices and perspectives of the teachers were valuable in facilitating jointly constructed understanding through the individual interviews.

3.4.6 Reflective logs

The reflective logs were another method by which reflections could be explored. Participating teachers were encouraged to keep a reflective log during Year 1 of the project, with time provided during the SGRDs for entries. Extracts of the reflective logs that teachers were willing to show were shared with me, and I kept my own research journal throughout the entirety of the process. The purpose of reflective logs is to enable critical reflection on theory and practice and encourage iterative, layered reflections over time. The logs and research journal operate as a tool to support thinking (NCTE, 2004). Short reflections could be recorded easily at the SGRDs and thereby ensured that data collection was not artificially separated from analysis (Altrichter et al., 1993), and used to chart the evolution of individual and collective thinking. Having engaged in some initial discussions to establish starting points in relation to reading and the teaching of reading, and having been introduced to a greater number of theoretical and research 'readings' throughout the course of the year, the journals were distributed in the first SGRDs. Time was offered for freewriting during the SGRDs themselves. We used this technique as outlined by Elbow (2008, p.83) as simply, private 'nonstop' writing, embracing its generative dimension in 'inviting chaos'; putting down words on the page without worrying about their organisation, and valuing the experience of surprise in writing something that the writer didn't necessarily 'know' before (ibid., 91). Periods of the SGRDs were used as occasions to foreground and clarify thinking (Lieberman and Wood, 2003) and to support the identification of issues and begin to embark on problem solving (NCTE, 2004). Teachers were, additionally, encouraged to use the reflective logs in their own time in relation to the teaching of reading and to support the generation of ideas towards particular interventions with students as part of the action research, as well as more focused moments of descriptive and interpretive sequences (Altrichter et al., 1993). However, perhaps understandably given the pressures on teacher time and the voluntary nature of the reflective log as an exploratory space, the more sustained periods of writing in the reflective logs took place during the SGRDs. In addition, since the research logs had necessarily been designated as private, according to Elbow's (2008) conceptualisation, what teachers chose to share at the end of the process was at their discretion; I did not, therefore, have access to the full logs as recorded by participating teachers. They are present in the data analysis, but

incomplete as a result. On the other hand, their use within the SGRDs enabled reflection prior to discussion and was therefore additionally useful in enriching the discourse within the SGRDs, if more limited as a data collection tool in themselves.

3.4.7 Student focus group interviews

From the classes of each of the four participating teachers, three students took part in a focus group interview (twelve in total). Teachers independently selected students from their own mixed ability classes, ensuring a mix of genders and ethnicity, with the aim of reflecting a range of responses and experiences in terms of perceived reading engagement across the ability range within their group. Focus group interviews were selected to mitigate the pressure that students might feel in an individual interview with a teacher and thereby to enable students to express their views with less restriction (Burton et al., 2008) as well as to stimulate dialogic, Bakhtinian (1986) discussion *between* students themselves where the discourse from one student may also help to encourage comment, response, challenge and elaboration from their peers. A small focus group interview was chosen as a more familiar situation for students and one in which ‘the social pressure to talk is lower for the individual because of the presence of others’ (Altrichter et al., 1993. p. 103), and dialogic responsiveness is more easily enabled. These focus group interviews were semi-structured to enable a more flexible exchange, but included key questions in relation to reading experience generally, and in relation to the particular lessons observed, while leaving room for following up and probing responses (Kvale, 1996).

Questions from the interview schedule were designed to be as open as possible and echoed some of the questions asked to teachers in the first SGRDs. Students were asked to reflect on their memories of reading in primary school and of learning to read in the first instance. They were asked to reflect on the differences they noticed between their experiences of reading across primary and secondary phases, and what they liked and disliked about their secondary reading experiences in English lessons particularly (See Appendix 3). The structure of the focus group replicated an ‘active interview’ process (Silverman, 2011) which required me as the interviewer to stimulate and provoke the responses. The PAR group decided that it should be me, as a person less familiar with

the students, who took on the role of interviewing them, rather than their classroom teachers. In part this was for similar practical reasons of time and timetabling as with the lesson observations, but also to build trust and rapport, and to avoid students seeing the interviews as some kind of 'test' in relation to their learning. The aim was to create an environment which might enable students to concentrate on their own personal perceptions in relation to reading (Altrichter et al., 1993); at the same time to prioritise the value of student responses and experiences as part of the relational epistemological approach of the research (Nind, 2014). I sought to be dialogic in what is already potentially a rather inhibiting, constraining format for students. The constraint may well have been exacerbated by some being aware of my role not just as another English teacher but as the Head of the English Department. The nature of these interviews was therefore made very challenging, and is discussed further as a limitation in 3.8, given that the issue of the balance of power and positionality is perhaps even more pronounced in relation to children (Burton et al., 2008).

3.4.8 Piloting of instruments

I piloted several of the research instruments by sharing them with my fellow teacher-researchers during the SGRDs, adapting questions in the survey and the student interview schedule, based on this feedback, and I also trialled survey questions with KS3 students to adapt and refine them (Brown & Dowling, 1998). Specifically, I reduced the number of questions overall in order to make the survey more accessible for students, structured the survey form so that not all questions required an answer (since this seemed to be off-putting for some students) and I enabled some quantitative data to be collected alongside the qualitative, narrative answers, such as identifying how many students claimed to have read for their own pleasure in the last month, for example.

3.5 Data collection

The research instruments included in the data collection process for this research were six teacher meetings, of 1-2 hours each, audiotaped (SGRDs); an attitudinal reading

survey completed by 387 KS3 students; two individual, semi-structured teacher interviews per teacher, audiotaped; eight semi-structured lesson observations of the four participating classes (two per class) across Year 8 and Year 9 to enable exploration of changing classroom practice; the teacher research logs; and eight focus group interviews with three students each, two from each of the four participating classes (as represented in figure 3.5).

Each of the SGRDs, student focus group interviews and individual interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed shortly afterwards (methods of data transcription are elaborated below). Continual access to colleagues meant that interviews could take place at mutually convenient times, and, though it was not always possible, I tried to capture thoughts in follow-up interviews immediately after lesson observations. Students were removed from one of their English lessons to take part in the focus group interviews at a mutually agreed time.

3.5.1 Transcription

Both the SGRDs and the student focus group interviews were audio recorded using AudioNote on iPad. Drawing loosely on some conventions from conversation analysis, I transcribed the data to include, as far as possible, pause and hesitation indicators. As Braun (2006) points out, transcription itself is an interpretive act since part of the process involves decisions about exactly how much of each exchange to record: both in the recorded interviews and SGRDs themselves, and subsequently in notation. How to construe paralinguistic features is a subjective judgement; likewise how to record them. Consequently, as Lather (1994, p. 94) observes, the process of transcription itself creates texts: ones which in themselves are not transparent, rather constructions which inherently distort due to the shift 'from words spoken by one person to words shaped into written form by another' forming the intersection between two subjectivities from which it might easily be possible, at any stage, to produce a different narrative or interpretation.

Once the transcribed text is created then any text is subject to multiple possible analyses (Brown & Dowling, 1998). It moves beyond the mechanical selection and

notation of symbols and is structured by the choices the researcher has made (Kvale, 1996) which are integrally related to theoretical and researcher positionality (Davidson, 2009) so that it is interpretive and constructed. Acknowledging this, I made certain conscious decisions about inclusion. I attempted to record the conversation as accurately as possible, to include every word spoken, for example, and to include a sense of pause and hesitation particularly, since they are often indicators of tensions in thinking, a site in which I was particularly interested. Further details of the notation used in the transcribing process are indicated in Appendix 5. Drawing loosely on some conventions from conversation analysis, I aimed for as full and accurate a representation of what was heard in the original transcription. For ease of reading during the presentation of data analysis, some of this detail is not reproduced. Ellipsis, for example, indicates missing speech. Utterances presented in quotation may not have been consecutive but occurred within the same part of the conversation; an interruption, while recorded in the initial transcription, and noted during data analysis, may not have been used in final quotations reproduced in the data findings chapter.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

The research generated a significant amount of data which required a careful, thematic analysis using approaches appropriate to the underlying ontological and epistemological foundations of the research. I undertook a thematic analysis initially, since this provides a flexible approach which can ‘potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 4). It is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns which organises and describes the data while encompassing rich detail. The initial thematic analysis involved open coding, ‘the process of identifying and closely examining units of meaning for similarities and differences’ (Lee & Schallert, 2016, p. 76). It is difficult, however, to pinpoint the beginnings of data analysis and separate this from the act of data collection since data-analysis is an iterative process. It starts, of course, with the act of data collection, but the process of evaluation and re-evaluation is ongoing in the light of new data and new thinking about the data (Braun et al., 2006). Notes made during classroom observations,

for example, moved beyond simply recording actions and dialogue in a lesson and began to synthesise ideas and offer commentary on what was being observed, a process that was continued through the formal data analysis stage. A similar process took place during the transcribing of interviews. It was impossible for me as the researcher not to 'notice' patterns and parallels at that stage (ibid.); some of this thinking was explicitly recorded in my research journal. I also attempted to separate factual description from analysis using a 'double-column' presentation of observation data (Dunne et al., 2005) during the lesson observations specifically. The detailed thematic analysis of transcripts and schedules began systematically with coding. What follows here is an attempt to document the process of coding as accurately and transparently as possible.

3.6.1 Data grouping

I grouped the data sets initially in the following way:

- A. Transcripts of interviews from the SGRDS and individual teacher interviews
- B. Transcripts of the student focus groups responses and responses to the student survey
- C. Classroom observations
- D. Teacher and my own research journals

Further information about the grouped data sets is included below.

Data Set A

Three separate data collection points are included within this data set focusing on teachers across the reconnaissance and action phases:

- The six SGRDs which took place after school over the course of a year and lasted between one and two hours each *before* the intervention. The study group interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed, and ranged in length from 70-90 minutes. The nature of the study group interviews, and the original PAR

design of the research resulted in the creation of ‘collaborative communities of educational enquiry’ (Whitehead, 2006; p160).

- One individual face-to-face interview with each participating teacher *during* the intervention/manifesto phase, scheduled as close as logistically possible to a lesson observation early in the cycle to enable a change to reflect on the lesson delivered as well as the wider concerns of the research, audio-recorded and later transcribed. These were semi-structured using open-ended questions and ranged in length from 15-45 minutes.
- One individual interview with each participating teacher towards the *end* of the intervention/manifesto phase; for some teachers this took place nearly two years following the first of the study group interviews. These were also semi-structured using open-ended questions, and also ranged in length from 20-50 minutes.

Together, this generated a richly layered data set for teachers, as represented in Figure 3.8.

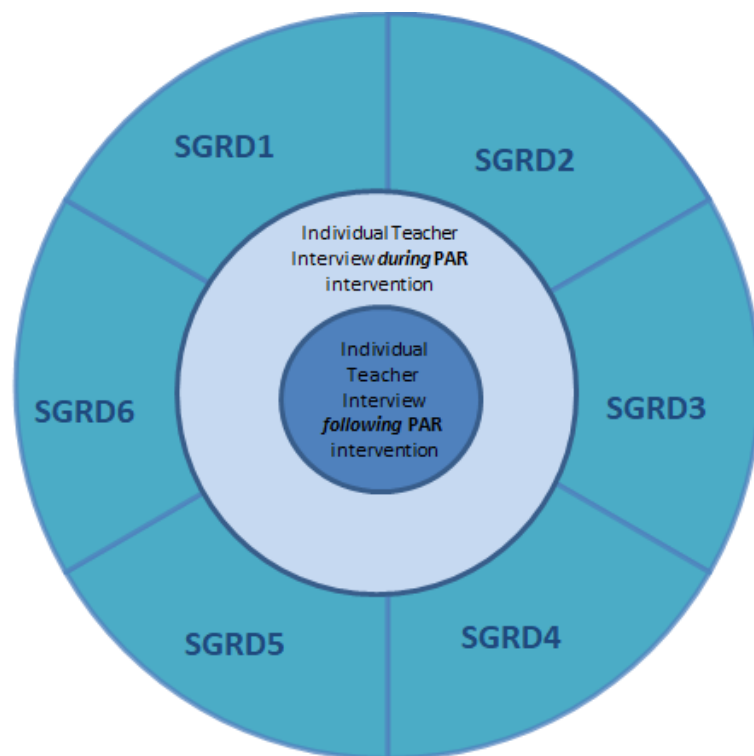


Figure 3.8: Data Set A
Richly layered data of teacher responses comprising 6 SGRDS followed by two individual interviews each, one during and one following the intervention

Data Set B

Two separate data collection points are included within this data set which focuses on students across the reconnaissance and action phases:

- Whole classes of students in Years 8 and 9, including those in the focus groups undertook the online habit and attitudinal reading survey during the reconnaissance phase generating a total of 387 responses.
- Three students selected from the class of each of the four participating teachers from Year 2 took part in two focus group interviews each, comprising twelve students in total, during the PAR intervention phase of the second year of research.

Data Set C

Data Set C comes from observation and includes data relating to both students and teachers across the action phase of the research. The written notes from classroom observations comprise rich qualitative data from more than seven hours of classroom time, but also include some photographs, to aid memory, of resources used during the lesson and images of students' written work.

Data Set D

I have full access to my own research journals, but as outlined in 3.4.6 above, teachers provided me only with extracts from their research journals that they were happy to share, rather than the complete journey through the research. (This was promised from the outset to enable teachers to write freely and dismiss any internal critic or editor since the words could remain private). In a sense, since teachers selected which material to share, a degree of editing and interpretation had already taken place before the teacher research journals arrived with me for data analysis (Creswell, 2008). All teachers shared at least some pages, though there was great variation across the final four participants in how much they submitted.

3.6.2 The Stages of the data analysis process

I began with Data Set A, the interview transcripts from the SGRDs, which amounted to around 50,000 spoken words recorded over approximately ten hours of dialogic conversation. Extracts from the data transcripts of earlier SGRDs were also discussed as part of the SGRDs themselves, so I found myself analysing transcribed conversations *about* the transcriptions: dialogue discussing the dialogue. This generated layers of reflection over time and reflection on reflection, or meta-reflection, which was important in deepening collective thinking. It created ripe conditions for meaning-creation through augmenting Bakhtinian responsivity in our discourse; dialogue which both responds to preceding utterances and is formulated in anticipation of future response; explicitly acknowledging the relationship of the discourse to prior instances, as well as future ones. Because the research was formulated around teachers increasing their pedagogical knowledge about reading in order to help students to do the same, I felt justified in beginning with these data sets. It also seemed logical to begin with the SGRDs, since they formed the first part of the data collection and therefore arrived earliest in chronological sequence.

Although I aimed in the first instance for an inductive approach to the coding of the transcripts, where induction here refers to an ‘inside out’ approach through which a researcher analyses data in order to construct a theory or model from within, in fact there were also deductive, or ‘outside in’ elements to the coding at the same time. Induction might perhaps be considered a more fitting approach within a qualitative paradigm: attempting to understand thinking and behaviour by allowing themes and patterns to emerge naturally from the data (Constantinou, et al., 2017). Yet, the research questions themselves framed a number of the deductive or predetermined themes drawn from the literature review and professional knowledge. So, coding was both deductive and inductive simultaneously, a kind of hybrid and iterative process or ‘abductive’ analysis; what Reichertz (2009) terms as a ‘logical’ form of inference. I was looking through my own lens, using some deductive codes as well as enabling inductive codes to emerge. It was iterative because the process of transcription was taking place

during data collection, and one was inevitably informing the other; analysis was in effect 'happening' *before* I undertook structured data analysis, as explained above.

The predetermined codes which were generated directly from the research questions and the literature review involved ideas related to the 'reading culture', 'knowledge about reading' 'existing teacher practices' 'teacher engagement with theory and research' and 'new practices'. The second major influence in terms of predetermined codes arose from the nature of the prompt questions that were created for the preliminary study group interview: for example, *knowledge of YA fiction*, *Initial teacher education (ITE)* experiences and *perceived barriers to reading*. Next, some open codes arose from the staged process of detecting patterns of recurring ideas, and trying to find meaningful links between the different data sets. Sub-codes such as *reading aloud* developed from the code of *teacher practices*. Data-driven codes such as *confidence of teachers* were integrated with theory-driven ones such as those related to *book access*, for example. Code development was therefore an organic and 'dialogical' process (Burton et al., 2008, p. 164). Knowing that it strengthens trustworthiness of the data-analytic process to have more than one researcher involved in the coding process, and that 'any text is susceptible to any number of analyses, depending upon the nature and specificity of the theoretical framework' being employed (Brown & Dowling, 1998: 89), but unable to enlist the help of participants as initially envisaged, I undertook some independent coding with my doctoral supervisor of four of the interviews, and some common codes such as *teacher reading identity* and *student reading identity* emerged from this process.

I followed a similar process with the individual interviews, returning frequently to SGRD transcriptions to refine coding of both data sets. Analysis of the raw data from the first data set was then combined with Data Sets C and D, analysis of data collected from classroom observations and research journals. Again, I followed a similar coding process with codes that had arisen from the first data sets.

I left the survey data, Data Set B from students, until last. The survey had produced an enormous amount of qualitative data which was most useful in relation to the specific focus of the first of my research questions in helping to establish the nature of the reading culture at KS3 in the school. It was coded in the same way as the transcripts,

with codes now familiar from earlier analyses, and used to compare and contrast with responses elsewhere. The quantitative results generated were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize the characteristics of the data set, based on indicative patterns and broad trends which emerged.

The coding software Dedoose was used to support the sorting and organisation of the data in the first instance. More than twenty 'codes' and 'sub-codes' were generated through this process. After working with the data for some time, it seemed as though these could be grouped more holistically, as well as being separated by teacher and students. Five major themes finally emerged as umbrella terms from the data:

- Reading identity (teacher and student)
- Teacher knowledge about reading
- Evolving practice of teachers
- Reading engagement
- Access and barriers to reading

3.7 Ethics

This section presents the ethical considerations I underwent before conducting this research. My ethical decisions were guided by the University of Sussex Ethical Guidelines, as well as BERA guidelines (2018) which were consulted throughout the project.

All participants, both teachers and students, had the right to withdraw unconditionally from voluntary research activities, without stating their reasons, following the BERA guidelines; and were required to give continuous informed consent. This was revisited at multiple points since this was an extended project. Customised student and staff information sheets to accompany consent forms were created in an accessible style to ensure that research participants were equipped with everything they needed to know about the study to make a fully informed decision about participation (Appendix 6 and

8). The written consent from parents of focus group students (Appendix 7), alongside that of the Headteacher was also sought prior to the start of the research (Appendix 9). These forms and documents were submitted for ethical approval. In addition to the written documentation, follow-up conversations with participants ensured that they fully grasped all the details of the project and what was required of their time and commitment. In addition, during the focus group interviews students were asked each time if they were happy for recordings to take place and following their written consent in order to establish a meaningful, and continual, process of informed consent.

Burton et al. (2008) warn of the dangers of students perceiving the researcher as a 'teacher' only, rather than a teacher-researcher during interviews. I reminded students repeatedly of my researcher role and encouraged them to see this explicitly as separate from my teacher identity; this was reinforced by the fact that I was not their regular English teacher (though in my Head of Department role I would likely have been a familiar figure in school to at least some of the students) but the confidentiality and anonymity of their answers was assured repeatedly. Another element of the ethical dilemma of unequal status was that students could have felt under pressure to participate, as they may have worried about refusing a teacher within the department in which they were being taught (Cohen et al., 2007). It is also worth acknowledging that the students for the focus groups were first selected by the teachers and then invited to participate. This inevitably resulted in some students' voices being silenced, potentially excluding some who may have wanted to contribute, and is a further limitation of the research.

Survey data was collected anonymously and students' optional completion of this was conceived as giving informed consent. Participants were made aware that they could withdraw any information provided in interview or questionnaire up to the date of data-analysis.

While there was an exploratory element to the intervention in the sense that we were changing some aspects of pedagogical approach in relation to the teaching of reading and strategies for reading engagement amongst Year 8 and 9 students, the structure of the research aimed to mitigate against detrimental effects on any teaching group. All

the proposed interventions were research-informed and therefore teachers only ever chose from a combination of pedagogies that had already been evaluated individually in a range of international research, both large and mid-scale, quasi-experimental studies (for example Wigfield & Guthrie's 1997 Motivations for Reading Questionnaire; Fletcher et al., 2011; and Westbrook et al, 2019) and small-scale qualitative UK studies situated in contexts similar to those of the school (such as Giovanelli & Mason, 2015). The best interests of the students were always the primary consideration throughout the study. Additionally, in consideration of the work with teachers, opportunities for maintaining research-informed and enquiry-led professional learning are demonstrated to be highly effective forms of teacher development (e.g. BERA-RSA, 2014). In this instance our aim was to develop practice on a fundamental aspect of the English curriculum, which underpins all else: reading.

Ethical considerations during lesson observation are easily overlooked (Burton et al., 2008) since lesson observation forms such a typical part of normal professional duties and does not involve intervention explicitly. Participating teachers were assured that the observation would relate specifically to the collaboratively agreed terms of the 'manifesto' and that no judgements of professional competence would be made, nor about the specific abilities of individual students.

A key ethical issue in any research with busy professionals is the amount of time that the research demands of its participants. The small, self-selecting group of volunteer participatory action researchers were able to use 'Professional Learning Weeks' which form part of teachers' designated work time to conduct some of the additional work generated by the research project. This helped to minimise the additional burden of workload as it was part of 'directed time' and contributed to their CPD hours for the academic year. Specific time was allocated during these sessions for writing in the reflective logs.

The principles of anonymity and confidentiality are central to ethical research. Anonymity was preserved as far as possible in the writing up of the research. Williams (2010, p. 260) explores the acquisition of 'guilty knowledge' within the research process in reference to professional activity, identifying that it is a particular concern where

teachers from the same institution participate in research. There is an implicit danger in exposure of individuals whose own professional identity is being scrutinised, creating a moral imperative for anonymity. I therefore used pseudonyms for the teachers, and classified them only into broad age and experience groups, not revealing, for example, any additional roles they may have in the department, as shown in Figure 1. Anonymity was similarly preserved when aspects of the research were shared inside school. The research coincided with two other independent research projects inside the English Department, and this, combined with a turnover of staff during the research period, ensured that staff were not easily identifiable. Names were removed from transcripts that were shared in the SGRDs. The problem remains, however, that anonymity cannot be absolutely guaranteed since it remains possible for people to reassemble or combine data in order to identify an individual teacher, or an institution (Cohen, et al., 2007).

I obtained the required ethical clearance from the University of Sussex's Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex before I conducted the fieldwork, and followed their protocol throughout. This included sharing my research plans, a detailed data collection procedure, interview protocols, observation schedules and other research instruments, alongside copies of the research information sheet, and different consent forms, for approval prior to embarking on the research.

3.8 Methodology limitations

For various reasons, many already touched upon, the research design was not as interactive or truly participatory as I would have liked, or as first envisaged; a theme commonly discussed in the literature on PAR (Smith et al., 2010; Nind, 2014). Generally, this was to lessen the workload impact on colleagues for ethical reasons and to fit in with micropolitical and institutional requirements. I made decisions about our group text selections, for example, at least initially, based on the reading that my existing doctoral study had generated. This was a pragmatic rather than an ideal solution. In the short time available it would have been entirely unrealistic to expect busy colleagues, not themselves engaged in doctoral study, to invest the same kind of time and

commitment to the project. However, the role of teachers also operated in a less participatory fashion than I had first hoped in relation to the data collection and analysis. Lather (1991, p. 53), in discussing a research design that included teachers' written response to the preliminary analysis and interpretation of data, identified it as 'the most common form of an emancipatory approach to research - the submission of a preliminary description of the data to the scrutiny of the researched.' This worked in theory, but not in practice: I tried a similar approach, presenting initial data-analysis as work in progress for my fellow participants' scrutiny in order to elicit their responses. I had intended this to inform the next phase of data analysis. However, aside from the novelty of seeing where individual participants appeared in the data, participating teachers did not seem particularly keen to be involved in the minutiae of time-consuming data-analysis and therefore, aware of ethical imperatives, I did not pressurise them in any way, accepting their views. The implications for their own classroom practice and the teaching of reading were prioritised, and were more important and pressing for participants than what might have been perceived as laborious exploration to draw conclusions from wordy data. This kind of involvement in data analysis is potentially a very time-consuming stage of the process, and I inferred from teachers' reluctance that work pressures may have contributed to this perspective.

Again, moving away from PAR principles, micropolitical factors limited student participation, as well as my own evolving excitement about watching teachers 'learning'. Not only were the student focus group interview participants selected by teachers thereby reducing the level at which student participation was voluntary, the interviews themselves were sometimes less effective in generating knowledge due to the difficulty of eliciting rich talk from students who are unfamiliar with the researcher. The beginning of any interview is particularly important since it is the stage which establishes a relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer (Altrichter et al., 1993, p. 105), and with hindsight and more experience I might have handled the opening moments differently. It might have been prudent, for example, to have used the kind of card-selection activity that I chose for the teachers in the first SGRD to scaffold the students' thinking and introduce a less formal and more active approach to involve students from the outset. It may also have been beneficial for teachers to interview their own students to remove any tensions and difficulties caused by my own unfamiliarity

with individual students, though of course, teachers interviewing their own students is a situation which presents its own problems (Burton et al., 2008). My own clarification and expansion skills, particularly in the student focus groups, were not commensurate with the unrestricted and wide-ranging dialogue that I aimed for. Through the process of transcription there are multiple moments where, with the benefit of hindsight, I wish I had followed up in some way that did not occur to me at the time. I was keen to elicit students' opinions but not to pressurise them, which is a tension, particularly as an insider-researcher, but for all research with children and young people. Because the conversations did not seem to me to flow as naturally as the SGRDs with teachers did, follow-up questions were less instinctive, and at times the transcripts feel interrogative and far less conversational than elsewhere in the research. Giving further thought to establishing the right kind of conditions with students, rather than assuming that I would simply be able to create them given my experience as a teacher, may have served to mitigate this. My familiarity with the setting was problematic once again, and repeatedly invited my 'own unexamined interpretive frameworks' to influence those interview moments (Brown & Dowling, 1998, p. 44). Furthermore, leaving the student data to examine until last may also be problematic since their voices and preoccupations may be perceived as secondary to those of the teachers as a result. Lather (1991, p. 67) observes that the researcher 'must consciously utilize designs which seek counter patterns as well as convergence if data are to be credible'. I aimed for a robust approach that would seek counter patterns alongside confluence.

While my intention was to break down power relationship as outlined in 3.2, in fact addressing them was even more complex in practice. Since I was a part of the SGRD discussions, I found hearing and then seeing my 'own' words reflected back uncomfortable. The cyclical and iterative nature of AR is manifest in the way this is recorded and acknowledged in my research journal. My dominant, and at times authoritative, role, particularly in early transcripts and in spite of my conscious attempts not to dominate, is evident, as is my own unease as this is repeatedly reflected back to me. It was a salutary lesson, a potential limitation of the project, and is addressed further in 7.4.

The survey data, while useful in helping to establish a snapshot of the nature of the reading culture at Readborough College, since it cast a wide net across multiple KS3 classes (with 387 responses in total) was less helpful since it was relatively inconclusive beyond that. Of all the methodological instruments used in the research, the student survey is the one that I would adapt the most in future research of this kind. As a group, we concentrated on looking at the questions themselves rather than fully considering the data that the answer format would generate. The anonymous collection of the survey data presented a limitation, since it meant that the responses of individual students could not be followed up. Again, with hindsight, it would have been interesting to explore the responses of the students selected for the focus groups with *their* specific survey data so that I could compare their views before and after the interventions. The promise of anonymity negated this possibility. Additionally, more selective invitation of survey respondents in the first instance (limited to the participating classes, for example) might have enabled useful 'before' and 'after' snapshots that could have been used for comparison. In addition, even though all reality is mediated by particular subjectivities, it remains difficult to ensure that a given line of questioning does not influence students unduly and lead students towards particular responses (Brown & Dowling, 1998). Further piloting of the format of the survey with students (not just critical friends in the SGRDs) may have been of benefit, and closer analysis of pilot answers. The data was rich and manageable when piloted with small numbers of students, but we failed to see the problems when this was scaled up to several hundred respondents. There were several questions where a 'tick as many as apply' response was invited. In these cases, it may have been more helpful for students only to select the most important answer. In the question that was aiming to elicit responses about reasons for reading, students might have selected reasons to do with enjoyment *and* reasons related to skill development for example, without indicating which was more dominant. Ten students, for example, said that they read both to give themselves a break *and* because they had to for school (see Table D3). In another statement 'tick box' question, a number of students said that reading was one of their favourite pastimes, but that they could not find much to read that interested them. While both statements may certainly be true, it would have been helpful to have the opportunity to unpick some of them in more detail. Similarly, a statement such as 'I read when there is nothing else to do' might be perceived negatively as a stand-alone statement, but a number of

students combined this with 'I read all the time' which appears to be a far more enthusiastic response when taken independently. In designing the questions, we perceived 'I read when there is nothing else to do' as being largely incompatible with, for example, 'Reading is one of my favourite pastimes', yet this was another popular combination. Conversely, another student selected that they liked going to the LRC, they read 'all the time', but also that reading was boring. As co-researchers, we were too inexperienced at that stage in the process to understand how the nuances of that data might not be entirely clear from particular questions, or how possible contradictions might arise through multiple statement selection in this way, which may not have any significance. We chose not to remove those candidates from the survey data as unreliable through contradiction, instead took the stance that it was possible for both statements to represent the authentic experience of the student.

Once more, with hindsight, I would be tempted to invite a narrative rather than a tick-box response to some of the statement questions, or at least to limit the number of ticked boxes permitted, particularly since a significant number of students chose to add an additional narrative embellishment as well as ticking some of the boxes. This generated a large amount of rich data that might have been far richer still with further judicious refinements. The survey was designed so that we would be able to dig deep and root out discrepancies such as those outlined above, and to replicate some aspects of Wigfield & Guthrie's (1997) Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ). It was an attempt to make the data analysis more robust. In practice, we did not have the necessary experience to manage this level of mixed qualitative and quantitative data. Given my own, and my fellow teacher-researchers' lack of expertise, it would have been prudent to design a much simpler, less ambitious survey in the context of this research.

Finally, as with all small-scale qualitative studies, there can be no claim to generalisability. The research design was relatively small scale (across one English Department) and generated rich, multi-layered longitudinally collected data within that context. Given the patterns that were observed between teachers, and across both teachers and students, the findings may have some resonance for another similar context; perhaps a similarly-sized semi-rural state school with relatively high achievement, for example.

4 DATA FINDINGS: RECONNAISSANCE

The preliminary, reconnaissance phase of the PAR investigated two research questions:

1. What is the nature of the reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College?
2. What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom?

This chapter presents teacher and student perceptions about the nature of the existing reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College, based on a student survey of KS3 students' attitudes to 'reading for pleasure' independently (n=387), where questions related to any kind of reading for pleasure, fiction or non-fiction; qualitative interview data from 12 students; qualitative interview and SGRD data from 8 teachers; and observational data from 12 lessons. Students' attitudes towards reading are evaluated, and the chapter considers what teachers professed to know and understand about reading near the start of the research, as well as exploring their existing practices in their English classroom, prior to participating in the PAR study.

4.1 A snapshot of the reading culture and existing practice

Firstly, the findings in this section suggest that teacher and student perceptions about the amount and nature of the reading taking place were misaligned: teachers initially perceived a greater paucity in the volume and type of reading that students were undertaking than students themselves did, especially in Year 7. The picture painted by students was more encouraging: both about their own reading habits, and about their collective perceptions of reading as a pleasurable activity. However, both teachers and students acknowledged that levels of reading for pleasure declined as students progressed through KS3 and into KS4, a finding supported by the literature (Cremin, 2011; Clark et al., 2020, for example). Additionally, both teachers and students attributed the greatest barrier to increased reading amongst students to a lack of time. Accounting for the differing perceptions between teachers and students offered an interesting avenue of conjecture. Teachers, for example, projected unfavourable

memories of their own adolescent reading histories and experiences onto students when making judgements about KS3 students' reading motivation and engagement.

4.2 Student survey data tables

The following tables show some of the collated data captured from the student survey (Appendix 4), and collected during the reconnaissance phase of the PAR study. The data are presented based on indicative patterns and broad trends which seemed to appear in response to the mixed questions. Some questions required students to select from statement lists, which generated some quantitative results analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize the characteristics of the data set. Where percentages are given, they are rounded to the nearest whole number. Many questions required a narrative answer. The qualitative responses generated by these questions were subjected to thematic analysis, as with the other qualitative data sets. A total of 387 students across KS3 responded in the survey (n=387).

Table 4.1 tallies 'yes' or 'no' answers in the survey, or qualifies 'yes' or 'no' where a narrative response was invited. Table 4.2 shows how one of the tallied answers represented in 4.1 (in response to the question 'where is your favourite place to read?') was further broken down based on the narrative answers that were given. In Table 4.3 students were asked the question, 'Why do you read?' and were able to select multiple responses from a statement list to complete the answering phrase 'I read because . . .'; or to explain in their own words, but without ranking the reasons. Likewise for Table 4.4, where they were asked the question, 'What stops you from reading?' and were invited to complete the phrase, 'I would read more if . . .'; again selecting responses from a multiple statement bank, or choosing to explain in their own words, and again without ranking their reasons. Table 4.5 shows further attitudinal responses, again selected from a multiple statement bank. In each case, a narrative option was available. Table 4.6 represents responses on an ordinate scale, where students were asked, 'On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is poor and 5 is very good, how 'good' a reader do you consider yourself to be?' Some of the limitations of the survey construction are discussed in both 3.8 and 7.4.

Student	Yes	No	No response
Has access to books at home	375	6	6
Has access to Kindle or other E-reader	160	190	7
Has preference for E-reader (rather than book)	130	245	12
Has home or parents as main source of books	288	71	28
Has a ready title for what they are currently reading	317	49	21
Has read for pleasure in the last month	256	108	23
Has a favourite place to read	376	3	8
Considers that they read 'enough', or more than enough	170	205	9

Table 4.1: Access - Snapshot of statistics from student survey data

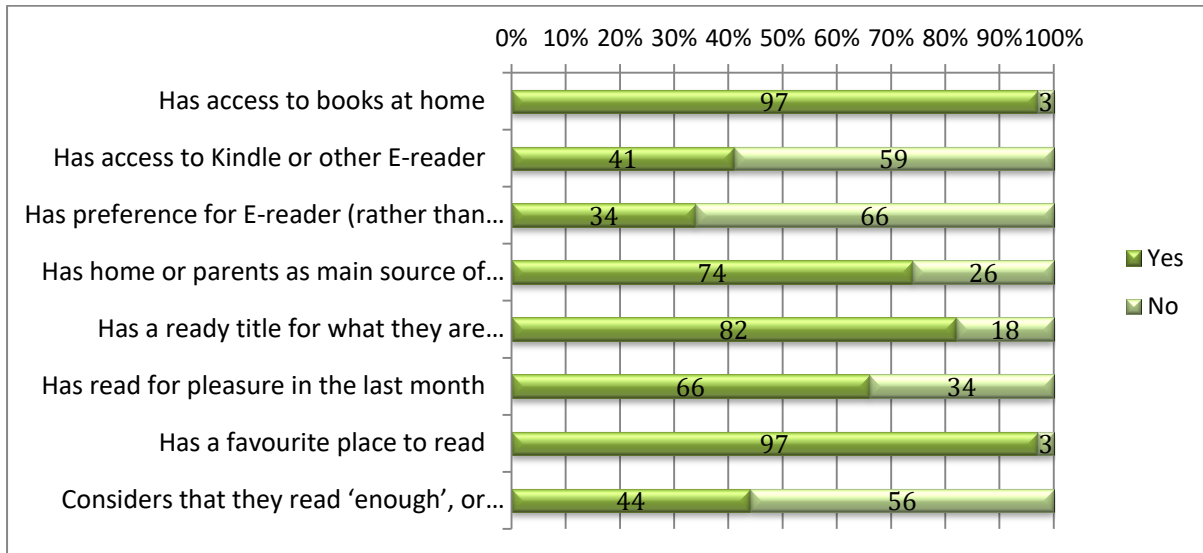


Figure 4.1 Snapshot of statistics expressed as % of student respondents

Favourite place to read	Number of students	% of students
Bed	141	36%
Own room	139	36%
Holiday	34	9%
Garden	24	6%
While travelling	17	4%
With pet	11	3%
Secret place	4	1%

Table 4.2 Access – Where is your favourite place to read?

I read because...	Number of students who selected statement	% of students who selected statement
I enjoy it	195	50%
It's a skill for life	138	36%
I have to for school	105	27%
It gives me a break	103	27%
It helps me find out what I want or need to know	93	24%
It helps me understand more about the world	72	19%
It helps me understand more about myself	31	8%
I don't read	8	2%
Chose narrative response	24	6%
Gave no response	27	7%

Table 4.3: Reasons - I read because...?

I would read more if...	Number of students who selected statement	% of students who selected statement
I had more time	223	58%
Books were shorter	71	18%
I found it easier	64	17%
Books were cheaper	53	14%
Someone read aloud to me	33	9%
My friends read more	32	8%
Libraries were better	23	6%
My family encouraged me to read more	23	6%
School encouraged me to read more	23	6%
I could find more books I liked	10	3%
books weren't boring/more fun	7	2%
I had more books	3	1%
Other	19	5%
No response	15	4%

Table 4.4: Barriers - I would read more if...

Which of the following statements do you agree with?	Number of students who selected statement	% of students who selected statement
I read when there is nothing else to do	172	44%
I can't find much to read that interests me	151	40%
I like going to the LRC	91	24%
Reading is one of my favourite pastimes	80	21%
I read all the time	76	20%
I only read when I have to	74	19%
Reading is boring	50	13%
Reading is more for girls than boys	11	3%
No response	18	5%

Table 4.5: Attitudes - Statements about reading

Self-identification rank	Number of students	% of students
1	7	2%
2	25	6%
3	96	25%
4	164	42%
5	85	22%
No response	10	3%

Table 4.6: How good a reader are you?

Student self-identification of reading ability on ordinate scale where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good

Almost all students, 375 from 387 respondents (97%) across Years 7, 8 and 9, said that they had access to books at home generally, suggesting that obtaining books was straightforward for most students at Readborough College. In addition, 256 of students (66%) claimed to have read a book for pleasure, of their own volition, in the last month. The overall, surface picture painted by students was of a lively, vibrant reading culture with 317 students (82%) able to name a book that they were 'currently' reading. However, it is worth noting that this figure is higher than the 256 (66%) students who claimed to have read for pleasure in the last month, suggesting that the perception of 'current' may not be entirely consistent with regular reading habits. A total of 80 students (21%) described reading as 'one of my favourite pastimes' (Table 4.6), while 195 students (50%) said that they read because they 'enjoy it' (Table 4.3) and 103 (27%) said that reading gives them 'a break', suggesting that it was viewed by those students as a welcome, relaxing pastime. One student explained that reading 'takes me in to another world where there is magic all around me,' and several students used the word 'escape' in describing the pleasures from reading. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish from the student survey data which year groups those who had read recently for pleasure came from.

Most students, 376 (97%) identified a favourite place to read (Table 4.1), and for 141 of those (36%), it was in bed, often before they went to sleep. The student survey data was compared with student focus group data (comprising twelve students across Years 8 and 9, three from each teacher). Reading in bed was a sentiment that was also highlighted in the student focus group interviews:

Sometimes I do it [read] just before bed, like just to go to sleep (Simon, RFG2).

Furthermore, reading was regularly identified with favourable descriptions in response to that question on the survey. Adjectives like 'cosy' and 'comfy' appeared repeatedly along with objects that might signify similar identification, such as blankets. One described their favourite reading place as 'on my bed with my teddies all wrapped up' for example, while another described being 'curled up in a ball on a cosy seat in a quiet place'. Being snuggled up with a pet was referenced by 11 students, one saying that their favourite place to read was 'next to my chickens and my chickens listen to me reading and they sometimes cuddle up on my lap and sleep', while a further 4 students had a 'secret place' that they liked to read. A number of students (34, or 9%) associated reading with holidays: there were mentions of specific countries, resorts, hammocks, beaches, suggesting that reading was seen in tandem with something pleasurable; and also identified with travel more generally, in relation to planes, trains, and car journeys. Other outdoor places also featured in the responses: 26 students (7%) named a tree, treehouse or garden space.

All six Year 8 students in the focus groups who were interviewed readily classified themselves as 'readers' both on their first arrival at Readborough College and as Year 8 students; conversely, five of the six Year 9 students were adamant that they were not readers by the time they started at secondary school in Year 7. This pattern perhaps suggests that either reading declines with age, from twelve to fourteen years, or possibly that students' willingness to self-identity as readers may decline over time; or perhaps a combination of these.

4.2.1 The volume and character of reading: misaligned perceptions

An initially striking observation from the data was the apparent discrepancy between student and teacher perception of the amount and type of reading outside of school that was taking place for students at KS3. Among the teacher-researcher participants, there was a collective and contradictory idea that students' reading habits were in dramatic decline, both historically over the last few years in general; and more specifically, the decline that was perceived to take place between Years 7 and 11 as students progressed through KS3 to the end of GCSE. We seemed to collectively hold a strong impression that

habits were not being formed at home, and a false perception (since 97% of student respondents claimed easy home access) that acquiring books outside of school was difficult. Philippa, for example, described her impression that many students she taught had never had the experience of reading at home. She felt that this created problems in the classroom for Year 7 students in particular on arrival at secondary school, since:

introducing [reading for pleasure] as something new, I think, is a much more difficult task to achieve (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa perceives the concept of students reading for pleasure as ‘something new’ to them, identifying it as something alien which therefore required careful ‘introduction’ rather than framing reading as an activity which built on existing practice. The response of other teachers suggested that we all had a similar tendency to underestimate, or to assume that reading for pleasure was not happening at all in some cases:

[Encouraging reading for pleasure in the classroom then] has something to do with creating those habits if those habits aren’t being created for them [students] at home (Bridget, SGRD1).

The assumption that reading habits were not being formed in the home contrasted strongly with what students themselves said. Bridget’s perception of a ‘reading for pleasure’ deficit amongst students was prevalent among the teachers, though often impressionistic and not always supported by clear evidence from within Readborough College itself. It is clear, however, that the notion of a measurable reading decline during adolescence is certainly echoed in the literature (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Cleverdon, 2017; Cremin, 2007; Fletcher, 2011; Laurenson et al., 2015) while the 2019 National Literacy Trust survey reported the lowest ever recorded daily reading levels for children aged 8-18 in the UK since the survey started in 2009, with only 25.8% of children saying they read daily in their free time (Clark et al., 2020). Without evidence to the contrary, teachers are inevitably and understandably influenced by the kind of language and discourses in which they are immersed, particularly when operating in the ‘practical-evaluative dimension’ (Biesta et al., 2015) of their work. Interestingly, one of the readings that took place in an early SGRD considered the way access to books in school decreased on the whole for students across the transition from primary to

secondary school in Australia (Merga, 2015), an education system which operates in a broadly similar way to the UK. Teachers recognised some of the access issues in their own classroom practice, for example not releasing set texts be taken home by students unless homework directly required it. This seemed to be partially in response to budgetary issues. Bridget noted:

The [class sets of] *Macbeth* are precious, aren't they? like, 'You're taking THAT out of my classroom?' (Bridget, SGRD2).

Bridget's tone was one of mock incredulity here, with emphasis on 'that' reinforcing the notion that the value of the books means that they should not be readily distributed; but she went on to explain:

I will let them borrow books from my shelf, you know, if we're doing wider reading they can borrow something BUT THEY MUST ABSOLUTELY PUT IT BACK AND THEY MUST PUT IT BACK IN THE SPOT WHERE THEY FOUND IT (Bridget, SGRD2).

Here the capitals indicate a mock-stern authoritative 'teacher' voice which was emphasised in the way Bridget spoke (see Appendix 5 for notations used in transcription) and, along with the intensifier 'absolutely' suggests that letting books leave the classroom was problematic for her. This represents an approach more aligned to Foucault's (1975) panoptican metaphor than Freire's (1970) problem-posing model. Philippa articulated a similar perspective:

I was a bit [precious] about my book shelf at the back of my room and then I [eventually] did let [students] take them home to read if they wanted and the first few times that I had done that it was, "Ooh, can I, can I take it away, can I take it?" And I was like, yeah, absolutely. And I haven't signed them out, just said you know just bring it back when you've finished it. So, so I think we do have this kind of precious thing about resources and not losing the books but maybe that does have a negative impact on the idea of access to them (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa acknowledges a 'negative impact' in her own classroom from this policing of books. Specifying that she has not been signing out books suggests that perhaps in the past she did. The tone of responses suggests that teachers were directly responsible for blocking, or at least restricting, students' access to books over time.

We were also collectively influenced by the school's internal library figures (reported in 1.3 and examined in SGRD1) that showed a dramatic decline from the number of books borrowed by students in Year 7 to the number borrowed by students in Year 11. This data was regularly reported in department meetings outside of the research, and teachers were therefore aware of the historical trends, along with my own concerns as Head of Department (outlined in 1.1.) This was reflected in questions such as:

What is it that changes from the Year 7 to Year 11 that ends up with us not having kids going into the library? (Nathan, SGRD1).

Nathan seems to naturally equate students not physically visiting the library with students not reading any fiction at all (as I did myself when I first encountered the figures), an assumption not supported by the self-reported student data. It is a further deficit portrayal. Yet, suggesting that students lack agency to access books beyond the school environment positions school as the gatekeeper of books once more: a characterisation wholly at odds with the self-reported picture from students. This is important because the mismatch between teacher perception and student reporting of reading clearly shapes teachers' approach to reading in the classroom. If teachers perceive students to be reading less than they actually are, they may position students as less able or less enthusiastic readers. It also suggests that teachers had not fully acknowledged the significance of reader identity in reader development and were consequently framing pedagogic practice in less responsive ways.

There was a similar degree of misalignment between teacher and student perceptions in terms of the use and prevalence of digital and e-readers. A relatively high proportion of the surveyed students, 245 (63%), preferred physical books to reading in any electronic format (Table 4.1), yet the teachers perceived digital consumption as the preferred medium. As Joshua put it:

it is becoming old fashioned to look at a book and just have words. Only words. And I think kids are starting to think: The only time I ever look at anything in that way is when I am in school. Outside of school even if I read a book it's not that way. Or a newspaper. There's other stuff. It's multi-modal and there's lots going on. Different fonts and stuff like that (Joshua, SGRD1).

Joshua's perception that books were considered 'old fashioned' may reflect a personal belief in response to changing digital consumption. Although Joshua describes what he believes students to be 'thinking', his use of the first person may suggest that he is reflecting on how his own experience of reading has changed, and simply assuming that this is the case for all students. His comments were echoed by the other teachers. Nathan, for example, perceived students to:

Get more of an emotional trip from playing [online] games than from reading books (Nathan, SGRD1).

Nathan self-identified as a computer-gamer from adolescence onwards, and the notion of a greater 'emotional trip' may for him, like Joshua reflect his own experience superimposed on to the students he teaches. Yet, once again, this was a perception that was not directly reflected in the student self-reported survey data.



Figure 4.2: Self-reported perception of reading ability from student survey data

At the same time as positioning teachers in a kind of 'saviour' role, pejorative judgment about student reading motivation limits teachers from establishing reciprocal and

interactive reading communities in their classrooms. The observed mismatch in discourse between teachers and students around reading habits and preferences is illustrative of similar tensions in teachers' beliefs about their students' abilities in reading. In the student survey data, 249 of the 387 students surveyed (64%) reported their perception of themselves as readers as being either 'good' or 'very good' on an ordinal scale (figure 4.2). Only 7 of surveyed KS3 students (2%) rated themselves as 'poor readers'. Yet participating teachers, in our discourse during the study group discussions, frequently referred to 'less able' readers in the groups, supporting Biesta et al.'s (2015) assertion that teachers continue to see ability, not just in reading but across the curriculum, as unitary and fixed. However, there are also some discrepancies in student answers, such as the 18.2% who felt, in a later question on the survey, that they would read more if they found it 'easier'; for example, suggesting that reading independently for these students was indeed something of a struggle. The phrase 'poor' as applied to reading ability is open to interpretation and has negative connotations (discussed further in 7.4) so there are other possible explanations for this discrepancy. Students may, for example, have wished to avoid feelings of humiliation that might be associated with admitting that they are 'poor readers', and therefore reject that label. Alternatively, students may not have fully equated a dislike of reading with a struggle to comprehend. At the same time, the teachers were, of course, in possession of broader knowledge of reading scores over time, so this strand of the data is open to multiple possible interpretations.

However, these examples in the data suggest that as teachers we retain a deficit perspective, one which enables teachers to justify their intervention in the classroom: students are not reading books and thus there is a gap which needs to be filled, characteristic of Freire's (1970) banking concept of education. Teachers can therefore justify their existence by assumptions of ignorance in students, and curate their role in the classroom as directive and active. This role allows for a narrative of remedying perceived flaws in students reading habits. Moreover, these flaws are constructed in deficit constructions of the social background and parenting of students as well as their ability, implied in the data above and explored by Biesta et al. (2015). Although teachers rarely spoke explicitly about social class differences in the SGRDs, perhaps this was unsurprising given that Readborough College is a relatively advantaged school situated

in a similarly advantaged catchment area with below-average levels of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium (PP) grant (see 1.1). Perhaps, as with Nathan's gaming and Joshua's insistence on the primacy of digital media, these ideas may also be consciously or unconsciously rooted in teachers' own self-perception as readers.

4.2.2 Teachers' reflections on adolescent reading selves

Significantly, surprisingly, and perhaps somewhat ironically, given teachers' criticism of students' lack of reading for pleasure, there was a collective admission that reading had not been important during early adolescence for almost all the participating teachers.

Exploring the decline in her own reading behaviour, Rowena explained:

Once I hit fifteen it was, well reading was gone, for a couple of years. I didn't read at all. Before that I was such a bookworm. I loved reading. I used to sit in all day on Saturdays reading books and then I got to fifteen and all the social things just took over. Didn't get back to it until I was probably about nineteen. And my mum was constantly trying to get me back into it and I was having none of it. Wasn't interested (Rowena, SGRD2).

The fragmented 'wasn't interested' reinforces the certainty that Rowena was 'having none of it'. There is a clear sense of a turning point from being a 'reader' to not being one. She blames 'social things' and also recognises her own resistance to her mother's efforts to encourage reading. Nathan had a similar experience at a similar stage of his life:

It was around fifteen [that I stopped reading]. But mine was when I started working and I could afford to pay for a TV and games console to put in my bedroom. So I bought that and then I didn't have to read any more because I had my own (Nathan, SGRD2).

The modality of 'not having to' read is interesting here, suggesting that reading was an imposition for Nathan at this time. Philippa likewise acknowledged similar feelings, and again identified them at a similar age, but offered different reasons to explain the decline in her own reading at that time:

I would say there was probably a couple of years, a few years, again kind of fifteen, sixteen, that kind of age, where it just petered off. And I think for me it was more about . . . I just couldn't find the time to do it, and, and when I . . . where I would have read before I went to sleep or anything like that I was too tired by that point. I was done with reading and doing work. And I felt like I wasn't connected in some way (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa's use of the compound sentence 'I was done with reading *and* doing work' clearly seems to equate reading with 'work', and associates reading in turn with school (rather than as part of her personal identity and pleasures), which is interesting in terms of her own construction of identity as an adult reader and teacher of reading. Joshua felt that pleasure in reading had come to him much later, but shared the experience of lacking reading enjoyment and commitment through adolescence:

In my life I was never really encouraged to read as a teenager or before that . . . um . . . my mum would say 'it's good to read' and I didn't doubt her sincerity but she like, just circumstance, she wasn't around enough to keep making me do it, um so I just didn't do it. At school I enjoyed English; it was my favourite subject, but when I left I didn't continue doing it. I wouldn't go home and pick up a book. I didn't have any books (Joshua, SGRD2).

Joshua described a reading culture at home that he perceived to be superficial and unsupported. He articulated being told to do something but not witnessing others doing it, coupled with having no books in the house and a lack of exploratory talk about reading. This suggests not only that reading cultures are important to supporting reading, but that Joshua recognised the inconsistency of his own as a contributory factor to his own lack of reading at that time. Of the participating teachers, only Bridget felt that her enjoyment of reading had not been interrupted or negatively impacted during teenage years. One explanation might be that, perhaps as a consequence of these experiences, teachers seemed inclined to project their own negative adolescent reading attitudes onto the students they were teaching, and assume a similar lack of engagement. a kind of essentialism and determinism here in teachers' conceptualisations of their students. Philippa recognised this connection explicitly, writing in her reflective journal:

Exploring [my] own reading experiences as having a gap during teenage years where it felt there was no time to read or it was too much hard work. Is this not a stigma we attach to our students? (Philippa, RJ.20.9.16).

Philippa directly questions the validity of her assumptions here, showing how perceptions of her students in the present day are firmly rooted in her own experience at the same age. For Biesta et al. (2015), this operates in the 'iterative dimension' of teacher beliefs and helps to explain the way that past experience continues to correspond with and impact their practice in the present. The value of extrapolating early experiences and bringing them to the fore for examination quickly became apparent. Additionally, Philippa's critical attentiveness to her own reading history represents an important stage in examining the processes that underpin her pedagogy, and recognition of its socially constructed nature (Giroux, 2020). Philippa's critically reflective observation is thus a first important step in disassociating her own experience from that of her students.

4.2.3 Reading environment and access to books

Reading environments within school, specifically the library and English classrooms, were categorised more negatively by teachers than by students as suitable spaces for reading. Owen considered the library, or LRC (learning resources centre), to be 'intimidating' for younger students because of its role as a sixth-form work space (Owen, SGRD2), while Joshua described it as:

a rubbish setting. And it's such a bad place to read, is the problem I have with it. I take Year 7s in there and they can't settle down because the Year 12s won't settle down or the Year 13s won't settle down. It's NOT a reading space (Joshua, SGRD2).

The perception from students in Year 7-9 was markedly different. Almost all students described the library facility at Readborough College in terms that suggested it was a welcoming space with more than three quarters of respondents (77%) using descriptors that could be classified as positive. Phrases such as 'welcoming and bright', 'a place where you can feel at home', 'relaxed', 'comfortable' were prevalent in the survey data. There were only a handful of negative comments. One said, 'I have seen

people messing about and swearing' and another said that it was 'ok-ish'. One student described it as 'a bit loud', and one noticed the difference between lesson time visiting when it is quiet and relaxing, and break times when 'it is quite noisy and I find it harder to concentrate'. A number of students who selected predominantly negative statements to do with reading in the survey, such as 'they only read when they had to' or 'reading was boring' also selected that they 'liked going to the LRC'. Indeed, 14 students picked 'I like going to the LRC' as the *only* statement they agreed with in the general reading statements question (table 4.5). The overall picture, just as with the self-reporting of reading for pleasure habits amongst students, was a much more enthusiastic one than the teachers presented. Once again, the reasons for this discrepancy in perception may be rooted in the shared discourse of teachers; a discourse which enabled us to impose our own values about the construction of a reading space that aligns with adolescent experience of silent spaces. The students appreciated the colour and vibrancy, the communal space, the zoned areas and all the interventions that teachers perceived as preventing reading.

In SGRD2, Bridget built on concerns about the social visibility of the library space (Merga, 2015) in comparison to the home, which contributed to its problematic portrayal by the teachers:

Students don't want to be seen there. It isn't conducive to encouraging readers (Bridget, SGRD2).

Yet later on she acknowledged that she had 'hidden' in the quiet of the school library at break times as a child (SGRD2), suggesting that she saw it is a place of refuge, and very different from the current environment in the Readborough College library.

The pattern repeated in response to the presentation of books in the classroom. There were similarly effusive descriptions from some of the more open survey questions about how students felt about their English classrooms as there had been about Readborough College's library, in terms of what they noticed about books and reading within them. Some students reported candidly that they had never given it much thought, or considered their classroom to be 'just a classroom', but others again used the adjective 'welcoming', one explained that their classroom 'welcomes you to the world of books' and many described displays as 'colourful', 'helpful' and 'interesting'.

Several used the word 'safe'. Teachers, on the other hand, perceived their own classrooms to be inadequate reading spaces that were not being used effectively. Joshua wrote in his reflective journal:

What messages am I giving off about reading through my classroom? The books are dusty. No one wants to read them (Joshua RJ.11.10.16).

Since the classrooms at Readborough College were cleaned daily, perhaps this more of a fanciful description: a metaphor for the lack of interest he perceives in book reading more widely. Owen echoed a similar thought when he wrote:

My room is full of books, but my bookshelf never gets used (RJ.11.10.16).

Nathan complained about the problem of reading on 'hard chairs' (Nathan, SGRD2), while Rowena similarly described the lack of beanbags or comfortable seating. There was a sense of a lack of versatility about current classroom design and the impossibility of having a 'dedicated' reading area. As with the access question which appeared to be fuelled by the Merga (2015) article, discussion of reading spaces ensued following references to the use of 'reading cafes' in Fletcher et al.'s (2011) research during the second study group discussion. Long-held beliefs about reading for pleasure also came under attack. Joshua said:

There are things I have just assumed [about the teaching of reading] without really questioning it - like we have to read, so we're doing it this way (Joshua, SGRD1).

Joshua's words suggest the construction of a utilitarian and functional vision of reading in the classroom, rather than a pleasurable one. He is realising, for the first time, perhaps, that there may be more than one way to approach the teaching and encouragement of reading. Teachers seem to be inclined towards downplaying or devaluing their own resources, classrooms and skills. On the one hand, perhaps this is unsurprising: the high level of de-professionalisation over time for teachers means that there is a sense in which, if we are engaged in professional development, then something must need *fixing*. On the other, it is somewhat at odds with Freire's (1970) banking concept of education and the positioning of teachers as student-saviours.

4.2.4 Kinds of reading

During the SGRDs there was acknowledgement of teacher bias in favour of fiction, and perhaps towards novels of a certain ‘calibre’ when encouraging students to read for pleasure. In contrast, Nathan explained that he invited his students to:

Take away the stigma. You don’t have to bring in a novel; it doesn’t have to be a book, just anything you enjoy reading, [students are] like what? (Nathan, SGRD2).

Nathan recognised that other choices of reading materials are stigmatised and denounced, and his characterisation of students as being surprised that they might be allowed to read something else suggests that insistence on particular fiction forms of reading, predominantly the novel, is a message they have heard from other English teachers, or as part of the ethos of Readborough College. It is an interesting insight into teachers’ views of the literary canon prescribed by the National Curriculum. It seems that while they may perhaps resist a patriarchal literary canon they still enact the idea of some other authoritative, canonical set of texts with their students. Nathan described encouraging students to bring in comics, magazines, even leaflets, and remarked on students’ collective response:

But at school if we do that someone else will tell us off (Nathan, SGRD2).

It is not entirely clear who that ‘someone else’ might be – perhaps members of the Senior Leadership team who may come into a lesson, or tutors who are asked to encourage students to bring in reading books. Bridget argued:

We’ve been saying that [students should be able to read whatever they want] for a long time (Bridget, SGRD2).

However, when Nathan described some of his students bringing copies of the *Guinness Book of Records* to read, Bridget commented that it was:

Quite a lazy choice (Bridget, SGRD1).

That Bridget perceives it as 'lazy' suggests that teachers were paying lip-service only to the notion of embracing students' own choices of reading for pleasure. There was a clear desire among participating teachers to encourage a wide range of texts, but not always a corresponding respect for the books that might be chosen, implying that teachers are not only policing the distribution of books, but also policing the boundaries of what counts as high-quality fiction; epitomising Foucault's (1975) panoptican metaphor once again. The curriculum itself does this, of course. The inculcation of a 'love' of reading in the National Curriculum is tied to 'high quality works' (DfE, 2013, p.2), alongside overarching aims such as that of ensuring pupils appreciation 'for our rich and varied literary heritage' (ibid.). This observation provoked discussion about what teachers valued in terms of reading material, and a binary opposition between our (teachers') and their (students') domains of reading matter. The realisation forced the teacher-researchers to confront some ingrained values. Bridget followed this up, for example, by explaining that she felt most students avoided any kind of challenge in their reading for pleasure, but then noted:

But WE [teachers] don't read [for pleasure] because we want a challenge (Bridget, SGRD1).

Bridget seemed to be implying that as an English teacher reading for pleasure rather than professional reasons she would be inclined to select something which she found less challenging. Joshua agreed:

Sometimes [you need to take away] the expectation that you've got to have some kind of profound [reading] experience [...] you just want to read stupid stuff (Joshua, SGRD1).

It appeared to be a revelatory moment, for Bridget herself, and indeed for all of us as participating teacher-researchers. An admission that using our own experience of reading and our choices of reading material to acknowledge that our expectations for students might be unrealistic and in tension with the proclaimed idea of what constitutes 'reading for pleasure'. If they, and I, were truly encouraging reading for pleasure, perhaps we might be less likely to insist that it had to be in some way 'worthy'. These discussions about reading and what might constitute acceptable forms of reading

are echoed by most of the teachers and seem to constitute accepted internalised discourse, discussed more fully in the third section of data findings about teachers' own learning. It is also suggestive of the fixed ontology teachers hold about students' reading, and represents one of the battlegrounds in English, where the lines between reading for instruction and reading for pleasure are blurred and bleed into one another. Because teachers want to help students improve their reading, there is a tendency to 'interfere' in the choice of what students are reading for pleasure, even though that negates the very idea of reading for pleasure and some of the definitions that entails. In the opening chapter of this research I attempted to differentiate between reading for pleasure and independent reading, and characterised reading for pleasure as volitional, reading for its own sake that is not tied to particular curricular tasks or learning objectives, or used to practise a set of prescribed skills or identify textual features (Cremin et al., 2008, Laurensen et al., 2015). Yet, teachers in the study repeatedly wanted to apply learning objectives or use time devoted to reading for pleasure as a way of increasing comprehension and interpretive skill. It is another area that seems to be in tension and where beliefs and macropolitical imposition might need to be carefully negotiated. Teachers were creating a climate for independent reading, but choice, a key requirement in reading for pleasure, was still being limited for students in sometimes subtle ways.

4.2.5 Barriers to reading

Evaluating potential barriers to reading for pleasure was one theme of the research where there seemed to be a greater convergence between teacher and student views. From both sets of data there were repeated references to time being the biggest barrier to reading for pleasure. Year 9 marks the transition from KS3 to KS4 at Readborough College, where students have selected their options for GCSE subjects. A total of 223 (58%) of student respondents in the survey (n=387) felt that they would read more if they had more time (Table 4.4). It was considered, by some way, the biggest perceived barrier to reading. One student, in the focus group interview explained:

I'll probably do it [read] more when I'm older because then I'll probably like have more free time (Tara, OFG1).

The focus groups also revealed significant demands on students' time which the students themselves equated with having a negative impact on reading. For example:

I'm usually outside doing something [other than reading]. Because I live on a farm and I work and things. I'm doing something when I get home (Angie, RFG2).

There was greater correlation here between the teachers' perceptions and what the students themselves articulated. Philippa likewise focused on increased demands on students' time when she said:

for so many of them [students] it's about, or seems about, time constraints. That's what I seem to find with my year 9s because they all write me a letter in their first lesson. So many of them have written 'I don't read any more because I have homework to do and I have other stuff to do and it's just another thing that I can't fit in' (Philippa, SGRD1).

Here Philippa has supported her perception with anecdotal evidence from the written responses of students in her own classroom. Nathan also conceived of a similar shift in the increased demands on his students' time, particularly at the point of transition to secondary school:

It's that time and age where [the timetable says] now you have twelve pieces of homework (Nathan, SGRD4).

Interestingly, and perhaps connected with a perceived lack of time, 71 surveyed KS3 students (18%) claimed that they would read more if books were 'shorter'. Teachers were likewise concerned with decreasing attention spans and the connections this might have with reading levels. Philippa wondered whether:

[students'] idea of what's quick changed as well. You know, everything is quite instant, isn't it? The gratification (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa is once again referring to the spread of digital and social media over the last decade that she has been in teaching. Joshua and Bridget agreed. Rowena likewise made

links with social media, particularly Instagram and Facebook, and the instant 'likes' in comparison to the 'slow burn' of reading a novel. The increase in student consumption of these forms of social media seemed to be negatively associated with the perceived decline in reading, due to ease of access through sharing via mobile phones combined with the lack of challenge involved in engaging with memes and GIFs:

Kids are always talking about what I know are, like, six second videos that take over their lives for three weeks. But I know that they just watch a million a day (Joshua, SGRD2).

Students were not asked directly about their consumption of social media and how this related to their reading habits in the survey, though three students commented that they felt they would read more if they did not have access to a mobile phone. It was also only referenced indirectly in the student focus group interviews. One student, Tara, explained:

I don't know I think I just want to do like other stuff than read [books], if that makes sense [...] When I do have time I will go on my phone on Insta [Instagram] or something (Tara, OFG1).

Tara's comment suggests that looking at messages from friends and social media posts is more attractive to her than the idea of reading a novel or non-fiction book. However, 64 surveyed students said that they would be inclined to read more 'if they found it easier', which is interesting when only 7 rated themselves as poor readers, (2%). There is a suggestion that students' ability for 'functional' forms of reading is well-developed, but perhaps that some narrative reading requires greater effort and commitment. This is additionally reflected in the 138 students (36%) who felt that reading was a 'skill for life', and 93 students (24%) who selected the statement that reading helped them to 'find out what they wanted or needed to know' (Table 4.2).

A further barrier to student reading arises through teachers' own admission of scant knowledge of and about young adult fiction, a collective concern highlighted repeatedly in the SGRDs. Teachers were concerned by what they perceived as their own inadequate knowledge of this genre, and its potential to support reading for pleasure. Philippa

described her knowledge as ‘fairly limited’, while Bridget concurred and articulated a reason why:

[YA Fiction] is a thing I don’t know anything about. When we were growing up there was no such thing as young adult fiction. Like it actually didn’t exist as a thing. So you had Enid Blyton and then you went to Hardy, basically (Bridget, SGRD1).

Nathan made the most confident claims when he explained about his knowledge of YA titles:

It comes from cinema listings. So I know about the *Divergent* series and all that kind of stuff. *The Hunger Games*. But other than that I have no idea. Or even where to send them [students] for that kind of information (Nathan, SGRD1).

Referencing the *Divergent* series (Roth, 2011-2013) and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) cannot really be said to constitute a strong knowledge in the genre, given that the latter was nearly a decade old at the start of the research. His ‘other than that’ suggests that he is himself aware of this, and also that he is at a loss for ‘where to send’ students. Teacher-researchers encouraged each other to undertake some YA reading and discuss our choices at the third SGRD. For some it was the first time they had read YA fiction for a significant length of time: a real indictment of both a curriculum that offers little room to encourage reading of YA fiction, but also the teachers’ perception that (propositional) knowledge about YA fiction does not automatically form part of their professional expertise. Citing the reading he already had to do to keep pace with a constantly changing curriculum, Joshua explained that, because he didn’t know where to start with YA fiction, he:

googled ‘Good Young Adult Fiction’ [and found] a Guardian list, or something like that (Joshua, SGRD4).

Owen recalled that he last did some YA fiction reading:

about eight years ago before I did my GTP (Graduate Teacher Programme) (Owen, SGRD4).

Owen’s acknowledgement shows that he had not undertaken any YA fiction reading

during his entire teaching career. Rowena acknowledged the paucity in her own contemporary reading of young adult fiction alongside a recognition that her inability to recommend a book to a student was ‘terrible’:

I remember one of the girls who was Year 8 but, you know, very able and loves reading and she’d read fifteen books over the summer and she says, ‘Miss, like I’ve read everything; I don’t know what else I can read’ and I thought, oh I’ll have to get back to you. And that’s terrible, like, I should be able to kind of straightaway, read this, read this (Rowena, SGRD2).

Rowena’s choice of modality, articulated here in the idea that she ‘should’ be able to make recommendations, is interesting in its expression of both expectation and the obligation she evidently feels. Again, lack of time was presented as a factor in teachers’ lesser knowledge of YA books. Philippa, writing in her reflective journal, resolved to:

Improve my own awareness of young adult fiction through reading and regular discussion with students in reading lessons (Philippa, J.6.6.17).

Her commitment to undertake this reading, suggests that Philippa has come to recognise knowledge of YA as an important part of her role as an English teacher.

Interestingly, these perceived barriers seem to contain a mixture of genuine and generated concerns. YA fiction knowledge amongst the teachers *was* low, as evidenced when they named titles and began to engage with some new releases of YA titles for the first time. Bridget’s acknowledgement of the non-existence of YA fiction when she was growing up is legitimate. Already in her late teens by the 1970s, she did not experience the first wave or ‘golden age’ of YA literature, nor its second peak in the 2000s with the popularity of JK Rowling’s Harry Potter series. On the other hand, the Readborough College library facilities were not reported as off-putting for students, nor were digital readers taking over in the way that teacher-researchers believed, suggesting that some of the barriers were generated by teachers’ perceptions themselves.

4.2.6 Fostering reading in school

In a question asking surveyed KS3 students to complete the sentence, 'I read because...' with statements from a list (from which they could pick as many as they wished), the most popular answer was 'because I enjoy it' with 195 (50% of the surveyed KS3 students) selecting this (table 4.3). Although there was a degree of overlap, 103 (27%) of the students said that it gave them 'a break'. Yet in another question which again asked students to select from a statement bank, a similar number, 105 students (27%) claimed that they read because they 'had to' for school. The teachers also identified the idea of enforcement of reading as potentially problematic:

Is it partly as well because they perceive it as work? They perceive it as being related to what they do in school and they want to separate themselves from that (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa's comment suggests that if reading (for pleasure) is imposed through English lessons and thereby associated with work and school, then this is alienating to student identities and undesirable for students. This notion of enforced reading for pleasure formed a dilemma for participating teachers which the SGRDs gave opportunity to consider later on. The idea of students reading when they 'had to' was also supported when synthesised with comments across the student focus groups:

I prefer to play football or something (Simon, RFG2).

[Reading is] just something for when I've got nothing to do (Angie, RFG2).

Firm conclusions about reading culture are difficult to draw from the data, given the mixed messages that emerged from comparing the teacher and student data sources, and the contradictions in the student data noted above. What does emerge is the idea that teachers felt a strong sense of duty towards cultivating the reading culture amongst students, and a personal responsibility for the reading enjoyment of our classes. Involvement in the research had encouraged us to critically examine the nature of this responsibility, exploring our own relationship with reading and reader identities in the first instance and the relationship between that and the way that we communicated

ideas about reading to students; as well as identifying deficits in our own knowledge and ability to support students, with, for example, choice of books for reading for pleasure. Owen wrote in an early entry in his reflective journal:

Most of the time you don't even think about it, but something like this [reflection opportunities during SGRDs] makes you confront the extent to which I might/must be complicit in leaching the love of reading out of these children (Owen, RJ.11.10.16).

Owen considered that when scrutinising his own classroom practice the tensions between teaching reading and teaching a 'love of reading' were manifest. The use of the word 'complicit' with its connotations of guilt is interesting here, while 'leaching the love of reading' is a vivid metaphor that suggests something important, and perhaps innate, is being removed from students as a result of his classroom influence. The alliterative phrase was loaded with emotive overtones and resonated with the earlier image of teachers poisoning books, explored in 1.4 above.

5 DATA FINDINGS: TEACHERS' LEARNING

Building on the discoveries about the state of Readborough College's reading culture, this chapter of data findings focuses on exploring the changes identified in the teachers' knowledge, beliefs and practices when they undertook sustained engagement with theory and research, alongside consideration of the 'resistance' that was observed towards this same theory at times. This aspect, I suggest, is due in part to the dominance of a performativity culture in schools and systematic de-intellectualisation of the profession through commodification and neoliberal paradigms.

As has been explored more fully in 3.1.3, the professional development design of this PAR was significantly different in its construction from that which had been more typical within Readborough College previously. Firstly, the PAR design enabled teachers to engage with the disciplinary topic of reading, and reading-related pedagogy, the particular form of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) that embodies content 'most germane' to its teachability (Shulman, 1986, p. 9) rather than a generic aspect of teaching. Secondly, it enabled them to undertake their own investigation, by offering each participant choice in terms of what he or she wished to focus on in relation to the reading and discussion. This freedom and flexibility enabled participating teachers to prioritise their own concerns and implement change in the classroom on their own terms, and to change their priorities within the broader context of the collective manifesto as time went on. Thirdly, for participating teachers, a project which evolved over six consecutive academic terms also offered an unusual degree of longevity in terms of opportunities for learning and critically reflecting about reading: far greater than other patterns of CPD experienced more recently within the school. Both the longevity and the repeated opportunities for collaborating and co-constructing knowledge and understanding through dialogue promoted development. The nexus between teachers' reading, knowledge and understanding, and their practice – the actual 'doing' in the classroom – was encouraged to become deeply rooted and firmly established. Additionally, the cyclical design of the research enabled a kind of 'folding-in' at each stage, so that by encouraging a deeper reflexivity from all participants, the

knowledge gained was strengthened by being more explicitly understood and interrogated. For some, particularly the early career teacher participants Rowena and Joshua, this was one of the first opportunities that they had been given to work in this way. Even for the more experienced teachers, however, the aforementioned pattern of CPD (as knowledge being imparted, rather than co-constructed, over a brief period of time with limited opportunities for reflection and follow up) was more familiar.

Teachers expressed their specific concerns relating to reading at the start of the project. These centred around developing students' engagement in reading in class and developing students' independent reading for pleasure (articulated most fully in the first SGRD and considered in the previous data section). Specifically, they perceived the most problematic areas in their own learning trajectories to arrive from:

- inadequate focus on reading in their own ITE
- insecure knowledge of reading processes and consequently poor awareness of strategies to teach reading
- recognition of increased barriers to reading for students today operating in an ever-increasing digital environment as compared with their own experiences as teenagers
- a deficit of knowledge about YA fiction

A final area of tension was noted in what the teacher-researchers perceived to be inadequate library facilities at school, although as has been shown in 4.2.3, this view was not concordant with the ways in which students themselves characterised the library at Readborough College.

It certainly appeared to be a substantial list. These issues were emotively described as 'scary' (Philippa), 'overwhelming' (Bridget), and 'a nightmare' (Nathan) at the start. This kind of emotive language from the teachers perhaps hints at feelings of guilt and inadequacy in their ability to facilitate a culture that promotes reading engagement in their classroom and beyond it, but was markedly absent from the discourse by the end of the research. Though what each individual participating teacher gained from the process varied significantly dependent on age, skills and professional experience, in line with DfE findings (Coldwell et al., 2017), the thematic analysis revealed six broad

themes which emerged in relation to teacher learning across all data sets. These themes are dealt with systematically in the six sections which follow, broadly categorised as *time, collaboration, teacher agency, depth of experience, a resistance to the language of theory*, (in spite of the theoretically-inspired shifts in practice already noted, and process of theory-generation) and finally, increased levels of classroom *confidence* and courage to act accordingly.

5.1.1 Theme 1- Time: 'To actually have time to think' (Owen II.2)

Teachers repeatedly referenced the benefits of the slow pace of the PAR cycle, acknowledging the merits of the longitudinal approach. This way of working offered teachers a far longer space of time for deep-rooted change to take place, and for the nature of that change to be reflected upon, than might ordinarily be created through other forms of professional development. Like the students who identified lack of time and the pressures of school as inimical to their own reading, temporality was a theme for teachers, who expressed appreciation at the opportunity for time for reflection created during the working day as a result of the space offered during the study group discussions. Time is therefore understood and experienced by the teachers in both longitudinal and momentary ways. Over an extended period of time, pockets of time were created for teachers to engage in collaborative discussions and reflective writing, supported by the readings that took place. The combination of elements generated a process that enabled deep critical reflection to occur.

Early in the PAR cycle, Bridget expressed surprise at the measured pace of the learning as she realised more about the shape of the process:

So we have two or three sessions just to sort of think about a load of stuff and then in January possibly put something in place with some of our classes, but at the moment just play around with ideas and thoughts? (Bridget, SGRD2).

The idea that Bridget is being invited to 'play around with ideas and thoughts' evokes surprise and is perhaps perceived as an indulgence. Certainly, it is at odds with the usual pattern of CPD; a pattern which often requires immediate implementation, or

measurement of outcomes, typically of attainment, over a shorter time frame. Perhaps there is also a measure of resistance in Bridget's phrasing of 'just play around with'. Teachers in schools in the UK are under immense time pressure. It could well be that Bridget is experiencing contradictions as she recognises the pleasure she personally feels in being allowed the time to think and experiment; a pleasure which contradicts internalised discourses that teachers should always work at a fast pace and be measurably productive. Later in the same session, Bridget talked about the time given during the session itself for writing in her reflective journal:

It's also nice to just write. Because we don't have any time, ever, do we? (Bridget, SGRD2).

Bridget's emphasis on 'ever' by punctuating it within a separate clause, evokes the relentlessness of this lack of time. The pressures of a typical school day, compounded week by week over the academic year, are not conducive to systematic, organised reflection in this way. Neither do they invite experimentation and constructive play. And of course, reading for pleasure itself could be construed as exactly this, given its association with having fun and enjoyment. The teachers are subject to similar pressures and conditions as the students. Interesting suggestions are being made here about Bridget's perception of the construction of the role and identity of a teacher and the lack of agency that accompanies it. Bridget saw the opportunity to write reflectively as 'nice' at this early stage, only later understanding its importance in developing practice:

It's that process of reflection which people in the earlier meetings were talking about as being useful (Bridget, SGRD4).

Comparing Bridget's comments with those that she made nearly five months later, it is striking that she subsequently applies the adjective 'useful', even though that word was not used directly in the meetings. She has absorbed the practice as one which is beneficial and necessary. Philippa echoed a similar thought in relation to the time accorded to reading the articles and research, commenting on the unusual situation of:

not feeling guilty about spending time just reading (Philippa, SGRD3).

In this instance, the reading she was referring to was of theorised articles, but similar sentiments were expressed in the later SGRD where YA fiction was shared and discussed. Like Bridget, Philippa's use of the adverb 'just' here suggests that reading is somehow a reductive pastime: intended perhaps in the sense of 'only' reading, or 'simply' reading, perhaps in contrast to other CPD which tends to focus directly on practice or immediate practical application of ideas. It is also noteworthy that she chooses the word 'guilt' here to talk about a practice that should arguably be a regular part of professional development. It is perhaps an indictment of policy discourse: that teachers of reading should feel guilty about 'reading' research and theoretical literature to deepen their thinking about their pedagogy.

In reference to previous professional development experience, Joshua explained:

I'll feel like I'm getting somewhere, but then every other pressure comes in and I think well, I'll come back to that later [...] Things lose momentum quite quickly which is annoying (Joshua, SGRD3).

Both the regularity of meetings and longitudinal nature of the SGRDs taking place over an academic year served to alleviate the sense of 'other pressures' and prevented the ideas that were taking shape during the research period from 'losing momentum'. The teacher-researchers in this study allude to the unique contribution afforded by time itself at several different points in the process. Across the final set of teacher interview data there are twelve separate references that pertain to an appreciation of time and the way that time for study was legitimised by the school through the meetings, as an opportunity to absorb and enact what was being learned, rather than just counting moments spent 'delivering' the pedagogy. It is sometimes evident that 'time' is also linked directly with reflection, and engaging with theory and literature, and it may therefore be hard to separate them.

Owen, for example, reflected in the final interview session that it had been:

Nice to actually have time to think (Owen II.2).

Using ‘actually’ here as an intensifier suggests that for Owen, time for thinking during the school day, or in CPD more generally is unusual. It became apparent however, that time was much more than ‘nice’. There were practical affordances of time, too. Joshua noticed that:

Actually it’s made me realise how much I need to slow down during the reading process within lessons (Joshua, II.2).

Recognising the benefit of creating time and space for reflection, Joshua passes on this affordance of time to his own students, and perhaps, in doing so, begins to move away from a banking concept of education and closer to Freire’s (1970) dialogical, problem-posing model.

Because I came away from that thinking about myself as a reader and then tried to imagine ways in which I would help the students understand themselves as readers and as learners at the same time (Joshua, SGRD3).

Joshua has reached an awareness that teachers need to allow students to do things more slowly, enabling deeper thinking at times (the same process that he is experiencing in the study group discussions), and therefore aligning teachers and students more closely in his own thinking. This begins to accord more closely with Freire’s (1970) ‘problem-posing’ conceptualisation of the teachers-student relationship, with the hierarchy of knowledge and authority removed. Joshua also makes the direct link between his own reading identity and the students’ construction of a reading identity, and ultimately, this leads him towards decisions about changes in teaching approaches that he wished to make. Significantly, they are not transmitted ideas that have been imposed upon him, rather ones that he has arrived at himself. The longitudinal, ethnographic design enabled significant transitions in pedagogic practice over time for all participating teachers (Chapter 6), which, in turn, allowed new behaviours to become deeply embedded, as might be expected following sustained engagement with research and repeated opportunities for reflection and classroom experimentation and implementation. Gibbons (2017) cites the success of teacher AR development projects in English teaching in the UK in the early 1990s which enabled teachers to systematically explore and investigate their own practice in order to

develop teaching approaches based on evaluation of teacher experience *over time* in collaboration with peers. Gibbons considers this ‘an ideal model’ of CPD (ibid., p53). Likewise, in their report into evidence-informed teaching, the DfE conclude that ‘while external research evidence often challenged teachers’ beliefs, it only led to sustained change where there was time for informed debate and teachers could see the impact in practice’ (DfE, 2017, p21). The deep-learning that occurs as a result of this kind of PAR project is not without its complexities, though; discussed further in 7.3.

Another moment which crystallises this process comes from Joshua in his final individual interview. He is reflecting about the process of reading aloud (discussed in more detail below in 6.1.2) but his language choices reflect some of the interesting ways in which teachers learn over time:

I read more to the students. Because when we were talking about it I remembered: what did I used to like about school? And I remember reading books in class. Why did I like it? Because the teacher read to me in a beautiful reading voice and I got it, and the characters were different and it was easier for me to enter the book world than it was if I was sitting reading alone. And I think that had I not had that experience ever I may not have enjoyed reading and I might always have seen it as something other people can do. So I read more to classes (Joshua, II.2).

Joshua employs two rhetorical questions suggesting that he is in a deeply contemplative phase of reflection, alongside the repetition of ‘remembered’. His metaphor of being able to ‘enter the book world’ attests to his recall of reading aloud as an intense, exciting, imaginative experience: an awareness about reading aloud is something that he knew as a child but had forgotten during his adult years as a teacher of reading, until, in his words ‘I remembered’, as part of the extended time and opportunity for reflection across the duration of the study. Alignment and amalgamation of Joshua’s own recalled history as a reader when younger now shape and confirm his current teacher identity. The critical attentiveness to his own history allows Joshua to examine the socially constructed sources underlying some of his formative processes in teaching (Giroux, 2020). During the project it became clear how significant the social constructivist nature of a PAR model of professional development was in enabling teachers to develop their thinking and practice in highly personalised and internalised ways, which suggests that, in some ways, teachers can indeed be considered a marginalised group,

disadvantaged by their lack of agentive position both nationally and globally. Giroux's (2020) critique of performative education systems, like others (Biesta, 2015; Sahlberg & Walker, 2021), positions teachers as transmitters of pre-packaged knowledge, which students absorb and the success of transmission is measured in tests. This kind of positioning leads to a mechanistic construction of a teacher's role. Conversely, taking time to become aware of the underlying beliefs and hidden assumptions that inform discourse, knowledge and pedagogical practices enables teachers to 'minimize the worst dimensions of the culture of positivism' (Giroux, 2020, p. 41).

5.1.2 Theme 2: Collaboration: 'I'm going to steal it immediately' (Philippa, SGRD2)

At exactly what stage research and intervention and change begin in PAR is difficult to establish (Altrichter et al., 1993) and, although the research design allowed for a year of preparatory reading, reflection and SGRDs before implementation the following year, once teachers had engaged with ideas it was inevitable that they began to experiment with them in their classrooms. Or, as Bridget articulated:

Stuff is already happening and yet none of us have made any kind of plan to sort of intervene (Bridget, SGRD3).

In SGRD2, Joshua shared an idea for the way that he had begun to 'rebrand' reading, playfully, in his classroom in order to tackle some of the barriers to reading that he perceived as making it seem unattractive to his students:

I've started not calling it reading. I've been calling it 'guided hallucination'. Yeah, a lot of kids then think, 'oh, that sounds cool, I'll do that'. With older year groups it works well. They do [know it's reading] but then the joke gets them in anyway (Joshua, SGRD2).

The time and space to consider and conceptualise ideas about reading had given him the chance to be more playful and creative with his teaching. Importantly, it was the social constructivist element that became crucial to the development of the group. When he shared his idea with colleagues, Philippa responded enthusiastically:

That's brilliant, I'm going to steal it [the idea of reading as 'guided hallucination'] immediately (Philippa, SGRD2).

The notion of a guided hallucination is interesting since it attests to the continuing search for metaphors to describe the complexity of the immersive experience of the reading process. The phrase 'guided hallucination' not only suggests that Joshua has embodied learning about the way in which readers enter text worlds (5.1.5), but also offers a simple semantic shift that is easily shared between colleagues during this kind of discussion and operates as an example of one of the sideways processes through which pedagogical changes emerged. Though Philippa uses the language of theft (I'm going to steal it), in fact, the process might more closely resemble borrowing through critical reflection in this shared space. Other teachers were also eager to discuss and share the different ways that their classrooms and classroom practice were evolving. Rowena explained the way that she had introduced a 'reading class' with extended choice and creative reading journals to her Year 7 students (something she had never done prior to the research) by the second session and expressed surprise at their reaction:

they [Year 7 students] seemed to be really excited about it: they all put reminders [for the next reading journal lesson] on their phones (Rowena SGRD2).

Rowena's observation here is further example of spontaneity and creativity within her teaching which the students clearly responded to with enthusiasm; suggesting that they, too, enjoy the newness of the pedagogy. Rowena is inventing and adapting and students respond positively to her creativity. Relinquishing the narrator-teacher roles allows learners to take over more of their learning and take greater agency. Thus, a sense of community is already being established in Rowena's classroom, as well as between the members of the study group discussions. Multiple communities of learners are emerging, facilitated by the repeated return to the development of reading practices between participants in the SGRDs. As well as the 'luxury' of time, a situated perspective on learning emphasises the importance of 'physical and social contexts in learning and the role of social interactions among learners as participants in learning communities' (Lee & Schallert, 2016, p75). Rowena is herself excited by the interactions with her

‘excited’ students. Later observations juxtaposed with comments made in early SGRDs show that Rowena, for example, also transitioned to offering her GCSE students, who were not part of the PAR research, greater choice in texts (Rowena, L02) and described offering that choice as ‘the first thing’ she did with each of her classes (Rowena, II.1). Choice was something that was highlighted during early SGRDs, and her comments suggest that it is now well embedded and foregrounded in her regular teaching practice with KS4 classes. Building on Rowena’s experiments in choice, Philippa later described offering her KS3 students a choice of shared class reader, explaining:

I wanted them to feel like they were just enjoying the book (Philippa, II.2).

Although choice had been discussed in SGRD1 and SGRD2, it seems that it was Rowena’s sharing of her experience that prompted Philippa to experiment with it; convinced by her colleague as much as, or at least in addition to, her own reading.

5.1.3 Theme 3 – Teacher agency: ‘Going in cold’ (Rowena, TM1)

Teachers’ agency, their ability to interpret and apply what they read, and to freshly navigate the movement between theory and practice as they integrated and made sense of new ideas, led participating teacher-researchers to some interesting places. The research design invited participating teachers to regularly discuss and revisit readings enabling them to arrive at their own ideas and decisions for classroom practice, rather than have required outcomes imposed upon them. Interestingly, the data revealed that reading the same articles contributed to significantly different interpretations and outcomes for participants. Teachers require the space to be thinking professionals who can make choices about pedagogy, rather than operating in more automated ways in response to policy. This kind of self-reflective practice and critical pedagogy illuminates the ways that ‘classroom learning embodies selective values, is entangled with relations of power’ and ‘entails judgments about what knowledge counts’ (Giroux, 2020, p4-5). Two of the teacher participants, Joshua and Rowena, interpreted one particular article as an invitation to deliberately take texts into the classroom that they had not read before. Joshua explained it thus:

I see the value of reading texts with a class that I haven't read before, so that I am better able to understand my [reading] process whilst trying to articulate it to the students (Joshua, II.1).

The concept of the teacher as a learner alongside his students allows Joshua to look critically at his own role as an intellectual 'located within specific cultural formations and relations of power' (Giroux, 2020, p. 65). But it was interesting to understand where this particular idea had come from. As part of a study group discussion early in the process at six weeks, we read an article about reading schema (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015). In choosing it my perhaps unconscious intention had been for teachers to explore the authors' use of the term 'authentic reading' and what that might mean for teachers in an English classroom. Promoting the idea of 'authentic reading' through research in the field of reader response theory (Iser, 1980; Benton, 1992), the authors advocate 'reading that is born out of an individual's own process of unmediated interpretation' (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015 p42). In order for students to engage in this kind of authentic reading the teacher must find ways for them to have space to interpret the text and experience it for themselves. If interpretation is 'imposed' onto a class or individual student, then the resultant reading experience is likely to be inauthentic, and what the authors deem 'manufactured' by the teacher; though perhaps often unintentionally (ibid., p42). The idea of teacher-imposed, authoritative readings was one that the research group recognised as familiar to their collective experience. In fact, it is in many ways actively encouraged by current policy and the high-stakes assessment systems prevalent in the current UK climate (Giovanelli, 2015; Cliff-Hodges 2016). The article suggests that manufactured readings can fare just as well in GCSE English examinations, if not better, than authentic ones 'since teachers have undoubtedly more control over what is perceived to be the correct way of responding' (Giovanelli & Mason 2015, p43). However, they also perceive this 'burden' of teacher knowledge as disadvantageous to real learning because it may prevent readers from developing personal, original interpretations, a key part of becoming motivated and sophisticated readers, since students who lack 'rich narrative schemas' for a text or class reader may be excessively guided through it by a teacher in possession of a 'highly accreted narrative schema' (ibid., p43). This discrepancy inevitably leads to teachers inhibiting students' interpretations by prefiguring events from later in the narrative and imposing

their complete narrative schema, instead of students developing this for themselves gradually over time (ibid., p46). Drawing on research in the field of applied cognitive linguistics to consider the ways in which readers' construct, negotiate and maintain fictional worlds, Giovanelli & Mason (2015) argue that if students' attention is directed in particular ways and authoritative interpretations are thereby 'pre-figured', then individual narrative schemas are accreted before they even encounter the text. The article encourages teachers to ensure that classroom activities and introduction to texts explicitly invite students to reflect on the types of knowledge that they bring to their reading in order to 'create rich, meaningful, and often inter-connected readings, and to legitimise personal and alternative ways of interpreting texts' (ibid., p53). The article provoked intense, rich and fruitful discussion, much of which was situated around a genuine concern amongst participants about the 'prefiguring of interpretation' that occurs during the reading of texts in the classroom. An example discussed at length was experiences of teachers asking for examples of animal imagery in the opening of *Of Mice and Men*, before students have read beyond the first chapter and have any idea at all of what the story is actually about. Simply by teachers directing students towards the animalistic images in that chapter, they are determining the kinds of response that they want students to have to the narrative. There was extended critical reflection of this point. With its tangible connection to classroom practice, the article seems to have resonated with teachers much more than some of the other 'drier' research pieces. The discussion was counterpointed with the idea of the 'joy' (Joshua, II.2) generated by leading students towards a narrative moment of particular importance or emotional impact when the teacher knows that it is coming, but did not suggest that the reading needed to be a 'first-time' one for teachers. Not only did Rowena and Joshua experiment with this in their own classrooms, they then spoke at a local area 'Teachmeet' (another format of CPD for teachers) about their experiences, encouraging other teachers to do the same. Though this was not originally intended as a data collection point, Joshua and Rowena allowed me to record and transcribe their paired presentation, since they were going to be sharing some of their ideas about reading from the research with colleagues in other schools. Here is how Rowena articulated her understanding and 'translated' the reading of the article and surrounding discussion to her colleagues at the Teachmeet:

One of the things that was suggested was that we as teachers go in cold. We don't know anything about the text before we do it [and] by removing us as the experts

from the classroom it completely changes things for the students: being quite open with them about that process was actually quite refreshing. So, suddenly for the students there was no right or wrong way in how to respond to the text. Suddenly their own thoughts, their own ideas and feelings about the text were valid. And this really changed things for them [students] and it created a really positive learning environment. So it's really about enjoying the reading process with them; and obviously at the same time as things are revealed to the students, they're revealed to us so we react with them [which] allows for some really deep and enriching conversations, surrounding what we are doing during the reading process (Rowena, TM1).

Her words were entirely unexpected, as I sat in a twilight Teachmeet session recording them. There was also some tension created here in my own researcher-teacher role. The notion of 'going in cold' that Rowena described (i.e. having not read the book that is to be 'taught'), was a course of action that was difficult to advocate in my then-role as Head of Department. The phrase itself 'going in cold' was troubling, because until it was voiced at the Teachmeet it had not been discussed before, even though Rowena and Joshua attributed it to the SGRDs and 'one of the things that was suggested'. Revisiting transcripts of the study group discussions confirm that it does not appear. There was certainly concern expressed over the 'burden' of teacher knowledge, but no consensus about a solution being to actually remove that burden by deliberately choosing unknown texts. Rowena continued to describe the effect of teaching a book unknown to the teacher on her Year 8 classes:

What I noticed was the way in which students became interested in us - the teachers - as readers. So, for example, if we did a prediction task where I shared some predictions, the students were motivated to see who was going to be the closest: me or them. And, generally, with [teachers] being more advanced readers, it is our predictions that ring true. And the students ask, why is that? You haven't read the text before; how are you able to work out what happened when we weren't? So again, it opened that conversation about the process of reading and [the class] were able to go back and look at little moments that we were able to deduce from or infer from and [teachers] could explain to them, oh well, this suggested to us . . . and I think that was really valuable to them, actually (Rowena, TM1).

Rowena evidently enjoyed the community of practice that was being established and the fact that as a result of experimenting with new pedagogy (the teacher reading an unread book simultaneously), teacher and student were able to relate as equals in the reading process. Rowena's role as authoritative interpreter was dismantled. The

relationship between teacher and pupil becomes active and reciprocal (Giroux, 2020). Rowena's reconstruction of her own teacher identity meant that she positioned herself not just as the teacher, but as a fellow reader whose interpretations were being reflected on, alongside those of the students. Her willingness to accept a decentred self, or multiple selves, and embrace the fluid nature of the construction of both 'teacher' and 'reader' (Lee & Schallert, 2016; Drzewiecka, 2017) appeared to be liberating. The freedom to experiment had resulted in students' more metacognitive approach to reading. And perhaps, only by daring to experiment with theoretical ideas, has Rowena facilitated this level of metacognitive exploration amongst them. The teacher – and the students – evidently valued this more equal positioning, though it might run contrary to established discourses about teacher roles. Like Joshua, Rowena is moving towards a problem-posing educational model where the teacher no longer occupies the sole teaching role, but is themselves taught through dialogue with students (Freire, 1970).

Yet, at the same time, this abdication of prior teacher knowledge about the text being taught is also potentially problematic from an ethical perspective, especially if the text brings up difficult emotions or issues that the teacher must be prepared to deal with. Rowena and Joshua also seem to be straddling the uncomfortable moments between Korthagen's (2010) second and third layers of practitioner learning, struggling to acquire a more profound understanding of aspects of theory and practice where an unconscious gestalt develops into a conscious self-generated theory or schema. In Rowena's case this is moving towards the ability to have a metacognitive conversation with students about the nature of reading, deepening their understanding of processes of inference and prediction, with experienced readers drawing on knowledge of reading other texts. It may be significant that both Joshua and Rowena are both early career practitioners since the introduction of deeper layers of theory *before* the need for such understanding arises, may work counterproductively (Korthagen, 2010). Guskey (2002) offers an alternative model of teacher change, suggesting that significant innovations in teachers' attitudes and beliefs occur when they gain evidence of improvement in student learning, which is also an important factor in the endurance of changes in pedagogical behaviour in the classroom. Rowena seems to sense this shift in student learning through the questioning of her students, 'How are you able to work out what happened when we weren't?' (TM1), which leads to metacognitive consideration

of reading experience in her classroom. This evolution towards theory-generation was one of the early principles of PAR methodology in particular, where participants' local knowledge is valued alongside academic knowledge and the interstices of the two becomes a space for the generation of theory (Rappaport, 2020).

Significantly, there is a sense of shift of perspective when these comments are compared with the individual teacher interviews with these two teachers. They later argued that it is not that either would consider undertaking GCSE English Literature text-teaching without any preparation, but more that, in terms of promoting and celebrating wider reading at KS3 during the shared class reader, they wanted to engender that authentic initial response to narrative. Both teachers seemed to have reached a deeper understanding of their theoretical position. They were learning how to adapt different pedagogy to different year groups so they are not just randomly experimenting with all students but are carefully adapting pedagogy to meet particular needs of reading for pleasure with KS3 students. This serves, perhaps, as an indication of how nuanced and sophisticated their learning is, adapting it to different year groups and aspects of reading. It has become subsumed and self-evident, and used in a less conscious way (Korthagen 2010).

The importance of the authentic response to narrative by both students and teacher was corroborated by something that was witnessed in the lesson observation of Joshua, manifest as a visceral response to text. Joshua was seated at a student desk (rather than at the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom) and he punched the air as other students screamed out 'Yes!' in reaction to the protagonist in a novel achieving one of their goals at a climactic moment in the narrative (JL02); it was a moment of mutual celebration at the character's success – a plot twist, enjoyed for the first time, by both teacher and student simultaneously. Joshua recognised that this unrehearsed and unchartered way of reading with students can produce a kind of authentic excitement as a real reader in both teacher and students simultaneously. It is a further example of situated cognition and embodied learning (Brown et al., 1989). By experimenting with practice, both teachers appeared to have had a profound effect on the learning of their students: Rowena's was on students' metacognitive understanding of reading; Joshua's was centred around the significance of situated learning, where movement, concept,

action and thinking are all combined (OECD, 2018) and present in the emotional response to the text, effected by readers being so involved with characters' lives. Of course, even in being unfamiliar with any given individual text, reading teachers are highly knowledgeable about genre and narrative, and how to construct a mental schemata, drawing on such knowledge so that their experimentation in this way is informed, even when they deliberately avoid the text-specific knowledge prior to engaging in the reading with their students.

However, something further about the relationship between knowers and their knowing had also been unwittingly revealed through the disparity evident between the ways that understanding of the Giovanelli & Mason (2015) article had been reached, and then applied in the classroom by Rowena and Joshua. Heron and Reason (2011, p9) explain that the experiential reality of any situation is always 'subjective-objective'; that is, it is relative both to the knower themselves and to what it is that is known. A perception or an idea during this kind of propositional phase, quickly and easily becomes actualized as 'knowledge' (ibid., p38). Hopkins (1993, p57) sees it as 'inevitable that the adoption of a new and barely internalized teaching strategy is initially less effective than the way one previously taught'. In fact, it seemed that Rowena and Joshua's approach might not be 'less' effective at all. One of the students in Rowena's class also described his experience as 'better' when the teacher read a novel along with the students without knowing the story herself (Oliver, RFG1). This critical incident invited me to reconsider epistemology at a deeper level, re-evaluating different knowers and different ways of knowing, and to reflect on my own action. I had to confront the notion that in using a critical pedagogy framework for teachers, I was attempting to 'liberate' (Freire, 1970, p. 47) without fully accepting the reflective participation of the other teachers. Remaining mindful of Nind's (2014) ideas about inclusive research and the way in which it is conducted 'with, by or sometimes for the researched', in contrast to research *on* them, it was important to foreground collaboration between participants. At the same time, it was vital to focus upon respect for 'different ways of knowing and different knowers' (ibid., p527), with an explicit purpose of transformation; in this case pedagogical transformation, both for me and my fellow teacher-researchers. In addition, it brought to the fore the importance of acknowledging diversity of teacher interests and motives, and of incorporating them

into a mutually acceptable and productive mode of collaborative inquiry (Wells, 2001), and signalled a further movement towards extended epistemology in the different ways of knowing (Heron & Reason, 2011). The potential value of the ‘unknowledgeable reading teacher’ as it is expressed here, with teachers modelling authentic reading experiences alongside their students, avoiding the conscious directing of students towards a particular interpretation and thereby developing both students’ metacognitive comprehension processes and personal interpretation, was undeniable. Teacher participants are professionals: negotiating their own learning journeys and their interpretation of the article, resulting discussion and translation of each into their own practice, is valid, even if initially at odds with my own ‘Head of Department’ judgments. It was tricky to negotiate the apparent paradox in feeling anxious about the ways that teachers were trying to interpret and translate theory into practice, when that is precisely what the research and the readings were supposed to support.

This also became a critical moment for me in considering constructivist and sociocultural perspectives more deeply. Both reading and discussion are, by their nature, interpretive processes which involve active engagement with the ideas and co-construction by the reader and the speaker and listeners. Where educational constructivism emphasises the active construction of knowledge that takes place for individuals, it has a number of distinctive characteristics that seemed to be presented here: firstly, the idea that the learning mechanisms are not easily observable, being internalised processes. Joshua and Rowena had both internalised learning and transformed that learning, applying it to the classroom in diverse ways. Secondly, given that learning often results from a ‘hypothesis-testing experience’ (Tracey and Morrow, 2017, p56), it is clear that Joshua and Rowena have tried out their theories and adjusted them based on classroom experience. Thirdly, our collective theorisation about reading in the early SGRDs explored the ways in which understanding grows from a process of inferencing, of filling in the gaps which occur in discussion or from written language (Iser, 1980). This theory about reading actually came to apply to the teachers’ learning about reading: though my understanding of the key points of the discussion and the teachers’ were very different as a result of this process of inference, one interpretation was not necessarily more ‘valid’ than another. In sociocultural terms, cognitive processes operate in conjunction with an individual’s beliefs and value systems. Here

there is a validation of Rowena's new approach in the responses of the students that she is working with. She considers it 'valuable' for students to discuss the reading process through the environment that she has created, and finds the conversations 'enriching'. Her actions are endorsed through the response of the students, who prefer this way of reading alongside her.

All teaching, conducted through the medium of language, inevitably involves interpretation. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) explain that when a teacher aims to influence, 'they do so in the clear understanding that what they are trying to communicate will inevitably be filtered through the creative imagination of the other' (ibid., 58). I was certainly not aiming to undertake the role of 'teacher' within the SGRD group: all my intentions were towards a participatory, collaborative research design. Yet, as explored in 3.1.3 and further in 3.2, I was responsible for establishing the SGRD group and introduced the readings to the SGRDs, and critical moments such as this further exposed some of the tensions generated in terms of researcher positionality. My instant reaction to feel alarmed that Joshua and Rowena have 'misunderstood' the article is problematic and reveals that perhaps, in truth, I did not simply want participants to explore theory but actually would have preferred them to arrive at the same understanding as me; and revealed that I believed myself to perhaps have a more authoritative reading of the articles than they did at this stage, perhaps paralleling the way in which teachers are encouraged to teach specific, authoritative interpretations of texts for GCSE. Consequently, I did not truly perceive each of us as equals in the process. This critical incident resulted in a more profound shift in thinking about the nature of the PAR project itself. A sociocultural perspective prioritizes helping prospective teachers understand the impact of cultural experiences on teaching and learning (Risko et al., 2008). Within this framework, I endeavoured to remain faithful to my espoused position as a PAR researcher, acknowledging that it was more important for teachers to learn to construct their own theories in response to the reading and discussion than be in some way guided towards a position of authoritative knowledge; and acknowledge that what I was seeking was the development of teachers' individual professional expertise at a deep level, achieved through collaboration with their peers. I needed to be prepared to respect and support the teachers' individual and collective judgement (Hopkins, 1993), especially since this judgement will have been arrived at

with far more time, space and deliberation than simple adoption of the existing schemes of work within the department in relation to reading. The process of learning about reading began to seem as interesting as reading itself in the action research: the opportunity for thinking, theorising and critical reflection for the teachers; as much an attempt to give teachers the authoritative research-informed knowledge they might require in order to become better reading teachers. The latter may arguably have had a more immediate effect on students, but might then ultimately be less profound in terms of deep teacher learning and the ability to critically reflect.

5.1.4 Theme 4 – Depth of experience: ‘But I’ve always done it that way’ (Owen II.2)

The longitudinal design enabled teachers to have time to absorb different ideas about reading more fully, but another interesting pattern emerged here. Participants assimilated learning to such an extent that when articulating ideas in the closing stages of the project during the final interviews it was almost as though they had *always* held them. What was occurring seemed to be a reframing of each participant’s understanding of their teacher identities, as well as their pedagogical understanding. While identity itself is generally defined as referring to an individual’s self-perception, it has also been helpfully conceptualised by poststructuralists as shifting, unstable, and multiple, involving the construction and reconstruction of the self, or the constitution of subjectivity, over time in an ongoing process built across institution and discourse as well as nature and affinity (Lee & Schallert, 2016). It is a process of simultaneous mastery and submission (Butler, 1997; Davies, 2006). Not only were teachers keen to be seen to ‘own’ the new knowledge in this way, they were also anxious to attribute it to their own individual professional development journey, rather than considering it to be linked to the collaborative PAR project, which started with all participants jointly exploring research literature on reading, reflecting on gaps in practice and agreeing on ways of enhancing their practice.

The SGRDs were consciously constructed as a non-transmissive space. Although different academic articles and readings were offered and might be used in discussion,

in the spirit of PAR, participants were, within a broadly agreed pedagogical framework, free to choose how and to what extent to adapt their own reading teaching approaches in the light of what they had read. In any case, research implications in such literature are 'unlikely to be clear-cut and must be contextualised and combined with practice-based knowledge as part of a wider professional learning process' (Coldwell et al., 2017, p. 23). The two-year study allowed time for both the change in practice and the understanding or full assimilation of that change to take place. Thus, for all teachers it was sometimes as though aspects of 'the time before' the research had never actually existed, so firmly embedded had their ideas and theoretical understanding become. Yet, the nature of the research design meant that these 'before' practices and views *were* captured in the first reconnaissance phase. The discrepancy suggests that the nature of self-knowledge and belief is very fluid and at times forgetful, but perhaps also that newer practices represent beliefs which are far more akin to teachers' beliefs as readers, and as reading teachers, beliefs which may have been suppressed by the historical, institutional and political factors that required reading to be done in different ways. It also attests to the depth of new understanding for each participating teacher so that they were fully able to take charge of intellectual ownership and find individual ways to apply and embody the learning. It became tacit knowledge due to being raised to a level of consciousness through the longitudinal nature of the professional development (Eraut, 2004), and eventually becoming part of their gestalt (Korthagen, 2010), or living theory (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Evidence for this process in action could be seen most starkly in comparing what teachers said in the final interviews with comments made earlier in the process, particularly for later-career teachers: Philippa and Owen both had more than ten years' of teaching experience, and Bridget had nine years' in the profession, while Nathan, Rowena and Joshua were early career teachers at the time of the research.

Philippa, in one of the early study group discussions, when she had already started implementing ideas from the PAR study, explains that she no longer:

[feels] guilty about spending time just reading. Or reading [out loud] to a class, as well (Philippa, SGRD2).

Before the research began she felt, 'as though it's always [the students] that have to do the reading' (Philippa SGRD2) but after the first term she reported increased confidence in reading *to* her students (Philippa, II.1). In the initial individual interview, two terms later, she explained how changes in her approach to reading teaching had come about because she tried to establish 'habits' of reading with her Year 9 class, foregrounding narrative and increasing exposure to text (each topic explored in depth during conversations and readings in the study group research discussions) but she does not attribute them to this process. Philippa perceives the complexity of the changes that are taking place and the process of natural assimilation that makes it feel as if she has always worked in this way:

To be honest, I think a lot of these things are happening by osmosis and subconsciously. It's not until you have asked the question that I realise that I am doing these things (Philippa, SGRD2).

At the end of the first term of the second year, she acknowledges a similar idea of conscious and subconscious layers of thinking in her approach,

I am using more strategies and finding ways to broaden the reading that my students are engaging with. Although this was very conscious last year I find that I am actively doing this more subconsciously now (Philippa, II.2).

Philippa's reflections highlight the problematic nature of tacit knowledge (Eraut, 2010). There is an inherent dichotomy between 'active' and 'subconscious' in her description. As embodied learning meets new contexts, the process of reflection-in-action occurs (Schön, 1983). When change is required the knowledge must first be raised to a level of consciousness (Eraut, 1994). Philippa has been through this process and is clear that changes to classroom practice are making a difference:

feeling that the things that you are doing are working (Philippa, II.2).

By the end of the second year, she reports that the breadth of reading in her classroom, the prioritising of student engagement and the focus on metacognitive approaches to the teaching of reading are:

just part of my practice, and it wouldn't even occur to me that it's part of our manifesto because it's just what I do (Philippa, II.2).

Philippa's reference to the manifesto in the same utterance as 'it's just what I do' reveals how fully the strategies within it have been absorbed. Altrichter et al., (1993 p109) suggest that teachers investigating their own work who seem to contradict themselves can often indicate 'a tension in their thinking', but arguably, it seems to be the reverse here: A resolution of tensions seem to have taken place. The teachers contradict themselves in the sense that they believe themselves to have 'always' done something that appeared new or experimental in the early cycle of the action research (when comments are compared between different stages) but that contradiction arises as a result of the deep, embodied learning that has taken place and significant changes in approach to the teaching of reading. Ideas that seemed contentious or difficult are firmly embedded in everyday practice, 'it's just what I do'. The teacher participants are embodying the 'virtuous circle' identified by Heron & Reason (2011, p. 6-7) whereby skilled action leads to enriched encounter, providing wider embodied knowledge, generating more comprehensive conceptual models that lead to still more developed practice, in the tradition of reflective practice developed by Schön (1983) in such a way that the sense of change in practice becomes virtually unidentifiable.

Another reason that it is difficult to pinpoint the how, when and why of learning is reflected in the first interview with Owen where we talk about the impossibility of 'waiting' to implement an idea once you have read something that excites you in the classroom. Just as identity is an ongoing process which alters continually from context to context and even moment to moment in interaction with others (Lee & Schallert, 2016), practice itself is shifting all the time and being influenced in subtle ways so it is not surprising that teachers may not recall exactly the date when they started implementing a certain approach because building a culture of research within the department has been a continuous process over a number of years. Half-way through the study group research interview cycle, Owen says:

As a result of this [the study group discussions] I have been more comfortable with reading more with classes. Not seeing it as dead time in a lesson but . . . a

nice thing to do and something to enjoy - but also as a way of teaching bits about writing (Owen, SGRD3).

Owen's words imply that extended periods of reading in class were perceived as 'dead time'. i.e. worthless, before the opportunity for reading of academic articles and reflection with peers on the reading process. Where Owen describes an increased focus on students' personal response to text as a change in the early interview, he clarifies this in the follow up interview at the end of the first term:

I have been much more confident around being open with students about my own emotional response to what I am reading them. I have used this as a way of opening out a wider discussion around male emotional literacy. I am also more conscious of talking to students about why I have chosen the texts that they are reading. While engaged in the rapid reading of texts, my conversations with students (especially in KS3 and my mixed-ability Y9 group) tend to be much more focused on their own responses to the texts, how they are making meaning and how they are predicting future events and "reaching back" to earlier parts of the novels (Owen, II.1).

Yet, in the final discussion at the end of the two years, Owen said that foregrounding students' emotional and personal response to a text was 'something that I always do because that's what made me love English as a student. Inevitably you teach with yourself in mind a bit, don't you?' Owen has reconnected with early hunches here, and his early beliefs about English as a subject. It may be that these had been suppressed or distorted due to the policy and institutional preferences that have generated internalised discourses over the years. The longitudinal opportunity for professional development and deep critical reflection has enabled these internalised discourses to be challenged. Beliefs have been reconstituted and reconceptualised, so that when asked explicitly about reading teaching Owen said that he is doing 'Nothing new,' (II.2) though he qualified this by explaining:

I'm maybe more conscious of why I did things and I maybe make more of a point of doing some of the things that I have always done anyway. So a lot of it is trying to make the text part of their world, and trying to make their [students'] world part of the text, so constantly this building of bridges which I think I always did but I think I am more conscious of it now because I can see why you do it, I can see the value of doing it (Owen, II.2).

Owen repeats the word 'conscious' and perhaps begins to acknowledge his debt to the theoretical journey he has been on as a result of his engagement with the literature he has read; he knows 'why' he should teach in a particular way. Perhaps when learning is really profound, even the most reflective teachers are not able to articulate it because they do not really know it is happening; schematized and theoretical knowledge can become self-evident (Korthagen 2010). Or perhaps it is tapping into something much earlier, that was there before but has been reawakened, which appears to be the case with Owen. This kind of embodied tacit knowledge, of knowing more than can be articulated (Altrichter et al., 1993), brings tension and contradiction when, through critical reflection, teacher-researcher participants challenge internalised discourses of individualism, which may be operating to make Owen deny the role of his collaboration with peers. This kind of experiential learning (Heron & Reason, 2011) seems to have become a lived experience for the participating teachers, who display a tendency towards being so 'engrossed in their everyday world, so engaged in the moment, that they forget that they are part of an inquiry, and their experiential knowing reverts to becoming almost completely tacit' (ibid., p15). Heron & Reason (2011) also explore ways that in its propositional form, knowing may easily become reified as knowledge, forming 'regimes of truth which create our reality' (ibid., p38). These regimes of truth seem to have been so powerfully constructed that teachers' conceptual models appear to them to have *always* existed that way: a process of negotiating multiple stances along the process of transformative learning 'in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one's (working) life' (Lee & Schallert, 2016. p74). The iterative synthesis of knowledge across four dimensions is perhaps what makes it so difficult to gauge how, when and why learning is happening. Teachers who were clearly identifying, reflecting and reporting a change in their practice after the first year of intervention, subsequently considered that these same changes were things that they had 'always' done, or an extension of something that they had always done. Teaching is such a routinised, physical act, performed over time and repeated many times so that knowledge or changes in practice accumulate unconsciously through even the smallest changes of actions. Though some of the changes were sizeable, unfamiliar knowledge had been embodied. Arguably, this playing down of change may also be linked to the kinds of internalised discourse which stem from individualism and is a result of our neoliberal

culture and of a performative education system, which generally encourages teachers to compete as individuals rather than to collaborate as a community (Biesta, 2010; Fielding & Moss, 2011). Moreover, the experience of collaborative learning with longevity is unfamiliar in an educational climate which insists on continuously measuring impact.

5.1.5 Theme 5 – Teacher resistance to theory: ‘I’m not really doing any of that theory stuff’ (Philippa, II.2) – while generating theories

Preconceptions formed by teacher’s apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) inform pedagogy unconsciously. These educational and epistemological beliefs influence teaching practice and knowledge acquisition in pivotal ways (Pajares, 1992). Consequently, theory always underpins teachers’ actions in the classroom. How teachers approach the teaching of reading is driven by the theories that they hold regarding how children learn to read, whether they are consciously aware of them or not (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Giroux (2020) is concerned with the ways that teachers interact with the knowledge they use and the often unexamined reality that underpins pedagogy. Examining the reality, foregrounding the theory, being open and explicit about the theoretical perspectives that were in place for individual teachers, and acknowledging that practice is never neutral, were each ideas central to the project. Yet it was another critical incident which showed how problematic this might be. In the first of the individual interviews conducted with teachers, Philippa was describing some of the things she had been doing recently with different KS3 and KS4 classes in relation to reading. Her classroom sounded awash with rich reading ideas. ‘So can you tell me which theories and research you think have inspired you the most?’ I asked. There was a long silence. After a moment, she said:

Well, no. I’m not really doing (*pause*) any of that theory stuff (Philippa, II.1).

The question seemed restrictive and shut down a conversation that had been lively and energetic just moments before. In many ways, I was sorry that I had asked it. The pause

before ‘theory’ and the reductive ‘stuff’ were telling. But Philippa *was*, clearly, in the enthusiastic descriptions she had offered just a few moments before, applying a mixture of all sorts of concepts that I had recognised as perhaps being grounded in some of our SGRDs and in our readings. While many teachers are not consciously aware of the theories that drive their practice and ‘may or may not be able to explicitly describe them’ (Tracey & Morrow 2017, p. 2), this seemed to be a more active resistance towards doing so. Once I was alerted to this ‘resistance’, it became something that I witnessed repeatedly in the study: the apparent dichotomy between theory and practice as constructed by the teachers involved; the perception of an ‘unbridgeable’ divide. Even when we were actively discussing theory in collaborative ways in the dialogic space created in the SGRDs there was a tendency to move away from theoretical language, and instead root discussion in concrete examples of classroom practice and teaching anecdotes. This happened repeatedly, and almost immediately, in any discussion type: both the SGRDs and the individual interviews. Phrases from the literature that might be deemed academic or theoretical were frequently revised into simpler terms, or rejected outright. In the second study-group discussion, for example, I asked about the notion of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation for readers. Extrinsic motivation was immediately re-categorised as ‘the providing-rewards thing’ by Nathan (SGRD2), which was then retained as a way of referencing the idea by the other teachers in the discussion that followed. Teacher-researchers were reluctant to describe themselves as ‘enacting’ theory, or at least unwilling to name it as such, even when it was evident that they were doing just that. There was an aversion to using academic and theoretical language, even when pedagogical changes as a result of reading theory and research were manifest in the classroom observations. I counted more than thirty examples of moments across the SGRDs where it appeared that academic or theoretical language was rejected or deflected in some way, contrasting with only a handful of times where there was an easier acceptance of the language. Instead, there was a reinterpretation, or an appropriation of the theory into language that was more familiar. Rowena, in response to a discussion about the dichotomy between a pleasure versus a utilitarian approach to literacy described it thus:

You mean hiding sprouts underneath the mashed potatoes (Rowena, SGRD3).

Rowena used the idiom to explain the concept, but also perhaps to avoid using what might be deemed academic vocabulary. Philippa deliberately mispronounced the theorist Piaget to make light of some references and maybe to appear less learned:

I know all these names, like Pidgit (Philippa, SRGD4).

Furthermore, when exploring the use of a graphic organiser to potentially support world-building according to text-world theory, Bridget joked:

Why would you send a text to yourself, the book and the world? (Bridget, SGRD5).

Bridget seemed to be offering a comic misreading of the task, in a similar manner to Philippa's 'Pidgit' reference. They each seemed to make light of and perhaps subvert the theoretical references, even though they were taking the 'work' of exploring reading in the classroom very seriously. There were only occasional moments where the language of different articles was embraced. In SGRD2, Owen responded to the reading of Fletcher et al., (2011), by declaring:

A phrase I really liked was 'positive self-concept' of the reader (Owen, SGRD2).

Owen went on to explain that this was a useful way of categorising attitudes towards reading amongst his students; however, this was a rare example. The tendency was much more towards reframing and repurposing the language. The language of theory and academic research did not seem to arise easily or naturally for the teachers during the PAR, occurring only when it was probed in interview questioning and discussion. The perceived resistance was initially all the more surprising since to become 'more theorized' was one of the things that we had, collectively, agreed to try and do: to support and encourage each other towards the articulation of a theory-based reading pedagogy, including the recognition that, in this process, we were likely to generate further theory from practice. Each of the participating teachers reported feeling increased confidence in developing students' reading in the classroom; nevertheless, all had to be coaxed to articulate these ideas clearly and shied away from directly using the academic language of the theorists that we had read. What seemed to be happening was

that teachers rejected the academic terminology itself rather than necessarily the theories behind it. The data suggest that there is, perhaps, a need for teachers to reappropriate the theory and its metalanguage as a way of relearning and absorbing it, as in Rowena's comment about 'hiding the sprouts under the mashed potatoes' above (Rowena, SGRD4). Given the systematic de-skilling of teachers (Giroux, 2020; Gibbons, 2017) resulting in the discouragement to engage with theory, it is perhaps less surprising that they lack confidence and feel unable to embrace it when suddenly asked to do so. The movement from gestalt to conscious schema (Korthagen, 2010), appeared to be regularly enacted by teacher participants in the PAR study, and reported during study-group discussions: ideas being explored within a theoretical reading would be instantly 'translated' into classroom situations. For example, in SGRD4 discussion was stimulated by a reading of Benton (1992) in which he states that his principal concern is to theorize about the nature of classroom practices in order to come closer to understanding the kinds of aesthetic experiences that are shared in reading classrooms. He argues that unless teachers 'develop a working theory of why we do what we do with books, we have no sure grounding for knowing how to transfer our approaches from one text or class to another' (1992, p. 6). Such a working theory may just arise from practice, or from practice, deepened by theory. The study group went on, in that particular session, to read the 'reading paradoxes' (ibid.) Benton identified and we used our reflective journals to consider the nature of these paradoxes. When the writing time was complete and the group moved into the dialogic phase, Owen explained where his reflection had taken him, illustrating evidence of the way he was indeed generating theories about reading:

Even today I had my Year 8, for the last time before their exam, and I just read the first chapter from *Jaws* to [students] and got them to talk about why it was so brilliant and actually it was interesting reading some of this stuff [academic literature] because I was reading the bit where she gets her leg bitten off and you could see them all tensing up in their faces and at the end it was really nice to kind of go 'I've just been reading marks from a page to you - why are you all being so weird about this' - and then you get them to reflect on the magic of reading (Owen, SGRD4).

Owen is encouraging his students to experience an intensive reading experience, then to disrupt this by confronting them with the idea that all they are doing is a mechanical process of decoding 'marks on a page', in order to force them to reflect on the power or

'magic' of reading; that is, for them to appreciate that reading arouses strong emotions, and causes readers to experience vicariously the experiences of the characters, to enter such a vivid imaginative reality that their bodies and facial expressions suggest that they are embodying the characters' experiences and emotions: 'you could see them all tensing up their faces'. Moreover, Owen has shifted his style of 'revision' lesson to incorporate himself reading aloud rather than a written 'practice' response. Not only this, but the reading part of the process dominates the writing-revision lesson as he reads the entire first chapter from the novel, bringing in a reading that has not typically been part of the scheme of work during the summer term. He then uses discussion to enable students to elicit ideas about the reading. He alludes specifically to the power of the SGRD design to incorporate reading and reflection, 'it was interesting reading some of this stuff'. Owen is making explicit reference here to the first two of Benton's paradoxes: reading a story is both detached and committed, and entails belief in an acknowledged illusion, drawing on Koestler's notion of 'bisociation' (1992, p. 15-17). Owen clearly applies this paradox to a recent classroom moment, but significantly, manages to avoid using any reference to the words he has just read on the page, even with the Benton chapter on the desk in front of him and his own notes made just moments before to refer to, preferring instead to describe such academic literature as 'this stuff'. Yet for Owen to decide it is more important the lesson before his students' examination to read with his students and enable them to enjoy the 'magic of reading' (rather than any last minute 'teaching to the test' that he could be doing) suggests that he is, in fact, generating and utilising theories of reading. It shows how his approach to examination preparation is much more holistic and bound up in an immersive response to the narrative. It was a pattern that was repeated in each study-group session. Alongside it came apology. Philippa, for example, claimed she did not feel as 'well-read as I should be around all this' alongside teachers acknowledging that they felt fraudulent in inhabiting unfamiliar space: circumventing language that 'didn't belong' (Philippa, II.2) to them, and repeatedly perceiving themselves as outsiders when discussing academic theory, even theory that relates to their pedagogical domain.

However, the classroom observations tell a different story. They suggest that teachers were constantly assimilating new information within existing ideas, and turning theory into practice, even if they were rejecting the outward designation of them by name. The

classroom observations offer examples of that absorption of theory in practice: Joshua's careful construction of a shared reading environment at the start of his lesson, 'We're in a good position to read now', his metacognitive modelling of his own role as a reader to the students in the instruction to 'do what I do', his instructions to students to work with a section 'that has significance for you', as well as his explicit questioning for comprehension, for example (Joshua, LO2). Each of these aspects seems to be derived from the reading, reflection and discussion that took place in the SGRDs. Owen invited his students to identify objects representing the characters that they were reading about, followed by peer-to-peer discussion where one student said, 'Marco's like a Jack in the box who gets wound up and snaps at the end' (Owen, LO1). His classroom was a dialogic space where strategies for visualisation were encouraged and student response was privileged over an authoritative 'teacher' reading of the text. Rowena also offered students a section from their novel which was pre-colour-coded to show which character was speaking at any time (Rowena, LO1), akin to a highlighted script, and perhaps building on Iser's (1980) theory about the limited repertoire of signals offered to a reader of a text.

Only when impelled to relate their practice to theory explicitly were teachers able to make some of the following (very few) claims. In some of her final reflections, Rowena commented that she was 'interested' in Benton's paradoxes as a way of understanding what happens when we read, while Bridget and Joshua both honed in on ideas surrounding 'schema':

What I have taken away is the importance of understanding individual student schema as far as possible, because sections of text do not allow for the real building up of reading holistically . . . in addition the semantic language fields rooted in classical literature and the various liturgies are rarely, if ever, now embedded in our students' schema (Bridget, II.1).

I am now more aware of how and why to consider theories surrounding schema when teaching. I try to help students create mental nets that will help them to retain and categorise fields of information (Joshua, II.2).

Joshua's conceptualisation of 'mental nets' suggests that a logical ordering has been constructed between conscious schemata which has then been connected into coherent theory. He has arrived from his practice at a 'theory' that students need to make

connections with their lives and a text and his articulation of this idea suggests a deeper understanding of the importance of this from a cognitive perspective. It also recalls the notion of mental models of texts whereby readers have to infer and fill in the gaps constantly, applying world and personal and intertextual knowledge in order to comprehend a narrative (Cushing, 2017; Kintsch, 1998); though perhaps in the long term Joshua will remain more comfortable with his own term 'mental nets' than the academic language surrounding schema theories. This perhaps suggests that there is a more fluid process occurring here than Korthagen's (2010) three-part structure suggests, of shifting *between* working theories generated by the teachers. These working theories are continually enriched by going back into the classroom and experimenting, as evinced in Heron & Reason's (2011) conceptualisation of the virtuous circle.

In the latter stages of the data collection, teacher-researchers showed further signs of shaking off their reluctance towards the metalanguage of theory. Owen explained:

My teaching is now more consciously and explicitly focused on a reader-response approach to texts and in encouraging students to think and talk about how they are making meaning from what they read (Owen, II.2).

Owen finally seems more comfortable applying the term 'reader-response' (Iser, 1980) to his pedagogical position, a term which had been encountered during the reading of Benton (1992) and discussed in other SGRDs. Moreover, Philippa perhaps went the furthest when she specifically acknowledged 'text-world theory' and how it had begun to 'underpin' her teaching. In an interview towards the end of the project, Philippa further explained that she was increasingly conscious of moments:

where my teaching IS grounded in theory. Although my preoccupation has been engagement, I realise also the need for these to be challenging texts. Part of this is due to the demands of the curriculum. Using aspects of text-world theory I am keen to find 'ways in' to texts which are grounded in the experiences of students but also see that texts, for example *Now is the Time for Running* can help develop wider world views using the text as a vehicle. I am also more actively beginning with writing rather than reading to explore notions of reading through writing or as a springboard which might support the reading that follows (Philippa, II.2).

This interview took place almost two years after the first study group discussion, and Philippa is, albeit using the language reluctantly, able to articulate some of the changes which have taken place in her teaching from a theoretical perspective. Philippa is using a range of strategies to engage students personally with the text, and identified this as her 'preoccupation'; at the same time she recognised the way in which she was able to actively support students with the world knowledge necessary to the act of reading through the sharing of meta-cognitive strategies. However, she is more comfortable talking about how in the classroom:

we talk about the reading process a lot more (Philippa, II.2).

Philippa described a literal change to emphasise the increased focus on metacognitive processes. Teachers engaging with research findings elsewhere in the UK seem to find similar 'surface' resistance to theory. A recent NFER briefing which summarised findings from a nationally representative survey of 1,670 schools and teachers similarly found that academic research has a relatively small perceived impact on teachers' decision-making, relative to other sources, even though teachers generally have positive dispositions towards research (Walker et al., 2019). Instead, teachers are 'most likely to draw on their own expertise, or that of their colleagues, when making decisions about teaching and learning or whole-school change' (ibid., p. 6). There are a number of reasons why the impact on teachers might be 'perceived' as small. Wiliam (2019) suggests that one of the reasons that this might be the case is that teachers spend the majority of their working lives and working days isolated from contact with other professionals: they are predominantly alone in the classroom when teaching. Perhaps there is a resulting sense that it is teachers who have the more authentic knowledge since they are the ones who are 'on the ground' or 'at the chalk face'. What could the researchers and theorists know or add to their experiential knowledge?

Although some European countries, such as Finland, possess a greater historical tradition and resulting expectation that 'pedagogy' includes theory (Crehan, 2017; Hudson & Schneuwely, 2007; Sahlberg & Walker, 2021), this is more of a contested area in the UK. Teaching is often perceived as *doing* (where theory is *thinking*) and, ultimately, teachers have to 'do'. Pedagogy is often therefore perceived as a collection of

teacher practices largely dissociated from theory. The combination of subject knowledge with theoretical understanding which incorporates an epistemological dimension is foregrounded far less than the practical business of being in the classroom. Sherrington (2017, p. 46) for example, contends that for most of his professional career he was ‘doing teaching’ without properly engaging in any of the central debates that may have helped to shape a philosophy of teaching. This detached approach seems to be cultivated from the very beginning of the teachers’ careers, and awareness of this was ever-present in the SGRD data. Teachers were openly critical of the amount and type of initial training they recalled in relating to the teaching of reading. Bridget said:

Do you know, I think I’ve only had an hour of professional training that hasn’t been generated you know, by us wanting to do it [independently]. I probably haven’t had much more than that, on my teacher training. I remember having one guided reading session which, frankly, was just cranky, sorry whoever it was: it wasn’t terribly good (Bridget, SGRD2).

Bridget had entered the profession less than a decade ago, but could only remember a ‘cranky’ guided reading session to amount for all her training in reading. Joshua had a recollection of the ways in which his ITE maintained a focus on generic rather than subject specific pedagogy:

I think my teacher training was 95% behaviour management, so of the 5% left over I think we probably did like a half day, I remember, of teaching poetry, a half day in the whole course, and a half day of introducing a novel. That was it (Joshua, SGRD2).

Joshua’s entry to the profession was more recent than Bridget’s, but his introduction to reading pedagogy amounts to two ‘half’ days, suggesting that it was not prioritised, or at least not in his perception of what was important. Rowena remembered doing a single reading seminar during her training year, which was voluntary, on a Saturday, for ‘one afternoon’ (Rowena, SGRD2). Philippa likewise claimed:

I don’t remember anything on . . . you know on actually encouraging reading for enjoyment or reading for pleasure. Actually, it was strictly the teaching of particular texts (Philippa, SGRD2).

Without a firm theoretical basis for the teaching of reading in their initial training, teachers have been required to create their own working theories about reading. (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Through this PAR, teachers were able to take steps towards bridging the theory-practice nexus to create firmer foundations on which to build.

5.1.6 Theme 6 – Courage and consciousness: ‘A year ago I don’t think I’d have had the confidence’ (Owen, II3)

In spite of the perceived resistance to the metalanguage of theory discussed above, this project *did* begin to shift the pattern and perception of the teachers’ own professional autonomy. Participating teachers reported increased confidence in their pedagogy surrounding reading teaching. Not only was an increased sense of empowerment, agency and ‘ownership’ in the classroom communicated directly by teachers, there were frequent allusions made to consciousness and confidence across the data. Often this was directly linked with the realigning or reconciling of tensions that had been previously observed between teaching beliefs and approaches on the one hand, and the restrictions of the system in which the teachers were operating on the other; restrictions that were often articulated in terms of timetabling and curriculum constraints, internal and external examination pressures, and political influences. Jeffries (1996) considers that teachers are able to respond more actively to changes through ‘creative mediation’ of policy when they are used to critically reflecting and finding solutions to problems where their values do not align with those of policy.

Teachers repeatedly referred to increased confidence in elements of their practice. The word ‘confident’ or ‘confidence’ appears 32 times at different points in the interview data and suggests the activation of agency; the active contribution to the shaping of their work and its conditions (Biesta, 2015). Philippa, for example, uses it most often in relation to a general perception about her approaches in the classroom. She describes ‘some’ increased confidence in her own abilities and decisions in relation to the teaching of reading more generally at the end of the first term:

It's a confidence in feeling that the things that you are doing are working, but also having the confidence to try out strategies (Philippa, II.1)

Philippa reflects that the confidence comes from assurance in the theoretical understanding of her practice and the way it is consciously framed, but also that this platform enables further experimentation. She explains that the process of professional development has been:

Really important . . . [for] . . . building confidence in terms of understanding how we read (Philippa, II.3).

Philippa's comments here acknowledge the fundamental conceptual shifts that have taken place within her own pedagogical framework. Owen likewise makes reference to feeling higher levels of confidence multiple times, and in each case gives a specific example:

I don't think a year ago I don't think I'd have had the confidence to say I'm giving over half an hour of our key stage four lesson JUST to reading (Owen, II.3).

I have been much more confident around being open with students about my own emotional response to what I am reading them (Owen, II.1).

As a result of participating in the project Owen is prepared to devote more classroom time to reading, and to cultivate longer periods of uninterrupted reading time. He also cites confidence in relation to factors which acknowledge the social nature of reading and foreground the significance of his own reader identity in framing pedagogic practice, suggesting movement towards a greater reciprocity in his classroom through his own 'openness' with students.

Perhaps most revealing of all were some of Rowena's comments in her final interview about spending more time reading in her lessons.

If a member of SLT [Senior Leadership Team] walked in I'd be able to explain that I was part of the [study group discussion] sessions last year. We had a lot of discussion surrounding it. And I know what I'm doing. It's not that [written] work isn't going to take place, but actually we want [students] to enjoy it as well.

And better work is bound to come out of that. [Students are] going to want to write well about it (Rowena, II.2).

Rowena seems to have acquired a kind of courage, a way of 'defending' her classroom actions that she did not possess previously. Enhanced teaching confidence, derived from deepened knowledge about reading processes and practices, has enabled the teacher-researchers to make informed decisions about how they conduct their lessons, in spite of perceived policy and institutional pressures. It seems that the combination of the individual teacher journey, within a framework of collaboration over time, offers a powerful form of CPD.

6 DATA FINDINGS: PEDAGOGIC CHANGES

In addition to capturing a snapshot of the reading culture and exploring the way that teachers learned, a further element of this research project was to consider what happens in the classroom as a result of a critical pedagogy model of professional development. Practice altered when teachers spent time reading theory and research, and experienced dialogic and written opportunities to reflect on the reading, explore the reading process, and individually and collaboratively consider what implications new information and ideas might have for the classroom. This chapter explores the ways that change was manifest: in the way that teachers considered their own practice to be affected and augmented, and also through lesson observation to capture ways in which the enactment of the results of this kind of critical pedagogy was revealed. For each of the participants there was evidence of clear pedagogical shifts through some significant changes in relation to classroom practice. A number of key themes emerged that were consistent across the data-sets, germane to changes in the classroom. These can be summarised as:

- Increasing the amount of time spent reading in lessons
- Increasing regularity of teachers reading aloud
- Finding innovative ways to conduct whole class reading
- Foregrounding narrative experience in reading lessons
- Prioritising personal response in relation to narrative
- Creating innovative ways for reading and responding to a novel

At the end of Year 1, in the final SGRD meeting, the teacher participants in the PAR group created a reading ‘manifesto’ for the teaching of reading. The manifesto emerged from what teachers considered to be the most important ideas arising from the reading, thinking and discussion that they had undertaken together as a group. In compiling these ideas, it was noted that they were habits and practices to aspire to: a kind of smörgåsbord of routines and ideals to choose from, and was compiled at the end of the SGRD phase of the research. The suggestions are below, with the revised order included in Appendix 10.

- Use reading autobiographies to encourage students to reflect on their own reading journeys and make sense of their attitudes towards reading and current reading habits.
- Increase the overall amount of time spent reading during class time.
- Link reading and writing more explicitly in teaching episodes.
- Undertake 'faster reads' (Westbrook et al, 2019, p.60) so that narrative is the driving force when students first encounter a text.
- Extend use of graphic organisers (rather than extended written responses) during this phase of reading, prioritising understanding before analysis.
- Teach and model strategies explicitly to show students 'process'; what reading looks like - confusions and all.
- Encourage self-monitoring of comprehension through techniques such as summarising, questioning, predicting.
- Invite students to reflect on the complexities of reading themselves - allow students to reflect on the narrative contract offered between reader and writer, and encourage them to identify their relationship with the storyworld - perhaps explicitly identifying the moment of 'entry' into fictional world in different texts.
- Make access visible, perhaps by not keeping an 'obvious' record of book distribution for class readers and giving away 'old' departmental books for students to keep.
- Articulate a clear reading approach and pedagogy in order to demonstrate understanding of classroom practice.

Teachers were given freedom to choose which of these aspects they wanted to prioritise, but there was shared commitment towards all adopting the final bullet point, aiming to be able to identify and articulate a clear reading approach and pedagogy. Collectively, this represented some of the practices that teachers aspired to, a kind of checklist of reminders. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that some of these appeared in what was observed from teachers' practice, to a greater or lesser extent. It is also interesting to note that some of the ideas were directly related to the kinds of activity that had taken place for participating teachers themselves during the SGRDs, such as exploring reading 'histories' through autobiographical reflection and considering the complexities of reading. The final bullet point was perhaps the one

which underpins all the others and which teachers expressed the greatest difficulty with, as explored in 5.1.5.

6.1.1 Increasing the amount of time spent reading in lessons

How much time students should spend on the process and act of reading itself in English lessons is an interesting question. English as a subject is broadly composed of reading, writing, and speaking and listening. The National Curriculum programme for English (DfE, 2014) gives no guidelines for how much time, proportionally, should be spent on each. Therefore, arguably a third of the amount of lesson time devoted to reading might be reasonable to assume. At KS4, 50% of an English Language GCSE is awarded for 'reading' and 50% for 'writing', though reading is 'measured' through a written response. At Readborough College, students in both key stages have eight fifty-minute English lessons timetabled in a fortnight, a total of 400 minutes. During the discussion in SGRD2, participating teachers were asked to estimate and then record how much time they spent actively reading over an average fortnight with their classes (figure 6.1). The group discussed different kinds of reading (such as the teacher reading aloud, whole class shared reading, small group, individual, guided reading). These different ways of reading were considered both in relation to a class reader and in the practice of reading of extracts for study; as well as in relation to any lesson time that may be apportioned to independent wider reading 'for pleasure'. Our perceptions of how much time was allocated to reading varied considerably, between teachers and from lesson to lesson, but typically, when teachers reported their results, it became clear that at KS3, extended reading time for a class reader took place primarily during the first term of the year, when approximately a quarter of each lesson might be devoted to reading before moving onto discussion, comprehension and longer written responses. In term two of the academic year, a small number of newspaper articles and shorter non-fiction items would be read, though it amounted to less than one tenth of the lesson time in a week. In term three of the academic year, around a third of lesson time would be spent in reading a Shakespeare play, and some poetry, with the rest of the lesson time involving activities related to the reading in some way. It was difficult to accurately establish

precisely how many minutes a fortnight were spent in the act of reading, but from this approximate gauge, it seemed to amount to less than 20% of actual lesson time overall.

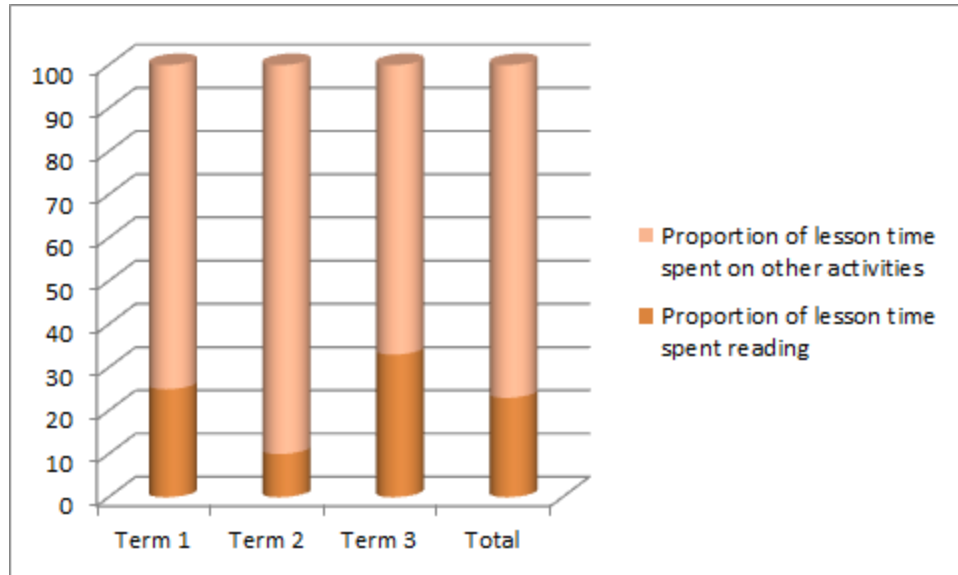


Figure 6.1: Teacher estimates of relative proportions of lesson time spent reading in KS3 as a percentage of all English lessons

Wider independent reading was even less supported in lesson-time. Monitoring of suitability, challenge and engagement for individual readers was perceived as difficult, and therefore the practice was, at best, sporadic amongst participating teacher-researchers. Extended periods of time for independent reading for pleasure had all but disappeared. There was no sense of consistency of practice between participants at the start of the project. In the first study group discussion, Rowena confessed, somewhat apologetically that, at KS3:

I don't even HAVE reading lessons. I can't get through the syllabus (Rowena, SGRD1).

Rowena appears to suggest that curriculum demands are too intense to be able to give space, time and encouragement to additional reading, and since there was no direct stipulation within departmental schemes of work (such as an allocated lesson, for example), time for reading for pleasure was given no priority. However, this was not the

only barrier to undertaking reading for pleasure in the classroom. Nathan explained that his ITE and training had even warned him explicitly to avoid extended periods of independent reading:

[We were told] don't take [students] into a library and just sit them down and make them read. Make sure that they have activities to help guide their reading. [We were] given this snakes and ladders game with instructions. You must do this - what does the character say? what does the character look like? - and then work your way through that (Nathan, SGRD2).

Nathan's use of the word 'just' here is reductive, suggesting that he has conceptualised reading independently during lesson time as an unworthy activity in its own right, based on those early training experiences that he recalls. The way he describes the snakes and ladders game seems far removed from more 'principled activities' surrounding reading (Benton, 1992, p. 50). Instead, books become 'the arbitrary occasion for the games and the gimmickry' (ibid., p. 51). While it might be useful to offer support activities that help students to enjoy their reading, comments like this suggest that various misconceptions have grown up around reading practice; indeed some that appear ill-informed based on the research evidence (Cremin, 2011; Krashen, 2011; Merga, 2015; Westbrook et al., 2019). Given the complexity of reading theory and pedagogy, and the historical void of its deep exploration for UK secondary teachers, perhaps it is not surprising that participating teacher-researchers have been working independently in the absence of any deep theoretical understanding of why independent reading matters. This complexity and absence of clear pedagogy had been compounded by internal school policy decisions at Readborough College. The value of wider independent reading had also been institutionally depreciated: the very concept of a reading or library lesson only happened regularly where class 'splits' occurred in the timetable (for example, students having seven lessons with their 'main' English teacher, and one with a second English teacher). The single, 'odd' lesson separate from the main taught lesson being dedicated to reading was a simple solution to a timetabling issue rather than an informed conceptual decision, thereby signalling implicitly that it was not as important as the other English lessons since it did not form part of the main body of study. This kind of reductive positioning of reading formed part of the hidden or unwritten curriculum within English lessons at Readborough College, at least prior to the inception of the action research.

The amount of time that participating teachers allocated to reading during lessons changed significantly, within the first term of the project, even before any collective decisions were taken about what interventions might be made. Philippa, who did not 'do' a KS3 reading lesson at all at the start, explained that just a term later she had independently decided to embed dedicated reading lessons into the English curriculum for all her classes throughout the year:

Students have chosen texts from a list of Gothic texts and either borrowed from the library or sourced copies of their own. I am also encouraging students to stick at the same book in their reading lessons and complete it before moving on to the next . . . for some students the only reading that they do is during their dedicated reading lessons (Philippa, II.2).

A few phrases here indicate Philippa's changed understanding. Referencing the formation of 'habits of reading' which 'many students don't have' suggests an indication of her appreciation of teachers needing to devote time and space to students' reading, while acknowledging the diverse experiences of children from different backgrounds, some of whom may arrive with no prior enculturation in reading.

By taking time to consider and reflect upon the value of independent reading and opportunities offered for reading in English lessons, teachers consciously made more space for independent reading. Owen articulated his own change in position at the end of the first year of the project:

[Now] We do free reading lessons where [students] bring in their own books and I have books up there [indicating the shelves] and I will recommend and let them choose their own (Owen, II.2).

In addition to offering increased time for students to read, Owen is cognisant of the need to provide access to books, free choice and alluding to the importance of teachers being knowledgeable readers themselves as an active part of the reading community they are creating: readers who can recommend books based on prior knowledge of both texts and students.

In the student focus group interviews, some students expressed appreciation at being offered reading time. Tara (a student in Owen's class) said:

I think I used to do like literally no reading. But I think now I read quite a lot in class. It's good. But I don't think I would read independently (Tara, OFG2).

Tara acknowledges the positive shift, 'it's good', but also that this class allocated reading time remains her only form of independent reading. Returning to the teacher perspective, Joshua insisted that he was offering opportunities for wider reading to his classes 'more often' and Rowena described her renewed enthusiasm and determination:

to bring back just reading for enjoyment (Rowena, II.2),

which she does 'often' by the end of the year with her KS3 groups, advocating free choice and the opportunity to respond simply in reflective reading journals that she has introduced with them.

Interestingly, time spent reading also increased for the practice of whole-class reading, both in the first term of KS3 (devoted to two class readers, according to existing internal departmental schemes of work) and through the other units across the year that related to non-fiction writing, and Shakespeare and poetry.

Philippa described:

A greater emphasis on whole class reading which students respond positively to and has created an atmosphere where books are talked about (Philippa, II.2).

This shift was reinforced in a reflective journal entry where she wrote that:

I probably encourage more discussion of reading and talk to the students more personally about books that they or I are reading (Philippa, J.27.3.17).

An 'atmosphere where books are talked about' indicates increased engagement with whole class and individual reading. Philippa is also illustrating the importance of combining silent reading with reading as a social process, in which books are explored dialogically, by enthusiastic communities of readers in a similar way to Owen's earlier point about himself as a reader, as well as sharing aspects of her reading self 'more

personally'. Owen also reported that he had noticed a significant impact in terms of engagement and motivation:

there's been moments in those lessons where you really do feel like . . . like [the students] are all in it. They're all fully . . . for quite a lot of them you do feel them being absolutely drawn in by it and it's been lovely and I don't think a year ago I don't think I'd have had the confidence to say I'm giving over half an hour of our lesson just to reading (Owen, II.2).

Reading in greater quantity has changed Owen's approach to the teaching of writing as well as of reading. Increased time spent in whole class reading seemed to have been a revelation and he explained how he uses reading to inform creative writing much more systematically than before.

In the past every time I've taught creative writing it's been really sort of dry and mechanical - ok here's the picture, write five sentences, start each one a different way - but for lots of this creative writing unit I've just read to [students] first . . . even the lesson on Friday I just brought in three pieces of writing and I thought, just read these and think about ways in which you can basically just nick what these writers are doing - they were all pieces of writing that focused on a very small period of time but described in lots of detail (Owen, SGRD4).

Owen's words illustrate understanding of engaged, whole-text reading and the way in which it develops both the linguistic resources and the narrative structures that are essential for writing (Barrs & Cork, 2001). Reading is used as a tool to model approaches to the writing process so that students are encouraged to read as writers and write as readers.

During SGRD3 (which took place during the second term of the year), Bridget summarised the way all types of reading have increased:

I'm allowing more time for class reading, as it sounds as though lots of people are, plus them reading independently so there is just more reading going on, definitely (Bridget, SGRD3).

Although the overall increase in time spent reading is difficult to accurately quantify, the teachers' perceptions of increased time spent reading were borne out by the classroom observations, with the amount of time spent in all forms of reading increasing by an

average of six minutes per lesson between the first and second lesson observations for each teacher, or an increase of more than 10% of time overall.

6.1.2 Increasing regularity of teachers reading aloud

In addition to an increase in the amount of lesson time allocated to reading during and following the study, one particular kind of reading emerged as a dominant mode and significant change from prior practice. All participating teachers reported an increase in the frequency and amount of time that they spent reading aloud to students in their classes. Reading aloud was a key component of the Faster Read study (Westbrook et al., 2019). The idea was explored in some depth in SGRD2, following the shared reading of an article by Fletcher et al. (2011). Outlining the close alignment between attitudes towards reading and reading achievement, the teacher reading text aloud to the whole class was presented as a ‘a popular and consistent part of the daily reading programme’ (ibid., p. 8). Participating teachers’ familiarity with the texts that they were reading, use of intonation, expression and ability to portray characterisation were also recommended strategies. In the discussion that followed this reading, Rowena said that prior to the research she used reading aloud as a strategy very occasionally, but only with classes where:

students can’t read [aloud] very well. So, do you know when they’re reading and it’s very broken up or it’s taking them an awful long time to read, so that it can sometimes take away from the story (Rowena, SGRD2).

Rowena initially only used the strategy in a compensatory way when she deemed that students’ own reading affected narrative coherence. Synthesising meaning across a text through the construction of mental models is certainly far harder to achieve through halting readings done by peers. At the next session, Nathan observed:

since we’ve started having these conversations I seem to be reading a lot more in the class (Nathan, SGRD3).

This change was echoed by other participants, though there was some resistance from others in the initial stages who felt the article described an intervention primarily aimed at younger pupils. However, there is evidence of this practice in research in the

secondary context. For example, a relationship between listening to a reading and developing both fluency and comprehension has been established by Westbrook et al., (2019). Reading aloud also enables students to read 'up', in the sense of accessing texts that might otherwise not be accessible (Williams, 2021). Yet it was not always a straightforward transition. Joshua expressed his mixed feelings about the process:

I was thinking . . . about reading aloud to the class and this is just a question, I suppose I'm never sure. I know that they as a class enjoy it more when I read than when they read to each other and I actually notice, particularly in that Year 8 class, most of them will start doing this (mimes opening and reading a book). . . and then start to look at me and then the book goes out of the hand . . . and then I always think, I'm not sure whether to say, 'Pick the book up and follow along' but . . . because I don't know if they're . . . like, does that count? . . . they're not learning to read but I dunno, it always . . . I never know what to do in that situation and I always feel bad because even kids who say 'I don't like reading' and then they're in it for a moment and then I say 'pick up the book' and then they're like, 'oh I hate English' (Joshua, II.1).

The large number of long pauses in Joshua's speech indicate his hesitancy in speaking; as a relatively new teacher to the profession, Joshua seemed to be wrestling with something he has observed and understands tacitly: that the class 'enjoy it more' when he is reading. This acknowledgement offers a glimpse, perhaps, of the reign of a 'modest kind of communal rapture', experienced in such readings aloud (Mangan, 2018, p. 215). However, Joshua's anxiety seems to stem from the idea that if he was doing the work of reading then it must mean that the individual students in the class were not, and this clearly troubles him: he seemed to question the validity of the practice in terms of student learning. Yet there is a strong relationship between oral comprehension and reading comprehension (Barrs & Cork, 2001; Cliff-Hodges, 2011; Fletcher et al. 2011; Oakhill et al. 2014). Reading aloud is helpful in developing vocabulary and as a powerful way of supporting fluency and comprehension for students who are able to physically see how the graphical representation on the page matches the aural counterpart, and how that in turn relates to the meaning (Oakhill et al., 2014). Joshua's hesitancy is a good example of a moment of recognition of a tension between affective beliefs and new cognitive knowledge. Later he articulates this more fully:

[knowing more about reading] feels good, but for some reason, maybe it's the heart-head thing again, my head used to tell me that in those situations [reading

aloud to students] isn't good for them . . . so it changed the way I think about that (II.1)

Joshua also made some subtle points about motivation, here, too. Witnessing a reluctant reader absorbed in the story seems to make him want to turn a blind eye to their not following in the text for the sake of reading motivation. And motivation, as established, is highly correlated with comprehension (Wigfield et al., 2008; Unrau & Quirk, 2014; McGeown et al., 2015). If reading is about being able to enter the imaginative world of the book, then there is a strong argument for expressive readings by the teacher. At the level Joshua is discussing, reading is also a creative act, a way of interpreting the world, of understanding oneself in the world, one's relationships with others, different perspectives, emotions, politics, history, culture. Teachers therefore need to be able to make judgments on what, of all the above, to prioritise at a given moment. If a struggling and disengaged reader is rapt and 'in it for a moment' just listening, Joshua sensed that this may be worth valuing over insistence that the student simply follows the text, perhaps less meaningfully, without looking up from the book during reading time in a given lesson. In his final individual interview he was very conscious of the way in which this specific aspect of his practice has changed:

I read more to the students...I read more to classes (Joshua, II.2).

By the final stages of the project the practice of reading aloud was firmly embedded into practice not just by Joshua, but by all the teacher-researchers, even those who were sceptical at first and considered it more appropriate to primary age pupils. Philippa noted it particularly as one of the significant changes to her pedagogy:

I read, they read, everybody will read a bit of the book. But I'm doing a lot more of me reading aloud (Philippa, II.3).

Moreover, Bridget described the value of reading examination texts to KS4 students, in a way that she had never consciously done before:

It's worked well, in that I entirely read *War of the Worlds* to them, and I entirely read *Animal Farm*; speed-reading I did it in four lessons - the whole novel. Because I had read *War of the Worlds* to them they were so receiving of that idea that I was going to do it that they took it at speed and they all sat, this is, you

know the class I'm talking about, they all sat for the full lessons for most of the time and listened to it and as a result, they have now all actually read the novel and not in the way that they were expecting to. I have got students who know what the plot is, and can discuss it. They like the books and they've all got huge, huge recall now. They're very, very clued in to it. And I never would have done that before (Bridget, SGRD3).

Bridget has transferred her learning, demonstrated in the way that she has changed practice from one context (her research class) to another (all her classes, including GCSE). This is further evidence of deep, embedded learning. She also shows great knowledge here about why the kind of speed reading associated with Faster Read (Westbrook et al., 2019) has the effect it does in creating a mental model to achieve global coherence, and thus enables readers to recall episodes from this integrated model more easily so that students have 'huge, huge [narrative] recall' now. Some participants, like Joshua, also acknowledged deliberate cultivation of the expressive character of that reading. This resulted in the increased regularity of the teacher offering what Pennac (2006) describes as the 'gift' of their voice, and Barrs & Cork (2001) designate as the 'performative reader' in the classroom. For Pennac, it spares the student 'the slog of code-breaking' in the first instance (op. cit., p121). For Barrs & Cork it works,

partly, of course, by slowing the experience of reading down from the more rapid pace of silent reading. In reading aloud, text cannot be scanned or skipped over; the full effect of the text as it is written must be experienced and given voice. The reading-aloud pace enables readers not only to read to get at the meaning, but also to take in many more of the subtleties of the writing' (op.cit., p. 39).

Each teacher considered reading aloud to be a primary way in which teachers succeed in engaging students with stories and texts, by helping the author's voice to resonate in the reading, even though it is the teacher's voice that is being heard. In one of Joshua's classes (Joshua, L02), his consciously expressive reading for his students from *The Children of Willesden Lane - Beyond the Kindertransport* (Golabek & Cohen, 2002) and the supportive community atmosphere that had been created around the act of reading, helped students to overcome their own resistance to reading aloud as they tried to emulate his technique. Afterwards, one student commented:

Well like in KS2 I wasn't that good at reading and then we did more and more [...] but then now I feel like I'm much more confident in reading. I, like, volunteer to read. But in primary school I would NEVER do that. Yeah, it would be horrible. I

think I've just grown in confidence. Because in primary school I didn't like it, so that made me not want to do it and I thought other people were better than me because I would stumble on my words. But now I feel that I just like it. Yeah (Layla, SFG2J).

Beyond her own increased confidence and enjoyment of reading aloud, Layla's choice of the word 'volunteer' here also attests to the nature of the supportive reading community that has been established within the class.

However, the teacher reading aloud does not necessarily work for all students:

If Sir's [Owen] reading I get quite annoyed not because he's slow but because he's slow for other people and I always end up, like, reading ahead and then blanking out other people. (Tara, OFG2).

While Tara found the practice frustrating, she also recognised the benefit for some of her peers 'he's slow for other people', again emphasising the sense of community within her class, and acknowledging a technique that seems to effectively support some of the most reluctant readers. Reading ahead has also been shown to support rather than disadvantage more confident readers by requiring them to regularly find their own way back through the text to the place where the rest of the class have reached (Westbrook, 2013).

6.1.3 Finding innovative ways to conduct whole class reading

As well as teachers reading aloud more frequently while taking on the role of performative reader more regularly and consciously, lesson observations showed that teachers also experimented with different ways of conducting whole class reading. Three teachers had developed the performative reader role into one where they operated as a kind of expressive narrator, while students took 'speaking parts' as characters, almost as if the novels were plays. Both Owen and Bridget used the same student voices for the same character over a series of lessons, in some cases for the duration of reading a class text, allowing strong readers to 'become' a character, so that the same student always read dialogue lines as the character, Innocent, in *Now is the Time for Running*, for example. Philippa used the same technique but varied readers

from lesson to lesson. In both cases, there was an ease and familiarity about this process for students, the opportunity to develop character, and enjoyment of student performance. In the observed lesson, Philippa reminded the class to:

be respectful of our readers (Philippa, L02).

Philippa's inclusive 'our' once more attests to the sense of community established within the group. Another practice observed was that of students being invited to 'prepare' a reading of sections of a novel in group, so that they could choose to narrate and speak as characters, or to break up the text into sections. In both of these examples there was an element of rehearsal, transferring the performative role from teacher to student while still avoiding the faltering misreading of texts so prevalent in traditional reading classrooms and that Rowena alluded to in the early stages of the research where:

it's very broken up or it's taking them an awful long time to read (Rowena, SGRD2).

Allowing students to rehearse and prepare their reading was an innovative way of preventing the problem of narrative being 'broken up' in ways that might detract from students' understanding and engagement with a story. It also enabled students to take greater responsibility for the shared text reading.

6.1.4 Foregrounding 'narrative experience' in reading lessons

The primacy of narrative and narrative enjoyment emerged as a favoured strategy amongst the participating teacher-researchers, building on Faster Read practices that were revisited during the SGRDs (Westbrook et al., 2019). Rowena explained how her KS3 classes now:

focus on the story and just really enjoy the story (Rowena II.1).

Before considering any analytical approaches to the text at KS4, she asked students to forget about being prepared for an exam:

and for a second, let's just enjoy the story! (Rowena II.2).

Again, this reflects a deep shift in pedagogical approach, applying to classes beyond those included in the research focus. Likewise, Philippa emphasises the need for:

reading a whole text and making sure that we have a clear and confident understanding of the narrative before we look at anything in isolation (Philippa II.2).

Philippa's telling use of the preposition here emphasises two different types of reading (for pleasure and for close analysis) but foregrounds the former. Joshua also observed how the meetings and interviews have brought narrative to the fore, and:

reinforced something that I already felt [about the importance of] knowing and understanding the narrative arc (Joshua II.2).

Owen likewise noted the need to avoid spending too much time on activities away from the text in the early stages, since:

[If] there is too much to process [then students] can't concentrate on the actual story (Owen, II.2).

The same idea was echoed by a student in Rowena's class who remarked, during the focus group interview:

When you've got time to think about what you've read and what the story's about and then when you get a question about it, you could think, oh yeah I remember that and then you could go back to it in the book and I think you just connect with the book more once you've read the whole thing instead of reading the first paragraph or the first chapter (Jack, RFG2).

From a student perspective, Jack is endorsing the notion that he might be able to analyse a text more effectively once the whole narrative is understood and absorbed, but also emphasised the need to 'connect' with the story in order to answer a question about it. Both teachers and students recognise that narrative engagement in the first

instance leads to greater comprehension and analysis, since ‘when reading becomes joyless there is no progress’ (Meek 1982, p. 130).

Yet the students of participating teacher-researchers noticed a big difference between KS3 and KS4, where we still seemed to be shutting down some of this practice in favour of a more analytical approach to reading at the level of the word, sentence or paragraph. This is articulated clearly by Eddie, a student in Philippa’s class, as he reflects on the differences between reading in Year 9 and reading in Year 10:

Now it’s more like picking apart sentences and what’s the dynamic verb or different sorts of nouns. Not reading for fun, for the story . . . Now it’s more subject terminology instead of reading. Because we did a lot of reading in Year 9 and then it stopped. (Eddie, SFG2P).

This seems a somewhat sad indictment of English Language and English Literature as a subject at GCSE, and suggests that while approaches may have improved at KS3, there is still some way to go in examination classes to relinquish the grip of public examination accountability. Eddie’s words emphasise not just that this approach is ‘not fun’ from a student perspective, but also that he does not consider such close word-level analysis without its broader context to be a particularly sophisticated reading or interpretation of texts. The ability to range across a whole text, to see how each part relates to the next, and how the whole coheres in terms of plot, character and thematic development involves a sophisticated set of interpretive processes which Eddie implicitly recognises as important beyond the loss of pleasure in experiencing the story. Of course, analysis at the level of the image, sentence or paragraph is also an aspect of linguistic analysis, but current practice has over-emphasised this single element of what it means to interpret a text (Bleiman, 2020; Cliff-Hodges, 2010; 2016; Westbrook et al., 2019).

6.1.5 Prioritising personal response in relation to narrative

The foregrounding of students’ personal experience in relation to their reading was another strategy that seemed to increase for teachers during the PAR. KS3 classrooms appeared to have become more humane spaces (Thomas, 2018) where student response was prioritised above the kind of critical and analytical dimension required in

GCSE public examinations, and at KS3. Owen articulated his ideas about how the project had changed his teaching of Miller's (1955) *A View From the Bridge* to Year 9 students:

I'm more confident with getting them to think about connections with their own lives all the time. And school as a community and you know, their daughters and fathers and all of that kind of stuff. I'm much more inclined to use that as a way in. My conversations with students tend to be much more focused on their own responses to the texts, how they are making meaning (Owen, II.1).

Owen is drawing deeply on reader response theory here (Iser, 1980; Benton, 1992; Cliff-Hodges, 2010). He finds ways for students to engage as individuals with the text and using this as the stepping stone to meaning, thereby placing ever greater emphasis on the role of the reader in actively constructing a text rather than operating as a passive consumer of it. Giroux, (2020, p. 181) points out that pedagogy which prioritises personal experience is valuable in giving students 'the opportunity to relate their own narratives, social relations, and histories to what is being taught'. While Freire (1970) and Giroux (ibid.) reference educational experiences more holistically, participating teacher-researchers were applying this approach to the teaching of reading, recognising that engagement and the idea of texts being meaningful at a personal level leads to greater comprehension (Benton, 1992; Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). In a later interview, reflecting on the whole project, Owen confirmed that:

foregrounding their [students'] emotional and personal response to a text, [is now] something that I always do (Owen, II.2).

The 'always' here is confirmation of this approach as having become an embedded part of Owen's practice by the later stages of the PAR cycle. Likewise, Philippa explained:

We more actively talk about what we might have as a personal response to reading . . . it's not even something that I would question or even think about any more, it's just something that we do, even with a shorter text, it's just the way that we do it. And that's with all year groups, and not just the class that we've been looking at specifically [for the project] . . . it comes down to personal engagement with a text (Philippa, II.2).

Just as it was for Owen, this emphasis seemed to be about a route to increased engagement as well as understanding for Philippa's students. Her transference of ideas explored in the research context of her KS3 class to her entire practice also reinforces the deep learning that has become embedded within her practice. The search for

connecting threads between a text and the reader is important; 'for readers, there must be a million autobiographies, since we seem to find, in book after book, the traces of our lives' (Manguel, 1996 p. 10).

In her individual interview, Philippa talked at some length about a particular student who had been reading Daphne du Maurier's (1936) *Jamaica Inn* independently as part of the Gothic project she designed, expressing delight that he was reading through choice, even when he did not actually have reading homework set for him:

He said to me the other day, 'Oh Miss, I'm loving *Jamaica Inn* and I read from page 43 to page 134 last night' (Philippa, II.2).

Reading for pleasure is clearly being enhanced, at least for some students, by the change in Philippa's teaching. There seems to be an epistemological shift in Philippa's understanding and knowledge about what it means to read and to be a reader, aligned with a shift in her own teacher identity as reader; she has adopted a completely different view of reading from the initial, narrow perception of reading for comprehension. Students' independent reading enthusiasm is given far more weight than in her previous comments, but there is also acknowledgement that it is occurring as a direct result of the measures she has put in place in the classroom.

6.1.6 Experimenting with ways to respond to reading

Participating teacher-researchers had also experimented with a range of different ways of recording and representing the reading experience. Building on discussions of the problems of transition from primary to secondary school, and the way reading seems to be valued so differently from KS1 to KS4, there was an increase in the use of reading journals. This was often accompanied by a choice of task offered to students about the types of response that they may wish to undertake in the classroom. For all of the teachers there seemed to be less focus on analytical written outcomes along with a clear movement away from the traditional 'book review' type response to reading. There were a greater number of opportunities for free writing, non-stop private writing that is closer to speech and thought than formal forms of writing (Elbow, 1973), perhaps

exploring what students felt about a particular character, or how they had interpreted that character in the section they had just been reading, for example. There were also a significant number of re-creative writing prompts (where students have to write their own creative text, inspired by the text that they have been reading, such as writing in role as character, additional scenes, making predictions for what might happen next, or how the novel might end). Rowena highlighted the differences in her practice by describing a 'before' and 'after' reading lesson at KS3 and KS4:

Before we'd done any of this I suppose [students would] come in. I suppose I'd test them on the last chapter or [get students to write] summaries or something. Then they'd read. Then they'd stop. We'd do comprehension questions. We'd do either a letter or a diary entry and it would be really specific, you know, 'This links to your Paper Two writing', or you know. And now, they come in, and it kind of depends, so sometimes I've done this with my Year 8s, they come in and do a time of reading and then they have [a choice of] activities. They have a kind of prediction ball thing. All sorts. [A selection of ways of responding] laid out on a shelf where they could take them from (Rowena, II.2).

Physical objects such as the prediction ball, a representation of a crystal ball encouraging students to 'see' into the fictional future of a novel, and a cauldron where students could place the 'ingredients' of a novel on pieces of paper were two further examples of more experimental responding strategies. These sat alongside multiple different ways of eliciting students' personal responses, but also seemed to be tailored to be supportive of reading comprehension, of less experienced readers in particular, through nurturing individual personal response and interpretation. The validity of difference in responses is celebrated at the same time as choice between tasks is prioritised (Cremin, 2007). There was also increasing acceptance that the response did not have to be written at all: that it might take some other format that was more visual, or physical. Creative book jars were added to the Year 9 scheme of work, for example, so that students recorded their response to the first self-selected and independently-read novel of the year by creating a jar filled with objects that link to the story: quotations, sketches, symbols and responses to the novel as another alternative to a traditional book review. This activity was conducted in conjunction with the school librarian, so that increased access to the school library was being offered at the same time. Several teachers had adopted and adapted versions of 'Rivers of Reading' (Cliff-Hodges, 2016), where students plotted what they perceived as key moments in their reading

development. This replicated the deep delve into reading histories that teachers themselves had undertaken in SGRD1.

Highly recommended for developing students' understanding of story structure, graphic organisers took on new and ever-evolving forms. With encouragement from the research (Jiang & Grabe, 2007) and from involvement in the University of Sussex Faster Read project (Westbrook et al., 2019), teachers have developed their understanding of the value of these over time and evolved their own forms. In Philippa's class, students had their own visual recreation of three imagined floors of the Birling house in their exercise books while reading J.B. Priestley's (1947) *An Inspector Calls*, which they used to reflect on different layers of their reading as they made their way through the play. The idea was to provide a visual reminder of the opulence of the Birling household in order to foreground the theme of social class in the play, while keeping a record of the action, key plot points and important moments of character development simultaneously. Students also had choice about which 'paths' they took in their own note-making.



Figure 6.2: Creating a graphic organiser in the form of a house to support reading of *An Inspector Calls*, taken from lesson observation of Philippa's Year 10 class.

This certainly marks a shift in practice from the start of the PAR. To have 'nothing' to show for the reading that has taken place over a half term is highlighted as a concern for Philippa in the initial cycle of the project:

It seems a little outside of the box (Philippa, SGRD2).

Philippa is using the idiom here to indicate that ‘just reading’, without supporting written activity, feels beyond the realm of her everyday teaching strategies. This is in spite of the idea that ‘just reading’ whole texts and of using oral responses to reading were a key part of the Faster Read project (Westbrook et al., 2019), and had been part of departmental practice ever since (discussed in 1.6). However, by the end of the project Philippa considers it a firmly accepted tenet. She explained that in every class that was studying a whole class reader, they read the entirety of every text before they analysed it:

The only other thing that we do is talk (Philippa, II.2).

Philippa has prioritised whole and smaller group discussion in response to reading, above written responses, suggesting that the monitoring of reading and providing formative assessment takes place in other ways, moving away from assessment of reading through formal assessed writing activities until the end of the study of a given text. She gave a detailed explanation of the kind of graphic organisers she had created for current KS3 and KS4 texts, not only in the observed example from *An Inspector Calls* (Priestley, 1947), but also for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Taylor, 1976) with Year 8 and *A View From the Bridge* (Miller, 1955) with Year 9 classes. She described narrative comprehension as foremost and ‘essential’, and with an importance far beyond written analysis (Philippa, II.2). Once again it was interesting to note that these examples came from classes beyond the research intervention group, attesting to the far-reaching nature of these pedagogical shifts as they moved beyond the specific contexts of the research. By the later stages of the project she had no qualms in justifying the lack of written response; it is no longer something she perceives to be ‘outside the box’. Philippa had generalised her learning, transferring it from one context to another, and even from KS3 to KS4.

In Joshua’s class, students became more agentive and independent. They took collective responsibility for narrative summarising and recapping by taking it in turns to create a glossary of important ideas from their reading of previous chapters of *The Children of Willesden Road - Beyond the Kindertransport* (Golabek & Cohen, 2002), a practice that Joshua explained he would previously have done *for* a class (Joshua, II.2). Part of the implication of this in terms of classroom practice is the demonstration of having higher

expectations of students than previously. He required them to be ambitious and autonomous through the creation of a collaborative set of resources to support comprehension and revision of the text. Joshua's pedagogy has heightened expectations by enabling students to actively engage in aspects that he might have transmissively told the class prior to engaging in the research.

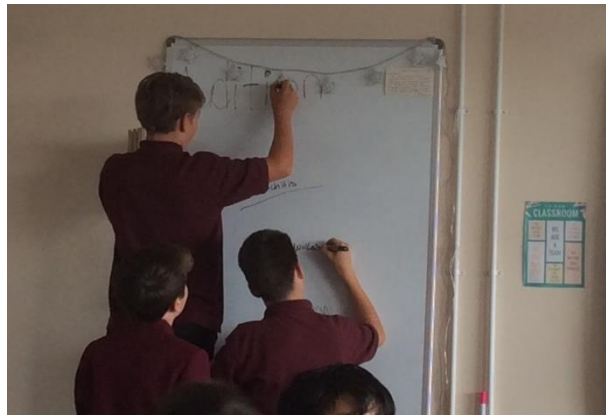


Figure 6.3: Students recapping chapters of a class reader by creating a glossary of important ideas for each other in Joshua's class from July 2018 observation

Reading has, somehow, become altogether a more dynamic, collaborative and creative enterprise. Joshua alludes to the changes that had been made, but also his flexibility in responding to the needs of individual groups:

I'd say there would be no way that we'd do reading lessons the way we did at the start of the year when I first met the class. It's nothing like the way we do them at the end. And that's a really nice thing. And the moment I really like is when I've figured out with a class how we enjoy reading a book together - and then those lessons are always my favourite ones (Joshua, II.2).

Here Joshua attests to the way that his lessons have changed over the course of the year, and expressions such as 'really nice', 'enjoy' and 'my favourite' are testament to the way he has created an inclusive reading community within this class with an emphasis on reading engagement rather than narrowly focused assessment objectives.

The participatory nature of the action research and its collaborative smörgåsbord approach meant that there were no specified intervention plans for any of the significant classroom changes acknowledged above, no *a priori* method that required

collective implementation (Giroux 2020). However, once teachers had been encouraged to theorise, read research and been given space in which to collaboratively reflect on their teaching of reading, while drawing on the literature and their own experiences as readers, then all of the above enhancements in practice occurred, stimulated by the SGRDs. This organic process highlights the effect of encouraging teachers to be researchers and professionals in charge of their own learning and development, who are agents of classroom reform as a result of constantly evaluating and critically reflecting on how to improve their pedagogy and practice.

7 CONCLUSIONS

My research sought to find ways to foster collaborative reading pedagogies amongst teachers, and between teachers and students, in order to ‘re-cognize’ reading, and thereby reconstruct the practices associated with the teaching of reading. This chapter first revisits the research questions and aligns findings and conclusions to them individually, before identifying contributions to knowledge, which lie in re-theorising how teachers learn, and in particular how secondary English teachers learn about the domain of reading. Building on these claims, recommendations are made for the way that professional learning might change in order to accommodate this understanding, followed by an outline of the limitations of the research.

7.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

The initial reconnaissance part of the research involved an in-depth examination of the existing culture to respond to the research questions:

1. What is the nature of the reading culture at KS3 at Readborough College?
2. What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom?

Readborough College had a history of healthy Progress 8 scores, the government’s chief tool for measuring students’ attainment based on performance in their best eight subjects at GCSE and the progress made from the end of Year 6 (Gov.UK, 2021). Prior to the introduction of Progress 8, the chief accountability measure in use was the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grade passes, including English and maths; here again, results were above those of similar schools. However, levels of reading engagement and GCSE examination success are not necessarily as interdependent as might be surmised (Giovannelli, 2010; Bleiman, 2020; Cushing, 2020)

and, indeed, the latter might come at the expense of the former (Cliff-Hodges, 2010). Our school gave the appearance of a lively reading culture, but closer scrutiny suggested that it existed at a superficial level. Participating teachers at the outset of the research, for example, seemed to characterise students' attitudes towards reading quite negatively, perceiving a paucity in the volume and type of reading that students were undertaking, as well as constructing identities of students which designated them as having poor attitudes towards reading. Yet the students, especially those in Year 7, offered a broad perception of independent reading as a pleasurable activity, frequently undertaken. The responses from students in the focus groups (Year 8 and Year 9) also framed reading in a positive, desirable, light. However, the student data suggested that levels of reading declined as students progressed through the school and moved towards the narrower focus of reading for meaning and analysis in GCSE literature texts, while being subjected to increasing pressures on their free time. Where, then, did the deficit in KS3 students' reading volume, the inconsistency in reading habits and shortcomings in reading attitudes that teachers identified, emerge from? Participating teacher-researchers seemed to unconsciously frame students' existing reading habits and abilities, initially, from a deficit perspective which positioned students as requiring intervention. This positioning enabled them to justify their role in the classroom (Freire, 1970), and thereby created the notion of a reading gap which needed to be filled. Teachers could therefore curate their role in the classroom as directive and active, allowing for a narrative of remedying perceived flaws in students reading habits and thus corresponding to Freire's (ibid.) banking concept of education, whereby the rationalization of the teachers' existence is achieved through the classification of students' ignorance.

As teachers explored their own reading histories and identities through the PAR, they acknowledged projecting unfavourable memories of their own adolescent reading histories and experiences onto current students in their assessment of students' independent reading motivation and engagement, and also constructed unrealistic ideals for students' reading: ideals that they did not, themselves, meet. Where judgements appeared to be based on teachers' own adolescent reading experiences (rather than fully rooted in the cultural landscape of the school), the emerging PAR enabled teachers to confront and deconstruct some of these tacitly held views.

Furthermore, although teachers had already begun to shift practice through waves of CPD and engagement in research on reading (for example through participation in the Faster Read project (Westbrook et al., 2019), it remained the case that teachers required a deeper level of theoretical understanding of how to teach reading, without which they tended to follow policy and its narrow focus on analysis. At the same time, the understanding about reading that the teachers held was framed in such a way as to position the teachers as the guardians of literary culture, ready to bestow their knowledge within a banking concept of reading education (Freire, 1970).

The PAR enabled teachers to begin to engage with the issues raised, but also sought to explore how teachers' knowledge about reading and reading pedagogy might extend beyond snappy, short-term engagement strategies and engender long term enjoyment and commitment to reading for all students. The study was designed to enable a horizontal research relationship between participating teachers, rather than a hierarchical one. This more reciprocal mode was achieved partly through my own role as an insider-researcher, although complicated initially by my initial Head of Department role, (explored below), but also through privileging the tacit knowledge of the participating teachers, while considering more precisely what happens to teachers when they undertake sustained engagement with theory and research in order to explore the further research questions:

3. What happens to teachers when they undertake sustained engagement with theory and research, and why?
4. What happens in the classroom as a result of sustained teacher engagement with theory and research, and why?

Focus broadened beyond reading as the substantive topic of the research to encompass teachers' learning, and the support of teacher empowerment. A major shift in my thinking occurred during the SGRDs so that the research evolved from a study initially conceived to be primarily about students' reading, to one primarily about teachers' learning to be reading teachers. I attribute this to the opportunities afforded by the PAR design, and to the changes I experienced myself through the process. Flexible and organic in its very nature, PAR enables such a shift in its iterative cycles. Researching and intervening simultaneously inevitably resulted in a different end point from that

envisaged. The more the SGRDs allowed us to reflect and speak about our experiences, the more apparent it became that we had had so little opportunity in our careers to deepen learning by reading articles or undertake sustained critical reflection, or to collaborate with peers beyond occasional development of schemes of work. These dialogues shifted our collective focus to teachers' learning. The goal became finding ways to encourage teachers to become more agentic and more knowledgeable, and to create an enabling space within a framework of critical pedagogy. Such a space enabled teacher-researchers to generate their own permissions to engage with theory on a dialogic plane. In turn, this enabled them to collaborate in new classroom practices. The 'what happens' to teachers themselves part of the research questions became as important as the new knowledge gained about reading. The SGRDs helped in the creation of a space from which theory and practice could be critically examined in relation to current educational thinking, to expose and confront the tensions which arose. It was also a space in which excitement and enthusiasm for reading teaching was renewed and reinvigorated (Wells, 2001) since the teachers were committed to change and development. The study was useful for participants in terms of their practice and action: in the way that they approached text, in enhanced understanding of active strategies for teaching comprehension, and in the prioritisation of narrative and engagement for students. Teachers' understanding, and knowledge of how to teach reading, was extended. At the same time, capacity for critical reflection was widened. Teachers changed the way that they spoke about reading, and reading for pleasure, in their classrooms. They opened up a dialogue with students in their classes; dialogue that moved away from 'curriculum-only' conversations. The notion of reading itself expanded. Teachers began to confront and redefine their own perceptions of what constitutes reading for pleasure, and to frame this within the wider context of curriculum requirements and concerns. Changes to pedagogical understanding and corresponding shifts in practice were deeply embedded and contributed to the creation of a wider culture and community within the department. Since cultures are compelling, in that they generate wider interest and participation (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021), they continue to spread, so that some of the ideas have gone beyond the small group of participating teachers and into the department at large.

There were other discernible shifts in actions around school, that continue into the present. Small groups of KS3 struggling readers are now encouraged to use two tutor time sessions a week (beyond their English lessons) to read a book alongside their teacher, that the teacher has not read previously, with no expectation for any written response, but to engender the shared delight in simultaneous narrative and character discovery. This is not the case for groups studying set texts for examinations, but operates beyond the curriculum in circumstances where narrative pleasure is the guiding principle. There are further long-term changes to departmental schemes of work; for example, the introduction of reading for pleasure story jars in Year 9, and the commitment to 'faster reads' before undertaking comprehension for whole class texts, continuing the model (Westbrook et al., 2019) introduced to the school six years before. Some of these changes, beyond the impact on individual participating teacher-researchers, are profound and their influence will be long felt. They are not temporary or ephemeral but rooted in departmental and school-wide approaches. Others may be less long-lived; as new teachers join the department, an urge returns to introduce analytical activities before the 'faster reads' (ibid.) have taken place, for example, so entrenched is it in the wider conception of what English teachers 'do'.

7.2 Contributions to knowledge

By the final stages of the PAR project, a range of possibilities and strategies had been generated in relation to the teaching of reading. These strategies were particularly pertinent to areas that had previously been perceived as highly challenging; indeed, what had been deemed at the start of the research as 'unsolvable' problems. Approaches to engaging students with wider varieties of reading (in lessons and in their independent reading for pleasure) had all become embedded practice. Ideas and solutions were reached through a combination of reading research literature, engaging in dialogic talk with peers and through the opportunity for sustained implementation and reflection in the classroom.

The key theoretical frameworks underpinning the research arise from a constructivist perspective (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978) to consider the interconnectedness of different kinds of knowledge (tacit and propositional, for example) and the way this knowledge integrates with the assimilation of theories around reading in a situated learning context. These conjoined lenses, with critical pedagogy as the root and route to exploration of them, help to explain the way that teachers develop their understanding about reading and reading pedagogy individually and collaboratively. The contribution to knowledge of this doctoral study lies in re-theorising how teachers learn, and in particular how they learn about the domain of reading. The resulting shifts in classroom pedagogy offer some significant implications for professional development. For the ongoing education of teachers to be effective, greater understanding is required about the kinds of professional learning that best help teachers develop and grow, in ways that will also support the learning of their students, even as expectations of students and schools are constantly changing.

7.2.1 Reconstructing teacher reading identity

Teachers' beliefs and values about reading and about teaching must be identified and examined. Deconstruction of the reading selves, which have been established through youth, adolescence and the historical past, as well as in the present, may be necessary in order to realign with classroom practice. Tensions may need to be ironed out. This is a vital part of the process of becoming a more effective teacher of reading. Through opportunities for critical and socially-mediated reflection, teachers began to overcome or realign some of the tensions observed between our teaching approaches and aspects of the system in which we were operating; moreover, we began to understand the degree to which values of the education system had been unintentionally internalised into individual belief systems. The nature of the PAR project invited teachers to challenge and critique assumptions and ideologies that have informed the way we taught reading. Unsurprisingly, at times this was evidently painful to acknowledge, as Owen so eloquently articulated in 4.2.6. Teachers were indeed being confronted with our own 'complicity' in why students may have switched off from reading for pleasure. This self-awareness and realisation is, arguably, transformative. Participating teacher-

researchers led themselves to change, but in diverse ways, in accordance with Giroux's (2020) framework for critical pedagogy; a framework which insists on the acknowledgment of the historical, political and institutional forces that restrict autonomy in the classroom and lead to a narrow, reductive and test-focused curriculum. The shift from a fixed mind-set that teachers held about students' reading, and subsequent positioning of themselves as powerful agents of change, was a significant factor in their professional development. Teacher professional discourses are limited because of the ways in which teachers are positioned within their professional environments (Biesta et al., 2015), and their resulting agency or lack thereof is therefore heavily influenced by a range of factors which are often outside of their control. The recognition of these tensions between existing beliefs and new cognitive knowledge formed an important shift.

Though beliefs are ingrained and difficult to shift, the belief system possesses an adaptive function in helping individuals define and understand situations such as that which Joshua described in remembering what he used to be engaged by in his own English lessons as a student, enabling them to alter their beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Joshua experienced this process of adaptation as a result of the extensive opportunities for critical reflection and seemed able to resist internalised discourses more readily than he had done nearer to the start of the study, enabling him to transform his pedagogy and resist further imposed policy and institutional discourses. Rowena was similarly explicit about her new knowledge and the resulting determination to prioritise extended reading and engagement, and was confident of being able to justify this to any observer (Rowena, II.2). When Rowena claims that she now 'knows what she is doing' in relation to the teaching of reading, she is able to support this assertion with explanation that coincides with conviction in the process. Practitioners are positioned as 'educational activists' when they move towards taking control of their professions, and refuse to have rules and values imposed on them that are difficult to reconcile with their own (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 158). Reaching this level takes time and investment in the process, and repeated practice of the kind of critical reflection that was enabled through this study: collaborative critical reflection combined with the opportunity to try things out over many weeks, or whole terms. Such a longitudinal approach enables teachers to make sense of their practice and allows time to overcome cognitive

dissonance. It is a process which offers the opportunity to move between embodied, tacit professional knowledge and more theorised, propositional knowledge, at the same time as exploring teachers' prior beliefs, values and assumptions about education. Space to undertake collaborative discussions with other professionals alongside the reading of academic literature encourages the shift. It is a process which provides the tools required to challenge hegemonic discourses in order to make teaching congruent with teachers' belief systems.

English teachers' identity as readers begins with their own experience of school and reading (Lortie, 1975) constructed through an apprenticeship of observation. All of these early experiences, including those through adolescence are generated long before teachers begin to engage with theories of reading and theories of pedagogy.

Opportunity to revisit these residual beliefs and values, to deconstruct them and in some cases to demolish them entirely before rebuilding informed conceptualisations of readers and learners, is important. This is a crucial step towards growth and shifting pedagogical values and beliefs, since it is so difficult to determine with any kind of precision where knowledge ends and beliefs begin (Pajares, 1992). Narration and exploration of this aspect of tacit knowledge therefore forms a vital part of the ongoing (professional) development of teachers (Krátká, 2015).

Since reading identity is not static, it requires regular revision and interrogation. The reading identity of teachers also needs to be aligned and integrated with teacher identity. Participating teacher-researchers acknowledged projection of their own behaviours and attitudes as adolescents onto their students. Reconciliation of teacher identity with reading identity enabled those projections to be challenged, only after bringing them out into the open. This led to a more fluid construction of student reading identity by teachers. While professional development of teachers is an enduring priority for government, schools and for individuals, programmes of professional development remain regularly ineffective since they repeatedly fail to acknowledge the centrality of identity. Historically, this has led not just to a low confidence base in relation to reading teaching, but to a fragmentation of pedagogical practice. Professional development approaches lack effectiveness in part because they often fail to consider the determining factor of accounting for what motivates teachers to engage in

professional development in the first place, alongside the process by which change in teachers typically occurs (Guskey, 2002). The political positioning of teachers as unreflective individuals is an approach which not only rejects consideration of identity in its post-structural conceptualisation as fluid and multiple, and produced through contextual intersections of a decentred subject (Drzewiecka, 2017), but also reinforces the theory-practice divide; thus, simultaneously preventing the need for exploration and scrutiny. Teachers are thereby encouraged effectively to become complicit in restricting their own professional development.

The confidence and resulting agentic power of participating teacher-researchers was raised through a combination of factors. Firstly, the opportunity for teachers' personal reflection was coupled with the exploration of cultural and ideological beliefs through dialogic talk (Bakhtin, 1986) and collaborative discussion. This enabled individual teacher journeys to align with the group 'consensus' that was reached at different points in the process. Secondly, the reading of articles and research reports enabled a high level of theoretical engagement while offering the opportunity for classroom experimentation and implementation. The intrinsic value of the social constructivist approach to the PAR (Vygotsky, 1978), whereby cognitive functions are seen as the products of social interactions, were key components within a framework of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This initiated the movement from the banking concept of education to what Freire (1970) deems a more humanist, or problem-posing approach. The research repeatedly insisted that teacher-researchers confront ingrained values and beliefs and thereby to begin to consciously reconstruct teaching identity. Teachers were able to explore the dichotomy between reading as a skill and reading as 'literature' (Traves, 1994); teachers who, for example, had rejected wholesale the notion of a patriarchal imposed literary canon of texts of the NC in a post-canonical world (Scholes, 1985; Lemov et al., 2016), only to realise that they had replaced that with their own authoritarian but internalised canon of a nebulous high-quality of fiction that students should be reading (Jamshidi, 2016; Lemov et al., 2016). It was these kinds of previously unvoiced values and beliefs that the research provided the opportunity to question and challenge, through critical engagement with beliefs and positioning; offering parallels between the way reader-responses are constructed

within texts and how teachers ‘read’ their own classroom and engage in dialogue to reconstruct shared meaning.

7.2.2 Reconceptualising the theory-practice divide

While greater consideration of the beliefs of teachers is a crucial element in shifting educational practice (Pajares, 1992), it is also important to acknowledge teachers’ resulting theoretical positioning in order to reconceptualise the dichotomy between theory and practice in relation to the professional development of teachers. Teaching practice is never natural or neutral (Scholes, 1985; Tracy & Morrow, 2017), but always results from a theoretical position which may have been influenced by political policy imposition, but has been absorbed over the course of a lifetime of professional experience (Wells, 2001) building on the apprenticeship of observation acquired during a teacher’s own early educational experiences (Lortie, 1975). Teachers bring their entire being, the whole of themselves to their interactions in the classroom, so that ‘their manner of teaching depends not only on what they know but on who they have become’ (Wells, 2001, p. 176). For the teachers participating in this study, where theoretical positioning had been previously unarticulated and unexplored, devoting time to allow beliefs and assumptions into the open for exploration and scrutiny with colleagues was a rewarding and beneficial part of the developmental process, and an important stage in redefining and reclaiming the ancient, well-trodden and artificial polarity between *theoria* and *praxis* (whereby theory and practice are positioned in constant tension with each other). A divided conceptualisation (e.g. Hammersley, 2004) ignores the potential, and the necessity, of the intimate relationship between theory and practice for teachers. Teachers need to embody the liminal space between theory, and their own understanding and absorbing of it, in order to implement it fully in practice, and thereby occupy the hyphen between theory-practice.

Teachers are repeatedly positioned as unreflective individuals by macropolitical systems that favour learning by doing and which emanate from a tradition of prioritising the ‘craft’ of teaching (Bennett, 2020; Brant, 2006; Marland, 1975). This more technical approach is mandated by the need to measure and collect hard data on

student learning outcomes. Policy has cherry-picked from theories such as Dewey's (1965/1904) to create the sense that teaching *only* involves 'doing' and is predominantly experiential and has been achieved by elevating the practical component in teacher training courses. Traditional ITE courses in the UK are less than a year long, which does not allow adequate time for training teachers to both practice and internalise the theory they encounter and to integrate it into their practice. While university ITE courses contain a greater theoretical element than school-centred initial teaching training programmes (SCITTs) or other more practical school-based routes to QTS), their short length is still restrictive. To position teachers primarily as doers contradicts the secondary strand of Dewey's work, which allowed that the initial practical components should be 'intensive', rather than 'extensive', in order to enliven teachers' reflection (Greenwalt, 2016). Policy aims to create consistency in standards but that consistency is reductive, partly as a result of the control measures which are introduced within it. It is not always the direct application of control within the hierarchical network that becomes restrictive, but the existence of that control in the first place (Foucault's 1975 panoptican metaphor). Teachers' internal monitor keeps control over what they can do. Consequently, within the profession, teachers operate under limited and predictable internalised discourses; for example, that classroom progress should always be speedy, and measurably productive. These systems of internalised discourse are in tension with many of the findings about reading in the literature. When set structures are imposed on teachers, their professional autonomy is diminished and critical reflection is discouraged. By contrast, opening up spaces for dialogic thinking, where the concerns and ideas of peers can be engaged with and responded to, enables teachers to develop richer ideas. This study showed that improving practice is a longer, more arduous, but also richer and more interesting process than simply learning by doing suggests. It is not a passive process whereby learning just happens, but rather a dynamic process that involves constant movement between theory and practice and requires space to reflect on the transposition between the two. Teachers' reading of theory and research studies, and of the literature around reading pedagogy, can support enhanced practice (Snow, 2002). However, engaging with research evidence requires discussion and mediation if it is to contribute to the shaping of ideas in the longer term. A community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) was achieved in this research through the PAR model. Fals Borda argued that theory

and practice exist in a dialectical relationship (Rappaport, 2002, p. 7). For too long that dialectical element has been absent from dominant models of professional development for English teachers. Sociocultural theory is premised on language being the medium through which we learn within the paradigms of power in a situated context; yet the lessons of the past have been ignored as each wave of new policy implementation has taken place in the UK, effectively preventing a dynamic synergy through which that educational theory might be explored in order to give it new signification for teachers. Shared reading and discussion and collaboration contribute to a culture (Abercrombie & Haslam, 2021) where experimentation and exploration in the classroom are facilitated. Theory cannot always be digested directly, but engagement with it leads to a further process of scrutiny and application by teachers in their individual contexts. Analysis and interpretation of any theoretical position is not complete nor effective or even 'lived' in a significant way until it has been through that further dialectical process by teachers, and turned back into action in order that the inactive theory can become a living practice; or that 'private' theory can become 'public' (Eraut, 2004). Part of the dialectic process also allows teachers' initial repudiation of research and theory, since new information may offer a threat to their current sense of identity as practitioner. Experimentation which acknowledges and permits misinterpretation or literal translation of theory (and sometimes even initially crude translations of written text into individual pedagogic discourse and actions, such as that witnessed during the course of this research), leads eventually to enhanced practice. Enhanced practice in turn results in both the power and the desire to generate working theories to explain what is happening in teachers' classrooms.

7.2.3 Reclaiming theory

Before the movement between theory and practice can be fully facilitated, the notion of theory itself must be reclaimed and 're-recognized' by teachers. Developing teacher knowledge works only by coordinating theory and practice together over time, as evinced through the longitudinal nature of this action research. It occurs through deep

exploration of the relationship between theory-practice in relation to the teaching of reading, in order to inhabit that liminal hyphen between them. Teachers learn over time, by integrating their beliefs about reading developed since childhood with later beliefs in adulthood. For teachers participating in this study, this integration was mediated by the process of critical reflection on practice coupled with drawing on theorised literature. It was in the conjoining of existing beliefs with the introduction of new theory that teachers found ways to resist current policy and practice, to engage in acts of creative mediation (Jeffries, 1996). The process of critical reflection may be the space where both theory and practice can be reflected on, negotiated and consolidated into richer learning outcomes for teachers, just as Freire (1970, p. 49) conceived of this point being situated between the 'totality' of reflection and action.

However, the findings in this study showed that teachers were initially resistant to the academic framework of 'theory' in generalised terms. The metalanguage of theory was repeatedly rejected by the teacher-researchers as an alien landscape. We were reluctant to perceive ourselves as scholars or academics, and were not ready to characterise teaching as 'intellectual labour' (Giroux, 2020), to the extent that we downgraded our own academic training; in many ways anticipating the 2021 framework for ITE and teaching (Ofsted, 2021) which seems to reductively conceptualise teaching as linear, routinised practice. Participating teacher-researchers offered active resistance to initial attempts to align with academic theory, as though it got in the way, somehow, of the real business of teaching and enacting concepts. There was a collective sense that this is not a domain that 'belongs' to us as teachers. The combination of internalised discourses from policy, curriculum and examination requirements (Cushing, 2020), and the ways in which teachers have been systematically deprofessionalised over a sustained historical period (Gibbons, 2017) has contributed to this resistance. Heavily prescriptive central intervention since the imposition of the National Literacy Strategy in 1998 (NLS, DfEE, 1998) may have restricted the extent to which secondary English teachers, in particular, have had the opportunity to learn about teaching reading in any coherent way. Constructing teachers as policy mouthpieces, automatons, who simply learn from the modelling of other teachers without supporting theory generates ideology which is flawed, or 'merely enacted rather than understood' (Gibbons 2017, p. 5), and consequently damaging for teachers and students alike. Biesta et al. (2015)

points to a similar phenomenon worldwide operating more generally within the teaching profession. Moreover, it may be that the resistance to theoretical and academic language is something that is more culturally prevalent in the UK than in other educational contexts. In Europe and other parts of the world where there exists a greater tradition of 'didactique' (Hudson & Schneuwely, 2007), teachers are more effectively positioned to espouse theory than their counterparts in the UK. Much theory presented to teachers in teacher education programmes is 'seldom used in practice, even after all kinds of sophisticated pedagogical measures have been taken' (Korthagen, 2010, p. 103). Thus, participating teacher-researchers may be reluctant to use much theory in their work since, while the gestalt and schema levels of learning (ibid.) are more accessible and intuitive, the theory level is aimed at deep and generalised understanding of a variety of similar situations accrued through lengthy situated and reflective teaching: requiring structured opportunities which occur rarely. Furthermore, teachers in the UK exist in a world where 'evidence-based' is firmly entrenched in the education lexicon (Coldwell et al., 2017) and something of a buzzword. Research schools, and university and school alliances proliferate (Department of Education, 2014), and policy promotes the importance of research-informed teaching, at least at a cosmetic level. The education research landscape in the UK has been dramatically altered by organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), who have, since 2011, sought to promote randomised controlled trials (RCTs) as the touchstone for how research should be conducted, rapidly overseeing more than 100 education RCTs (Dawson et al., 2018). Consequently, these quantitative, comparative, controlled experiments have come to be seen as more desirable, currently, than qualitative research; thereby narrowing the perception of what is understood by 'evidence-based' among members of the profession. Traditional, transmissive forms of professional development for teachers generally engage with theoretical positioning at only a superficial level, a passing reference to a study or theorist to justify its existence. And yet the place of theory in teaching and learning is central.

My own resistance to the language and sphere of theory and academia is markedly present throughout this research, even as a doctoral student. It is reflected in the way I began this thesis with a 'teacherly' narrative, trying to wriggle free from the straitjacket of academic register. Its remnants can perhaps still be seen most clearly in chapter one,

in spite of the multiple drafts and revisions that have been applied to the writing: along with my fellow teacher-researchers, keen to not be seen doing ‘any of that theory stuff’ (Philippa 2.1). Nevertheless, the teacher-researcher participants in this study were undoubtedly enacting living theories (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) generated by tacit knowledge and enhanced by engagement with external theory and research. Theories intersected with the readings that took place within SGRDs but were also enriched by their practice and experience in a two-way process. Collaboratively they generated their own language while rejected the existing terminology of social science; although they were, evidently, still theorising. There were many such moments when teachers appeared to be spontaneously generating their own theories of what was happening in their classroom. The example of Joshua reflecting on his childhood experience of enjoyment at the teacher reading aloud is a perfect example of this theory-generation (5.1.5), or his description of schemata as ‘mental nets’ (II.2), or his conceptualisation of reading as ‘guided hallucination’ emphasising the way readers become lost in the text world; or Rowena’s growing convictions about the changing power relations of students and teachers as readers (TM1); or Owen positioning reading differently and foregrounding personal response as ‘a way of teaching bits about writing’ (SGRD3). The wider issue may be the dominance of performativity within practice which limits teacher positioning as intellectuals and scholars. This is inevitably internalised by teachers themselves and hence we resist theory and use of theoretical terms to further analyse what we do. It seems, therefore, that there is a necessity for a slow induction into the language of academia for teachers who perceive it as an unwelcoming space, a territory of otherness, when in fact it is precisely their domain and should be rightfully claimed as such, since teachers only come to ‘know’ something by accommodating and integrating it within existing sets of beliefs and values about reading, and assimilating it in turn into their practice. The UK government’s required standards for teachers make scant reference to *how* teachers should improve their practice, meaning that there is no explicit requirement to engage with theory. Part of teachers’ wider professional responsibility requires taking responsibility for improving teaching ‘through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues’ (DfE, 2011). This kind of language suggests that improvement comes from without, rather than as a result of the generative power that arises from the opportunity to create living theories (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Moreover, it is frustrating that the notion of the most effective changes to reading attitudes and achievement for students comes from deeper pedagogical shifts for teachers is not new: cooperative learning and mixed-method models have consistently be found to more powerful routes to teacher learning (Slavin et al., 2008), but are not regularly embraced in mainstream courses of professional development for English teachers. Working theories often remain tacit, which is why critical reflection is such a key stage in the process of enabling teachers to clarify their theories to themselves and enrich and deepen them, by reflecting on other theories in the literature at the same time. Practitioners ‘tend not to participate in the discourses of theory generation in mainstream educational research’ (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 57). This is deeply concerning: an unpalatable situation since it results in teachers without agency in terms of policy formation.

7.2.4 Active models of professional development.

The act of investigation, and that of using its results in order to transform existing social relationships, is itself a powerful form of professional development for teachers: a kind which enables teachers to attain greater agency within an educational climate that seems to suppress it. In early research designs for this dissertation, I had (misguidedly, and in spite of extensive methodology reading) conceived of an AR project that simply intervened in the teaching of reading in some way agreed on by participants, and sought to evaluate the impact on and the journey undertaken *by the students* in response. However, as the project evolved organically in cycles, it was only in enacting the research that I came to fully appreciate the immersive nature of PAR and discovered that the parameters of the project had shifted to become equally focused on teacher learning and development: the processes by which teachers of reading experimented with, and changed their practice, informed by the literature and by collaboration with each other. In considering what happened, it is necessary to highlight once more the sustained nature of this study. Organising professional development through this kind of PAR design heralded a significant shift from the kinds of in-service development that

had taken place at Readborough College prior to this research. It was unusual in that it enabled teachers to engage with the disciplinary topic of reading, and reading-related pedagogy, prioritising this factor above more generic aspects of teaching. Offering each participant choice in terms of what he or she wished to focus on through the collaboratively generated smörgåsbord of ideas, our 'manifesto', was powerful. It generated independence and ownership, and facilitated the prioritising of teachers' own concerns, fuelled and informed by the selected readings and discussion. A further key element of the design was its construction as a project which evolved over six consecutive academic terms, providing a noteworthy degree of longevity in terms of opportunities for learning and critically reflecting about reading in comparison to other patterns of CPD experienced more recently within the school. Action research, just as it is a process that has no clear beginning, also has no end. As a result of this research, and the repeated opportunity for engagement with theory and research in collaboration with colleagues that it provided, a number of perceivable changes took place at Readborough College for participating teacher-researchers. Findings suggested that is far more powerful to form communities of readers (Cremin, 2018), where there is a greater sense of equality between teachers and students generated through shared reading journeys and experiences, and greater openness about the personal and emotional reactions to characters and narrative, for example. Although data is no longer being collected beyond the research, the process that has been set in motion will continue to have far-reaching effects, certainly for those teachers directly, and for the school community and school ethos more widely. Knowledge about reading was generated and deepened in myriad ways. Teachers reported greater understanding about reading itself, and about reading pedagogy, and expressed increased confidence in the teaching of reading at KS3. The reach of these shifts was powerful to the extent that it informed approaches to reading beyond that key stage and into KS4 and KS5. Giroux (2020) contends that it is critical pedagogy which enables teacher knowledge to be activated to challenge dominant pedagogical practices. It offers a notion of empowerment for teachers through acknowledgment of the historical, political and institutional forces that limit authority in the classroom and lead to a narrow, reductive and test-focused curriculum. Educational policy offers more problems than it provides solutions (Alexander, 2014). Critical pedagogy therefore positions teaching as a political act, which necessitates challenging teachers and students to examine the power

structures of their surroundings. My conceptualisation is not as radical as Giroux's. My aim was not to dismantle existing structures but to acknowledge and challenge them, and at the very least, to open teachers' eyes to their existence in order to force engagement and head-on confrontation, and to position teachers as agentive beings within a necessarily bounded space. A PAR approach is epistemologically enmeshed with critical pedagogy. Participatory action research has grand aims: to enable marginalised people to develop their critical reasoning or 'voice' and to achieve greater levels of social justice. By the end of the project teachers had reclaimed reading as their territory, were confident to act, at times in spite of, and not just because of, micropolitical and macropolitical imposition, and felt that they were able to justify actions accordingly. Thus the nexus between classroom practice and teachers' reading, knowledge and understanding was repeatedly explored and revisited. The active, cyclical design of the research encouraged a circumvolution of ideas and experience, leading to deeper reflexivity, and more firmly embedded change. In addition to producing knowledge, it also offered a different way of knowing (Noffke, 2012).

However, the process of effecting this kind of deep-rooted change is anything but straightforward. The value of this kind of PAR does not lie in neat research to improve student outcomes. Arguably, many PAR projects leave teachers feeling a level of anxiety and inadequacy because it has identified their shortcomings. This was certainly the case during the early SGRDs, which generated many such moments of recognition. Consequently, this is not an attempt to smooth over the difficult aspects of PAR. In developing teachers' ability to critique their practice and themselves as reading teachers, there was a sense of regression before we could collectively move forwards. Arguably, for radical educational change, it is necessary to arouse strong emotions as well as the ability to reflect critically on the myriad complexities involved in the teaching of reading. This will, inevitably, bring potential pain and personal challenge for teacher participants, and further ethical considerations become imperative in undertaking a project such as this.

7.2.5 Problematizing positionality in hierarchical school cultures

Finally, it is extraordinarily difficult to achieve a truly participatory mode of research given the power relations that exist as part of school cultures: so much so that I relinquished my role as Head of Department during the research. My role not just as an insider-teacher-researcher, but with the institutional power of being a departmental lead while working with teachers in my own department at Readborough College, gave insight into the insider-outsider complexity. The nature of this positionality itself constitutes a contribution to knowledge: how problematic it is to find a way to inhabit the multiple hyphens of insider-outsider-teacher-researcher. In spite of a genuine search for more 'innocent' forms of representation of the voices and concerns of participants, issues of power and authority inevitably permeate the research processes (MacLure, 2003, p. 104), however much the 'productive dilemma' might be acknowledged (*ibid.*). On one level, stepping away from the Head of Department responsibility was to do with the doctoral workload, but on another it was reflective of my desire to work more equally with my colleagues and to more fully embrace the democratic ideals which I had intended to underpin the research (Burton et al., 2008; Wells, 2001). It proved almost impossible to eliminate hierarchical power structures until I actually abnegated that Head of Department role, so deeply entrenched are they in the lived fabric of daily school life, yet this brought its own challenges in terms of continuing the research. I only realised this on the other side, as it were, when, in the second year of the project during the lesson observations, final teacher interviews and student focus group interviews, I discovered how much more difficult to organise they were when I no longer wielded any institutional, instrumental power. This was in stark contrast to the previous year when it had been straightforward to organise SGRDs and observations. Not only did I have to seek additional permissions, but participants themselves were less responsive. It was a fascinating clarification of something I had not entirely understood; and required increased levels of determination and far greater persistence to overcome. I found myself continually oscillating between the authority afforded by being a student at a university and the personal authority that had been reduced by my change in role; between 'master and surrender' (MacLure, 2003, p. 126). It was there in the trap between finding the 'authentic voice of the subject and the desire for certainty that leads researchers to override it' (*ibid.*) I was acutely conscious of this double bind during the research, as the participating teacher-researchers must

well have been themselves: the pressure and ultimate inevitability of ‘fabricating’ the self (ibid.).

7.3 Recommendations

The findings suggest that it may be necessary to rethink pedagogy from the inside, and to conceptualise successful professional development differently. Teacher development forms an independent journey, within a community of practitioners. Teachers are transformed through extended active engagement with values and beliefs in order to reconsider, and reconstruct, teacher identity. Alongside opportunities for teacher engagement with theory and research using a framework of critical pedagogy, this forms a more powerful route to teacher agency than the current dominant forms of professional development allow.

Ultimately, it is the business of active engagement, over an extended period of time, with values and beliefs alongside theory, that makes a difference. An intervention on its own is not enough to effect profound change, since teachers are resistant to change. Ideas require percolation over time, alongside the space and opportunity for dialogic discussion with colleagues in order to enable the complex, interconnected and, indeed, interlocking facets that are required to be a teacher of reading to be activated. It takes commitment to occupy the theory-practice hyphen. The conjoined lenses of my theoretical framework enabled these facets to be brought into sharp focus. The interlocking chain of becoming a teacher of reading begins with the important link of identity (Figure 7.1). Secondary English teachers teaching reading will necessarily draw on their personal knowledge and understanding of reading through their own encounters with it (Cremin, 2014), assimilated with their own past experiences as learners (Lortie, 1975), and reinforced through contact with a number of different teachers and classroom modes while teachers were first pupils, then teachers. This contributes to the tacit knowledge which teachers possess. Consideration of reading identity leads into exploration of reading process. Deepening understanding of the cognitive aspects of reading processes and reading theories, (including knowledge

about the Simple View of Reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary processing and schema construction and organisation, for example) is beneficial to reading teachers.

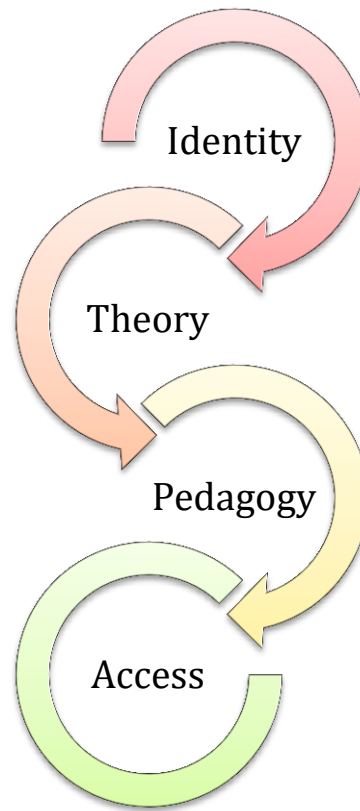


Figure 7.1 Interlocking chain of knowledge about reading

Together, identity and process enable teachers to construct an informed pedagogy for the teaching of reading, to solidify propositional knowledge. Explicit pedagogical strategies need investigation and topping up. These include strategies for engagement, strategies for managing class reading, experimentation with graphic organisers, and the reconstructive practices described in the data findings. These interlocking rings shape the way in which teachers offer their students access to books and texts, and, more importantly, the way in which teachers come to reject a deficit view of their students and reconceptualise them as capable readers. Finally, access constitutes teachers themselves reading with a greater knowledge about YA fiction; knowledge that enables them to recommend particular titles and engage in dialogue about current YA novels. Beyond this, access includes ways of managing visibility and facilitating greater accessibility of books for students, (through avoiding book distribution and returns ‘policing’ (Merga, 2015), for example.) Access also incorporates the drive to create

opportunities for students to read more and faster (Westbrook et al., 2019), initially prioritising narrative drive and comprehension above analysis.

Time is a crucial factor for teachers, and professional development in an area as complex as reading pedagogy is immensely time-consuming. Teachers already work long hours, averaging nearly fifty hours a week (DfE, 2019). Opportunities for personal and collaborative reflection with colleagues are limited, and where curriculum requirements and statutory guidance are regularly changing, professional development is often limited to keeping up with factors that will directly affect professional practice (ibid., 2019), rather than 'development' at a more fundamental level. So finding time and space for teachers to engage in meaningful reflection requires careful cultivation, is difficult to achieve, and goes against the grain of current policy. Yet it must be. Future models of professional development could incorporate the longitudinal nature of the SGRDs, as well as the in-depth exploration of current research and theory alongside safe dialogic and reflective spaces. From a critical pedagogy perspective, the historical position is also important, both as a way of understanding where those theories have emerged from, but also to what extent the theories and research have influenced existing educational policy and results in teachers needing to be agentic in their thinking.

Whitehead (2006, p158) positions practitioners as 'educational activists' when they move towards taking control of their professions, and refuse to have rules and values imposed on them that are difficult to reconcile with their own. Reaching this level takes time and investment in the process, and repeated practice of the kind of critical reflection that was enabled through this study. Such a longitudinal approach enables teachers to make sense of their practice and allows time to overcome cognitive dissonance. It is a process which offers the opportunity to move between embodied, tacit professional knowledge and more theorised, propositional knowledge, at the same time as exploring teachers' prior beliefs, values and assumptions about education. Space to undertake collaborative discussions with other professionals alongside the reading of academic literature encourages the shift. It is a process which provides the tools required to challenge hegemonic discourses in order to make teaching congruent with teachers' belief systems.

7.4 Limitations

The claims made in this research are, of course, non-generalisable, since they are based on action research within a single secondary institution. They do, however, offer a detailed insight into the way professional development models might be conceived of differently.

The idea of a self-selecting group of teachers is itself a limitation of the study, since these teachers are necessarily already predisposed towards thinking about reading and have chosen to invest CPD time in the project. The significant personal and pedagogical shifts that have been described are highly individual and there is no sense that this might be true of other teachers. There is a need for more longitudinal research into how teachers learn from evidence, how teachers learn about reading specifically, and how that learning translates into pedagogical experiences for students. It is very difficult to talk about in ways that usefully make the link between these three phases, and move from teachers to students. There remain few studies which have sought to link evidence and research engagement with changes in teachers' practice, and fewer still which manage to establish a link between teachers learning and directly improved outcomes for students within an educational institution.

My position as a novice researcher was problematic in the gathering of some of the empirical data, and this creates further limitations to the research. After the event, I thought of ways that might have enabled the student focus group interviews, for example, to be conducted differently in order to engender richer discussion. I wish, for example, that I had used students to randomly select cards for posing questions, just as I did in the first SGRDs, in order to move away from positioning myself as authoritative teacher and questioner. My interview technique, particularly in relation to the same student focus groups but also to the interventions during observation in the classroom, was clumsy at times. I reflect, ruefully, that I might inadvertently have shut down potentially fruitful avenues of dialogue. When looking at transcripts months after the interviews I note follow-up questions that I should have asked, or moments where I moved ahead with my pre-prepared questions when in fact greater patience might have prevailed. With hindsight, spending longer in getting to know the students, or selecting

students with whom I had already built a long term relationship may have been wise since interviews with children can be challenging when these relationships have not been established (Thomas, 2013).

A further limitation arises from the latterly applied lens of critical pedagogy. Fals Borda (1988) was concerned with a technique which he termed 'imputation' which positioned historical information at 'the interstices between research and action: it was only by inhabiting the past that one could imagine the future' (ibid. xxi). This really resonated with me, once the research was underway. On reflection I should have done more to highlight the history of English teaching and the role of policy in the SGRD meetings themselves. The dichotomy between policy and pedagogical ideals was implied in discussion, but not a dialogic focus. This is something I would address were I to repeat the project.

Similarly, examination of the survey data and the misalignment in teacher and student perception of the reading culture at Readborough College was only fully brought to light in the data analysis phase of the research, after the SGRDs had taken place. It would have been fruitful to see the teacher-researchers' perceptions of why students and teachers felt so differently about the climate of the reading culture. Although the student survey had been collaboratively designed, piloted with a small group of students, and been loosely based on an existing research questionnaire, there were a number of issues with the structuring of questions and responses. In the statement bank questions, for example, students were not required to rank the statements that they selected, so it was therefore difficult to make judgements about the priorities in terms of access, barriers, and reasons for reading. Some of the wording itself was also inherently problematic. For example, in results represented in Table 4.5: *How good a reader are you?* the choice of the word 'poor' in the ordinate scale from which students were selecting naturally builds in a deficit perception and may have affected results since students might be unlikely to select a negative term to apply to themselves.

Perhaps it forms part of the internalised discourse absorbed by teachers as part of the performative culture (Foucault, 2002) in which we operate. It might have been better to choose a descriptor such as 'tricky' (as in 'I find reading tricky') as a more emotionally acceptable phrase, and one which avoids the pejorative associations of adjectives such as 'poor' or 'struggling'.

A further related limitation rests with the lack of collective authorship achieved in the final instance. This is, of course, difficult to achieve within the parameters of PhD study but something that it would be more in line with PAR principles to aim for in future work of this kind.

Finally, the biggest issue affecting the claim for participatory research rests with the lack of reciprocity in the research process for students. The survey data was not shared with students, for example, in the same way that it was with the teachers. They very much retained the status of 'subjects' within the process which is along way from the ideal of PAR.

7.5 Concluding comments

The commodification of teaching reading under the banner of access and entitlement has been as reductive for teachers as it is for students. At Readborough College we had undertaken reading initiatives, prior to this research, in the name of engagement as a route to a quick fix with immediate outcomes and measurable impact, frequently in terms of reading level or reading age, or on some other quantifiable scale (Guskey, 2002). Like many other schools we had participated in enterprises like a banned books exhibit, or making the library look like a crime scene; issuing reading passports and setting up listening posts for classic novels. All these things served to create a buzz about reading in the short term, partly because they attempted to dress reading up as something else. Superficially attractive, they were unsupported by teachers' deeper understanding of the reading process. Rather than acting as a sticking plaster over pedagogical gaps and clashes, popular reading activities such as author visits, banned books exhibits, reading passports, listening posts for classic novels, and so on, can be far more successful as part of a more informed programme of exploring reading pedagogy with teachers and students than as individual, one-off events. If teachers engage with current research and theory, within a climate of critical reflection, while also having opportunities to engage in dialogue with each other, then such activities become more integrated into a wider, pedagogically-secure programme. Otherwise they remain

disjointed, unconnected events which simply borrow from someone else's (unexamined) theory. When the system appears to be designed to suppress pedagogical content knowledge through scripted lessons (DfES, 2003), opportunities for teachers to take back control are increasingly limited. UK teachers in recent years have largely been implementers of government policy rather than agents of it, and *how* teachers learn may ultimately have been affected. Moreover, the teaching profession has a long history of prizing academic excellence. The performance of students is celebrated annually in public examination success. Academic attainment is also sought amongst teachers in relation to subject knowledge, where a higher class degree or post-graduate qualification in the subject to be taught is valued and considered to be a key factor of 'good teaching' (Hickman & Gooda, 2020, p. 80). Yet, paradoxically, that same level of academic *pedagogical* knowledge seems to be less valued. Being a good reader and having an English Literature degree does not mean that an individual necessarily has a deep knowledge of cognitive reading processes. On the other hand, as the teacher-researchers in this study observed, that focus on reading is not foregrounded in ITE or typical forms of professional development in English. In the case of reading then, this important knowledge falls between two pillars. Professional development models are not adequate, in their current form, to achieve the kinds of rich opportunities for individual teachers that this research did.

Participatory, collaborative research today does not necessarily mean activism in the way that it might once have done, but it does mean ownership. For secondary English teachers and their students that may be the key to unlocking reading and its teaching. It is not just the books that have been poisoned (the notion with which this study began, with reference to both real and fictional examples) but our entire approach to the teaching of them. Eco's (1983) novel concludes with the climactic conflagration of the library of books. Fire in religious terms can be seen as a form of purification. It is my hope that this research will also light a fire that contributes to the reconstruction and reinvention, and indeed the 're-cognition', of reading teaching.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Semi-structured lesson observation schedule

Observation schedule

Date: _____ Teacher: _____
 Period: _____ Class: _____
 Novel: _____ Students: T: _____ F: _____ M: _____

Visibility: How are books on display, and how are they accessed?

Reading activity: Note timings of the following activities where applicable:

Activity		Start time	End time	Total time spent	Notes
Reading quietly					
Reading aloud					
Guided reading groups					
Answering questions					
Inter-pupil discussion					
Use of graphic organisers					
Use of reading journal					
Listening to teacher					
Teach/model reading strategies					
Meta-reading discussion (relationship with storyworld, contract with reader,)					
Other					

Engagement: What do pupils do and say? Note as many examples as you can.

Appendix 2 Sample questions from semi-structured individual teacher interview schedule

- What has changed about your teaching, and in particular your reading teaching, over the last 12-15 months?
- In what ways are you closer to being able to articulate a theory of teaching?
- Which reading or readings or discussion ideas have been most influential in changing practice?
- In what ways are you able to reconcile the tensions between reading for enjoyment and reading to answer an exam question in the classroom?
- Which ideas from our early readings and discussions have you been most drawn to and why?
- Can you describe a before and after reading lesson?
- What has changed about your classroom environment or the way students access books?

Appendix 3 Sample of questions from student focus group interview schedule

- What do you remember about reading in primary school?
- What do you remember about the process of learning to read?
- When you first came to Readborough College would you describe yourself as readers? Why?
- What do you notice is different about reading at secondary school from your primary school experience?
- What kinds of things do you think the school and your teachers do to promote reading?
- What do you like and dislike about reading in school?
- How much do you read at home?
- What is English? What happens in English lessons? What are your favourite things to do in English lessons? Why?

Appendix 4 Student survey questions



Students as Readers Questionnaire

Members of the English department are collecting information about reading habits and preferences of KS3 students. None of the questions are compulsory, but some may require a longer answer than others.

Please include as much information as you can - responses are anonymous.

What was your favourite book when you were in primary school?

Your answer _____

What have you read recently for your own pleasure?

Your answer _____

Was this..?

- ☐ In the last month
- ☐ Within the last three months
- ☐ Within the last six months
- ☐ Over six months ago

How do you usually get hold of books for your own reading?

- ☐ Home/parents
- ☐ School LRC
- ☐ Local library
- ☐ Book shop
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Other: _____

What books can you remember reading in English at KS3?

Your answer _____

List six authors of Children's or YA (Young Adult) fiction

Your answer _____

How many of the authors you listed have you read yourself?

- ☐ All of them
- ☐ Three or more of them
- ☐ One of them
- ☐ None

What are you currently reading?

Your answer _____

Where is your favourite place to read?

Your answer _____

Do you have access to books at home?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you have a kindle or other e-reader?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Given the choice, do you prefer to read books or in an electronic format?

☐ Books

☐ Electronic

What type of texts do you read?

Tick all that you would say you choose to read regularly

☐ Magazines

☐ Newspapers

☐ Biography/autobiography

☐ Other non-fiction

☐ Comics

☐ Poetry

☐ Manga

☐ Novels

☐ Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is poor and 5 is very good, how 'good' a reader do you consider yourself to be?

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Do you think that you read enough?

☐ Yes

☐ No; I would like to read more

☐ No, and I don't want to read more

I think I would read more if...

Tick as many statements as apply

- ☐ I had more time
- ☐ Someone read aloud to me
- ☐ My family encouraged me to read more
- ☐ My school encouraged me to read more
- ☐ Books were shorter
- ☐ I found it easier
- ☐ Books were cheaper
- ☐ My friends read more
- ☐ Libraries were better
- ☐ Other: _____

I read because...

Tick as many statements as apply

- ☐ It gives me a break
- ☐ I enjoy it
- ☐ I have to for school
- ☐ It helps me understand more about myself
- ☐ It helps me understand more about the world
- ☐ It is a skill for life
- ☐ It helps me find out what I want or need to know
- ☐ I don't read
- ☐ Other: _____

Which of the following statements do you agree with?

Tick any which apply

- ☐ I only read when I have to
- ☐ Reading is more for girls than for boys
- ☐ I like going to the LRC
- ☐ Reading is boring
- ☐ I can't find much to read that interests me
- ☐ Reading is one of my favourite pastimes
- ☐ I read all the time
- ☐ I read when there is nothing else to do

Who is your current English teacher?

Your answer _____

Are you

- ☐ Male?
- ☐ Female?

Appendix 5 Notations used in transcription

Layout	The stream of an individual's speech was organised into utterance segments.
-	Incomplete utterance were indicated by a hyphen
?!	These punctuation marks were used where I judged an interrogatory or exclamatory intention
CAPS	Capitals were used for words spoken with greater emphasis
...	Ellipsis indicates missing speech. Utterances may not have been consecutive but occurred within the same part of the conversation. i.e. an interruption, while recorded in the initial transcription, may not have been used in quotation during data analysis.
()	<p>Parenthesis were used to denote the manner in which something was said, or to indicate additional paralinguistic information (laughter).</p> <p>Parenthesis were also used at the end of each quoted utterance to give information about where the data came from; (Philippa, SGRD2) indicates the speaker and which meeting the speech utterance took place in. Abbreviations include:</p> <p>II – individual interview (numbered 1, 2 or 3)</p> <p>LO – lesson observation (numbered 1 or 2)</p> <p>RJ – research journal</p> <p>SFG – student focus group (along with the number of the interview, 1 or 2, and first initial of teacher of that class, for example, SFG2P = Student Focus Group 2, Philippa's class)</p> <p>SGRD – study group research discussion (numbered 1-6)</p> <p>TM - Teachmeet</p>
[]	Square brackets were used to insert missing information

Appendix 6 Student consent form and information sheet

RESEARCH INTO READING CONSENT FORM

Child's Consent

I _____ (write your name) agree to participate in the research project.

I understand that it is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time without any problems

I understand that my responses will be used in the research. I understand that my name will not be used and that the information will be confidential. It will not be possible to know who I am from the research project.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return this consent form signed to the English office or to your child's English teacher.

January 2017

Research into reading INFORMATION SHEET for students

The aim of the study is to research the nature of the reading culture at school at KS3 and KS4, and to consider ways that the reading culture might be further enhanced to support the engagement of all students in reading in and out of lessons. You have been offered a role in the study along with other Year 9 students. Your opinion on the process will be used to improve reading practices for you and other students across the English department in the future.

What will it involve?

You, as a pupil in your English lesson, will complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the project. Your English teacher will read two fiction books with your class over the Autumn term, as in your usual English lessons. During this time, a teacher-researcher will observe your class twice, making written notes, to see what kinds of reading activities you are doing with your teacher.

If you choose you can also volunteer to be interviewed as part of a focus group. The interview will be around 20 minutes and will take place at a time which is convenient to you. Whatever you say will be anonymous and put together with other students' opinions so that your individual views will not be obvious to teachers.

When the researcher writes the final report, all pupil, teacher and school names in the project will be anonymous so that no one can be identified. The only people with access to the information (data) collected will be the research team of five teachers at the school. They will ensure that the data is kept in a secure place. If you wish withdraw at any time during the project, you may do so, without giving your reasons.

If you are happy to take part in the project, you and your parents need to sign a consent form. If you or your parents/carers are NOT willing for you to be complete the questionnaire, be observed in the two lessons or to take part in the focus group interviews, please ask your parents/carers to sign the slip at the bottom of the consent form and bring this into school to your English teacher.

You do not need to share any personal information; you can just give your opinion on the resources and teaching methods and how well they work. The information will be used to see if changes in reading strategies could make a difference to reading progress and engagement at school.

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this research. Whether you do so or not will not affect your relationship with any of your teachers.

You are free to withdraw from the project at any time and without giving a reason.

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 7 Parent consent form and information sheet

RESEARCH INTO READING CONSENT FORM

I give permission for (pupil's name) _____ to take part in the research into reading study as described on the 'Research into reading' information sheet. I understand that information deriving from these activities will be used for research purposes.

I understand that my child/ward's participation is voluntary, that I can choose for them not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw my permission at any stage of the project without them being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my child/ward's personal information for the purposes of this study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. I have the right to withdraw consent for my child/ward's data to be used up until the start of the data-analysis process from January 2018.

Signed : _____ Date _____

Please Print:

Name of parent /guardian: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Research into reading INFORMATION SHEET for parents

The aim of the study is to research the nature of the reading culture at school at KS3 and KS4, and to consider ways that the reading culture might be further enhanced to support the engagement of all students in reading in and out of lessons. Your child has been offered a role in the study along with other Year 9 students. His/her opinion on the process will be used to improve reading practices for their class and for other students across the English department in the future. The Head Teacher has approved this study, considering that it will be of value to pupils and not, in any way, a risk to them.

What will it involve?

Pupils in English lessons will complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the project. Their English teacher will read two fiction books with the class over the Autumn term, as in usual English lessons. During this time, a teacher-researcher will observe the class twice, making written notes, to see what kinds of reading activities students are doing with their teachers.

Pupils may also, if they choose, volunteer to be interviewed as part of a focus group. The interview will be around 20 minutes and will take place at a time which is convenient to them. Whatever is said will be anonymous and put together with other pupils' opinions so that individual views will not be obvious to teachers.

When the researcher writes the final report, all pupil, teacher and school names in the project will be anonymous so that no one can be identified. The only people with access to the information (data) collected will be the research team of five teachers at the school. They will ensure that the data is kept in a secure place. If your child/ward wishes to withdraw at any time during the project, he/she may do so, without giving reasons.

If you are happy for your child/ward to take part in the project, you need to sign a consent form.

No personal information will be shared; pupils can just give their opinion on the resources and teaching methods and how well they work. The information will be used to see if changes in reading strategies could make a difference to reading progress and engagement at school.

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 8 Teacher consent form and information sheet

RESEARCH INTO READING CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature of this research into reading study as described on the 'Research into reading' information sheet. I understand that information deriving from these activities will be used for research purposes.

I give the researcher permission to present this work in written and/or oral form for teaching or presentation to advance academic knowledge without further permission from me provided that my name or identity is not disclosed.

I may withdraw at any time during the project without giving reasons.

Participant Signature

Date

Research into reading INFORMATION SHEET for teachers

Fostering a collaborative reading community in the secondary English classroom

With researcher Theresa Gooda

The purpose of the study is to consider reading theory with secondary English teachers in order to investigate students' engagement in the literature read in class for English lessons, and in students' engagement with independent, wider reading. The project is a response to concerns about a national and international decline in students' wider reading for pleasure reflected in the current institution, combined with policy requirements to foster a love of literature. In this project, concerns about levels of reading engagement for students are being linked with the apparent desire of teachers in the setting to understand more about reading processes and develop theoretical knowledge in order to investigate whether these two things are indeed connected; the aims are to build greater knowledge about the teaching of reading, make changes to the specific schemes of work in which reading is taught (through the shared reader) collaboratively create curriculum space for wider reading and closer consideration of the implicit messages about how reading is valued, and then explore to what extent these factors are catalysts for increased student engagement in reading and fostering of a love of literature. The following research questions will be addressed: What is the nature of the reading culture at Key Stage 3 at the school? What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom? Can instructional contexts and pedagogy in the secondary English classroom and in the Department as a whole, be developed to improve students' engagement in reading through teacher engagement with theory and research? What changes can be observed as a result of improved teacher knowledge and practice in the English classroom, and beyond?

You will be asked to read a range of literature relating to reading research and theory; keep a reflective log; take part in audio-recorded discussions; work with other volunteer English teachers during professional learning sessions in order to collaboratively design an intervention to take place for one term in English lessons in relation to the teaching of the 'shared' class reader; consider the possible relationship that may have with students' own wider reading.

Personal benefits you may get from this study are: gaining a deeper understanding of the reading culture at the school; engaging with existing theories about reading and current reading research; time for reflection on current practice; collaborative involvement in the design of reading intervention around the shared class reader.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decline to participate in the study but still take part in the professional development. Refusal to participate or withdrawal of your consent or discontinued participation in the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits or rights to which you might otherwise be entitled. The researcher may at her discretion remove you from the study for any of a number of reasons. In such an event, you will not suffer any penalty or loss of benefits or rights which you might otherwise be entitled.

All names in the project will be anonymised throughout the research process and confidentiality for the school, teachers and pupils is guaranteed. The only people to have access to the data will be the research team and they will ensure that the data is kept in a secure place, and will use data-encryption methods so that no names or individuals can be identified.

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex.

Appendix 9 Headteacher consent form and information sheet

RESEARCH INTO READING CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature of this research into reading study as described on the 'Research into reading' information sheet. I understand that information deriving from these activities will be used for research purposes.

I give the researcher permission to present this work in written and/or oral form for teaching or presentation to advance academic knowledge without further permission from me provided that my name or identity is not disclosed.

I may withdraw at any time during the project without giving reasons.

Head Teacher's Signature

Date

Research into reading INFORMATION SHEET for head teacher

Fostering a collaborative reading community in the secondary English classroom
With researcher Theresa Gooda

The purpose of the study is to consider reading theory with secondary English teachers in order to investigate students' engagement in the literature read in class for English lessons, and in students' engagement with independent, wider reading. The project is a response to concerns about a national and international decline in students' wider reading for pleasure reflected in the current institution, combined with policy requirements to foster a love of literature. In this project, concerns about levels of reading engagement for students are being linked with the apparent desire of teachers in the English department to understand more about reading processes and develop theoretical knowledge in order to investigate whether these two things are indeed connected; the aims are to build greater knowledge about the teaching of reading, make changes to the specific schemes of work in which reading is taught (through the shared reader) collaboratively create curriculum space for wider reading and closer consideration of the implicit messages about how reading is valued, and then explore to what extent these factors are catalysts for increased student engagement in reading and fostering of a love of literature. The following research questions will be addressed: What is the nature of the reading culture at Key Stage 3 at the school? What do teachers currently know about reading and what are their practices in the English classroom? Can instructional contexts and pedagogy in the secondary English classroom and in the Department as a whole, be developed to improve students' engagement in reading through teacher engagement with theory and research? What changes can be observed as a result of improved teacher knowledge and practice in the English classroom, and beyond?

Teachers be asked to use professional learning session time to read a range of literature relating to reading research and theory; keep a reflective log; take part in audio-recorded discussions; work with other volunteer English teachers during professional learning sessions in order to collaboratively design an intervention to take place for one term in English lessons in relation to the teaching of the 'shared' class reader; consider the possible relationship that may have with students' own wider reading.

Pupils will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the project. Their English teacher will read two fiction books with the class over the Autumn term, as in usual English lessons. During this time, a teacher-researcher will observe the class twice, making written notes, to see what kinds of reading activities students are doing with their teachers.

Pupils may also, if they choose, volunteer to be interviewed as part of a focus group. The interview will be around 20 minutes and will take place at a time which is convenient to them. Whatever is said will be anonymous and put together with other pupils' opinions so that individual views will not be obvious to teachers.

Teachers' participation is voluntary. They may decline to participate in the study but still take part in the professional development.

All names in the project will be anonymised throughout the research process and confidentiality for the school, teachers and pupils is guaranteed. The only people to have access to the data will be the research team and they will ensure that the data is kept in a secure place, and will use data-encryption methods so that no names or individuals can be identified.

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex.

Appendix 10 Teachers' final collaborative reading routines manifesto

Our aim is to generate a secure methodology for the teaching of literature, underpinned by application of reading theory. We have foregrounded reading for pleasure in our discussion, and considered reading for study and its connections with writing. Through the intervention phase of the research participating teachers (along with a nominated class) shall aim to:

Articulate reading approaches and pedagogy

Since reading is an enormously complex cognitive process, as English teachers we have a responsibility to teach it carefully. We need to understand what we are doing and why.

In addition, participating teachers may choose to:

Make time for both reading for enjoyment and reading for study in the classroom, by encouraging students to read independently and providing time and access for them to do alongside opportunities for response to reading episodes; undertake explicit reading teaching during more formal reading phases.

Use reading autobiographies to encourage students to reflect on their own reading journeys and make sense of their attitudes towards reading and current reading habits. Continue to reflect on our own.

Make the linking of reading and writing more explicit in teaching episodes.

Undertake 'faster reads' (Westbrook et al., 2019) **so that narrative is the driving force when students first encounter a text.** Extend use of **graphic organisers** (rather than extended written responses) during this phase of reading. Analysis can come later.

Teach and model strategies explicitly to show students what reading looks like - confusions and all. Encourage self-monitoring of comprehension: summarising, questioning, predicting, etc., then 'Go Meta': **invite students to reflect on the complexities of reading themselves** - allow students to reflect on the narrative contract offered between reader and writer, and encouraging them to identify their relationship with the storyworld, perhaps explicitly identifying the moment of 'entry' into fictional world in different texts.

Make access more visible, perhaps by not keeping an 'obvious' record of book distribution for class readers, and giving away 'old' departmental books for students to keep, for example.

Measure the amount of time spent in actual reading during the term, with a commitment to increasing it from 'usual' practice.

Use peer talk, pairs and groups, to encourage engagement with reading.