RECREATIONAL READING: A CASE STUDY OF RECREATIONAL READING HABITS OF SOME PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER-LIBRARIAN IN INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

MINOR DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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This is my own original and unaided work that has not been submitted to any other institution for assessment purposes. All sources, references and other assistance have been acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

An interest in the topic of recreational reading was prompted by the observations and experience of the researcher. The study that followed was intended to confirm or refute the theory of the decline of reading. A perceived decline in reading has concerned teachers and librarians and strategies have been devised to reverse this trend. The strategies used by the researcher were adopted and adapted to meet the pupils' recreational reading needs. Methods that were likely to reverse the trend in the decline of reading were used with the expectation that the reading programme would affect reading behaviour and that pupils would be encouraged to read for pleasure.

The case study method which included both a questionnaire and discussion with the pupils was used. Studies of this kind are scarce and out-dated, but this investigation has been of value to the pupils, teachers and the researcher as teacher-librarian, for all have benefitted from the stimulating and interesting input from the interventive strategies.

A number of the results proved to be unforeseen, such as a decline in recreational reading generally throughout the group, and also the children's perception of the short amount of time they spend viewing television. These were contrary to the findings of all previous studies and should be treated with circumspection.

The role of the school library and the teacher-librarian are essential in schools today as they are of great benefit to the whole school community. The study has proved without a doubt that availability of reading resources and guidance to the pupils in making stimulating and interesting choices should be the aim of all concerned with children's reading so that their needs can be met and the reading habit fostered.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to explore the proposition that as pupils grow older they read less fiction, as other recreational pursuits begin to multiply and expand. The theory that there is a decline in recreational reading as children grow older is well established in articles on children's literature. Television has become targeted as the culprit and there is literature to support this claim as well as literature to refute its detrimental effect on children's reading. In the researcher's experience at Grove Primary School, library statistics have shown a decline in the reading of fiction as the pupils in Standards Four and Five become more involved in project work, sport and social activities.

The researcher is the teacher-librarian at the above-mentioned school and has held this position for the last sixteen years. Being in charge of the library and also the teaching of Media Guidance (formerly known as Book Education), the researcher has gained valuable experience in children's literature and in children's reading habits. Over the years it has become noticeable that fewer senior fiction books are being borrowed by the older pupils. Media Guidance lessons often take the form of introducing pupils to new books, or quality books which are worth being read for their social interest or subject matter. In recent years pupils generally have shown very little interest in what is on offer, in marked contrast to the situation a number of years ago. Attractive book displays and posters have caught the attention of younger pupils but the readers among the older pupils prefer to choose

their own books and in their own time - usually when the rest of the class is not around.

Reading is considered to be of prime importance in schooling and there are numerous methods and books on the mechanism of reading and how it should be taught. This dissertation concentrates on the importance of recreational reading, or narrative reading. Evidence of this belief is found in the literature and is supported by numerous educationists, librarians and parents.

The researcher realized the need to examine the theory in the light of the observed decline in the borrowing of recreational reading material in the senior section of the school. Regarding the decline in recreational reading, the displacement theory was considered. Was there any displacement of reading by activities such as sport, hobbies or television viewing as pupils reach the upper standards in the primary school?

Another factor that needed to be studied was the importance of literature in children's development. Results of a questionnaire that was administered indicated a need for the introduction of interventive strategies in the different classes and the promotion of narrative in the Media Guidance lessons.

2. Synopses of Chapters 2 to 5

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the various aspects of the study. This includes reasons why recreational reading is considered of extreme importance by authorities in the field; reasons why some children read and why others do not; the developmental stages of children and how this affects book selection and the changes in reading interests and leisure pursuits; the importance of reading aloud and the role of television in the lives of children.

Chapter 3 deals with the method chosen for this empirical study - the case study - and why it was considered to be applicable for the investigation. The researcher was influenced by Busha and Harter (1980) who describe the steps in conducting a case study.

The conduct of the investigation into the reading behaviour of upper primary school pupils that was undertaken at Grove Primary School, is the subject of Chapter 4. This chapter handles the administering of the questionnaires and includes a number of class discussions where time permitted. The investigation continues in Chapter 5 with a discussion of the strategies that have been used to encourage the pupils to read for pleasure. It should be noted that the researcher, in the position of teacher-librarian, will maintain the use of a variety of ways to introduce literature in the Media Guidance lessons at the school as there is a need for continuing work in this field.

The dissertation concludes with a discussion on the value of the study undertaken and the limitations of such research. The decline of reading (not only fictional reading) in the teenage years has been the subject of many review articles and research papers for many decades. It has therefore been an ongoing problem but one that needs to be considered and handled continually. Implications for future practice are considered and recommendations made for promoting recreational reading.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CONTEXT - A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Importance of recreational reading

Numerous authors of articles on reading state its importance (Butler, 1986; Chambers, 1983; Cullinan, 1992; Dubow, 1979; and many others), but in most cases the emphasis is on reading for information *and* for pleasure and not for pleasure alone. Yet when one analyses the articles, one notices that it is recreational reading that is being promoted - a desire to maintain a lifelong interest in reading. Many of the writers point out that reading is taught as a subject at school until the pupils can master its mechanics and then they are left to their own devices. Vast research projects have been undertaken to ascertain the most effective methods of the teaching of reading but it is not the purpose of the researcher to go into depth on this aspect of reading.

Far less has been done to discover what actually happens to a child when he or she reads a story - what feelings are engendered while reading the text; the effect the story has; the changes in attitude it has brought about; the growth in maturity; and so on. Lonsdale and Mackintosh (1973:24) mention that "research gives little definite information about the effects of particular types of stories or activities on individual children", but these observations were made more than two decades ago. It seems, however, that later research has not been able to add much more to the subject of what happens to children when they read (Triggs: in Gawith, 1991:5). With one accord though, the authors writing on children's literature state that reading is good for children and that it should become a lifelong habit (Hitchcock, 1993; Spiegel, 1981; Stahlschmidt and Johnson, 1984; Staiger, 1979). There

are many authorities on children's literature who believe that not all texts are necessarily "good", and that "pulp" fiction, "bad" or "mediocre" books should not be promoted or encouraged, although there is definitely a place for popular fiction in our culture (Dubow, 1979; Russell, 1979; Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1977).

The researcher believes that this study should briefly define the process of reading to gain a more comprehensive view of the topic and so to place into perspective the particular focus of the study. The dissertation, however, is confined to a narrower area, that of recreational reading which was the main subject of the investigation.

In answer to the simple question: "What is reading?" Spink (1989:1-3) states that a simple answer is what is to be expected, but that there are a number of different answers. Reading is a "complex process", a "dynamic activity", but basically one reads to comprehend the meaning of some printed or written text. The reader does not just passively absorb meaning from the print but actively contributes to the text by interpreting and extrapolating from his/her own experience. Iser (1978: 107) argues that reading is not a direct "internalization". It is not a "one-way process" and he sets out to describe the reading process as a "dynamic *interaction* between text and reader."

It is necessary to explain what is meant by the term "recreational reading". Articles on recreational reading mention "reading for pleasure" (Spiegel, 1981); "narrative" reading (Meek, 1982); "literature" (Lonsdale and Mackintosh, 1973; Saxby, 1987); the reading of "fiction" (Protherough, 1983); and the reading of "stories" (Dyer, 1993). They are all referring to the same subject. However, although there are similarities in most of these terms there are also some differences which should be briefly elucidated.

When reading for pleasure many children prefer to read non-fiction or factual books. The study undertaken was expressly concerned with texts that did not contain facts *per se* and pupils were thus requested to write down the books that they had read that were not factual. Reading for pleasure embodies not only fictional reading but all reading that an individual does for pleasure. Books chosen for the interventive strategies in each class had to meet the criterion that they were not expressly factual. However, some books chosen by the pupils, for example the Willard Price adventure series, include many interesting facts but are nevertheless classified as fiction and were therefore considered acceptable for the study.

Meek (1978:75) states that "narrative" is the "primary act of mind" and that it is used to

> make sense of the world and to feel at home in it, compensating in dreams for what we are denied, putting to rights what we feel is crooked, re-ordering experience the better to accommodate it.

In "narrative" we find a term that has a number of similes - namely, stories, tales, anecdotes, novels. The term "fiction" also accurately portrays texts that were read in this study. However, Protherough (1983: 17) points out that writers do not always agree on its definition and that fiction "is a category which cannot be defined by particular qualities, nor marked off by secure frontiers from other written modes." Can one accurately classify a story about a famous person as biography in non-fiction, or amongst the "story" books?

Another term that is used extensively is that of "literature", but this term embodies a number of meanings and as can be seen by the following definitions, covers a wider area than was envisaged in this study :

> the art of composition in prose and verse; the whole body of literary composition universally, or in any language, or on a given subject, etc; literary matter; printed matter; humane learning; literary culture or knowledge. (Chambers dictionary, 1993)

Spiegel (1981:3) defines recreational reading "as voluntary reading of self-selected materials, either for information or for pleasure." As was explained above, the researcher's aim was to confine the reading of texts to those read purely for fun and in which the use of imagination was required. Texts that were read for information were excluded, but it must be pointed out here that no pupil was forbidden to read factual books during the time of the study. Spiegel (1981:3) continues by stating that "the final goal of a recreational reading program is that students will enjoy reading and seek it as an activity."

The researcher's aim was to promote the enjoyment of reading and to encourage pupils to become involved in the reading activity for the fun that could be experienced from the books they read.

It is possible to tabulate the importance of recreational reading. Lonsdale and Mackintosh (1973:24) state succinctly that stories:

- provide opportunities for fun, relaxation, and recreation;
- help individuals define their roles in the home, school and community;
- help them to understand society and the people in it;
- help them to become acquainted with different cultures in the world;
- help them to understand their problems and the problems of others;
- develop pride in their own cultural heritage;
- help them to develop their own set of values which are in harmony with society;
- build a sensitivity to beauty in them and help to develop a permanent

interest in literature.

If the above are the effects of recreational reading or the reading of stories, then it is understandable that authors argue that reading is "good", for the above attributes will certainly produce a society of well-rounded citizens.

An authority in the field, Bruno Bettelheim (1979) points out that bringing up children in this world is not an easy matter and that parents and educationists should be concerned about teaching them the importance of the meaning of life. He believes that it is through folk fairy tales that children can discover the deeper truths of life. These tales can be experienced on two levels - on the surface where the story is read for its pure enjoyment and satisfactory ending, but also on the deeper level where the real issues of life are tackled. He believes it is of utmost importance that children are exposed to these stories because the issues, difficulties, situations and feelings in the stories can be explored. When this happens children's inner resources, emotions, imagination and intellect can be developed.

Another reason why stories are important, not only for children but also for adults, is that we need to have fantasy in our lives. Apart from life becoming extraordinarily dull with a surfeit of facts we also need to use our imaginations and fantasize. It has been observed that society would make little progress if there were no fantasies for where would inventors, engineers, scientists, artists, musicians and writers receive inspiration if they did not use their imaginations?

Each culture has a store of tales that promote its social mores. From these stories each generation is initiated into its cultural heritage - the values, the beliefs, the codes of behaviour, the experiences, the meaning of life according to that culture. To fail to provide opportunities for these stories to

be read is to neglect the valuable contribution they can make to society in the rearing of children. It is of extreme importance that stories become a part of children's leisure or recreational time.

It is argued that children who have been introduced to books and stories from an early age are far more advanced linguistically than those who have not been exposed to literature. It is also argued that school-going children who have experienced the power of books and listened to stories before coming to school, are more literate and able to understand the teacher's talk (Dyer, 1993:3). Staiger (1979:71) states that it is important to attract children to books and reading as early as possible in childhood so that lifelong reading habits may be inculcated. He believes that this is the reason for so many special kinds of reading programmes being developed and introduced. Triggs (in: Gawith, 1991:4) believes that to be able to "read competently, confidently, flexibly and fluently is *power*": [my emphasis] and therefore she believes in the "importance of reading and the value of literature for young people."

Dubow (1979:2-3) states that first and foremost "reading is a pleasurable activity". This pleasure can occur at different levels such as "intellectual pleasure", "emotional pleasure" and "sensuous pleasure". Thus thought and logic are stimulated, new ideas are generated and argument and counter-argument are possible (intellectual pleasure); deep feelings of joy, sadness, hope, pity, and so on are stimulated (emotional pleasure); and the visual senses are stimulated by imagery and rhythm (sensuous pleasure). She points out emphatically that reading however, is not a substitute for living and experience (1979:8). The document entitled *English for ages 5 to 16* of the British National Curriculum is concerned about reading and warns teachers against neglecting "the pleasure principle". It also points out that "children should be given opportunities for reading for fun, and that this

should be promoted right through to the final years of schooling" (Allison, 1991:8).

2.2 Reasons why children read and why they do not

Staiger (1979:19) cites research by Gray and Rogers who have compiled a list of reasons why people read. He states that from the list it appears that "the habit of reading is based upon real human needs." This list of purposes for reading is as follows:

- As a ritual, or from force of habit
- From a sense of duty
- Merely to fill in or kill time
- To know and understand current happenings
- For immediate personal satisfaction or value
- To meet practical demands of daily living
- To further avocational interests
- To carry on and promote professional or vocational interests
- To meet personal-social demands
- To meet socio-civic needs and demands (good citizenship)
- For self-development or improvement, including extension of cultural background
- To satisfy strictly intellectual demands
- To satisfy spiritual needs

Not all the above reasons apply to children in primary school, but it will be noticed that many of the children's needs match those of adults. There may be one reason why a child reads or there may be many. All children during their schooling will have to read for information as their teachers demand that they complete projects or set exercises. The reading habit is one which

most educators want instilled in pupils at as early an age as possible. Thereafter, if it is a habit it is considered a "good" one. Children are often told to read and thus they might read out of a "sense of duty"; many children state that they read because at that moment there is nothing else to do and they want to "kill time"; some children read because it does give them "personal satisfaction" and some children read because they want to be intellectually stimulated.

The term "reading habits" needs to be defined here. Carter (1986:1) states that the term "has been taken to embrace rather more than the term immediately expresses, for it is frequently not the habits *per se* which are important ... but more broadly their underlying causes and their implications for, effects on and relationships to all other aspects of a young person's life and development." Ward (1977:16) points out that "[T]he term 'reading habits' suggests the sociological aspect of the reading process, the groups of readers, patterns and types of behaviour." As in Ward's study, this study "also refers to activities related to reading and to psychological values in reading, and also includes non-readers: the whole range of behaviour, in fact, related to reading, but distinguished from the physiological aspects." This brief overview of reading behaviour helps to place this aspect of the study into a wider context.

However, when considering why children read, it is also necessary to ascertain why they do not read. Many excuses are given for not reading among adults but Donald (1979) has categorized child non-readers into four groups, the largest being children who have a disability in learning to read and who therefore only read when they are compelled to do so. He has also identified a group which he terms the "socio-cultural" group because these children fall socially and culturally "outside the mainstream of the world of literature" - the values, language, goals, rewards, contents in this literature

are different from theirs and thus have little real meaning for them. A third group of non-readers Donald calls the "motivational" group - children who are not interested in reading for different reasons but mainly because "it does not turn them on". The last group consists of children who do not read because material for them to read is not readily accessible to them and thus Donald calls these children the "material availability" group.

The third group is the target area for this empirical study - those who do not read because they just do not like reading and believe that it does nothing for them as there are no rewards. The other three groups do not apply to this investigation - the pupils at Grove Primary School do not suffer from disabilities as it not a school for pupils with specialized needs; few, if any, of the pupils are socially or culturally different from the literature that is presented to them; and thirdly, there is a large school library and many classrooms have book collections so the material for reading is readily available.

Donald (1979: 4-5) points to a number of reasons why pupils in this "motivational" group are not motivated to read, among which are:

- the lack of personal involvement (they feel no sense of achievement or fulfilment)
- the lack of parental support (where the parents do not encourage reading or do not read themselves)
- lack of interest at school (reading is taught as a subject but not promoted for enjoyment)
- too many other interests to compete for the leisure time available.

This last reason can be explored for further study, for it is this lack of motivation to read when there are so many other options, that is the basis for

this investigation. Brindley (1993:221) and Donald (1979:5) both mention that the South African climate and the culture are not conducive to a reading tradition. South Africans are far more sport orientated and the out-door life beckons children to swim and visit the beach. Donald also blames the "canned, ready-made entertainment" which competes too for children's time.

Brindley, in support of his theory, states that the Americans, the English and the Russians are far more motivated to read than South Africans. It is interesting to note that he holds up Americans as an example, yet they are criticized for reading fewer books than people in England, France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. In fact, Barmore and Morse (1979:75) state that it is estimated that only ten percent of Americans read eighty percent of the books and that even college graduates do not read a book a year. Comparative studies are not available for South Africa but it is likely that reading is generally low on the list of interests.

The lack of motivation to read affects a large percentage of White South Africans. This situation, however, is found particularly among Black people where there is little or no culture of reading as yet, as there is still a high rate of illiteracy and lack of suitable reading material and libraries (Brindley, 1993:221). Fortunately, the picture is not all gloomy, for Brindley says that whereas ten years ago there was no reading tradition at all, today there are some "strands" and the hope is that in another ten years' time there will be more reading taking place at home and in schools (1993:224).

Donald suggests that it is from this "motivational" group, who feel that there is "insufficient reward in the activity of reading", where the most change can be effected and where non-readers can be retrieved (1979:5).The interventive strategies that were incorporated into the lessons were ways in which the researcher attempted to foster a desire to read. "Reluctant

Houghton-Hawksley, 1983; Leeson, 1977), are pupils who are able to read but need encouragement and motivation in order to explore books and discover different types of stories. The interventive strategies therefore were introduced after having gathered information from a questionnaire which exposed the need for all pupils throughout the school to become familiar with a variety of books, particularly ones that would lead to a fostering of the reading habit. These strategies employed by the researcher in the Media Guidance lessons were attempts to motivate the pupils, particularly those who were unwilling to read in their leisure time.

2.3 Developmental stages of children

Librarians and teachers who have the desire to provide children with quality literature and books suitable for the age range and interest level, need also to concern themselves with a knowledge of what is broadly termed "child development". Hitchcock (1993:243) comments:

> Research indicates that reading patterns do tend to follow some kind of path determined by the maturity and the psychological development of the reader. These patterns form some guidelines which are obviously very flexible.

Spink (1989:15) lists a whole range of developments that make up the "development of children", namely, "physical, intellectual, language, emotional, personality, social, moral and spiritual." He points out that child development is a complex subject and his list "a crude device"and an "artificial categorization" to enable one to study the matter.

There are numerous studies on the development of children and most authorities on children's literature refer to Jean Piaget and Vygotsky and

their theories of intellectual development. Brady (1987:28-34) also mentions Kohlberg's study of moral development; studies by Maslow and Erikson of emotional and personal development; and Chomsky's study of language development.

The discipline of child development has implications for such an empirical study as the one undertaken and therefore it is essential that each type of development is briefly considered for the guidance that can be given on the selection of children's literature. Brady (1987:26) points out that understanding child development is not a blueprint for "matching books to the characteristics of developmental stages". She argues too that this knowledge not only makes an indisputable contribution to the quality of children's books, but that it also helps to entice children to read.

A warning is given that there are limitations:

- variability in the developmental stages particularly in the moral and intellectual stages
- developmental stages must not be used as "infallible guides for determining literary preference" as children may select stories for different reasons than the ones maintained in the stages
- children do not "function exclusively according to a particular stage" but "experience a stage mixture"

Spink (1989: 16) states that it is necessary to have "a map" before one considers "the ways in which reading can support" the various kinds of growth. He mentions, too, that as so much attention has been given to child development "it should be possible to find a generally-accepted theory" and "a basis for guidelines, not [for] a mechanistic procedure, to match children with books." He points out that the obvious basis is "direct observation of

actual children." This was the basis for Jean Piaget's studies as he observed the growth of his three children.

Piaget divided intellectual development into four fixed age-related stages. Stage Three that of the "concrete operational stage (7-11 years)" - which compares with Vygotsky's "pseudo-concepts and potential concepts" stage; and Stage Four the "formal operational stage (12 onwards)" - which compares with Vygotsky's "genuine concepts" stage, are the two stages which cover the age range of the children involved in this investigation Brady, 1987:29-30; Gillespie and Conner, 1975:32-33).

Spink (1989: 20) warns that one cannot just apply Piaget's ideas to reading, as it is not such a simple matter, but by knowing the different stages one can apply this knowledge to book selection. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1986:33) have this to say:

> As children enter the period of concrete operations, approximately ages seven to eleven, they reach a new level of self development that allows them to understand some of the ways they are related to other people. Through play and language, they seek to understand the physical and social world. This seems to imply the importance of realistic fiction which will encourage children to interact with story characters who are involved in some sort of conflict resolution.

Of use to the researcher and other teachers or librarians are the recommended stories and authors for this stage. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1986:33-34) argue that as children move through this stage of their development they are beginning to "handle events of the past" but they are also becoming "able to think in terms of the future" so that they are being

prepared for fantasy and science fiction. Moral values become internalized early in the concrete operational stage and later "the rules that govern their lives" are examined. The desires of individuals take precedent over established or adult authority in fiction for children at this stage; characters who question the norm or reject the traditional rules and authority feature in many stories.

Piaget's period of "formal operations" begins approximately at age eleven and ends at approximately age fifteen. The validity of information is questioned as the ability to compare, perceive and contrast things develops. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1986:34) comment that literature will thus include:

- situations in which readers can be involved with the characters and use their ability to interpret their "needs and feelings in terms of their relations to one another";
- provision of experiences where fiction is contrasted with nonfiction as in contrasting historical and biographical fiction with real biography and historical material"
- episodes that "build towards a climax and resolution" thus using readers' ability to be "more aware of relationships within the structure of a story"

Selectors involved in book selection need to bear in mind the characteristics of these stages but are warned that the choice of literature must not be limited to definite age ranges, as normally children do not "function exclusively according to a particular stage" (Brady, 1987:27). However, King (1970:145-146) cites studies that indicate that elementary school children "enjoy stories of action, mystery, adventure, horses and dogs." These studies show that "[i]nterest in mysteries, recreation and sports continues to increase, and interest in cowboy stories and fairy tales decreases." Studies

of children aged ten to fifteen show that girls favour "stories of home life, romance, school adventures, fairy tales and animals while "boys of all ages were more interested than girls in science, invention, sports, and violent adventure." Although these studies are dated, more recent studies (Marshall, 1982 ; Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1986) show similar distinctions.

For further comment on children's reading interests see Chapter 6.

2.4 The importance of reading aloud

One of the main techniques in introducing stories or books to children is to read these stories to the children aloud. Jennings (1990:570) explains that as a teacher she would often talk about books to encourage the pupils to read them but this did not persuade them to actually read the books for themselves. Realizing her failure to encourage reading, she decided that to introduce her pupils to good books she would have to read aloud to them. Her experience has been that by choosing the right book to read aloud (and this is no easy matter) she has begun to "hook" her pupils onto books and reading. Her belief is that we in the position to do so just "cannot afford not to read aloud" (1990:568).

An expert in the field of reading aloud, Jim Trelease, has been an inspiration to many teachers and librarians with his helpful advice and short summaries of good books to read aloud. The practice of reading aloud to children is not a new one as it has always been considered as having extremely valuable results. Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984:146) quote Kimmel and Segel, who state that reading aloud is acknowledged to be "the most effective, simplest and least expensive way to foster in children a lifelong love of books and reading."

With the publication of his book *The Read-aloud Handbook*, Jim Trelease has revived an interest in reading aloud (1984). He states that it was the decline of reading in schools that affected him profoundly and he mentions that at some schools when he asked the question: "What have you read lately?" the pupils responded by naming their class textbooks! He determined to set to rights this state of affairs by providing "a simple how-to guide for parents, teachers and librarians on reading aloud to children" and included a list of recommended titles (1984:20).

Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984:146) state that this renewed interest in reading aloud may be as a result of the "phenomena" (sic) called "aliteracy". A person who is able to read but does not do so is known as an "aliterate". After learning how to read, the next step for the pupils should be that they are taught to want to read and this is what Trelease has set out to do in his book. He believes that the desire to read should be "a prerequisite and/or co-requisite to learning how to read" (Stahlschmidt and Johnson, 1984:146).

Research has been conducted into the effects of reading aloud and Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984:146-148) argue that reasons for its importance are:

- an improvement in reading and listening comprehension which has been achieved where reading aloud programmes are administered
- the enrichment of vocabulary and through the hearing of stories the development of language
- the attitudes towards reading have changed and there is a more positive approach to it
- the desire to read after hearing a book read aloud
- a wider variety of books can be shared with children, particularly those which require above-average reading ability but should not be

neglected

- the exposure to the variety and richness of language
- the experiences of others can be vicariously sampled; imaginations wakened; appreciation of self and others through different characters can be stimulated
- the opportunity for shared experiences such as joy and sorrow
- the provision of a basis for discussion where all are equals and none are precluded because of inadequate reading ability
- the teacher or librarian reading to them provides the pupils with a role model

Although in many schools teachers read to their junior primary pupils, unfortunately this practice falls away, even in the language classes, in most upper primary standards. It has been argued by a number of authorities that many children lack the ability to read books which interest them as television has developed interests and appreciation levels above their reading ability levels. However, reading aloud can assist in this matter as children become exposed to good literature and encouraged to read the books for themselves. After hearing about a wide variety of interesting subjects, they can read and do further research.

Nimon (1992:23-24) studied reasons why adults read and why they do not read in an attempt to discover what makes a reader. She used twenty-seven papers of former students in her children's literature classes to investigate the question. Although this is a very small, unscientific sample, information from these papers is very illuminating. Of interest here, is the response from the students, most of whom indicated that they had become readers through someone in the family or a teacher or teacher-librarian having read aloud to them at school. Nimon states that her investigation should be an encouragement to teacher-librarians who play an important part in

developing "enthusiastic and successful readers." This is indeed motivation for the researcher to continue reading aloud to the classes each week, but to heed Jennings' admonition that the choice of book must be right.

2.5 The role of television

No study of reading habits or use of leisure time fails to reflect on the role of television. Trelease (1984:97) states that "[i]n its short lifetime, television has become the major stumbling block to literacy in America. For all its technological achievement, television's negative impact on children's reading habits - and therefore their thinking - is enormous." There are numerous authorities who agree with him (it is commonly called the American child's "third parent" or the "electronic parent") and there are those who disagree, believing rather in the positive impact television has made on society and its children.

A number of statistics regarding the viewing habits of television viewers in America are quoted by different authorities. Breslin and Marino (in: Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1977:596) have this to report regarding children's viewing:

- by the time a child reaches high school he/she will have spent an average of 22 000 hours watching TV - that is twice the time the child will have spent in school
- preschoolers watch an average of 50 hours a week; the only other activity in which more time is spent is sleeping
- nearly half the 12-year-olds in a study watched on average six or more hours of television each day

The Human Sciences Research Council monitored children's viewing habits in South Africa over a twelve year period (Barker in: Packard, 1986:49). Included in their findings were:

- That pupils in Standards Three to Ten average 20 hours viewing a week - accounting for up to 40 percent of leisure time.
- That primary school children find "instructional" television boring, and would rather watch a drama or serial.
- That significantly less time is spent on homework, sport and reading by children who watch a lot of television. Children who are dedicated to their studies or leisure activities, however, are able to resist television.

These statistics would have little meaning except that it appears that American children and South African children, generally, watch a great deal of television. This will in all likelihood influence their behaviour, their interests, their values and the way they think, and there will be less time for other leisure pursuits including reading for pleasure.

Phillips (1986:43) explains how "the body reacts to the TV much in the same manner as to a physically addictive minor depressant drug" resulting in children becoming "glued" to the television. He cites child development experts who advise that pre-school children "should watch a maximum of one hour of television a day" and that older children may watch two hours a day, for the more the child watches the worse the effect. Even so-called "educational" programmes, those that have been produced to teach basic skills have "flaws". These experts encourage parents to read to their children as in their view, books have a beneficial effect. Stories help children to use their imaginations - they can picture the characters, the events, the places; stories can be stopped at any point and questions asked so that the child is

in control of the medium and not vice versa as in the case of television (Osborn, 1988:253; Phillips, 1986:45-46).

To read to oneself takes far more effort than watching television. Television is fast-moving and action-packed and children, who have grown up never having known a world without television, find that if a book does not plunge them into action at a fast pace, complain that the story is boring and refuse to read further. Many children find reading to be an anti-social activity and do not consider it a pleasure to read (Meek, 1982:93).

A positive aspect of television is its promotion of books which have been made into films or televised. According to reports from bookshops and libraries when a book has been serialised, shown on television or advertised that it will be screened, sales and requests for those books have risen sharply. Stanton (1978:31-32) states that apart from encouraging children and adults to read those books, the publishing industry is boosted as it feels the impact of the television industry with its increase in sales. He mentions a two-way flow: books are adapted to the television medium and successful television programmes are converted into books (1978:34-35). Thus authorities see in the book and in television a "complementarity of technologies" and not the "displacive fallacy" which Boorstin (1978:7-8) calls "the fallacy that an invention is a conqueror and makes the predecessor surrender".

Experts in education, child development, library services and even parents are concerned about the effect of television on children. An article by Bassett (1994:78-81) giving advice to parents on how to use television with their children appeared in the *Reader's Digest* (September 1994) and was also printed in *The Argus* (26 August 1994). Bassett warns about the negative aspects of television viewing (unlimited viewing which has a detrimental

effect on children for many different reasons; and programmes that are not monitored and which may be unsuitable). She also encourages parents to experience the positive effects of television - programmes that are selected by the family which are not all educational nor all cartoons and soap operas and which can still "teach" something; encouragement of the reading habit particularly when the book is televised, or interesting subjects such as dinosaurs which can be studied; by watching television together and talking about what they have seen children can learn even more as they chat to their parents; and by using videos adapted from books, parents and children can enjoy the old favourites like *Mary Poppins* and *The Secret Garden*.

Most authorities who comment on the impact of television on the lives of children state that there is no indication that time spent watching television would necessarily be utilized in reading a book. It is also highly likely that non-readers would rather follow different pursuits in their leisure time (Fouche, 1974; Fourie, 1990:307).Some authorities believe that television has become a scapegoat for all the ills of society, but do acknowledge that television is a powerful force for either good or evil. Indications are that once the novelty of television has worn off, children and adults return to their previous habits or interests (Brown, 1976:279; Fourie, 1990:303). This has been noticeable in the use of public libraries where a fall-off of patronage was experienced when television was instituted, but librarians notice that television has also drawn people to the library, particularly after a book has been televised or an interesting topic has been shown (Fourie, 1990:303; Reynolds, 1993:105; Staiger, 1979:25).

A concern of a number of authorities is the fact that television is extremely time-consuming and that for a reader or a non-reader there is less time available for reading (Adler, 1978:21; Howe, 1977:56). Although this is an

acknowledged fact, Fourie (1990:307) says that four categories of television users have been identified, namely:

a. Heavy viewers who are heavy readers
b. Light viewers who are heavy readers
c. Heavy viewers who are light readers
d. Light users of both media

It appears from the body of the literature that there are many different view-points and there seems to be little consensus. However, Cullingford (1984:178) states that : "It is important to remember that the positive and negative views of television are both, in a sense, correct, but that they only make sense when they are taken together.". Osborn (1988:257) appears to agree with the idea of the complementarity of the two media in the literary development of children, and thus she sees the need for a literary programme which uses both books and television.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 **Review of the research undertaken in children's reading**

There have been numerous studies conducted on children's reading and children's literature, but relatively few have been undertaken on the recreational reading habits or reading behaviour of children. Authors point out that research has been mainly in the field of the mechanics of reading in the primary school and that studies on literature in school have been mainly the prerogative of secondary schools. The teaching of the mechanics of reading "for reading's sake alone" appears to concern primary schools more than the teaching of literature and the social effects of reading (Karetzky, 1982:325; Lonsdale and Mackintosh, 1973:6).

Possibly the earliest research into children's reading and library provision was that of John Cotton Dana in 1896 who, although he did not use the modern terminology of *experiment* and *observation* believed in the need to research children's reading interests and the effects of reading on children and to accomplish this by careful observation and the recording of the data (Karetzky, 1982:7). Karetzky (1982:19) points out that it was educators rather than librarians who conducted the research into reading interests. One of the most authoritative researchers was Douglas Waples who studied the general reading interests of boys and girls of different ages and discovered that there was a great variety of interests among children of the same age and the same sex, particularly noticeable from the age of eight or nine.

Spiegel (1981:18) states that there is a problem with the claim that recreational reading has positive effects on children's reading achievements or attitudes to reading. The reason for this is that there has been little "hard" research conducted on the positive effects of recreational reading so there is little empirical evidence to back up the claims. Spiegel goes on to cite a study where the positive effects of recreational reading were claimed, but he points out that this was the result of pupils and teachers making subjective observations and not on carefully designed studies.

However, other studies cited by Spiegel (1981:19), claim such positive results as higher reading achievement scores; improved vocabulary, written language fluency and comprehension; and a more positive attitude to reading. Some studies have not shown significant differences between the groups following recreational reading programmes and those of the control section. It has been indicated that one of the problems has been the short time-span allocated to the studies and that for the reading habit to be inculcated long term study is required.

Lukenbill (in: Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1977:581) points out that of studies conducted in children's literature it is in the area of children's reading interests that most research has been undertaken but these have suffered from "inadequate statistical and sampling techniques." He also observes that depending on "the samples and the time periods" there will be contradictions and changes to the results.

Staiger (1979: 62) mentions a number of studies of interest to the researcher such as reading and other leisure time activities but unfortunately not the findings. He discusses an interesting study on the reading behaviour, reading performance and reading interests of ten-year-old children in Austria. In this study, carefully constructed questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and the pupils. In the pupils' questionnaire the same questions

were asked in different ways so that it was possible to draw a picture of the position of reading in a child's leisure time. The teachers' questionnaire related to personal details of each child such as socio-economic level, parents' occupations and reading characteristics. Apart from the questionnaires, standardized reading tests were administered and informal tests given. Staiger (1979:64) states that "the analysis of the data was cautious and the results derived from the study were informative" but unfortunately he does not illustrate with findings that have a bearing on the researcher's own study. However, the method of study proved to be useful.

Staiger (1979: 65-69) cites another project on children's reading, called the "Book Flood", in New Zealand. The study was set up to test the assumption that the availability of books does have an influence on the reading tastes of children. Initially teachers and interested parties observed that the impact of the project was favourable as children were introduced to a great variety of books but the investigators were dissatisfied with these observations which did not inform them about "the long-term effects of books on children's behaviour."

Tests, questionnaires and rating scales on all aspects of children's reading were therefore drawn up and teachers were required to assess the children's attitudes and make confidential assessments regarding their own practices and beliefs in the teaching of reading. Five children from each class were involved in an intensive case study and studies made of their reading behaviour from their informal reading lists. After six months the impact of the "Book Flood" was measured. Although the results were favourable in that more books were being read and there was a shift in attitude towards reading, the results were disappointing as the changes were statistically insignificant.

A number of the results will be included here as they can be compared later to results in the researcher's own study:

- Regarding the children's preferences in use of their leisure time, reading fared below their preferred interests of sports, television, art and going to the pictures.

- The main source of books was considered to be the school library with the public library receiving a fairly low rating after a number of other sources.

- A shift in fiction reading interests was noted, from "cowboy, war and fairy stories to mystery and detective stories."

- Changes in the selection of books were noted, as children were influenced by book discussions with their friends and teachers.

A year later further results were obtained to ascertain the long-term impact of the "Book Flood." Significant improvements were found in the volume of reading and listening comprehension but otherwise the findings were little different from those of the interim evaluation. It was concluded that for the first six months of the study there had been significant effects and that in the following year these effects had been maintained. Most teachers believed that the variety and availability of books had successfully "hooked" many children onto books and where this had not been the case and a decline in reading had been reported, it was noted that this had occurred where the teachers themselves had shown minimal interest.

Cullinan (1992: xvi) cites a number of studies conducted (in America) on how children spend their time in school and out of it. Many studies show that generally little time is spent reading in the classroom, but activities connected with reading occupy the pupils for most of the time. Reading activities, for example, require pupils to complete worksheets by filling in

blank spaces with letters or matching words. A study on the use of leisure time found that children do not spend much time reading out of school either. Children may read for five to ten minutes each day, if that, but that frequently they will watch television for two hours or more a day.

Neavill (1986: 629-633), reviewing the book *Reading in the 1980s,* points out that reading can be examined from a number of different disciplines such as those of education, psychology, neurophysiology and sociology. He cites a number of studies of particular importance to this empirical study - the surveys into reading habits and preferences in the past - but he draws attention to the fact that nearly all the essays in the book are written from a general or literary point of view and that even the sociologists have written generally and not handled the important question that if we assume reading is good for people then people should read serious books and that this ought to be a lifelong occupation.

A paper read at the seminar held in Poland in 1980 on "Book and Library in Society" criticized previous surveys and studies because of the "lack of precise definitions of the objectives, variables, scope and thorough understanding of the empirical validity of the methods used in determining reader response and habits...". The importance of language was pointed out as well as the difficulty in achieving an objective assessment and valid result from "free-answer questionnaires, interview techniques" and "self-testimony" which rely on attitudinal and emotive responses. It was noted that individuals use language differently to express their reading experiences and that in further studies an awareness of the importance of the linguistic aspect must be considered (Rusch, 1980:374).

A review of the research into children's literature has uncovered a number of interesting studies but also the constraints that have prevented conclusive evidence in the several areas. One of the most difficult problems which has

not yet been successfully solved, is that of obtaining data from scientifically researched studies. It has been argued that there is a need for long-term research in measuring reading habits, which experts believe may take years to inculcate. However, in the studies under discussion, a number of different scientific methods and techniques were used. These will be dealt with in more detail in the section below.

3.2 The case study method

From the above reviews it will be observed that a number of different techniques were used by researchers namely, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations and assessments. Lukenbill (in: Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1977:582) points out that there are a number of methods - the historical; the descriptive; the experimental; the case study; and the genetic or developmental study - which are applicable to studies on children's literature. The historical and the descriptive (appraisal techniques questionnaires and so on) have been used most widely in children's literature research. For understanding the effects of books, reading and literature on the learning and changes in behaviour and attitudes of children he recommends further study in the experimental method, although there are difficulties in controlling the social and environmental variables. He mentions that although applicable the case study method has not been widely used in children's literature but that educators have "suggested that this method be used more extensively in studying characteristics, interests and responses of readers." The genetic or developmental study method is time consuming and expensive although they believe that "it would be beneficial to children's literature."

Lukenbill (1977:583) goes on to advise prospective researchers to consult as many research studies, dissertations, monographs and journals as possible to keep abreast with developments in children's reading. This the researcher has attempted to do as can be ascertained from the above reviews. Busha and Harter (1980) were also consulted for advice on the method to use for this study. They refer to various methods used by researchers in the field of the social sciences, stating that the case study is one that is used by those who concentrate on a single phenomenon and utilize a wide range of data-gathering methods (Busha and Harter, 1980:151). They continue by stating that the "overall purpose of a case study is to obtain *comprehensive* information about the research object." In the case of the research under discussion, the research subjects are the primary school pupils and the comprehensive information that was required from them was about their reading habits and their use of recreational time.

Busha and Harter (1980: 151) state that there are various methods of data-gathering including "direct observation" and the supplementation by other techniques such as interviews and questionnaires. The researcher has referred to a number of previous studies where these techniques have been utilized.

Case studies have been conducted on many groups of library clientele including children in primary and high schools. Busha and Harter (1980:152) describe six steps for the procedure of conducting case studies.This empirical study logically follows these steps and thus this method was chosen above the other methods mentioned. The researcher's own experience and direct observation of the pupils at the school over the years and the use of questionnaires and discussions with the various classes allows for a closer examination of the problem of a decline in the reading habit.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL STUDY

For many years the researcher as teacher-librarian at Grove Primary School has been following a programme in the Media Guidance classes, in which many different types of stories are introduced to the children. There are several reasons for this: the prescribed syllabus allows for Reader Guidance; children need to be introduced to books which they may overlook as being too difficult or too simple but which are stories that should not be missed at that stage of their development; few teachers at the school read to their classes and reading aloud is important for the listening skills of children; and the researcher enjoys reading the stories to the pupils to see their response and hear their opinions.

4.1 Direct observation

There have been many opportunities, therefore, to observe the pupils over the years and to ascertain which books are popularly received and which books need to be handled differently, or even to be discarded from the programme. Through this direct observation, it has been noticeable to the researcher that fewer books are being requested by the pupils, mainly in the upper primary classes, after their introduction to these books. Fewer pupils, too, request assistance in finding books for recreational reading except those in the lower primary classes where the class teachers sometimes give assistance as they are aware of the children's reading abilities. Many pupils who borrow books return them unread, as from time to time pupils are casually questioned on their response to a story. The researcher has

regularly heard the response that the book was boring so the pupil did not finish it or that there was too little time to finish it.

Having observed the pupils and having noted their diminishing requests for fiction, the researcher began to check the issue statistics, noting that an increasing number of non-fiction books were circulated when different projects were in progress. Conversely there was a decrease in fictional reading statistics, except when the teacher required a reading mark for English or Afrikaans.

This examination of circulation statistics revealed a trend which could not be interpreted without a scientific survey. It was therefore necessary to design a study to provide hard facts about reading behaviour and habits and the information to understand the role of reading in pupils' leisure time.

4.2 Formulation of the questionnaire

As mentioned in Section 3.2 above, the case study method was considered to be the best approach for this empirical study. For a more scientific approach it was necessary to formulate a questionnaire to test the role of recreational reading in pupils' leisure time which would then be distributed to each class as they came to the library for Media Guidance. It was necessary to include questions to obtain valid and reliable information which would either refute or substantiate the proposition that recreational reading declines as primary school pupils grow older.

Busha and Harter (1980: 61-62) also note that it is necessary for the investigator to "conduct a thorough search and review of all literature related to the topic under study" as this will assist the understanding of the problem and thus result in a better study. The researcher therefore consulted the

study by Whitehead and others (1977) and the pupils' questionnaire in Gawith (1987). A questionnaire utilized by a teacher with the Std 5 classes regarding the importance of television in their lives, was also consulted. These three sources formed the basis of the questionnaire that was finally formulated.

There were a number of factors of which to take cognizance when formulating the questionnaire, namely:

- the questions had to be unambiguous and easily understood by the pupils;
- the time factor dictated the length of the questionnaire (all lessons are allocated one half-hour on the timetable and this was the time available for the distribution, reading of the questionnaire and explanations where necessary);
- questions were needed that would yield answers which would substantiate or refute the theory of the decline in recreational reading.

Although many studies in reading deal with samples, the possible population number, in this case the pupils, was very small - approximately 500. Professor Underhill of the Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, was approached and he advised that the whole population should be surveyed. His reason for this was that 500 is a small number compared to the probable number of pupils countrywide in this age bracket. By using the maximum number of pupils in the investigative study, the researcher would reach more accurate conclusions.

The questionnaire consisted of eighteen questions, several of which had a number of sub-sections. The first questions dealt with reading and the pupils'

responses to fiction; the second part dealt with their television and video viewing patterns, their hobbies, sports and interests and their use of leisure time. The questionnaire appears in Appendix A.

Since there was no time to pilot the questionnaire with children of similar ages and class (or indeed having access to such children) the draft questionnaire was discussed with experts in questionnaire design before its final formulation. Recommended changes were therefore incorporated before it was distributed to the pupils of the Grove Primary School.

4.3 Administration of the questionnaire

Each pupil present in each class on the day of the allocated Media Guidance lesson, was issued with a questionnaire. The first classes to receive the questionnaire were two of the Std 5 classes. As the pupils arrived they were handed a form and told to complete the questions to the best of their ability.

No explanations were given to these classes, but where pupils had difficulty in giving an accurate answer, their questions were handled on an individual basis. Within twenty minutes of its distribution most pupils had completed the questionnaire, but later, on recording the answers, it was discovered that not all the questions had been answered satisfactorily.

The researcher realized, therefore, that she was faced with three options: either to redistribute the questionnaire; to reformulate the questionnaire discarding questions that required verbal explanation and include only those that the majority of pupils were able to answer satisfactorily and still supply the required information; or to involve the classes in a discussion regarding the unanswered questions. The third option was chosen as the minimum of time was available in a short and activity-packed term. Another lesson

therefore had to be allocated to obtaining the necessary data from the pupils by discussing the questions and hearing the pupils verbalize their answers. These answers were then recorded.

Although the Standard 4 and 5 classes had few questions regarding the questionnaire, the Standard 1, 2 and 3 classes needed an explanatory introduction and a reading through of the questionnaire by the researcher before the pupils were able to commence. Even so, it became clear that some of the pupils struggled to answer the questions and on recording the data, this became more evident. Later discussions with the classes provided much of the missing data.

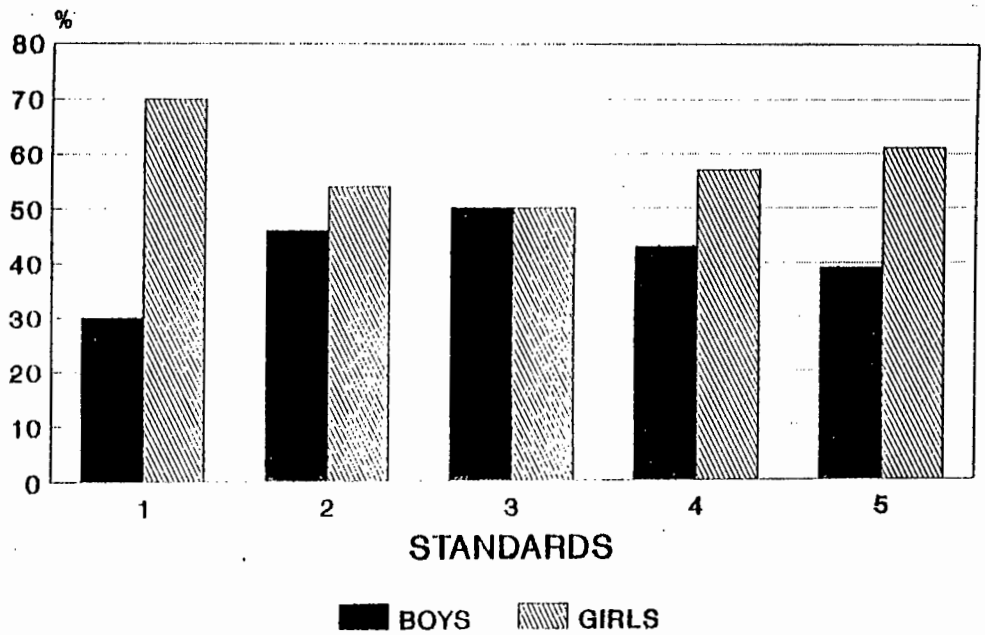
It also became apparent that the pupils in the lower classes needed further time to complete their questionnaires. The average time for the questionnaire to be answered in Standard 5 was eighteen minutes while the longest time (twenty-seven minutes) was recorded in Standard 1. The biggest stumbling-block for the pupils proved to be their ability to assess the number of hours spent watching television in their leisure time. The younger pupils, in particular, were unable to gauge their times accurately. Where there was this problem, many questions were left unanswered, as was mentioned above.

In discussion with the pupils in the second lesson allocated to the study, pupils explained their inability to answer some of the questions where there was to be a "yes" or "no" response. For them the answer was neither positive nor negative, as they preferred to respond with "some", "sometimes", or "it depends". Thus in the analysis of the results this dilemma will be reflected.

Four hundred and eighty-four questionnaires were distributed and returned yielding a response rate of 100%. There were 200 boys who answered the questionnaire and 284 girls. This ratio reflects the composition of the school,

as there are generally more girls in most classes than there are boys, throughout the school. Below is a bar graph depicting the gender distribution from Standards 1 to 5.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION GRAPH ACROSS STDS 1-5



The amount of data collected from the questionnaires necessitated the setting up of a database. This was accomplished by using Inmagic Plus - a recognized library management package which has sophisticated searching properties. Seventy-two fields such as age, standard, authors, titles, hobbies, television, and so on, to match the questions in the questionnaire, were selected. Each of the 484 records, one for each of the respondents, was able to yield valuable data. Even though some of the questionnaires were answered incompletely, there was sufficient data to reach defensible conclusions. This was borne out by the responses of the pupils in a number of classes when the researcher later discussed the results of the survey. Several of the responses confirmed by the pupils in the discussions afterwards were:

- that Roald Dahl is the favourite author of this age group;
- that term time is the most popular time to watch TV;

- that swimming is the favourite sport; and
- that the majority of pupils enjoy reading

The next section deals with the results of the survey in greater depth.

4.4 Survey findings

Of the 484 pupils who answered the questionnaire, 88.8% indicated a positive response to the enjoyment of reading. There were10.4% negative replies and 0.8% unanswered or doubtful responses. Regarding leisure time, 42.6% stated that they read in their free time. Reading as one of their hobbies or interests was indicated by 43.2% pupils. That reading was their only hobby was stated by 2.3% pupils. There seems to be a clear disparity between the number of pupils who profess to their enjoyment of reading (88.8%) and those who consider reading as one of their hobbies or interests (43.2%).

Pupils were required to fill in information regarding their age, sex and standard. The bar graph in Section 4.3 above displays clearly that in most standards there are more girls than boys. The significance here is that most studies identify more readers among girls, while boys tend to stop recreational reading at a younger age. There being more girls in the survey could therefore affect the findings significantly. Table 1.1 displays the gender frequency distribution across Standards 1 to 5.

The contingency table shows the relationship between gender and standard for 484 subjects and the calculation of expected value

TABLE 1.1: GENDER FREQUENCY ACROSS STANDARDS 1 - 5

(n = 484)

STANDARDS	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL n
BOYS	30	45	48	40	37	200
GIRLS	70	53	48	54	59	284
TOTAL	100	98	96	94	96	484

CALCULATION OF EXPECTED VALUES FOR CHI-SQUARE

$$\frac{200 \times 100}{484} = 41.322 \qquad \frac{284 \times 100}{484} = 58.678$$

$$\frac{200 \times 98}{484} = 40.496 \qquad \frac{284 \times 98}{484} = 57.504$$

$$\frac{200 \times 96}{484} = 39.669 \qquad \frac{284 \times 96}{484} = 56.331$$

$$\frac{200 \times 94}{484} = 38.843 \qquad \frac{284 \times 94}{484} = 55.157$$

$$\frac{200 \times 96}{484} = 39.669 \qquad \frac{284 \times 96}{484} = 56.331$$

A chi-square test was performed on the data in Table 1.1. Table 1.2 below shows the calculation of chi-square for the data of Table 1.1. The value of chi-square obtained was 9.489. The number of degrees of freedom associated with Table 1.2 was (Rows - 1)(Columns - 1) = 4. The value of chi-square required for significance at the 5% level was 9.488. One had, therefore, grounds for saying that there were significantly more girls than

boys in the sample of children who completed the Reading Profile Questionnaire and that it was probable that this would affect the findings of the investigation.

TABLE 1.2: CALCULATION OF CHI-SQUARE FOR DATA OF TABLE 1.1

(O) OBSERVED FREQUENCY	(E) EXPECTED FREQUENCY	(O) - (E)	$[(O) - (E)]^2$	$\frac{[(O) - (E)]^2}{(E)}$
30	41.322	-11.320	128.188	3.102
45	40.496	4.504	20.286	0.501
48	39.669	8.331	69.406	1.750
40	38.843	1.157	1.339	0.035
37	39.669	-2.669	7.124	0.180
70	58.678	11.322	128.188	2.185
53	57.504	-4.504	20.286	0.353
48	56.331	-8.331	69.406	1.232
54	55.157	-1.157	1.339	0.024
59	56.331	2.669	7.124	0.127
				$\chi^2 =$ 9.489

2 X 5 χ^2 TABLE $\therefore$ 4 DEGREES OF FREEDOM
$\therefore$ p VALUE 0.05 FOR χ^2 VALUE OF 9.488

Table 2 below shows the percentage of responses of the boys and girls to Question 1 of the Reading Profile which required pupils to select from five options to describe how they viewed reading as an activity. Pupils were permitted to select more than one of the following categories: FUN; EASY; BORING; HARD WORK; OTHER. From theTable it can be seen that the majority (80.6%) selected FUN and 49.6% chose EASY. There were far fewer pupils (9.3%) who indicated that they found reading BORING and those who indicated it was HARD WORK (3.9%). Under OTHER, comments varied from "addicted to it"; "trapped into most of the books read"; to "waste of time"; "obliged to read"; and "something to do".

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1 OF READING PROFILE (n = 484)

RESPONSES*	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
FUN	155	**32.0**	235	**48.6**	390	**80.6**
EASY	84	**17.4**	156	**32.2**	240	**49.6**
BORING	25	**5.2**	20	**4.1**	45	**9.3**
HARD WORK	12	**2.5**	7	**1.4**	19	**3.9**

*More than one response was acceptable

To determine whether there was a significant deviation between the responses of the boys and girls to the different categories, two chi-square 2 x 2 or fourfold[1] contingency tests were performed[2]. No significant gender difference was found. One can therefore conclude that there was little variation between the responses of the boys and girls to the four categories FUN/EASY and BORING/HARD WORK.

Question 2 required the pupils to indicate whether they had read a book within the last four weeks prior to the survey. Positive responses came from 88.9% of the pupils; 10.3% responded negatively and 0.8% did not answer the question. As the majority responded positively to the question and had therefore read at least one book during the previous month, there is an indication that according to the children themselves reading does occur in their leisure time. There were 65 pupils who wrote down four or five titles they had read the previous month. Of this number 80% were girls (consisting of 18.3% of all the girls) and 20% were boys (consisting of 6.5% of all the boys) revealing that more girls are avid readers.

[1] A correction for continuity was performed for the 2 x 2 contingency tables
[2] Categories were combined in order to satisfy the need for theoretical frequencies to be at least 5 in each cell

Pupils were required in Question 3 to list the titles and authors of the books recently read. While the majority of pupils were able to remember the titles, identifying the authors proved generally to be a stumbling block. Fewer pupils in the junior classes wrote down titles they had read than did the senior pupils. Although there were fewer pupils who had read a book during the previous month in the senior classes, more books were recorded by the avid readers. This affected the average of books read in each standard so that a fairly uniform pattern of recreational reading throughout the school was noticed.

The book read by most pupils was *Witches* by Roald Dahl, followed by two more of his books, *Boy* and *The BFG*. Below is a list of titles in order of frequency recorded.

12 *Witches*
11 *Boy*
9 *The BFG*
8 *Charlie and the chocolate factory*
8 *Fantastic Mr Fox*
7 *Matilda*
5 *Danny the champion of the world*
5 *Diary of Anne Frank*
5 *Elephant adventure*
5 *James and the giant peach*
5 *Jurassic Park*
5 *Summer to die*
4 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
4 *Amazon adventure*
4 *The Hobbit*
4 *Iggie's house*

4 *The magic finger*

4 *The story of Peter Rabbit*

4 *The Twits*

3 *Call of the wild*

3 *Charlotte's web*

3 *Dodos are forever*

3 *Fudgeamania*

3 *Jungle Book*

3 *Lion adventure*

3 *One boy at a time*

3 *Save the unicorns*

3 *Silent tears no more*

3 *South Sea adventure*

3 *Superfudge*

3 *Wind in the willows*

The rest of the 701 titles fall into the categories of either being listed only once or twice and will therefore not be enumerated.

It is interesting to note that among the titles of books recorded, there were many titles of series thus showing their popularity among school children. Below is a list of popular series read by the pupils.These are not ranked in order of popularity, but in alphabetical order:

Anastasia Krupnik

Biggles

Cedar River Daydreams

Famous Five

Freshman

Hardy Boys

Nancy Drew
Secret Seven
Sweet Dreams
Sweet Valley High
Sweet Valley Twins
Trebizon School
Willard Price

Question 4 asked the pupils to record the books they liked. There was very little significant change from the titles already recorded. It appears that most of the pupils enjoyed the books that they had read the previous month. The month in question covered the last week of the third quarter of 1994, one week of the September school holidays and the first two weeks of the fourth quarter 1994. This meant that there was more time for reading, for during this period the winter sports fixtures had been completed and the new summer term fixtures had not yet commenced, and there was school holiday time.

Pupils were required in Question 5 to indicate the number of books they possess. The significance of this question is that research has shown "a positive association between amount of book reading and the ownership of a significant number of books" (Whitehead *et al*, 1977:74). From the figures below, one can see that 54.8% of the pupils own more than fifty books and 27.1 % own up to fifty books. This is an indication that the pupils come from homes where books are freely available for them to read.

33.7% pupils indicated that they owned more than one hundred books;
21.1% pupils indicated that they owned up to one hundred books;
27.1% pupils indicated that they owned up to fifty;
14.6% pupils indicated that they owned up to twenty; and
3.5% pupils who were unable to answer the question.

Whitehead *et al* (1977:74) claim that in their investigation a positive correlation between ability, social class, book ownership and amount of reading was found. In this investigation, there was no information regarding the pupils' reading ability or family background requested and thus the results will not show these associations with book reading.

Question 6 related to the favourite authors of the pupils. The majority (70.9%) of the pupils indicated that they had one or several favourite authors, 23.1% of the pupils indicated that there was no author whom they considered a particular favourite, and the remaining 6.0% of the pupils did not answer this question. Roald Dahl was significantly the most popular author receiving 32.3% of the votes, followed by Enid Blyton who received 8.5% of the votes and Judy Blume who received 6.0% of the votes. Below is a list of fifteen authors ranked in popularity:

32.3 %. Roald Dahl
8.5.% Enid Blyton
6.0% Judy Blume
4.6% Dick King-Smith
4.5%. F.W. Dixon
3.9%. Willard Price
3.3%. Francine Pascal
3.1% Carolyn Keene
2.9%. J.R.R. Tolkien
2.5%. Lois Lowry
1.7% Beatrix Potter
1.7% Beverley Cleary
1.7% C.S. Lewis
1.7% Judy Baer

1.2% Colin Dann

1.2% Kate Williams

Question 7 required the pupils to consider the amount of reading they thought they did on average. The researcher, in the discussion with the pupils regarding this question, suggested that to be able to arrive at a weekly figure it was best to consider how much recreational reading they did each day and then to compound the figure. Thus if they read ten minutes every day that would equal one hour ten minutes each week. The pupils were asked to consider five options. The researcher gave indications of the number of hours/minutes a day which would constitute each category. Thus for the category LARGE AMOUNT a pupil would probably read more than two to three hours a day; for the category QUITE A LOT a pupil would probably read from one and a half hours to two hours a day; for the AVERAGE category a pupil would probably read an hour a day; for the category NOT VERY MUCH a pupil would probably read about half an hour a day and for the category ONLY A LITTLE a pupil would probably read about ten minutes a day. The results were as follows:

7.2% of the respondents indicated they read a large amount
26.7% indicated they read quite a lot
33.7% indicated that they read about average
14.0% indicated that they did not read very much
4.8% indicated that they read only a little
13.6% were unable to answer the question

Pupils were also asked in Question 7 to indicate how many hours they spend reading a week. The researcher intended to compare these results with those of Question 15(c) regarding their television viewing but answers were haphazard and difficult to quantify. However, it was possible to add up all the

hours of reading per week that the 350 pupils (who answered the question) recorded. A total of 2605 hours was registered. As explained above, pupils had been given assistance in quantifying their reading time to arrive at a weekly figure. The average time spent on recreational reading per week as recorded by the pupils was 7.44 hours. Pupils on average devote approximately one hour a day to reading. (One hour a day was the figure suggested by the researcher as an average time for reading and it appears that this compares favourably with the pupils' response in Question 2 where 88.9% of the pupils stated that they had read at least one book in the previous month).

Question 8 asked a straight-forward question as to whether or not pupils enjoyed reading. Enjoyment of reading was indicated by 88.8% of the pupils, whereas 10.4% responded negatively and 0.8% were undecided or omitted to answer the question. What proved to be an anomaly, were the pupils' responses to reading and the average number of books read a month. In the survey, 963 books were recorded as having been read during the previous month (which included a period of ten days' holiday) by the 484 pupils who answered the questionnaire. This gives an average of 1.99 books per pupil during that month. This was far lower than expected and most disquieting if one compares the Jenkinson report of 1940 in which it was found that boys and girls were reading between 3.9 to 6.5 books a month. (Whitehead, (1977:51). Whitehead compares Jenkinson's findings with his own findings in his 1971 study. Here it was found that the children were not reading half as much (2.16 to 2.39 books a month) yet these findings are higher than the findings of the present study.

Another perceived anomaly was the average recorded reading time of 7.44 hours a week and the low average of books read. For further discussion on these anomalies see Chapter 5 (the introductory section) and Section 6.3.2.

Table 3 below indicates the distribution of responses to Question 8 on the pupils' enjoyment (or not) of reading.

TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTION 8 OF READING PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE: ENJOYMENT OF READING (n = 484)

STANDARD	YES		NO		NO ANS		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	93	**19.2**	6	**1.2**	1	**0.2**	100	**20.6**
2	85	**17.5**	10	**2.1**	3	**0.6**	98	**20.2**
3	86	**17.8**	10	**2.1**	0	**0.0**	96	**19.9**
4	86	**17.8**	8	**1.7**	0	**0.0**	94	**19.5**
5	80	**16.5**	16	**3.3**	0	**0.0**	96	**19.8**
TOTAL	430	**88.8**	50	**10.4**	4	**0.8**	484	**100.0**

Table 4 below shows the distribution of responses to Question 9 relating to types of stories pupils enjoy, ranked in order of preference and according to percentage. The categories range from stories that make them laugh to those that are fairy or folk tales. Predictably, the most popular genre was stories that make them laugh. An enlightening revelation was the response to stories about people living in other countries which was recorded second in popularity, after humorous stories. An explanation for this result could be that most children's books are published in Britain or America and are therefore technically about children in other countries. A surprising response was that of the low rating received by folk or fairy tales as well as the genre of science fiction or stories about the future, yet fantasy rated almost as high as animal stories. As were the researcher's expectations, books dealing with friends and friendship were rated highly and stories that make them cry were the least popular.

TABLE 4: RESPONSE PROFILE FOR EACH STORY TYPE: BOOK TYPES RANKED ACCORDING TO PREFERENCE* (n = 484)

TYPE	YES		NO		UNSURE		NO ANS	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
LAUGH	446	**92.2**	19	**3.9**	2	**0.4**	17	**3.5**
COUNTRIES	331	**68.4**	110	**22.7**	8	**1.7**	35	**7.2**
FRIENDS	318	**65.7**	134	**27.7**	3	**0.6**	29	**6.0**
ANIMALS	305	**63.0**	139	**28.7**	11	**2.3**	29	**6.0**
FANTASY	300	**62.0**	145	**30.0**	6	**1.2**	33	**6.8**
REALITY	276	**57.0**	171	**35.3**	8	**1.7**	29	**6.0**
PAST	263	**54.3**	180	**37.2**	9	**1.9**	32	**6.6**
PEOPLE	242	**50.0**	208	**43.0**	7	**1.4**	27	**5.6**
DAILY LIFE	229	**47.3**	217	**44.9**	5	**1.0**	33	**6.8**
FUTURE	200	**41.3**	246	**50.9**	4	**0.8**	34	**7.0**
CRY	189	**39.1**	263	**54.3**	6	**1.2**	26	**5.4**
FAIRY TALES	185	**38.2**	251	**51.9**	10	**2.0**	38	**7.9**

*More than one response was acceptable

Question 9 was included to give the researcher some idea of the popularity of certain genres of stories which can help the school's buying policy and assist in preparing material for Media Guidance lessons. Having a knowledge of pupils' preferences makes it possible to recommend other titles in the same genre and be prepared to answer questions regarding pupils' requests for popular types of books available in the school library. This information also provided ideas for the choices that were made regarding the interventive strategies.

The pupils were asked to select the sources of their reading material in Question 10. They were again allowed to choose more than one option. Predictably the school library as a source of books scored the highest with

90.5% responses. This was followed by 83.1% of the pupils who indicated that they read their own books. Other sources of reading material are ranked as follows, in order of frequency of responses:

81.8% public library
59.7% buying books
42.4% borrowing from friends
41.1% borrowing from family
19.6% class library

The low response in the category of class library is due to the situation in which only pupils in Standards 1 and 2 make use of the system of "box books" (a type of class library) in their classrooms. Availability of books is one of the variables affecting reading and thus this question is highly significant.

All the categories above show a fairly high response to sources of reading material. Each of the categories indicates that books that are read are freely available from all the sources, barring the last one which, as noted, is for the use of Standard 1 and Standard 2 pupils. Pupils are therefore not in the disadvantaged position of many pupils of their ages in South Africa who have no access to libraries and financially cannot afford books. One would assume that children from privileged homes would be highly motivated readers but from the results of this survey this does not appear to be the case.

Following on to the previous question, Question 11 required the pupils to indicate whether they belong to a public library and to indicate their use of it. The answers indicate that good use is made of the public library. The vast majority (87.2%) of the pupils indicated that they were members of a public

library whereas 11% indicated that they were not members and 1.8% did not respond. As can be seen from the results below more than 50% of the pupils visit the public library on a regular basis.

46.7% of the pupils indicated that they sometimes borrow books from the public library;
28.9% of the pupils indicated that they borrow books once a fortnight;
13.5% of the pupils indicated that they borrow books once a week; and
10.9% of the pupils indicated that they borrow books twice a week (or more)

Question 12 was an important question regarding the reading habits of parents or adults in their homes. Pupils were asked if their parents read library books or whether other adults they knew were also readers. This led to these findings:

82.7% of the pupils responded that their parents do read library books
6.6% of the pupils responded that they do not read library books
9.7% responded that they did not know
1.0% did not answer the question

See Section 6.1.3 for comment on the role model of parents and adults as their reading patterns and habits warrant further discussion.

In response to Question 13 whether there was a TV set at home, 99% pupils responded positively and 1% negatively. Question 14 inquired whether there was a video recorder at home. There were 82.9% positive responses and 17.1% negative responses. One pupil qualified her negative response by stating that the family video recorder had been stolen the day before from

their home and they would be replacing it if it was not recovered by the police.

Pupils were asked to consider their viewing habits in Question 15. This question was divided into three sections. Question 15(a) required the pupils to indicate the times when they watch television. The weeks were divided into categories: schooldays, weekends and holidays. These in turn were divided into hourly slots. An omission in the questionnaire was the possibility of morning viewing in the holidays and weekends and therefore the pupils were asked to add the times or hours themselves. Although much data was recorded which could be of assistance to persons interested in times of television viewing by school children, for the purposes of this investigation, the data has little relevance.

An indication of how many hours a week the pupils watched video films or recorded programmes was requested in Question 15(b). The weeks were divided into weekdays and weekends (during term) and holidays and holiday weekends. Question 15(c) requested the pupils to indicate the number of hours a week they watch television programmes. More television is watched in term time after school than in the holidays. There was no indication that more viewing takes place during the weekends either in term time or the holidays. Pupils in the discussion stated that there were so many activities during weekends and holidays that television was not a priority and that television was enjoyed once they completed school and their extra-curricular commitments and needed some relaxation.

Pupils were requested to list their hobbies and interests in Question 16. Interestingly, of the 484 pupils who answered the questionnaire 43.2% stated that reading was one of their hobbies, yet only 11.6% wrote down TV viewing. According to other research into children's viewing patterns, television plays a large part in a child's recreational time. Five other hobbies

or interests ranked in order of frequency were: stamp collecting (14.7% pupils); computer programming and playing with computers (14.3% pupils); art and drawing (13% pupils); listening to music (10.5% pupils); and piano playing for relaxation (8.3% pupils).

It appears therefore that children do count reading among their interests as is indicated by the 43.2% pupils who responded thus. The majority of the pupils are also still at an age when reading is given as homework and this may have given reading an inflated result.

Most of the hobbies and interests give an indication of the home circumstances of these pupils. Many of the hobbies and interests recorded by the pupils require substantial monetary outlay thus indicating that the majority of pupils come from homes that are well-to-do. It appears that the parents provide as many opportunities for their children as are available and are not deterred by financial constraints. Hobbies and interests such as music, ballet, horse-riding and pottery, require instruction for which fees are charged. There is also the need to provide the children with the correct kit and equipment that are required. The indication is that, with so many interests and commitments outside school hours, many pupils just do not have the time for recreational reading.

In Question 17 the pupils were required to record the sports in which they are interested and in which they participate in their extra-mural hours. The indication is that most pupils participate in a number of different sports, organized swimming (swimming where there is instruction or training) being the sport most frequently recorded.

Pupils were given the opportunity to record the favourite way they like to spend their free time or recreational time in Question 18. A large number of

pupils questioned the meaning of "free time" as they have so many commitments (different types of sport mainly) that there just is no free time left over! The majority of pupils, however, recognized that they did have plenty of time to do what they liked best of all. Reading was again top of the list with 42.6% pupils recording it as their favourite way to spend their free time. Most of the pupils also included other ways of spending their free time, but there were 2.3% pupils who reiterated that reading was their only pastime. Swimming (without training and only for fun) was voted as the second most popular recreational activity with 19.8% pupils recording this as their preference. This may be an inflated figure as the weather had been extremely hot, the pupils were starting the summer term and swimming was uppermost in many pupils' minds. Should the questionnaire have been distributed in the winter term when the weather was cold and wet, the result might have been different.

Contrary to expectations, only 19.4% pupils regard television viewing as preferable to other hobbies or interests in their free time, while only 3.7% pupils stated that they liked to play TV games. Interestingly, only 1.0% pupils wrote down that they watched videos in their free time and only 0.2% pupils wrote down video games. Computer games or computer programming was recorded by 7.4% pupils, thus indicating that computers are more popular than TV or video games.

An analysis and discussion of the results of the survey is included in the final section of this investigative study. The researcher has mainly included results which are pertinent to the study and those which should be of interest to all those involved with children and children's literature. It must be reiterated that this survey was conducted among a very uniform population with many pupils coming from highly advantaged and financially stable homes and few, if any, of the pupils were disadvantaged in any way. Home

background is a factor which affects reading and thus the findings of the survey should be considered in this light.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVENTIVE STRATEGIES

Research has shown that children need to be made aware of the many types of stories that have been written for them. Courses and seminars are given on children's literature and in some countries, such as Britain, students are able to take advanced degrees in the subject. There is a vast body of literature relating to children's stories and every year publishers spend huge sums of money in providing catalogues of the titles of children's books in print, or to be printed shortly. Reviews of children's books appear in the newspaper from time to time and in South Africa there is a publication called *Bookchat* that reviews local and overseas children's books. It is necessary to keep up with what is being published and thus all reviews are helpful guides to those who are involved with children and their reading. Roeder and Carter (1979:14) state that:

> Motivating children to read for their own enjoyment is a major objective of reading instruction at all levels .....it requires a great deal of originality, energy, and careful planning.

They have included twenty-five ways in which teachers may encourage pupils to read. Not all the suggestions are suitable for primary school pupils and some are not possible to use in Media Guidance lessons when there is so little time available. However, a number of the suggestions were used.

Included in the bibliography are other books that provided the researcher with extensive assistance in the preparation of lessons and thus introduced a variety of books to the pupils which they might otherwise have overlooked.

As explained previously, the researcher is in the position of teacher-librarian and therefore has the task to promote books and encourage pupils to read them. This is possible in the Media Guidance classes, as many lessons are devoted to different ways in which a variety of books are introduced to pupils. In this section of the study, a number of varying strategies will be examined in which books have been recommended to the different age groups.

A review of the results of the questionnaire confirmed the researcher's observation that fewer senior primary pupils than juniors were involved in recreational reading. This being the case the interventive strategies which follow were necessary in an attempt to stimulate thought and motivate the pupils to read for recreation and not just for information. The teachers at Grove Primary School prioritize research and project work with the result that pupils are required to read widely and study a number of sources. Recreational reading has not been a priority, as many teachers dislike reading themselves and do not actively encourage pupils to read, other than for the purpose of acquiring facts for projects which are then marked or for a reading mark for the school report. Reading has come to be seen by many pupils as something that relates to marks and reports and the pleasure principle is not considered.

The findings regarding the number of books read by the pupils were most disquieting, and confirm a general decline in reading across the age range surveyed. A decline in reading from Jenkinson's 1940 study to the 1971 study into reading habits had been detected (Whitehead, 1977:51) and a further decline in reading was discovered when the researcher compared the Grove findings with the 1971 findings. As some pupils did not even record one book, one must assume that the avid readers among them read considerably more than the average two books a month.

As 56.8% of the pupils in this empirical investigation did not consider reading important enough to be recorded as a hobby or interest and 57.4% did not include reading in their recreational time, this appears to confirm that the pupils are reading fewer books than the pupils in the past. It is therefore of the utmost urgency that children need to be informed about books and come into contact with all genres. Older children in particular should become aware of the purpose of the writer in committing the story to print. Formal lessons in the library where the librarian has the opportunity to introduce pupils to books and authors is made possible in the Media Guidance syllabus.

The researcher's concern for those pupils who have not continued to enjoy and discover the delight of stories resulted in an intensive search through the writings of knowledgeable authors (Sutherland, Arbuthnot, Gillespie and others) in an attempt to ascertain whether the correct procedures were being followed and effective strategies were being utilized. The researcher was increasingly aware that readers are made and not born and that even the pupils who considered themselves readers deserve as much of the best literary fare as possible.

By examining the results of the question on the types of stories the pupils prefer, it was possible to include several books of the different genres as well as introducing narratives which were not considered so popular but were extremely thought-provoking, e.g. *The slave dancer* and *The iron man.* Apart from the scheduled lessons, opportunities to promote books came at lunch recess when pupils of different standards were able to advise and recommend books. This occurred frequently when senior pupils who are readers assisted the younger pupils in finding appropriate stories. The researcher was increasingly conscious of the enormity of the task ahead and the undertaking to become involved in strategies which would motivate non-

readers into becoming readers. What was most disheartening was the realization that the study was being conducted over a relatively short period (seven weeks, including the week devoted to the questionnaire) and that the results of the intervention in guiding the reading of the pupils would hardly bear fruit which could be scientifically measured.

A number of interventive strategies were used which were valuable methods of encouraging the pupils to read. Ramsamy (1991), Hill (1989) and Davies (1992) are some of the authors who recommend a variety of ways to promote books and foster a reading habit. By using their advice and some of the ideas from the books by Perry and Thomas (1991; 1992) and Thomas and Hipgrave (1985; 1990) reading guidance lessons became stimulating and entertaining. Ramsamy (1991:41) argues that guidance is essential if one is really concerned about helping children and young people to develop a love of reading and find the pleasure that is afforded them when they do so.

It was necessary, however, to be constructive in the application of the strategies (as set out in Sections 5.1 to 5.6 below), and confident that they would meet the objective of slowing down and then reversing the trend in the decline of recreational reading as revealed in the findings.

5.1 Reading aloud

An extremely effective way to introduce pupils to a variety of stories is to read aloud to them. This allows the author's thoughts and words to be used rather than the facilitator's. Children respond, particularly at a young age, to the pictures and text in the book. As was mentioned in Section 2.4 above, reading aloud is essential for children, who need to hear stories read at a pace that suits them and where they can stop the reader when there is need of explanation. Cullinan (1993:xiii) firmly believes that children need to be

surrounded by books and adults who will assist them to become literate. Learning to speak happens as children are "immersed" in language and "surrounded" with talk and if the same is done with reading (giving them frequent and positive contact with books"), "children will learn to read in the same natural way." Cullinan (1993:xiii) argues that reading aloud is one of the ways in which a groundwork for their liking to read is laid; they will become "hooked on good stories" and choose "to read on their own frequently." The pupils were therefore given the opportunity of being surrounded by good books and having the choice to read on their own from the books introduced to them.

Jay Heale (1994:16) confirms Cullinan's views and says of reading aloud that "[I]f there is any magic wand to get children hooked on books, then this is it." The researcher has found that it is possible to read stories to pupils whose reading ability is not advanced enough to manage the text on their own, but who are mature enough to handle the content of the story. It is the sharing of a story that is essential and as Heale (1994:17) points out it is not a question of reading to children, but reading a book *with* children which is the vital distinction. He continues by stating that reading is "an experience" one is trying to share. It has therefore been extremely important to choose books for the different age groups which the researcher herself feels are right for the class at that time. There have been failures, where the pupils have not responded to the story, and there have been others when the pupils have been irritated when the bell rang and the story had to stop, so engrossed have they been in the tale.

One of the problems of reading aloud to the pupils in the library, is that only half an hour a week is allocated to this subject and by using this technique it is virtually impossible to cover more than one book a term. Unfortunately, a book that is a favourite with one teacher is not always favoured by another,

so it is seldom that pupils can request their English teachers to continue reading the story to them. Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984: 149) state that there should be a co-ordinated reading aloud programme to avoid dangers of teachers only reading popular books. It is their conviction that "a well-planned read-aloud program works toward accomplishing the goal of developing in children the desire to read."

5.2 Short book reviews

Although reading aloud is so important, if the whole book is to be read, there is little time left for pupils to be introduced to other books. Thus another strategy, one that makes it possible for a whole genre or a variety of texts to be shared, is that of giving brief summaries of certain books. The researcher chose different types of stories (such as humorous stories and family stories) and gave a brief description of a number of the most suitable ones which were then available for the pupils to borrow. In this way more books and authors were introduced to the pupils and more children were given a chance to borrow a recommended book.

Pupils were also encouraged to recommend books to their peers, either by giving a short book talk in front of the whole class, or individually, when assisting another pupil to find a book for recreational reading. Pupils in the upper classes found it preferable to write a review and read it to the class rather than give a book talk. As reading is meant to be enjoyable pupils were not forced to read a book for the sake of the book talk and few pupils defaulted. This is due partly to a short reading period slotted in at the beginning of each school day when every pupil has to have a book to read. They are thus better prepared to share a book they have enjoyed with the rest of the class. Interestingly, pupils in the classes where book talks were given, often requested from the school library the selfsame books that had

just been reviewed. This confirms the findings of studies cited by Carter (1979:56) in which a factor in pupils' reading interests is the influence of their peers.

Genres that were handled in the Media Guidance lessons varied from standard to standard during the study. However, during the year some of the same genres were treated with different standards but there was no duplication of titles. At the end of this chapter in section 5.6 there are notes on some of the lessons that were conducted during the investigative study.

5.3 Dramatization

Dramatization is extremely popular with primary school pupils and was used to introduce pupils to certain books that lend themselves to this kind of technique. Pupils in the senior primary classes were given a chapter to read and dramatize for the rest of the class. Books handled in this way were:

Revolting rhymes by Roald Dahl (Std 4)
The true tale of the three little pigs by A. Wolf as told to J. Scieszka (Std 4)
The island of the blue dolphins by Scott O'Dell (Std 5)
The slave dancer by Paula Fox (Std 5)
Uncle Misha's partisans by Uri Suhl (Std 5)
Professor Branestawm's perilous pudding by Norman Hunter (Std 5)
The headless cupid by Zilpha Keatley Snyder (Std 5)

In the case of the first title listed, the researcher read one of the rhymes, Cinderella, and then divided the class into groups to enact the story. Pupils enjoyed Roald Dahl's zany and outrageous humour and this book has become a firm favourite. The second book on the list is also extremely humorous as it is a parody of the traditional fairy tale *The three little pigs* by

the Grimm brothers. In the lesson in which this story was read, the pupils again worked in groups and were asked to re-enact the story in modern terminology. This proved to be a most popular exercise and the pupils were extremely innovative and ingenious in their handling of the subject.

The next five books on the list (which were chosen for their diversity - survival, slavery, war, humour and the supernatural) were introduced in the first lesson by the researcher. Numbers from one to five were written on slips of paper, pupils were formed into groups and each group chose a slip. The group which held the number one slip had first choice of the books and each group chose a slip until group number five was left with the remaining book. The pupils were made aware of the necessity to read the chapters which they were to dramatize and to consider the characters in the story. There was to be a narrator and the play could either be spoken or mimed. By the end of the first lesson, the pupils had only been given a short review of the book and read the chapter which was to be adapted. It therefore became necessary to devote more than one lesson to the mimes or plays. Pupils who preferred not to have speaking parts used mime, while those who were confident preferred to speak. The emphasis was on the enjoyment of the book and so pupils were not pressurised to produce model performances. Much thought was needed for this exercise and the pupils did not find it easy to adapt the story. However, most of the pupils became highly motivated and there were a number who borrowed the books to read the whole story for themselves.

5.4 Book displays

There is a pupil support system in the Grove Primary School library and pupils are encouraged to set up displays of books on an interesting theme. One of the book and poster displays centred on authors and their books;

another on Cape Town landmarks with a model of Mostert's Mill; books on local history and an enlarged photograph of the old avenue of trees in Pine Avenue (now Grove Avenue); and pictures dealing with the Second World War and books by and about Anne Frank to coincide with the Anne Frank Exhibition held in the South African National Gallery.

Book displays are one of the most effective ways of promoting books and reading. Frequently, teachers and pupils comment on how overwhelmed they feel when walking into a library and faced with close on 15 000 books. By drawing attention to books on various themes more books are circulated and pupils become aware of what is available in the library. Being made aware of books in stock, teachers are encouraged to look beyond the school curriculum and enrich their teaching by using stories based on a topic that is being explored.

5.5 Games

An activity enjoyed by the pupils in the Std 3 class was the illustrating of a book in such a way that it formed a game to be played by other members of the class. Groups of pupils joined together to use their skill in developing the games either as a "Snakes and Ladders" type of game, or a board game like "Trivial Pursuit" where cards could be chosen and questions asked so that competitors could move around the board until a winner was declared.

Books which were chosen to be made into games were:
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
The Magic Finger
The Silver Sword
Robin Hood
Treasure Island

Pupils in the group who had not read the story were instructed to read it to become acquainted with the characters and events so that they could contribute to the game. This was an example of peer pressure or influence, which ensured that members of the group were aware of the story and that the whole group participated in the activity. Although only a few books were handled, in this way a number of pupils were motivated to read the chosen story so that they could share in the activity with their peers. Pupils who wanted to play the game were also motivated to read the book to discover the story for themselves.

5.6 Book discussions and lessons integrated with projects

A number of lessons were conducted in which literature was integrated with class projects or topics related to the syllabus. The Media Guidance lessons were an extension of the classroom work as will be noticed in the brief lesson plans for some of the topics which are included below. After sharing the story, many of the lessons included a time of discussion about the book or its author. Other books by the author were also brought to the pupils' notice.

5.6.1 Giants

One of the Std 1 classes dealt with the theme "Giants" during the term and this gave great scope to the researcher to introduce a number of books to the pupils. The first lesson in the scheme involved the reading of the story *The selfish giant* by Oscar Wilde. The pupils were given strips of paper which they divided into four equal sections. As the story progressed, so they had to illustrate it by showing the transformation of the giant's garden four times to represent the giant's changes of mood. At the end of the lesson they were then able to fold the paper in such a way that it made a card on which they

could write a message. Selfishness, a key theme in the story, was discussed and pupils considered what thoughtlessness can do to affect other people, the children (and particularly the giant) in this story.

A second lesson featured the story "The brave little tailor" in *The book of giant stories* by Ruth Manning-Sanders. Bravery was the key theme in this story and the pupils pondered the tailor's bravery as well as his cunning in outwitting the giants. Some of the pupils had the opportunity to pretend that they were TV news reporters who had to interview and report on the tailor's brave deeds.

A caricature of the well-known fairytale "Jack and the Beanstalk", called *Jim and the beanstalk* was shared with the pupils. This is a delightful tale of Jim, a boy who has practical answers to the giant's problems, such as short-sightedness, thinning hair and lack of teeth. The pupils enjoyed the variation of a well-loved story and were able to suggest other ways in which to alter parts of the story without losing its essential plot.

The final lesson in the plan was the introduction of Roald Dahl's *TheBFG* (The Big Friendly Giant). It is a wonderful story to read aloud, but unfortunately it was too long to read the entire book or even a number of chapters in the half-hour lesson once a week, allocated to Media Guidance. The researcher therefore read only the first chapter to the pupils and during the lesson the pupils drew a "Rogues' gallery of giants". This was an idea taken from a book for teachers on literature activities in the classroom called *Into Books* (Thomas & Perry, 1985). Pupils thought of stories of giants and then drew pictures of them as if they were paintings hanging in an art gallery.

5.6.2 Circus

The class teacher was dealing with the theme "Circus", so the researcher was able to read and share some of the circus stories and picture books with the pupils. The first lesson in the scheme dealt with the picture book by Brian Wildsmith called *The Circus.* Wildsmith's illustrations are very detailed, glow with colour and the story includes vocabulary to enrich the pupils' grasp of the language. Cards had been made depicting the different people involved in a circus. A pupil was chosen to pick a card and then read what had been written. From the explanation on the card the participant then had to mime the person's occupation and the rest of the class had to guess. The pupil who guessed the correct occupation, for example, that of a liontamer then had the opportunity to pick a card and mime in front of the class. This provided much hilarity.

A book about a small boy who learned to stand on his hands and do cartwheels, *Upsidedown Willy* by Dorothy Clewes, was another story introduced to the class. This lesson was integrated with a physical education lesson where the pupils practised handstands, cartwheels and somersaults. Unfortunately, pupils were unable to demonstrate their expertise in these activities in the library but a number of them were able to talk about their prowess.

The third and last lesson in the scheme consisted of an introduction to two much longer and involved stories, *Doctor Dolittle's circus* by Hugh Lofting and *The little man* by Erich Kastner. There was no time to read an extract to the class of either of the books as there was a discussion on other stories about circuses and circus people. Enid Blyton's stories came under discussion as there are a number of tales about the circus, such as *Mr*

Galliano's circus and *Circus of adventure.* This latter book is available in the school library and is extremely popular among the children. A list of non-fiction circus books such as *Clowns and clowning* and *Fairs and circuses* was available for the class teacher to borrow while the class was busy with their project, as were Afrikaans story books on the circus like *Die sirkus kry 'n nuwe nar.* Thus it was possible to include narrative and factual books on the topic.

5.6.3 Pirates

Another class chose the theme "Pirates". There are a number of pirate stories which pupils enjoy and so the researcher chose to introduce the theme by reading *Captain Pugwash* by John Ryan. Pupils had to illustrate the story by either drawing a picture of a pirate, a pirate ship or a pirate flag like "The Jolly Roger". This led to a discussion of pirates, which then continued in the classroom with the class teacher and the prepared activities which involved the integration of the subjects - geography, history and English.

A shortened version of the most well-known of pirate stories by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, was introduced in the next lesson. The teacher wanted to show the movie of *Treasure Island* to the class and so it was considered appropriate to introduce the pupils to the characters beforehand. As the researcher read the story to the pupils, they were able to illustrate the front page of their project book.

Other pirate stories were introduced to the class during the third lesson. These were available for the pupils to borrow and read for themselves. The books recommended were other Pugwash stories, Margaret Mahy's book *The man whose mother was a pirate*, Macdonald Topic Book *Pirates* and a

book entitled *Pirate poems*. The pupils were also shown where to find non-fiction books dealing with the subject "Pirates" so that these could be used in the classroom to assist the teacher and the pupils.

The final lesson in the scheme was the introduction to J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. In this story one of literature's most famous pirates, Captain Hook, leads his band of pirates against Peter Pan and Wendy and all the Lost Boys. The children loved this story with its humour, adventure and fantasy. Unfortunately, due to lack of time it was not possible to read the whole story in the Media Guidance lessons and thus only a few pupils were able to complete the story for themselves. The pupils enjoyed dramatizing the story by enacting the adventures of the Lost Boys and the Pirates. The part that produced the most hilarity was the adventure with Captain Hook and the crocodile. Peter Pan may enter the lists as a children's "classic" but it still retains its popularity among today's children.

5.6.4 Pets

The fourth lesson scheme dealt with the subject "Pets". There is a proliferation of books on pets and thus it was difficult to choose books to be treated in the lessons which would appeal to pupils and encourage them to read the stories for themselves. However, the researcher decided to subdivide the topic into different kinds of pets and to handle a different one each week. In this way books on dogs, cats, mice, and a miscellany of pets were introduced.

Dog stories were chosen for the first lesson. A discussion on how to care for dogs preceded the stories *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* by Lynley Dodd and *A bath for Biscuit* by Helen Hunt. Although an activity had been planned to integrate the stories with factual books on dogs, time was limited

and the activity had to be waived. (The lesson prepared had involved a handwork exercise where the pupils had to draw the shapes of different species of dogs, cut them out and make a frieze to be displayed in the library.)

Again the choice of cat stories was extensive. The researcher therefore chose an old favourite *Millions of cats* by Wanda Gag and a humorous story by Judith Kerr called *Mog the forgetful cat.* Both these stories are fairly short so after the discussion about the cats' experiences, the pupils were able to complete the lesson by making origami cats.

There are a number of stories about different kinds of pets so the choice fell on mice. John Yeoman's book *Mouse Trouble* was chosen for its humour and illustrations. Pupils were reminded of *The tale of Johnny Town Mouse* by Beatrix Potter which had been read to them previously in a lower standard. The class then compiled a menu for a "Mouse Dinner Party".

To complete the lesson scheme on "Pets" a hilarious story by Margaret Mahy called *The boy who was followed home* was read to the class. The pupils were then asked to re-tell the story substituting other animals. Again this lesson was thoroughly enjoyed for its humorous content.

The above four lesson schemes were all dealt with in the Std 1 classes. Books that were introduced by the researcher were available for borrowing and there was much interest and many requests for the books handled in the lessons, or books of a similar nature. Although the pupils were not handed a book list to assist them in finding books on the theme, they were encouraged to use the computerized library catalogue for assistance.

All books introduced, read in the Media Guidance classes, or related to the topic discussed, are listed in Appendix B.

5.6.5 Different themes dealt with in the Media Guidance lessons

The Media Guidance lessons for the Standard 2 classes centred on the study of different themes. In two classes only one book was read to illustrate that theme and in the other two classes a number of books were read. One of the themes was "Fantasy" so the book *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes was chosen as it deals with the supernatural. Another theme was "Countries and People". In this lesson scheme *Sadako and the thousand paper cranes* by Eleanor Coerr (a Japanese story about the result of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima) was read. "The Family" was the third theme and various family stories were introduced to the pupils. The last theme was "Dragons", where again a number of books were chosen.

A lesson plan or scheme was drawn up for each topic. Below is a short explanation of the interventive strategies for each class in Std 2.

5.6.5.1 Fantasy

The Iron Man was read to the class as an example of a book dealing with fantasy. In the first lesson, the first chapter was read followed by a discussion of the Iron Man - where he came from and the importance of the different parts of his body. The next lesson was a continuation of the story and the pupils drew a picture of their impression of the Iron Man. As the story continued, the pupils were encouraged to enact scenes depicting the Iron Man's experiences with the people with whom he comes into contact and express their feelings regarding an encounter they might have had with the Iron Man. In the final lesson in the scheme the pupils were asked to design a

poster advertising the book to others and to be displayed on the library noticeboards.

5.6.5.2 Countries and people

A demonstration of origami introduced the book *Sadako and the thousand paper cranes*. The pupils were shown how to fold a paper crane as Sadako in the story learnt to do. It was also necessary to give some background to the story - the Japanese participation in the Second World War and the atomic bomb that was dropped to stop Japan's involvement. As the story progressed each week, the pupils filled in a chart of Sadako's health and coloured a picture of her, showing her deterioration from the leukaemia she had contracted. Pupils were also encouraged to read about the atomic bomb and the destruction it caused. The last lesson, in which the pupils learn of Sadako's death from radiation sickness, dealt with the need for peace in the world. The pupils were asked to design a monument to Sadako and the others who died from the fall-out, by contracting leukaemia.

5.6.5.3 The Family

Apart from being a story about children in a family, and one Ramona, in particular, *Ramona the pest* by Beverley Cleary is also a humorous story. The first chapter is an amusing account of Ramona's first day at school. The pupils were given paper and asked to draw an impression of their first day at school if they could remember it, or a depiction of Ramona's experiences.

Judy Blume's book *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* was the next family story to be introduced to the pupils. Chapters 2 and 4 were read to the class. The pupils were posed a question: "Whose fault is it if someone in the family gets

hurt?" This led on to a discussion of family responsibilities and reminiscences about accidents occurring within the family.

In the third lesson of the scheme a close scrutiny of the illustrations was important, for the story chosen was Anthony Browne's *Piggybook.* This is a story where the humans in the illustrations begin to take on the shape and habits of pigs. Browne satirizes middle class complacency and sex roles in this story through the text (which is very brief) and the illustrations. It is through the pictures mainly that Browne displays his attitude to the husband and the boys in the treatment of the mother. This lesson ended in a discussion of expectations of family members and sex roles in the family. For example, who washes the dishes, mends the clothes, cooks the meals, fixes the car? Are sex roles firmly embedded in middle class homes or do family members share the chores?

Roald Dahl's *James and the giant peach* provided the content for the last lesson in the scheme. Although Dahl's brand of humour is often cruel and outrageous, children love his books and respond to his humour with delight. James's Aunts Spiker and Sponge are horrible and treat James despicably. Chapters 1 and 2 were read and then pupils were asked to think of other stories in which there were wicked relatives. Cinderella's ugly sisters and stepmother; Snow White's stepmother; and the Russian folktales involving Baba Yaga the wicked grandmother were examples that were discussed. The stories that had been read to the pupils were all available for borrowing from the school library and the pupils were encouraged to read not only the books introduced to them but other books by the same authors.

5.6.5.4 Dragons

There are many books written about dragons which are simply delightful. For an introduction to the theme, the researcher chose a humorous story out of *Book of dragons* by Ruth Manning-Sanders called "Stan Bolovan". The main characters in this story depict certain emotions - Stan is bold; his wife is unhappy; the young dragon is fearful and the mother dragon is scheming. A discussion followed, on how each character's emotions led to the next event in the story. Pupils then drew a picture of their impression of the mother dragon and her son.

The story *Saint George and the dragon* retold by Geraldine McCaughrean was read during the second lesson. This led to a discussion on flags, particularly the flag of St George which is part of the British Union Jack. It was necessary to examine the reason why the British flag came to be called the "Union Jack", so flag books and encyclopaedias were studied. The pupils found researching the topic of flags fascinating and the lesson became important for two reasons: the discussion of the importance of myths and legends in our culture and secondly, the importance of reference books to find relevant answers to questions.

Greensmoke by Ruth Manning was the third and last book in this scheme of lessons. The pupils were given a sheet of paper with spaces for labelled illustrations. As the story was read, the children had to fill in the gaps with their impressions gleaned from the book. There was also a discussion on what one does at the beach and this led on to a discussion of the effect of tides. By using literature it was possible to introduce subjects like geography, science and history.

5.6.6 Lessons held in the upper primary classes

The lessons in Stds 3, 4 and 5 have been mentioned in the sections detailing the interventive strategies of games (Std 3) and dramatization (Stds 4 and 5). It must be clarified that time was very limited for these classes for a number of reasons. The fourth quarter in the year is always an extremely busy one with Honours Day and examinations taking precedence, but during the time of the investigative study the school Sports Day was also included. This entailed pupils being required to practise for a gym display daily for several weeks as well as teams to be chosen for the various races. Lessons were disrupted for these exercises so that a full lesson plan was impossible, unlike the schemes conducted in Stds 1 and 2. The school also closed early for the last few weeks of the term and a number of lessons were cancelled, affecting a number of upper primary classes. However, by preparing a general scheme for the term it was possible for pupils to benefit from the reading guidance interventive strategies.

5.7 Further observations

A study of the results of the questionnaire proved to be extremely useful in the preparation of lessons. The schedule for the investigative study of necessity had to be condensed to contain time for surveying the problem (through the questionnaire) and time to include the interventive strategies to reverse the decline in recreational reading and, if possible, to discover positive (or negative) results from the intensive programme during the seven weeks of the survey. The scope of the investigation of necessity had to be limited to fit the structure of a minor dissertation although further study, in the field of recreational reading and its decline, should be on-going.

Awareness of the pupils' likes and dislikes regarding reading and types of stories, the popularity of some authors but not of others (due to lack of exposure to them), the preference for sport and socialization among the senior pupils and knowledge of the pressure from peers that cause pupils in Std 5, in particular, to reject the use of the school library for recreational reading matter, gave the researcher a clearer picture of the problem of the decline in recreational reading among older pupils. The needs and preferences extracted from the questionnaire enabled the researcher to focus on the importance of children's literature and to direct her attention and that of the pupils to the best literature available in the school library. It was then possible to transfer this view into constructive activities to expose pupils to the books and motivate them to read in their leisure time.

Although it was not possible to calculate the quantifiable effect of the interventive strategies, as a longer time span is required in which to inculcate a reading habit, the following observations have been made:

- the circulation statistics of fiction have risen this term in comparison to that of non-fiction;
- an increase in the number of pupils who are using the school library for their leisure reading requirements; and,
- an increase in the number of pupils who are willing to talk about books and share the stories with their peers.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation originated from the researcher's observation that there appeared to be a decline in the borrowing of recreational reading material, particularly in the senior primary classes of the school. As teacher-librarian she was in a position to motivate and encourage pupils to read in their leisure time by introducing and promoting books that would interest the different ages. The study that resulted led to a collection of interesting information, some of which confirmed the findings of other studies and some of which contradicted the findings. This substantiates what Ward(1977:12-13) notes about surveys:

> Surveys may be large or small, providing an overall view or a study with specific focus.... The data can be readily classified into categories and sub-groups for detailed study and comparison. It can usually be quantified or turned into numerical form for processing and statistical analysis. One can examine relationships, test hypotheses and generate explanations. This sort of information can confirm or deny hunches which so often guide decisions, and demonstrate effectiveness. Findings can often be validated against other operational experience.... Library surveys can assist in management.

Ward (1977:13) notes, too, that there are disadvantages to surveys as well as advantages and he "suspects that the main beneficiaries of

research are the investigators themselves through theses, publication or employment ...." However, in this investigation both the pupils and the researcher benefitted - the pupils by enrichment reading to encourage the reading habit and the researcher by renewed interest in reading and the introduction of a stimulating new programme of recreational reading.

Pupils from one school and from a fairly homogeneous home background were used in this investigation which may account for the results obtained. However, Whitehead (1977:292) states that "there is ample scope for individual schools to undertake useful small-scale research into the reading habits and preferences of their own pupils" and thus a questionnaire was formulated to obtain this information. Whereas Whitehead suggests that the role of the investigation should be "diagnostic" so that a general book selection policy and provision of books for the school as a whole can result from the data gathered, the information collected in this study was also available to assist individual pupils in fostering a reading habit. From the data collected the researcher was able to test the observation that there was a decline in recreational reading and to develop a programme of interventive strategies.

A review of the literature revealed studies which gave the researcher insight into the field of reading and disclosed a number of areas from which to initiate the study into reading habits and the decline of reading for pleasure. Much of the information gathered in the subsequent study was valuable to the researcher, and teachers and librarians may find that this study has uncovered areas that need to be attended to in their own positions. However, there were also limitations which should be noted for future research.

The following framework is used as a device to identify and discuss the main findings that have emerged from the investigation, to compare those to other research studies, and to generate recommendations:

6.1 The role of the teacher-librarian

The importance of recreational reading is endorsed by numerous authorities (Butler, 1980; Cullinan, 1993; Dickinson, 1994; Gardner, 1991; Spiegel, 1981; Whitehead, 1977). The confirmation of reading for pleasure by so many authorities redirected the researcher's teaching of Media Guidance by highlighting the need to introduce more stories into the lessons rather than concentrating on the syllabus requirements of information retrieval. Some of the findings of the survey and the interventive strategies also suggested other opportunities for the promotion of reading.

6.1.1 Reading guidance

Pupils at the school are surrounded by books, as the school library has one of the largest primary school bookstocks; the "box book" system makes books freely available; there are public libraries in the suburbs where they live; and many of them are in the position of being able to buy books when there is a need or a desire for them. According to their responses, therefore, many pupils use a number of different sources to satisfy their reading needs. The researcher over the years has built up a bookstock that is extremely comprehensive and should suit most tastes. It was encouraging to note that a number of authors (Foster, 1977; Mansfield, 1993; Whitehead, 1977) agree on the importance of having a variety of books available so that pupils can have a wide choice. Nonetheless, in spite of the abundance of available reading material in the pupils' immediate environment, a reading decline was detected.

From the discussion with the pupils, it became clear that faced with a wide choice of books and many different genres, most pupils needed some form of guidance. Ramsamy (1991:41) notes that "there is a surfeit of books" as there are bookshops and libraries freely available. However, he argues that "it is by no means certain that those equipped with the skills to read will in fact do so unless they are purposefully directed." As teacher-librarian, the researcher was available to assist pupils with their reading needs and to direct their reading.

With the information gathered from the questionnaire, the researcher was able to introduce books on various topics and genres using a number of different strategies. From the circulation figures it was

encouraging to note an increase in the borrowing of fiction and it was assumed this was a consequence of the interventive strategies.

Spiegel (1981:4) argues that "[T]he development of a love of reading is too important to be left to chance." Although Spiegel's main thrust is towards developing a reading programme for every classroom, the researcher was able to develop a programme that was used in conjunction with a number of classes. The teachers in the Grove Primary School were enriched by new ideas through the introduction of children's stories into the lessons, and not just from receiving additional factual books for their classrooms. The teachers involved in the programme, though few, discovered that allowing children to read for pleasure was not "wasting" time. As Spiegel (1981:28) argues "tremendous pangs of guilt" are suffered by some teachers if they allow class time for reading, but "recreational reading *is* worth the time. Giving children time to read *is* doing your job."

6.1.2 Reading aloud

It became increasingly clear that it was extremely important as one of the interventive strategies, to read aloud to the classes. Firstly, many of the pupils are not read to by parents or teachers and secondly, the researcher was made aware of the power of reading aloud to children by increased requests for the books chosen in each class after a book was introduced in the reading guidance lesson. A poem that had a profound effect on the researcher and continues to do so, was written by Steven L. Layne and entitled "Read to them". It is included below:

Read to them

Read to them
Before the time is gone and stillness fills the room again.
Read to them.

What if it were meant to be that you were the one, the only one,
who could unlock the doors and share the magic with them?
What if others have been daunted by scheduling demands, district objectives, or one hundred other obstacles?

Read to them
Be confident Charlotte has been able to teach them about friendship,
and Horton about self-worth;

Be sure Skin Horse has been able to deliver his message.

Read to them
Let them meet Tigger, Homer Price, Aslan, and Corduroy;
Take them to Oz, Prydain, and Camazotz;

Show them Truffula Tree.

Read to them
Laugh with them at Soup and Rob,
and cry with them when the Queen of Terabithia is forever lost;

Allow the Meeker Family to turn loyalty, injustice, and war into something much more than a vocabulary lesson.

What if you are the one, the only one, with the chance to do it?
What if this is the critical year for even one child?

Read to them
Before the time, before the chance, is gone.

Trelease (1989: 205) contends that "[T]eaching children how to read is not enough; we must also teach them to want to read." He maintains that this has been proved by many years of "programmed learning"

which has "produced a nation of schooltime readers" not "lifetime readers" (and here he is referring to America). The researcher will therefore continue the programme of reading guidance which has already produced more readers since the interventive strategies were introduced.

6.1.3 Role models

Frequently parents are reminded of the influence they have on their children, but this also applies to teachers and librarians who work with children. Adults play an important role in the lives of children and therefore it is important that the right example should be set, especially as "children are great imitators" (Ramsamy, 1991:44). Enthusiasm is essential when promoting books and the researcher found that the books which affected her the most, were the ones that were most frequently requested. The researcher also learned that patience is an essential ingredient when working with children and books. Ramsamy (1991:41) observes that it is "only after long and patient guidance from one or many adults" that the pleasure of books will be discovered.

Although Mansfield (1993:142) cites a British study in which the "recommendation by teacher or librarian was the method least used by children in selecting books" the researcher confirms that this was generally the case with most of the older pupils at the school, but did not apply to pupils in the lower standards. Books that were shared with the pupils were generally requested at the end of the lesson, proving that the interventive strategies were often highly effective. Mansfield notes that it is the teacher-librarian who has the responsibility of selecting books for the school library and thus the

data gathered on reading interests is highly significant for a future book selection policy.

The parental model is commented on by numerous authorities (Buzzing, 1970:94; Gardner, 1991:34; Packard, 1986:50) and this survey questioned the pupils on the reading habits of their parents. As was noted, the majority of parents do read. This is understandable as many of the parents are highly educated, professional people and white collar workers, for whom the education of their children is an important issue. Of value to the researcher has been the contact with parents who are beginning to show more interest in their children's use of the school library since the reading guidance programme started. Interest has been manifested in a number of ways, such as requests for lists of books suitable for pupils to read themselves, lists of books that are good read aloud stories and suitable books to give as presents.

The example of their parents has great influence on children, particularly the younger ones. The researcher believes that the programme now started, and where there is co-operation between the parents and the teacher-librarian (including one or two teachers), will have positive results in developing a love of books and the reading habit among those children who are affected. Gardner (1991:35) notes that a "particularly strong influence" is reading to children in their infancy and that it is often pupils who read "whose parents are also frequent readers."

6.2. The pupil as reader

At the time of the investigation the school used a system of streaming the pupils. One class in each standard was set aside for children who were high achievers or capable of academic success and in need of enrichment teaching. The other classes consisted of mixed ability pupils (pupils who did not achieve academically, although this was not always the case) and pupils who were under-achieving. It was discovered that this system had a detrimental effect on many pupils who had a low self-image of themselves and this system has now been changed. Classes have been thoroughly mixed and cater for all pupil abilities.

Whitehead (1977) argues that there is a high correlation between reading and pupils' ability and attainment. The researcher noticed that in the classes where there were high achievers, the results corroborated Whitehead's study. Far fewer pupils indicated that they were readers in the other classes. An analysis of this phenomenon may lead to the conclusion that one of the factors in the overall decline in reading is partly due to low achievers having to spend more time in learning reading skills than practising them. Although many pupils did have the necessary skills for reading, they did not have the accompanying confidence, and therefore seldom read. This would therefore have affected the results regarding reading habits and preferences.

6.2.1 Gender differences

Findings of the survey revealed that there were avid readers in each standard. The ratio of girls to boys who had read four or five books the

previous month was 4:1, thus revealing that more girls are avid readers than boys at Grove Primary School. This confirms Whitehead's findings (1977) and Carter's report (1986:3) which identify girls as more "likely to be voluntary readers and to read a greater quantity of books than boys." Earlier it was proposed that there being more girls in the school the results of the survey would reveal certain trends. From the discussions that followed, more boys than girls stated that they preferred sport, television or computers to reading than did the girls. This confirms the findings of Whitehead (1977), Gardner (1991:34) and Landsberg (1989:49) who argue that boys generally prefer other activities and that their reading will consist of non-fiction rather than narrative.

6.2.2 Age differences

The findings regarding the number of books read in a month must be considered with caution, as the results of the survey showed that there was a reverse in the anticipated decline of reading in the upper standards. Junior pupils recorded fewer titles than the seniors (as was noted above) so that it appeared that more reading was taking place among the senior pupils. Although there was little significant difference between the number of books read by the juniors and the seniors, there is a disparity between this study and the findings of others such as Whitehead (1977) and Houghton-Hawksley (1983) where a decline in reading was found among senior primary pupils. Marshall (1982:79) observes that reading normally declines in the teenage years although there has developed a teenage genre to attract teenage readers. Carter (1986: 5) notes that younger pupils are often concerned with "the educational/learning benefits of reading" and they therefore associate reading with "the practical rather than the

pleasurable benefits." This could be another explanation for the pupils in Standards 1 and 2 not recording many titles - the main reason being, however, that they could not conceptualize time and could not remember what they had read in the past "month".

6 2.3 Reading interests

Regarding the types of stories and reading interests, the results confirmed previous findings that the younger pupils preferred fairy and folk tales and fantasy. The researcher has also observed the keen interest in ghost stories, mystery stories and animal stories which confirm both the findings of King (1970:148-9) and Marshall (1982:115-117). Marshall also notes that reading interests change as the children develop and that boys and girls in the middle age group (nine to thirteen years) are beginning to show their preferences - boys choosing adventure stories, humorous books and non-fiction and girls choosing school stories, horse stories, animal stories, fantasy, historical novels and love stories. This too, confirms the researcher's observations, survey findings and discussions with pupils. Humorous books are popular among all age groups and between genders. King's (1970:149) findings were confirmed by the majority of positive answers to the question:"Do you like stories which make you laugh?" King (1970:148) also observes that "[C]hildren appear to be maturing faster in their reading interests." Confirmation of this trend is borne out by a number of junior girls recording their reading of senior fiction titles. Titles of thirteen series were recorded, five of which were teenage love stories and unsuitable for eight- and nine-year-olds. Interventive strategies were used to try and wean the junior girls off these "boy meets girl and falls in love" books and to broaden their

choices with books which should not be missed at their age, such as the Dick King-Smith animal stories.

In Whitehead's study (1977), the most "important feature" regarding the pupils' choice of books was "the extraordinary diversity of book reading" undertaken by the sample of children. This was confirmed by the findings of this investigation. In the 1977 study, classics like *Black Beauty, Treasure Island* and *Little Women* predominated and Whitehead (1977: 281) questioned "the relatively thin representation of more recent writers of books for children" surmising that classics were freely available in the classroom and school libraries. This supposition proved to be correct and led to the conclusion that availability is an important factor in the choice of books by primary school children. In this investigation few classics were recorded and newer titles featured prominently, such as the books by Roald Dahl and Judy Blume. The school library has both classics and modern children's literature, the latter predominating.

Regarding authors, Whitehead (1977:151) noted that "[T]he most striking feature... is the predominance of Enid Blyton, particularly among the girls." Although the researcher did not classify favourite authors according to gender preferences, Enid Blyton was still among the most popular authors, ranked second to Roald Dahl. This confirms the widely held theory that pupil readers enjoy the familiar style and language of many authors who are prolific writers. Series also provide the security that many children require in their reading - the familiar characters and story line. When children discover an author's books which they have enjoyed, they prefer the familiar above the unknown and untried. Studies into the reliance of children on one author's books have been conducted and there is no evidence that this

reliance has led to a decline in reading in later years. This has also been the observation of the researcher who considers that pupils grow out of a dependence on one author as they mature and that series and single authors are only a phase in their development.

6.2.4 Peer influence

Even pupils in the junior classes today are faced with peer pressure, which could be one of the reasons why younger girls are reading love stories to keep up with their older sisters and their peers. Whitehead (1977:290) noticed that pupils over the age of twelve were influenced by their peers and this influence was one of the reasons for the decline in reading. Peer pressure is decidedly stronger among the senior pupils, many of whom consider those who use the school library to be "nerds". It has been the researcher's observation that most of these pupils prefer to do their browsing and borrowing from the school library when alone after school and not in the company of their peers. Paradoxically, however, pupils were interested in the book talks given by their peers and did borrow books from each other. King (1970:149) notes that the most frequent reason for selecting a book was stated as being "[A] recommendation from a personal friend."

6.2.5 Leisure time pursuits

The findings of studies on reading and reasons for its decline, target a number of different activities. The decline of reading is most noticeable among teenagers, but even in 1977 where a comparison was drawn between that study and a previous study in 1940, there was an alarming decline in reading generally among children. A number of the reasons will be discussed below, comparing them to the

findings of the present study, but remembering that a number of the findings here must be treated with caution.

6.2.5.1 Television

A number of studies have been conducted into the viewing patterns of pupils and statistics vary according to the number of hours a day children watch television. The British study conducted by Whitehead and others in 1977 calculated that pupils watched an average of two to three hours a weekday. Breslin and Marino (in: Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1977:596) cite American children as spending an average of six or more hours a day viewing television but Howe (1977:16-17) states that studies indicate that American children watched over two and a half hours a day. The study by Dr de Beer of the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa in 1986 found that pupils in Standards Three to Ten viewed an average of twenty hours a week (in: Packard, 1986:49). This is lower than in the other countries identified, if one considers that weekends were counted into the South African calculation. However, all these figures are high enough to reduce the amount of time they have available for homework, recreational reading and other leisure time pursuits.

In the Grove Primary School investigation, it was difficult to calculate daily or weekly viewing hours and thus any comparison must be treated with caution. Steinfirst (in: Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1986:631) cites studies which have identified television viewing peaking at age twelve and then declining in adolescence. One would expect therefore, the number of hours the pupils watched television to be greater than the recorded amount. From the majority of answers, it appeared that television did not occupy much of their time, but on

further questioning, it emerged that most pupils did watch television daily, preferring school weekdays above weekends and holidays. This confirms the study of Howe (1977:57) who states "that watching television is chosen as the most-preferred activity, only at times, such as after school, when children quite reasonably seek rest and relaxation..." Almost half the Grove pupils chose reading as a hobby or interest and did not really consider television important in their leisure time. This refutes findings by King (1970:145) and Staiger (1979:67) who both found that reading ranked fourth in recreational interests. Other studies have found that television has had a positive effect on reading (Cramond, 1976:279; Fourie, 1990,307; Gardner, 1991:39; Osborn, 1988:251 and Ramsamy, 1991:44) who have found that television has not displaced reading but has rather widened children's interests. The researcher also confirms, from observation and discussions with pupils, further findings of Dr de Beer who found that avid readers and pupils dedicated to their studies do not allow television to intrude upon their time.

6.2.5.2 Sport and other activities

Sport, however, plays an important part in the lives of the pupils and the majority recorded the sports in which they take part. Ramsamy (1991:41) includes sport in the leisure time pursuits he enumerates. Gardner (1991:35) found in his study that in the secondary school, sport did not seem to pose a threat to book reading. This would appear to be confirmed by the primary school pupils in this investigation. Few studies appear to have been concerned with the position of sport in pupils' extra-mural hours possibly because most studies are conducted in Europe and America and sport does not feature as prominently as it does in South Africa.

Fasick (1984) argues that the new technologies have also become most pervasive.Television is the most time-consuming pursuit in today's society but "[O]ther technological developments which have entered children's lives are pocket calculators, cassette recorders, video cassette recorders and compact radios." Fasick also warns of the challenge of personal computers, particularly among those who can afford them. This confirms the researcher's findings of a growing number of pupils who prefer computers to reading and other leisure time pursuits.

Listening to music was an addition to the many other leisure time pursuits recorded by the pupils. This response was found particularly in the responses of the senior pupils. These pupils stated that listening to music occupied a fair amount of their recreational time. This confirms Fasick's observation that the new technologies such as tape recorders and radios do have an impact on young people today.

Older pupils also responded that they enjoyed spending time with their friends. This confirms studies by Whitehead (1977) and others, which indicate that socialization plays an important role in the development of teenagers. In the discussion that followed the questionnaire, spending time with friends was named as one of the reasons why the senior pupils did not read as much as they had when they were younger.

6.3 Limitations of the study

6.3.1 Lack of time

A period of eight weeks was available for the interventive strategies to be implemented in the classes. Some of the lessons that were planned had to be postponed, which affected the programme. Earlier studies have stressed that investigations into reading habits and interests should be conducted over a number of years as the reading habit can take many years to inculcate (Carter, 1986; Spiegel, 1981; Ward, 1977). The findings of this study must be seen in the light of a shortened investigatory period although a number of the interventive strategies used in the investigation had been used by the researcher previously.

Another area in which the time factor was a problem, was the half-hour period allocated to Media Guidance. There was not enough time in most classes to complete the questionnaire and one could therefore assume that even in classes where extra time was given, pupils felt pressurised and unable to answer all the questions.

6.3.2 Unanswered questions and doubtful answers

A limitation of this study was the number of unanswered questions. By not answering questions, or even answering them incorrectly, which is not an unusual feature of research involving child respondents, gaps in the information resulted. A few of the results also contradicted other reading studies. For example, pupils in Standards 1 and 2 fared badly in writing down books they had read the previous month. Indications from the results of the questionnaire were that the younger pupils

were not reading for pleasure, yet studies show that the most voracious readers come from precisely this age group. The assumption here is that pupils had been reading but were unable to remember all the titles of the books. From the discussion that followed the questionnaire, this appears to have been the case.

Another question which was badly answered, was the question of television viewing. This appears to have been a general dilemma for most pupils, as was the calculation of the amount of time they devoted to reading each week. The researcher had hoped to compare the two leisure time pursuits, but the results were most disappointing with many pupils omitting to answer these questions. Another problem was the doubt caused by inflated answers received from some of the pupils. A question for the researcher was therefore: Were the pupils writing these responses to impress or satisfy the researcher, as all the questionnaires were answered in the school library, or were they genuine responses? It was difficult to discover the reasoning behind some of the answers, for example, the general attitude to television which fared well below the expected preferred leisure time pursuits, coming third after reading and swimming. Yet there is the anomaly that pupils read an average of 1.99 books a month. Cullinan (1993 :xvi) notes that children "frequently watched television for more than two hours a day, but they read for only five to ten minutes, if at all." The pupils in this investigation indicated that they read approximately an hour a day but were unable to indicate the number of hours a day they watched television. This refutes the findings of Cullinan and other authorities.

6.4 Implications for future practice and recommendations

Sections 6.1 to 6.3 were an attempt to highlight and collate the conclusions concerning the issues and questions regarding children's recreational reading habits. The investigation undertaken by the researcher brought a number of areas of concern to light and confirmed many of the experts' findings. It is hoped that this study will be added to the body of literature on children's recreational reading habits and prove useful for future research. It is recommended that more data should be gathered on this issue in an effort to benefit all who work with children and books. Gardner (1991:39) recommends that "longitudinal research such as in-depth case studies" of "avid or infrequent readers" is needed. Carter (1986:16), however, makes a number of recommendations concerning future research in this area, one of which is that it "should follow a methodology based on that of an existing study, in pursuing only those areas which remain problematic" but she warns "that more research findings could further confuse rather than illuminate."

As noted earlier, Whitehead recommended that individual schools should conduct their own investigations. It is a recommendation that other schools should examine the possibility of such an investigation as was conducted at the Grove Primary School, but using an abbreviated or adapted questionnaire. There is very little research on recreational reading in South Africa and such an investigation in schools locally or nationally could be of considerable value (Houghton-Hawksley, 1983: 238; Gardner, 1991:33).

South Africa is undergoing a transition period and education, although in turmoil, is a top priority. Implications from the investigation at Grove Primary School are:

- that teacher-librarians or those in charge of Media Guidance become better acquainted with good children's books to read aloud and to promote.
- that parents become more aware of quality childrens' books that are available and the support of bookshops be enlisted in this regard.
- more liaison between parents and the teacher-librarian is necessary so that parents can be made aware of quality books to share with their children.
- the teacher-librarian should encourage co-operation between the home and the school library by extending an invitation to parents to visit the school library and then to share books with them.
- the school community should be made aware of the importance of the library and books by holding a book fair or other book promotional activities.
- a course in children's literature should be made available at evening Adult Education classes held at schools for parents and adults interested in children's books.

Some recommendations to the education authorities are therefore:

- that primary and pre-primary teacher training should incorporate children's literature modules consisting of more practical experience in reading children's books than in the theoretical aspects of the subject.

- that junior primary, pre-primary and teachers of English in the senior primary should have the opportunity of attending in-service courses which include a practical component.
- that all new syllabuses (in languages as well as in subjects, but particularly in Media Guidance/Information Guidance) will emphasize the importance of recreational reading and allow time for its practice.
- that at Teachers' Centres a consultant or expert in children's literature be appointed to advise teachers on children's books. This person could also be used to advise inquiring parents.
- that the SABC be contacted and an official appointed to liaise with their educational television team. As television plays a significant role in the lives of children, the support of the South African Broadcasting Corporation should be enlisted to ensure that children's books are promoted (and there are many fine stories that have already been televised in Britain) at a time which is suitable for the majority.

Some further recommendations can be made to schools:

- that at least one teacher on the staff be knowledgeable about children's books and be ready to give advice on books that are suitable for the age group and to read aloud;
- that as children develop a sense of what the teacher values, school policy should reflect the importance of recreational reading by making time for it and encouraging all staff members to read in that time;
- that money should be made available for not just text-books but also for building up a fine stock of fiction;

- that parent evenings should include opportunities to buy books for the school library and for their own children and they should have an opportunity to talk to the teacher-librarian about suitable stories.

Concluding remarks

What this investigation has shown is the need for children to be given every opportunity to become lifelong readers through discovering the excitement and enjoyment which comes from stories. The importance of reading was stressed, but of concern to those who interest themselves in children and books, is the fact that "[M]any children learn to read without learning to love reading" (Sutherland and Arbuthnot, 1986:5). Even surrounded by a variety of books the majority of children do not complete a story or read for the sheer enjoyment of it. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1986:5) observe that "[C]hildren are not born loving good books; neither are they born hating to read. They can be encouraged and influenced in either direction ..."

The researcher has realized the truth of this observation through the investigation she conducted and was motivated to bring to the pupils the best literature that was available. Since the programme was introduced late in 1994, there has been a renewed interest in stories and an increase in the circulation of fiction.

Pupils at the school do not suffer from physical or mental disabilities as did Cushla, in the book *Cushla and her books*. Cushla's grandmother, Dorothy Butler, an authority on children's books, recorded the impact that books had on her grand-daughter's life.

Although severely disabled, tests showed that the exposure she had had to stories had enriched her life by contributing greatly to her cognitive development and to her language development in particular. If these are the results of the impact of books on a child who is severely mentally and physically disabled then here is proof of the value of stories for children and every reason why literature and recreational reading should have their rightful place in every child's life in school and out of it. This leads to the question whether educationists are going to be made aware of the importance of recreational reading and whether they will use their influence to bring about this change.

To quote Trevor Dickinson (1994:213):

> We have, as teachers, as librarians, as parents, that terrifying obligation and proud privilege of making sure that our book-touch is benign and lasting. Our unremembered children will then be forever in our happy debt.

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APPENDIX A

READING PROFILE

Age in years ☐ **Boy** ☐ **Girl** ☐ **Std** ☐

1. DO YOU FIND READING: EASY ☐ **FUN** ☐ **BORING** ☐
HARD WORK ☐ **OTHER .....**

2. HAVE YOU READ A BOOK (OR BOOKS) IN THE LAST FOUR WEEKS? Don't count books which you must read in the lesson or for homework and don't count stories which are told mainly in pictures.

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

3. IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" WHICH BOOKS HAVE YOU READ IN THE LAST FOUR WEEKS?
Write down as many of the books as you can remember. Add the author's name if you can. If you have only read one or two books, just put those down.

_____.	_____.	☐
_____.	_____.	☐
_____.	_____.	☐
_____.	_____.	☐
_____.	_____.	☐

4. PUT A TICK IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE BOOKS YOU LIKED.

5. HOW MANY BOOKS DO YOU OWN?

☐ **I own up to 20 books**
☐ **I own up to 50 books**
☐ **I own up to 100 books**
☐ **I own more than 100 books**

6. DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE AUTHOR, ONE WHOSE BOOKS YOU LIKE READING MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE'S?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "YES", write down the author's name here. (You may wish to write down several author's names).

Write down the authors' names here:.....

.....

7. ABOUT HOW MUCH READING DO YOU THINK YOU DO?

Tick the box of the answer you choose. In the other box write how many hours you spend reading a week.

		HOURS
☐	A large amount	☐
☐	Quite a lot	☐
☐	About average	☐
☐	Not very much	☐
☐	Only a little	☐

8. DO YOU ENJOY READING?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING. DO YOU LIKE STORIES WHICH:

Make you laugh?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Make you cry?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about people and their problems?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about everyday life?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about friends?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about animals, not people?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about real people?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about the past?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are set in other countries?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are about space, aliens, the future?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are fantasy?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are fairy or folk tales?	Yes ☐	No ☐

10. FROM WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR BOOKS? You may tick as many as you use.

Class library	☐	Borrow from a friend	☐
School library	☐	Borrow from someone in the family	☐
Public library	☐	Buy	☐
Belongs to me	☐		

11. DO YOU BELONG TO A PUBLIC LIBRARY?

Put a tick in the box of the answer you choose.

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "YES", tick the answer which is most nearly true for you:

- ☐ I go to borrow books twice a week (or more)
- ☐ I go to borrow books once a week
- ☐ I go to borrow books once a fortnight
- ☐ I go to borrow books sometimes

12. DO YOUR PARENTS, OR ANY OTHER ADULTS IN YOUR HOUSE, READ LIBRARY BOOKS?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

13. DO YOU HAVE A TV SET AT HOME?

Yes ☐ No ☐

14. DO YOU HAVE A VIDEO RECORDER AT HOME?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15. VIEWING HABITS:

a)At which times do you usually watch?

(You may choose more than 1 block)

	SCHOOLDAYS	WEEKENDS	HOLIDAYS
3 - 4 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
4 - 5 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
5 - 6 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
6 - 7 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
7 - 8 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
8 - 9 p.m.	☐	☐	☐
Later than 9 p.m.	☐	☐	☐

b) About how many hours each week do you spend watching video films or recorded programmes?

Schooldays	☐	**Weekends**	☐
Holidays	☐	**Weekends**	☐

c) About how much time do you spend watching TV programmes each week?

Schooldays	☐	**Weekends**	☐
Holidays	☐	**Weekends**	☐

16. WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS? Write each hobby or interest in a box. Then write in the box next to it the number of hours you spend on it each week.

_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐

17. a) IN WHICH SPORTS ARE YOU INTERESTED?

_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐
_____.	☐	_____.	☐

b) HOW OFTEN DO YOU PLAY THIS SPORT? Next to each sport write the number of hours you spend on it each week.

18. WHAT IS THE FAVOURITE WAY YOU LIKE TO SPEND YOUR FREE TIME?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

Books used in Media Guidance to motivate pupils to read

Barrie, J.M.	*Peter Pan*
Blume, J.	*Tales of a fourth grade nothing*
Blyton, E.	*Circus of adventure*
Blyton, E.	*Mr Galliano's circus*
Brading, T.	*Pirates*
Briggs, R.	*Jim and the beanstalk*
Browne, A.	*Piggybook*
Cleary, B.	*Ramona the pest*
Clewes, D.	*Upsidedown Willy*
Coerr, E.	*Sadako and the thousand paper cranes*
Crowther, C.	*Clowns and clowning*
Dahl, R.	*The BFG*
Dahl, R.	*Charlie and the chocolate factory*
Dahl, R.	*James and the giant peach*
Dahl, R.	*The magic finger*
Dahl, R.	*Revolting rhymes*
Dodd, L.	*Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy*
Foster, J. (comp.)	*Pirate poems*
Fox, P.	*The slave dancer*
Gag, W.	*Millions of cats*
Hughes, T.	*The iron man*
Hunt, H.	*A bath for Biscuit*
Hunter, N.	*Professor Branestawm's perilous pudding*
Kastner, E.	*The little man*
Kerr, J.	*Mog the forgetful cat*

Lofting, H.	*Doctor Dolittle's circus*
Mahy, M.	*The boy who was followed home*
Mahy, M	*The man whose mother was a pirate*
Malory, T.	*Robin Hood*
Manning, R.	*Greensmoke*
Manning-Sanders, R.	*The book of dragons*
Manning-Sanders, R.	*The book of giants*
McCaughrean, G.	*Saint George and the dragon*
Misheiker, B.	*Die sirkus kry 'n nuwe nar*
O'Dell, S.	*The island of the blue dolphins*
Potter, B.	*The tale of Johnny Town-mouse*
Ryan, J.	*Captain Pugwash*
Scieszka, J.	*The true tale of the three little pigs by A. Wolf*
Serraillier, I.	*The silver sword*
Snyder, Z.K..	*The headless cupid*
Stevenson, R.L.	*Treasure Island*
Suhl, U.	*Uncle Misha's partisans*
White, P.	*Fairs and circuses*
Wilde, O.	*The selfish giant*
Wildsmith, B.	*The circus*
Yeoman, J.	*Mouse trouble*