



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

## Research Commons at the University of Waikato

### Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**ENHANCING THE READING ENGAGEMENT OF  
UNIVERSITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: AN  
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
at  
The University of Waikato  
by  
Jocelyn Lee Yee Vun



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

2015

## ABSTRACT

Despite burgeoning research that has been conducted on the broad term “engagement” in the past decades, research into engagement in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts remains scarce. Furthermore, in the English Language Learners (ELLs) context in Malaysia, where reading avoidance seems to be an issue, no research has specifically addressed reading engagement.

This qualitative case study aims to increase student reading engagement through a strategy-based intervention, *Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement* (CARE), designed to engage ELLs with whom it was conducted under an action research paradigm. Another purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which reflective practice and development as an action researcher would empower the practitioner in her professional development.

Data were collected from 41 students enrolled in an intact university class for 36 hours; a duration of a semester. Six participants, each representing different engagement levels, were selected for close study. Data collected from the six participants in this study were obtained from multiple sources, including transcriptions of participants’ reflective reading logs; transcriptions of audio-recordings of group discussions and a group interview; transcriptions of audio-recordings of the researcher’s private speech during lessons; and the researcher’s reflective journal. Most of the data were qualitative, but some - such as the word count in logs, speech size, number of turns in discussion, and reading engagement scores - were quantitative. In the first phase of the action research cycle, students received explicit instruction and teacher modelling, and in the second phase, they worked more independently. The data were subject to a procedure of grounded analysis, and triangulated to achieve a thick description.

The results showed that interactional opportunities such as retelling and group discussion supported four dimensions of ELLs’ reading engagement: behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic. From a sociocultural perspective, ELLs need one another to achieve engagement. Peer scaffolding, or collective scaffolding, in ways analogous to teacher scaffolding exemplified students’ agency. The findings of the present investigation showed that sustained silent

reading, when effectively scaffolded, tended to have positive effects on ELLs. Evidence in the present study showed that growing engagement appeared to be attributed to Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE), which allowed ELLs to move along the reading pathways from initial engagement, to emergent engagement, and finally, deeper engagement with texts.

As a means of examining the practitioner's position and practice, action research revealed the teaching style and tacit knowledge of the practitioner's everyday practice. As a reflective teacher, I moved along a continuum comprised of identifying a problem (students were disaffected with reading), developing a research design, collecting data, refining the procedures, analysing the data, and presenting aspects of the study in the public domain.

The present case study can be related, rather than generalised, to similar contexts. The study can make an original contribution to an academic understanding of reading engagement and the teacher's reflective practice in relatable contexts. These findings have important implications for practitioners and researchers; they suggest that neglecting the role of reading engagement could be the cause of missed opportunities to support ELL literacy development and students' critical thinking stance. The present study also shows that developing reflective opportunities has evident consequences for teachers who are engaging in action research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The eyes of the Lord keep guard over knowledge *and* him who has it.

Proverbs 22:12

I am indebted greatly to several people for the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to give my heartfelt appreciation to my chief supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Roger Barnard who is always jovial and approachable to his supervisees. He has taught me so much about academic rigour and scholarship, and I have learned a great deal from his commitment and dedication towards his work. Dr Ian Bruce, a postgraduate advisor at FASS, is my second supervisor. He offered to take me as his student during my most difficult time in my PhD journey. I would not have become what I am today if they had not taken me under their wing.

Also, my sincere thanks are extended to Hyeseung Jeong, who was there supporting me during my trying time until I had a smooth transition to the Faculty of Arts and Social Science. My gratitude goes to Jenny McGhee, who spent time coaching me on Endnote at the beginning of my journey and the formatting of the thesis towards the end.

To my husband, Daniel Leong, who always supports me and stands by me, and because of his understanding and love, “I take the [road] less travelled by, and that has made all the difference” (Robert Frost). To my only child, Christi Danielle Leong, thank you for giving me the time and space to complete my studies. Your deep engagement with books has inspired me to take up this challenge.

My embarkation on this journey was actuated by the belief of my late father, Lee Min Tet that “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” (W. B. Yeats). Dad, I dedicate this thesis to you. To all my brothers and sisters in the Lee family, I want to say a big thank you. Your long-distance calls and messages were just so touching.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA .....	1
1.2 ENGLISH IN SABAH .....	4
1.3 READING IN MALAYSIA .....	5
1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY .....	9
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.6 THE RESEARCH SETTING .....	11
1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS .....	12
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	14
2.2 ENGAGEMENT: BEHAVIOURAL, COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL AND AGENTIC .....	15
2.3 READING ENGAGEMENT .....	16
2.4 MOTIVATION: STRATEGIES AND READING SKILLS .....	16
2.4.1 <i>Intrinsic Motivation</i> .....	17
2.4.2 <i>Self-efficacy</i> .....	18
2.5 READER RESPONSE .....	19
2.5.1 <i>Reading logs</i> .....	21
2.5.2 <i>Discussion groups</i> .....	21
2.6 USING A CRITICAL LITERACY APPROACH TO READ LITERARY TEXTS .....	24
2.7 EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF CRITICAL LITERACY WITH L1 LEARNERS .....	27
2.8 CRITICAL LITERACY AND ELL .....	28
2.9 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON READING ENGAGEMENT .....	29
2.10 WAYS OF PROMOTING READING ENGAGEMENT .....	30
2.10.1 <i>Selecting appropriate texts</i> .....	31
2.10.1.1 Using literary texts to engage ELLs .....	31
2.10.2 <i>Motivation and autonomy</i> .....	32
2.10.2.1 From motivation to investment .....	33
2.10.3 <i>Independent reading time/sustained silent reading (SSR)</i> .....	34
2.10.4 <i>Social interactivity</i> .....	37

2.10.5	<i>Teacher scaffolding</i> .....	38
2.10.6	<i>Strategy-Based interventions</i> .....	39
2.11	THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION .....	40
2.12	COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO READING ENGAGEMENT (CARE) IN THE ELL CONTEXT ...	42
2.13	SUMMARY .....	43
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>		<b>45</b>
3.1	METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES .....	45
3.2	RESEARCH STYLES .....	48
3.3	THE RESEARCH SITE, SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS .....	55
3.3.1	<i>The research setting</i> .....	56
3.3.2	<i>Participants</i> .....	56
3.3.3	<i>The data collection instruments</i> .....	58
3.4	ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS .....	69
3.5	ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER .....	70
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS .....	71
3.6.1	<i>Coding and reducing data</i> .....	72
3.6.2	<i>Warrants</i> .....	75
3.6.3	<i>Credibility</i> .....	75
3.6.4	<i>Transferability</i> .....	76
3.6.5	<i>Dependability</i> .....	76
3.6.6	<i>Confirmability</i> .....	77
3.7	SUMMARY .....	77
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS .....</b>		<b>78</b>
4.1	STUDENTS’ ENGAGEMENT IN THE INTERACTION CONTEXT .....	79
4.1.1	<i>Behavioural engagement</i> .....	81
4.1.2	<i>Cognitive engagement</i> .....	86
4.1.3	<i>Emotional engagement</i> .....	98
4.1.4	<i>Agentic engagement</i> .....	102
4.1.5	<i>The six selected participants</i> .....	107
4.2	MY REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT AS AN ACTION RESEARCHER .....	119
4.2.1	<i>Continuity and contextual support</i> .....	120
4.2.2	<i>Intersubjectivity: Sharing what is in the teacher’s head?</i> .....	122
4.2.3	<i>Contingency: Providing help when necessary</i> .....	128
4.2.4	<i>Flow: Teacher and students’ motivation in ELL teaching and learning</i> ...	133
4.2.5	<i>Preparing to hand over: Raising and lowering scaffolding</i> .....	136
4.2.6	<i>Identifying the six participants</i> .....	137
4.3	LEARNING TO RESEARCH .....	142

4.3.1	<i>From systematic reflection to solving problems</i>	142
4.3.2	<i>A novice researcher</i>	143
4.3.3	<i>Debriefing</i>	144
4.3.4	<i>Problems faced and challenges I overcame</i>	145
4.3.5	<i>Memoing</i>	147
4.3.6	<i>Analysis while collecting data</i>	148
4.3.7	<i>Systematic coding</i>	151
4.3.8	<i>Emerging categories: Getting inside the heads of my participants</i>	152
4.3.9	<i>Creating a grounded theory</i>	154
4.4	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	156
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS</b>		<b>158</b>
5.1	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	158
5.2	OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER	158
PART I		159
5.3	INTERACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES ENHANCE READING ENGAGEMENT	160
5.3.1	<i>Retelling</i>	160
5.3.2	<i>Group discussion</i>	161
5.4	THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCT OF READING ENGAGEMENT	164
5.4.1	<i>Behavioural engagement</i>	164
5.4.2	<i>Cognitive engagement</i>	165
5.4.3	<i>Emotional engagement</i>	168
5.4.4	<i>Agentic engagement</i>	169
5.4.4.1	Personal agency/self- efficacy	169
5.4.4.2	Collective agency/efficacy and peer scaffolding	171
5.5	SUSTAINED SILENT READING AND ENGAGEMENT	172
5.6	COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO READING ENGAGEMENT (CARE) IN THE ELL CONTEXT	173
5.6.1	<i>Social interactions</i>	173
5.6.2	<i>Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE)</i>	174
PART II		178
5.7	EMPOWERMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	178
5.7.1	<i>For-action reflections</i>	178
5.7.2	<i>In-action</i>	180
5.7.3	<i>On-action</i>	182
5.8	ACTION RESEARCH	185
5.8.1	<i>Identifying a problem</i>	185
5.8.2	<i>Developing a research design</i>	186
5.8.3	<i>Collection of data by various procedures</i>	187
5.8.3.1	Retelling	187

5.8.3.2	Discussion.....	188
5.8.3.3	Students' reflective reading logs.....	189
5.8.3.4	Interview .....	190
5.8.4	<i>Refining the procedures during the project</i> .....	190
5.8.5	<i>Analysing the data</i> .....	192
5.8.5.1	Challenges .....	194
5.8.6	<i>Presenting aspects of the study</i> .....	195
5.9	INSIGHTS GAINED.....	196
5.10	SUMMARY .....	197
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>199</b>
6.1	SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS.....	199
6.2	LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY.....	200
6.3	IMPLICATIONS.....	202
6.3.1	<i>ELL teachers of reading in Malaysia and relatable contexts</i> .....	202
6.3.2	<i>Theory of reading engagement</i> .....	205
6.3.3	<i>Action research to professional development</i> .....	206
6.3.3	<i>Suggestions for further research</i> .....	207
6.4	CONCLUSION .....	208
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>		<b>210</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>		<b>232</b>
APPENDIX A: LETTER OF RESEARCH INFORMATION.....		233
APPENDIX B: STUDENTS INFORMED CONSENT .....		235
APPENDIX C: BLURBS.....		237
APPENDIX D: A GUIDE TO THE READING LOG .....		239
APPENDIX E: REFLECTIVE WRITING PROMPTS.....		240
APPENDIX F: PROCEDURES.....		241
APPENDIX G: FOCUS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....		245
APPENDIX H: SNAPSHOT OF INITIAL OPEN CODING PROCESS IN NVIVO.....		246
APPENDIX I: SNAPSHOT OF THE INTERACTIVE DATA ANALYSIS IN NVIVO .....		247
APPENDIX J: FINAL REFLECTION PROMPTS .....		248
APPENDIX K: DATA SAMPLE OF STUDENT GROUP DISCUSSION .....		249
APPENDIX L: DATA SAMPLE OF MY CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS IN CLASS.....		257
APPENDIX M: DATA SAMPLE OF MY PRIVATE SPEECH IN CLASS.....		260
APPENDIX N: DATA SAMPLE OF MY CONVERSATION WITH DEBRIEFER I.....		261
APPENDIX O: DATA SAMPLE OF MY CONVERSATION WITH DEBRIEFER II.....		264
APPENDIX P: COMMUNICATING WITH DEFRIEFER II VIA EMAIL ON 18 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2014.....		266
APPENDIX Q: COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO READING ENGAGEMENT (CARE) FOR ELLS.....		267

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The Basic Reading Model of Reading Engagement.....	41
Figure 2 The Basic Action-Reflection Spirals (McNiff, 1988).....	53
Figure 3 McNiff's Generational Transformational Evolutionary Process (McNiff, 2010, 2013) .....	54
Figure 4 Emerging Categories .....	73
Figure 5 Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) for ELLs .....	175
Figure 6 Action-Reflection Cycles .....	191
Figure 7 Cycles of Cycles .....	191

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Criteria for Degree of Engagement from Participants' Written Work .....	57
Table 2 Participants' Profiles .....	57
Table 3 Studies on Literature .....	61
Table 4 Data Sources Collected .....	62
Table 5 Criteria for Degree of Engagement from Participants' Group Discussion.....	65
Table 6 Chronology of the Research.....	68
Table 7 Labelling data .....	79
Table 8 Transcription Conventions.....	80
Table 9 Six Participants and Their Initial Engagement Levels.....	107
Table 10 Intersubjective Space and Meaning Sharing.....	127
Table 11 Discussion with Debriefers .....	138
Table 12 Initial Coding .....	150
Table 13 Data Analysis (Codebook) Refined .....	151
Table 14 Freebody (1992) and Luke and Freebody's (1999) Reading Model .....	159
Table 15 Number of Data Collected .....	193

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the highest civilization, the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

### 1.1 The history of English language education in Malaysia

The use of the English language in Malaysia increased during the British colonisation in the nineteenth century. The British set up English medium primary and secondary schools, while ethnic groups set up their own schools. The education system before independence was fragmented as a result of the British colonial policy of governing through each of the Federated Malay States (FMS). When Malaya moved towards independence, English was made compulsory in all public primary and secondary schools. There were four different types of primary school, each of which had a different medium of instruction (Malay, Chinese and Tamil), and a different syllabus. Such differences still exist today, and continue to pose problems in today's multilingual society.

Shortly after independence, an education committee referred to as the *Razak Report*, and the education review committee known as the *Rahman Talib Report*, formed the basis of The Education Act 1961 (Foo & Richards, 2004) which defined the different medium schools in Malaysia:

- Malay medium schools as national schools
- Chinese and Tamil medium schools as *vernacular* schools, and
- English medium schools as *national-type* schools

Following independence in 1957, education in Malaysia underwent a period of considerable change. The shift was mainly focused on nation building, especially the promotion of unity among the nation's different ethnic groups. English was considered to be unsuitable as a national language because it was "the language of the colonial master" (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008, p. 308). Therefore, there was a need to develop a national language which could be commonly used by all Malaysian citizens. Although the Malay language was declared the national language in 1963, English was still the official language

and remained the medium of instruction in national-type (English medium) schools. The implementation of the national Educational Policy, based on the *Razak Report* in 1956, phased out English as the medium of instruction and introduced a common syllabus for English as a subject in primary and secondary schools, resulting in a standardised English examination for all (Foo & Richards, 2004). Malay as the language of instruction was first introduced to secondary schools in 1968. Also, in the same year, the first cohort of Malay-medium students graduated from the University of Malaya. The next 15 years marked the phased conversion, from English to Malay in national-type schools; by 1983, all the courses at tertiary institutions were conducted in Malay (Skinner et al., 2008). However, vernacular schools (Chinese and Tamil primary schools) maintain their policies regarding the medium of instruction to the present day.

Secondary schools in Malaysia consist of four types. Other than the national schools that are taught in Bahasa Malaysia, there are also 66 private schools, 60 Chinese independent schools, and 67 international schools throughout the country (Private Schools in Malaysia, 2013). There are two types of private school; those that teach the national curriculum but may have different syllabuses for English, Mathematics and Science, and those that follow the national curriculum. Chinese independent schools, funded by the Chinese community, have their own syllabus and most subjects are taught through the medium of English. Besides the *Unified Examination Certificate*, independent school students also take the same public examinations as those in the national schools. They attend extra classes to prepare for such examinations. International schools adopt the UK or US curriculum and most of the members of the teaching staff are expatriates. Any new government curriculum policies and issues related to their implementation do not really concern the international schools, due to the fact that such schools employ different syllabuses. However, the independent schools have to follow other education policies.

In all the national schools, the change in language policy - that is, the use of Malay as the medium of instruction - brought about changes to both the English language curriculum and the pedagogical approaches. For example, the existing structural-situational syllabus was replaced by a communicative syllabus at the end of 1974. This move was in line with changes in approaches to English language teaching, which favoured a more communicative approach (Richards &

Rodgers, 2001). However, discrepancies were found in the syllabuses; one of which was a lack of connection between the curriculum for primary and secondary English. The primary school syllabus was based on a structural-situational approach, the lower secondary school English (for Forms 1, 2 and 3) was a contextual base for teaching structures, while the upper secondary education (Forms 4 and 5) adopted a communicative syllabus, hence resulting in a lack of coherence within the overall English programme (Pandian, 2006). This led the change in the school curriculum to the KBSR (New Primary School Curriculum) in 1983 and KBSM (Integrated Secondary School Curriculum) in 1988. The emphasis of this new English curriculum (as a subject) is on reading and writing at the primary level, while the curriculum in the secondary is skills-based, where the four language skills are integrated (Pandian, 2006). KBSR and KBSM will be gradually phased out, and will be replaced by KSSR or Primary School Standard Curriculum and KSSM or Secondary School Standard Curriculum to enhance students' mastery of reading, writing, arithmetic and reasoning with additional elements of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. These curricula have a greater emphasis on problem-based and project-based work, a streamlined set of subjects or themes, and formative assessments. KSSR has been introduced to primary schools in stages since 2011, and KSSM will be implemented in 2017.

In 2003, a genre-specific approach to the learning of English - *English for Science and Technology* - was introduced as an additional subject to Forms 4 and 5. This move was to increase the use of English in the teaching of Mathematics and Science (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). It was hoped that the learning of these two subjects through the medium of English would sustain a progressive-humanistic curriculum (Muhamad, 2003), and also a scientific and technological civilisation for the future (Noordin, 2002).

The implementation of English for mathematics and science in 2003 - to replace the use of Malay to teach these two subjects in national schools, and Chinese and Tamil in national-type schools - was not without complications. In 2011, the MOE permitted the use of English in these two subjects for students who had started learning the subjects in English since the implementation, but first year primary and secondary students from 2013 would use Malay as the medium of instruction. In the uproar that ensued, the ministry proposed a new programme known by the Malay abbreviation of MBMMBI (*Upholding the*

*Malay Language, Strengthening the English Language*) by adding more hours to the learning of the English language, while the reversion from English to Malay persisted.

The present study was conducted in Sabah, one of the thirteen states of Malaysia, which is located on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia. At present, there are 32 ethnic groups in Sabah, with the largest being the Chinese and the indigenous Kadazan-Dusun people, followed by the Bajau and Murut. As with all states in the Federal Territory, Bahasa Malaysia is the official language in Sabah, and although English is not the official language, it is widely used in the private sector and in everyday transactions. To gain entry to both public and private universities in Malaysia, a pass in English is mandatory. In relation to the learning of English, three categories of Malaysian students can be identified. The first group is from homes in which spoken English is the first language. The second group speaks a native language at home, but has exposure to the English language. This group learns English as a second language (ESL). The third group is learning English as a foreign language (EFL) because of their limited exposure to English. These three groups of students have diverse needs. Although students from the first category are often fluent in spoken English, they may have problems in writing, while ESL and EFL learners have difficulties in producing both spoken and written language, despite a minimum of 13 years of learning the English language at schools before continuing their tertiary education. As will be more fully discussed below, these three groups of students also have difficulties in reading. Most English language classrooms are comprised of all three groups of students, and for the sake of convenience, the term *English Language Learners* (hereafter ELLs) will be used to refer collectively to them all.

## **1.2 English in Sabah**

The education system in Sabah is the same as in West Malaysia. A study in a number of primary schools in the rural areas of West Malaysia revealed that the typical teaching method consisted of drilling past-year examination questions (Pandian, 2006). The findings were similar to those from Sabah, where it was reported that teachers in 15 urban secondary schools mostly used comprehension

questions, exercises and paraphrased notes from workbooks with students (Hwang and Embi, 2007). When these teachers were asked why they favoured such activities over others, they reasoned that students were preparing for examinations and these tasks could assist them in answering examination questions. What is envisioned by the Ministry of Education is remote from the reality of what is actually being practised in the classroom. In short, commercial revision books and examination practices have been of central importance, as teachers emphasised passes in examinations (Pandian, 2006). The concern to prepare pupils for the examination as a motivating factor seems to be the same in both primary and secondary schools, irrespective of whether they are in rural or urban areas.

### **1.3 Reading in Malaysia**

Despite having gone through years of formal education, it seems that Malaysian students have not been nurtured to read by the time they reach university (Ganakumaran, 2004). One of the factors that has caused this persistent non-reading phenomenon could be an impoverished reading culture (Shahrizal & Amelia, 2006). A number of researchers suggest that Malaysian students read only for academic purposes, such as examination preparation, and do not read for personal knowledge or pleasure (Chin, Lee, & Thayalan, 2007; Pandian, 2000; Yong, 2010). Students in Malaysia, according to Pandian (1997), are reluctant readers: in a study conducted on university students it was found that many did not have regular reading habits (Chin et al., 2007; Pandian, 2000); in a survey on reading of both L1 and ELLs, carried out by the National Library of Malaysia in 1996, the average Malaysian reads only two books a year (Small, 1997). In terms of language proficiency, 73% of Malaysians aged 10 years and above can read Bahasa Malaysia well. 24% of those who are 10 years and above claim they can read English. In Sabah and Sarawak, of respondents who were 10 years old and above, 91% could read but only 88% practised reading (reading as a habit regardless of language). From the findings, it appears that students' reading habits decline as they grow older. Following this, the Malaysian National Library conducted another L1 and L2 reading survey in 2006 (Malaysia National Library, 2006), which revealed that there was no increase in reading since the first survey

ten years earlier. Based on the 1996 report, 97% of the *bumiputra* (natives in Malaysia including the Malays) claimed they read well in Bahasa Malaysia, but only 17% stated that they were good at the English language. Newspapers were the main reading materials (79%) for the *bumiputra* as compared to books (54%). Since the setting for the present study is a university exclusively for *bumiputra*, this information provides a background of the natives' linguistic competence.

As a response to this situation, in 2000 the Ministry of Education of Malaysia implemented the teaching of English literature in secondary schools, separate from the English Language, with the following stated aim:

A small literature component has been added to the curriculum. This will enable learners to engage in wider reading of good works for enjoyment and for self-development. They will also develop an understanding of other societies, cultures, values and traditions that will contribute to their emotional and spiritual growth (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 1).

The following shows the list of texts for the literature component in the English language syllabus for Forms 4 and 5 students (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 13).

#### POEMS

1. If by Rudyard Kipling
2. Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare
3. Si Tenggang's homecoming by Muhammad Hj. Salleh
4. Monsoon history by Shirley Lim
5. The road not taken by Robert Frost
6. There's been a death in the opposite house by Emily Dickinson

#### SHORT STORIES

1. The lotus eater by Somerset Maugham
2. The necklace by Guy de Maupassant
3. The drover's wife by Henry Lawson
4. The sound machine by Roald Dahl
5. Looking for a rain God by Bessie Head

(Learners are to study all of the above poems and short stories)

## NOVELS

1. Jungle of hope by Keris Mas
2. The return by K.S Maniam
3. The pearl by John Steinbeck

(Learners are to select one of the above novels for study)

A survey by Suthagar (2006) found that one third of Form 5 (aged 17) students did not finish reading the English novel prescribed by the Ministry of Education, and even one fifth of the 108 students who scored the Grade of A in the SPM (Malaysia Certificate of Education) made the same report. Most students relied on reading the readily accessible commercially published revision books, which contain summaries of, and notes about, the novels. These students avoided the texts and only read the summaries in order to pass the examination (Suthagar, 2006). Instead of reading the story, students were encouraged by their teachers to read the summary of each chapter (Hwang & Embi, 2007; Suthagar, 2006).

In a related study on vocabulary knowledge, 360 first- and second-year students from five diploma programmes in one Malaysian university took two tests (Mokhtar et al., 2010), namely the *Passive Vocabulary Knowledge Test* (Comber, 2001a) and the *Controlled Active Vocabulary Test* (Laufer & Nation, 1995). The findings revealed that these tertiary students failed to achieve the passing level of both tests. This indicates that a majority of them did not have enough vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary size to use English as their second language (Mokhtar et al., 2010). In the present study, the core participants were selected from an existing class of 41 students. Initially, I planned to select twelve students, but could only manage to get ten students. The number was further reduced to six at the end of the first cycle due to insufficient data sources from the other participants. These six met the criteria of the different levels of reading engagement (emerged nearing the end of the first cycle) which could represent the diverse range of students in a typical ELL class (see Section 3.3.2, p.56).

This apparent non-reading culture in the country also compelled the Ministry of Education to introduce a further literature component in English to students in primary schools in 2005. However, the teaching of reading at this level is generally through the choral repetition of reading texts and choral spelling aloud of words (Lyall, n.d). According to Ganakumaran (2006), the majority of

teachers in Malaysian secondary schools have little exposure to literature and literature teaching methodology. Sidhu, Chan, and Kaur (2010) reveal that teachers in ELL primary classrooms in the state of Selangor in Malaysia seldom asked students questions in relation to the meaning of the text, nor did they ask them to make predictions about the next part of the text when teaching literature to children. They spent most of the class time on answering comprehension questions, with little emphasis on actually teaching comprehension or higher-order thinking skills such as analysing, synthesising or evaluating. Sidhu et al. (2010) argue that primary teachers emphasise basic comprehension activities, giving few opportunities for discussion related to issues raised in the texts. Similarly, (Basree, n.d.) also asserts that teachers ignore child-centred activities and provide only limited opportunities for pupils to initiate talk about their reading. Students' contributions are, therefore, neglected. What students experience in primary schools also continues in secondary schools. Hwang and Embi (2007) noticed three activities widely practised by the secondary school teachers of reading: students reading aloud, teachers giving written comprehension exercises, and the teacher retelling and explaining the literary text to the students.

The results from international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) suggest that Malaysian students' cognitive skills and reasoning (critical thinking skills) are declining (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The results from PISA 2009 of which Malaysia participated for the first time, Malaysian students ranked in the bottom third of 74 participating countries, below the average of the international and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 44% and 43% of the 15-year-old Malaysian students who participated in PISA did not meet the minimum proficiency levels in reading and Science respectively. The ministry has since then identified that the education system in Malaysia has historically fallen short of critical thinking, reasoning, creative thinking, and innovation where students are "less able than they should be in applying knowledge and thinking critically outside familiar academic contexts" (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013, p. E-10)

## 1.4 Rationale for the study

My experience as an English language teacher in schools, and as a lecturer at tertiary level in Malaysia, has confirmed that most of the ELLs I have taught struggle with the language. Very often when they do not read well, they read infrequently and consequently they lose motivation to learn the language. Their lack of motivation to read inhibits further language learning. It seems that this alarming trend is cyclical since the weak readers read as little as possible, and they continue in a vicious cycle of frustration. Deprived of practice, they continue to find it hard to understand what they read, and thus remain weak readers (Nuttall, 1996). Students' indifference towards reading, in part, appears to be attributable to the reliance on the English textbook in class, which has become a means to an end in an examination-driven learning culture. In my experience, I have noticed that many teachers rely on textbooks to plan or organise lessons and provide suggestions for teaching and assessment. Even in the teaching of literature, the use of commercially produced workbooks comes to the fore. For example, teacher summaries of the stories for the students, and students answering questions in the workbooks, are the pedagogical norms. As a consequence, most students rely on the teacher to tell them the plot instead of reading the stories for themselves. It is therefore rare for students to talk about their responses or experiences.

As a language educator, I have carried out classroom-based, reflective explorations related to the teaching and learning of reading, and these have led to my present research project. For example, in 1999, I embarked on an informal study using *Readers Theatre*<sup>1</sup> for non-fiction literature (Lee, 1999). The outcomes showed that students' interest increased when they could explore the different aspects of a literary text through engaging in these procedures. In 2002, I carried out another study on a group of 17-year-old secondary students, entitled "Learning literature through Readers Theatre" (Lee, 2002). Students learned the

---

<sup>1</sup> Readers Theatre is a presentation of a text that is expressively and dramatically read aloud by two or more readers. It is similar to drama in many ways, but the emphasis of Readers Theatre is on reading from a script. Simple movements like mime, facial expressions or gestures are added to oral reading. Interactions and actions are paramount; readers exchange expressions with others, setting the mood and constructing meanings by nuance of voice. As students have the opportunity to practise a script they have developed from a text several times before performing, their reading fluency, sight vocabulary, understanding of the text and oral projection also improve.

lives of the characters when they explicated the story through Readers Theatre and found the learning of literature interesting.

These reflective, practice-based classroom investigations have motivated me to bring literature into ELL classrooms in my university. Spurred on by my students' attitudes towards reading, I undertook a further survey in which I was the key researcher on my students' reading behaviour (Chin, Lee, & Thayalan, 2007); this study revealed that students' reading behaviour was largely shaped by their home and school environments, and that most of them avoided reading altogether. I began to consider what I should do to change the attitudes of these learners to like reading and perhaps become lifelong readers.

From my observations as a language teacher, despite the introduction of English literature into Malaysian schools, I have noticed that reading still receives little emphasis in the classroom, a state of affairs confirmed by the Malaysian research reports referred to previously (Hwang & Embi, 2007; Suthagar, 2006; Yong, 2010); together with a non-reading home background, this is likely to be the central factor contributing to both the lack of engagement with reading and the resulting struggle for ELLs.

As will be discussed more fully in the literature review (Chapter 2), literary reading strategies with a focus on analytical reading skills have not been researched in the ELL context in Malaysia. It seems especially important to investigate the issue further.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The purpose of this action research project was to investigate the effects of an intervention that involves systematic skills training in literary analytical reading in a university ELL reading class. To date, empirical studies on reading engagement among ELLs, particularly university students, are limited. A few studies have addressed ELL motivation for reading (for example, Kim, 2004; Ivey & Johnson, 2013), and there has been a dearth of research on reading engagement with texts. This is particularly important in the ELL context as L2 reading has traditionally focused on discrete language skills, and therefore neglected the engagement processes that are vital to literacy development.

In this study, I hope to establish the importance of the use of particular reading strategies in the ELL setting to *engage* students in reading literary texts. As a result of these interventions, it is aimed that such learners will adopt the targeted strategies and skills and to become sufficiently motivated to read whole texts. Through these reading interventions, one possible outcome might be that these learners could become members of a community of readers, thereby creating a reading culture within and beyond their university classrooms. Findings from this research could yield direct implications for classroom practice in relatable ELL contexts; for example, language teaching practitioners might adapt such approaches to reading in their respective classes.

Through this action research, I sought also to describe, analyse and reflect upon my personal values and practice in order to gain a deeper understanding of my professional activity and to generate a personal living theory of practice (McNiff, 2007; Whitehead, 1998a, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Also, in this study I sought to explore and develop reflective practice in action research. Reflective practice, as a key element of professional development as well as action research, is generally overlooked in the Malaysian setting. Through a systematic approach to reflective practice, I, as a teacher researcher, became a knowledge maker, contributing to my area of discipline to a more general academic understanding (Allwright, 2006).

## **1.6 The research setting**

The data-gathering site was one of the branch campuses of a large university in Malaysia. Unlike other public universities in Malaysia, it is the only institution that is committed to nurturing indigenous students or *bumiputra* to achieve the highest qualification. Students of Chinese and Indian descent, as well as others who do not have *bumiputra* status, are not able to further their studies at this institution. The university was established in 1973 and at present it has a student population of 4,286. The university offers 18 different full-time programmes, ranging from Pre-Commerce Diploma to Bachelor of Administrative Science. Postgraduate programmes, such as Executive Master of Business

Administration and Doctor of Business Administration, are offered on a part-time basis.

Students are predominantly from different parts of Sabah, the state within which the university is located, and a small minority are from other states. There is a preponderance of students from lower income families. The university provides students free hostel accommodation and a monthly allowance for food. After finishing Form 5 - that is the final year of secondary school - students enrol for pre-diploma or diploma programmes.

English is a mandatory subject for all programmes, and when this study was carried out, there were 19 full-time and five part-time English teaching staff. Tests and final examinations measure skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as grammar. The examination papers are set by teachers in all the branch campuses, which are then deposited in a test bank in the main campus of the University. Test items are decided by the lecturers at the main campus.

## **1.7 Outline of the thesis**

The thesis consists of six chapters. The introductory chapter has provided a contextual analysis of the Malaysian educational system, English language education, and the teaching of reading in schools. This introductory chapter has also presented an overview of the reading culture in the region, the research setting, and the participants' background.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that relates to reading engagement relevant to this study. Section 2.2 discusses the definition of the broad meaning of the term 'engagement', and then the multidimensional construct of engagement. Section 2.3 discusses reading engagement, followed by a brief overview of reading skills and strategies related to reading engagement. Two reading approaches - *reader response and critical literacy* - are reviewed. The chapter also highlights ways of promoting reading engagement. The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) as it will be employed in the target ELL context is explained in Section 2.12. This section ends by identifying the gap in which the present study aims to situate itself, resulting in the four central research questions.

Chapter 3 presents a description of the research procedures adopted by the present study to answer the research questions. The chapter provides a justification for the approach employed, followed by a consideration of how warrants for validity were maintained in the present qualitative case study action research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the present study in three sections. Section 4.1 presents the themes and categories according to students' engagement which consists of four strands; namely behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic engagement. This is followed by detailing the progress of six students selected to represent the different engagement levels for close study. Section 4.2 reports the data relating to my role as a teacher researcher's reflections in-, on- and for- action. Section 4.3 traces my journey of development from a novice researcher to an experienced researcher.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to each of the research questions, with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Learners' reading engagement is discussed from Sections 5.1 to 5.6, while Sections 5.7 and 5.9 are devoted to the teacher researcher.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarising the key findings of the study and acknowledging limitations. Following this discussion, implications from both theoretical and practical perspectives are considered. The thesis concludes with recommendations and suggested directions for future research in the area of reading engagement.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews published literature focusing on theory and research that aims to account for the development of reading engagement. Broadly, reading engagement is defined as not only the time students spend reading for pleasure but, more importantly, their interest in and attitudes towards reading (Brozo, Shiel, & Topping, 2007). After a brief introduction to key issues in reading, Section 2.2 discusses more fully the definition of the wide-ranging term *engagement*, and then explains the multidimensional facets of the construct of engagement, namely its behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic dimensions. This is followed by a discussion of reading engagement in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 provides a brief overview of the reading attributes that relate specifically to reading engagement. The next sections review two reading approaches: *reader response* approach (2.5) and *critical literacy approach* (2.6). Section 2.7 explores empirical studies of critical literacy with L1 learners, while Section 2.8 reviews critical literacy and English Language Learners. Relevant empirical research on reading engagement is reviewed in Section 2.9. Sections 2.10 and 2.11 discuss ways of promoting reading engagement, and explain the theoretical framework respectively, while Section 2.12 explains Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) in the ELL context. Finally Section 2.13 summarises the chapter and identifies the research gap which is the primary focus of this research study.

### 2.1 Introduction

A number of studies have examined a range of factors underlying students' attitudes to reading (Chin et al., 2007; Pandian, 2000), their access to books (Allington, McGill-Franzen, Camilli, Williams, Graff, & Zeig, 2010; Whitehead, 2004), time spent reading, and different interpretations of the significance of independent silent reading time (Bryan, Fawson, & Reutzel, 2003; Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Reutzel, Jones, & Newman, 2010; Siah, 2008; Siah & Kwok, 2010). These lines of research are related to the present study, but my primary concern is the engagement of ELLs in reading intact literary texts or short stories.

The following section will begin with a discussion of the types of engagement. Secondly, I will explore the attributes of an engaged reader. Reading engagement attributes such as intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy will also be discussed.

## **2.2 Engagement: behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic**

Engagement has been a very frequently discussed topic in the broad field of school achievement. At times, the terms student engagement, and school engagement, have been used rather loosely to refer to anything that is related to students' improvement or achievement (Eccles & Wang, 2012). More specifically, academic engagement has been described as a multidimensional construct that fuses behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects of students' motivated action (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009). Behavioural engagement accounts for students' direct involvement in activities, including their positive conduct, effort and persistence. Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho (2013) refer to reading engagement in its behavioural form, comprising students' actions and intentions to interact with text. However, Fredricks et al. (2004) argue that behavioural engagement could be misleading because the observable behaviours might not reveal students' internal reading engagement: students might seem to be engaged, but may not be thinking about the material, and vice versa. Cognitive engagement is defined as the attention given, or the willingness to exert the mental effort required to understand challenging concepts and complete difficult tasks. Emotional engagement refers to positive and negative reactions such as enthusiasm, enjoyment, happiness, curiosity, interest, anxiety, anger, fear or boredom (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Gonida, Voulala, & Kiosseoglou, 2009; Miserandino, 1996). It represents students' affective reactions to learning, which reflect their motivation to master the academic material during learning activities. More recently, Reeve and Tseng (2011) have introduced the concept of *agentic engagement*, adding it as a new aspect of student engagement. They define agentic engagement as students' active contribution to the flow of the instruction that they receive by intentionally personalising it and enhancing both the lesson and the conditions under which

they learn. Students may, for instance, offer additional input, express a preference, suggest, contribute, ask questions, find ways to add personal relevance to the lesson, and request assistance (Reeve, 2013).

### **2.3 Reading Engagement**

As mentioned in Section 2.1, the focus of the present research is on reading engagement. Horner and Shwery (2002) define engaged readers as self-regulated; they set themselves realistic goals, select effective reading strategies, monitor their understanding of the text, and evaluate their progress. Reading engagement theory is consistent with the general theories of academic engagement in that it is a multifaceted construct, with behavioural, emotional and cognitive dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004). A large body of research on engaged reading has been developed by Guthrie and his colleagues, who define it as interacting with text in ways that are both strategic and motivated (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012). Engaged readers are motivated to read, strategic in their approaches to comprehending what they read, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from the text, and they are socially interactive while reading (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004; Guthrie et al., 2012). They are also cognitively competent with regard to comprehension skills and cognitive strategies for learning from texts (Guthrie, 2004).

### **2.4 Motivation: strategies and reading skills**

Cambria and Guthrie (2010) claim that skills and will are indispensable for reading. Students with skills may be capable of reading, but if they do not employ strategies and are unmotivated, they cannot become effective readers. They argue that students who are motivated read both in and out of school.

According to Horner and Shwery (2002), learners' reading strategies can be developed via the teacher's modelling, which they specifically refer to as cognitive modelling or thinking aloud. In such modelling, teachers are not teaching students what to do, but how they can think (Dorn & Soffos, 2001).

Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008) define reading skills as eventually becoming automatic, whereby readers efficiently decode and comprehend a text, whereas reading strategies are deliberate and goal-oriented activities which control and modify the readers' efforts to decode, understand words, and construct meanings. They argue that a reading strategy can become a reading skill, although initially utilising a strategy requires conscious effort. After practising numerous times, the strategy becomes less conscious and a reader uses it more efficiently and thus it develops into a reading skill. The present study set out with the purpose of investigating a reading intervention in the hope that students' attitudes towards reading could be transformed. The empirical studies conducted on strategy-based reading intervention will be reviewed in Section 2.9.

Reading engagement is generally associated with intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Many studies have shown that extrinsically-motivated students who read for grades, rewards or recognition (external reasons) do not read as deeply as those who are intrinsically-motivated (Guthrie et al., 2004; Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller, & Wigfield, 2012; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Research (for example, Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich, 2004) suggests that engaged reading encompasses both the motivational processes and the cognitive characteristics of the reader when they read frequently and deeply. Intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy will be more fully discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **2.4.1 Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is "the most self-determined, or autonomous, form of motivation" (Levesque, Copeland, Pattie, & Deci, 2010, p. 618). A sizable body of research has shown that intrinsic motivation is related to the amount of reading done by students (Gambrell, Marinak, Brooker, & McCrea-Andrews, 2011; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 2009; Kamil, 2008). Students who read for interest and pleasure, and who have a favourite topic (internal reasons) read a considerable amount (Philipp, 2010), and their reading ability increases as a result. Reading for enjoyment is a clear indication of intrinsic motivation.

Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (2001) claim that intrinsic motivation can be promoted by encouraging learners to be self-initiating, providing them with

choices about learning, allowing them to solve problems independently, and avoiding the assertion of authority and control over them. Similarly, Williams, Hedrick, and Tuschinski (2008) propose that when ELLs are intrinsically motivated to read on their own, they will sustain their interest in reading and improve their reading abilities. They posit several ways for motivating students to read independently, which will be discussed in Section 2.10.

#### **2.4.2 Self-efficacy**

Positive self-efficacy is essential for reading motivation (Guthrie et al., 2004). Self-efficacy for reading is defined as individuals' judgements of their own ability and perceptions of their competence to participate successfully in a reading activity (Bandura, 1997; Chapman & Tunmer, 1995; Schunk & Pajares, 2002; Scott, 1996). This means that students will read when they perceive themselves as capable readers. With high self-efficacy, they are confident and motivated to work towards their learning goal (Scott, 1996), and believe that they can overcome difficult texts (Guthrie et al., 2004). In contrast, if students do not believe that they can read well, they will not believe that they are in control of their reading activities (Noels et al., 2001). Scott (1996) argues that self-efficacy influences the goals that students set for themselves, how much effort or investment they put in, how long they will persevere when they encounter difficulties, and how long they will be resilient towards failure. These characteristics determine students' success.

Much of the seminal work with the concept of self-efficacy has been attributed to Bandura (1997) and Scott (1996). Both Bandura and Scott perceive that teachers who have high self-efficacy can support students' own efficacious development, which presumably means that teachers can increase students' willingness to try, to make reasonable efforts, and to persist. According to Bandura (2006), the developmental progression of personal agency shifts from perceiving causal relations between the events of the environment, through understanding causation via action, and finally to recognizing oneself as the agent of the actions. When students personally experience positive effects of actions directed toward them, they increase their own actions to reciprocate. Personal agency is more than just yielding actions. Feedback received during transactions helps how they view themselves. Their self-perception is beyond what they have

experienced. As they become increasingly aware that guidance by the people around them increases their self-efficacy, their sense of personal agency strengthens. While this may be true, what they suggest would appear to be somewhat theoretical since they do not propose a practical approach to improve learners' self-efficacy. Guthrie et al (2004), on the contrary, appear to offer a more thoroughly developed and pragmatic approach to reading self-efficacy. They suggest that teachers provide appropriate tools and scaffolding to develop reading engagement. Scaffolding, they argue, should be explicit and thorough, as will be discussed in Section 2.10.5.

This body of literature seems to suggest that enhancing students' reading-engagement by intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy should be the essential focus of the teacher in class. The next section will discuss two reading approaches to reading a text.

## **2.5 Reader response**

One approach that enables readers to connect their personal experiences to the text and to create meaning of their own is *reader response theory*. Key theorists of reader response are Iser (1978) and Rosenblatt (1994). This subsection provides a discussion of the ideas central to this theory.

The fundamental idea of reader response theory is that readers are the ones who construct meanings from a text. Iser (1978), for example, views reading a literary text as an experience, and sees readers as active participants rather than passive consumers. The text is uncovered through the reader's personal views and prior life experience to produce meaning (Davis, 1989).

During the reading process, a reader interacts with a text, resulting in a transaction between the reader and the text. To interact with a text is an implication of separate, already defined entities acting on one another (Rosenblatt, 1986). In literary criticism and the teaching of literature, a transaction indicates a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship between the reader and the literary text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Readers make sense of the text using their prior experiences to arouse images and feelings, while the text concurrently shapes readers'

involvement by creating new experiences and orientations, giving rise to a two-way process (McGee, 1992; Morrow & Gambrell, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1994).

Rosenblatt (1994) identifies two different types of reading response in the reading process: aesthetic and non-aesthetic. Generated by the words of the text, an aesthetic stance allows the reader to respond spontaneously, select and associate with what he or she sees in the literary work of art. A non-aesthetic (or 'efferent', as Rosenblatt puts it) reading response comes about when the readers focus their attention on information, ideas, or actions that will stay after their reading of the text. According to Rosenblatt, the aesthetic and non-aesthetic are at two ends of a continuum, along which different readers will engage at different points. Rosenblatt reasons that in much of our reading, our attention moves to and fro, between alternative responses activated by the text. This continuum is relevant to the present study, as it gives rise to a reading approach I have constructed to lead ELLs towards reading engagement (Section 5.6.2).

With regard to teaching learners to engage with aesthetic and efferent stances, even readers for whom the text is in their first language need assistance and guidance in order to respond freely and to discover the significance of the text for themselves, and thereby develop the necessary approaches, strategies, attitudes and skills which will result in greater engagement with text (Probst, 1994, 2004).

A set of guiding questions or prompts can help students read with more engagement, and are meant to support and extend, rather than restrict, students' reading. These questions can be quite generic. For example: "What do you remember, feel, question, and see after reading the text?" "What is your own sense of the text?" "Does it have any significance for you?" Probst (1994) emphasises that such questions are not short-answer questions, but rather provide an opportunity for students to talk and write about their perceptions. He further suggests a set of guidelines to facilitate students to respond to a text, and to have the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their reactions and questions. When students find similarities and differences in their experiences in life as they explore and communicate with others in the class, they are invited to engage in group discussion and write about self, text, others, and the culture of their society. If native-speaking students need a hypothetical set of questions to guide and support their reading, without dictating precisely what they will do with texts, this implies that ELLs will require more of such assistance so that they may learn a

repertoire of questions, strategies and skills to discover the significance of the text, and thus enjoy reading. In the present study, I adapted the ideas of Probst (1994, 2004) as a springboard for my own strategies, such as the use of reading logs and discussion groups in the reading class.

### **2.5.1 Reading logs**

Reader response pedagogy often makes use of reading logs as a simple way of encouraging students to respond to a novel or a short story. Kooy and Wells (1996) define a reading response log as a record of thinking about a piece of literature, from initial thoughts and questions through discoveries and understandings. The core function of the log is for readers to record their thoughts and feelings which are usually hidden while performing the act of reading. According to Folse and Ivone (2002), when ELLs write their thoughts about what they have read, they have to re-examine, rethink, and recycle their ideas, which gives them ownership of their literacy experiences (Runkle, 2000). Writing a log can also prepare students for discussion because it is a “text for talk” (Kooy & Wells, 1996). For example, Roman-Perez (2003) noticed that her ELLs viewed the log as “a tool for articulating their humanity” (p. 313). However, Roman-Perez’s students were not given any question prompts or guidance to respond to the short story they read, which could lead them to write something that is off task. Carlisle (2000), in contrast, guided his EFL university students, and also showed them questions, which they discussed before writing their entries in English. However, the participants in Carlisle’s study may have had problems expressing their thoughts if they were required to write in the L2 because this expectation might have defeated the purpose of encouraging a free exploration of ideas, which is the focus of a reading log. Hence, writing logs in the students’ preferred language is to be encouraged.

### **2.5.2 Discussion groups**

According to Thomson (1987), small group discussions of literature help L1 students engage with the texts, to clarify their understanding and to reflect on what they have read in a collaborative, non-threatening social setting. According

to Dugan (1997), literacy develops best through social interaction and dialogue with others. For example, teachers and students can collaboratively read, write and talk about books in order to engage in meaning-making.

Mercer (1995) argues that some of the most creative thinking takes place when people are talking together. He suggests that one of the opportunities school can offer pupils is the chance to involve other people in their thoughts—to use conversations to develop their own thoughts (p. 4). He introduces three different types of talk which he refers to as modes of social thinking. The first is disputational talk, which refers to exchanges marked by speech acts such as assertion, contradiction, challenge, counter assertion, and rebuke. Attitudes are competitive, posture defensive, and reasoning is individualised. The second mode is cumulative talk, which is linguistically marked by repetition, confirmation, suggestion, the exchange of opinion, (dis)agreement, and elaboration. In this way, speakers build positively but uncritically on each other's ideas. This type of talk may lead to Mercer's third mode of social thinking, exploratory talk, which is evidence of positive engagement (Mercer, 1995; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997). Exploratory talk consists of statements, opinions and suggestions offered for joint consideration, which are subject to being challenged. Participants engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Alternative suggestions and hypotheses are also proposed. Knowledge is thus socially distributed and learning is shared. This type of talk reflects positive engagement, in that all of the students in the group have the responsibility and opportunity to work together and build a community of readers and learners (Kooy & Wells, 1996; Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996).

As indicated previously, sharing or discussing about literature in a group brings considerable advantages to L1 students. Likewise, talking about a story read in a group has the same effect on ELLs (Kim, 2004; Soraya, 1993). For example, Kim (2004) found that ELLs developed diverse, meaningful responses when encouraged to respond to the text through prompts. Students had opportunities to use the English language by means of social interactions. Hirvela (1996) maintains that reader response theory in literature-based communicative language teaching strengthens the discursive talk of ELLs. Soraya (1993) used a reader response approach with a group of ELL university engineering students. She started by engaging students in pre-reading activities and subsequently she

invited the participants to share their initial responses to a story read at home, both in small groups and with the whole class. Tasks and projects were given to groups. Students were then asked to write their reflections in their reading diaries, and they presented their projects in class. Her findings demonstrated that the literature discussion was “intellectually stimulating”, although students were silent at times until she initiated questions (Soraya, 1993, p. 294). The difference between the studies by Kim and Soraya is that the literature discussion in Kim’s study was directed by the teacher whereas Soraya’s students were left to discuss on their own, and when there were indications of silence, he would intervene by initiating questions. In neither study were participants explicitly taught appropriate strategies for discussion. Although Kim’s students were given the prompts, the teacher was present in the group discussion. As a result, some students may be reserved around the teacher, and less willing to articulate their thoughts. It was also unclear how Soraya’s struggling readers reacted to the intervention since the support provided was inconsistent.

Personal responses inherent in the reader response approach may make the speaking activities for ELLs using the target language more genuine. Their interaction with the text enables them to interpret, and their interaction with peers in discussion groups strengthens their understandings (Malloy & Gambrell, 2011). The reader response approach takes account of the entire experience of the reader-text transaction. The conversation or discussion takes place in the context of a whole text – whether it is a novel, a poem or a play - and it serves as a point of departure for more and related production, so that the conversation is genuine (Hirvela, 1996).

In summary, a pedagogic approach to reading based on reader response theory would appear to encourage greater reader engagement, particularly for ELLs who have the chance to relate their own experiences with the text and talk about them with their peers. However, it needs to be emphasised that comprehension of the text must precede both personal response and the sharing of that response with others. If this threshold of understanding is not achieved, their initial engagement will be hampered. Reader response theory informs the present research project because the focus is on students’ reading engagement. When readers engage with a text, they respond to it based on their experience. Establishing personal response through reader response could augment

engagement. The next section outlines the characteristics of critical literacy and the approach to textual reading associated with it, including literary texts.

## **2.6 Using a critical literacy approach to read literary texts**

The reader response approach to reading has been critiqued for various reasons. Appleman (2000) examines reading through the lens of reader response, taking into account both its utility and its limitations. Appleman challenges the “overly simplistic notion” of the individual which characterises the “pedagogy of personal experience” (p. 28); by this she means the incompleteness of reader response, which appears to encourage readers merely to draw on their experiences, opinions and feelings in their interpretation of texts, without fostering critical analysis of how they are being positioned by texts and social contexts. In reality, however, if students (whether L1 or L2 learners) just stop at responding personally, then their critical thinking could be restricted. McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) point to the same limitation identified by Appleman in conventional reader response approaches by adding another component to Rosenblatt’s efferent-aesthetic continuum—the critical stance. They argue that students reading from a critical stance raise questions about whose voices are represented, whose voices are missing, who benefits and who loses. Critical literacy, in a broad sense, is defined as “the ability to engage critically and analytically with ways in which knowledge, and ways of thinking about and valuing this knowledge, are constructed in and through written texts” (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999). Critical literacy helps teachers and students to enlarge their reasoning, broaden their multiple perspectives, and become active thinkers (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). As promising as this sounds, there should still be a transitional strategy for students, in particular ELLs, to move from reader response to critical literacy.

The critical stance approach suggested by McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) draws on Luke and Freebody’s (1999) four resources model of reading in a text-based culture: code breaker (coding competence), meaning maker (semantic competence), text user (pragmatic competence) and text critic (critical competence). Luke and Freebody (1999) later reconceptualised their resources

and roles as social practices, suggesting that these roles were constructed and developed in the context of reading, and recombined and articulated in relation to one another on a continuing basis. They argued that successful readers were those who drew on these resources to develop and sustain the four roles.

The critical literacy approach to teaching reading, therefore, may be seen as adding a valuable dimension to reader response theory because it encourages readers to be not only active participants in the reading process, but to question, dispute, and examine power relations. It also prompts the readers to “question what we believe is true, ask harder and harder questions, see underneath, behind, and beyond the texts, see how these texts establish and use power over us, over others, on whose behalf, and in whose interest” (Molden, 2007, p. 50).

According to Knobel and Healy (1998), there are four characteristics of critical literacy practice. First, advocates of critical literacy are convinced that language education can make students’ lives different, especially those at-risk groups who cannot fit in the mainstream (Luke & Freebody, 1997) – such as the students in the present study. Being literate is more than just knowing how to read and write (Janks, 2010). Luke and Freebody (1997) propose that literacy is socially constructed, and that the contexts of literacy instruction are not neutral. If a teacher adopts this position, then students should be encouraged to investigate, question and challenge the relationships between language and social practices that favour one particular group over the other (Knobel & Healy, 1998). Secondly because reading practices are culturally conditioned, the words embedded in texts are associated with social, historical, political and economic practices. Therefore, if a text goes unquestioned, it will give only one side of the story (Misson & Morgon, 2006). Readers must question further after reading, to go beyond the words in the text (Molden, 2007). Thirdly, critical literacy is fundamentally about the analysis and evaluation of texts. Janks (2010) claims that critical literacy is critical because there is power implicated in texts. She maintains that part of critical literacy is to make this power visible, denaturalize assumptions and reveal them. Janks’ (2010) formulation of critical literacy identifies four dimensions: domination (dominant texts are deconstructed to discover the power and the silent voices); access (genres that carry social power are made explicit); diversity (students’ own diverse language and literacies are drawn as resources); and design (diverse learners are to create their own meanings through reconstruction of texts).

Taking these four dimensions into account, when students come across a text pertaining to a certain issue, they will first read it critically to see how it has been constructed, whose interests are served, and who is denied access, and how these interests work to produce one's identities. Moreover, the reader must question whether there are any perspectives in the text other than the one presented. Lastly, critical literacy is about social awareness and becoming active citizens (Knobel & Healy, 1998). In effect, ELLs require critical literacy to help them read the texts that construct the politics of everyday life in the real world as literacy enables ELLs to read both the word and the world critically (Freire & Macedo, 1987). A critical literacy approach has been used to frame students' responses to diverse texts in the L1 contexts, ranging from magazines, art works, articles, literature, songs, and signs to movies (Gilbert, 2001; Kempe, 2001; Luke, O'Brien, & Comber, 2001; Misson & Morgon, 2006). This implies that ELLs could be encouraged to do the same.

Teachers play an important role in a critical literacy class. Comber (1998, 2001a) proposes three different principles that should guide teachers' roles when implementing the critical literacy approach in a reading class. First, teachers should seek to reposition students as researchers of language by working with students' existing abilities for critical analysis, and examining texts. Secondly, teachers should respect students' ways of knowing and speaking, and explore the cultural construction of literacy and language use. Thirdly, teachers could "problematize" classroom and public texts (p. 92) by opening up a discussion about a specific discursive practice. Put simply, it appears to be the teacher's job to make connections between occurrences in the world and their students' lives by developing "their professional dispositions, discursive resources and pedagogical practices" to do critical literacy work in classrooms (Comber, 2006, p. 55) – a way to enable students to redesign i.e. resist the textual positioning by contributing to the process of creating a world that is just and sustainable (Janks, 2014). In the present study, the teacher played a crucial role to guide the students as to how to approach a text by adopting a critical literacy stance.

## **2.7 Empirical studies of critical literacy with L1 learners**

Bean and Moni (2003) claim that critical literacy offers a feasible framework for the exploration of the novel. They suggest that, following a critical literacy approach, literary texts can be manipulated, transparent constructions can be accepted or rejected, and multiple meanings can be explored. Bean and Moni add that students develop an understanding that the worldview represented in a novel is not a “natural” one, and that it can be challenged and actively resisted (p. 647). Similarly, a study by Lewison, Flint, and Sluys (2002) generated positive results on two novice teachers who were new to critical literacy and who used literature with their fifth-grade students. The children were found to be increasingly engaged in meaningful literature discussions when reading socially-related texts. In addition, they asked questions about fairness during their discussion, focusing on a socio-political stance by moving beyond the personal and focusing on language and power relationships. In this regard, then there is an ongoing need for the development of critical literacy not only in children but in older learners too.

Students can be taught strategies to help them achieve a critical examination of texts in a classroom. For example, Comber (2001a) proposed guiding students (p. 92) through a range of discursive strategies to problematise texts so that they can develop their own analytical skills and critical reading practices. Beck (2005) suggests showing the class an example of how to approach a text based on a critical literary approach. Teachers might choose to scaffold learning by adopting a five-step instructional framework: explain, demonstrate, guide, practice, and reflect (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002). Although teacher modelling appears to be teacher-centred, the questions will soon lead students to a discussion and they will take charge as they respond. Engagement in critical dialogue will lead students to higher levels of understanding (Beck, 2005). Beck also asserts that one of the crucial literacy lessons is using dialogue as a tool to engage with texts. Klenner and Sandretto (2011) also posit explicit instruction or direct teaching as necessary to teaching the meta-language associated with critical literacy. For students to engage with texts critically, a supportive environment is needed in which they can participate in thoughtful exchanges with one another. However, it is acknowledged that scaffolding in the ELL context needs to be more explicit and explanation needs to be more lucid (Alford & Jetnikoff, 2011; van Lier, 1996).

## 2.8 Critical literacy and ELL

Research into critical literacy in ELL or EFL contexts remains scarce. Many of the studies have been conducted in Australia (Eastman, 1998; Fraser, 1998; Ko & Wang, 2009, 2013; Reade, 1998), although a few other more recent studies have been conducted elsewhere (Huang, 2011; Ko & Wang, 2013; Wallace, 2006). In exemplifying the critical literacy approach, Wallace (2006) has highlighted the importance of introducing texts to ELLs in England for “re-authoring”. By this she means that texts can be recreated by readers as they reposition themselves as “expert interpreters” rather than “passive consumers”, as in the traditional reading class. In an Asian context, Kuo (2006) argues that ELLs are capable of taking a critical stance towards language learning, and in her empirical study in a tertiary English conversation course in Taiwan, Kuo (2009) explored critical literacy using a dialogue activity. In this study, she found that most students reflected positively on the activity, but one student shared his concerns that the lack of focus on conventional literacy might affect his ability to perform well on language proficiency exams. Kuo therefore cautioned that critical literacy should not be emphasized “at the cost of reading delight and spelling/grammar corrections” (p. 493) in ELL classrooms.

Huang (2011) claimed that her Taiwanese EFL university students understood critical literacy as a conscious form of reading that helped them uncover hidden meanings in a text and consider multiple perspectives. However, she did not investigate how students actually moved from personal response to critical literacy. She only examined students’ perspectives of critical literacy in relation to their language development, discussing what critical literacy meant to them, and she did not use critical literacy to develop students’ reading engagement as in the present study. In their qualitative case study, Ko and Wang (2013) claim that four Taiwanese EFL college learners demonstrated a certain degree of critical literacy despite the differences in their English proficiency level. Likewise, Lau (2013) claims that with careful language scaffolding as well as classroom structures and conditions that facilitate open and critical discussions of

real student concerns, beginning ELLs were quite capable of cognitively challenging literacy work.

As indicated previously (see Section 1.4), ELLs in Malaysia do not appear to have the motivation to read, and few of them have rarely, if ever, read a book in English. ELLs may be motivated to read by talking about the text with others. It is proposed here that introducing the approach of reading aesthetically to these students may be a means to provide a platform for boosting their motivation and engagement as they interact with peers about the texts in the group discussion. When these readers then move from aesthetic to critical modes, they should be able to explore the multiple meanings embedded in the same text, and may possibly be able to realign themselves to re-author, question and even resist the texts.

Reader response has gained widespread popularity in Western educational contexts, but it is not commonly practised in the Malaysian setting, at least at the university where the present research was done. Therefore, exposing ELLs to the two different lenses of reading (reader response and critical literacy) is a challenge. Hence, there ought to be a transition from reader response to critical literacy because of the complexity of reading itself, and such strategies must be explicitly instructed. The present study restricts critical literacy to ways of engaging students with language in the written mode. Engagement with other semiotic systems is beyond the scope of this research project. The next section will provide discussion of some empirical research done on reading engagement.

## **2.9 Empirical Research on reading engagement**

As a key point of agreement, reading engagement occurs when students spend time reading, not only because they can, but because they are motivated to read. Research on reading engagement often offers limited information on engagement as a multidimensional construct (Reeve, 2012); that is, information about the interactions between the different aspects of engagement and about the development and malleability of engagement over time. Fredricks et al. (2004) critically reviewed the methods used in research to measure the different forms of student engagement (behavioural, cognitive, and emotional). They claim that

these individual types of engagement have not been studied in combination. Moreover, they stress that observational techniques used to evaluate behavioural engagement have failed to capture and explain students' thinking and participation (Fredricks et al., 2004). The reading engagement model (Guthrie et al., 2004) also suggests that students' engagement is directly affected by the teacher's motivational style and their instructional behaviours. A large body of studies on motivation also suggests that the direction of effects was from teachers to students (Skinner et al., 2008). While this may be true, it does not fully uphold the proposition that students' reading engagement in its totality rests on the teacher. The role must shift to the students, and they will have to take over and play the lead role (van Lier, 1996, 2004). The one-way directional flow of motivation from the teacher to his or her students, therefore offers an incomplete account of reading motivation (Bandura, 2006; Reeve, 2012; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Students react to teacher-provided learning activities, but their active involvement is also crucial. Students' constructive contributions to their learning are not solely predicted by behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects, but also from their agentic engagement (that is, student agency) (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

In summary, the literature on reading engagement identifies factors that may enhance students' reading engagement: allocating time to read, allowing them to participate in socially interactive activities, and providing support through teacher scaffolding, to lead students towards greater agency. In the next section, ways to elevate reading engagement will be discussed.

## **2.10 Ways of promoting reading engagement**

Previous studies show that reading engagement can be promoted in class (see Sections 2.3.and 2.4); specifically it appears that engagement occurs when there is a connection between the learner, the text, the context and the teacher (Kamil, 2003). The following subsections discuss key aspects of reading pedagogy that relate to engagement. These include: selecting appropriate texts (2.10.1); motivation and autonomy (2.10.2); independent reading time/sustained silent reading (SSR) (2.10.3); social interactivity (2.10.4); teacher scaffolding (2.10.5), and strategy-based interventions (2.10.6).

### **2.10.1 Selecting appropriate texts**

A few studies have examined whether reading motivation is related to students' preferences for specific genres (for example, narrative or expository texts) or text types (such as comics or books) (Philipp, 2010; Schiefele et al., 2012). Reading materials that arrest students' interest are critical for student engagement (Allington et al., 2010; Day & Bamfort, 1998; Guthrie et al., 2004; Snow, 2001). When students experience success and enjoyment in their school reading, they have more positive beliefs about their reading efficacy in the future (Skinner et al., 2009). In a study examining reader-text interest, Wade, Buxton, and Kelly (1999) discovered that texts with important, new, and comprehensible information were associated with student interest. Several other studies have claimed that narrative texts induce more positive emotional experiences and thus increase intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Cho, Xu, & Rhodes, 2010; Moller & Retelsdorf, 2008; Philipp, 2010; Schooten, Oostdam, & Glopper, 2001).

#### **2.10.1.1 *Using literary texts to engage ELLs***

Literary texts elicit personal responses from learners and encourage students to draw on their own experience to understand the text. Lazar (1996) states that literary texts are especially rich as they can comprise every human dilemma, conflict, and yearning, and they may elicit strong emotional reactions from learners. Similarly, Schraw (1997) asserts that the multiple aspects of literary texts are interesting because they are suspenseful, coherent, and thematically rich, and that interest is associated with personal engagement. According to Duff and Maley (1990) and Sivasubramaniam (2006), literary texts comprise multiple meanings, and thus can promote ELL classroom activities in which students can share their feelings and express their views. Literary texts are open to multiple interpretations and rarely will two readers who read the same text understand and react in the same way. Because of this, literary texts provide a "ready-made opinion gap between one individual's interpretation and another" which "can be bridged by genuine interaction" (Duff & Maley, 1990 p. 6).

Tse (1996) introduced novels to her ELL adult learners for a period of ten weeks. These participants had never read a book in English and most of them perceived that their English reading ability was low. The results showed that these ELLs gained confidence in reading and expressed enthusiasm about continuing to read in English. Likewise, the findings from a study by Lao and Krashen (2000) also showed that their Hong Kong university ELLs were enthusiastic about their reading of literary texts.

Researchers have found that the inclusion of literary texts in the ELL English curriculum is able to engage learners, facilitate learning and promote motivation for ELLs (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Locke, Cawkwell, & Sila'ila'i, 2009; Sivasubramaniam, 2006; Tse, 1996). My Van (2009) claims that different approaches to literary analysis can be introduced to university ELLs. He reasons that students' motivation is determined by their interest and the material used in class. Selecting texts is crucial, and he urges teachers to select texts that match the level of the students so that they will not be passive in their reading and dependent on the teachers' interpretations. Similarly, Taboada, Townsend, and Boynton (2013) argue that a minimum level of L2 proficiency is necessary for reading engagement to play a mediating role in text comprehension. From this perspective, text readability is important for ELLs to achieve comprehension. If students' language proficiency is too limited, the motivational processes involved in engagement will be overpowered by the cognitive or language limitations. In the present research, a collection of short stories from both graded readers and authentic texts were selected to match the level of proficiency of the students.

### **2.10.2 Motivation and autonomy**

Apart from using literary texts, offering choices to students is one way to empower them. When teachers create opportunities for choice — such as choosing topics, selecting reading materials and using strategies that they believe are effective — students are motivated to read (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001; Guthrie et al., 2009). Giving students autonomy facilitates motivation for reading development (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990; Weakland, 2014). However, Assor, Kaplan and Roth (2002) argue against the idea

that autonomy enhances engagement. In their findings, they assert that students do not see the connection between autonomy and their school work, personal goals and interests. Instead, they suggest that relevance is more closely related to engagement than autonomy. In their terminology, *fostering relevance* involves teachers' attempts to help students experience the learning process "as relevant to and supportive of their self-determined interests, goals and values" (Assor et al., 2002, p. 264). Although these two views are contrasting, they are both crucial in ELL reading engagement.

### **2.10.2.1 From motivation to investment**

According to B. Norton (1995), language learners are often perceived to possess motivation as a fixed personality trait. However, her construct of *investment* attempts to capture the dynamic relationships of the language learner to the changing social world. It conceives the learner as investing in complicated social identities and multiple desires that are constantly changing across time and space. When learners invest in a second language, they have the understanding that they will acquire a broader range of symbolic resources (such as language, education, and friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, and money), which in turn increase their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). These language learners expect a favourable return on that investment – a return that gives them access to "hitherto unattainable resources" (B. Norton, 1995, p. 17). This suggests that teachers should recognise the multiple identities and imagined communities of students in the class, in order to develop pedagogical practices that enhance students' investment in the language practices of the classroom and beyond (B. Norton, 2011). The idea of commitment or investment is central to the common understanding of the term engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004) - and thus to the present study - as it affects students' effortful learning, suggesting their commitment or investment in their reading engagement with the texts.

### **2.10.3 Independent reading time/sustained silent reading (SSR)**

It has long been advocated that more classroom time should be allocated for students to read silently (Reutzel et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2008). Independent reading can be defined as the time spent silently reading self-selected texts (Gambrell et al., 2011). A number of terms have been used in the literature to describe the time devoted to silent independent reading. Hunt's (1970) uninterrupted sustained silent reading or USSR was probably the first, which later became known as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). Other terms include Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Super Quiet Reading Time (SQUIRT), Wonderful Exciting Books (WEB), Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT), and a variety of other names intended to promote interest in reading (Jarvis, 2003; Jensen & Jensen, 2002). During this in-class reading time, little or no instruction is provided, and typically students are left alone to read independently and silently. A substantial number of empirical classroom studies have reported positive results from an SSR programme (Cynthia, 2000; Jensen & Jensen, 2002; Valeri-Gold, 1995; Yoon, 2002). In a more recent meta-analysis, Manning, Lewis, and Lewis (2010) maintain that SSR is a valuable intervention in developing vocabulary and reading comprehension. Whitney's (2010) students participated in sustained silent reading followed by sharing activities, and it was found that their reading engagement greatly increased.

However, there have also been opposing reports that raised important issues related to the role of independent reading. The U.S. National Reading Panel (NRP) reported that the lack of scientifically-based experimental research questioned the practice of providing reading time in class for SSR (Parr, 2005; NICHD, 2000). However, the report did acknowledge that there are hundreds of correlational studies demonstrating that good readers read more and poor readers read less. The panel also highlighted that these studies suggest that when students read more, their fluency, vocabulary and comprehension become better. Because these studies did not meet the panel's "narrow selection criteria", the NRP dismissed them in their analysis, arguing that the findings "cannot be a derivation of sound data" (Garan & DeVogd, 2008, p. 338).

Kamil (2008) also questions the supposedly beneficial effect of sustained silent reading (USSR), despite the popular assumption that it is an effective

method for improving reading ability. In one of his empirical studies (2008), he investigated the reading practice in the form of recreational reading in schools. The majority of his participants were English language learners. The schools were provided with a large collection of books for use and students read in class and outside class. Time for reading was set aside except instructional support. The results echoed the report by the National Reading Panel (NRP) that there was no reliable evidence that sustained reading alone improved reading ability (NICHD, 2000). Another of Kamil's (2008) empirical studies claimed that explicit instruction can leverage recreational reading to produce gains in reading achievement. Similarly, Bryan et al. (2003) demonstrated that when teachers monitored their students' silent reading during SSR by interacting with the students and providing feedback, the most disengaged students in the class subsequently remained on task for three weeks without monitoring visits. Thus recent research on independent reading (Bryan et al., 2003; Kamil, 2008; Whitney, 2010) suggests that independent reading requires the teacher's guidance and support for successful reading practice in class. In Malaysia, a concept similar to SSR, the NILAM programme (*Nadi Ilmu Amalan Membaca*), was launched in 1998 in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools (Abdul Shukor, 1998), aimed at instilling the reading habit among students. During the 20 minutes of reading every school day, students could choose reading materials in any of three languages (Bahasa Malaysia, English or Mandarin). A number of studies have been done on SSR/NILAM in the country, with somewhat contradictory results. Some studies revealed that students' attitudes towards reading improved after the implementation of SSR, while others have reported that it did not extend to students' reading habits out of school, and yielded benefits only for certain categories of students (Siah, 2008; Siah & Kwok, 2010; Tan, Lee, & Pandian, 2012). Siah (2008) reported that the number of students reading books for leisure during the programme increased, but the number of students reading after school decreased. The results of Siah and Kwok's (2010) study seem to suggest that SSR only benefits those students who already have positive attitudes towards reading, but not students whose existing attitudes are negative. Nevertheless, Tan, Lee and Pandian (2012) emphasise that the undergraduates from the findings of another Malaysian study enjoyed SSR and that their motivation to continue reading increased.

In the Malaysian setting, a few studies have been conducted on SSR in combination with extensive reading. In their analysis, Ratnawati and Ismail (2003) introduced extensive reading to three secondary schools in a rural area in Malaysia. Students read independently and retold the stories to the class. They reported that students' attitudes and motivation towards reading improved. In another study, Yahya and Surayah's (2007) undergraduate students read on their own outside of class time in the first phase of the study, while in the second phase, students were given ten minutes of USSR before the start of each lesson. Students had to record the number of books they read in these two phases. At the end of the second phase, an open-ended questionnaire was administered. Yahya and Surayah claim that USSR, together with extensive reading, promotes independent reading.

The study by Siah (2008) implies that Malaysian students are not recreational readers despite the implementation of SSR in Malaysian schools. It is also difficult to know how much time students spend on reading during SSR (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Stahl, 2004). In the studies by Ratnawati and Ismail (2003), and Yahya and Suraya (2007), even though SSR time was set aside for extensive reading, it was still not apparent whether students became more motivated to read, as the participants were only behaviourally engaged. They may have had problems reading on their own even though they went through the motions of reading; possibly, they were just pretending to read. The participants in Ratnawati and Ismail's study were from the rural schools, yet they were expected to perform their reading independently, without receiving explicit instruction in effective reading comprehension and engagement. Also the students were given opportunities to retell the stories, but they had to do it in front of the whole class, rather than in small groups. This could have been an impediment for two reasons: firstly, it was impossible to have everyone retell their stories due to the class size and time constraints; secondly, students may not have felt comfortable speaking in front of the whole class. Despite the wide use of the retelling technique elsewhere, it is not commonly used in Malaysian schools as an instructional tool for increasing comprehension (Lin, 2010).

Review of the literature seems to suggest that self-efficacy (see Section 2.4.2) and intrinsic value (see Section 2.4.1) are the main determinants of how much time students spend time on reading for leisure. Reading solely for intrinsic value is autonomous; that is, the action is performed for its inherent satisfaction

(Deci & Ryan, 1985; Levesque et al., 2010; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000). In an ELL setting like Malaysia, students may have poor self-concepts of efficacy and intrinsic value as readers. Encouraging reading in class will not by itself increase reading achievement because students might not respond to the time provided by becoming more engaged. The positive effect of having the opportunity to read occurs only when it is linked with *engaged* reading (Guthrie et al., 2001). Explicit instructional support, therefore, appears to be pivotal to students' motivation towards reading. When students develop feelings of competence, they gain confidence in reading. Although silent reading is not the main focus of the present study, it is an essential component of reading engagement.

#### **2.10.4 Social interactivity**

This section provides some discussion of the strategy of encouraging social collaboration among students to promote reading engagement. It includes social interactive activity, such as group discussions to engage readers.

Social constructivist perspectives focus on the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge. Social interactivity is another contributor to reading engagement (Certo, 2011; Williams et al., 2008). Guthrie and Alao (1997, p. 100) use the term 'social collaboration' in the reading classroom to refer to students who socialise with others in a learning community, and suggest that this interaction enables students to co-construct knowledge from a text. According to A. D. Cohen (2010), engaged readers use their social networks via class discussions and literature circles to support their understanding and strengthen their enjoyment in reading. In a survey of studies on different types of small group discussions, Wilkerson (2006) reported that student-led discussion had more impact than teacher-led discussion because students' participation, enthusiasm, reading before discussion and depth of thought was higher. Antonio and Guthrie (2008) explain that students tend to be more motivated when they are in control of their activities than when they are directed by the teacher (Furrer & Skinner, 2003), and where there are fewer opportunities for promoting expanded forms of critical thinking (Moll, Dfaz, Estrada, & Lopes, 1992; Pacheco, 2010). Theorists who support this view claim that interactions, such as talking about

books, can increase student's reading engagement (Ivey & Johnson, 2013; Kim, 2004; Miller & Legge, 1999).

Miller and Legge (1999) revealed that by talking to peers in class, both 11th grade college-bound and 12th grade at-risk students who initially did not take up the invitations to think and converse, were able to connect their lives with the stories after a period of time. Students in their case study expressed themselves and embarked on the “narrative form of reflection” (p. 13) which involves a conscious process of interpreting or deriving meaning from narratives by drawing on other stories or life experiences. Similarly, in a study by Kim (2004), her L2 participants in her literature discussions were engaged in highly dialogic social interactions when responding to the texts and to the ideas of group members. Kim suggested that such conversation was a platform for L2 students to actively engage in achieving literal comprehension, trying to understand difficult expressions in the text, and negotiating meaning—as well as practising the target language extensively. In a more recent study, Ivey and Johnston (2013) affirm that social activity was central to engaged reading, occurring both with the characters of the books and beyond the books in the form of dialogical relationships with other readers and themselves. Their findings also indicate that socially meaningful talk leads to a sense of relatedness with others. In this light, reading engagement cannot be reduced to a solitary cognitive relationship of focused attention. Rather, it is relational, that is, socially interactive (Ivey & Johnson, 2013, p. 256).

### **2.10.5 Teacher scaffolding**

This section focuses on the role of the teacher to engage readers; that is, what teachers do to facilitate student interests in reading.

Several researchers have encouraged the creation of reading engagement in classroom cultures (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Gina, Doepker, & Ortlieb, 2011; Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie et al., 2004). Skinner et al. (2009) stress that teacher scaffolding for reading engagement is vital. Scaffolding is basically defined as teacher support for learning, in which both the teacher and learner take part. At the initial stage of this joint endeavour, teachers generally contribute more, while students perform less. When students gain expertise, teachers transfer

responsibility for performance in an activity to the students (Guthrie et al., 2004; van Lier, 1996, 2004; Walqui, 2008).

Teacher scaffolding comes in different ways. One form of scaffolding is teaching reading strategies through pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities using scaffolding reading experience (SRE). The underlying key concept is to provide support to help learners bridge the gap between what they know and the intended goal, that is, a ZPD (Fournier & Graves, 2002; Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003). Another example is to scaffold learners when they are in their discussion groups. Studies have shown that some students abandon the assigned roles (through teacher scaffolding), and extend their group discussions once they have internalised and familiarised themselves with their discussion about the text (Latendresse, 2004; T. W. Long & Gove, 2003; Wilfong, 2009). Another form of scaffolding is encapsulated in van Lier's (1996) six principles of scaffolding:

1. Continuity - tasks are repeated and connected to one another
2. Contextual support - exploration is encouraged in a safe environment
3. Intersubjectivity - mutual engagement, encouragement
4. Contingency - task procedures depend on learners' actions
5. Handover - learners' readiness to take over
6. Flow - skills and challenges are in balance

In the current study, teacher support was provided throughout the study. The levels of on-site support were robust and encompassed all aspects (see Sections 4.2). Students need to know what is expected of them in engaged reading so that they can take charge of their own reading, and this is the eventual goal of the present study. Van Lier's principles will be discussed in Section 4.2.

### **2.10.6 Strategy-Based interventions**

Intervention programmes such as strategy-based intervention can support reluctant readers. This section highlights L1 reading strategy training, Concept

oriented reading instruction (CORI) that enables students to go beyond the text to construct meaning.

Strategy-based interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012; Annamma et al., 2011; Choo, Eng, & Ahmad, 2011; Dole, Nokes, & Drets, 2009; Pressley et al., 1992; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994; Wilkinson & Son, 2011). Concept oriented reading instruction (CORI) is an engagement-focused classroom intervention that integrates strategy instruction with instructional techniques to improve students' reading motivation (Guthrie et al., 2004). A number of studies have demonstrated positive effects of CORI on reading achievement, reading strategy use, and reading motivation (Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2004; Guthrie, Wigfield, & VonSecker, 2000). The findings of these studies suggest that strategy-based intervention can improve reading cognition, as well as reading motivation and engagement.

The research conducted by Guthrie and colleagues is specifically on L1 readers. Since L1 reading is in many ways distinct from L2 reading, to help L2 learners become lifelong L2 readers is even more challenging. Not only do these students need strategy instruction to be able to engage, they also need scaffolding assist them in comprehending a text to a level where they can read both independently and critically. Thus, more research is needed to identify classroom-based practices that influence reading engagement, particularly the engagement of ELLs who avoid reading.

## **2.11 The theoretical framework – the pedagogical intervention**

The theoretical framework for this study was grounded in a socio-cultural view of literacy, as well as reader response theory, critical literacy, and the engagement model of reading development—all of which share a socio-cultural perspective.

A socio-cultural view of literary studies recognises that literary texts have more than a single predetermined meaning (Kempe, 2001), and in the current study, two reading approaches—reader response and critical literacy—were used as mediators to augment reading engagement in the ELL context. L2 reading

engagement and social affordances can be adequately investigated through the lens of socio-cultural theory. In the approach taken here, a socio-cultural view of literacy highlights the gaps and challenges of the present reading pedagogy employed in the Malaysia context, a pedagogy that tends to view reading as a solitary activity depending on individual initiative and attention.

Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencevich's (2004) *engagement model* of reading development was pertinent to this research as its central ideas are reading engagement, strategies, provision of texts, social interaction, and teacher support. The research design also drew on McLaughlin and DeVogd's (2004) expanded conception of the four resources model, which enabled ELLs to utilise the kinds of "resources" (code breaker, meaning maker, text user and text critic) suggested by Luke and Freebody (1999) from a comprehensive socio-cultural perspective (Durrant & Green, 2001). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the present study which was derived from synthesising the above approaches.

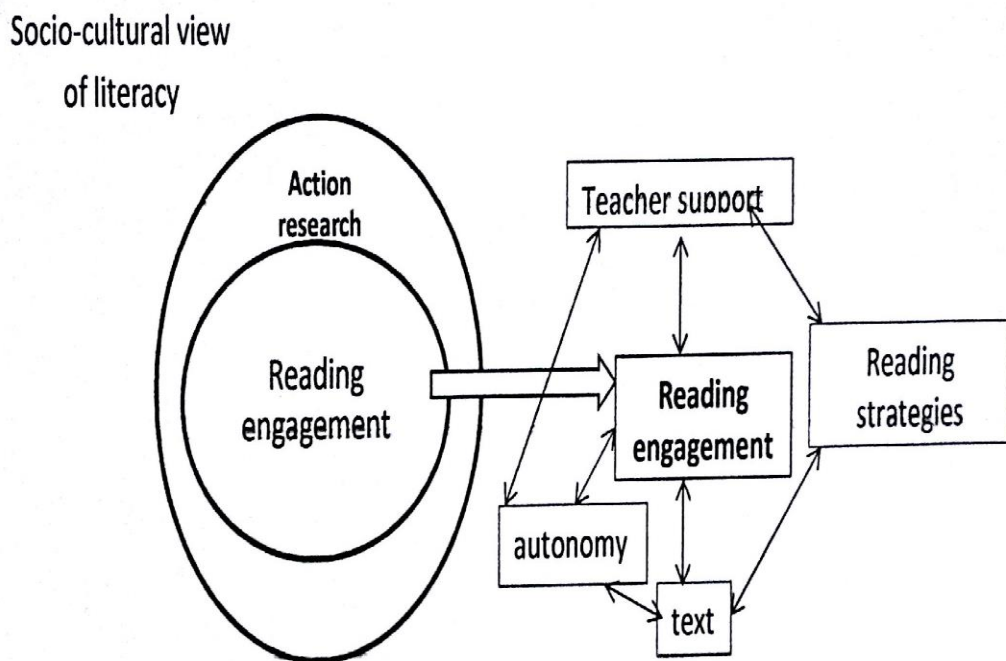


Figure 1 The Basic Reading Model of Reading Engagement

Also, the methodologies of most studies on student engagement seldom utilise qualitative approaches (Fredricks et al., 2004; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie et al., 2012). A recent study by Ivey and Johnson (2013) on reading engagement relied mainly on student interviews to understand the range of outcomes of engagement and the processes supporting engagement as perceived by students. Their secondary data – such as observation, recordings and conversations with students were used only for comparison with the primary data. It could be well argued, then, that in order to understand L2 reading engagement fully, data collection needs to be triangulated. In the present study, I used multiple data collection methods to explore the attitudinal – and the behavioural, cognitive and agentic -- changes of my students in order to provide a richer level of detail. The study relied on the interpretations of multiple sources of qualitative data from participants’ reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions, audio-recordings of the researcher’s in-lesson reflections, the researcher’s reflective journal and a group interview—processes and outcomes that are unrealised in standard quantitative approaches to engagement (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). In the following section, I will explain the strategy-based intervention that I designed for ELLs and implemented in the present study. This aspect of the classroom intervention is referred to as Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE).

CARE evolved gradually over the first cycle. Despite considerable forethought, prior planning and careful design, the basic reading model (Figure 1) was relatively deficient. It was not until the end of the first cycle that the comprehensiveness of the framework was in shape and emerged as CARE.

## **2.12 Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) in the ELL context**

In the ELL context in Malaysia, to the best of my knowledge, no research has specifically addressed reading engagement with university students. In the current study, Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) is the amalgamation of reader response and critical literacy specifically designed for a

specific group of Malaysian university to engage ELLs with the intention of elevating their reading engagement.

Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) is composed of cohesive sets of reading strategies focused on exposing students to reading engagement along a continuum: initial engagement, emergent engagement and deeper engagement. Because of its comprehensive nature, it entails the principal ways of defining, shaping, and conducting reading engagement among largely reluctant readers in an ELL classroom. The pedagogic intervention in the present study incorporates the following features:

Students had the option of reading their preferred texts. Choice is crucial to reading engagement, as it builds enthusiasm and excitement (Weakland, 2014). Fifteen to 25 minutes of independent reading time was provided. After reading a text, students orally retold the story in groups, and used reader response prompts to write in a log, after which they discussed in a group. Through reader response, meaning was constructed, interpreted, and revised by readers themselves (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000), and then dialogued with others to strengthen their understandings (Malloy & Gambrell, 2011). They then proceeded to critical literacy prompts, wrote in their logs, and participated in another round of discussion. Readers were expected to draw upon the four resources conceptualised by Luke and Freebody (1999), to develop and sustain the four roles needed to be a successful reader. The intervention was conducted under an action research paradigm, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **2.13 Summary**

The review of studies in L2 reading engagement in this chapter has identified a number of limitations of the research in this area. First, much of the seminal work with the concept of reading engagement by Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012) has been on L1 learners. Therefore, the area of L2 reading engagement may be considered to be somewhat under-researched. Secondly, many of the studies reviewed above have often focused on particular elements of engagement rather than integratively on all the relevant elements and the patterns and relationships between them

(Crick, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004). Therefore, there has been little research that has investigated engagement as a multidimensional construct (Reeve, 2012). Thirdly, reading engagement studies were measured quantitatively (e.g. Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie et al., 2012). Many of the studies reviewed used questionnaires or surveys as instruments for data collection. Engagement measurement, such as the ones mentioned may have left students little room to elaborate, and may also mask the dimensions of engagement that are important for students.

From the understanding of the context in Chapter 1 and the research spaces summarised above, this research will attempt to address the following questions:

- 1) To what extent does a range of interaction opportunities enhance the motivation and empowerment of Malaysian ELLs to engage with literary texts?
- 2) What are the implications of this study for the empowerment and professional development of teachers in contexts relatable to this study?
- 3) What is the contribution to academic understanding of reading engagement by applying the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE)?
- 4) In what ways do the findings of this thesis contribute to a greater understanding of the process of reflective practice and action research in contexts relatable to this study?

The next chapter will present the research methodology for this study, and detail the research setting and procedures which were taken to gain access to participants, and to collect and analyse data to answer these research questions.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology of the study, and is divided into three sections. It begins with a discussion of the rationale for the methodological choices for a research design appropriate to an examination of the research questions set out above. Following this, the theoretical framework for the pedagogical intervention is presented, beginning with an outline of the methods employed: namely, participants' reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions, audio-recordings of the researcher's in-lesson reflections, the researcher's reflective journal and a group interview. The chapter then provides a detailed description of the research site, the participants, the data collection instruments and the staging of their implementation, followed by an explanation of the procedures used for data analysis and interpretation techniques. It then continues with a discussion of validity in the choice of research instruments and the procedure in data collection (see Table 6, p.68 & Appendix F). The subsequent section discusses ethical issues concerning the research process, and the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the preceding sections.

The primary research issue of this study was to examine how teaching reading strategies could make the process of reading meaningful and rewarding for ELLs. It explored the extent to which the learners' attitudes to reading and reading practices changed during the process of the intervention. As I investigated and reflected on my own practice, I demonstrated engagement with key action research theorists and my own values, beliefs and professional practice. Through such systematic reflective practice, I generated a personal living theory of practice (McNiff, 2007; Whitehead, 1998b, 2008; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), and the findings could also be related to other comparable contexts.

### **3.1 Methodological approaches**

This section briefly discusses the three main research approaches: positivist, interpretive/hermeneutic (naturalist) and critical theory and presents a rationale for the selection of a critical theory approach to underpin the present research.

### *The positivist approach*

L. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) identify four principal assumptions of those following a positivist approach to research. First, researchers formulate hypotheses, to account for happenings in the world, giving them firm prediction and control. Secondly, they believe that science can find empirical evidence to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses. Thirdly, they tend to explain a phenomenon based on a theory, and finally, the findings can be generalized. Studies based on the positivist approach also tend to be concerned with the collection and statistical analysis of quantitative data. The strengths of a positivist approach to research are that the procedures are clearly defined, and the hypotheses are tested for (dis)confirmation. In addition, the key variables are distinctly defined and are controlled so that studies can be replicated (Burns, 1999). Scientific explanations may be one way to explain human behaviour. However, they fail to address “many interesting or important areas of life” (Habermas, 1972). The positivist approach tends to regard “human behaviour as passive, essentially determined and controlled, thereby ignoring intention, individualism and freedom” (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 18). Because it potentially fails to account for individual human differences, such an approach may be inappropriate to investigate the social complexity of an activity such as teaching and learning. Therefore, given the complex human dimensions of the present context, a class of Malaysian ELLs’ responses to a curricular innovation, it was considered that the positivist approach would not be suitable to frame such a study and an alternative approach was required.

### *The interpretive/naturalist (hermeneutic) approach*

In contrast to positivist research, interpretative research also - known as naturalist or hermeneutic research (L. Cohen et al., 2011) - seeks to explore and understand central/key human phenomena in their natural settings (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2009), Data are collected and subjected to a process of grounded analysis, from which a situated explanation will emerge (L. Cohen et al., 2011). Interpretative research is inherently subjective as the interpretations come from the researcher’s internal understanding of the world, especially where the researcher is regarded as an insider (Yin, 2011) although meanings may be co-

constructed in joint activities and dialogues. The interpretive approach is not without criticism: researchers using this paradigm can be partial and biased. Hence, it is crucial for researchers to be “constantly aware and systematically reflect on their own personal identity and impact on the participants and research setting” (Croker, 2009, p. 11).

The purpose of the current case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of current pedagogical and academic relevance – the attitudes and activities of students and their teacher in a reading class in an ELL context. If this were the sole aim of the project, the issues could be explored using a straightforward interpretive approach. However, crucial to the present study was the empowerment of the research participants – both teacher and learners – and so the limitations of the positivist and interpretative approach led to a third paradigm, the critical theory approach, the intent of which was not just to understand situations and phenomena but to transform and empower the participants.

#### *The critical theory approach*

The third overall approach to research, that of *critical theory* is greatly influenced by Habermas (1972) and the theorists from the Frankfurt school of thought (e.g. Adorno, 1966; Marcuse, 1941). Habermas (1972) has constructed knowledge and modes of understanding around three cognitive interests: *technical knowledge*, *practical knowledge* and *emancipatory knowledge*. Technical knowledge is based on empirical investigation and is governed by technical rules, prediction and control of behaviour, as in scientific research which has the characteristics of hypothetical-deductive theories (such as in research that follows the positivist approach). Practical knowledge is concerned with human social interaction, in which knowledge is governed by reciprocal human activity or mutual understanding between individuals. Emancipatory knowledge is concerned with praxis, which Kincheloe (1991) considers to be the principled combination of practice and self-reflection. Applied to educational activity, the knowledge gained through reflection leads to a transformation of teaching and learning activities and to self- emancipation. (L. Cohen et al., 2011).

Technical knowledge does not apply in the present study because of its mechanistic and reductionist view of nature, which defines life in measurable

terms rather than the inner experience of individuals. Scientific concepts do not exist independently because the object of enquiry was the people in the natural world which means they need our understanding of nature. In other words, the principle axioms of science such as objectivity, replicability and parsimony are remote from the present study which occurred in an intact class where the practitioner was situated. I saw the problems in my ELLs in the area of reading engagement, and I introduced an intervention as a solution, and evaluated the outcomes of my actions. Put simply, critical theory offers a practical methodological framework in terms of empowering those who are disempowered – the teacher and students in the present study -- by the power structure of the society, which I will discuss further in the next section.

### **3.2 Research styles**

#### *Case study*

A case study draws attention to what can be specifically learned from a single bounded system, for example a child, a class, a school, or a community (L. Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It allows us to learn “more about a little known or poorly understood situation and investigate how individuals change over time” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 135). A case study, therefore, offers researcher insights into the dynamics of real situations and people. Case studies are methodologically eclectic, which means embedded within them, there are more than one kind of research styles such as ethnography, experiment, action research, survey, illuminative research, observational research, or documentary research (L. Cohen et al., 2011). They can use a range of methods of data collection, and indeed data types (quantitative and qualitative) and ways of analysing data (statistically and through qualitative tools), and they can be short term or long term.

A case study approach is suitable for the present study as the nature of the research questions is to probe into the implications of an application of a range of reading strategies in the specific setting of a particular class – a bounded situation, the findings of which could be related, rather than generalised, to similar contexts.

The specific setting of this present research was an intact class in a university, and both the students and their teacher were the participants whose changes in practice were investigated, monitored, and evaluated by the teacher as a researcher. In this case study, I chose action research as the research style, which I will address in the next section.

### *Action research*

In action research, practitioners are involved in a process involving systematic data collection, analysis and interpretation. Action research is a “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers”, representing a “significant way of knowing” about teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 43). The object of their research is usually their own professional practice or that of their peers. In action research, a teacher researcher acts as an agent of change (Sandretto, 2007): Burns (2009) posits that action research empowers teachers to be active agents rather than passive recipients of knowledge. In the case of the present study, the teacher (myself) was the agent who helped students change their reading practices, and thus sought to empower them. Rust and Meyers (2006) maintain that the publication, dissemination, and exertion of a public discourse by a teacher researcher represent the “bright side of teacher research, the explicit, open, successful outcome of thoughtful enquiry” (p. 79). Thus, through dissemination, the findings of action research have the potential to be adapted by other teachers in relatable contexts. Rust and Meyers (2006) further claim that these types of public forums for teachers to present their research “enable discussions of education policy and place teachers as knowledgeable partners in these discussions” (p. 79). In short, “teachers as action researchers apply the rigors of scientific inquiry in the context of their classroom and classroom experience” (Parsons & Brown, 2002, p. 4).

Despite the claims for the benefits of teacher research, a number of critiques have also been put forth. The most common criticisms of practitioner action research centre around issues related to epistemology, methodology, and politics, particularly to notions of knowledge and use, its validity and generalisability (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Research by teachers is often perceived as research that is of poor quality in terms of methodology, which is

normally underpinned by conventional scientific notions (Borg, 2013). In many ways, teacher research is criticised for being dominated by practitioners' descriptions of their work, or accounts of their efforts to improve students' achievement over analysis, and thus does not regard as legitimate research (Borg, 2013; McNiff, 2013).

Although there are substantial criticisms of teacher research, there is a significant amount of theoretical support for the notion that practitioner research can be beneficial for teachers and their students. Practitioner inquiry is not the conventional scientific method applied to teaching because it is problem-posing rather than problem-solving (L. Cohen et al., 2011). It is motivated by a quest to improve and understand the situation by changing it and learning how to improve from the effects of the changes made. It is seen as a means of improving one's own practice by means of explaining it, and involves preparing evidence to justify the claim, which means that the teacher researcher has to commit to his or her knowledge and capacity for knowledge creation (McNiff, 2009; Polanyi, 1958). To establish validity, practitioner action researchers monitor their own learning, and share how that learning comes to influence their new learning and actions (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This is done by utilising a variety of data-gathering techniques which will be discussed in detail in the later part of this chapter.

Action research can be said to fall into two categories (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). One approach was proposed by Elliott (1991), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Adelman (1993) and others. They believed that an action research study involves having an external researcher to watch and report on the legitimacy of what other practitioners are doing; this is often referred to as *interpretative action research*. Another category was proposed by Whitehead (1989), who believed that practitioner researchers are able to offer explanations as they study their own practice, and these are grounds for the generation of their own personal 'living' theories of practice: this kind of knowledge contributes to personal and social transformation (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010; Whitehead, 2003). While social scientists generally stand outside a situation and research what others are doing, action researchers are insiders because they form part of the context they are investigating (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). McNiff and Whitehead (2011) assert that:

action researchers do not look for a fixed outcome that can be applied everywhere. Instead they produce their personal theories to show what they are learning and invite others to learn with them. They judge their work not in terms of its generalisability or replicability, which are social science criteria, but in terms of whether they can show how they are living in the direction of their educational and social values, using those values as their living standards of judgement...[In action research], the “I” should never be understood as in isolation. We all live and work in social institutions. Whatever we do in our practices potentially influences someone somewhere. Action research means working with others at all stages of the process...it is definitely not a solitary activity. (p. 32)

In the present study, from the emic perspective, I was not isolated as I was constantly surrounded by students. I was working with them throughout the course of the study, and I engaged them in conversation to listen to their voices through their reflections. Through this dialogical process and reflecting together (as I also kept a reflective journal), we could act and transform our actions (Shor & Freire, 1987). Also, my intention was to challenge my existing position as I was the sole possessor of knowledge of the object; that is, teaching reading. My aim was to study with my students, and share my growing knowledge with them. They were the ones who stimulated my curiosity, and I brought this enthusiasm to the students so that we could illuminate the issue of reading engagement together.

#### *Action research and reflection*

Central to action research is reflection (Burns, 1999; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Farrell, 1998, 2004; Richards & Ho, 1998; Schön, 1983). It “involves some transformation from previously held assumptions to adopting a new framework” and it is related to continual professional development (L. S. Norton, 2009, p. 23). Unless teachers develop the practice of reflection, their personal beliefs and assumptions will be unchallenged and unexamined (Larrivee, 2000). Reflection has its origins in the work of American educator Dewey (1933), who emphasised the value of exploring experience, interaction and reflection. Schön (1983, 1987) further developed Dewey’s idea: the three-stage reflective cycle for teachers includes reflection *for* action (planning a lesson), reflection *in* action (while

teaching a lesson), and reflection *on* action (after the lesson) (Farrell, 1998; Schön, 1983). These three stages extend beyond individual lessons to encompass larger didactic units. In the present research, I reflected on a range of critical incidents. A critical incident is defined as an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during class, outside class or during a teacher's career, but which is vividly remembered (Brookfield, 2006). Angelides (2001) defines critical incidents as problematic situations which stimulate a period of reflections. The intent of reflecting on critical incidents is to analyse and focus on the meaning of the incidents and not merely on the experience of them (Griffin & Scherr, 2010).

More importantly, through in-action reflection, I could explore my tacit knowledge<sup>2</sup> and transform it into explicit knowledge. Whitehead (1989) maintains that if practitioners can capture their actions in their teaching practice, they are more likely to track the mismatches or 'living contradictions' – between what the practitioners would like to be doing and what in fact they are doing. Such evidence provides an opportunity for the practitioners to review and reflect upon what they did and why they were doing it, which could lead them to probe how they came to have that goal. "The aim of action research is not always to resolve the contradiction, but to recognize it and learn to live with "I" as a living contradiction in the narratives of lifelong learning" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 257). Griffiths and Tann (1992) attempted to link the different terminologies used to refer to reflective practice by various authors: personal theories are sometimes known as 'theory-in-action' (Schön, 1983) or as 'metaphors' (Munby & Russell, 1990), living contradictions when compared with public theories (Whitehead, 1989) or 'critical reflection' (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Underlying each of these frameworks is an instance of judgement about values, the nature of knowledge, and how to understand what is going on in a particular context. By situating learning in my experience, I was in a position to relate to and actively contextualise what I was learning.

---

<sup>2</sup> Tacit knowledge is a kind of knowledge which cannot be captured by language, but can be seen only by its action (Polanyi, 1958). This is the tacit dimension of personal knowledge which we know more than we can say. We cannot articulate or explicitly tell, but we somehow know (Clarke, 1995; Polanyi, 1958). For Schön (1983, 1987), thought is embedded in action. If the experiences are unpleasant or non-routine (partly indeterminate, and are not immediately amenable), we will choose to ignore the incidences because of the unpleasant feelings they evoke (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011) or use our intuition to tackle the problem (Schön, 1983).

Action research is neither linear nor static, but is in a constant state of revision (Burns, 1999; McNiff, 1988, 2013), and is at the same time “systematic and methodologically rigorous” (McNiff, 2010, p. 34). At the simplest level, an action–reflection cycle involves planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In developing her own theory of the nature of action research, McNiff (1988) designed action-reflection steps as seen in Figure 2 -- her diagram of a generative transformational evolutionary process back then. The development of her thinking changed, the spirals of action research are not confined, but unfold themselves and fold back again into themselves (Figure 3). They attempt to communicate the idea of a real life situation which “unfolds all its previous manifestations yet which is constantly unfolding into new versions of itself”. In action research, therefore, it is possible to address multiple issues while still maintaining a focus on one (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002, p. 56).

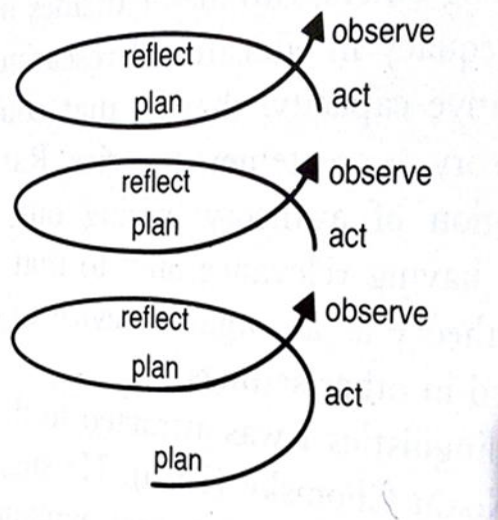


Figure 2 The Basic Action-Reflection Spirals (McNiff, 1988)

Any professional activity such as teaching is complex and is constantly shifting and developing in different directions as new understandings emerge (McNiff, 2003). As mentioned earlier, the process becomes one of ‘spirals on spirals’, as shown in Figure 3. The action research process is continuously developing learning and action, and reflection on the learning and action. This action-reflection cycle makes the process generative, transformational, cyclical and ongoing (McNiff, 2010; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). The fluidity of the spirals mirrors the liberating experience of an action enquiry process in real life. It

is therefore a powerful methodology for explaining change by means of transparently reporting the action research cycles (why and how things and people, including the practitioner researcher change), as any answer to a problem will be transformed into new questions (McNiff, 2010).

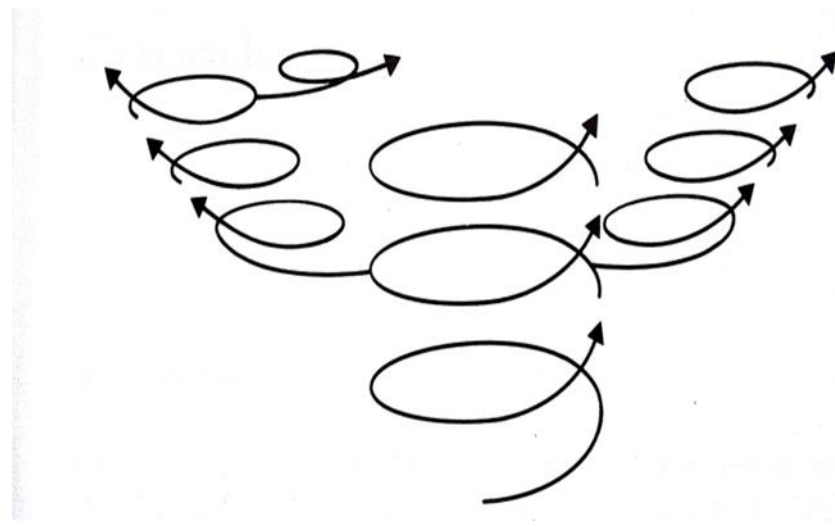


Figure 3 McNiff's Generational Transformational Evolutionary Process (McNiff, 2010, 2013)

To facilitate the action researchers' evaluation and interpretation of events, it is increasingly recommended that they should conduct an inquiry audit (Brown, 2009b) with a critical friend – that is, someone who listens and gives critical but supportive feedback on the researcher's data and ideas. He or she might agree or disagree with the researcher's claims and critique whether the evidence is coherently presented and consequent interpretations believable (McNiff, 1988, 2010, 2013; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). Another way to conduct an inquiry is to use peer debriefers – that is, people who act as external reviewers and who facilitate the researcher's consideration of methodological activities, and who provide feedback concerning the accuracy and completeness of the researcher's data collection and data analysis procedures (Booth, 2012; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003). Using peer debriefing is said to improve the credibility of action research, particularly in grounded analysis of data (Barber & Walczak, 2009). In the present study, I invited critical friends who were also my peer debriefers, Dr Arnold Puyuk and Dorothy Chin (see Table 6, p.68) at four stages: a) before data collection, b) during data collection, c) while doing the data analysis, and d) during the interpretation stage when the themes

emerge. It was anticipated that critical friends or peer debriefers would provide formative feedback every two weeks, which I reflected upon, where appropriate, and planned alternative actions after considering the consultations. My peer debriefers included an active researcher from the discipline of Political Science (Dr Arnold Puyuk), and a veteran teacher of reading (Dorothy Chin).

Since I wanted to explore the changes in the attitudes of my students, I needed multiple sources or data to extend, elaborate on and explain the phenomena or issues that arose (Creswell, 2012; B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012). I used a mixed method design to build on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data, which were “in conversation with each other in a variety of ways” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 110), in order to understand the research problem more completely (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p. 137). Although the scores of students’ engagement, word counts in logs, speech size and the number of turns in discussions were quantitative, the study relied predominantly on the interpretations of multiple sources of qualitative data from participants’ reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions, audio-recordings of the researcher’s in-lesson reflections, the researcher’s reflective journal, and a group interview. I will discuss these sources of data more fully in the next section.

Effectively, therefore, it is appropriate to refer to this study as multi-method research, which is appropriate within my conceptual framework and serves the aim of my case study located within the paradigm of action research. In sum, as a teacher researcher within the discipline of applied linguistics, I sought to become a knowledge maker (Allwright, 2006), and not merely a consumer of other people’s theories, thereby contributing not only to my discipline, but also to a more general academic understanding of learning and teaching.

### **3.3 The research site, sample and data collection instruments**

In this section, I will first describe the setting, the participants, and the data collection tools, followed by data collection and analysis procedures.

### **3.3.1 The research setting**

The present research was located in one of the branch campuses of a large public university in Malaysia. English is the medium of instruction in all the programmes offered, and also a mandatory subject for full-time diploma students. These students do four semesters — equivalent to two years of the diploma — before proceeding to their bachelors degree, which takes another two years. Diploma students have six contact hours of English per week. Each unit in the prescribed text book emphasises the four language skills (Ponniah, 2009). In every unit, a short reading passage is used to teach basic reading skills such as skimming and scanning, predicting, locating the main ideas, and drawing conclusions, followed by literal questions that are aimed at fostering comprehension

### **3.3.2 Participants**

The participants were a convenience sample of the wider population of the university's students in their second semester of a Diploma Science programme (see Section 3.3.1). They were 'convenience' in the sense that they were members of an intact (that is, regular) class which comprised 41 students out of a yearly cohort of 299 students. These students were from different parts of the state of Sabah, and a majority of them were from the interior (see Chapter 1). Their participation was voluntary, and their informed consent to participate was sought and obtained (See Appendices A & B). They were native speakers of their own ethnic language and/or Bahasa Malaysia, and all of them had been learning English as a second language since kindergarten (around five or six years old).

Within this relatively large class, a number of students were selected for close study at the beginning of the study. Consistent with case study research, the students were selected in response to Stake (2005), who focuses primarily on the specificity of cases and how their uniqueness contributes to further understanding. The rationale for this choice of students was that they had to be from a diversity of the 4 different levels of engagement, which I devised, following my understanding of Guthrie et al. (2004, 2012) and Luke and Freebody (1999): Level 4 engaged, Level 3 emergent, Level 2 apathetic and Level 1 disengaged.

(See Table 1 below and Table 5, p. 65). The criteria for degree of engagement were redrafted near the end of the first cycle after reflecting on students' reading logs and discussion data (see Extracts 86 & 87, p. 140 & 141). My data sources were from participants' reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions, audio-recordings of the researcher's in lessons reflections, the researcher's reflective journal and a group interview. This meant that each of these core participants had to have participated in at least one audio-recorded group discussion, and regularly maintained and submitted their reading reflective logs. Four of the ten students who were initially included were dropped from the list either because their group discussion was not recorded, or they did not submit their logs.

Table 1. Criteria for Degree of Engagement from Participants' Written Work

8-10 Engaged	Level of Engagement 4	Students write about their personal response and are able to go beyond. They question the text and give their viewpoints. Their writing is long.
5-7 Emergent	3	Students' write about their personal feelings and what they think. Writing can be moderately long or short.
3-4 Apathetic	2	Students' writing may seem long but it shows very little of how they feel and what they think.
1-2 Disengaged	1	Not much is written. Writing does not reflect their response towards the text.

Table 2. Participants' Profiles

Student No.	Gender	Initial engagement level	No. of Recordings	Reading reflective log
20	F	3	2	Y
6	M	3	1	Y
36	M	2//3	3	Y
23	F	2//3	2	Y
3	M	1	4	Y
10	F	1	2	Y

Table 2 shows the six participants' profiles. The student number allocated at the beginning of the study, which students wrote on their own reading log, was used to identify the participant and to ensure anonymity. Each participant represented a different reading engagement level. However, there were no students at level 4 of the engagement scale at the start of the study.

The class had three two-hour lectures per week, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The first three contact hours each week were set apart for the current study and the second half was based on the course syllabus prescribed by the university. Students in this course were assessed by three tests, one final exam, and their attendance. The weighting of each assessment was: 15% writing, 15% listening, 20% speaking, 10% attendance, and 40% final exam (reading and writing), making a total of 100%. Students' tests and a final examination were marked by lecturers who were teaching other cohorts. It is important to note that the reading competence of the present class which was the focus of this action research project was not assessed. The implication of this non-assessment was that their scores were not determined by their participation or non-participation in the study (see Section 3.4 for more details).

For the five years of these participants' secondary education, they had been exposed to English literature in the form of short stories, poems, sonnets and novels (see Chapter 1). Hence reading literary texts such as short stories in this research was not new to them. However, the approach used in the present intervention was innovatory.

### **3.3.3 The data collection instruments**

In relation to the development of my data collection instruments, I drew insights from a number of studies on the teaching of literature that used multiple data collection methods in their research on ELLs (Carlisle, 2000; Kim, 2004; Miller & Legge, 1999; Soraya, 1993; Urlaub, 2012; Yang, 2001). Like the present study, these studies were all conducted in a university with single classes of ELLs, apart from Miller and Legge's study, which was conducted in a high school involving two classes. The studies by Soraya, Carlisle and Yang were in Asian contexts, specifically in Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong, while those by Kim, Miller and Legge, and Urlaub were conducted in the United States of America. In

her 1993 study, Soraya's role was as a teacher researcher, and her data collection tools were reading diaries, group discussion data, presentation of projects and other forms of activities. Reading logs and discussion groups were salient methods used in Carlisle's study.

The investigation of reading in Yang's (2001) study was a quasi-experiment in which he had four adult ELL classes: two experimental groups used novels in addition to the prescribed textbook, while two control groups just had the textbook. However, three obvious differences between the present study and Yang's were that Yang's was a positivist comparative study; he had two control groups, and he measured the levels of participants' proficiency to identify the effectiveness of the use of novels. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to all the participants in the four classes, designed to assess the participants' knowledge of grammar, sentence structure and usage. At the end of the last meeting, students from the experimental groups were given a 20-item questionnaire in order to comment on the effectiveness of the novels used in class, followed by interviews. Although there were group discussions in the experimental classes, they were not recorded. Like Yang's (2001), the study by Urlaub (2012) was also experimental research, with an experimental group and a control group. Like the present research, her L2 participants were taught reading comprehension strategies via literary texts, although the classes were online.

Kim's (2004) participant observer-study of literature discussion in adult L2 learning was the most comprehensive: the group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed, and the researcher kept field notes and conducted informal interviews with the participants about their experiences in the literature discussions. Kim's field notes were meant to capture additional information. They detailed the information on the story covered, topics of discussions, names of leaders and members in groups, activities students engaged, and moments of interest. She also conducted more than one informal interview after reading sessions to probe into students' experience and feelings, such as the characteristics of reading classes they took in the past and their experiences in the literature discussions. The group discussion in the present study was audio-recorded, and there was also a group interview conducted at the end of the study.

The present study is akin to the case study conducted by Miller and Legge (1999) in terms of research methodology. Legge was a teacher who used her own

literacy experience to guide changes in her teaching of literature to a group of high school L1 students. Her students were scaffolded by introducing narrative strategies in group discussions and also response journal activities. Over time, when students engaged in text discussions, they learned to notice the “narrative gaps, posed narrative dilemmas”, and ruminated over the intentions behind human actions. Through their discussions, their narrative reflections became their conscious strategies (p. 10). In her reflection, Legge considered how she desired initially to engage her students more in their reading of literary texts, and later realised that her teaching had changed from traditional literature teaching to one that supported student response and thinking. However, the salient difference between the present study and that of Miller and Legge is that Miller was an external figure who interpreted the data from an etic viewpoint. She was a researcher in a university, and was the one who evaluated and reported the transformation in Legge’s literature teaching. It is possible that the whole issue of change would have been reported differently if it were told from Legge’s point of view. In the present study, however, I was the teacher researcher and thus I could reflect on my own change and seek understanding of my own teaching and learning. My position was as a complete insider within my own practice. In that regard, my inquiry was from a viewpoint that differed from a description by an observer, as in the case of Miller and Legge’s study. Because I was the sole action researcher, it was necessary to report my reflections, decisions and actions as thoroughly and transparently as possible, and similarly to report the interactions I had with my peer debriefers.

The studies described earlier were qualitative; while the studies by Urlaub (2012) and Yang (2001) were experimental, the data collection methods employed by Soraya (1993), Carlisle (2000), Kim (2004) and Miller and Legge (1999) were multiple methods (see Table 3).

Table 3 Studies on Literature

<b>Study</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Approach</b>
Soraya (1993)	University	Malaysia	Teacher researcher	Qualitative
Miller and Legge (1999)	University	United States of America	Observer	Qualitative
Carlisle (2000)	University	Taiwan	Teacher researcher	Qualitative
Yang (2001)	University	Hong Kong	Teacher researcher	Experimental
Kim (2004)	University	United States of America	Participant observer	Qualitative
Urlaub (2012)	University	United States of America	Teacher researcher	Experimental

In the current study, I employed the following tools to collect data: participants' reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of student group discussions and group interviews, audio-recordings of my oral comments (which included both my class-directed speech and private speech) during lessons, and my reflective research journal. Table 4 shows the data sources collected.

Table 4 Data Sources Collected

Data sources	No. collected
Participants' reflective reading logs	6
Audio- recording of group discussion	13
Group interview	1
Oral comments (my class-directed speech and private speech)	21
Researcher's reflective entries	32

*The participants' reflective reading log*

Journal or diary writing can provide information about ELLs and their perspectives on their learning (McKay, 2009). Jacelon and Imperio (2005) state that participant journals or reflective writing can be a practical source of qualitative data, in particular when prolonged periods of observation are not possible. In addition, journals provide clues for the researcher to determine the importance of events for the participants, their attitudes about those events, and their strategies used. However, one challenge seems inevitable. When the participants know that the addressee is the researcher, they may tend to write what is acceptable and avoid revealing what they think is unacceptable to the researcher. To minimize this problem, I reminded students at the initial stage that there was no grading of their journal entries, and that they could freely write and reflect.

In the present study, reading logs were used as a means to gather the students' responses to the short stories. The reading logs had two objectives: one was for participants to write their reactions and responses to the short stories, and the other was for them to reflect on the pedagogic intervention. Throughout the study, each participant wrote his/her reflective reading log in an exercise book

which I provided specifically for this purpose. The first half of the log was for their responses towards the story, and the second half of the book was for their reflective writing. The rationale of keeping a book for this dual function was that it was more convenient than having another book for a different purpose. Their reading logs were anonymised and participants wrote the allocated number on the cover page of their reflective logs.

In Carlisle's study, reading logs helped the Taiwanese undergraduates to "get more out of the book"; students also gained clearer understanding of the novels and enjoyed being "given a space to express their feelings" (Carlisle, 2000, p. 18). Journal writing was typically done before discussion in a group. In Soraya's (1993) study, participants wrote their reflections in their reading diaries at three different times: during the initial reflections, after sharing in discussion groups, and finally at the end of the lesson. Their first writing was to make sense of what they had read, their second was to reinforce their initial reflections, and the last was to recapitulate what they understood and learned through their reading experience. In the present study, question prompts were provided as a guide for their entries, and similar to Carlisle's procedure, participants were asked to respond to three to four questions (out of six questions) to write in their reading reflective logs and then discuss in a group. Students were introduced to two to three new questions at different times during the course. On the whole, all the question prompts in the two sets were repeated. Some questions were reworded for comprehensibility after reflections.

The analysis of the data obtained from the participants in response to the texts was based on the criteria in Table 1.

In most of the studies conducted in the ELL contexts, students wrote their entries in the target language. For example, in Carlisle's (2000) study, students were instructed to use English to write entries in their reading logs. This can be an impediment to ELLs. Some participants may withhold information due to their lack of confidence in using L2 to express their views. As pointed out by Jacelon and Imperio (2005), participants must be able to read and write in the language. Similarly, Sweetnam Evans (2011) states that when ELLs are allowed to use their L1 and to code-switch in their responses, their use of L1 facilitates comprehension and learning. To put participants at ease and to obtain the most insights from these

reading logs in the present study, students were given the option to write in their L1, code-switch or write in English.

Another potential problem in the use of journal writing is that comments may be unfocused (Burns, 1995). Richards and Ho (1998) argue that although respondents have an opportunity to write reflectively, journal writing does not necessarily promote critical reflection. They suggest that some form of training in reflective writing at the beginning will be effectual. In the current study, I did not train the students. Instead, I provided them with narrative frames, which consisted of a “skeleton to scaffold writing” (Warwick & Maloch, 2003, p. 59). Narrative frames are facilitative rather than constraining, and help participants to construct meaningful stories (Nguyen & Bygate, 2012). The frames are similar to semi-interview questions, which allow the participants to expand on the sentence starters or connectors designed by the researcher (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010). The objective was to guide them to reflective writing instead of writing on their own on a blank page in the log (See Appendix E). Also, to relieve the tedium, their responses towards the text were done once a week, and their reflective writing was done at the end, after completing a story, approximately once a fortnight. For every single entry, students were given 30 minutes to write their reactions or responses in the reflective reading logs. This enabled me to gain a sense of any change in students’ thoughts, responses and ways of interacting with texts. These logs were collected at the end of every second week. Their final reflection, for which they followed a template, was circulated towards the end of the study (Appendix J).

#### *Audio recording of group discussion*

Audio recording is an invaluable tool used to “capture in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances” (Burns, 1999, p. 94). Soraya (1993) and Carlisle (2000) did not utilise this tool, but in Kim’s (2004) study, which had only five participants, all the group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed. I chose audio-recording as one of the data collection tools because it permitted me to check the contents of their discussion, and track the changes of the extent to which students were engaged or otherwise. In the present study, I audio-recorded one group whenever there was a group discussion because I had to seek approval

from each group for recording. Although it was less intrusive than video recording, audio recording should be, and was, conducted on a voluntary basis. Whenever students engaged in discussions, I randomly selected a group and obtained their consent to record. If some members of the group refused, then another group was asked until I found one where all members agreed. Subsequent analysis of these recordings indicated whether each of the participants could be identified within one of the four categories: engaged, emergent, apathetic or disengaged, according to the same criteria as in Table 1, but with expanded descriptors as follows (Table 5):

Table 5 Criteria for Degree of Engagement from Participants' Group Discussion

8 -10 Engaged	Level of engagement 4	Students are highly motivated. They show enthusiasm and initiative. They relate the story to their own experience and contribute their views about the text. They build on the ideas of other students and are eager and excited to share.
5 -7 Emergent	3	Students at this level are on the borderline. They do not show initiative, but share their ideas, sometimes only occasionally. They give their views, but usually only when prompted by other students.
3 - 4 Apathetic	2	Students do not usually give their viewpoints. They choose to be silent although occasionally they give very short comments. They do not respond to other students' ideas.
1 - 2 Disengaged	1	They are rarely involved in the discussion and choose to distance themselves by keeping silent.

### *Group interviews*

Group interviews can yield a wide range of responses and may be less intimidating than individual interviews (L. Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher can probe into participants' experiences and feelings (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The number of participants in a group is the determinant of the in-group power relationships (Gladman & Freeman, 2012). When the group has too few members, individuals may feel pressured; when it is too large, the group may lose focus (L. Cohen et al., 2011). It is, therefore, necessary for the moderator to ensure that the discussion is not dominated by one or two individuals only. One strategy to minimise this problem is by forming a small group in which respondents have ample time and opportunities to share ideas (Gladman & Freeman, 2012).

The group interview was chosen in this study for two reasons. Firstly, it allowed me to hear students' voices and thus access their opinions or thoughts. Secondly, students were given an opportunity towards the end of the study to give feedback about the impact of the intervention strategies. The interview questions in the present study were piloted with a group of respondents who shared similar characteristics with the research participants to see if the questions make sense and whether the wording was appropriate. Using the feedback and results from this pilot enabled the researcher to revise the questions before interviewing the participants.

Considering the fact that there were 41 students in this study, a group of five to eight was an ideal size. Eight students volunteered to take part in the interview. The interview was conducted in a comfortable, non-threatening setting (Tomal, 2010), and this was held in a lecture room after class. It was audio-recorded to capture the interaction verbatim.

As the facilitator, I asked the interviewee questions in both languages, English and BM, and my interviewees were permitted to use BM, English or even code-switch the language.

### *Audio-recordings of the researcher's comments during lessons*

In the present study, a digital voice recorder was either left on my desk or held by me when I walked around the class to capture not only the interaction with the class as a whole but also my own private speech comments as a record of

reflection in action, that is, making decisions during class about the events in the classroom as they happened (Farrell, 2004; Schön, 1983). After each class, I analysed the recorded data as a form of reflection on action. This involved thinking back on what was done to discover how knowing in action might have contributed to an unforeseen action (Farrell, 2004); in this way, positive and less positive issues could be identified and appropriate changes to future lessons could be planned, that is, reflection for action. I prepared lessons for the future by using my knowledge from what happened during class and what I reflected on after class. Thus I was able to detect any inconsistencies between my beliefs and practice. Audio recording was an ideal tool because it gave me an accurate record of what I said in class (Burns, 2010; Silverman, 2011). However, there were several instances when the battery of the recorder was flat, and sometimes I forgot to bring the recorder to class, so I had to use the conventional way of jotting notes. Reflections were consistently noted in my electronic research journal, that is, my computer. In addition, I also discussed my thoughts and feelings with my peer debriefers. These stages of the reflective cycle of the action research process journeyed from identifying, planning, researching, and observing (collecting data) (Farrell, 2004).

#### *The researcher's reflective journal*

Keeping a research journal can be a useful data collection tool for the teacher researcher (Borg, 2001). Reflective journals capture the researcher's thinking that occurs throughout the research process (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). They are also used to create transparency, and explore the effect of critical self-reflection on both the research design and the actual procedures which may alter methodologies and affect analysis (Ortlipp, 2008). Critical self-reflection, according to Ortlipp, considers the power-knowledge relationship with participants. Moreover, the use of a journal can improve the quality of data collection and enhance the interpretation of qualitative findings (Friedemann, Mayorga, & Jimenez, 2011). I reported my reflections in my laptop. This was normally done after listening to my private speech comments and the transcriptions of students' in-class discussions. There were also occasions when I recorded my reflections using a recorder after the class. In short, keeping a journal

enabled me to reflect on my unfolding practice (Mertler, 2012) and provided a summative record of the research. Table 6 shows the data collection plan for this study.

Table 6 Chronology of the Research

<b>Durations</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Aug-Sept 2012	Piloting	Piloting research tools at Pathway University of Waikato	A group of second language learners taking IELTS
	Piloting	Piloting teaching plan	Immigrants at Wintec New Zealand
Dec 2012	Piloting	Piloting research tools and interview questions at research site	Students from another cohorts
	Debriefing	First meeting with debriefers	Dr Arnorld Puyuk (Political Science lecturer) and Dorothy Chin (former lecturer specialised in reading)
Dec 2013- Feb 2013 First Cycle	Teacher scaffolding	Use of dictionary	Learning how to use the dictionary
		Pre-teach vocabulary	
		Scaffolding reading experience (SRE)	Pre-reading While reading Post reading
	Teacher scaffolding: Retelling	Teaching students how to retell *Introduce after SRE Explicit	instructions: e.g. each took turn to say three sentences
	Teacher scaffolding: Group discussion:	Introduce students to group discussions	Learned etiquette of group discussion
	Teacher scaffolding	Introduce Sets A & B questions (Appendix D)	Rephrasing questions
	Teacher scaffolding	Writing reflective log (Appendices D &E)	Part I: responses to reading Part II: students' reflections on reading
	Researcher's oral comments	Reframed actions	Throughout the research
	Researcher's reflective log	Reframed actions	Throughout the research
	Debriefing	Met with debriefers in the beginning and middle of the first cycle	Reframed changes

Transition		Students taking control	Teacher gradually withdrew help
Feb 2013-Mac 2013 Second Cycle	Peer Scaffolding Collective scaffolding	Students did independently	From looking up words in dictionary to writing reflective logs
	Researcher's oral comments	Reframed actions	Throughout the research
	Researcher's reflective log	Reframed actions	Throughout the research
	Debriefing	Contacted debriefers in the beginning and middle of the second cycle	Reframed changes
		Talked to Dr Puyuk during data analysis and interpretation of themes	

### 3.4 Ethical implications

As a researcher and teacher, I adhered to the requirements of the university, such as the syllabus provided, and took into account the abilities of the participants. The participants were informed about their right to refuse to take part in the study and were assured of their anonymity in the reporting of findings. Also, I have ascertained that the research methods were compatible with both the aims of my practice field and democratic human values. I also made sure that the focus of this research matched my concern, and helped me understand my practice situations and improve my practice. The data collection activities that I conducted took into account the ethical principles of voluntary participation and guarantee of confidentiality. The research project received formal approval from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Human Research Ethics committee, University of Waikato (see Appendices A and B).

After the students had returned their informed consent forms to me, it was found that 15 students refused to be recorded during their group discussions and also to participate in the interview at the end of the study. Four students did not want their reading logs to be read. Although I did not use their data, they were present throughout the duration of the study and took part in all the activities.

In relation to the grading of the three tests, to adhere to ethical principles, I informed the course coordinator of my intention of exchanging the paper with

another lecturer teaching another class. As a result, my colleague assessed the writing, listening and speaking components of my students.

### **3.5 Role of the researcher**

As mentioned earlier, my role was as both teacher and researcher. Birks and Mills (2011) suggest entering the research field with strategies which enable the researcher and the participants to share power. Even though I understood the key issues, I could not deny my presence in some ways, exerted considerable power on my students. On the first day I met the students, I explained my intention of conducting this research and also the activities in which they would be involved. Since this research was interpretative, the theory generated was developed inductively from data. My students perceived me as their teacher as well as a researcher who wanted to develop and evaluate their ability. This was obvious when an audio-recorder was placed in a group discussion. Although most students consented to be recorded, they were conscious of the presence of the device and as a result some of them were reticent and might have perceived it as a threat. Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed out that establishing rapport with participants would inevitably be a time-consuming task. In the first phase of the study, some students were reserved with me (because I was a new teacher to them), but they became more open in the second phase because of the rapport that I had by then established with them. When a group agreed to be recorded, I would deliberately reassure them by saying, “You just say whatever you want. Just be natural.” At other times, I would say to another group, “This isn’t to see how well you speak English. It is confidential. You do not need to worry.” Overtime, students trusted me and eventually some of the reluctant ones even volunteered themselves to have their voices recorded.

Apart from informed consent, there are risks of asymmetries in power between the researcher and research participants (Block, Warr, Gibbs, & Riggs, 2012). It is possible that the present research might have inflicted “symbolic violence” through misunderstanding or misrepresenting participants, because my participants were relatively disempowered and vulnerable (Bourdieu, 1996). Permitting my participants to use their mother tongue in their writing, group

discussions and group interview was intended to minimise the impact of disparities in power. To make the research process meaningful and beneficial for the participants (Block et al., 2012; Bourdieu, 1996), at the outset of the research I had stressed the importance of reading to improve their language learning and the gains they would experience throughout the study. Nevertheless, the fact that the reading intervention in the present study was not assessed had rendered some students careless in their reading-related tasks, but my responsibility as a researcher overcame my inclinations as a teacher. I had to constantly remind myself that I was a researcher, and whatever action I took would affect the validity of the data, and so I could not correct them. There were also occasions when I nearly called out certain students because I wanted them to be in the group interview, but I refrained from doing so.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

In the present study, I adopted a grounded approach method to analyse the data I collected. Grounded theory was originally an inductive research method that generated explanations derived from the data as a challenge to “doctrinaire approaches to verification” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 7). Strauss (1987) later explained that grounded theory analysis calls for induction, deduction and verification. After examining the logic of grounded theory, Reichertz (2007) concludes that a combination of inductive and abductive thought is necessary to explain the abstract conceptual framework rather than giving a qualitative descriptive account. Charmaz (2014) defines abduction as:

a type of reasoning that begins with the researcher examining inductive data and observing a surprising or puzzling finding that cannot be explained with conventional theoretical accounts. After scrutinizing these data, the researcher entertains all possible theoretical explanations for the observed data, and then forms hypotheses and tests them to confirm or disconfirm each explanation until he or she arrives at the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the observed data .(p. 341)

Because the nature of the present case study action research was to improve practice, it was intended to achieve change; that is improvement in the students' engagement with their reading through implementing new strategies for the teaching of reading in the classroom, and also my pedagogic practice. The core of a grounded theory approach is the constant comparative method of coding and analysing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and it is explicit about how to convert information and experience into theory. Action research complements grounded theory as both are explicit (Dick, 2007): action research is clear about how understanding informs action, collects and interprets information more efficiently in each turn of the research spirals than an experimental research; grounded theory is also explicit to explain how theory is built from evidence (Fox, 2003).

Data collected in this study were obtained from multiple sources. Most of the data were qualitative, but some of them - such as the word count in logs, speech length, number of turns in discussion, and reading engagement scores - were quantitative. I transcribed all the data verbatim after each session with students. I returned the hard copy or soft copy of the transcriptions from the group discussions to participants for their comments to ensure credibility. Students would rectify the errors I made such as typographical slips, fill in words that were inaudible, and they often identified the students who spoke as I often had no idea who the interlocutor was. After they concurred with the changes they made, they would return the corrected copy to me. I keyed in the students' written work from their reading reflective logs in the computer. Then I imported all the data into *NVivo 10* on my laptop. I chose *NVivo 10* because this software allowed me to manage my qualitative data systematically, and I could easily assess, explore and find patterns in my data.

### **3.6.1 Coding and reducing data**

The analysis commenced with my initial coding (Charmaz, 2006, 2014) or open coding (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). I remained open to “exploring whatever theoretical possibilities I could discern in the data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47). I assigned key phrases and words to determine themes. The coding process was iterative, and I read each of the data sets countless times. I coded as

many categories as I thought appropriate. New categories emerged and new incidents were fitted into existing categories (Holton, 2007). Some of the categories were also merged with other, similar categories. For instance, *students' application of strategies* was subsumed under *students' motivated behaviour*, which both eventually coalesced into *behavioural engagement*. Most of the categories remained. Below is an example of how the categories and sub-categories were collapsed in this study. For instance, *Sense of relatedness* and its sub-categories were merged with *Students' motivated behaviour*.

Students motivated behaviour	Inquisitive Independent learning Pay attention Using dictionary Initiative
Sense of relatedness	Assisting one another Interested in sharing Eager to share

Figure 4 Emerging Categories

Dey (1993) states that coding can be in the middle range which means categories can come from both the data and relevant literature. In the same manner, Lempert (2007) argues that one has to review literature extensively to enter into the theoretical conversation. Comparing findings from the literature alerts a researcher to see the gaps in theorising and tell the differences in the data collected. Urquhart (2013) also maintains that in thematic coding, a theme is a large category applied to a big chunk of data. This type of coding involves both bottom-up and top-down approaches. In other words, a thematic framework can be built from the literature and applied to the data, and vice versa.

In this study, I first coded the data inductively by using the keywords written by the participants in their reflective logs and group interviews. I also compared each data set with other data sets. Then, I triangulated all the findings to see the patterns, which were then organised into broad categories. While coding, I also attempted to develop a codebook, which I had not planned to do earlier (see Sections 4.3.7 & 5.8.5.1). Little in the literature indicated that grounded analysis was used to illuminate the findings in relation to reading engagement. Therefore

the coding process I adopted allowed me to perceive emerging categorical patterns and themes, and interpret the findings. The emerging themes were:

1. Behavioural engagement
2. Negative behavioural engagement
3. Cognitive engagement
4. Emotional engagement
5. Negative emotional engagement
6. Agentic engagement

To a large extent, these themes resonated with studies I have reviewed since collecting data. Under these themes there were sub-categories. For instance, under “Behavioural engagement,” the sub-categories were “active participation, “initiative,” “seeking understanding” and “assisting one another.”

I also rated participants’ reading engagement scores, and the word count in their reading log transcripts as well as their speech size and the number of turns in the group discussion transcripts. I compared these quantitative data with the qualitative data during the analysis. As I was coding, I was also informed by my own teaching experience, knowledge, literature I had read, extant theories in the field of reading and reading engagement, and also my peer debriefers.

Memo-writing is considered to be a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts the researcher to analyse his or her data and codes early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Lempert, 2007). Several authors contend that memoing should commence early, from data collection to theory construction (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Wiener, 2007). Birks and Mills (2011) regard memoing as the cornerstone of quality and believe that it should begin during the planning stage. While actively engaging in coding and analysing, I constantly wrote memos, and so I could trace the changes of my thinking over a period of time. Through the use of memos, I was able to engage with the research to a greater degree, as I could establish a relationship with the data, and feel a heightened sensitivity to the meanings embedded in it. In short, through memoing, my writing as a researcher from the beginning formed the basis for the final written product. Memoing

enabled the researcher to answer the question, “What is actually happening in the data?” (Glaser, 1978, p. 57).

### **3.6.2 Warrants**

Criteria for validity in quantitative studies have been developed into *warrants* in interpretative studies. A warrant is a base or standard to make a research study interpretative. It is a justifiable reason for accepting and believing in a research claim or finding (Freeman, 2009, p. 37; Maxwell, 2002). The four warrants in interpretative studies are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Brown, 2009a, 2009b; Eisner, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These warrants have been observed, in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the present study.

### **3.6.3 Credibility**

Credibility is defined as “maximizing the accuracy” of the concepts and participants under investigation (Brown, 2009b). To ensure that the results of this interpretative research would be credible, I took into account as many as possible of the complexities that presented themselves, and I addressed problems that were not easy to anticipate, such as the insufficient number of students for audio-recordings and the group interview at the end of the study (Gay et al., 2012). The transcriptions of the group discussions were given to the participants to check that the account was acceptable and credible to them (Gibbs, 2007). This type of participant feedback is an important strategy as it requires the participants to verify the researcher’s interpretations and conclusions (Brown, 2009a, 2009b; R. C. Johnson & Tweedie, 2010). Careful triangulation of the data collected from the different sources increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Burns, 1999; Feldman, 2003; Mertler, 2012), and should provide evidence to support a particular explanation (Whitehead & McNiff, 2010), but it should also provide contradictory evidence. According to Gibbs (2007), constant comparison is a technique used to enhance the validity of the data throughout the process of analysis. This is to check the consistency and accuracy of the codes especially when I first developed them and their applicability across different data sets.

Farrell (2007) points out that researchers must be continually open to learning, using what is available through applying the works of others to augment, support and validate existing theories (Birks & Mills, 2011). To ensure credibility, I discussed the naming of categories and how they related to each other with my peer debriefers, as this was crucial in theoretical coding (Urquhart, 2013).

#### **3.6.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the notion that the findings of the study can be applied and transferred by readers to a different context (Brown, 2009a, 2009b); this is also referred to as “relatability” (Bassegy, 1981, p. 85). This potential can be enhanced by using thick description (Brown, 2009a, 2009b; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the context in which data are collected, and by means of vividly and transparently describing of the research design, contexts and conditions of the study in sufficient detail. In this report I included descriptive, context-bound statements so that the setting could be identified (Gay et al., 2012), and appropriate implications could be drawn.

#### **3.6.5 Dependability**

Dependability can be achieved when the findings are consistent (Gay et al., 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using “overlapping methods” (Brown, 2009b, p. 215), (researcher’s reflective writing, participants’ reflective writing logs, audio-recordings of group discussions and a group interview) to collect data, triangulations, and thick description can be reached. A transparent self-reflexive process that shows the reader the procedures leading to a particular set of findings is crucial (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Since I was the teacher researcher, I checked my transcriptions, and made sure I did not include any mistakes. I would constantly assure myself, as stated by Ritchie and Lewis (2003) that:

- the student selection was without bias;
- the fieldwork was carried out consistently;
- the analysis was carried out systematically and comprehensively;
- the interpretation was well-supported by evidence; and,
- the research design allowed equal opportunities for all perspectives to be identified.

### **3.6.6 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to verification of the results of the study (Brown, 2009a, 2009b), in which I need to be accountable for fully disclosing and describing how the data are constructed or interpreted (Brown, 2009b; Feldman, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I documented all the steps and details of this action research process, including my own and the participants' reflections, transcriptions of the audio-recordings of participants in class discussions and a group interview. As noted above, peer debriefers were referred to during and after my data collection.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter has presented and discussed the research approach and research style for the present study, the data collection tools, and the procedures. It is argued that case study reflective action research is legitimate in this study, given the fact that the research is about inquiry, reflection and learning, including professional development. Also, approaches to coding and analysis were described and ways in which the study was made transparent and credible were also delineated. The following chapter presents and comments on the findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter begins with the findings related to student engagement. Following this part are reports from my reflective practice and development as an action researcher, and how I learned to research. The relevant research questions are:

- 1) To what extent does a range of interaction opportunities enhance the motivation and empowerment of Malaysian ELLs to engage with literary texts?
- 2) What are the implications of this study for the empowerment and professional development of teachers in contexts relatable to this study?
- 3) What is the contribution to academic understanding of reading engagement by applying the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE)?
- 4) In what ways do the findings of this thesis contribute to a greater understanding of the process of reflective practice and action research in contexts relatable to this study?

Reading engagement in classrooms generally occurs in a social context when students are interacting. Section 4.1 begins by presenting students' engagement which consists of four strands: behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic. Section 4.1.5 details the progress of the six selected participants out of the class of 41 students, representing different engagement levels for close study.

Section 4.2 reports the data relating to my reflections in-, on-, and for-action. Specifically, this section includes an exploration of my own teaching style; Contingency and contextual support; Intersubjectivity: "Sharing what is in the teacher's head?"; Contingency: "Providing help when necessary"; Flow: Teacher and students' motivation in ELL teaching and learning; Preparing to hand over: "Raising and lowering the scaffolding"; and Identifying the six participants.

Section 4.3 describes my journey from a novice researcher to a more experienced researcher. These sections include: From systematic reflection to

solving problems; A novice researcher; Debriefing; Problems faced and challenges I overcame; Memoing; Analysis while collecting data; Systematic coding; Emerging categories: Getting inside the heads of my participants, and Creating a grounded theory. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the main points in relation to the findings (Section 4.4).

#### 4.1 Students' engagement in the interaction context

The data were derived from the following five sources: participants' reflective reading logs; audio-recordings of participants' group discussions; audio-recordings of my in-class reflections; my (written) reflective journal; and a group interview I held with students. Collectively, these uncover four different dimensions of student engagement. I will present each of these dimensions with an explanation, and examples from the relevant data source.

##### *Labelling data and transcription conventions*

The following is the list of labels for sources of data for the purpose of recording and retrieval.

Table 7 Labelling Data

RL:	student reading and reflective logs
FR:	final reflection
GD:	group discussion
PS:	private speech
RR:	researcher's reflection
Int:	interview
DB:	debriefing
MM	memo

The titles of the stories used (e.g. *Soapy's Choice*, are printed in italics, and brief synopses of these stories ('blurbs') are provided in Appendix C. The conventions below were used in all the transcriptions.

Table 8 Transcription Conventions

#1, #2	number of extract
S	student
Ss	students
T	teacher
/, //, ///	Pauses (one second, two seconds, three seconds)
]	overlapping speech
(xxx)	unintelligible speech
< >	interpretive comment
italics	translation of original speech in BM (Bahasa Malaysia)
[ ]	grammar corrected to make lines more comprehensible
BM	Bahasa Malaysia
HRC	high response complexity (responses consist of more than one sentence)
MRC	medium response complexity (fragments and responses of one complete sentence)
LRC	low response complexity (responses of one or two words)

The English utterances of the students were transcribed verbatim, and no effort had been made to improve the syntax or lexis.

Cognitive engagement has become a pivotal focus in reading engagement research. However, without examining students' behavioural engagement, it is impossible to understand whether or not they are cognitively engaged. Hence, I will first present the findings on behavioural engagement.

#### **4.1.1 Behavioural engagement**

This section discusses observable behavioural engagement in relation to reading. These observations continued throughout the study. Students appeared to be keen to be engaged in the given tasks. Undoubtedly, some help-seeking behaviours are not good indicators of engagement because students may seek help simply to complete the task without effort or to avoid doing any work. However, students may ask for help from teachers or peers with the aim of learning and understanding: such instrumental help-seeking is a vital indicator of behavioural engagement. Through open coding, I labelled some concepts which were indicators of phenomena. I also put other similar phenomena under the same labels: *active participation*, *assisting one another*, *initiative*, and *seeking understanding*. Taken together, these concepts led to an abstract category - positive behavioural engagement. Other than positive behavioural engagement, enervated behaviours, such as avoidance, passivity, and giving up were also involved.

##### *Active participation*

Active participation refers to the behaviour of participants spiritedly taking part in tasks assigned to them. An example of active participation from the data is an instance in which “some students chose to stay back to do their writing <answering Set B questions>” (PS12/12/2012) after others had taken their break. Active participation also emerged on other occasions when participants were not specifically instructed to do a certain activity, yet they were engaged and were “doing retelling” to make sense of the story even though “it wasn't retelling time” (RR25/2/2013). It was also found that on days when classes were held in the

afternoon, students would be tired and sluggish. However, “although they were sleepy” (PS 20/12/2012), they were “involved in the group discussion” (PS23/1/2013).

### *Initiative*

Students were spontaneous when they did their work without being told what to do. Their behavioural engagement was reflected in their dynamism - a sense of obligation towards the activities they undertook. While doing an activity, I saw a group of girls looking for information. This aroused my curiosity and thus the following dialogue:

#1

One group of girls was taking out their texts.

T: What are you checking?

Ss: Want to check the end of the story.

T: What do you want to find out?

Ss: Why did the policeman catch Soapy at the end?

T: What did you discover?”

Ss: The ending of the story is not complete.

Ss: It is unfair.

Ss: something is missing.

(PS14/12/2012: *Soapy's Choice*)

The exchange above implied that students were enterprising. With one accord, they began to locate the details in the text as to why the police wanted to arrest Soapy. They acted on their own initiative.

Another incident which indicated student initiative was when some girls looked up difficult words in a dictionary, and also pointed to the right page of the text to check the information (PS21/1/2013). One girl was “drawing lines and

circling words”, while another girl was using “an electronic dictionary” (PS 30/1/2013). Their initiatives occurred not while I was engaging with them or even nearby, but “in my absence” when “I [was] standing in a corner” (PS4/2/2013).

### *Seeking understanding*

This category of behaviour refers to specific instances of students asking questions to aid their understanding. An example of this behaviour from my reflective journal is: “They stopped and asked me questions. Their questions ranged from the spelling of words to words they wanted to know in English, and from the meanings of words to the use of those words” (RR20/2/2013). They needed them in their writing, oral retelling or group discussion.

The following data are some examples of when students encountered difficulty in using words in oral retelling sessions or discussions. They instantly sought advice or help from me. In Extract 2 following, one student wanted my verbal confirmation as to whether the phrase she intended to use in her writing was correct.

#2

Ss: What are the words to use when we want to say you and your friends are together? Can we say you bring your friends?

T:Yes. Correct.

(PS9/1/2013)

The form-focused episode in Extract 3 occurred when students were writing their reading logs. Students needed the English translation of the word to express their views. They gave me a Malay word, but I was not sure of the context. After finding out which story they read, I was able to provide two English expressions for the term *berpecah-belah*.

#3

S: What is *berpecah-belah*?

T: What story are you doing?

S: *The Doll's House*.

T: What's *berpecah-belah*? In what way do you want to describe?

S: Different society, fight with each other and *berpecah-belah*.

T: You mean there's no unity.

S; Yes, no unity.

T: They don't live harmoniously?

S: Harmoniously. Harmonious.

T: Don't live harmoniously or don't have unity

T: Harmonious. H-a-r-m-o-n-i-o-u-s.

(PS20/2/2013: *The Doll's House*)

In the following example, a particular student was confused with the grammatical forms of subject pronouns, possessive adjectives and object pronouns while writing the entry in her log: "Miss, what is the difference between he, his and him? (PS15/3/2013), so I explained the difference to her.

In another example, some students asked for clarification when the instructions were unclear. "One group of boys who felt that the instructions given were vague, requested that they be repeated" (RR17/12/2012). Others asked to clarify the meanings of the question prompts they did not understand (PS14/12/2012). As a result of this, I rephrased the instructions to make sure they understood what they were supposed to do.

Overall, students' seeking clarification from the teacher, such as seeking help for form and meaning, and their active participation was evidence for the behavioural dimension of their engagement.

### *Assisting one another*

More capable peers would be seen assisting those who had difficulties or those who were absent, by “checking their understanding” (RR17/12/2012), “briefing them” (RR5/2/2013), or “explaining to them about the story” (PS15/3/2013). For instance, when one boy misunderstood a story, another boy summarised the story for him (RR17/12/2012). They read the text again for comprehension. They also encouraged the members of their group who were reluctant to speak up (RR20/2/2013), and consulted each other about the story (PS20/2/2013), as shown in the vignettes following:

#4

One boy is leading the group. He is telling the story to the other two boys. Another girl was translating the story into BM to the other members in her group. (PS21/1/2013)

#5

All the groups are discussing the text. One boy is briefing Student 20 about the story. Another girl is briefing Student 31 who was absent from the previous class. A boy and Student 20 are reading the story (PS4/2/2013)

The students in Extracts 4 and 5 shared a common goal; that is, to make sense of the story they were reading. Students who were more capable assisted their weaker peers - and those who were absent from the previous class - to achieve comprehension. They did not want their classmates to lag behind; instead, they wanted them to operate in tandem with them. Their involvement in initiating and executing their leadership in the learning activity displayed positive behavioural engagement.

### *Negative behavioural engagement*

Negative behavioural engagement refers to an observable behaviour that reflects students’ reading disengagement pertaining to reading activities. Some of

the male students were easily distracted, and made only minimal effort. Their apathy may be inferred from the following vignettes:

#6

“There is a group of boys. They are playing with cell phones when I am out of sight. Once our eyes meet, they quickly return to their work.” (PS 12/12/2012)

#7

“The boy is still playing with his cell phone in the group.”  
(PS 2/1/2013)

#8

“Student 13 was looking around while Student 18 was cutting his nails.” (PS4/2/2013)

#9

“Student 31 is slouching in his chair. He is texting with his cell phone. He doesn’t bother to even read the text.” (RR5/2/2013)

Presumably one explanation for this apathy could be that some of these male students were not interested in reading and, therefore, showed little engagement with their work. A second possible reason that affected their interest and engagement could be the boys’ lack of interest in the types of story used in the study, or because the level of the language was too high for them. A further possible factor could be they were from homes whose parents did not value reading, and thus they perceived reading as irrelevant to their lives.

#### **4.1.2 Cognitive engagement**

Cognitive engagement may be defined as attention given to related texts, and mental effort made to analyse and synthesise readings, as demonstrated in discussion messages. It may also involve seeking, interpreting, analysing, and

summarising information, critiquing and reasoning through different opinions and arguments; and making decisions. Cognitive engagement is always the key element in the teaching of reading because it is generally thought that reading achievement is correlated with cognitive growth. For example, a teacher's high-level or thought-provoking questions can promote students' high-level thinking.

Students may be cognitively engaged through the teacher's questioning. The reading intervention in this study consisted of two sets of questions, Set A and Set B applied to each text. Both sets were composed of questions which encouraged students to think and interpret. Question prompts were structured in such a way as to provoke students' cognitive processes, as a result of which some participants were able to produce some relatively higher-order thinking related to a particular text. They could think deeply about the content of the stories, as well as reflect on what they did or did not know. They also used different strategies for learning and, thereby increased their understanding. More importantly, they thought critically and creatively about the text. From their responses to these questions, seven categories emerged: *passing judgment on characters, reasoning, thinking critically, giving opinions, making connections with their own experience, making meaning of words related to reading* (that is, understanding the words in the text) and *offering interpretations*.

#### *Passing judgment on characters*

When talking about the story, students read between the lines and were able to pass judgment on the characters in the story. An example is the critique of a main character in the following extract:

#10

S20: OK. If I'm in the situation, I'll probably // I'll probably find a job, rent a place and work hard to have a better life ... Education evidence. Education // like he don't go to school. Ok that's make it worst. He don't even know how to read or ... speak ... Soapy's idea is irrational.

S3: Yes. It's really irrational.

S20: I mean a low IQ. (S20.D12/12/2012, *Soapy's Choice*)

Student 20 critiqued Soapy's decision. To her, Soapy's intention to go to prison to spend the winter was implausible. She seemed to reprimand Soapy for his foolishness, and his lack of motivation to improve himself. His decision was nonsensical. This showed that Student 20 could draw inferences, from which she could evaluate the behaviour of characters in a story, although at this stage she was unable to empathise with Soapy in his strange (for her) situation. In another story, Student 36 made inferences about a character:

#11

I feel the character should not rob the bank. He can find a job from the newspaper but also from the outside. I think he didn't think out of the box. He committed crime.  
(S36.D9/1/2013, *Heroes*)

Like Student 20, Student 36 also criticised the protagonist's father in *Heroes* for robbing the bank to support his family after he lost his job in a factory. Although the action may have been justified by the protagonist's father, Student 36 condemned him for not thinking sensibly to overcome his problem.

Students tried to put themselves in the characters' situations and critiqued their decisions. Passing judgment on a character in this way provided evidence of their engagement, even though their experience of life was very different from that of the protagonist. For example, the following dialogue indicated some students' ability to empathise with the protagonist:

#12

S3: You know. Let's say you are a poor young woman trying to get a life, and you don't have anything like anything you just think like Soapy with such idea getting into the jail to have food,

S20: ...for free. Get [warmth] for free, to get food for free for three months during winter, of course.

Despite their lack of life experience, Students 3 and 20 tended to be able to understand the protagonist's problem. Student 3 seemed to say that to alleviate poverty, one would think like Soapy just to survive.

### *Reasoning*

An individual's ability to reason involves the capability to recognise and discriminate between facts and principles, such as interpreting and making deductions about the content of the stories. Reasoning requires cognitive effort. Students 20 and 6 (below) demonstrated that they understood the content of the story and were able to rationalise beyond the literal meaning:

#13

In the cell, you may be fighting with others, right? Ya, for the [comfort]." (S20.D12/12/2012, *Soapy's Choice*)

Soapy might think that spending the winter in jail will keep him warm, but according to Student 20, life was not as easy as Soapy thought. He could be fighting for comfort in prison.

Further evidence of reasoning can be seen in the following comment by Student 6 about the purpose of the story:

#14

Ok. Next question: "Why is the text written in the way it is?" Because the writer wants us to think that as people, we should speak and give what we think about. We should tell people what we think about. We're not supposed to stay silent because God gives us one mouth. (S6.D/1/2013, *The Oval Portrait*)

Student 6's voice was clear that one must speak up instead of remaining silent. He seemed to say that others would make the decision for us how to live our lives if we failed to express our own views. The reasons given by these two students are evidence of their efforts to understand the story, and to relate it to

their own personal lives and beliefs; in short, they could be said to be cognitively engaged.

### *Thinking critically*

In relation to the data, thinking critically refers to instances where the participants in the study interpreted and analysed information from their readings to solve a problem. The following responses show the students' ability to think critically when they were given the space to think, and when they were supported by the teacher in terms of providing the question prompts. In the dialogue below, Student 20 showed that she could engage in reflective and independent thinking.

#15

S20: In my opinion, why this text is written the way it is. The story has some irony in it.

S4: The text written, in what term? The language? or the line?

S20: The story.

S4: The story.

S4: Ok. I got you

S20: The story line. People don't want to go to jail but Soapy wants. He gets in prison. That's the irony.

(D14/12/2012, *Soapy's choice*)

Student 20 identified Soapy's conduct as inconsistent with what a normal person would do. Unlike ordinary people, Soapy would choose to go to prison instead of earning his own living to make ends meet. To her, it was ironic. In that sense, she was thinking critically. In a similar vein, Student 36 was capable of exposing the fallacy of the woman in a story entitled *The Oval Portrait* in which the female protagonist was docile. Although she was ill, she kept this information to herself.

#16

The view excluded was from the wife herself. Because the wife, as we know, loved her husband. She was willing to do anything for him, but her action was rather stupid and wrong. Because she just do nothing. She just sit and keep quiet to see her husband finish his work. She's beautiful and young and the painter should not take her for granted, and she should defend herself. She should defend herself from being a puppet. (S36.D2/1/2013, *The Oval Portrait*)

Student 36 thought that being entirely subservient to one's husband was foolish. He challenged the woman to speak up. Even though Student 36 came from a culture in which women tended to be submissive, he did not seem to agree with this point of view. He was bold to confront the issue, and to contradict such an ideology. In that way he was critical. In the following comment, Student 5 - unlike Student 36 - recognised the extent of evidence and its importance in the story, which led her to understand the author's emphasis on the importance of having a family.

#17

The first question I choose is "What kind of person, and with what interests and values, wrote *The Purple Pileus*?" I think the writer of *The Purple Pileus* is the type of person who is really interest[ed] in a family story. I think the writer wants people to know the value of having a family, and how to keep [a stronger relationship with the members of a family]. (S5.D25/2/2013, *The Purple Pileus*)

Guided by the question prompts and given the opportunity to express their views, students could exhibit higher-order thinking skills. They tended to explore more than was expected of them.

### *Giving opinions*

In a group discussion, students gave their opinions more openly, and were more at ease to express their views than talking to the teacher or sharing their

views in the front of the class. As illustrated in the responses below, students tended to influence each other by both providing and seeking information.

#18

S10: I think friends [are influential] in our [lives]. They will influence your life ... you should choose them.... Friends are important to me. They are like colours. They colour our lives.

S29: Ya, that's right. (all laughing)

S2: They colour our lives. They will accompany us when we are alone.

S29: Good *friendslah* . Look for friends who are good and kind.

(S10.D4/2/2013, *The Body Snatcher*)

Student 10's comments seemed to be echoed by Students 29 and 2 in her group, and they also stimulated the other students to elaborate on her metaphor. In that sense, Student 10's opinions convinced others to agree with her, and encouraged them to build on her ideas. In a similar discussion, the role was reciprocated.

#19

S29: Ok. I think that ...not right to [get] involved with murders. I think they know the dead body is from a murder, but they keep it silent ... He shouldn't keep quiet. Macfarlane knew this, but Fettes kept quiet.

S2: He was threatened. Macfarlane threatened Fettes? He said "do not tell anyone."

S10: Fettes should report to the police, shouldn't he? (xxx)

(S29.D4/2/2013, *The Body Snatcher*)

Students 29, 2 and 10 voiced their opinions and posed questions to elicit more details. To them, concealing murder was a crime. All appeared to agree that the main character should not keep this to himself; instead, he should report it to the police. These three students exhibited collaborative talk (Mercer, 1995), a feature of exploratory talk in which they all offered opinions and gave reasons to

support those opinions. They sought each other's views to see whether or not they were in agreement. This information and opinion giving is evidence of overt social thinking (Mercer, 1995), and a clear indication of the students' positive engagement.

### *Making connections with their own experience*

Reader response refers to when students connect their own experience with the story (Rosenblatt, 1994), suggesting that - they are cognitively engaged and are able to associate with the text. The responses in students' written journals and the dialogue below show how students related the story to what they experienced in their own lives:

#20

“I see that in real life. It happened to my neighbour. A couple always quarrelled over a small matter. They quarrelled over the sweetness of the coffee the wife made.”  
(S13.D20/2/2013, *The Purple Pileus*)

Student 13's reference to his own neighbour who argued with his wife over trifles indicated that he related the text to real-life experiences and human problems with which he was familiar. Extract 21 below shows students moved beyond their comprehension of the text to a deeper level.

#21

- S2: I think when we live like what Malay people say hukum karma. When we do bad things, we will get back [what we did].
- S10: It's not Malay belief. It's Hindu's belief, Karma.
- S2: It is the same concepts of Karma. When we do something bad to people, the same thing will happen to us. Do you want to add something?
- S27: We believe that when we commit the same offence, we get back whether it is good or bad. It's like karma. So in this story, Lord Mountdrago got back what he did to Owen. He was dreaming about something that was not clear that happened in his

real life. [So he met] the doctor to solve his problems.

S2: After our discussion, I can conclude that I think we have to control ourselves not to be too egoistic and arrogant. Our life is like a roda. A wheel. Sometimes we go below. We also have to be nice to people.

S10: May be some day we may need [them].

S29: Yes, we can't hate people so much because we don't know that one day they will help us.  
(D15/3/2013, *Lord Mountdrago*)

Both Students 2 and 10 could relate to the main character in the story who died in the end; both inferred that it was *karma*, that is, one has to pay the price for the actions one does. Of course, there could be other interpretations of the author's intent, but these were the students' personal interpretations and there could be no right or wrong answer. Students connected the people and events in the story to what they knew, suggesting that they connected the cultural values embedded in the text to their own lives. This extract may be seen to illustrate Mercer's (1995) category of disputational talk, in which the short exchanges consisted of assertions and counter-assertions but which, as a social mode of thinking, assisted the participants to clarify their own thinking. Student 10 showed her individualised decision-making when she asserted that karma was a Hindu belief. The conversation went on, resulting in cumulative talk when they exchanged their opinions (see Sections 2.5.2 and 5.3.2)

#### *Making meaning of words related to reading*

Numerous times in the group discussions, it was observed that the students consulted their peers about the meanings of unknown words in order to develop a sound understanding of the text.

#22

S18: (acting) He is actually moving. You're surprised but you're not [scared].

S13: If I...I'm afraid.

S18: [You will be] sweating.

- S13: Sweating. Sweeting. Means sweet?  
 S18: Not sweet.  
 S13: Means?  
 S18: *Berpeluh-peluh*. Sweating means afraid. *Berpeluh-peluh*.  
 (D1/2/2013, *The Waxwork*)

With the help of his peers, difficult words in the story were made clear for Student 13. It was due to his intrinsic motivation that he engaged himself by seeking help for meanings. Clearly, his use of a help-seeking strategy was to regulate his attention and effort in order to monitor his comprehension. His motivation demonstrates that he wanted to fully understand textual content. More precisely, he was seen to be cognitively engaged.

#### *Offering interpretation*

Self-constructed interpretation of a text suggests students' increasing motivation to read, which involves a deeper understanding. When "transacting" with a text, readers may create different meanings, and hence an active interaction between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). In the present study, students offered interpretations when communicating with group members to explore ideas, put together information, and create meanings.

#23

- S6: Stupid, right? Lokomoko...  
 S8: Lokomoko...  
 S36: She didn't say anything.  
 S6 & S 8: Crazy, crazy, crazy.  
 S36: I think she's still a virgin  
 S6: Ya, still a virgin.  
 S8: Ya, a virgin.  
 S6: She never has a chance to [get] pregnant.  
 28: Ya. From that story, Petro and his master were excluded. The story did not say where the master and Petro [came] from and why they went to the forest. (D2/1/2013, *The Oval Portrait*)

In *The Oval Portrait*, the main character, the woman, has a very acquiescent and docile nature, sitting as a model for a portrait for weeks. She does not complain, but continues to smile for her husband's sake. The painter is so passionate that he does not notice his wife wasting away until she dies sitting in a chair. Student 6 condemned the woman. Student 36 was the first student who conjectured that the woman was a virgin. Students 6 and 8 were in agreement with him, while Student 6 added that she had not had a chance to conceive. Although he did not give his final comment concerning this, what he implied appeared to be reasonable, as her workaholic husband was too obsessed with his painting and neglected his wife. In the same vein, the dialogue following shows the interpretations students gave for *Lord Mountdrago*.

#24

- S10: I have the same opinion. We should not be arrogant whether we are in high position. He always humiliated Owen. We should be nice to other [people]. For example, when they had a discussion. Lord Mountdrago always blamed Owen although his opinion is good. I think that's what the author wants us to think.
- S2: I see your point. Actually I would like to ask all of you that when you read the story, have you ever asked yourself why Lord Mountdrago kept attacking Owen. He always planned to humiliate Owen in the public. Why [did] he hate Owen so much?
- S10: I think maybe he doesn't want Owen to have a higher position than him.
- S29: Sorry. Can you repeat?
- S10: Maybe he doesn't want Owen to have a higher position than him.
- S29: Maybe in the past. They had something. May be it was a grudge. *Dendam* <revenge>.
- S2: Revenge. What about you?
- S27: I have the same opinion. Because Owen is the lower class and Lord Mountdrago won't able to fit in.

- S2: I think there is a gap or silence in this situation. I was thinking that Owen might do something that made Lord Moundrago feel so angry [with] him.
- S10: May be. It makes sense.
- S2: For example, [there is] a reason why we hate some people. Do you have any point of view?
- S10: Can we move to other question?  
(D15/3/2013, *Lord Moundrago*)

The protagonist in the story, Lord Moundrago, feels threatened by his rival, Owen. He is struggling for political power. First, Student 10 expressed his opinions. In reply, Student 2 asked her group members a provocative question. The interpretations of Students 10, 29, 27, and 2 were distinct from one another when engaging in social thinking in their group. They used their understanding of the ideas presented in the story to construct their own interpretations. Not only did they demonstrate their cognitive engagement with the story in exploratory talk (see Section 2.5.2), they also shifted from comprehending the story to interpreting it, and this shift indicates agentic engagement, which I will elucidate in Section 4.1.4.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that students were cognitively engaged: it appears that the prompts encouraged their personal meaning construction, and gradually led them to engage more profoundly with the texts. In Extracts 14 and 17, students interacted with the texts and created their own personal meanings. They were also seen to use their prior knowledge and personal interpretation of the author's intended message to make sense of the meaning (Extracts 19 and 23). Also, those who had difficulties with the text gained support from their more capable peers (Extracts 22 and 24). More importantly, the responses of the student readers went beyond the given prompts. For instance, clarifying words related to reading, offering multiple interpretations and reasoning all exemplified the intensive and extended interactions over texts. On the basis of the findings that relate to the participants' responses to the prompts, it appears that these participants may be characterised as engaged readers.

### 4.1.3 Emotional engagement

Emotional engagement refers to positive and negative reactions such as enthusiasm, enjoyment, happiness, curiosity, interest, anxiety, anger, fear or boredom. It represents students' affective responses to learning that reflect their motivation to master the academic material during learning activities. Emotion and cognition interact to support problem-solving, making decisions and generating plans of action. Emotional regulation plays a crucial role in planning, discriminating, and choosing between alternatives, monitoring, self-correcting, and regulating one's responses. The extent of emotional engagement among the students in this study was revealed through the stories they chose and in the group discussions with their peers.

#### *Students' emotions revealed through the story chosen*

With the exception of the first story (*Soapy's Choice*), which was my own selection for the class, students decided what text to do in the first and second phases of the study. Through the types of stories that they read, students revealed their emotions. Student 35 disclosed that she tried to understand a story, but she "couldn't understand at the end of the story and it's boring" (S35RL). Evidence of students' negative disengagement with reading was shown in some students' reflective logs. Words such as "bored", "don't like reading", "hard" and "stories too long" were used to express their reading reluctance. Those who commented like this were students who revealed that they did not read much or did not like reading. Student 23 said she was "bored and lazy to read because [she felt] sleepy when reading" (S23RL). Likewise, Student 5 professed her lack of interest in reading:

#25

"I don't like reading, but when we always [read], I find that reading is fun. It opens my mind to be [an] imaginative person." (S5RL)

#26

“It was difficult to understand because [there are] many new words, *ayat baru* [new sentences]” (S35RL).

However, when they found the story interesting, students’ enjoyment and eagerness intensified, and they used words such as “fun”, “not boring”, “interesting”, “curiosity”, “eager”, and “excited”. Student 10 commented that she “enjoys reading the story that has many actions” (S10RL) and Student 20 said:

#27

“I actually don’t like reading but the feelings of curiosity push me.” (S20RL)

Although Student 20 divulged that reading was not her favourite activity, she admitted that she was enchanted by the suspense of the story. As she continued reading the text, she wanted to find out more. The availability of a whole text probably is the reason that aroused her curiosity.

Similarly, Student 5 disclosed that:

#28

“[I] really read the whole story of *The Waxwork*. I find the story is really fun because of the murderer’s waxwork.”(S5RL)

On analysis, it transpires that Student 5 had read the whole story as the word “really” was used. Not only did she complete the story, but she read it twice, stressing again in her last sentence:

#29

“I read the whole story and [I] don’t feel [bored] and when I read, I really want to know more what happens in the story.” (S5RL)

This implies that reading the whole story could motivate students to engage with a text. Often, reading passages in ELL textbooks are extracts from a

longer text. The story may start half way or the rising action of a plot is shortened and simplified, and the effect can be arid. In the present study, students were expected to read whole texts. Student 5 said she understood a whole story if she “really read”. She also commented in her reflective log that “at first [the story was] confusing” but after she read it twice, she “understood what the story was about.” Additionally, she stressed that she read the whole story and wasn’t bored as she wanted to know what happened next in the story (S5RL). Because she read a whole story for which she had preference, it could circumvent the adverse effect of otherwise boring content being responsible for her aversion to reading. Student 36 made this unexpected statement in his reflection:

#30

“I feel I want to go to the library every day.” (S36RL)

The data above suggest that reading a whole text can engage students because they experience positive emotions after reading a complete story. The text draws their attention to the story line and they develop an aesthetic stance as well as the efferent stance towards the story (Rosenblatt, 1994). The participants in the present study could comment at the end of their reading on whether or not a text was interesting. For example, Student 10 revealed that she read *The Body Snatcher* which to her “was long”, but when she “read it carefully”, she could “understand the story.” She said this helped her not to give up when she “wanted to know something” (S10RL). This indicates that when she persisted in reading a full text or was given an opportunity to read a whole text, she could eventually understand. Students even compared the stories they read. Student 5 expressed her views on the stories she read; “*Waxwork* is boring and *The Body Snatcher* is interesting, but I think that the choice I made is not wrong because for me the story of *Waxwork* is better than the *Body Snatcher*” (S5RL).

#### *Students’ emotion revealed in group activities*

After reading a story of their own choice and writing in their reading reflective logs, students would discuss the story in a group. Data from my

reflective journal and private speech in-class comments show that the students' enthusiasm was manifested in group work. I noted that these discussions "brought life to the classroom." "All were excited about discussing and talking. Whenever there [was] group work such as retelling and discussion, students [became] livelier" (RR23/1/2013). In the oral retelling group, everyone was engrossed (RR7/12/2012). The following vignettes are evidence of this effect:

#31

"Students were very "busy" doing their retelling. When someone was retelling, others were paying attention."  
(RR17/12/2012)

#32

"There was a full participation in this retelling. Students were assisting one another by checking their understanding, reading the text again for comprehension."  
(RR18/1/2013)

Students responded remarkably well to the retelling activity in which everyone in the class participated. Through this post-reading activity, the students cooperated closely with their peers to co-construct understanding. One setback for retelling was that if students had not read the text, they would not be able to retell. Their role would be passive as they waited for someone to tell them the story. To accommodate those students who had not read the story, I made the class form groups, and asked students who had not read the story to join a group of students who had (RL10/12/2013). On another occasion, students had done silent reading, and because the story was quite long, I gave them reading homework. During the next class, when I asked them some questions just to find out whether they understood the story, I realised that they had not read it, and my immediate response was to allow them to read in class (RL18/1/2013). By neglecting to read it, students would not be able to retell and discuss the story in groups. When students felt that they belonged to a particular enterprise, their desire to connect to others in their group was fulfilled. Through this social interaction and collaboration with more capable peers, comprehension was achieved. Also, when

the desire to express themselves was congruent with the need to share with others, their engagement became positive. This implies both that emotional engagement could be an active ingredient in sustaining behavioural engagement, and that behavioural engagement may be related to cognitive engagement.

#### **4.1.4 Agentic engagement**

In agentic engagement, students intentionally and proactively personalise the task or activity in order to enrich their learning. They modify or transform the learning activities into something meaningful, interesting or challenging to them.

From the data, it appeared that students - particularly those who had low proficiency in English - often used their first language to make the activity more relevant to their understanding of the story.

#33

“I overheard they were speaking in BM.” (PS20/12/2013)

“Some students use BM when they are retelling.”  
(PS21/1/2013)

Some groups are using BM to discuss. (PS11/3/2013)

One group “who wasn’t comfortable to use English used BM” (RR10/12/2012). Numerous times during retelling, some students preferred to use their first language (PS10/12/2012, 2/1/2013, 21/1/2013, 11/3/2013) to construct meaning.

Students also tailored the task to their own needs by repeating the retelling of stories during discussion time:

#34

“Students were supposed to discuss the questions, but they still did retelling to comprehend the story before discussing.” (RR25/2/2013)

Several times, the ending of the story startled some students. For example, Student 6 did not seem to know about what I referred to as “holding the readers in suspense” (RR21/1/2013). He wrote in his last reflection that “*Some of the stories are disappointing. The ending of the story was not as expected. This is why I don’t really look forward to reading because it breaks my heart after finish reading the stories*” (S6FR). He modified the ending of the story and changed it into something different, rather than accepting it as it was given. This may help to illustrate his agentic engagement as he communicated his dislike by making the story more relevant to his needs. It is also possible that he could not fully grasp the meaning of the story, as he confided to me that the last story had no ending.

The short dialogue below may help to illustrate other students’ agentic engagement:

#35

- S1: So, which position, voices and interests are demonstrated in the text? Ok. I think it’s obvious [that] Connie’s voice is demonstrated.
- S23: I think it’s her mother.
- S7: Her mother? Why?
- S23: Because Hmmm...because ...
- S34: Ok. So next question.
- S23: Because the mother [was] always controlling her child in this story. Connie was controlled by her mother.
- S1: Is it so?
- S7: Is it?
- S1: She lied to her mother.
- S7: Her mother doesn’t care about her even she goes out with her friend at night...
- S23: I think it’s Connie’s voice.
- S1: Ya. I think it's also obvious Arnold Friend’s interest in this story. He wants to take advantage of Connie.
- S34: He stalks her.
- S23: I think the teenagers will be benefited when they read this kind of story. It’s like an example for

them. They will know whether how adults will take advantage of them. (D25/1/2013: *Where are you going? Where have you been?*)

Guided by the question prompt, Student 1 first posed the task question to the group. Student 23 attempted to illustrate her point, although not quite successfully. Her topic of conversation was interrupted by Student 34. However, she offered her input and kept the discussion on course by communicating what she was thinking. Both Students 1 and 7 asked a question to seek clarification and then offered their contributions. Also, Students 1, 7 and 23 seemed to look for opportunities to try to intentionally and proactively enrich the discussion and make the task more enjoyable. Despite their uncertainties about the voices or interests demonstrated in the story, they were not merely receptive. Instead, they enriched their learning experience by negotiating the meaning of the story among themselves. The dialogue may be simplistic, but it occurred naturally and all the interlocutors - except Student 34 - contributed constructively to the ongoing activity by expressing their opinions. They did not just react to the teacher-provided learning activity, they also “proacted” (Reeve, 2012, p. 162) on the task by transforming the input into something more challenging or interesting to them. They appropriated (Bakhtin, 1981) the content of the input. In a similar vein, examples of social modes of thinking could also be found:

#36

- S3: What’s your opinion?  
S20: Soapy’s idea is irrational.  
S3: Yes. It’s really irrational.  
S20: I mean he have a low IQ.  
S3: He has a low IQ (laughing)  
S3: He has a low IQ (laughing)  
S20: Yes, you know. He has a very low IQ. He couldn’t think of...  
S3: Couldn’t think of anything better. It’s like a child, like ok ... like a child wanting an ice-cream.  
(D12/12/2013)

The exchanges of Students 3 and 20 were repetitive, confirming each other's suggestions. They built positively but uncritically on what the other had said, and used talk to construct a common knowledge. This extract exemplifies Mercer's (1995) cumulative talk.

In the following dialogue, most of the students except Student 7 used their L1, and worked with language with which they were comfortable to explore the topic (fathering) in relation to the text they had read.

#37

- S1: ...an example like her father, he didn't even like (inaudible) he didn't even know why his child did (inaudible)...
- S34: His child will become wild.
- S1: Become wilder.
- S23: But not too controlling, at least some control.
- S7: Shows a little care.
- S1: Show her that he cares about her. If not, the child will become too free. Cannot be over pampered and cannot be over controlled,50-50. balance.(D25/1/2013, *Where are you going? Where have you been?*)

Students in this dialogue engaged critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Students 23 and 7 exhibited some challenges, followed by Student 1's alternative hypothesis. This implied that students used the language as a means for collaborative intellectual exploration (Mercer, 1995).

Most notably, they initiated a process in which they generated options that expanded their freedom of action, and increased the chance to experience both strong motivation and meaningful learning. This is probably students' agentic engagement affecting changes in the learning environment.

In peer scaffolding, learners provide support and guidance for each other, similar to that which is provided by a teacher. Peer scaffolding in this study occurred routinely when students were retelling or discussing in a group particularly when they worked together on a task. This indicates that ELLs were

capable of providing guided support to their peers in ways analogous to teacher scaffolding. Their peers might be more capable, at the same level with them (a relationship of equal knowledge, such as when group members work on a shared task), or at a lower understanding (that is, less capable peers). In the present study, students formed their own group, working on a particular task together. The following recorded private speech comments of the teacher point to some examples of intersubjective engagement.

#38

“One girl was translating the story into BM to the other members in her group.” (PS21/1/2013)

#39

“Their peers show [the other members] to turn to the right page and also explain words if their members encounter difficulties.” (RR30/1/2013).

#40

“Whenever students are in a group, students will be seen helping one another to understand the story.” (RR4/2/2013)

In social interactions, such as doing collaborative tasks in a group, ELLs mutually constructed a scaffold out of the discursive process of negotiating contexts of shared understanding, and this suggests intersubjectivity (Section 4.2.2). Other examples of scaffolding will be discussed in Sections 4.2.3, 4.2.4, and 4.2.5.

Apart from my questioning to check students’ comprehension and probe for information to find out about their thinking after silent reading, question prompts from Set A and Set B were also intended to be thought-provoking. “I noticed students used the questions they had learned to ask their peers” and encouraged their friends who were reserved to speak up (RR20/2/2013). “These questions also triggered them to go through the story with their peers to fully understand the story before they answered” (PS25/2/2013). Put simply, students

understood the purpose of questioning skills and applied the strategies in their reading activity.

From the data above, students offered input, expressed a preference, suggested, contributed, asked questions, found ways to add personal relevance to the lesson, and requested assistance. Taken together, these actions indicate students' agentic engagement.

#### 4.1.5 The six selected participants

In the remainder of this section, I will examine how the six selected participants (see Section 3.3.2) responded to the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE), their progression as well as their regression in relation to their engagement. In addition, these students represented the heterogeneous nature of the class, exemplifying the diverse range of students typically found in an ELL reading class. Table 9 shows the six participants and their initial engagement level: it should be noted that, at the outset of the study, no one was at Level 4.

Table 9 Six Participants and Their Initial Engagement Levels

Student No.	Gender	Initial Engagement	Level
-	-	4	Students write about their personal response and are able to go beyond. They question the text and give their viewpoints. Their writing is long.
20	F	3	Writing may be moderately long and about personal feelings and what they think
6	M	3	
36	M	2 (3)	Writing seems to be long but shows very little how they feel and think
23	F	2 (3)	
13	M	1	Very little is written and does not reflect their response to the text
10	F	1	

The engagement scores were calculated based on the criteria for establishing the degree of engagement from participants' written work (Table 1).

The score for entries in Set A and Set B was 20 marks. There were six entries in both phases, and the total score was 120 marks.

The following vignettes/accounts present the six students in order of the degree of students' engagement levels after the intervention, from the highest score to the lowest. I chose this particular order so that changes in each of the participants could be tracked by the readers. In each case, different sources of data (the transcriptions of students' reading reflective logs, audio-recordings of their group discussions, a group interview, the researcher's reflective journal, and in-action reflections) are identified.

### **Student 36**

Student 36 scored the highest (79/120) in the level of engagement, and based on my judgment, he was highly engaged. In Phase 1, his score was 38 and in Phase 2 there was an increase of 2 marks (41 marks). He was active in the class from the beginning, as reflected in my following private speech comments about the group of which he was a member at the very beginning of the intervention:

#41

“There is another group of boys. They are really involved in the story. Most of them, in fact every one of them, is involved in the group discussion....This group of boys is very good. They take turns to talk and get involved.”  
(PS12/12/2012)

He was also one of the four students out of 41 students in the class who read *The Cop and the Anthem*, which is an unabridged text for *Soapy's Choice*, intended to be used for students to practice their dictionary skills (RR10/12/2013). His willingness to read outside class time indicated that he was keen to take the initiative.

Although he was leading in the level of positive engagement, the quantity of his written work was the second lowest. In his final reflection, he commented that “there is a lot of writing and we don't want our skill to improve but also our marks.” Despite their brevity, the statements in his log were sensible. He completed all his Set A and Set B questions in the reading log. He was able to

expound critically on the metaphor used in the text. For instance, of the story, *The Purple Pileus*, he wrote in his log:

#42

Everyone in this world [has] someone to give [him or her] advice, and motivation to move on in [his or her lives]. Someone [who gives] a head start to change [one's] life to be a better one. The fungus, purple pileus, may not be that someone who [changes] a person but it is something that makes Mr Coombes change his mind and [makes] him brave enough to tell what is wrong in the house (S36RL20/2/2013).

Of these six core participants, Student 36 used his critical lens frequently. He made inferences: for instance, when commenting on Extract 42, he inferred that the fungus had a symbolic meaning; a representation of a motivator that propelled the main character, Mr Coombes, into action. Similarly, in a group discussion about *The Oval Portrait*, he demonstrated his critical thinking skills by critiquing the main character in the story and condemning the woman for her stupidity in being passive. He suggested that she should defend herself instead of being manipulated by her husband:

#43

S36: The view excluded was from the wife herself. Because the wife, as we know love her husband. She was willing to do anything for him but her action was rather stupid and wrong. Because she just [did] nothing. She just sit and keep quiet to see her husband finish his work. She's beautiful and young and the painter should not take her for granted, and she should defend herself. She should defend herself from being a puppet. Can you explain your opinion with us?

S6: Stupid , right? Lokomoko...

S8: Lokomoko...

36: She didn't say anything.

(S36D2/1/2013, *The Oval Portrait*)

In his reflective writing, he used words such as “effective”, “understand the story much faster” and “interested”, indicating that there was a change in his reading. Other entries, such as “begin to read long story”, “go to the library”, and “like reading so much”, show that he reported a high level of engagement. In his narrative frame (the final reflection), he wrote two conflicting opinions: “reading isn’t that boring at all. I am more confident in story [re]telling.” He also wrote, “the participant should have received credit by participating in this survey. There is a lot of writing and we don’t want our skill to improve but also our marks.”

### **Student 6**

The engagement level of Student 6 was 76/120, and he had a sharp increase of 8 marks in Phase 2. He was always full of enthusiasm and responsive to the tasks given to him. Like Student 36, he was also one of the few students who read *The Cop and the Anthem* outside class. Not only that, he answered the question prompts at home, while the others left their work undone (PS15/3/2013). In the reading reflective log, his lengthy written work of 3,142 words, the highest in the class, reflected his engagement. Although his part in the only audio-recording of his discussion was not highly interactive, he did make some enthusiastic comments. For example, in his reflections, the words he used associated with the reading strategies, included “great”, “more suspense”, “think deeply”, “excited to read”, “read more and more”, “attracted to reading”, “imagine more”, and “read advance or intermediate kind of [stories].” He repeated three times out of six, both in his reflective logs and in the interview, that he only liked stories with pictures, because to him “words [were] confusing”. Interestingly, however, in his third reflection, he stated that reading and writing about the stories did not “improve his skills.” Nevertheless, he chose to read authentic stories twice; one story in the first phase (*Where are you going? Where have you been?*) and another one in the second phase (*Small avalanches*). Therefore, despite his comments, it appears that he was competent enough to read more challenging, unabridged texts with no illustrations, and to read critically. The following extract was taken from his reading reflective log:

#44

My response towards the story is that I feel it is quite unique how the story line was written. It shows me that a normal teenager, especially girls who are in their turning-point to be adults usually have the feeling of wanting to be free and enjoy the life. But for some reasons, life is not always easy as we are getting older. Problems and issues will keep coming and going. It is all about how you manage to solve the problem. For Connie, if she had not started the conversation with the stranger, she might probably not be in that situation, fear and helpless. (S6RL23/1/2013, *Where are you going? Where have you been?*)

Through his critical lens, Student 6 seemed to say that teenagers' desire for greater freedom was normal, and what was crucial to him was how one tackled his or her problem. He was in fact well on the way to improving his language skills. In his final reflection, he wrote:

#45

“My speaking skills are much better after this reading program. Secondly, I learn that not all stories [are] as boring as I thought [they] would be. Sometimes we can't just judge the book by its title.” (S6FR)

### **Student 20**

I rated Student 20 8/10 four times in her reading log, and she had a rise of four marks in Phase 2. From her classroom behaviour, she appeared to be someone who was easily distracted, and would drift away during an activity. For instance, she would look in the mirror, stroke her hair or play with her mobile phone. Her written work was extensive (1,820 words), but because she completed only half of the twelve entries in her reading reflective log, her engagement score was 44/120. She presumed that I, the teacher, was only interested in my research project, and took the students' learning lightly. In one of her reflections, she expressed her disaffection that “the class [was] not just based on the research, [students had] feelings and desires of [their] own.” However, after learning the strategies and reflecting on her experiences, in the interview she said:

#46

I feel like I want to read more because///. After this programme, Miss, you [taught] me how to understand the story and everything, it makes me want to read a lot of stories more, and to understand the story even deeper. What is the meaning behind it, so I think I like to read even more stories. (S20I)

Student 20's written work showed an increase in her engagement, and in her two recorded discussions, her high response complexities (responses that consist of more than one sentence) or HRCs remained quite stable. She exhibited more medium response complexities (fragments and responses of one complete sentence) or MRCs in the first recording, but more low response complexities (responses of one or two words) or LRCs in the second. In her reflections and interview, she used words like "fascinated", "new discovery", "hidden meaning", "want to read more", "understand the story deeper", which all revealed her zeal and determination to read more and share with her peers about the texts.

### **Student 23**

Student 23's reading engagement level dropped from 32/60 in Phase 1 to 30/60 in Phase 2 mostly because she did not complete one of the logs in the first phase and two logs in the second. Nonetheless, she participated actively in class activities, and despite the reduction in her grade, her engagement level clearly showed some positive changes. For example, she enthused about retelling stories and group discussion in class. In her words, she said she "make interaction between friends" (S23RL6/2/2013). Her initial engagement was apathetic (level 2), and she was in between emergent and engaged (Levels 3 and 4) in the last four logs in Phase 2. For instance, about *The Oval Portrait*, she wrote:

#47

"Base on my opinion, the wife's views are excluded from the text. This is because the wife was so silent and let her husband do anything he wants until she was so weak and died."

#48

“The author want us to think that being too obsessed is not a good thing. This is because when we are obsessed, we will forget the people that we care and other than that, the author want us to think that being to silent will lead people will overtaken us.” (S23RL)

In the story *Heroes*, the main character’s father robs the bank of \$400.00, but the figure reported in the newspaper is \$4,000.00. Student 23 wrote:

#49

The gap is when the father said that he stole 400 dollar and not 4000 dollar. There are a lot of gaps here because the father really stole \$400 [so that] he and his family can have a proper meal every day. The text does not raise how the father committed the crime. Other than that how the money became 4000 dollar. The text actually [has] its truth in reality. That is when people who desperately need money, they will do anything to survive like stealing for food. (S23RL)

Student 23 reasoned that the protagonist’s father committed larceny for the sake of feeding the family. Despite having mentioned that the man only stole \$400.00 and not \$4,000.00, Student 23 did not critique the truth of what was reported in the newspaper. Although the comments provided by this student were not lengthy, her views were quite reasonable and sound as an ELL. She seemed to be cognitively engaged because she had two discussions recorded and had five HRCs (see Table 8) in the first discussion. In her second discussion, her first question to her group was how the main character - who was a doctor - went into the room. When there was no answer given, she repeated the question again:

#50

S23: After I read the text, [my] question is how he managed to get in the room? I asked just now.

S13: You’re confused.

S23b: Ya, I'm confused.  
(S23D1/2/2013)

Despite asking twice, her question was left unanswered by her group members. She attempted to ask the question again to make herself clear. Also, she switched to her L1 while elaborating her point as shown below”

#51

S23: Next question. “Why has the writer represented the character in a particular way?” I think based on Arnold Friend, I think the writer//*The writer portrays the character in that way to show teenagers that strangers know how to attract for instance through the attires (xxx) dating (xxx).*

Through questioning, she wanted to construct meaning, and her switch to a language with which she was comfortable is evidence of her agentic engagement. She commented in her final reflection that the intervention helped her “think outside the box” and that her “critical thinking [had] improved” (S25FR).

### **Student 35**

Student 35 completed all the entries except one in Phase 2, and wrote 3,057 words in her reading log - the second longest written log, after Student 6. Her near-completion of her log exhibited her motivated behaviour. However, in her reading engagement, she dropped seven marks, from 35/60 to 28/60 (see the first part of Section 4.1.5 for the grading of the work), which was probably because the level of some of the stories was too high for her. She did indicate in her log and also in her final reflection that she could not “fully understand” the story because there were “many new words, and sentences” (S35L28/1/2013). In her logs, she wrote sometimes in English and in BM. Nonetheless, as may be seen from the following, her judgments were generally sound.

#52

*“Lord Mountdrago was influential and arrogant. Dr. Audlin was different. He was a meticulous doctor and he treated all his patients equally. He didn't have any preference even when his patient was somebody in the society.”*

#53

*“I predict that it will happen in real life especially among politicians who are vying for power and status.”*

(S35RL)

The same topic was discussed in the group and Student 35 related it to the politics in Malaysia:

#54

S17: Oooo, happened in real life? What's your opinion?

S35: ... In real life among the politicians who compete for a place.

S17: Why?

S35: (In BM) *Yes, competing for a place.*

S17: For example?

S35: (In BM) *BN contests with.... Enter the topic of politics already.*

S14: (In BM) *What does it mean? What does it mean?...*

S17: (In BM) *They compete with each other like Lord and Owen. Like What I said earlier, Owen is an oracle, and he is good at that. They are all vying with each other for the constituency.*

S14: (In BM) *Ohhhh. That is what you mean.*

(D11/3/2013)

Students 17 and 14 did not understand what Student 35 was referring to, and both probed for more information. In this sense, excitedly, Student 35 related her knowledge about the coming election in her country to the story she read.

However, she did not dare to elaborate as she thought the topic was sensitive. Her ability to link what she had read to what she had observed in real life implied that she responded to the story exceptionally well. In her final reflection, Student 35 wrote:

#55

“[I] push myself to read twice and try my best to understand the story. Besides, reading program also [makes] me borrow more books.” (S35FR)

Student 35 was determined to continue reading in spite of the difficulty she encountered. Instead of giving up, she stretched her capacity for learning. For instance, she had language difficulties when writing and expressing herself, but she used alternatives, such as her L1, to overcome her shortcomings. In that sense, she tended to be agentically and cognitively engaged.

### **Student 13**

Student 13 did not do some of his work and left assignments incomplete in both phases (7/12 work done). His total word count in his log was below 500 words, and his grade in Phase 1 was between one and two marks. He scored only 17/120 in the level of engagement, and appeared to be disengaged in Phase 1. However, in Phase 2, in particular the last story, he wrote more than previously. There was a slight gain of one mark in Phase 2. He was able to give an illustration of a football player to substantiate his understanding of the story *Luck* (elementary level) and to relate it to his personal life.

#56

*“What is real in this story is we need luck to succeed. It is like a striker whose job is to score goals. If he does not have luck, he will not score ...I’m also a footballer.”*  
(S13RL13/3/2013)

Likewise, in his four group discussions, he was a little brusque. In the first recording, he disrupted the other members in his group by being noisy and making a nuisance of himself.

#57

S18: I think...I feel he is so...stupid.

S13: (making noises) Idiot. Yes.

S18: Why didn't he *revealed*?

S13: idiot...*no manners. Finished*

S18: That's all.

S36: Are you hurt?

S13: I'm good. I want to fight one on one.

S36: Let's play *dota* tonight. OK. How did you respond to it? *If this the question?*

S13: OK. *We speak in Malay.*

S36: What similarities and differences do you notice in your experience with the text?

S13: There's no similarities but the differences have. The difference is my father never been published in the newspaper (laughing). That's all. Wish I can be DD.

S18: OK. How so you feel about the character's action? How did you respond to it?

S36: I think the story is full of moral values that we can learn the way for example, the way his father put an effort to make his family happy. Of course, the way he makes them happy is wrong.

S13: (singing)

S36: But he sacrificed himself for a small amount of money for the family.

In his subsequent discussions, however, he contributed his views and shared in English what he experienced and knew. In *The Waxwork* (Penguin, Level 2, 600 headwords), a man was murdered by a doctor.

S13: Did the text remind of something? You know the text reminds me of Mona Fendi.

S23: Who is Mona Fendi?

S13: You don't know Mona Fendi? You google it.

S23: Oh my God! Who's Mona Fendi?

S13: I already uug ... It's a singer but killed politics, politics.(all laughing)

S18: Politician, Dr Mazuan and

S13: Cut the body into 16.

S18: No 18

S13: Into 18 parts.

S23: O... terrible.

S13: That's Mona Fendi.

Student 13 said that *The Waxwork* reminded him of Mona Fendy, a singer who murdered a high-profile politician in Malaysia in 1995, a case that the others were unaware of. Student 18 gave the name of the politician and the number of mutilated body parts. When this piece of information was shared, Student 13's understanding developed, and knowledge and comprehension expanded. Although most of his responses were of low complexity (LRC), his thought processes were built upon and consolidated. Through the support from peers, his cognitive engagement was strengthened.

Despite being seen as a disengaged reader, Student 13 responded to the text by associating it with what he noticed in his life, just as the other students did. His reading engagement was largely associated with the level of the texts. If the language of the text was easy - for instance an elementary level text (Extract 56) - he could engage easily. With texts such as *The Purple Pileus*, an intermediate level text, he may not have understood it. However, through the retelling activity and the support given from members in his group, he understood and was able to respond personally (Extract 22, Section 4.1.2). It seems probable that he lacked the confidence to use English, as he used BM in most of his group discussions and in his log. Despite the low increase of one mark, some of his writing and his discussions showed evidence of positive engagement.

## Summary

In summary, four different dimensions of reading engagement emerge from analysing the data of the class as a whole. They are behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and agentic engagement. Positive behavioural engagement is observable, and includes seeking help to understand the text and assisting one another. The converse of behavioural engagement, such as apathy, was also present. Students' cognitive engagement in the ELL context was associated with the question prompts provided. Students could produce relatively high-order thinking related to the text. Their emotional engagement, whether positive or negative, was closely linked to the level and interest of the whole stories, and to social interaction with their peers. From the analysis, agentic engagement was attributed to the following: their use of L1 in their writing and discussions, their retelling activities to help their peers to understand the story, their appropriation of the content as input in discussion, their application of the learned reading strategies in their reading activity, and their guided support provided for their peers.

Data from the six selected participants were representative of the diverse range of students in the ELL reading class, exhibiting the four dimensions of engagement. Especially noteworthy was that all the four categories of engagement were interrelated, implying that reading engagement is a multidimensional phenomenon - much less expected was the discovery that the marks I awarded did not fully reflect a student's engagement (see Section 4.1.5).

The section that follows reports the results of my reflective practice. Specifically, this segment includes discussion of my reflective practice and development as an action researcher (Section 4.2); and learning to research (Section 4.3).

## **4.2 My reflective practice and development as an action researcher**

This section explains how, in the context of my pedagogic intervention, I sought to be a reflective practitioner and then become an effective action researcher. The data (see Table 4, p.62) were derived from two major sources,

namely my private speech (PS), and my reflective journal (RR). Two themes emerged: exploring my own teaching styles and learning to research.

Learning and knowing my own teaching styles came in many forms. The pedagogical support that I provided to students ranged from guiding them to comprehend a long text to presenting a language point and lexis. In most of the pedagogical activities, I assisted and facilitated students whenever necessary, enabling them to complete an assigned task. In the following discussion, I will explain my praxis in terms of van Lier's (1996) six principles of scaffolding which were introduced in Section 2.10.5: continuity and contextual support, intersubjectivity, contingency, flow and handover.

#### **4.2.1 Continuity and contextual support**

As I reflected and analysed my in-action reflections, I uncovered understandings of my own practice.

I entered my class in accordance with the assumptions and generalisations --the way I understood things--that the students were similar to that of the last class I taught in this programme in terms of their abilities. Such assumptions often rendered my subsequent actions incongruent with what I actually believed. However, my reflective practice made me view my present students through a different lens. I initiated new and tentative attitudes, some of which I discarded as time passed, but some I refined and entered into my core belief system.

On one occasion, I prided myself on knowing a particular story from cover to cover as recorded in my reflective journal:

#59

I have read this story numerous times, and I would say I know it every well. When one student uttered that Soapy was an ex-prisoner, my ears pricked up. I asked where the line was. Students responded it was on page 9. In the second paragraph, it read "This was how he usually spent his winters." (RR7/12/2012)

My students' ability to read between lines had proved me wrong, and negated my claim to a greater authority as a reader. The lesson I learned from this incident was reciprocity: that I (the expert) could learn from my less capable students.

My support provided for students was continuous. When some of the students were absent during one class but, present in the next, I did not leave them alone. Instead, "I got them to sit in groups with others who knew the story" (PS1/2/2013). During the transition period in which students were required to be more responsible for their learning, I also provided them the stems (the first few words of a sentence provided and students filled in the rest of the words) for their entries in their logs, and gave them more time to write (PS23/1/2013). They were provided with a safe basis on which to work, yet there were also challenges when students refused to write more or merely repeated the same statements they wrote in their previous reflections. Other than that, I attempted to balance routine with variation: most of the tasks were the same in the first and second phases, and they were all connected to, and built upon, one another. For example, after silently reading a text, students did retelling and then wrote their entries in their logs, after which they discussed the material in groups. There was continuity throughout the entire two cycles. I also consistently provided contextual support whenever necessary to encourage students to explore in a safe environment. I made my presence known by "walking around the class" (RR20/2/2013), so that they could informally ask me questions.

There was some set times when students sought help from me while I was in the class:

#60

As I was moving about in class, students stopped me and asked me questions. Their questions concerned the spelling of words, words they wanted to know in English, and how those words were used. (RR20/2/2013)

As I was proactive in responding to students' needs, students also took their reactive roles in seeking assistance. The scaffolding principle illustrated

above is continuity (tasks are repeated and connected to one another). The aim was to create a natural flow in accordance to van Lier's (1996) scaffolding.

#### **4.2.2 Intersubjectivity: Sharing what is in the teacher's head?**

As I planned my lessons, I generally had a clear understanding in my own mind of what I expected the students to do, and the underlying reasons for those expectations. However, in the class students frequently stopped and asked me for clarification about some of the prompt questions. On one such occasion, I recorded the following:

#61

I am asking students to do set B questions again. Just now some students asked me about questions in Set B that they didn't understand. (PS14/12/2012)

“One student asked me by raising her hands. She asked me what the question meant, “How are the people constructed in the story?” Then I suddenly realise that this question is quite difficult to understand. Perhaps, I need to get back to critical literacy questions to get more questions and more options.” (PS2/1/2013).

Although “I took time to explain to students the questions, they still found them difficult to understand” (PS14/12/2012, PS2/1/2013). I overestimated their ability or under-estimated the extent to which I explained things clearly. Through this and other critical incidents, I became aware that my underlying assumptions did not benefit my students; I immediately reframed my subsequent actions.

The process of making sure that the students understood the question prompts was iterative. In planning the subsequent lesson, some of the questions were simplified in a way that I thought that all the students could understand (PS9/1/2013). In the class, I found that students still had problems with the questions (PS25/1/2013), and so my for-action decision was to provide a bilingual version of the Set A and Set B questions. My later in-action reflection was:

#62

“I’m glad that I put the BM translation because some students can’t really understand the meaning of the questions in English (PS15/3/2013).

Even so, I realized that “some still fumbled” despite my efforts to “repeatedly explain the meanings and also model the answers to them.” “That was why I thought BM version was necessary” (RR 11/3/2013).

Reflecting on this type of critical incident made me notice how I approached a situation. I began to pay more attention to my students’ needs, and checked whether there was a mismatch between my intentions and their understanding. If I noticed that there were incongruities, I reframed my actions. The recordings of my in-action reflections were very helpful in this respect. They also included my conversations with the students. The following dialogue took place when the class went through the questions about the story, *Soapy Choice* together:

#63

- T: How did you respond to it emotionally and intellectually?
- Ss: Hilarious.
- T: Sorry?
- Ss: Hilarious
- T: Is it hilarious?
- Ss: Ridiculous.
- T: Ok. What similarities and differences do you notice in your experiences with the text? Any similarities with your experiences?
- Ss: No. nothing at all.
- T: Nothing at all?
- Ss: Ya.
- T: For me I will think that sometimes we do. Probably not the same thing. I will do some silly things. Later on when I reflect// probably not the same as what Soapy did ... looking forward to

going to prison. It might be some other situations. But I definitely experienced ... you know, when you go to a restaurant, the way the waiters and waitresses treat the customers.

(PS10/12/2012)

In my reflective journal, I wrote:

#64

I failed to prompt students to elaborate on what they have said. For instance, when one student said it was “hilarious” and another commented it was “ridiculous.” I didn’t prompt him to illustrate and elaborate. I have to take note of this so that I won’t do that again. (RR 10 Dec 2012).

My failure to probe for more information from the first question brought the dialogue to a halt. My approach to teaching about an issue completely contradicted the very message that I was attempting to deliver. Although I was able to think aloud by verbalising my thoughts about the second question, I failed to follow up students’ answers for the first question. I severely hindered the development of their understanding, because I was more concerned about putting my own ideas forward than to listen to, and respond to, the students’ views. This sort of teacher-centred approach was a weakness, which I would not have noticed if I had not recorded the classroom conversation.

On another occasion, I realised that my thinking patterns changed as I talked about the story during the demonstration stage in the beginning. I never expected to talk about the woman. She was not the protagonist, yet I compared her with the main character and critiqued her action.

#65

T: What about the woman? Soapy expected the woman to scream, but the woman held his arm and said “let’s go for a drink.” What kind of woman is that?

Ss: Cheap.

T: Was she desperate for money? For free food and free drink as well? So Soapy was not alone in the story. Have you ever thought of that? I've read the story many times, but I never thought of that. Today, I talk about the woman. I think the woman in the story was also the same. Don't you think so? See, by talking about it, I get to understand more. I never thought that way. I read this story in the past. The woman was like Soapy. She never planned. She always expected somebody to give her something. If we compare Soapy to the woman, I think Soapy is much better. Why? At least he worked towards what he wanted. We know it was a wrong choice, but he worked towards his goals//This woman, how did Soapy approach her?  
(PS12/12/2012)

New insights came to me as I talked about the story. I began to think critically and to articulate my thoughts about the woman. As I was doing that, I highlighted to my students that “by talking about the story”, we could understand better. I was thinking aloud to my students spontaneously, and that was the time I began to think more deeply about the woman. The same happened for the students if they were given space to talk about the story. When I later thought about these occurrences, I saw the effects of talking about the story:

#66

I realised my own thinking changed as I talked about the story. I had never even once thought of the woman in Soapy's Choice. As I talked about it, the thought came and I critiqued the woman. If I notice my own change via my talking about the story, I am sure talking (group discussion) benefits ELLs. (RR12/12/ 2012).

There was in fact substantial evidence from the data that could suggest that talking about the story with others could facilitate students' learning and understanding. However, I failed to make this important point explicit to the students, and almost certainly they did not understand the idea or the importance of social thinking (Mercer, 1995) as a way of co-constructing understanding.

Also, being so overexcited in thinking about and talking through this interpretation, I failed to notice that once again, I had not probed the student's suggestion that the woman was "cheap." I supposed that one could not do two things at the same time. Although there was spontaneity in this teacher-led task, I gave my students little room for responding to the questions I posed. In fact, they were bombarded with my questions. Like the previous incident, the session was teacher-centred.

During the semester break, I took time to reflect on the previous sessions and I became acutely aware that "I did the talking most of the times. I could notice some students were bored" (RR30/12/2012). In spite of having my actions reframed, I had failed to see that what I really ought to do was encourage collaborative talk in interaction, when one participant's utterance was completed or taken further by another participant. I should have let my students speak more for themselves so that they could be encouraged to present a clear argument. Also, when I was reflecting on my recorded private speech, I realised that "my thoughts [were] not as organised as they should be" (RR30/12/2013), so my next course of action was to prepare power point slides as visual aids to reinforce my thinking patterns. That way, "students could concentrate and pay more attention when I read to them and they could see the power point." (RR30/12/2012)

A constant communication including my own reflections on my in-class private speech (Extract 61), and the reciprocal understanding of my students led to the creation of an intersubjective space where meanings were shared. For instance, their problem of not understanding the questions led me to prepare bilingual questions for the students (Extract 62). Dialogues whether they were my monologues (private speech) or conversations with my students became the avenues towards understanding from the interlocutors' perspective. Table 10 shows the intersubjective space and meaning sharing between the teacher and students.

Table 10 Intersubjective Space and Meaning Sharing

Private speech	One student asked me by raising her hands. She asked me what the question meant, “How are the people constructed in the story?” Then I suddenly realise that this question is quite difficult to understand. Perhaps, I need to get back to critical literacy questions to get more questions and more options. (PS2/1/2013)
	One student asked me what is “dole”, I explained to him. (PS9/1/2013)
Students’ working language	S: <i>Kelebihan</i> in English? T: Advantages. What? T: have their own strength. S-t-r-e-n-g-t-h. T: do as they wish. (11/3/2013)
	S: Always think about their luck. <i>Macam tiada, sebenarnya ada.</i> T: Repeat again. What do you want to say? S: <i>Macam orang yang... orang rasa bad luck, sebenarnya ada. Cuma orang tidak dapat maafaatkan. Dan orang selalu .....</i> T: They didn’t know they have luck, so they murmured. (spell the word for the student). They murmured and thought that they didn’t have luck. (15/3/2013)
Reflective journal	After reading their second and third reflective writing, I realise 16% of the students found that “Where are you going? Where have you been?” by Joyce Carol Oates long and difficult. This story is an unabridged story. They commented they did not really understand the story. 11% found “The Body Snatcher” and “The Waxwork” long and difficult. These two stories are from graded readers. (RR17/2/2013)
	Retelling in a group is working. I discovered that even in a group discussion which students were supposed to discuss

	the questions, they still did retelling to comprehend the story before discussing (RR25/2/2013).
	During retelling, everyone was involved. One particular group who wasn't comfortable to use English, I think, used BM. I didn't interrupt them as the purpose was to understand and make sense of the story and whatever language they used is not important. (RR10/12/2013)
Memo	After reading my sotto voce on 30th Jan, I find retelling in a group is beneficial to ESL students. They can clarify what they don't understand. Their peers show them the right page and also explain words if their members encounter difficulties. Without the teacher's help, student's retelling takes longer and they look up words in the dictionary on their own. They become a community of learners. They help each other. (30th Jan 2013)

As a result of mutual engagement and rapport, the types of change to practice that I made allowed intersubjectivity to occur (van Lier, 1996, 2004).

#### **4.2.3 Contingency: Providing help when necessary**

In the present study, my in-action reflections were audio-recorded, and thus I could consciously reflect on the lesson by listening to these comments. When I identified specific problems, I thought about what changes were to be made. These in-action reflections, if not recorded, would have remained at the subconscious level of my thoughts, and were largely irretrievable after class. The extract below explains what I did to support students:

#67

I spent a lot of time asking questions, as this text *Where are you going? Where have you been?* is a long story. When students did not seem to know, they had to turn to the right page to obtain the information. They read silently sometimes, and sometimes I also read aloud to the students, so that they could listen to the story. (RR 21/1/2013)

The level of scaffolding I provided in relation to this text fell within the category of continuity (Section 4.2.1). I wanted them to access an unaltered text with ease. As a result I assisted them with their reading whenever I thought was appropriate. The small segments of the individual activities above - from asking questions to reading silently, and reading aloud to them - were all connected. Students repeated the same activities when they read other stories in both phases. Extract 68 shows that students requested me to translate the meanings in English. Such pedagogical scaffolding was contingency because I provided help according to their needs.

#68

Pam asked what is *membazir masa* <wasting time>, and another student asked whether there was another word for supernatural. Some students asked me to translate words they needed to use. (RR11/3/2013)

I also employed this type of scaffolding when I sensed that my students needed my assistance and endorsement (proactive), or when they asked for it (reactive). It was natural for me to respond to students' needs to help them to complete a task when they encountered difficulties or complexities in a learning context. This might be done spontaneously when I responded to an explicit request for assistance. Numerous times students consulted me about forms (grammar point), hence I provided them with the contextual support:

#69

- T: Any questions?  
S: He or him?  
T: To look down on him.  
(PS15/3/2013)

Students tended to ask more questions in a non-threatening environment. They requested feedback for their language output. I provided them with implicit feedback in the form of a recast or translation in a supportive manner so that they had access to the language point they needed. Although this was a reading class, there were times when it was appropriate to provide a pedagogical focus on syntax. After this informal type of reformulative feedback, I noticed learners' uptake and repair of error in their utterances and writing of the target language.

My reflective practice also informed me of my failure to respond to my students' needs. For instance in Extract 63 (Section 4.2.2), I did not even realise that I had switched to another question so quickly that I took no notice of their answers. I could have elicited more of their responses. Sadly, the exchange came to an abrupt halt. There were also occasions when I provided help when it was not necessary. For example, in the extract below, I asked a few questions while three students were discussing and writing simultaneously.

#70

- T: What are you writing?  
S6: Just want to add something.  
T: Like what?  
S6: I want to write about the text. The text tells us something. I asked his opinion and we just exchanged ideas.  
T: Do you think the discussion helps?  
S6: Yes, it really helps. Because sometimes after three questions, we get blank and we can ask our friends.  
T: What is your answer to that question "Why is the title *Small avalanches*? What do you think?"  
S6: Because small avalanches represent the small rocks. Because of small rocks, the guy suffered.

It appears that my questions in Extract 70 did not serve a purpose as I just wanted to make small talk. Out of my curiosity, I asked what the students had written, but the questions that followed were completely unrelated. Very quickly, I switched to a particular question in Set B “Why is the title *Small avalanches*? What do you think?” reducing the help I had provided.

From my past experience, I assumed that students would not read if they were given an out of class reading assignment. In this study, I had no intention of asking students to read the stories for homework. However, it was not until later that I realised that my students would not write summaries or even answer questions outside class time:

#71

It looks like as though, I ask them to answer the questions at home, most of them will not do as I ask them. (PS9/1/2013)

I began to ponder the problem of students’ avoidance of reading-related tasks outside class time. Based on the scaffolding principle of contingency, I reframed my thinking and my strategies to make sure the essential tasks could be completed: the situation could be rectified by having viable alternatives, such as asking the students to write all their entries during class time.

#72

I notice students will not do reading-related tasks as homework. My next course of action is to complete the tasks in class. (RR9/1/2013)

#73

I will give them more time to write, and I don’t think I want to give them homework. They have to finish their writing. (PS23/1/2013)

After reflecting on- and for action, I decided that all reading activities would be done during class time.

While preparing stories for students to choose from, I selected a number of stories of my own preference; stories that I thought were interesting. One particular story on the list was *AP Velloo* by Catherine Lim, a Malaysian-born author but an emigré to Singapore. My intention in choosing this story, written by a Malaysian, was to give the students an opportunity to identify with the culture in the story. I noted this remark in my private speech:

#74

Nobody chose No. 4 (*AP Velloo*). Bad choice.  
(PS5/12/2012)

I also reported this incident in my reflective log:

#75

I did not expect that not even one student chose *AP Velloo*. I think if a teacher chooses a story for the class without giving the students options, then it is like forcing students to do something that is uninteresting. I never know students do not like the story about politics. I think it is because of their age. They are in their late teens. (RR5/12/2013)

In order to choose a suitable story for the students, I had altered my actions a few times.

#76

After reading their second and third reflective writings, I realised that 16% [of the total number of students who handed in their logs] of the students had found that the unabridged story, *Where are you going? Where have you been?* long and difficult. They commented they did not really understand the story. 11% found *The Body Snatcher* and *The Waxwork* long and difficult. These two stories are from graded readers (pre- intermediate) ... It does make sense that they did not enjoy the story as they didn't understand what they read (due to the length and lexicon of the story). While most students (89%) commented that *The Body Snatcher* was interesting, 11% considered the story difficult. 11%

of these students were most likely from the lower-level group. However, when some students comment that the story is long and difficult, I have to take this into consideration. I will have to read through my next list of stories and to make sure that the stories are not too long or too difficult. (RR7/2/2013)

Following this on-action reflection, my reflection for-action was to abandon my plan to bring in authentic stories because I found that students had problems with length, lexical and structural complexity and complicated plots – as well as the sheer number of stories I expected them to read. This suggests that most students in the class were better able to read in the range of elementary and pre-intermediate levels, while only a small number of them were at the higher levels (PS20/2/2013).

Through the students' responses, I came to know which stories the students liked. I developed this intersubjective frame because I took account of the interaction between shared and individual knowledge as a group. I realised that students' understandings of the story were associated with the level of the language.

Selecting stories to correspond to the students' linguistic level and interest spanned almost two months or more. Despite the time lag, it revealed the help I provided for my students. I examined and reviewed the evidence I collected from my practice, and made informed decisions about my actions. My reflection-for-action was the action that I took after gaining insights from regular cycles of planning, actions and reflections about myself, my teaching and my students.

#### **4.2.4 Flow: Teacher and students' motivation in ELL teaching and learning**

The concept of 'flow' was experienced both by the students and the teacher in the present study. Flow is a state of concentration so focused that it amounts to absolute absorption in an activity. Numerous extracts (for example, Extracts 19, 21 and 22, Section 4.1.2) taken from students' interactions among themselves in the present study, actually exhibited the occurrence of flow. Extracts 2 and 3 (Section 4.1.1) and Extract 60 (Section 4.2.1) show how flow emerged when students asked me for help just when they encountered some

challenges in a task. In this case, it was the language that posed a problem, but as soon as they received immediate feedback, their communication expanded and flowed more naturally.

The flow experience happened when I met their needs. My interest and involvement was present as I answered their questions at the peak moment when they needed my assistance. This type of communication is authentic (van Lier, 1996) since it is a process of engagement in the learning situation where both the teacher and her students interact for the purposes of learning.

There were moments when I encountered incidents which I had not experienced before, and I was uncertain how to respond to them. My decision making on the spur of the moment often determined the success or failure of the outcome. If it was successful, flow occurred. For example,

#77

I have the intention to talk about what I read in the newspaper about the policemen, but I think I don't want to talk about it now because these are Set A questions. Probably the story about the police falls into set B questions.

(PS10/12/2012, Soapy's Choice)

I was not sure whether the story was appropriate to the questions in Set A (reader response questions) or Set B (critical literacy questions). I sensed a problem, and the decision had to be made on the spot. I came close to abandoning the idea of sharing it with the class. Finally, I went ahead and shared the story with the class, and it was successful.

In another situation shortly afterwards, a lesson did not turn out as planned, as a result of my indecision. This was documented in my private speech and in my reflection below:

#78

I was thinking whether I should introduce discussion <etiquette> first. I thought of getting students to discuss, but then I realised that it was not practical. So I introduced Set B questions. When they break into groups later on, they can discuss both sets of questions together.  
(PS2/12/2012)

While in class, I could not make up my mind what to teach first, so I developed my contingency plan to let students have one discussion to discuss both sets of questions. However, it ended in failure.

#79

After transcribing, I realised that students had only discussed material based on Set A questions (not Set B) in this particular group. So I think I should in fact, have asked students to discuss twice, one for set A questions and another discussion for set B questions. I was aware that they probably did not have time to write their responses based on Set B questions, and that I should have given them more time. After their discussion, I should have asked them the type of questions raised in their discussion. I could probably get some information about it ... I realised that I had introduced two major components in one class! – Set B questions and discussion etiquettes. Gosh!! (RR12/12/2012)

Pondering this issue led me to a change in my strategy. Also, after reading students' logs, I found out that some of them had not completed their entries and I speculated that I had not given them sufficient time for writing their logs, as documented below.

#80

“After my reflections, I find my own weakness. I have not given them enough time to complete a task, so I must make sure they have ample time to do a task.”  
(RR19/12/2012)

In my next lesson with the students, I gave them more time to write:

#81

“I give them 30 minutes instead of 20 because they need time to think and write.” (PS15/3/2013)

Although there was hindrance in Extracts 79 and 80, flow was experienced in Extract 81. There was a temporary lapse in timing, but I was engaged, involved and excited to rectify the flaws to ensure that learning took place, and in that sense, my sense of flow inspired motivation in students. A closer look at the data above sums up that flow has relevance to both the students and the teacher.

#### **4.2.5 Preparing to hand over: Raising and lowering scaffolding**

During the modelling stage in Phase 1, as a reading teacher, I explicitly demonstrated to students how to think and engage with the story. I did this by simplifying the task using simple expressions to show students what I thought about the story so that they could understand and know what to do when they had to do this independently. However, I did not have a clear idea what I would do during the transition period when students gradually took over the responsibility, and also when some students were apathetic.

During the transition period after Phase 1, I assumed that students would perform independently. I had not given much thought to how exactly students could be shifted onto the second phase, at least not until one of my first debriefing meetings.

My debriefer, Dorothy Chin advised me to show students how and what to do in Phase 1. She reminded me that during the transitional phase, I only had to show them how to do some of the questions, and allow students to do the rest themselves (Df2/1/2013). I assisted them whenever necessary, applying the contingency principle. According to my debriefer, this was a way to scaffold students towards independence during Phase 2. In so doing, the responsibility would be handed over to the learners in the second phase. My for-action reflective plan following this debriefing was more robust:

In the third story in Phase 1 - *Where are you going? Where have you been?* I will release some responsibilities to students, and I will only explain both sets of the questions to students and model two questions (one from each set) to think aloud in class. I will then invite students to take part. My role then will be more of a facilitator to support their learning. I will approach different groups and make myself available. (Df2/1/2013)

Not only did I decide which story to use during in the transition period, I lowered the scaffold by only modelling two questions from each set. My meeting with my debriefer had affirmed my judgement.

The findings I have presented above are the culmination of my activities as a reflective practice practitioner, a necessary step in the process of conducting action research. However, engaging in “systematic and intentional inquiry” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 7) began long before the data were collected, and the insights continued after that period.

#### **4.2.6 Identifying the six participants**

When I informed my debriefer, Dorothy Chin (Table 6, p. 68), that I was looking for students representing the samples from the four categories of engagement, she reminded me that the objective of my research was to prepare disengaged students to become engaged. Table 10 shows the action I planned to do.

Table 11 Discussion with Debriefer

	<b>What happened/what I did</b>	<b>Debriefer's advice</b>	<b>My action</b>
Four categories of students	I am looking out for the four categories of students- engaged; emergent, apathetic and disengaged	The objective is to help disengaged students to be engaged.	Since I want to see whether there is any change in students' reading, I will pay special attention to disengaged students. However, I will also observe students from other categories.

I was still uncertain about what to do shortly after meeting with my debriefer, as I noted in my reflective journal:

#83

[My debriefer] once remarked that the aim is to see a change in disengaged learners. In what way? I don't know. I recorded Student 13 twice, and also observed him in class. (RR5/2/2013)

My perspective became broader than before meeting my debriefer. I then attempted to identify other students who were disengaged and weak. My intention was to assist them and monitor their progress instead of just limiting my scrutiny to Student 13.

#84

As documented in my little note, based on [students'] reading logs, Student 31 is apathetic and Student 32 is disengaged. I also refer to their recording on 9th Jan 2013 on Heroes. Student 31 contributed more than Student 32. Student 31 said the [boy's] father, although a robber, had the value of love towards his family and others because he didn't injure others. Student 32 did not say anything. His speech was inaudible. What I reflect on and notice here is that there is a contradiction. Based on the discussion, Student 31 is more engaged, and from the observation, Student 31 is not reading silently let alone discussing the story. I need to see whether there are any changes. I recorded them once in Phase 1, I should do that again in the second cycle. (RR5/2/2013)

The pace of learning for Students 31 and 32 may have been slower than that of the other students, and that could be the reason why they were inconsistent in their performance. This could possibly suggest that there were different stages of readiness for handover. It was possible that these two students were not able to perform independently, and they needed more support than the others. I continued monitoring Students 31 and 32 by approaching and assisting them in class, as shown in the following extract:

#85

I am not sure Students 31 and 32 have read the story. They were not here last Wednesday. These two are in between apathetic and disengaged.

T: So what are you two talking about? Have you read the story?

T: Do you have any problem?

S: (inaudible) ... *the story line*

T: *The story line?* You didn't do last Wednesday?

S: *I did, but I want to ask again.*

T: So you want to understand the story, jalan cerita?

S: Yes. (PS25/2/2013)

As a result of this advice from my debriefer, I felt that I was becoming more attuned to the different needs of my students. The fact that the student whispered, almost inaudibly, and answered me using his L1 suggested that he was rather timorous, and thus needed more support than most of the others in the class. To make him feel at ease, I used the target language and repeated the key phrase again in his L1 to assure him that I was discreet. I took his level into consideration when I was conversing with him.

The descriptors that I set for the levels of engagement at the beginning of the study did not match the actual participants. So I made amendments, after my first encounters with Students 31, 32, and also 25.

#86

In the transcription on 9th Jan 2013, Student 25 (I put as disengaged in my record - note book earlier), although she talked a lot in the discussion (in BM), didn't show she was engaging with the story. She questioned why the father didn't look for a job. In the story, this father looked for a job every day. It was not that he didn't look for a job, it was because he couldn't find one. She accused the factory manager of firing the workers. It seemed that she either hadn't read carefully or she didn't understand the story, or her world view was narrow. She is from the disengaged category (based on her log). (RR5/2/2013, *Heroes*)

My reflection on Student 25 informed me that although a person might be vocal in discussion, this did not necessarily demonstrate his or her engagement with the story. This prompted me to revise the engagement criteria. I noticed that there was a discrepancy between the seeming legitimacy of the engagement descriptors and my experience on site. Below are the changes I made:

#87

After reading the four categories - criteria for degree of engagement from participants' group discussion, I will change the descriptors for Apathetic and Emergent.

#### Apathetic (old)

students do not usually give their viewpoints. They choose to be silent although occasionally they give very short comments. They do not respond to other students' ideas.

#### Apathetic (new)

Students do not usually give their viewpoints. They choose to be silent although occasionally they give very short comments. They may share their views, but it does not show that they understand the story completely and their views can be irrelevant.

#### Emergent (old)

Students at this level are on the borderline. Students show initiative to share their views, but sometimes they do so occasionally. They give their views, but usually only when prompted by other students.

#### Emergent (New)

Students at this level are on the borderline. They do not show initiative, but share their ideas, sometimes only occasionally. They give their views, but usually only when prompted by other students. (RR5/2/2013)

My position as a teacher of reading became clearer. My original, supposedly well-defined actions were challenged by my peer debriefers. They made me review my plans and actions, and I realised that as a teacher, I could not simply impose my do-as-I-do ideology on my students. The section that follows details the development of my competence as an action researcher.

### **4.3 Learning to research**

I have learned that action research was indeed a systematic, but also an iterative, process of moving back and forth across the various phases, from my problematising at the very beginning, to deciding on the first action, collecting data, reshaping teaching decisions, asking additional questions, gathering more data, evaluating both the process and outcome, interpreting the data and feeding the data back into the system. The first important step was to see the connection between reflective practice and action research.

#### **4.3.1 From systematic reflection to solving problems**

My critical reflections commenced before I embarked on this research study, when I noticed the problems faced by my students, and attempted to put the existing theories into practice in my class. At this stage, although I did not write down my reflections, the occurrence of critical incidents--unexpected or problematic situations--occurred during my teaching which had constantly caught my attention in the classroom for a number of years. After I decided to conduct the present study, and while reviewing the related literature, I was overwhelmed by the plethora of theories relating to the teaching of reading. I questioned the theories and practice of teaching reading, as well as the conventional wisdom. Realising that teaching L2 reading was different from teaching in L1, I began my journey as a reflective practitioner.

Through self-reflection, I became increasingly aware that I was actually an interactive participant in a classroom together with my students; that is, I constantly had conversations with myself and with my students. Reflections gave me a sense of vision and purpose as I changed my actions after learning from experiences. Such reflections called for my own repositioning, which meant facing uncertainties and feeling confused and anxious for some time. Breaking familiar cycles was an essential part of my transformations as a reflective practitioner. When I recalled my own reflections, I was amazed at how far I had come.

Becoming a reflective practitioner was a process of discovery about my personal awareness while teaching. Writing a reflective journal gave me a space to

find personal meanings. I could express my frustrations, record my internal conflicts, note critical incidents, pose questions, name issues, identify relationships, observe patterns over time, and trace related themes. Such reflections led me to take action to solve problems.

#### **4.3.2 A novice researcher**

During the period of preparing my research design, I commented in my earliest journal that I was like Sherlock Holmes, solving mysteries (RR22/6/2012). As a novice researcher, I also noted that “action research can be scientific research. The research is systematic. A teacher researcher is like a doctor who knows the patient’s problems. He or she wants to investigate the patient’s reactions after the intervention” (RR27/6/2012).

I decided to work within the paradigm of practitioner action research because I was cognisant of my students’ avoidance of reading. In a regular ELL reading class, students found themselves reading excerpts of stories and answering questions to prepare for standardised exams. What was worrying was that the classroom instruction fell short of meeting students’ needs. Reading extracts and assigning more worksheets could not serve as a proxy for improving students’ language, let alone students’ motivation towards reading. My question was what the teacher should do to improve the situation.

The beginning of the journey was difficult because there was resistance from those who tended to consider all research should occur within the positivist paradigm, and grounded their stance in an asymmetrical relationship in terms of power accorded to practitioner action researchers. I first discovered Whitehead’s work on practitioner action research in his (1998) article about a doctoral student who did single action research in the 1990s, facing immeasurably unforeseen obstacles and challenges. It strongly resonated with me. It was at that time that I realised that qualitative research, as well as action research, still received resistance even in the 21st century. I remarked in my journal, “I can’t agree more with Jack Whitehead” (RR27/6/2012):

I see similar kinds of power relations at work in educational research, in the process described as “balkanisation” by Robert Donmoyer (1996) ...  
Balkanisation refers to the process in which different interest groups exclude forms of discourse different to their own, with little or no attempt to engage in creative, educational dialogues. (Whitehead, 1998a)

The “balkanisation” I encountered was my voice in relation to the proposal of the present study was suppressed by the chairperson from a different faculty who was not only shallow in practitioner action research, but also monopolized the conversation of those who were experts in the field. I refused to accept this form of rigid control over educational knowledge. I began to examine literature on practitioner-based forms of enquiry. This led me to a wealth of practitioner action research projects in different parts of the world - including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Ireland, Australia, and other Asian countries - with the aims of improving the quality of practitioners and their students’ learning. This form of research linked academic scholarship to professional development, and the process of enhancing the quality of pupils’ learning. There are also international networks for the sharing of practice which promote the ideas of teachers as educational theorists. To add the validity and legitimacy of knowledge claims, I had two debriefers to facilitate my research and provide me with feedback concerning the accuracy and completeness of my data collection and data analysis procedures.

### **4.3.3 Debriefing**

My meetings with my debriefer, Dr Puyuk, started right at the beginning of the study. He enquired whether I reflected critically on what I did and whether I could provide authentic evidence to support my claim. I brought up my concern about the problem of having multiple data sources and wondered how I would be able to manage them. He advised me that a case study such as the present project had to be conducted in depth (Appendix N). All the recordings had to be transcribed in order to make me aware of my own bias. My follow-up action was:

#88

[Since] I record my own private speech each time I enter the class, [and] I have a reflective journal, I should type my reflections instead of writing them. This will make my work easier later on. I become clearer and I need to transcribe the audio-recordings that I make during the lessons. I will listen to my recording and then I will transcribe immediately after each lesson. My reflective journal will be stored in Nvivo which means I will key in the computer. (DF7/12/2012)

At the outset, I planned to select three participants from each level of engagement; that is, disengaged, apathetic, emergent and engaged, totalling 12 participants all together. I never exactly thought of when and how to select the participants that I had in mind for close study. Through verbalising my thoughts with my debriefer, I became more decisive about when to identify the 12 students I had in mind. My intended action was recorded below:

#89

The selection will be in Phase 1 while students are doing the second or third story. The criteria for selecting will be based on what I observe during lessons (my reflective log and recordings), students' reflective logs and my recordings of the group discussions. (DF7/12/2012)

#### **4.3.4 Problems faced and challenges I overcame**

As a novice action researcher, one of the problems I encountered was my confusion over some research terminology. The first few terms I came across were “theory”, “conceptual framework”, “ontology”, “epistemology” and a whole gamut of other terms. There was also a lack of clarity in underlying philosophical paradigms and research methods. Nevertheless, it was important for me to debunk the myth of these specialized terms.

Although I collected data systematically and attempted to follow the action research cycles, to a certain extent, I was initially unable to realise the full potential of action research. For instance, I did not fully know how and what to

reflect upon particularly during my initial attempts at being reflective in my research practice. To me, being reflective was peripheral. Often, my reflections were based on what I could see and observe. I just reflected on things that interested me, overlooking other incidents that needed my attention. This probably stemmed from the fact that I did not clearly understand what constituted self-reflection. Instead of reflecting, I might just describe issues, ideas and events. Much of my knowledge about self-reflection came from the literature. In terms of the rigour required in action research, at times I fell short of thoroughly analysing and carefully monitoring both my personal beliefs and my instructional behavior. Nevertheless, I learned many lessons about what it means to be a researcher.

My intention was to collect as much data as possible from all the students in the class. However, I was unable to do so because of absenteeism on certain days. I had to adapt to the practice context and look out for participants from whom I could collect most of the data, and these students also had to be a representative sample of the four different categories of engagement (disengaged, apathetic, emergent and engaged). Other than students' absenteeism, which was beyond my control, there was a time that the data collected were inadequate due to my own weaknesses as recorded in my reflective journal below.

#90

I find my own weakness. I have not given them enough time to complete a task (RR19/12/2013)

Students were not able to complete an assigned task because the time was too short. My estimation of time was inaccurate, and it took me a few sessions of class time to realise that students required a considerable amount of time to finish their work. Although I was haphazard at the beginning because of my inexperience in research, I learned to be a better researcher throughout the course of my research.

### 4.3.5 Memoing

My memoing started during my data collection process. Originally, I used NVivo to write memos. I dated all the memos. Memoing permitted me to take a reflective stance in relation to the research setting, participants and data under study. It clarified my thinking on the research topic, provided a mechanism for the articulation of assumptions and subjective perspectives about the topic of my research. Memo was not the term I used at the beginning. I used labels such as 'my thoughts', 'reflections' and 'field notes'. However, at a later stage, I changed to 'Reflect' for easy documenting. I had used far too many terms to designate the same thing, which was really my reflection.

During the data analysis process, I used Microsoft OneNote to memo. The software had the function of recording each entry with a date and time, and this was useful and practical. I wrote the key words or phrases on the title headings, and entered my hunches, questions, ideas or reflections as they crossed my mind. This way, I could ensure that I retained ideas that would otherwise have been lost. I even had my concept maps drawn to indicate what I knew about a topic. One of my earliest concept mappings was of my initial themes, which were scattered all over the page. At times, after reading some literature, I had intuitions and insights, and I noted these down in OneNote. I also made comments on the journals or books I referred to, and recorded the references in the EndNote. OneNote software also allowed me to pull out the pages fairly quickly when I needed them to support my findings. Some of what I have written might not be useful, but it was never a waste because it was useful at a later stage. The following extract provides an example of this:

#91

What is the relationship between the quality and the quantity of students' entries? What is the relationship between the quality of entries and their exam scores? Does this show something? (MM26/6/2013)

I was not sure of the relationship between the quality and the quantity of students' writing. After some time, I noted in my memo that:

#92

I have a hunch that marks (that is, the quantitative data) do not reflect the degree of engagement, especially for students who are at the opposite ends of the spectrum; outcomes that are unrealised in standard quantitative approaches in engagement. Qualitative data shows a more accurate picture when our study is in a natural setting. It reveals students' levels of engagement as we triangulate data from different sources. (MM5/7/2013)

Through memoing, it appeared that I was able to articulate, explore, think, and challenge my interpretations when examining data.

#### **4.3.6 Analysis while collecting data**

During the data collection period, I actually thought of analysing the data only at the end of the study. However, in our first meeting, my debriefer, Dr Puyuk encouraged me to start writing in order to see the connection between the data collected and the research questions. At that point I transcribed and transferred the data to NVivo and began making memos right from the start of the study.

As a novice researcher, ensuring rigour when analysing voluminous data collected from different sources appeared overwhelming, although I knew that my research was interpretative. A comment from my debriefer that this interpretative study was leading towards a grounded theory reaffirmed my understanding of interpretative study. Also in the first meeting, he shared his experience of doing research, and that provided me with new insights into my own research, such as writing immediately to see the connection between data sets (Df7/12/2013). He also showed me the initial coding of his interview data and, subsequently, his emerging themes. Most notably, he stressed the fact that, to make a claim, the research must be "in depth" (Df 7/12/2013).

When 18 students were reluctant to be recorded during data collection, I consulted Dr Puyuk who urged me to pay attention to students' facial expressions and gestures and to obtain feedback from other members in the same group during my observation. Following this, I changed my strategy. Because of my debriefer's advice, I was able to analyse the data collected through observation.

#93

“I will record what I observe. I will stand on the corner or near the group to observe.” (DF9/1/2013)

I communicated my emerging themes pertaining to the learners' reading component, to Dr Puyuk. His questions in his emails made me consider how I could justify the themes, and provided a basis for refinement of my analysis. He urged me to add two more columns to the original codebook (Table 12); one for my initial themes and the other for the processes or methods used. I vacillated for a period of time, and took cognizance of consolidating the information in the table. The table was in fact the codebook I developed throughout the course of data analysis process.

Table 12 Initial Coding

<p><b>Evidence of positive engagement</b></p> <p>Independent learning</p>	<p>Students show initiative and take charge of their learning.</p>	<p>(30 Jan 2013 Sotto Voce) A girl is looking up difficult words in the dictionary. Another girl is drawing lines and circling words. Another girl is using an electronic dictionary.</p> <p>They are helping one another to understand the word Scotsman. They look up the meaning. The girls in this group take out their dictionaries together and look up the meaning.</p>
<p>Understanding</p>	<p>Comprehending a story after retelling or discussing with peers in a group</p>	<p>(Student 10) It helps me to stay focused in the story I have been retelling.</p> <p>22 March 2013 (Interview) (Student 20) To me the group discussion does help me to understand more the story line the story because some of the <i>jalan cerita</i> (story line), I do not really understand it. Then my friends my other friends help me to understand. So it's good.</p>

Table 13 below illustrates the result of my meeting with my debriefer. It was comprehensively refined in the process of my data analysis.

Table 13 Data Analysis (Codebook) Refined

Themes	Descriptions	Categories (*categories are italicised; those supported by data are underlined)	Initial coding	Methods
Behavioural engagement	Behavioural engagement involves observable behaviour. Students are seen to be engaged in terms of their effort, persistence, initiative, concentrated attention, and help-seeking	<i>Active participation</i>  <i>Initiative</i>  <i>Seeking understanding</i>  <i>Assisting one another</i>	<i>Independent learning</i>	Subsumed all observable behaviours under behavioural engagement
Cognitive engagement	Cognitive engagement is clarified as attention to related texts and effort in analysing and synthesising readings, as demonstrated in discussion messages.	<i>Passing judgment on characters</i>  <i>Reasoning</i>  <i>Thinking critically</i>  <i>Giving opinions</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	Collapsed students' understanding, analytical, and interpretative abilities under cognitive engagement

#### 4.3.7 Systematic coding

As a part of the analysis of emic representations of an action researcher, I started building a codebook and analysing the data concurrently. However, after doing it for some time, I found that my analysis stagnated. Since I was still at the beginning stage, I had not fully read all the data from various sources analytically. I put my codebook aside and continued in-depth analysis by reading all the data sets again to identify patterns, and triangulating the data collection by comparing findings from different data sources in order to get the best understanding of the issue under investigation.

I returned to build the codebook again when I had a list of the categories emerging from students' own terms and semantics to guide the construction of codes. At a later stage, I adopted structural or index coding; that is, by coding the

text according to the research questions and slotting the sub-themes I discovered under the main themes. Through this, similar code categories were merged and collapsed. Likewise, recurrent subthemes were also subsumed into their related categories. Although the codebook had been reviewed and revised numerous times, it was still in an embryonic form (see Section 5.8.5.1). The linkage between my thinking patterns and the coding led me to develop the categories discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3.8 Emerging categories: Getting inside the heads of my participants**

As a beginning researcher, my qualitative inquiry was to understand a phenomenon of interest from the perspective of my students. The language problem of my students' reading engagement had motivated the present study. Through my choice of methodological tools (students' reflective journals, recording of group discussions, student interview, my researcher's journal and recordings of private speech), I gathered multiple data sources and triangulated across datasets.

At the beginning of the journey, from an emic perspective, I expected to see some noticeable changes emerging in my students' reading attitudes as a result of the intervention. I learned that each of the six participants had his or her own traits, and that students who varied greatly in their reading engagement level had individual needs. For example, Students 6 and 13 were both at opposite ends of the scale. Student 6 started off as an emergent reader (Level 3), while student 13 was a disengaged reader (Level 1). Student 6 was enthusiastic about learning, but he often thought he was incapable. He repeated several times that he could understand more if the text was accompanied by illustrations. Throughout the study, I found that he was actually competent. He chose an authentic story in the final round and was able to understand. Interestingly, he could even give his critical literary stance. In fact, he could perform better than he thought.

Student 13, in contrast, displayed his resistance towards reading at the beginning. His reading time span was the shortest among the rest of his peers. In the midst of reading the text silently at the first few rounds, he would look up to scrutinize my face intermittently. His less receptive attitude was the most obvious

in the group discussion where he made a lot of noise to distract the others from talking. The confession he made “*I’m not so interested in reading. It’s boring. I’m not good at the English language*” (FR22/3/2013) - revealed his lack of confidence and his lack of interest in reading.

Many of the ELLs in the present research context were similar to Students 6 and 13. There was a mismatch in their personal judgment of their own abilities and the task they had undertaken. Their negative self-efficacy made them feel that they were not completely in control of the learning situation and thus they did not believe that they had the ability to succeed. Their motivation was affected. They needed different levels of scaffolding to reassure them that their weaknesses could be strengthened so that they could, ultimately, stand on their own. Student 6 needed some help to read more challenging texts. Until his perceived self-efficacy changed, he continued to be lacking in confidence. In a similar vein, Student 13 needed to receive more thorough scaffolding in order to read an elementary level text. When he achieved some success, he would become a reader. Getting into the heads of my students such as Students 6 and 13, was a revelation, and it empowered me to help them to transform into real readers.

As I journeyed from a novice researcher to an emergent researcher and then to an experienced researcher, I gained valuable insights into myself as a researcher, and this was an essential part of the research process. My reflections and my past experiences had led me to try different teaching strategies and approaches. I discovered deep meanings in human experiences and feelings, which could not be represented by numbers. Though this research, I obtained a more holistic picture of the issue at hand, that is, reading engagement of ELLs. Using a variety of research methodologies - such as the basic case study, action research, interpretative method, and grounded theory - opened my eyes to the ways in which qualitative research could promote student learning.

The data of my own private speech recordings was the most important; without this I would not have become aware of the assumptions and beliefs that initially impeded my plans for the students. My intention was to encourage my students to express themselves. Paradoxically, at times I was the one who silenced my students’ voices. I realised that the worded question prompts, which I thought my students could understand, were in fact incompatible with their proficiency

levels. Without taking time to reflect deeply, I would not have known that I was so teacher-centred, and was therefore undermining my students' credibility.

I embarked on this research journey with the aim of finding a solution for my students' language predicament. Little did I know that I was also contributing to my students' weaknesses and exacerbating their problems. Had I not recorded my private speech and reflected on it, I would not have been able to capture these problematic incidents, which were recursive in my teaching profession. I was informed by my own private speech which consisted of my interactions with my students, my verbalisations of my thoughts, and the critical incidents I had encountered.

As an action researcher, I engaged in two ways: I made the action happen and I stood back from the action and reflected on it. By triangulating the data, and through thick description, the problem that once baffled me became intelligible. Through this qualitative paradigm, I came to understand the implications of learners' individual experiences, and to explore the avenues for creating positive change. As my research literacy developed, I moved from being a teacher to being a teacher researcher.

#### **4.3.9 Creating a grounded theory**

Since the primary goal of my research was to understand a particular phenomenon, I was led by my assumptions to the choice of an appropriate research methodology. I adopted a phenomenological framework to explore and describe the particular issue of reading engagement. The appropriate methods for data collection permitted me to collect richer data that provided me with more complete answers for my research questions than a single data collecting tool. My research design allowed flexibility and practicality in terms of application. I learned how to overcome the initial difficulties I encountered. Allocating specific time for teaching and research permitted me to collect data systematically. My initial fear of having to find a balance between data collection and teaching was therefore addressed.

I conducted the study in an ethical manner, complying with the standards set by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Waikato. I submitted the ethics application twice, and amended and addressed the points

raised by the Committee. I adhered strictly to the criteria. Guided by the informed consent form, I was careful to avoid personal preferences when selecting participants for recording and interviewing. The emerging categories generated a framework for building a grounded theory. It started with raw data which I collected through recordings of students' discussions, reading their reflective journals, final reflections, an interview, my private speech, and my reflective journal. Through open coding (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), these data were analysed as potential indicators of phenomena which formed concepts. *Active participation, passing judgement, taking initiative, reasoning and assisting one another* were concepts which I encountered as I read the data. I labelled these particular phenomena. When I compared subsequent incidents with the first ones, I gave them the same label if they appeared to resemble the same phenomena.

Concepts are the basic units of data analysis upon which a theory is developed. Categories are higher and more abstract than concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). They are generated through the same analytic process, used to lower-level concepts, of making comparisons in order to highlight similarities and differences (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I compared all the concepts and developed connections between a category and its sub-categories (selective coding). I continued with the examples presented earlier. When I spotted the similarities while coding, I realised that they represented a similar process, even though the concepts were different in forms. Hence, I grouped *active participation, showing initiative, and assisting one another* as the same concepts, which formed the more abstract category of *behavioural engagement*.

The generalised relationship between a concept, a category and between discrete categories formed propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The four different dimensions of engagement (behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic) were categories. These categories were interrelated and integrated to build a theoretical framework. The process of building a grounded theory was followed by several procedures, evaluated against credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Systematic reflection, debriefing, and comparing literature helped establish both relationships and credibility.

The use of memos enabled me to systematically keep track of all the categories, ideas, hunches, and generative questions that evolved from the

analytical process. Writing memos formed an integral part of doing grounded theory.

I read my data repeatedly, looking for other concepts and categories to choose cases to fill theoretical categories (theoretical samplings). This was an iterative process until I could not see the connections between data sets (theoretical saturation). The set of findings could then be generalised to a grounded theory, inductively derived from the study. Therefore, there was a reciprocal relationship between data collection, data analysis and theory building. This led me to compare the emergent theory with extant literature comparisons with conflicting frameworks as well as similar frameworks. The data which contributed to the building of the theory in the present study will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.4 Summary of findings**

This chapter has presented the findings of the present study in three main sections: students' engagement in the interaction context (Section 4.1); my reflective practice and development as an action researcher (Section 4.2); and my process of learning to research (Section 4.3). Four main themes emerged (behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic engagement), describing students' reading engagement in the ELL context. Each of the themes derives from all the different data sources.

On the interaction plane, students were behaviourally engaged. They actively took part in assigned activities, seeking help from friends and demonstrating spontaneity in their learning. However, the reverse was also true when students lacked interest in performing reading-related tasks.

Guided by the question prompts, students could co-construct meaning and engage with the text cognitively. Interestingly, their production exceeded the prompts given, extending their interactions over the texts. From the analysis, it was found that emotional engagement could sustain or negate behavioural engagement. Students' emotions were demonstrated in two aspects: in the stories they read and in group discussions.

Students' agency was also recorded as a form of engagement. Peer scaffolding was the indicator of students' agentic engagement. As a reflective practitioner, my reflections came in three different forms: in-action, on-action and for-action reflections. The process was one of personal awareness discovery. My journey from a novice researcher to an emergent researcher to an experienced researcher was invaluable, unfolding the researcher's self of a classroom practitioner.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Summary of the study**

This study focused on increasing student reading engagement with texts through an intervention designed to empower students to become engaged readers. Another purpose of the study was to investigate whether reflective practice as an action researcher would empower me in my professional development.

The data were collected over a period of twelve weeks, from 3 December 2012 to 22 March 2013, at a public university in Eastern Malaysia. Participants, an intact class of 41 undergraduate students, worked with me (the teacher-researcher), for a total of 36 contact hours. In the first phase, the participants received explicit instruction and teacher modelling of reading engagement tasks and activities. In the second phase, they worked independently, applying the strategies they had learned in the previous reading activities. The data included participants' reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions and a group interview, audio-recordings of my oral comments (p. 62) during lessons, and my written reflective research journal. Audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim. These data were subjected to a process of grounded analysis, as described in Chapter 3.

### **5.2 Outline of the chapter**

The chapter consists of two main parts: the first addresses issues related to the learners and the second considers issues related to the researcher. In both cases, reference will be made to relevant studies reviewed in Chapter 2. In the first part, I discuss the interactive opportunities that enhance reading engagement (5.3). This is followed by the multidimensional construct of reading engagement (5.4): behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and agentic engagement. I will provide a detailed analysis how agencies led to peer scaffolding. In Section 5.5, a scaffolded form of sustained silent reading, which led ELLs to reading engagement will be highlighted. Then in Section 5.6, the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE), a new approach I

designed to address reading avoidance among ELLs, will be discussed. The second part of the chapter discusses the empowerment and professional development of the teacher (5.7). Action research (5.8) is examined next, and in Section 5.9, I will explore the insights I gained through action research. The final section (5.10) summarises the chapter.

## Part I

I will adopt the reading model of Freebody (1992), and Luke and Freebody (1999), to interpret the findings about student engagement. Most of the studies on reading engagement have used standard quantitative approaches (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Since the data sources of the present study were qualitative, my intention was to identify the level of engagement of my students in relation to Luke and Freebody's (1999) model. This model attempts to incorporate the diverse approaches to teaching literacy, and shift the focus from trying to find a single suitable method for teaching reading to a multi-method framework, which can be used by teachers to guide students in constructing meaning and analysing texts.

Table 14 Freebody (1992) and Luke and Freebody's (1999) Reading Model

Code breaker (coding competence)
Meaning maker (semantic competence)
Text user (pragmatic competence)
Text critic (critical competence)

In this model, reading is not a solitary act. Rather, it is suggested that reading takes place in a social context, is undertaken by human agents, and its practices are substantive, visible, dynamic and fluid (see Section 2.6). Luke and Freebody (1999) suggest that effective literacy draws on four dimensions of reading (see Table 13) all of which require explicit teaching and development at all points in learning literacy (Freebody, 2013). The purpose of this model was to advance the knowledge in the field in terms of student reading engagement via an intervention what I have subsequently termed Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE). This will be explained in Section 5.6.

### **5.3 Interactive opportunities enhance reading engagement**

In this section, I will explain reading engagement in relation to the interactional opportunities provided. The discussion serves to address the first research question:

*To what extent does a range of interaction opportunities enhance the motivation and empowerment of Malaysian ELLs to engage with literary texts?*

This question concerns oral retelling and group discussion activities which provided the impetus for reading engagement and a platform for interaction to take place.

#### **5.3.1 Retelling**

In the present study, retelling was an approach which the participants had not previously experienced. The students selected from a range of the stories I had prepared for them, and retold them in a group that had read the same story.

The basic rationale for retelling after reading the story was to assist ELLs to develop collaborative comprehension skills. Research suggests that promoting interaction and discussion among students during reading instruction influences positive reading engagement (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012; Ivey & Johnson, 2013). In such group interactions, individual comprehension problems were allowed, and even pushed, to come to the surface and then to be solved. Interlocutors in the present study negotiated the meaning of difficult words and phrases found in a text or which occurred in their oral interactions (see Extract 22, Section 4.1.2). Through negotiation of meaning (M. H. Long, 1991), these learners came to comprehend input that had previously been above their current level of language proficiency. Comprehension problems were treated following an individual learner's signs of non-comprehension. The discussion was finely tuned to their level of proficiency. Hence, retelling bridged the gap between the linguistic level of the text and the learners' understanding of it. Students' retelling performance, which provided evidence for the essential role of reconstruction in reading comprehension, is in line with the findings of a study by Lin (2010)

whose participants used their own words to retell the story and related it to what they already knew. In the present study, some students reported that retelling helped them “to stay focused on the story” and the discussion taught them “to hear other opinions about the story, to share ideas with friends and exchange opinions [with] each other” (R2/1/2013S10). This verbal reconstruction that related to their personal experiences, increased their comprehension of the text (see Section 4.1.1)

Most notably, retelling in the present study became a channel for networking, sharing information and supporting other evidence. The bond built in these groups added to the students’ sense of belonging to the class as members of a learning community. This sense of relatedness thus increased the likelihood of initial reading engagement. In the present study, social activity was of paramount importance to the promotion of engaged reading, as it permitted students to interact with members in their group. The present findings correspond to those in a recent study by Ivey and Johnson (2013), in which students talked about books with peers and teachers through student-initiated small group discussions. Ivey and Johnson (2013) argue that socially meaningful talk and active listening led to a sense of relatedness, and of being appreciated and understood by others. It is important to note that the negotiation of meaning in the present study occurred within a context of collective negotiation. Interpreting the text was completely the students’ doing; this concurs with the findings of previous studies which claim reading is essentially a social phenomenon (Cox & Boyd-Batstone, 2009; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Williams et al., 2008). Much of the peer scaffolding in the present study (Section 5.4.4) in the present study occurred during retelling and group discussions.

### **5.3.2 Group discussion**

All too often, Malaysian ELLs did not engage in dialogic exploration due to crowded classrooms and test-driven instruction. Communications in the ELL class to a large extent were directed by the teacher, and guided (but free-flowing) discussion of fictional stories was rare. In most of the literature-reviewed, the teacher had assumed a leadership role, determining specific questions and probes (see Section 1.3). The student-led discussion in the present study is less teacher controlled and could thus encourage students to engage in social thinking and

exploratory talk (Mercer, 1995, pp. 89-118), leading, in turn to a deeper understanding of the literature (Almasi, 1995; Eeds & Wells, 1989). Peer-to-peer exchanges were common in the present study, despite the fact that the questions were devised by the teacher.

Group discussion in the present study was an authentic literary task related to the story that students had read. This approach is predicated on the idea that tasks that distribute meaningful student cognition and result in the construction of new meanings would be considered more authentic than tasks that simply require extraction and recall of information. Thus, authentic tasks have some personal relevance and require some ownership or control on the part of the learner (Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011). Unlike Whitney's (2010) study, the students in the present study did not report that they did not know what to talk about to keep the conversation going. This, in part, was due to the guided question prompts which were provided. Despite the fact that there was no teacher-led discussion, these ELLs used the guided questions as stimuli to write about the text in their logs. Writing their thoughts enabled them to re-examine, rethink, and recycle their ideas, as suggested by Folse and Ivone (2002). Such internal responses took place in student's individual understanding of, and interaction with, the text, and these can be seen as dialogical relationships with the characters (Ivey & Johnson, 2013). Their subsequent dialogical relationships with others within the group enhanced and changed their understandings (Gambrell et al., 2011; Ivey & Johnson, 2013; Malloy & Gambrell, 2011), allowing them to express their personal responses and authentic purposes for learning. When one student shared his or her views, the shared thoughts tended to stimulate others in the group, resulting in the collaborative co-construction meaning of texts, and the formation of new interpretations. I was rarely directly involved since the students were advancing their discussions and managing turn-taking and topic shift by themselves. In this respect, the flow (van Lier, 1996, p. 195) of discussion was maintained by the students themselves. Based on these findings, it is argued that ELLs who are engaged in more dialogic interactions in a social setting are able to focus more on making reasoned judgments, and freely interacting with each other, in their search for new meanings and understandings. The findings contribute to the body of research on L2 reading that suggests that interactional opportunities, such as retelling and group discussion, support the four dimensions of ELLs'

reading engagement (see Section 4.1). This implies that collaborative involvement in an activity leads to increased comprehension and engagement, and made reading a rewarding personal journey.

Although it is tempting to conclude that the effect of such interactional opportunities has positively changed students' reading attitudes, this conclusion may be overly simplistic, given the fact that not all the participants were able to articulate their personal and critical responses thoroughly, nor was their growth consistent -- as reflected in their engagement scores. Nonetheless, most participants attempted to take a position on the issues raised in the stories, and supported it with reasons and evidence. There is evidence that some participants tried to give their reasons to questions pertinent to the entire story and deliberate together with their peers. In addition, they seemed able to extend the story world and relate it to other complex issues relevant to them, engaging in forming their own judgment and responding to each other's reasoning.

Also, there is evidence of these learners repairing and reformulating their own utterances, and assisting each other to find the correct form and to express meaning more clearly. The data also indicate that a number of learners supported each other, showed interest in what their interlocutors were saying and encouraged them to persevere. Notably, they were sharing their meanings while monitoring and modifying their own and each other's utterances, minimizing overt communication breakdowns, and frustration. From a sociocultural perspective, such exchanges show that ELLs in the present study relied on one another in order to proceed. Interactive tasks as social events led learners to be mutually helpful, cooperative and interdependent. Such events may seem to be merely examples of a form-focused learning. Focus-on-form overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they ensue casually in lessons whose main focus is on meaning or communication (M. H. Long, 1991), yet, they are crucial to ELLs' communicative language learning opportunities (Donato, 1994).

In the present study, as students meaningfully explored issues in the text, they crisscrossed the four constructs of reading engagement, making their reading multi-dimensional- behavioural, emotional, cognitive and agentic. In the next part, I will discuss the four constructs of reading engagement in the same order as they were presented in the previous chapter. Although I present behavioural, cognitive,

emotional, and agentic engagement separately, all the four types of engagement overlap with each other.

## **5.4 The multidimensional construct of reading engagement**

This section discusses the four constructs of reading engagement: behavioural engagement (5.4.1), cognitive engagement (5.4.2), emotional engagement (5.4.3), and agentic engagement (5.4.4).

### **5.4.1 Behavioural engagement**

In the current study, when students were actively participating in oral retelling, by showing their initiative to check information, or by finding the meanings of words (see Extracts 4 and 5, Section 4.1.1), their goals were to understand the material and master the content (Fredricks et al., 2004). When their understanding was impeded, they sought assistance from me and/or from their peers. They seemed to be engaged on this threshold of reading. However, a closer examination of the data indicates that some were at the in-between stage of breaking the codes and making meaning (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

The findings of the present study pertaining to behavioural engagement differ from those in studies of first language users by Guthrie et al. (2013), and A. Ryan and Pintrich (1998). Guthrie et al. (2013) conceptualized students' reading engagement in behavioural terms, consisting of actions and intentions to interact with text for the purpose of understanding and learning. They used the term *dedication* to refer to reading with effort, purpose, and intention to learn, which they measured using questionnaires. As shown in the findings of the present study, although some ELLs were behaviourally engaged, and often dedicated, they were in actual fact comprehending the text, which is far from deep engagement. In accordance with Luke and Freebody's (1999) model, these students were just semantically competent (code breaking and meaning making), and as a result cannot be conceived as engaged reading. Their expending effort in the behaviour of reading only signified their initial engagement with text.

Behavioural engagement itself provides very limited information about engaged reading. A. Ryan and Pintrich (1998) reported that low-efficacy and low-achieving students thought that by asking for help, others such as teachers and peers would think they were unable. The weak students in the current study did not think that they were incapable; on the contrary, they sought help from me or their friends whenever they encountered problems, such as unknown words or difficulties in comprehending a phrase or a paragraph. So far, there is little or no empirical evidence in the literature to support the connection between behavioural engagement and the degree of engaged reading. Results from the present study appear to suggest that trying to understand a piece of writing is evidence of agentic engagement (see Section 5.4.4) rather than behavioural engagement.

#### **5.4.2 Cognitive engagement**

In their study on the motivation to read, Applegate and Applegate (2010) found that the level of intellectual challenge and opportunities for deep thinking impelled their students to engage cognitively in the activity of reading. In the present study, students were required to give opinions, reason, critique, make connections, and offer interpretations on the texts they read, all of which are cognitive aspects of engagement. Rather than merely being language learners, the students took the role of *text users* (Luke & Freebody, 1999). Students responded to the text in a personal way by reflecting on its influence on them or their own friends. Because the participants incorporated thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex issues, they can be said to have cognitively invested in their learning (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 82; B. Norton, 1995, 2010, 2011).

It is generally assumed that ELLs' English proficiency is a *sine qua non* for reading engagement since students' limitation in English is often seen as a stumbling block precluding reading engagement. Like Kuo's (2009) study (see Section 2.8), one student in the present study also confided in his final reflection that he wanted to improve his marks and not just learn the strategies to read (see Student 36, Section 4.1.5). This is in part due to the incorporation of both reading and writing components to the critical literacy instruction as well as conventional literacy such as teaching the writing skills, teaching vocabulary and discussing

grammatical mistakes. In the present study, some students consulted me about grammatical issues as they were writing entries in their journal or during their discussion in a group, an example of student-initiated focus on form (Ellis 2002). This perhaps was the time they needed language support to perform the task. In short, they used the language meaningfully to achieve cognitively-focused tasks.

Consistent with other research on critical literacy and ELLs (Ko & Wang, 2013; Lau, 2013), irrespective of their proficiency level, some students in the present study became effective text critics. The results of the present study showed further that a degree of critical literacy can be introduced to ELLs with modest levels of competence. From this perspective, even struggling readers could cognitively process texts within their proficiency level (Fraser, 1998; Huang, 2011; Kuo, 2009; Reade, 1998; Wallace, 2003). Given the opportunity, ELLs, like L1 users, may not only make connections with their own experiences, but can also offer interpretations. One possible explanation for this finding is that when the strategies of responding to a text are explicitly instructed, and the explanations given are lucid, students appear to gain confidence and become more competent. The students in this intervention tended to apply the strategies they had learned, such as using the guided question prompts, as their primary means of questioning. Research has shown that when an intervention focused on helping students to be more strategic, desired changes in students' reading resulted (Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa, & Madden, 2010; Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, Rintamaa, & Buckman, 2013; Edmonds et al., 2009; Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake, 2008). The fact that some of these ELLs exhibited strategy use similar to proficient L1 readers is a promising sign that they were becoming more active, engaged readers. This finding is important in that it suggests that if a text is an appropriately selected story within the learner's linguistic level, even less proficient students can enjoy the pleasure of reading and in turn become able to critique the text.

A second factor to be considered is the presence of social interactivity, whereby students used their social relationships to support, co-construct and distribute their understandings and interpretations of texts. One consistent finding in the present study was students' interactions with the others appeared to boost their reading engagement. The finding was aligned with that of Whitney (2010) and Huang (2011), documenting that social interaction had positive effects on students' reading engagement. The participants of the present study tended to

respond to and critique the text, implying that they could think critically and engage more than superficially with the text, consistent with the study by Huang (2011) The findings of this study suggest that despite being introduced to critical literacy for the first time, ELLs were able to read critically.

The ELLs in the present study did not seem to have remained at the stage of literal reading comprehension, often regarded as merely information extraction or low-level inferencing. Instead, they responded to the texts by addressing open-ended questions which required them to think and make personal responses to what they were reading. Set A questions led ELLs to use their experiences to construct meaning in response to the text, while Set B questions solicited higher-level critical thinking. The aim was to develop learners who were capable of critiquing what they read, and not to take the texts as neutral and beyond criticism. Only when students understand the content, are they likely to have the motivation for reading. This is in line with what Tabata-Sandom (2013) reported, in that: “The more [less proficient students] understand a text, the more they enjoy and like it”. The results also broaden the theoretical notion of Guthrie and colleagues by showing that text readability promotes ELLs’ reading engagement.

Guthrie and colleagues’ earlier empirical studies were mainly conducted with native speaking learners of English and in the domains of reading science texts. In their more recent work on adolescents, Guthrie et al. (2013) briefly mention the significance of readable texts in their reading programme Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI). The major premise of their current framework on engagement is behavioural engagement in the form of dedication, and their definition of engagement seems to merely mean the achievement of literal comprehension. If that is the case, then it is insufficient to help ELLs to more fully engage with texts.

In the present study, comprehension of text preceded ELLs’ motivation. Meaning construction propels ELLs to continue their reading. Readable texts seem to be the first pathway to the development of cognitive engagement in the ELL context. If the story is interesting, students are intrinsically motivated to complete reading the entire text. Findings from the present study revealed students’ boredom and frustration resulted in losses in their behavioural engagement. This finding is similar to the study by Skinner et al. (2008): positive emotions reflected in students’ effortful involvement, and at the same time, emotional disaffection,

especially boredom, led to students' withdrawal from their behavioural participation in academic activities over time. Students' negative behaviour engagement is likely to be related to their emotional engagement. Hence, disengagement in relation to their emotional engagement will now be discussed.

### **5.4.3 Emotional engagement**

Consistent with other studies, the reading motivation levels of male students in the present study tended to be lower than those of females (Durik, Vida, & Eccles, 2006; Gambrell & Marinak, 2010). Some of the male students in the present study showed reading 'avoidance' (Guthrie & Klauda, 2013) - a negative form of engagement, including rejecting, evading, minimizing effort, and disconnecting from reading tasks (Guthrie et al., 2013).

Concurring with Guthrie et al. (2013) and Reeve (2012), the data in the present study suggest that reading engagement may be indicated by positive qualities, such as a student's enthusiasm, devotion of effort and active participation. When the chosen story was interesting (Cho et al., 2010), and the language was not excessively challenging, students' emotions tended to be positive and they showed they were capable of doing the reading tasks. In the present study, positive emotions correlated with effortful learning, which suggests students' high investment in their learning (see Section 2.10.2.1).

In the present study, reading a whole text tended to motivate ELLs to fuller engagement. Some students in the present study said that they understood the whole story after reading it more than once. One of the most essential ingredients of a complete text in Day and Bamfort's (1998) term is "complete-in-itself act of communication between author and audience" (p. 64). Findings from the present study do not concur with the study by Skinner et al. (2008) in that their students did not actually read whole texts. It seems plausible that reading short decontextualized passages requiring learners to practise certain linguistic items, often lack a genuine communicative intent and as a result fail to present ELLs with an authentic reading experience (Tabata-Sandom, 2013). This suggests that students' continuous reading of complete texts could increase their reading engagement.

#### **5.4.4 Agentic engagement**

As mentioned in the literature review (Section 2.9), a substantial body of research that has investigated reading engagement mainly emphasizes the impact that mono-directional flow of teachers' actions and instructions had on students' engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Attention seems to have focused on the role of the teachers to motivate students rather than on developing agency within the students themselves. I will discuss two modes of agency in the following subsections: Personal agency and collective agency.

##### **5.4.4.1 *Personal agency/self-efficacy***

The foundation of human agency is the extent of individual's beliefs in self-efficacy – thought patterns that are either self-aiding or self-hindering (Bandura, 1989). In a reading context, such as in the present study, when I moved the students towards greater learner autonomy, my role was that of a facilitator, rather than instructor or director of learning. By facilitation, I mean I actively paid attention to the learning atmosphere and tried to be also sensitive to the needs of the individual students, enabling them to take as much responsibility as possible for their learning (Underhill, 1999). Assuming that any learning experience is a two-way process with opportunities for both educator and learner to scaffold each other in their respective roles (Cross et al., 2006), I adjusted the level of assistance as students passed through phases towards mastery, offering explicit guidance in earlier phases, but gradually withdrawing aid as students become more competent in mastering tasks independently. In this way students' sense of personal agency developed, as did my own professional agency. When students regarded themselves as non-readers after experiencing some failures or difficulties, self-doubt may set in, and they perceived they were inefficacious. This perceived lack of competence within their belief system may well have affected their capabilities and performance behaviours (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

However, the crux of reading avoidance is neither the failures nor difficulties, but the speed of recovering from the setbacks affecting their self-efficacy. In the face of difficulties, resiliency of students' self-assurance and capabilities are crucial (Bandura, 1989). This could explain why some of the

participants in the present study revealed in their reflective writing that they perceived reading as a tedious activity, and if possible they avoided reading. Such negativity was partly due to their previous experience of solitary reading in conventional classes. In the face of failure, they lost faith in their capabilities. Over time, these impediments, adversities and frustrations weakened their personal efficacy. Beset by self-doubts about their reading capabilities, some of these ELLs slackened their efforts or aborted their attempts prematurely, and settled for mediocre solutions – avoiding reading all together. Negative self-efficacy beliefs are further exacerbated by the predominant activities or tasks such as reading aloud, reading short passages and answering comprehension questions. Low efficacy extends to other determinants, such as goals, aspirations, and outcome expectations. Unless these negative efficacy beliefs are addressed, struggling and apathetic readers will perceive reading erratically and pessimistically. The goals they set will be low, the efforts they put forth will be less, and their perseverance when faced obstacles will diminish. In the present study the six core participants, although situated at different categories of the engagement level at the beginning, all seemed to show some improvement in their self-efficacy after the intervention, CARE even though their score could not fully reflect their engagement in reading (see Section 4.1.5 and Extract 92, Section 4.3.5). What may have been understood to be resistance to reading could be alternatively viewed as their perceived low self-efficacy/agency. Most students in the present study increasingly took responsibility for their own learning curve, and became agents themselves. The findings of the present study are in line with those of Ivey and Johnson (2013) who suggested that students can be not only responsible for their own learning trajectory, but also for the actions of others. When they became personally absorbed in and committed to participation in learning and the mastery of a task to the level they were capable, their participation and experience led them to personal commitment and investment in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 82; B. Norton, 1995, 2010, 2011). This particular finding was consistent with Crick (2012), who refers to this kind of involvement as ‘deep’ engagement.

The findings of the present study show that students tended to move from personal agency/efficacy exercised individually to collective agency/efficacy. This will be discussed in the next section.

#### **5.4.4.2 *Collective agency/efficacy and peer scaffolding***

In the present study, I encouraged the students to take charge of their learning by forming their own groups and deciding on what language to use in the discussion. Their group also had to determine the amount of time to be spent on each question. These parts of the findings were congruent with those of Skinner et al. (2008), which suggested that teachers should provide autonomy support in the motivational dynamics of students' behavioural engagement. In the present study, when their autonomy was supported, students tended to show more agency. However, although Skinner et al. (2008) stressed the importance of autonomy and relatedness, they indicated that the support students experienced rested on the teacher's involvement: they did not mention the support from peers in a group. Similarly, Reeve (2012) also did not highlight the support students gained from their peers. While there was some evidence of negative behavioural engagement (see Section 4.1.1), most students appeared to work together through their social interaction and produced desired outcomes. Such group attainments are the key ingredients of collective efficacy suggesting student agency, achieved through collective actions. In the exercise of collective agency, they pooled their knowledge, skills, and resources, and act in concert to shape their future (Bandura, 2000).

Similarly, in the group discussions (see for example, Extract 35, Section 4.1.4), students seemed to speak up whenever they thought they could, and their communication flowed easily. Flow here refers to a subjective state of complete involvement (Fredricks et al., 2004), whereby individuals are so involved in an activity that they may lose awareness of time and space (Csikzentmihalyi, 1988). In this particular context of collaboration, the members comprised more capable ones, equal peers, or less capable peers (van Lier, 1996, 2004; Walqui, 2008). They mutually constructed a scaffold out of the discursive process of negotiating contexts of shared understanding often referred to as intersubjectivity (Rommetveit, 1985; van Lier, 1996).

Interestingly, and in contrast with findings by Ivey and Johnson (2013), the findings in the present study suggested that students' sense of agency in reading shifted away from personal agency. The group achievement in the present study was not only the product of shared knowledge and skills of the members,

but also of the interactive, coordinative and synergistic dynamics of their transaction, implying that agency is a function of both individual and collective cognition and effort. Like personal efficacy, the higher the collective efficacy, the higher the group's motivational investment in their undertakings, the stronger their perseverance when faced impediments and setbacks, and the greater their accomplishments (Bandura, 2000). This seems to suggest that efficacy of reading at the individual level has an important bearing on collective efficacy. In the present study, struggling readers with low self-efficacy invested sufficient effort, and persisted in reading despite having challenges and difficulties, primarily because they were supported by their peers in terms of learning reading strategies, and facilitating social interactions.

In the present study, peer scaffolding (Donato, 1994) occurred routinely as students worked together either in pairs or in groups on a task, providing evidence that ELLs are capable of providing guided support to their peers in ways analogous to teacher scaffolding.

The students in the present study shifted from comprehension to interpretation by working together with the language of the text and in dialogue with each other. This shift shows the collaborative agency of the readers during the reading process, and also suggests deep understanding and flexible use of knowledge – hallmarks of cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

## **5.5 Sustained silent reading and engagement**

Silent reading in the current study was not the main research focus, but it was one of the ways used to scaffold students towards reading engagement. The sustained silent reading (SSR) in the present study differed from what is normally practised in schools in Malaysia. Ample evidence is found in the data of the present study to show that SSR when *scaffolded* tended to have positive effects on ELLs, which aligns with the findings of Bryan et al. (2003) and Parr and Maguiness (2005).

This finding lends support to those of Reutzel, Fawson, and Smith (2008), who argued that students needed to be carefully coached into sustained silent reading. In the current study, only in the first phrase were the students coached

through the tasks addressed earlier. In the second phrase, students worked independently on tasks such as looking up words in the dictionary, learning how to select a text, being autonomous, retelling, journal writing and discussing in groups. Their main support and guidance came from social interactions with their peers, rather than the teacher because they had both place and opportunity to share and consult their friends instead of just reading on their own. These findings are consistent with previous research on the benefits of social interaction with reading motivation and engagement (Bryan et al., 2003; Whitney, 2010).

## **5.6 Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) in the ELL context**

This section seeks to address the second research question:

*What is the contribution to academic understanding of applying Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) such as the one in the study?*

### **5.6.1 Social interactions**

Social interaction was a crucial component of CARE. Regarding the relationship between engaged reading and social interaction, the data from the present study can be understood in the light of a socio-cultural view of motivation. Students socialize with others in a learning community to co-construct meanings (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). A socio-cultural perspective helps us view literacy as a project not just of reading but also of identity, and that the contexts that surround the readers delineate who is and who is not a reader, the objective of reading, the texts that are valued, and what counts as reading (McCarthy & Moje, 2002). Ample evidence is found in the data to show that growing engagement with the text of both reluctant and motivated students was due in part to the social interactivity contributing to reading engagement (Guthrie et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2008). By far the most recurring finding was that peers helped, and received help from, peers in their discussion groups, suggesting that when opportunities for

social interactions abound, students take leadership roles (as in peer-led discussion). Through working with language in group discussions, learning takes place (Certo, 2011). Considering social thinking –in Mercer’s (1995) terms, there is little evidence of disputational talk in the present research (for example Extract 21, Section 4.1.2). Students interacted in a competitive way, sometimes contradicting each other. However, when they continued the dialogue, they tended to share and build information in an uncritical way, which was evidence of cumulative talk. Examples of exploratory talk (Extracts 19, Section 4.1.2 and 37, Section 4.1.4) occurred when students tended to be behaviourally, cognitively and agentically engaged.

The question prompts were also an essential element in CARE. Having more opportunities to interact and through consistent use of these higher order discussion questions impacted on the students’ thinking skills. This encouraged their sharpening of their collective meaning-making abilities (Moll et al., 1992; Pacheco, 2010). At the opposite end of the spectrum, if collective meaning-making opportunities are narrowed (as often happens in ELL setting), their uptake of diverse world views, language abilities, and critical thinking are also reduced.

### **5.6.2 Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE)**

Figure 5 (see Appendix Q) following presents ELL framework on reading engagement: the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) that depicts classroom practices, particularly on ELLs’ reading engagement. The aim of building this framework is to describe how classroom practices, code breaking, meaning making, personal response (text user) and critical literacy (text critic) are interrelated.

Depicted in the graphic are the engagement processes in reading consisting of three main loops: Initial engagement, emergent engagement and deep engagement.

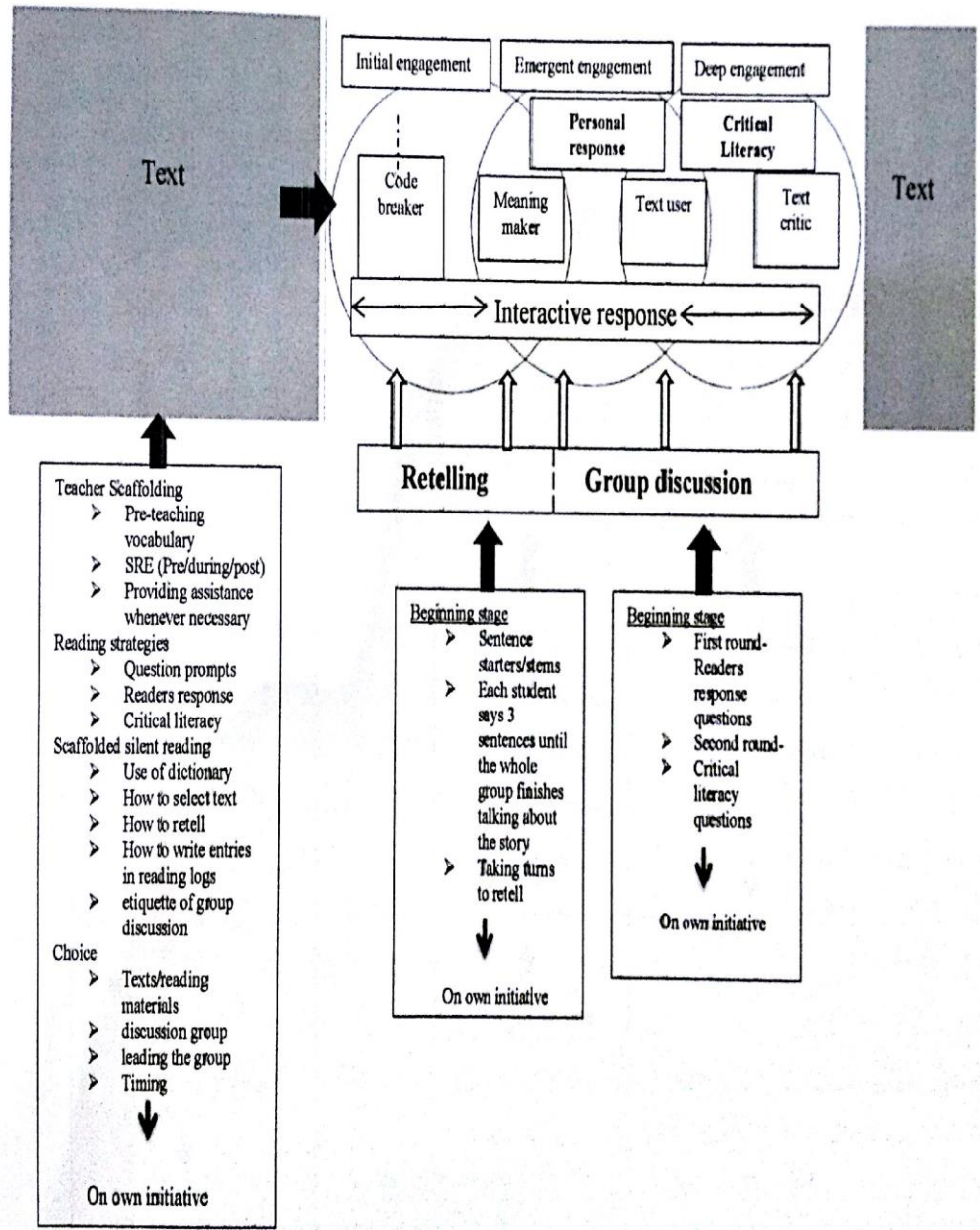


Figure 5 The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) for ELLs

The rationale for considering these all to be engagement processes is that they represent ELLs’ reading pathways to deep engagement. I refer to these reciprocal pathways as *quasi-engagement* processes. This is because the primary focus is to lead students to deep authentic engagement.

On the far left of the graphic are classroom practices. Some of these are already incorporated in Guthrie and Wigfield’s (2000) engagement model of reading development. Specifically, such classroom practices in the model are

scaffolded silent reading, ample opportunities for students to make choices, teacher support, reading strategies and social interactive activities. Most of these practices are iterative throughout the quasi-engagement processes to actual reading engagement.

From classroom practices, ELLs move to the first loop referred to as the initial engagement stage. In this stage, they pass through the code-breaking and meaning-making stages. Once comprehension is established, the pathway leads them to the second loop - emergent engagement. This is the stage where they become text users as they respond personally to the text (readers response). This stage is a precursor to the last stage, referred to as deep engagement. Students become text critics and it is at this stage that they engage deeply (critical literacy).

Reading is often viewed as a solitary and sedentary pursuit. In the present study; however, a majority of the students talked about self, text, others, and the culture of their society during discussions (as suggested by Probst, 1994). They read a common text, but respond differently because of individual feelings, experiences and knowledge. Most students could make personal connections to the story central to analytical thinking (see Section 4.1.2). Some of dialogues occurred in group discussions (for example Extracts 54 & 58, Section 4.1.5) which thus circumvented the individualistic/solitary side of reading by encouraging multiple and diverse responses within and between readers. This suggests that engaging in this type of reader response is appealing to ELLs as they are encouraged to work out their own meanings by sharing ideas, as opposed to getting the right answers to the questions on worksheets. The findings in the present study show that reader response appears to provide ELLs with a safe threshold for reading which they can cross to develop a higher level of engagement – emergent engagement.

However, the limitation of conventional conceptions of reader response is that the reader is the one constructing meaning based on their life experiences, making it too personal and simplistic (Appleman, 2000). Unlike L1 learners, in the ELL context, reading aesthetically from such a lens is pivotal to further and deeper engagement with texts. Expanding the ELLs' critical stance increases their power of reasoning and thinking critically (for example Extract 36, Section 4.1.4 & Extract 49, Section 4.1.5), at the same time empowering them to question and 'reauthor' (Wallace, 2006)/recreate the text (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). The

act of redesigning the text enables ELLs in particular, to resist textual positioning and to contribute in some ways, to the process of creating a world that is just and sustainable (Janks, 2014). The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) could usher ELL students into the pathway to the eventual goal - deep engagement - as reported in the findings of the present study.

From the review of literature (for example, Section 1.3), it can be said that ELLs commonly stagnate at the level of decoding competence (code breaker) and explicit semantic competence (meaning maker), which I consider to be the beginning stage. As was indicated previously in Chapter 1, ELLs in Malaysia have limited opportunities to assume a more complex meaning-making role, let alone the other two roles (text user and text critic) of the four resources model (Protacio & Sarroub, 2013) which were applied in the present study.

Most students will read for extended period of time when opportunities are provided. Instead of sustained silent reading, ELLs need scaffolded silent reading including providing opportunities for students to make choices, providing teacher support, teaching reading strategies and taking part in social interactive activities- retelling and group discussion.

In most of the reading activities, teacher support is inevitable. Throughout the study, I assisted students when, and only when necessary.

Scaffolding is dynamic and flexible. Although van Lier's (1996) levels of scaffolding are structured in sequence, teacher support rarely follows a linear path, but tends to be recursive and at times overlapping. Disengaged, apathetic and emergent readers require constant support from the teachers. Even students who are engaged need sometimes to be scaffolded to assure that they are capable of reading challenging text. The ultimate goal of providing the support is to hand over and let students assume the role of an independent reader.

The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) enables ELLs to have the opportunities to navigate, interpret, re-author, and interrogate the written text like the L1 readers. Even with very weak ELLs, a text within their linguistic level can guide them through the printed material to experience an initial engagement with the text. With the help of Set A question prompts, they respond personally, and become text users. The critical literacy prompts in Set B narrow the gap between readers response and critical literacy, taking ELLs to move from responding personally to the critical edge "to develop a social

conscience served by a critical imagination to redesign” (Janks, 2014, p. 350). Because the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) is explicit, ELLs are positioned to transact with texts they encounter, turning the reading process holistic, accessible and complete. When students use the information pragmatically (text user) and critically (text critic), they experience deeper engagement. As indicated previously, the growing engagement of the ELLs in the present study illustrates a strong CARE advantage.

## **Part II**

### **5.7 Empowerment and professional development**

This section addresses the third research question:

*What are the implications of this study for the empowerment and professional development of teachers in contexts relatable to this study?*

Reflective teaching as a self-directed approach to teacher professional development provides the basis for improving the teachers’ understanding of their own teaching by consciously and systematically reflecting on their teaching experiences (Farrell, 2007, 2013). The next section discusses how I reflected on my own practice at different times throughout the present research project: for action (5.7.1); in-action (5.7.2), and on-action (5.7.3).

#### **5.7.1 For-action reflections**

One conjecture I had for years which could possibly be the cause of the decline in students’ standard of English was their reading avoidance. Although I attended professional development training in the past, and learned from experts, the information I gained was not based on my individual experience. There were new developments and new ways of teaching reading, but none of them seemed to address the process of engaging students with texts. Although I had attempted

different ways to engage students by doing intensive reading and implementing silent reading in my daily practice, there was no significant improvement.

Before the start of the present practitioner research, I had to devote my time to refining my pedagogic intervention (which eventually became CARE), and planning the first lesson I intended to teach, which I will discuss below.

### *Planning the research design*

As a practitioner, the undertaking of a research project of this scale while teaching a class of 41 students was considerable. I thought about the research design during the drafting of my proposal. I did three rounds of piloting, involving two classes of international students at the University of Waikato and the Waikato Institute of Technology, both in New Zealand, and a cohort of comparable ELL university students at the research site in Malaysia, whom I asked to complete the responses and provide feedback on the clarity of the items. The final version included the changes to the wording of instructions, inclusion of more items, and a Malay translation.

After designing the research project, the action research route also required me to develop an appropriate pedagogy; that is, my understanding and enactment of how to help my students engage using instructional strategies within a particular learning environment (Park & Oliver, 2008), and teaching activities while working with the participants. For instance, some of the pedagogical aspects I provided were not the main data-collection sources. Nevertheless, they provided me with supplementary information.

### *Planning the first lesson I intended to teach*

When planning the first lessons, I imagined what my students were like in terms of their abilities and their interests. I started searching for an interesting story at a suitable level that could cater for the interests of the whole class (*Soapy's Choice*) (Appendix C). I learned that no matter how well a teacher has planned (in this case, choosing a story), there will be some students who do not like the selected text. I also devised a pedagogical approach comprising a series of activities to engage students (See Table 6, p.68 & Appendix F). A few sessions were planned: to pre-teach the relevant vocabulary; teach students how to use a dictionary; introduce reader response and critical literacy; and introduce students

to reflecting on what they had read by using the writing prompts (Appendices D and E). I also estimated the time I would spend teaching each item, and included time for students to have a break. In addition to allocating the time, I also envisaged how each of these lessons would be conducted. These were my reflections for-action at this planning stage. My active role, as a for-action reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) and exploratory researcher (Allwright, 2006), had begun.

### **5.7.2 In-action**

Private speech in the present context refers to my monologues, which were audio-recorded in class. This was a good way to record naturally occurring classroom interaction. More importantly, it is a verbatim record of my own ‘cognition in flight’ (Vygotsky, 1934) at the research site. Compared to field notes, private speech transcripts can offer a highly valuable record to which researchers can return whenever necessary.

My private speech was not restricted to my own record of my in-action reflections (Appendix M); it also included my speech in class with my students (Appendix L). I recorded all my classroom interactions over the first two weeks. I was cognisant of the impracticality of having to transcribe everything I recorded, so I exercised my discretion to select some of the classroom interactions based on my orientation. There were also a few occasions when I forgot to bring a recorder to class, and I would instead take *in situ* field notes.

Although the transcribing was painstaking, especially at the beginning where I recorded all my dialogues with the students, most of the data collected were useful. My monologues were also audio-recorded after class while driving home. Private speech appears to be very useful in terms of the teacher understanding herself, both in and outside class, as well as the actual happenings in class (class-directed speech) with the students.

Through in-action reflections, my teaching practices and underlying patterns surfaced. I learned about my shortcomings, such as my limited understanding of scaffolding, and the support I provided for my students. Before entering the class, I was bound by my own preconceived notions about modelling tasks. I explicitly showed my students what to do, and they repeated and practised

in a group after the demonstration. That was what continuity (van Lier, 1996, 2004) originally meant to me. I shifted my attention to the structuring of the pedagogical task instead of my students' responses (see Extracts 63 and 64, Section 4.2.2). I seemed to be showcasing my dominance and expertise without engaging them in the discussion. The amount of my teacher talk exceeded student talk as my students seemed to listen only passively with little in-depth discussion. My attempt at pedagogical scaffolding was not sufficiently supportive of, or conducive to, learner-centredness. I thought I had provided them with appropriate contextual support, but it was not liberating because I was following my own agenda rather than contingently responding to their reactions. I realised that I needed to modify my understanding of scaffolding to enhance the support I provided. The key to achieving this would be to strike the correct balance between providing appropriate support and enabling the students to eventually take over the tasks. There was a mismatch or "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 1989, 1996, 2000, 2009) between what I as a practitioner would like to be doing and what I was actually doing (see Section 3.2). Such contradictions provided me with an opportunity to review and reflect upon what I did and why I was doing it. This led me to examine my implicit theoretical assumptions or personal theories (Schön, 1983).

Examining and analysing my critical moments assisted me to discover and research the assumptions that framed how I worked, and informed my self-knowledge (Angelides, 2001; Griffin & Scherr, 2010). Having my students challenge my assumptions (e.g. Extract 59, Section 4.2.1) was evidence of my oversight. I assumed that I knew the story well enough, but I had not read as carefully as some of my students! Although to me it was an embarrassing moment, it also illustrated how my students and I started to form a community of learners, involving both active learners and more skilled partners, who provided support and guidance (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996). Such reciprocity and intersubjectivity (van Lier, 1996, 2004) is similar to Argyris and Schön's (1974) double-loop learning, in which thinking, practice, and problems are raised to an explicit level; this is in contrast to single-loop learning, whereby planning, teaching, and testing remain at the tacit level of learning (Farrell, 2012).

One of my main objectives for enhancing students' reading engagement had been to introduce social interaction into the reading classroom. I had aspired

to create a space in which students could talk among themselves about the story. Yet, in Cycle One, I could see little evidence of increased interaction (see Extract 63, Section 4.2.2). I appeared to be contradicting myself, in relation to what I wanted to do and what I did. This was an example of my ‘tacit knowledge’ (Polanyi, 1958): the knowledge that I had when I was doing something intuitively (Schön, 1983). In this action setting, I confronted my ambiguous, unclear and indeterminate problems. If my beliefs had been left unchallenged, I would have been trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations (Larrivee, 2000).

### **5.7.3 On-action**

The reflective journal was a useful tool for understanding and developing my activities in and outside the classroom. It helped me engage in my research-focused reflective writing throughout the duration of the study, through which I documented my personal experience of the research process (Borg, 2001). My private speech data harmonised with my reflective writing. For instance, after analysing my private speech data, some issues were brought to my attention, and I was able to identify appropriate actions to solve or improve the situation (e.g. Sections 4.2.2 & 4.2.3). However, certain issues could not be resolved immediately, but some solutions emerged numerous times in my reflective logs. For example, the issue of selecting the most appropriate stories was recorded in my earlier reflections as well as nearing the end of the study (Section 4.2.3).

Clearly, other than reflecting on my oral comments (see Table 4, p.62) in my reflective journal, reading my students’ reading logs, calculating students’ engagement scores and number of words written in students’ logs as well as listening to audio-recording data, also motivated me to explore concerns over students’ engagement. For example, the problem pertaining to the time set aside for reading tasks (Extract 72, Section 4.2.3) surfaced after listening to the audio-recordings of the data, and reading students’ logs, which led me to examine my tacit knowledge. Reflecting can therefore expose the teacher researcher’s assumptions, strengths and weaknesses.

Another source of data which also formed part of on-action reflections was a collection of my conversational notes with my two critical friends, also my

debriefers (see p. 54), whose strengths were entirely distinct, assisted me in my on-action reflections. Dr Arnold Puyuk was knowledgeable about qualitative methodology, while Dorothy Chin was a veteran teacher of reading. Soon after the investigation process had started, my conversations with him (Appendix N) resulted in my change of actions, and increased the credibility of the present project. In the same manner, Dorothy Chin made me realise that scaffolding is premised upon the notion that the responsibility for reading will be handed over by the teacher to the students (Section 4.2.5 and Extract 82 in the same section). Also, I was baffled when two students resentfully reported that reading did not benefit them, and I was in a quandary about what to do next. Dorothy's comments had provided me some kind of personal support (Appendix P).

The numerous memos I made in NVivo 10 and OneNote which bore the headings "thoughts for thesis 2013", "journey as a researcher" and "discussion", played a key role in shaping my thinking about my on-action reflections (see Section 4.3.5).

This aspect of my research study, which is rooted in my personal and professional experience, suggests the feasibility of practitioners embarking on autonomous professional development through reflective practice. The findings of the present study raise two central concerns that have particular relevance to the empowerment and professional development of teachers. First, consistent with the research of scholars such as Whitehead (1989) and Whitehead and McNiff (2006), the present study was not only about how students engaged with a text, but also about my own learning trajectory. My students and I were on parallel learning curves. For example, after reflecting on the data from students' discussions, my first speculation about students not having enough time to complete their work came to the fore. I did not suspect that this was due to my mismanagement until I examined the critical incidents (see Extracts 79 and 80, Section 4.2.4). As I searched deeper to understand the situation, and looked at all sides of the issue, I held myself accountable for it. It seems highly probable that my own sociocultural background negatively influenced my behaviours. The time I scheduled for my students to complete a task in the earlier part of the present study was affected by my cultural values of efficiency more strongly than my pedagogical belief in focusing on the students' development. At that time, I did not realise that I was

rushing my students through the activity. Specifically, the results showed an increase in awareness of the situations that impacted on my teaching and learning.

Secondly, through reflective practice, my learning process became holistic (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Instead of focusing on discrete skills, the holistic approach to learning started with my individual behaviour, and extended beyond other aspects which also became part of the learning process. Such changes were the discovery of myself in a new light, and helped me gain an understanding of my journey from a teacher to a teacher learner, and vice versa.

This recreation of my professional identity as a practical theorist is evidence of empowerment and professional development. The on-action reflections did not end there. The insights that I gained informed my subsequent actions (for-action). For instance, on several occasions (Extracts 71 and 72, Section 4.2.3), students rarely bothered to do reading-related tasks that were given as homework. I learned to exercise caution, so I stopped giving homework, and let them complete the task in the class (Extract 73, Section 4.2.3).

I gained further insight in my first class, when I used only one story with all the students. When the story was later found incompatible with the readers' interests and abilities (Extracts 74 and 75, Section 4.2.3), I altered my strategies ranging from offering different titles to different linguistic levels (Extract 76, Section 4.2.3). My growth came from a "reconstruction of experience," (Dewey, 1933, p. 87), and reflecting on such experiences reframed my own approaches to teaching (Farrell, 2012).

The understanding that emerged from this study implies that all pedagogical practitioners should discover their "teacher selves" (Freese, 2006), through reflection and inquiry into their own pedagogical practices, and their students' learning. By identifying their own beliefs and practices, teachers will learn to assume personal responsibility for their actions and performance. When teachers combine these systematic reflections with their actual teaching experiences, they can become more aware of their professional growth as a teacher. As indicated in the earlier part of this section, reflective practice is a bottom-up approach to professional development. It is this form of voluntary professional development based on systematic reflections in- on- and for-, practice that fosters change, and which can be sustained throughout a teacher's

teaching career (Farrell, 2013). In the next section, I will discuss how action research can empower practitioners based on the present study.

## **5.8 Action research**

Having dealt with the findings and the issue of pedagogical intervention, I now turn the attention to how I developed practitioner research skills through the implementation of an action research project.

The section that follows deals with the fourth research question:

*In what ways do the findings of this thesis contribute to a greater understanding of the process of reflective practice and action research in contexts relatable to this study?*

In this section, I will relate my personal experience in order to elucidate some of the practical processes involved in doing action research.

### **5.8.1 Identifying a problem**

Before starting the present action research project, I had had some hunches about my students' reading avoidance and disengagement for many years. However, narrowing the topic I wanted to examine was not easy because I had too many ideas, some of which I had informally 'tested' with my students (Section 1.4). The focus emerged as I began to start the present research project. In order to clarify my understandings about the issue, I explored and read articles and books on topics such as literacy, motivation, L1 and L2 reading in order to obtain ideas for research. My initial hunches became clearer. I wanted to know why my students became alliterate and to identify the factors contributing to it. "If these students are encouraged and supported, will they like reading?" was the question that helped to guide my thinking at the early stage of the research. As my focus area became more refined, I finally identified a more specific area, that of reading

engagement. I took an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) to propose a possible solution, which was the systematic use of stories to engage students.

### **5.8.2. Developing a research design**

The next stage of action research was to develop an appropriate research design to investigate my practice, which involved documenting and analysing data drawn from the classroom, and interrogating relevant research literature. My classroom became a research site and a source of knowledge. The action research, designed to promote my reflections, made me actively involved in, and responsible for, my learning (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1993; Schön, 1983). A reading intervention, the basic reading model to reading engagement (see Figure 1, p. 41) was designed to address the issue of reading avoidance among ELLs. To study my own practice, an in-depth qualitative approach was more appropriate than a positivist approach to data collection. At the time, my knowledge of research methodology was limited. At this juncture I returned to the literature surrounding research design and methodologies. I realised that I was vague about the kind of research (methodology) I was undertaking. I searched again for readings centred on this aspect, and I learned to distinguish methods from methodologies. I had in mind the kinds of instruments (methods) I would use, but I had not seriously thought through the methodologies – they are best referred to as research styles (L. Cohen et al., 2011). My class was a case that I studied (real people in a real context), and it was also an action research study. Henceforth, two research styles: a case study constituted within an action research project led the emergent development of the CARE model (see Figure 5, p. 175).

As a teacher researcher, I had to strike a balance between the pedagogical applications and the rigorous process and hermeneutic spirals of questioning, discovering, framing, reframing, revisiting, and reflecting which are germane to action research (McNiff, 2010; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

Like a number of action researchers (McNiff, 2013; Whitehead, 2014), I encountered initial academic prejudice against practitioner research on the grounds that it was ‘unscientific’ because it lacked standard measures of validity and reliability. “Practitioners are trivialised, along with the status of the

practitioners as knowledge makers and theory generators, while abstract theorising continued to maintain institutional legitimacy through the creation of grand theories” (McNiff, 2013, p. 4). One of the earliest constraints in conducting the present research was highlighted in Section 4.3.2. My emergent thinking of embarking on practitioner research as an educational researcher (a teacher researching my own learning and others in the place where I work), was silenced. Education researchers distinguished by their knowledge through their information gathering, theory construction, testing within the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation, tended to polarise practitioner research in terms of the research rigour and practitioners as knowledge makers.

### **5.8.3 Collection of data by various procedures**

Given the limitations inherent in studying students’ engagement through only one method, I soon decided that I needed to select an appropriate set of data collection procedures. I have learned much through using the following tools in the present research. In this section, I will present how each tool helped me to become an effective researcher.

#### **5.8.3.1 *Retelling***

As discussed in Section 5.3.1, retelling was a part of pedagogic design to improve comprehension. Retelling stories enables second language learners to reconstruct stories in their own words, and at times retrieve some of the lexical items in the text to retell. Ongoing analysis of the retelling data enabled me to consider whether I should proceed to group discussions, where I collected students’ data. For example, when some students had not read a story, they could not retell the story, and getting them to participate in a group discussion in such circumstances was futile. Observing the retelling sessions in class also provided me with some supplementary data, which I could not obtain otherwise. For instance, students’ facial expressions and body gestures exhibited their behavioural engagement. I might not know much about their cognitive engagement, but the extent of their active involvement informed me whether they

were positively or negatively engaged. Through analysing these retelling data, patterns began to emerge. The initial concepts appear in Section 4.1.1, most of which, such as *active participation*, *initiative*, *seeking understanding*, and *assisting one another*, were derived from retelling. The data collected through retelling not only demonstrated students' behavioural engagement, but the patterns in the data were also apparent in cognitive, emotional and agentic engagement. In sum, retelling was more than just a pedagogical tool for students to achieve reading comprehension -- it was also a considerable asset to the action research project.

### **5.8.3.2 Discussion**

Collecting audio-recordings of discussions illuminated the cognitive engagement of the students in the present study. The data revealed not only students' thinking patterns, but also the degree to which these ELLs could think critically. These data were of the utmost importance due to the transparent naturalistic dialogues, and verbatim utterances between learners. All the seven categories of cognitive engagement emerged in Section 4.1.2: *passing judgment on characters; reasoning; thinking critically; giving opinions; making connections with their own experience; making meaning of words related to reading; and offering interpretations* attributed to the data collected from the discussions.

However, the limitations of audio-recordings were inevitable. If I had used video-recording, I would have collected a constellation of non-verbal behaviours which would have provided me with rich contextual information, but on the other hand, students might have been more reluctant to be recorded if I had done so. Eighteen students in the present study refused to be audio recorded, which I discussed with one of my peer debriefers, Dr Arnold Puyuk (see Appendix N). Possibly, the presence of the recorder was intrusive to these second language learners, as they were self-conscious about being recorded. Also, I had to transcribe immediately after the class was over, in order to recall who said what in the discussion; if I had delayed, I could not match the person to his or her utterances. To some extent, I could rely on my memory of observing the interaction in class, but I was unable to observe all the group discussions.

### **5.8.3.3      *Students' reflective reading logs***

In the present study, students' reflective reading logs served two purposes. One was to write their responses towards the stories based on the question prompts provided, and the other was to write their reflections in relation to the pedagogic intervention. In this sub-section, I will first discuss what I have learned from using reading logs as a research tool.

While collecting data, I found it handy to collect students' logs to evaluate the quantity of students' written work, and the quality of their thinking in class. The engagement scores were calculated based on the criteria designed to evaluate the participants' written work in the reading logs. These scores were important as they measured the degree of engagement level - in particular, the cognitive engagement of the individual students. I also calculated the number of words written in the reading logs. While students were writing their entries, I considered their behavioural, emotional and agentic engagement. Both the quantitative and qualitative data enabled me to make a thick description of their engagement.

Students' reflections towards the intervention were recorded in their logs. They used the narrative frames (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) that focused on a particular topic, and comprised a few sentence starters to prompt them to express their ideas and experiences. The use of such frames helps participants to construct their stories and allow them to express themselves (Nguyen & Bygate, 2012). The initial intention when designing these frames in the present study was to provide a scaffold for the participants who were unaccustomed to writing accounts of their experiences and views. However, some students were inclined to repeatedly write the same statements or phrases in their reflections. They were probably unable to express themselves accurately and clearly in English. They may also have felt reluctant to reveal their personal views that they may have felt offended me. Conceivably, that could explain why some students did not even complete some of the reflections. On reflection, I believe I should have designed a different set of frames, and administered them at different times during the study, to circumvent students feeling tired of writing the same frames over and over again.

#### **5.8.3.4 Interview**

I did not include a focus group interview in my final research design on account of the limited English of the participating students due to the fact that it capitalises on communication between research participants, which explicitly uses the interaction of the group to generate data (Gladman & Freeman, 2012). Instead, I chose a group interview towards the end of the intervention in which the participants only responded to questions I posed. The group was stimulated with a topical question, and opinions of several individuals were obtained simultaneously. Since the interview was voluntary, I only managed to have seven interviewees out of 41 students. I could neither select participants nor ensure that the group was a homogeneous group of students with approximately the same ability. Of these seven students, only four were the core participants in my case study. In addition, the interview was conducted towards the last class of the intervention, which also marked the end of the semester. The duration of the whole interview was approximately 30 minutes, and it was administered in haste, without allowing time for really pondering in detail the responses given by the participants. Despite having been reminded that they could use their first language, some of the interviewees chose to express their views in English. Their limited proficiency in English could have meant they felt less able to express themselves freely and accurately, resulting in the quality of the data being affected (Canh, 2012). Although the interview data that I collected could not be considered representative, some of the data supported my responses to the research questions.

#### **5.8.4 Refining the procedures during the project**

As indicated in Chapter 3, the action research project had two main phases. In Phase 1, I modelled the reading strategies, which underpinned the objective, while in Phase 2, students performed the reading tasks independently. The two phases of the action-reflection cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting are depicted in Figure 6 below.

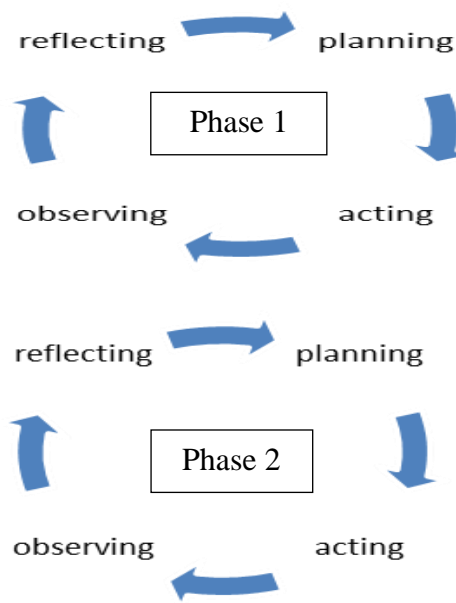


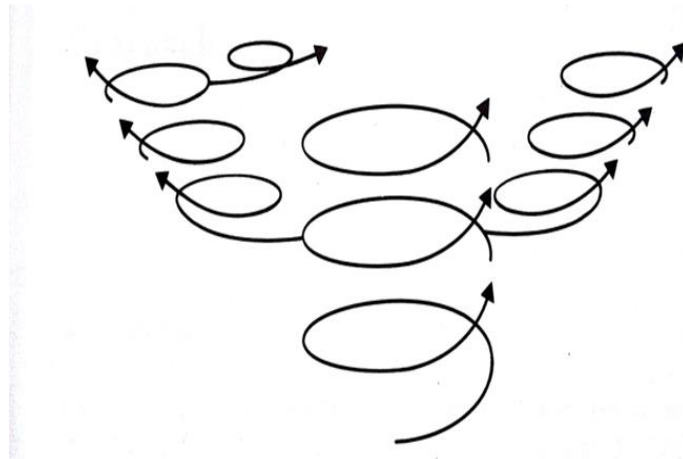
Figure 6 Action-reflection cycles

In each of the two cycles, there were circuitous routes in the inner part, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7 Cycles of Cycles

As the research continued, the inner cycle veered off course, forming another cycle. Often, there is slippage between the planned diagram and reality, in that the former can show only something that is predictable and sequential. The spirals in the present study are parallel with the non-definitive fluidity and unpredictability of the action research model by McNiff (2010, 2013). The visual metaphor developed by McNiff depicts a spiral of spirals (see Figure 3, p. 54).



Amidst the spirals, a series of interrelated experiences is represented, which includes the stages of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Burns, 2010). In the present study, my discussions with my peer debriefers (See Table 6, p.68) provided points of reference which enabled both my thinking and my change of plan for subsequent actions (Section 4.3.3).

Refinement of the procedure during the research was also a function of the research tools of the present study: participants' reflective reading logs, audio-recordings of group discussions; audio-recordings of the researcher's in-lesson reflections, and the researcher's reflective journal. Data collected from each of these methods had a bearing on the research process, which I adjusted and altered to fine-tune, and periodically make major changes. The pedagogy, in fact, occurred concurrently with the research procedure. For instance, during the first week of research, I introduced question sets A and B, thinking that it would save time if the students discussed both sets in a single discussion. However, I discovered the flaw when I was transcribing the recording data, and I realised that the whole class only discussed one set of the questions and not the other, resulting my lack my success in collecting the other dataset. This clearly sums up that a change in any part of the pedagogy tended to affect the research process.

### **5.8.5 Analysing the data**

Chapter 4 has provided a detailed account and analysis of the data collected over the duration of this study. Data analysis in action research involves departing from the actions embedded in the cycles, and proceeding to more systematic observation and reflection (Burns, 1999). My data analysis did not

begin after collecting all the data; rather, I analysed when I had some preliminary data. I continued moving backwards and forwards from data collection to analysis, which is typical of the reflective nature of action research. After collecting the data and making the preliminary analysis, I spent more than eight months on a thorough analysis, which was much longer than I had expected.

Table 15 Number of Data Collected

<b>Source of data</b>	<b>No.</b>
Six students' logs *reading responses *reflective writing	12 entries x 6 5 entries x 6
Audio-recording of discussions	13
Interview	1 (7 interviewees)
Oral comments (my class-directed speech and private speech)	21
Reflective journal entries	33

After interrogating all my qualitative and quantitative data, while searching for recurring themes, I refined my focus at different points during my study. I also carefully reviewed the lesson plans that I had drafted to examine and look for evidence of change in my practice over the course of the study, until I was able to make sense of it through what I had recorded.

The complexities of analysing data from multiple sources pose a challenge to a practitioner who may not have extensive research training or practical strategies (Burns, 1999). The challenges arising from analysing the data are discussed below, because they are likely to be relevant to action researchers in relatable contexts.

### **5.8.5.1 Challenges**

The greatest challenge I faced was how I should link the data collected from different sources. My data analysis involved several stages. From the outset, I read and tentatively interpreted the data from a single source, and as soon as I collected data from another source, I switched and made a preliminary analysis of another dataset. The data, though raw, gave me some useful information (McNiff, 2013). I reflected on them, and noted down thoughts as they occurred to me during the initial examination. As I progressed, I could see connections between the different data sets. Rereading helped make possible patterns clearer. As a novice researcher, I was uncertain whether my data analysis was accurate, and I wished the analysis was more straightforward. I had to remember constantly that I should be informed by the data, and not to be swayed by my own intuitions or assumptions.

I concomitantly built my codebook (see Section 4.3.7) – this was one of the initial steps, and arguably the most critical step even before an in-depth analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). It was developed through an iterative process of analysing the data (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011). However, tabulating the themes was not easy. My codebook, consisting of a set of codes, definitions, and examples, was rudimentary, possibly because I was the only coder in this action research project. Technically, I found it difficult to do the thinking at a computer. Visual images which I drew manually helped to better translate my ideas. My data reduction and data expansion (making new connections between concepts) were done using NVivo 10 and OneNote (see Sections 4.3.6, 4.3.7 & 4.3.9). The use of memos in OneNote enabled me to systematically keep track of all the categories, ideas, hunches, and generative questions during the analysis process. Writing electronic memos in OneNote, in this context, was more practical -- it prompted me to analyse my data and codes early in the research process (Charmaz, 2014); and helped me build themes across data at the later stage of data analysis.

Familiarising myself with NVivo10 was difficult since I was still mastering the basic concepts of data analysis. It was, in effect, a double cognitive load (Urquhart, 2013) - I had to learn to analyse the data, which synchronised with the learning of the software. I used NVivo for memoing at the early stage of the

research after I had collected some data. I immediately transcribed and imported them to NVivo. It was frustrating when my laptop encountered a technical problem, as I then had to repeat the entire process of transcribing all the data.

Nevertheless, the advantage of using NVivo lies primarily in data management and organisation, by which the data administrative work can be done more efficiently. It is easier and quicker than to search separate word documents electronically. After coding, I moved back and forth through NVivo to add, reduce, or collapse nodes and child nodes. NVivo refers to codes as nodes. A node represents a theme, dimension, or an idea of the data. Nodes can be organised in hierarchies – moving from a general topic at the top (the parent node) to more specific topics (child nodes). Over the course of my analysis in the present research, I reordered nodes by moving them within the same level, or moving them to a different level, and at times I deleted nodes if there were no logical connections. As I refined the nodes, my understanding changed, exhibiting my own increased understanding of the data. I also thought about and discovered new ideas by memoing in OneNote (for example, Extracts 91 and 92, Section 4.3.5).

#### **5.8.6 Presenting aspects of the study**

I have made three presentations at three different stages of my research project. The first one, on the proposal for the practitioner research project, was presented at the University of Malaya (Lee, 2013a). Specifically, I presented the rationale for doing this research, as well as the research methodology, instruments, and data analysis. It was done while my research was in progress. The paper became a road map to remind me how I should collect and analyse the data. However, I had learned that, despite being very familiar with the project proposal, resolving issues that appeared unexpectedly at the research site was inevitable.

The second presentation was made in the midst of analysing my data. I presented some of the initial findings on action research and reflective practice drawing from my experience (Lee, 2013b). The challenge I faced was how I could transform a mass of data into a 10-15 minute short presentation. Presenting this paper synchronously with data analysis had an added advantage, in that it made my understandings and interpretations of the data less ambiguous.

The third presentation focused on my reflective practice as a teacher researcher, and highlighted the learning of my own teaching style, including my tacit knowledge (Lee, 2014). While preparing for this particular presentation, my reflections at different stages mapped my tacit knowledge, embedded in my critical incidents. In this regard, the in-, on- and for-action reflections unearthed other issues existing at a deeper level.

As part of the process of disseminating aspects of my study, the feedback I received from my peers and from the audience was invaluable in that it harnessed the way I analysed and interpreted the data.

## **5.9 Insights gained**

My reflections and recorded oral comments provided me with some insights for assisting my students. The current study provides evidence that a teacher moving about in the classroom invites students to seek assistance (Extract 60, Section 4.2.1). In the present study, students did not seem to seek help from me in front of a big class. As I made myself available to them, they felt safe to ask me in a group setting. This is likely due to their cultural background, which also influenced their learning style preferences, and this was consistent with several studies (Amirkhiz, Abu Bakar, Samad, Baki, & Mahmoudi, 2013; Maesin, Mansor, Shafie, & Nayan, 2009; Reid, 1987). Although in the present study, matching my students' learning style and my teaching style was the least expected, understanding this, has altered my pedagogical strategies.

Another insight I learned was that students' first language has a necessary and facilitating role in the second language classroom (Anton & DeCamilla, 1998; Burns, Paltridge, & Wigglesworth, 2008; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). However, although the use of L1 has been discouraged in all the classes in the university I have been teaching, the use of students' mother tongue was permitted in this study in order to encourage learning. Given the freedom to choose the language in their writing and sharing their ideas in groups, most students still preferred using the target language, particularly the motivated ones. The students' use of their L1 functioned as a psychological tool: it provided them with additional cognitive support that allowed them to work at a higher level than

would be possible were they restricted to the sole use of their L2. The use of L1 also allowed them to focus on the goals of the task and work out ways to address specific problems. In the present study, students used their L1 when they perceived difficulties in understanding the text. Their goal was to make sense of the story. The use of L1 also enhanced their interpersonal interactions and to help with negotiation of meaning, especially in completing a task. This implies that L1 facilitated L2 reading in this setting, particularly for low proficiency students. Their interaction in a group flowed in a natural way, so that they were in ‘tune’ with each other (van Lier, 2007, p. 60). As a result, I have learned to have some flexibility by allowing students to use their L1 in an L2 setting. Understanding this helps me make sense of the complexities of teaching L2 reading.

Clearly, the present action research was not merely about achieving a specific end result, nor was it about controlling practices. The level of my awareness of my students’ reading activities and my own teaching practices has increased. Through my involvement in research, I became a teacher researcher, bridging the gap between theory as the domain of academic researchers, and practice as the province of teachers.

## **5.10 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the findings from the multiple sources of data with reference to the research questions. Section 5.1 dealt with the first research question, *“To what extent do a range of analytical reading interaction opportunities enhance the motivation and empowerment of Malaysian ELLs to engage with literary texts?”* Discussion of the results showed that scaffolded silent reading, retelling and group discussion were particularly appealing to second language learners; oral retelling was a means to achieve comprehension, while discussion using question prompts led ELLs to explore the text and express themselves more freely, resulting in their increased engagement with the texts. As students meaningfully explored issues in the text, they crisscrossed the four dimensions of reading engagement, making their reading multi-dimensional and overlapping.

The second question, “*What are the implications of this study for the empowerment and professional development of teachers in contexts relatable to this study?*” highlighted the implications of empowering teachers in their profession. To address this research question, I used my research journey to narrate the empowerment and professional development I gained, and the implications it has for teachers in relatable contexts.

The third question, “*What is the contribution to academic understanding of applying analytical reading approaches such as those in the study?*” underscored the importance of Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) in ELL contexts. I reiterated the significance of combining social interactive activities with CARE reading intervention. In addition, I explained how the explicitness of the expanded reading framework made the ELLs’ reading process more holistic and complete.

The fourth research question is “*In what ways do the findings of this thesis contribute to a greater understanding of the process of reflective practice and action research in contexts relatable to this study?*”, I used the account of my present educational action enquiry into my practice to justify my own practice. To be a professional educator demands one to be a reflective teacher, and to become involved in action research.

The next chapter will summarise key findings of the present study, acknowledge its limitations, and discuss the implications for my theory of reading engagement, reflective practice and professional development.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the key findings of the study with specific reference to each research question of this thesis, and in relation to the relevant literature. The present chapter concludes the thesis with a brief summary of the whole research project and an acknowledgement of the limitations of the study. It then suggests implications for the enhancement of reading engagement for English Language learners, teacher development, practitioner action research, and suggestions for further research.

### 6.1 Summary of key points

The aim of this research was to address the challenge of teaching reading strategies to address ELLs' reading avoidance in a Malaysian university context. Avoidance of reading limits the opportunity to achieve literacy. The present study showed that, with explicit modelling and careful scaffolding that facilitated social interaction, ELLs were capable of critiquing literary work. Their previous experience of reading instruction had been largely to respond to explicit literal questions. However, through the fusion of practices such as implementing scaffolded sustained silent reading, and participating in social interactions, the specially designed Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) tended to increase the reading engagement of the participants in the present study. When students' comprehension and enjoyment increased, their dialogic reasoning, and expression of their personal opinions were also enhanced. They became acculturated into talking, reading, and writing with a critical orientation.

The implementation of CARE appeared to increase students' reading engagement. Interestingly, while struggling and proficient readers differed in many ways in their levels of reading, CARE enhanced the motivation of both groups in largely similar ways. Most notably, the voices of both struggling readers and capable readers were heard. In the present research, the less proficient readers tended to show a greater increase in higher-order comprehension, and they experienced positive changes in their reading engagement. Proficient readers became more confident of reading challenging texts. The findings of the present

study reveal that students' resistance to reading could be related to their perceived low self-efficacy/agency which could be rectified by providing different levels of assistance to different students. When students were given the motivation to read, their thinking was enlarged, enabling them to make connections between texts and topics. Once they had learned the strategies, such students were geared into agency in the real world, empowered as readers.

Pertaining to my reflective practice, my private speech in the form of recorded data introduced me to the lived experience of my in-action reflections where some of my values, beliefs and experience often diverged from my actual practice (see Sections 4.2 and 5.8). I could listen to the recording and reflect on- and for-actions. By collecting this form of information and examining it systematically, I began to learn from it, and this led to changes in my pedagogic activities. Such realisation was characterised by the recognition that I could evaluate my own teaching and thus enable me to engage in autonomous professional development.

Other than reflective practice, I have learned the systematic processes of practitioner action research, starting from identifying a problem to developing an appropriate research design, collecting, analysing and interpreting the data to the final stage of presenting aspects of the study (Lee, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). Through the reflective implementation of the current action research, I came to understand that the underlying problem of these students' reading avoidance was their low self-efficacy and their lack of belief in their own power agency. Students' dialogues with others facilitated their seeking and giving assistance (peer-scaffolding), and this invigorated their reading. It is clear from the findings of the present study that action research is always in situ, lending itself to a judicious combination of data collection methods which can provide more detailed and rich data sources.

## **6.2 Limitations of the present study**

It should be noted that there are a number of limitations to this study. First, the present study adopted a comprehensive, but inherently subjective approach relying on the interpretation of students' reading and reflective logs, a group

interview, the researcher's private speech and reflective journal. In order to avoid biased results, triangulation was made between data sets. Nevertheless, some significant information might have remained hidden from myself as the sole researcher. It also should be noted that, although justifiable from a methodological point of view, the present case study limits the extent to which the findings can be extended to other contexts as the opportunities and constraints of each pedagogical setting would be different.

A further limitation is the briefness of the timeframe of the implementation, which was carried out only for 12 weeks; the duration could be too short to fully examine the impact and put into the effect and evaluate the necessary changes. Ideally action research needs to be practised over several cycles, not merely two. Furthermore, only short stories were involved in the study; transferability to other genres such as expository text or electronic texts needs further investigation. It was also difficult to delve into students' attitudes because of the limited number of participants taking part in the interview towards the end of the study.

Another limitation relates to myself as a novice researcher, working in isolation. I performed two roles, as both a teacher and researcher. An alternative approach, although one not really possible for a PhD candidate, would involve working collaboratively with other co-researchers or teachers which would allow new ideas and insights to be shared. A collaborative approach could create a supportive way of doing action research that enables the teacher researcher to extend and challenge his or her own reflections and findings through ongoing dialogue with others. Overall, therefore, collaborative research is potentially more empowering than action research conducted individually as it strengthens the results of research on practice to be fed back into educational systems in a more substantial and critical way (Burns, 1999, 2010).

The CARE model in the present research involved a focus on print or written texts, which is only one form of representation and meaning-making among many –one that has been, and continues to be, privileged above other forms in schools. Other modes, such as visual and audio of texts should also be considered.

Despite the limitations, the study has illuminated and provided some interesting findings, and the implications of these will now be discussed.

### **6.3 Implications**

The present study centred on increasing ELLs' reading engagement through the Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE), and conducting action research by systematically collecting and analysing data, reflecting on one's practices, and then making decisions -- a compass that allows practitioners to change personal practice and retheorise public and personal theories -- for professional development. Several implications could be provided in relation to ELL teachers of reading in Malaysia and similar contexts, theories of reading engagement, and action research to professional development.

#### **6.3.1 ELL teachers of reading in Malaysia and relatable contexts**

These findings point to an urgent need for teacher development programmes to equip teachers with the knowledge and instructional skills for the teaching of reading in order to ensure quality instructional practices. This could be achieved through conducting workshops, pre-service or in-service programmes, or in-house training. Teachers of all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary -- should be introduced to, and scaffolded through, instructional strategies that support reading engagement. Such strategies can help reading teachers develop their daily practice about the different domains of reading engagement. Since motivation to read is malleable, documented impacts of engagement practices have important implications for professional development. Engagement practices are a skill set that can be taught to teachers and learned by teachers. During such teacher development programmes, teachers could be introduced to concepts of engagement, strategies for motivating students in the classroom, and behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic components of deep reading. Teachers could also be provided with opportunities to perform the reading strategies that students will be learning through designs such as CARE.

The findings from this study hold important implications for educators. They suggest that neglecting the role of reading engagement could lead to missed opportunities to develop reluctant learners' eventual autonomy. The findings of the present study also suggest that if teachers want recalcitrant readers to become lifelong readers, then they must provide these students with encouragement and

supportive scaffolding to read during the school day, so the skills thus gained can be employed in reading out of school. While many important sociocultural factors hindering the development of reading skills are beyond the teachers' competence, an intervention such as CARE can ameliorate the situation because it lies within the control and professional responsibilities of teachers.

As highlighted in Section 5.7.2, each activity in the classroom strategy leads ELLs from reading avoidance to initial engagement and then to deeper engagement. Given the freedom to exercise choice (of reading material) and agency (to read or not), students have a measure of control over their reading activity. Choice is motivating because students can read potentially enjoyable material in contrast to many other classroom reading experiences that may be limiting and less than motivating, and is therefore vital in promoting a measure of independence. Teacher instruction entailing reading strategies (reader response and critical literacy) strengthens independent student reading practices. Finally, including group discussions/social interactive activities subsequent to scaffolded sustained silent reading encourages students to read and promote collective engagement.

Scaffolded silent reading (ScSR) is an effective literacy practice for independent reading by second language learners. ScSR is intended to provide students with "the necessary support, guidance, structure, accountability, and monitoring so they can transfer their skills to successful and effective silent reading practice" (Reutzel, Jones, et al., 2008, p. 196). Students are supported all the way during ScSR from explicit instruction on how to use a dictionary, how to select a text, strategies to exercise a measure of control in retelling and journal writing to etiquette of group discussion (see Section 5.3). Such scaffolding can be gradually dismantled to enable students to read independently using the strategies they have learned. The social sharing activities added to silent reading were the fundamental contributors to ELLs' reading engagement in the present study, which concurred with findings of previous studies (Reutzel, Fawson, et al., 2008; Reutzel, Jones, et al., 2008). Although dialogical/interactional classrooms are currently rare in the Malaysian context (Basree, n.d.; Hwang & Embi, 2007; Sidhu et al., 2010), revisiting and refining the present silent reading and implementing interactive activities are likely to increase ELLs' reading engagement.

The results of the present study offer a strong rationale for conducting two separate workshops to expose teachers to reader response and critical literacy. Teachers have to experience the two reading strategies themselves by going through the guided questions in Sets A and B to deconstruct the text. Set A reader response questions will lead them to connect their own experiences to make meaning of the text, and Set B critical literacy questions will guide them to examine the text critically and to create their own meaning through textual reconstruction. Like the students at the modelling stage in the present study, teachers would write entries in their logs before sharing in groups. Eventually, they might also modify and add more questions to both lists. The effects of CARE model might be optimal when teachers are professionally prepared before adopting it in their classrooms.

While reading authentic texts is a level that teachers should aim at, the initial scaffolding to teach students strategies for choosing readable, attractive books should not be neglected. Graded readers are written for learners of English using limited lexis and syntax, the former determined by frequency and the latter by simplicity. The objective is to arouse students' interest in readable texts. Because of students' aversion to reading, many language educators perceive students to be incapable of reading more complex texts. This is true to some extent especially for students whose linguistic competence is limited. Therefore, beginning with graded readers or readable texts is necessary. However, there comes a point when students should be eventually introduced to authentic texts. This is because the simplified nature of such corpora may limit learners' exposure to natural lexical chunks, more complex syntax, and real contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2002), so that they can use functional language and see language in its entirety (Goodman & Freeman, 1993).

The present findings raise the question about using the same text for all students, a common practice in the ELL settings. In this study, students' engagement was in part attributed to the opportunities which afforded them to choose the text that matched their levels of language proficiency and interests. When students realise what they have accomplished, in this instance, understanding the text, their sense of achievement leads them to move further—to make more investment in their reading. Therefore, if teachers want students to

find pleasure in reading, they should allow them to read texts that engage them to solicit conversations and invite such engagement.

This study illuminated the pivotal role played by teachers of reading in the ELL contexts. Students' human agency is generally negated by reports that confined reading to behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement. This suggests that students' reading will be more effective when teachers are aware of human agency, operating through direct personal agency (which is not merely reacting to a conduit for external influences) by exercising self-influence i.e. operating generatively and proactively on reading, or collective agency through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspiration and collective action. Therefore, I argue that teachers need to think about engagement as encompassing four interconnected dimensions: behavioural, cognitive, emotional and agentic, By adding the fourth dimension to their pedagogic repertoire, they will be able to uncover the critical understanding of students' reading and promote optimal reading engagement.

### **6.3.2 Theory of reading engagement**

Reading engagement theory postulates the importance of cognitive engagement in teaching reading. Guthrie and colleagues (2001) have tied engaged reading to the achievement of reading comprehension. While this is almost certainly true, it is also an incomplete understanding of reading engagement. Acquisition of skills is only a part of what it takes to be literate. The primary concern lies in using the texts –engage with the texts –in the real world (Freire, 2001). By that I mean literacy is essentially about people taking the printed word, connecting it to the world (in their everyday lives) and using that for purposes of empowerment.

Just like student engagement and school engagement, the findings of the present research showed that reading engagement is multi-dimensional -- all the four aspects of engagement (behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic) are inherently linked (each influences the other) and iterative throughout the whole process of reading. As mentioned earlier, Guthrie and colleagues' (2001) definition of reading engagement grounded heavily in comprehension, denying and ignoring the criticality of what readers do with the texts in their everyday

lives. The limitation of the present construct of reading engagement does not capture the essential need for the readers to examine and question the texts. This being said, I argue that reading engagement theory has to be refined. As depicted in the CARE model (Section 5.6.2), reading engagement is divided into three phases: initial, emergent and deep engagement. Comprehension occurs between the two loops of breaking the code and meaning making, and it is an initial engagement within the quasi-engagement process. Readers will have to move along this continuum to achieve deeper engagement by utilising both the power to read and the support provided to increasingly take responsibility for their own learning trajectory until their reading becomes meaningful in their lives beyond the classroom. The findings of the intervention through CARE model extend the definition of engaged reading. Being engaged with texts goes beyond understanding texts in which students take responsibility as agents of their reading to critically analyse and interpret their reading of the world.

### **6.3.3 Action research to professional development**

The present study can also be seen as a response to Schön's (1995) call for action research as an approach to develop a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching, and why teachers should engage in action research. The reading approach designed for ELLs Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) was my personal theory-in-practice, which was constructed in action and constituted reflectively in my teaching practice. This theory was tacit (Polyani, 1967) and would be difficult to articulate to myself and others had I not put into practice. Grounded in the form of action research, the arguments are more dynamic than steps prescribed by reading theorists or resource room instructional models, which are less applicable to typical classroom setting. This means that practitioners at any level, who are interested in fine-tuning their practices, can engage in action research.

The distinction between education research and educational research/practitioner research, and the emphasis on producing validated and evidence-based explanations of educational influences in learning is that practitioner research encapsulates the practical details of the teacher and her students, and thus has implications for teacher professional development. In

particular, it is beneficial to practitioners who want to be more effective by extending their pedagogic skills and gaining more understanding of their classroom, their students, and themselves as teachers.

It is also worth highlighting reflective practice in the action research process is invaluable. Both reflective practice and action research are the critical dimensions of the professional development of teachers. Reflective practice is more than just a process of learning from experience. In the present study, I was emancipated to unravel the issue vis-à-vis my students' aversion to reading, including my own practice. That is to say that reflective practice involves a much more detailed analysis than merely thinking about how any lesson was planned and implemented. My in-and-for- action reflection was captured through the use of audio-recording, and thus made my on-action reflection more integrative and effective. Developing reflective opportunities of this kind has evident consequences for teachers who are engaging in action research. In addition to the practical implications for teaching and learning, there are some implications for future research.

#### **6.3.4 Suggestions for further research**

If teachers adapt a strategy such as CARE in their classrooms, there is a need for exploratory research (Allwright, 2006) in order to understand how the complexity of such an intervention can be implemented in specific contexts. Associated with this would be investigation of teacher and learner cognition (Borg, 2006) as to the values and beliefs they hold regarding both the notion of reading engagement and their reported practices. This implies observational research, and post-lesson discussion by, for example, stimulated recall sessions (Gass & Mackey, 2000), and/or focus group meetings (Ho, 2006). If possible, such research should be longitudinal, so as to gather a long term development in the perception and practices of both teachers and learners.

Research into other genres of texts (in both print and electronic texts) is needed because such research has not been the focus of a sufficient number of investigations. For example, it is unknown whether the use of fiction or non-fictional texts via CARE would generate the same effect as in the present study. It

is conceivable that fiction or electronic texts, such as e-books are highly motivating. Using this medium via CARE seems warranted.

Furthermore, given that the present study focused on university ELLs, similar studies are especially needed at primary and secondary levels because ideally engagement with texts should begin early in a child's life. Such studies might be conducted by impartial academic researchers and/or classroom practitioners. As indicated in the previous section, research carried out by teacher researchers is valuable because they understand the complexity of the social reality of classroom teaching and learning.

Also, action research project studies need to be based on a sound foundation of reflective practice as discussed in the previous section. Moreover, any classroom research, whether by practitioner or non-practitioner, should incorporate data collection by using a judicious combination of different sources of data. In the present study, in particular, it is important to gain an insight into the online cognitive processing – “cognition in flight” (Vygotsky, 1934) of both learners and teachers, such as by the innovative use of discrete audio-recording of interaction among learners and in-action reflections by teacher. This suggests that teachers would gain valuable insights into their assumptions and beliefs, and pedagogic practices by recording their private speech and oral comments with students

The present study only involved two cycles. The impact of the CARE model on students and the outcomes could have been different if there had been three cycles – one or more additional cycle would have been enabled further reflection, pre-planning and reflection on action to the ultimate benefit of the students in the present study and a refinement of the model for future use. Therefore, it is suggested that action research of this nature be conducted, wherever possible, over a longer period of time.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This study set out with the intention to investigate the extent to which reluctant readers could be scaffolded by the implementation of CARE to develop an active engagement in reading narrative texts. There is evidence to suggest that

this was possible, and that the model, suitably modified, might be applicable in relatable context. The extent to which this might be the case rests on the judgment of the readers.

In closing, my reflective practice was informed by the think-act-reflect cycles (Farrell, 2007; Schön, 1983), private speech (Vygotsky, 1934), and the advice of critical friends and supervisors. Notably, the principles of action research procedure (Burns, 2010; Whitehead & McNiff, 2010) have enabled me to comprehend and develop reading engagement in the ELL context, to evaluate especially the designed intervention and to critique and improve my teaching practice.

Thus, in the course of this academic journey, I have learned to be a better teacher, and to become, I hope, an effective researcher. There is still much for me to learn.

## References

- Abdul Shukor, A. (1998). *Program membina tabiat membaca*. (Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas Bil. 13/1998).
- Adelman, C. (1993). Kurt Lewin and the origins of action research. *Educational Action Research*, 1(1), 7-24. Retrieved from [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wie/teaching/cpd/ucst/ie906/Ipe\\_readings/adelman.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wie/teaching/cpd/ucst/ie906/Ipe_readings/adelman.pdf)
- Adorno, T. (1966). *Negative Dialektik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Afflerbach, P., Pearson, P. D., & Paris, S. G. (2008). Clarifying differences between skills and reading strategies. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(5), 364-373.
- Ahmadi, M. R., & Gilakjani, A. P. (2012). Reciprocal teaching strategies and their impacts on English reading comprehension. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(10), 2053-2060.
- Alford, J., & Jetnikoff, A. (2011). High-challenge teaching for senior English as an additional language learners in times of change. *English in Australia*, 46(1), 11-20.
- Allington, R. L., McGill-Franzen, A., Camilli, G., Williams, L., Graff, J., & Zeig, J. (2010). Addressing summer reading setback among economically disadvantaged elementary students. *Reading Psychology*, 31(5), 411-427. doi: 10.1080/02702711.2010.505165
- Allwright, D. (2006). Six promising directions in applied linguistics. In S. Gieve & I. K. Miller (Eds.), *Understanding the language classroom* (pp. 11-17). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Almasi, J. F. (1995). The nature of fourth graders' sociocognitive conflicts in peer-led and teacher-led discussion of literature. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(3), 314-351.
- Amirikhiz, S. Y. Y., Abu Bakar, K., Samad, A. A., Baki, R., & Mahmoudi, L. (2013). Teachers' experiential reflections on Iranian and Malaysian students' collaborative orientations. *Asian Social Science*, 9(1), 271-277.
- Angelides, P. (2001). The development of an efficient technique for collecting and analyzing qualitative data: The analysis of critical incidents. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education Researcher*, 14(3), 429-442.
- Annamma, S., Eppolito, A., Klingner, J., Boele, A., Boardman, A., & Stillman-Spisak, S. J. (2011). Collaborative strategic reading: Fostering success for all. *Voices From the Middle*, 19(2), 27-29.
- Anton, M., & DeCamilla, F. (1998). Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 54(314-342).
- Antonio, D., & Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Reading is social. In J. T. Guthrie (Ed.), *Engaging adolescents in reading* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Applegate, A. J., & Applegate, M. D. (2010). A study of thoughtful literacy and the motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(4), 226-234.
- Appleman, D. (2000). *Critical encounters in High School English*. New York, NY: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Assor, A., Kaplan, H., & Roth, G. (2002). Choice is good, but relevance is excellent: Autonomy-enhancing and suppressing teacher behaviours

- predicting students' engagement in schoolwork. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 261-278.
- Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2000). *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, 4(9), 1175-1184.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9(3), 75-78.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2), 164-180.
- Barber, J. P., & Walczak, K. K. (2009). *Peer debriefing strategies in grounded theory research*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, California.
- Barkhuizen, G., & Wette, R. (2008). Narrative frames for investigating the experiences of language teachers. *System*, 36(2008), 372-387.
- Barnard, R., & Nguyen, G. V. (2010). Task-based language teaching (TBLT): A Vietnamese case study using narrative frames to elicit teachers' beliefs. *Language Education in Asia*, 1(1), 77-86.
- Basree, S. (n.d.). Contemporary children's literature in English classrooms: A study of Malaysian primary schools. *The International Journal of Learning*, 16(8), 325-334.
- Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: On the relative merits of search for generalisation and study of single event. *Oxford Review of Education*, 7(1), 73-94.
- Bean, T. W., & Moni, K. (2003). Developing students' critical literacy: Exploring identity construction in young adult fiction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46(8), 638-648.
- Beck, A. S. (2005). A place for critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(5), 392-400.
- Birks, M., & Mills, J. (2011). *Grounded theory: A practical guide*. Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Block, K., Warr, D., Gibbs, L., & Riggs, E. (2012). Addressing ethical and methodological challenges research with refugee-background young people: Reflections from the field. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 26(1), 69-87. doi: 10.1093/jrs/fes002
- Booth, D. (2012). *Strengthening the validity of qualitative data analysis*. Paper presented at the 2nd Auckland Postgraduate Conference on Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Auckland.
- Borg, S. (2001). The research journal: A tool for promoting and understanding researcher development. *Language Teaching Research*, 5(2), 156-177.
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Borg, S. (2013). *Teacher research in language teaching: A critical analysis*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Bosco, R. A., Johnson, G. M., & Myerson, J. (2010). *The collected works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. USA: Harvard University Press
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). The logic of practice. London, UK: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). Understanding. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 13(2), 17-37.
- Brookfield, S. D. (2006). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, J. D. (2009a). Foreign and second language needs analysis. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 267-293). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Brown, J. D. (2009b). Open-response items in questionnaire. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 200-219). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brozo, B., Shiel, G., & Topping, K. (2007). Engagement in reading: Lesson learned from three PISA countries. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 51, 304-315.
- Bryan, G., Fawson, P. C., & Reutzel, D. D. (2003). Sustained silent reading: Exploring the value of literature discussion with three non-engaged readers. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 43(1), 47-73.
- Burns, A. (1995). Teacher research: Perspectives on teacher action research and curriculum renewal. In A. Burns & S. Hood (Eds.), *Teachers' voices: Exploring course design in a changing curriculum*. Sydney: NCELTR.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2009). Action research. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics* (pp. 112-134). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Burns, A., Paltridge, B., & Wigglesworth, G. (2008). Review of doctoral research in second-language teaching and learning in Australia (2003-2006). *Language Teaching*, 41(2), 273-293.
- Cambria, J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2010). Motivating and engaging students in reading. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 46(1), 16-29.
- Canh, L. V. (2012). Interviews. In R. Barnard & A. Burns (Eds.), *Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies* (pp. 90-108). Bristol: UK: Short Run Press Ltd.
- Cantrell, S. C., Almasi, J. F., Carter, J., Rintamaa, M., & Madden, A. (2010). The impact of a strategy-based intervention on the comprehension and strategy use of struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 102(2), 257-280.
- Cantrell, S. C., Almasi, J. F., Carter, J. C., Rintamaa, M., & Buckman, M. (2013). The impact of supplemental instruction on low-achieving adolescents' reading engagement. *Journal of Educational Research*.
- Carlisle, A. (2000). Reading logs: An application of Reader Response theory in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 54(1), 12-19.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, knowledge and action research*. Geelong, NSW: Deakin University Press.

- Certo, J. L. (2011). Social skills and leadership abilities among children in small-group literature discussion. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 25(1), 62-81.
- Chapman, J. W., & Tunmer, W. E. (1995). Development of young children's reading self-concepts: An examination of emerging subcomponents and their relationship with reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87, 154-167.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Chin, D., Lee, J. Y. V., & Thayalan, X. (2007). Reading behaviour and the influence of reading on the English Language proficiency among students at UiTM sabah. Retrieved from <http://eprints.ptar.uitm.edu.my/4360/>
- Cho, S. H., Xu, Y. Y., & Rhodes, J. A. (2010). Examining English language learner's motivation of and engagement in reading: A qualitative study. *The Reading Matrix*, 10(2), 205-221.
- Choo, T., Eng, T., & Ahmad, N. (2011). Effects of reciprocal teaching strategies on reading comprehension. *The Reading Matrix*, 11(2), 140-149.
- Clarke, A. (1995). Professional development in practicum settings: Reflective practice under scrutiny. *Teaching & Teaching Education*, 11(3), 243-261.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation*. New Your, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cohen, A. D. (2010). Focus on the language learner: Styles, strategies and motivation. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (2nd ed., pp. 161-178). London, UK: Hodder Education.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Comber, B. (1998). Problematising 'background': (Re)constructing categories in educational research. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 25(3), 1-21.
- Comber, B. (2001a). Classroom explorations in critical literacy. In H. Fehring & P. Green (Eds.), *Critical literacy: A collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association* (pp. 90-102). Newark: DE: International Reading Association.
- Comber, B. (2001b). Negotating critical literacies. *School Talk*, 6(3), 1-2.
- Comber, B. (2006). Critical literacy educators at work. In K. Cooper & R. White (Eds.), *The practical critical educator* (pp. 51-65). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (1991). Competence, autonomy and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system processes. In M. Gunnar & L. A. Sroufe (Eds.), *Minnesota Symposium of Child Psychology* (Vol. 22, pp. 43-77). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13, 3-21.
- Cox, C., & Boyd-Batstone, P. S. (2009). *Engaging English learners exploring literature, developing literacy, and differentiating instruction* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Crick, R. D. (2012). Deep engagement as a complex system: Identity, learning power and authentic enquiry. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 675-694). New York, NY: Springer.
- Croker, R. A. (2009). An introduction to qualitative research. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 3-24). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cross, V., Moore, A., Morris, J., Caladine, L., Hilton, R., & Bristow, H. (2006). *The practice-based educator: A reflective tool for CPD and accreditation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Csikzentmihalyi, M. (1988). The flow experience and its significance for human psychology. In M. Csikzentmihalyi & I. S. Csikzentmihalyi (Eds.), *Optimal experience* (pp. 15-35). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cynthia, A. (2000). Sustained silent reading: Try it, you'll like it. *The Reading Teacher*, 54(3), 258-259.
- Dana, N. F., & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2009). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Davis, J. N. (1989). The art of reading in the foreign language: Pedagogical implications of Iser's readers-response theory. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 420-428.
- Day, R. R., & Bamfort, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, A. W. (2011). Developing and using a codebook for the analysis of interview data: An example from a professional development research project. *Field Methods*, 23(136), 136-155.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social sciences*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Dick, B. (2007). What can grounded theorists and action researchers learn from each other? In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 398-416). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dole, J., Nokes, J. D., & Dritis, D. (2009). Cognitive strategy instruction. In S. E. Isreal & G. G. Duffy (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension* (pp. 347-372). New York: NY: Routledge.

- Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Dorn, L., & Soffos, C. (2001). *Shaping literate minds: Developing self-regulated learners*. Portland, MA: Stenhouse.
- Duff, A., & Maley, A. (1990). *Literature*. Hong Kong, HK: Oxford.
- Dugan, J. (1997). Transactional literature discussions: engaging students in the appreciation and understanding of literature. *The Reading Teacher*, 51(2), 86-96. Retrieved from Academic Research Library database
- Durik, A. M., Vida, M., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Task values and ability beliefs as predictors of high school literacy choices: A development analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 382-393.
- Durrant, C., & Green, B. (2001). Literacy and the new technologies in school education: Meeting in the L(IT)eracy challenge? In H. Fehring & P. Green (Eds.), *Critical Literacy: A Collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association* (pp. 142-164). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Eastman, L. (1998). Oral discussion in teaching critical literacy to beginners. In A. Burns & S. Hood (Eds.), *Teachers' Voices 3: Teaching Critical Literacy* (pp. 22-28). Sydney, NSW: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Eccles, J., & Wang, M. T. (2012). In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 133-145). New York, NY: Springer.
- Edmonds, M. S., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Reutebuch, A. C., Tackett, K. K., & Schnakenberg, J. W. (2009). A synthesis of reading interventions and their effects on reading comprehension outcomes for older struggling readers. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 262-300.
- Eeds, M., & Wells, D. (1989). Grand conversations: An exploration of meaning construction in literature study groups. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23, 4-29.
- Eisner, E. W. (1981). On the differences between scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research. *Educational Research*, 10(4), 5-9.
- Elliott, J. (1991). *Action research for educational change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2002). The place of grammar instruction in the second/foreign language curriculum. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (Eds.), *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms* (pp. 17-34). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (1998). Reflective teaching: The principles and practices. *English Teaching Forum*, 36(4), 10-17.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2004). *Reflective practice in action: 80 Reflections breaks for busy teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective Language Teaching: From research to practice*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2012). Reflecting of reflective practice: Revisiting Dewey and Schön. *TESOL Journal*, 3.1, 7-16. doi: 10.1002/tesj.10
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2013). *Reflective writing for language teachers*. Sheffield, England: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

- Feldman, A. (2003). Validity and quality in self study. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 26-28.
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of qualitative methods*, 5(1), 80-92.
- Folse, K. S., & Ivone, J. (2002). *First discussion starters: Speaking fluency activities for lower-level ESL/EFL students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Foo, B., & Richards, C. (2004). English in Malaysia. *RELC Journal*, 35(2), 229-240.
- Fournier, D. N. E., & Graves, M. F. (2002). Scaffolding adolescents' comprehension of short stories. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 46(1), 30-39.
- Fox, N. J. (2003). Practice-based evidence: Towards collaborative and transgressive research. *Sociology*, 37(1), 81-102.
- Fraser, H. (1998). A place for critical literacy in developing discussion skills. In A. Burns & S. Hood (Eds.), *Teachers' Voices 3: Teaching Critical Literacy* (pp. 47-54). Sydney, NSW: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *American Educational Research Association*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Freebody, P. (1992). A socio-cultural approach: Resourcing four roles as a literacy learner. In A. Watson & A. Badenhop (Eds.), *Prevention of reading failure* (pp. 48-60). Sydney: Ashton-Scholastic.
- Freebody, P. (2013). Knowledge about language, literacy and literature in the teaching and learning of English. In A. Simpson & S. White (Eds.), *Language, literacy and literature* (pp. 3-25). South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, D. (2009). What makes research 'Qualitative'? In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 25-41). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freese, A. R. (2006). Reframing one's teaching: Discovering our teacher selves through reflection and inquiry. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 100-119.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word & the world*. London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Friedemann, M. L., Mayorga, C., & Jimenez, L. D. (2011). Data collector's field journals as tools for research. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 16, 453-465.
- Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. A. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(1), 148-162.
- Gambrell, L. B., Hughes, E. M., Calvert, L., Malloy, J. A., & Igo, B. (2011). Authentic reading, writing, and discussion: An exploratory study of a pen pal project. *The Elementary School Journal*, 112(2), 234-258.
- Gambrell, L. B., & Marinak, B. A. (2010). Reading motivation: Exploring the elementary gender gap. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 49(2), 129-141.
- Gambrell, L. B., Marinak, B. A., Brooker, H. R., & McCrea-Andrews, H. J. (2011). The importance of independent reading. In S. J. Samuels & A. E.

- Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (4th ed., pp. 143-158). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ganakumaran, S. (2004). Are We Really Teaching Malaysian to Read? In M. E. Vithamani (Ed.), *Reading in TESL Vol. 2: Essay in honour of Basil Wijasuriya*. Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Sasbadi-MELTA ELT Series.
- Ganakumaran, S. (2006). "Stickability" in online autonomous literature learning programmes: Strategies for sustaining learner interest and motivation. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 2, 80-96. Retrieved from <http://www.melta.org.my/modules/tinycontent/Dos/Ganakumaran.pdf>
- Garan, E. M., & DeVogd, G. (2008). The benefits of sustained silent reading: Scientific research and common sense converge. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 336-344.
- Gardiner, S. (2005). *Building student literacy through sustained silent reading*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Gass, S., & Mackey, A. (2000). *Stimulated recall methodology in second language research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2012). *Educational Research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Gilbert, P. (2001). Using sexist language practices to explore critical literacy. In H. Fehring & P. Green (Eds.), *Critical Literacy: A Collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association* (pp. 75-83). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Gina, M., Doepker, G. M., & Ortlieb, E. (2011). Preserving adolescent readership through interest and motivation. *International Journal of Education*, 3(1), 1-7.
- Gladman, A., & Freeman, D. (2012). Focus groups. In R. Barnard & A. Burns (Eds.), *Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies* (pp. 68-89). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York, NY: Aldine.
- Gonida, E. N., Voulala, K., & Kiosseoglou, G. (2009). Students' achievement goal orientations and their behavioral and emotional engagement: Co-examining the role of perceived school goal structures and parent goals during adolescence. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 19, 53-60.
- Goodman, K., & Freeman, D. (1993). What's simple in simplified language. In M. L. Tickoo (Ed.), *Simplification: Theory and application* (pp. 69-76). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Graves, M. F., & Fitzgerald, J. (2003). Scaffolding reading experiences for multilingual classrooms. In G. G. Garcia (Ed.), *English Learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 96-104). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Griffin, M. L., & Scherr, T. G. (2010). Using critical incident reporting to promote objectivity and self-knowledge in pre-service school psychologists. *School Psychology International*, 31(1), 3-20.

- Griffiths, M., & Tann, S. (1992). Using reflective practice to link personal and public theories. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*, 18(1), 69-84.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guthrie, J. T. (2004). Teaching for literacy engagement. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 36(1), 1-29.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Alao, S. (1997). Designing contexts to increase motivations for reading. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(2), 95-105.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Klauda, S. L. (2013). Engagement and Motivational Processes in Reading. In P. Afflerbach (Ed.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Reading*. New York: Routledge
- Guthrie, J. T., Klauda, S. L., & Ho, A. N. (2013). Modeling the relationships among reading instruction, motivation, engagement, and achievement for adolescents. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(1), 9-26.
- Guthrie, J. T., McRae, A., & Klauda, S. L. (2007). Contributions of Concept-oriented reading instruction to knowledge about interventions for motivations in reading. *Educational Psychology*, 42, 237-250.
- Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W. D., & Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunities to read and balanced reading instruction for reading achievement and engagement: A policy analysis of state NAEP in Maryland. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94(3), 145-162.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. III). New York, NY: Erlbaum.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., Metsala, J. L., & Cox, K. E. (2009). Motivational and cognitive predictors of text comprehension and reading amount. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3(3), 231-256.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & Perencevich, K. C. (2004). Scaffolding for motivation and engagement in reading. In J. T. Guthrie, A. Wigfield & K. C. Perencevich (Eds.), *Motivating reading comprehension: Concept-oriented reading instruction* (pp. 55-86). New Jersey, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & VonSecker, C. (2000). Effects of integrated instruction on motivation and strategy use in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(2), 331-341.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & You, W. (2012). Instructional contexts for engagement and achievement in reading. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 601-634). New York, NY: Springer.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interest*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Hammond, J., & Macken-Horarik, M. (1999). Critical literacy: Challenges and questions for ESL classrooms. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language, Inc. (TESOL)*, 33(3), 528-544.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2010). *Mixed method research*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Hirvela, A. (1996). Readers-response theory and ELT. *ELT Journal*, 50(2), 127-134.

- Ho, D. (2006). The focus group interview: Rising to the challenge in qualitative research methodology. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29(1), 5.1-5.19.
- Holton, J. A. (2007). The coding process and its challenges. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 265-290). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Horner, S. L., & Shwery, C. S. (2002). Becoming an engaged, self-regulated reader. *Theory into Practice*, 41(2), 102-109.
- Huang, S. Y. (2011). Reading "further and beyond the text": Student perspectives of critical literacy in EFL Reading and writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(2), 145-154.
- Hunt, L. C. J. (1970). The effects of self-selection, interest, and motivation upon independent, instructional, and frustrational levels. *The Reading Teacher*, 24(2), 146-158.
- Hwang, D., & Embi, M. A. (2007). Approaches employed by secondary school teachers to teaching the literature components in English. *Journal Pendidikan*, 22, 1-23.
- Iser, W. (1978). *The art of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. London, UK: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Ivankova, N. V., & Creswell, J. W. (2009). Mixed Methods. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 135-161). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ivey, G., & Johnson, P. H. (2013). Engagement with young adult literature: Outcomes and processes. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(3), 255-275.
- Jacelon, C. S., & Imperio, K. (2005). Participant diaries as a source of data in research with older adults. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(7), 991-997.
- Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Janks, H. (2014). Critical literacy's ongoing importance for education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 349-356.
- Jarvis, D. H. (2003). RED time stories: Fostering of forcing literacy across the curriculum? *The Ontario Action Researcher*, 6(3). Retrieved from [www.nipissingu.ca/oar/archive-Vol6No3-V631E.html](http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/archive-Vol6No3-V631E.html)
- Jensen, T. L., & Jensen, V. S. (2002). Sustained silent reading and young adult short stories for high school classes. *The ALAN Review*, 30(1), 58-60.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. B. (2012). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Johnson, R. C., & Tweedie, M. G. (2010). Could phonemic awareness instruction be (part of) the answer for young EFL learners? A report on the early literacy project in Malaysia. *TESOL Quarterly: A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and Standard English as a Second Dialect*, 44(4), 822-829.
- Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescent and literacy: Reading for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Kamil, M. L. (2008). How to get recreational reading to increase reading ability. In Y. Kim, V. J. Risko, D. L. Compton, D. K. Dickinson, M. K. Hundley, R. T. Jimenez & D. W. Rowe (Eds.), *57th yearbook of the National Reading Conference*. Oak Creek, Wis: National Reading Conference.
- Kelley, M., & Clausen-Grace, N. (2006). R5: The sustained reading makeover that transformed readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(2), 148-156.

- Kemmis, S. (1982). Seven principles for programme evaluation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 14(3), 221-240.
- Kempe, A. (2001). No single meaning: Empowering students to construct socially critical reading of the text. In H. Fehring & P. Green (Eds.), *Critical Literacy: A Collection of articles from the Australian Literacy Educators' Association* (pp. 40-57). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Kim, M. (2004). Literature discussions in adult L2 learning. *Language and Education*, 18(2), 145-166.
- Kincheloe, J. (1991). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative path to empowerment*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Klenner, S., & Sandretto, S. (2011). *Planting seeds: Embedding critical literacy into your classroom programme*. New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Knobel, M., & Healy, A. (1998). *Critical literacies in the primary classroom* New South Wales, Australia: PETA.
- Ko, M., & Wang, T. F. (2009). Introducing critical literacy to EFL teaching: Three Taiwanese college teachers' conceptualization. *Asian EFL Journal*, 11(1), 174-191.
- Ko, M., & Wang, T. F. (2013). EFL learners' critical literacy practices: A case study of four college students in Taiwan. *The Asia-pacific Education Researcher*, 17, 221-229.
- Kooy, M., & Wells, J. (1996). *Reading response logs: Inviting students to explore novels, short stories, plays, poetry and more*. Canada: Pembroke.
- Kuo, J. (2006). *Collaborative action research on critical literacy: Investigating an English conversation class in Taiwan*. Indiana University.
- Kuo, J. (2009). Critical literacy and a picture-book-based dialogue activity in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal Education Review*, 10(4), 483-494. doi: 10.1007/s12564-009-9048-6
- Lao, C. Y., & Krashen, S. (2000). The impact of popular literature study on literacy development in EFL: More evidence for the power of reading. *System*, 28(2), 261-270.
- Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming Teaching Practice: becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective practice: International and multidisciplinary perspectives*, 1(3), 293-307.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2002). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Latendresse, C. (2004). Literature circles: Meeting reading standards, making personal connections, and appreciating other interpretations. *Middle School Journal*, 35(3), 13-20.
- Lau, S. M. C. (2013). A study of critical literacy work with beginning English language learners: An integrated approach. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 10(1), 1-30. doi: 0.1080/15427587.2013.753841
- Laufer, B., & Nation, I. S. P. (1995). Vocabulary size and use: Lexical richness in L2 written production. *Applied Linguistics*, 16, 307-322.
- Lazar, G. (1996). Exploring literary texts with the language learner. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 772-776.
- Lee, J. Y. V. (1999). *Text alive: Readers theatre in non-fiction literature*. Bachelor of Arts. Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Lee, J. Y. V. (2002). *Learning literature with readers theatre: The Malaysian context*. (Master of Education Thesis), University Malaysia Sabah.

- Lee, J. Y. V. (2013a). *Analytical Reading In ESL Context*. Paper presented at the Expanding research in languages and linguistics in Asia, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.
- Lee, J. Y. V. (2013b). *Reflective practice in an action research project*. Paper presented at the ALANZ Regional Seminar Auckland - Waikato, Wintec Institute of Technology, New Zealand.
- Lee, J. Y. V. (2014). *Reflective practice and action research*. Paper presented at the 10th Annual CamTesol Conference on ELT, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Lempert, L. B. (2007). Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 245-264). Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Levesque, C., Copeland, K. J., Pattie, M. D., & Deci, E. L. (2010). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In P. Peterson, E. Baker & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 618-623). New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Lewison, M., Flint, A. S., & Sluys, K. V. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-391.
- Lin, L. F. (2010). The impact of the retelling technique on Chinese students' English reading comprehension. *EFL Asian Journal*, 12(2), 163-191.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic enquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Locke, T., Cawkwell, G., & Sila'ila'i, E. (2009). Teaching literature in the multicultural classroom. from University of Waikato <http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/9248-FinalReport.pdf>
- Long, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. deBot, D. Coste, R. Ginsberg & C. Kramersch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39-52). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Long, T. W., & Gove, M. K. (2003). How engagement strategies and literature circles promote critical response in a fourth-grade urban classroom. *Reading Teacher*, 57(4), 350-361.
- Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1997). Critical literacy and the question of normativity: An introduction. In S. Muspratt, A. Luke & P. Freebody (Eds.), *Constructing critical literacies: Teaching and learning textual practice* (pp. 1-18). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1999). Further notes on the four resources model. *readingonline*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingonline.org/research/lukefreebody.html>
- Luke, A., O'Brien, J., & Comber, B. (2001). Making community texts objects of study. In H. Fehring & P. Green (Eds.), *Critical Literacy: A Collection of articles form the Australian Literacy Educators' Association* (pp. 112-123). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Lyall, A. (n.d). Impact of a program to teach reading strategies to primary children in rural Malaysia. *The International TEYL Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.teyl.org/article8.html>
- Maesin, A., Mansor, M., Shafie, L. A., & Nayan, S. (2009). A study of collaborative learning among Malaysian undergraduates. *Asian Social Science*, 5(7), 70-76.

- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013). *Malaysia education blueprint 2013-2025: Preschool to post-secondary education*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- Malaysia National Library. (2006). *The reading profile of Malaysians 2006*. Malaysian National Library. Kuala Lumpur.
- Malloy, J. A., & Gambrell, L. B. (2011). The contribution of discussion to reading comprehension and critical thinking. In R. Allington & A. McGill-Franzen (Eds.), *Handbook of reading disabilities research* (pp. 253-262). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Manning, M., Lewis, M., & Lewis, M. (2010). Sustained silent reading: An update of the research. In E. H. Hiebert & D. R. Reutzel (Eds.), *Revisiting silent reading: New directions for teachers and researchers* (pp. 112-128). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Marcuse, H. (1941). *Reason and revolution: Hegel and the rise of social theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Margolis, H., & McCabe, P. P. (2003). self-efficacy: A key to improving the motivation of struggling learners. *Preventing School Failures*, 47(4), 162-169.
- Maxwell, J. (2002). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. In A. M. Huberman & M. B. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher's companion* (pp. 37-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCarthy, S. J., & Moje, E. B. (2002). Conversations: Identity matters. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37(2), 228.
- McGee, L. M. (1992). Focus on research: Exploring the literature-based reading revolution. *Language Arts*, 69, 529-537.
- McKay, S. L. (2009). Introspective techniques *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 220-241). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McLaughlin, M., & Allen, M. B. (2002). *Guided comprehension: A teaching model for Grades 3-8*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2004). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding Reader Response. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(1), 52-62. doi: 10.1598/JAAL.48.1.5
- McNiff, J. (1988). *Action research: Principles and practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- McNiff, J. (2003). "Peace education and other stories of violence". Paper presented at the Jordan Valley Academic College and at The Israeli Center for Qualitative Methodologies, Ben Gurion University of the Negev.
- McNiff, J. (2007). *How do I account for the good in what I claim as quality educational research?* Paper presented at the Philosophy of Education Special Interest Group, Institute of Education, University of London.
- McNiff, J. (2009). *How do I contribute to a reconceptualisation of educational theory for moral accountability in the creation of sustainable social order*. Paper presented at the Academic practitioner-researchers: Shifting the epistemological centre in higher education, University of Manchester.
- McNiff, J. (2010). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new and experienced action researchers*. UK: MPG Books Group, Bodmin and King's Lynn.
- McNiff, J. (2013). *Action research: Principles and practice* (3rd ed.). New York: NY: Taylor and Francis Group.

- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2002). *Action research: Principles and practice* (2th ed.). New York: NY: Taylor and Francis Group.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2010). *You and your action research project* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2011). *All you need to know about action research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mercer, N. (1995). *The guided construction of knowledge: Talk amongst teachers and learners*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press Ltd.
- Mertler, C. A. (2012). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Miller, S. M., & Legge, S. (1999). Supporting possible worlds: Transforming literature teaching and learning through conversations in the narrative mode. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 34(1), 10.
- Ministry of Education. (2000). *Bahasa Inggeris*. Ministry of Education: Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum.
- Ministry of Education. (2012). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025*. Ministry of Education.
- Miserandino, M. (1996). Children who do well in school: Individual differences in perceived competence and autonomy in above-average children. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88(2), 203-214.
- Misson, R., & Morgon, W. (2006). *Critical literacy and the aesthetic: Transforming the English classrooms*. Urbana, III: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Mokhtar, A. A., Raiwan, R. M., Yahaya, M. F., Abdullah, A., Mansor, M., Osman, M. I., & ... Murat, A. (2010). Vocabulary knowledge of adult ELLs. *English Language Teaching* 3(1), 71-80.
- Molden, K. (2007). Critical Literacy, the right answer for the reading classroom: Strategies to move beyond comprehension for reading improvement. *Reading Improvement*, 44(1), 50-56.
- Moll, L. C., Dfaz, S., Estrada, E., & Lopes, L. (1992). Making contexts: The social construction of lessons in two languages. In M. Saravia-Shore & S. F. Arvizu (Eds.), *Studies in education and culture: Vol 3. Cross-cultural literacy: Ethnographies of communication in multiethnic classrooms* (pp. 339-366). New York, NY: Garland.
- Moller, J., & Retelsdorf, J. (2008). Reading or watching TV? On the prediction of activity preferences. *Zeitschrift für Entwicklungspsychologie und Pädagogische Psychologie*, 40(1), 13-21. doi: 10.1026/0049-8637.40.1.13
- Morrow, L. M., & Gambrell, L. B. (2000). Literature-Based Reading Instruction. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 563-586). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- My Van, T. T. (2009). The relevance of literary analysis to teaching literature in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 3, 2-17.
- Muhamad, M. (2003). *Teaching science and Mathematics in English: The way forward*. Paper presented at the ELTC ETeMES conference, managing curriculum change, Pearl Point International Hotel.
- Munby, H., & Russell, T. (1990). Metaphor in the study of teachers' professional knowledge. *Theory into Practice*, 29(2), 116-121.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based

- assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Nguyen, G. V., & Bygate, M. (2012). Narrative frames. In R. Barnard & A. Burns (Eds.), *Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies* (pp. 48-67). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Noels, K. A., Clement, R., & Pelletier, L. G. (2001). Intrinsic, extrinsic, and integrative orientations of French children learners of English. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 425-442.
- Noordin, W. Z. (2002). The vision and strategies of education in Malaysia. In S. Hussin (Ed.), *Revisiting education: Some prospective policy innovations* (pp. 15-30). Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications.
- Norton, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language*, 29(1), 9-31.
- Norton, B. (2010). Identity, literacy, and English-language teaching. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28(1), 1-13.
- Norton, B. (2011). The practice of theory in the language classroom. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 18(2), 171-180.
- Norton, L. S. (2009). *Action research in teaching & learning. A practical guide to conducting pedagogical research in universities*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Oxford: Heinemann English Language Teaching.
- Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 695-705.
- Osterman, K. F., & Kottkamp, R. B. (1993). *Reflective practice for educators: Improving schooling through professional development*. Newbury Park: CA: Corwin Press Inc.
- Pacheco, M. (2010). English-language learners' reading achievement: Dialectical relationships between policy and practices in meaning-making opportunities. *International Reading Association*, 45(3), 292-317.
- Pandian, A. (1997). *Reading in Malaysia*. Selangor, Malaysia: University Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Pandian, A. (2000). *A study on readership behaviour among multi-ethnic, multi-lingual Malaysian students*. Paper presented at the Seventh International Literacy and Educational Research Network (LERN) Conference. <http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/aug01/pandian1.htm>
- Pandian, A. (2006). English language teaching in Malaysia today. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 22(2), 35-52.
- Park, S., & Oliver, J. S. (2008). Revisiting the conceptualisation of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK): PCK as a conceptual tool to understand teachers as professionals. *Springer*, 38, 261-284. doi: 10.1007/s11165-007-9049-6
- Parr, J. M., & Maguiness, C. (2005). Removing the silent from SSR: Voluntary reading as social practice. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49(2), 98-107.
- Parsons, R. D., & Brown, K. S. (2002). *Teacher as reflective practitioner and action researcher*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning.

- Philipp, M. (2010). *Empirical reading: A longitudinal study on the relevance of peer groups for reading motivation and behaviour at the beginning of secondary school*. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). *Personal knowledge*. London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Ponniah, A. (2009). *Stride Ahead*. Kuala Lumpur: Pearson Malaysia Sdn Bhd.
- Pressley, M., El-Dinary, P. B., Gaskins, I., Schuder, T., Bergman, J. L., Almasi, J. F., & Brown, R. (1992). Beyond direct explanation: Transactional instruction of reading comprehension strategies. *The Elementary School Journal*, 92, 513-555.
- Private Schools in Malaysia. (2013). Retrieved 14th February, 2013, from <http://www.myworklife.my/lifestyle/live/education/private-schools-in-malaysia/>
- Probst, R. (1994). Readers-response theory and the English curriculum. *The English Journal* 83(3), 37-44.
- Probst, R. (2004). *Response and analysis: Teaching literature in secondary school* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NE: Heinemann.
- Protacio, M. S., & Sarroub, L. K. (2013). A case study of reading instruction in a Philippine classroom. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/teachlearnfacpub>
- Ratnawati, M. A., & Ismail, S. A. (2003). Promoting English language development and the reading habit among students in rural schools through the guided extensive reading program. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15(2), 83-102.
- Reade, H. (1998). Incorporating a critical literacy perspective in an intermediate reading class. In A. Burns & S. Hood (Eds.), *Teachers' Voices 3: Teaching Critical Literacy* (pp. 39-46). Sydney, NSW: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Reeve, J. (2012). A self-determination theory: Perspective on student engagement. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 149-172). New York, NY: Springer.
- Reeve, J. (2013). A self-determination theory perspective on student engagement. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 149-172). New York: Springer.
- Reeve, J., & Tseng, C. M. (2011). Agency as a fourth aspect of students' engagement during learning activities. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36, 257-267. doi: 10.1016/j.cedpsych.2011.05.002
- Reichertz, J. (2007). Abduction: The logic of discovery of grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 214-228). Singapore: Sage: Publications.
- Reid, J. M. (1987). The learning style preference of ELLs. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(1), 87-111.
- Reschly, A. L., & Christenson, S. L. (2012). Jingle, jangle, and conceptual haziness: Evolution and future directions of the engagement construct. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 3-20). New York: Springer.
- Reutzel, D. R., Fawson, P. C., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Reconsidering silent sustained reading: An exploratory study of scaffolded silent reading. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(1), 37-50.

- Reutzel, D. R., Jones, C. D., Fawson, P. C., & Smith, J. A. (2008). Scaffolded silent reading: A complement to guided repeated oral reading that works! *The Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 194-207.
- Reutzel, D. R., Jones, C. D., & Newman, T. H. (2010). Scaffolding silent reading: Improving the conditions of silent reading practice in classrooms. In E. H. Hiebert & D. D. Reutzel (Eds.), *From revisiting silent reading: New directions for teachers and researchers* (pp. 129-150). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Richards, J. C., & Ho, B. (1998). Reflective thinking through journal writing. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Beyond Training: Perspectives on language teacher education* (pp. 153-179). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A Description and analysis*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. London, UK: SAGE.
- Rogoff, B., Matusov, B., & White, C. (1996). Handbook of Education and human development (pp. 388-414). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Roman-Perez, R. I. (2003). Whatever works: Electronic chicken soup for reluctant ESL writers. *The Clearing House*, 76(6), 310-314.
- Rommetveit, R. (1985). Language acquisition as increasing linguistic structuring of experience and symbolic behavior control. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication, and cognition* (pp. 183-204). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1986). The aesthetic transaction. *Journal of aesthetic education*, 20(4), 122-128.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rosenshine, B., & Meister, C. (1994). Reciprocal teaching : A review of nineteen experimental studies. *Review of Educational Research*, 64(4), 479-530.
- Runkle, D. R. (2000). Effectively using journals to respond to literature. *Schools in the Middle*, 9, 35-36.
- Rust, M., & Meyers, E. (2006). The bright side: Teacher research in context of educational reform and policy-making. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 12(1), 69-86.
- Ryan, A., & Pintrich, P. R. (1998). Achievement and social motivational influences on help seeking in the classroom. In S. A. Karabenick (Ed.), *Strategic help seeking: Implications for learning and teaching* (pp. 117-139). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence, Erlbaum.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.
- Sandretto, S. (2007). Action research for social justice: Teaching & learning research initiative. Retrieved from <http://www.tlri.org.nz/assets/discussion-paper-pdfs/action-research.pdf>
- Schiefele, U., Schaffner, E., Moller, J., & Wigfield, A. (2012). Dimensions of reading motivation and their relation to reading behavior and competence. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 47(4), 427-463. doi: 10.1002/PRQ.030
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. Boston, MA: Basic Books Inc.

- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schön, D. A. (1995). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Aldershot, Hants: Arena.
- Schooten, E. V., Oostdam, R., & Glopper, K. D. (2001). Dimensions and predictors of literacy response. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 33(1), 1-32. doi: 10.1080/10862960109548101
- Schraw, G. (1997). Situational interest in literary text. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22, 436-456.
- Schunk, D. H., & Pajares, F. (2002). The development of academic self-efficacy. In A. Wigfield & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 16-31). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Scott, J. E. (1996). Self-efficacy: A key to literacy learning. *Reading Horizons*, 36(3), 195-213.
- Shahrizal, A., & Amelia, H. (2006). Reading habits and attitudes in the digital age: Analysis of gender and academic program differences in Malaysia. *Emerald Group*, 25(3), 285-298. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0264-0473.htm>
- Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2011). Teachers' critical incidents: Ethical dilemmas in teaching practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 648-656.
- Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). What is the "dialogical method" of teaching. *Journal of Education*, 169(3), 11-31.
- Siah, P. C. (2008). The effects of the sustained silent reading program on cultivating students' habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. *The Clearing House*, 81(4), 180-184.
- Siah, P. C., & Kwok, W. L. (2010). The value of reading and the effectiveness of silent reading. *The Clearing House*, 83, 168-174.
- Sidhu, G. K., Chan, Y. F., & Kaur, S. (2010). Instructional practices in teaching literature: observations of ESL classrooms in Malaysia. *English language Teaching* 3(2), 54-63. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsenet.org/elt>
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Sivasubramaniam, S. (2006). Promoting the prevalence of literature in the practice of foreign and second language education: Issues and Insights. *Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 8(4), 254-273.
- Skinner, E., Furrer, C., Marchand, G., & Kindermann, T. (2008). Engagement and disaffection in the classroom: Part of a larger motivational dynamic? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 765-781. doi: 10.1037/a0012840
- Skinner, E., Kindermann, T., Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (2009). Engagement and disaffection as organizational constructs in the dynamics of motivational development. In K. R. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 223-245). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Skinner, E., Wellborn, J. G., & Connell, J. P. (1990). What it takes to do well in school and whether I've got it: A process model of perceived control and children's engagement and achievement in school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 22-32.

- Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(3), 290-322.
- Small, F. (1997). *The study of reading habits in Malaysia, 1996*. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.
- Snow, C. E. (2001). *Reading for understanding*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education and the Science and Technology Policy Institute.
- Soraya, A. (1993). The Reader-Response Approach: An alternative for teaching literature in a second language. *Journal of Reading*, 37(4), 288-296.
- Spall, S. (1998). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(2). Retrieved from <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-20778155/peer-debriefing-qualitative-research.html>
- Spillett, M. (2003). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: Emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(2), 280-292. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Peer+debriefing%3a+who%2c+when%2c+why%2c+how.-a0111848817>
- Stahl, K. A. D. (2004). Proof, practice and promise: Comprehension strategy instruction in the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 57, 598-609.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 433-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Storch, N., & Wigglesworth, G. (2003). Is there a role for the use of L1 in an L2 setting? *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 760-770.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Suthagar, N. (2006). Literature in Malaysia schools: A post instructional survey. *Projek penyelidikan pemantauan khas bahagian pendidikan guru, BPG*.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2000). Task-based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research*, 4, 251-274.
- Sweetnam Evans, M. (2011). Reading bilinguals reading: First language use and comprehension monitoring in the reading of different textual genres. *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*, 17(2), 53-69.
- Tabata-Sandom, M. (2013). The reader-text-writer interaction: L2 Japanese learners' response toward graded readers. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 25(2), 264-282.
- Taboada, A., Townsend, D., & Boynton, M. J. (2013). Mediating effects of reading engagement on the reading comprehension of early adolescent English language learners. *Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming learning difficulties*, 29(4), 309-332.
- Tan, D. A. L., Lee, B. C., & Pandian, A. (2012). Learners' perceptions of sustained silent reading practices in tertiary classrooms. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55, 266-274.
- Thomson, J. (1987). *Understanding teenagers' reading: reading processes and the teaching of literature*. New York, NY: Nichols Pub. Co.

- Tomal, D., R. (2010). *Action research for education* (2nd ed.). Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Trelease, J. (2006). *The read-aloud handbook*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Tse, L. (1996). If you lead horses to water they will drink: Introducing second language adults to books in English *California Reader*, 29(2), 14-17.
- Underhill, A. (1999). Facilitation in language learning. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *The role of affect in language learning* (pp. 125-141). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Urlaub, P. (2012). Reading strategies and literature instruction: Teaching learners to generate questions to foster literary reading in the second language. *System*, 40(2), 296-304. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2012.05.002
- Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded theory for qualitative research*. Singapore: SAGE.
- Valeri-Gold, M. (1995). Uninterrupted sustained silent reading is an effective authentic method for college development learners. *Journal of Reading* 38(5), 385-386.
- van Lier, L. (1996). *The curriculum as interaction: In interaction in the language curriculum*. London, UK: Longman.
- van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
- van Lier, L. (2007). Action-based teaching, autonomy and identity. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 46-65.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1934). *Myshlenie i rech: Psikhologicheskije issledovamniya [Thinking and speech: Psychological investigations]*. Sortsial'no-Ekonmicheskoe Izdatel'stvo.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge: MA: MIT Press.
- Wade, S., Buxton, W. M., & Kelly, M. (1999). Using think alouds to examine reader-text interest. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(2), 194-216.
- Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical reading in language education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wallace, C. (2006). The text, dead or alive: Explaining textual repertoires in the adult ESOL classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 17, 74-94.
- Walqui, A. (2008). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9(2), 159-180.
- Warwick, P., & Maloch, B. (2003). Scaffolding speech and writing in the primary classroom: A consideration of work with literature and science pupil groups in the USA and UK. *Reading*, 37(2), 54-63.
- Weakland, M. (2014). *Super Core! Turbocharging your Basal reading program with more reading, writing, and word work*. Newark: DE: International Reading Association.
- Wegerif, R., & Mercer, N. (1997). A dialogical framework for investigating talk. In R. Wegerif & P. Scrimshaw (Eds.), *Computers and talk in the primary classroom* (pp. 49-65). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?". *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19(1), 41-52. Retrieved from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/livtheory.html>
- Whitehead, J. (1998a). *Creating living theories through paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities*. Paper presented at the Futuring educational

- research: What are the paradigmatic or post-paradigmatic possibilities?, AERA, San Diego.
- Whitehead, J. (1996). Living educational theories and living contradictions: A response to Mike Newby. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 30(3), 457-461.
- Whitehead, J. (1998b). *Educational action researchers: Creating their own living educational theories*. Paper presented at the Action Research SIG, AERA, San Diego.
- Whitehead, J. (2000). How do I improve my practice? Creating and legitimizing an epistemology of practice. *Reflective practice: International and multidisciplinary perspectives*, 1(1), 91-104. doi: 10.1080/713693129
- Whitehead, J. (2003). *The future of teaching and teaching in the future: A vision of the future of the profession of teaching- Making the possible probable*. Paper presented at the Standing Committee for the Education and Training of Teachers Annual Conference, Dunchurch.
- Whitehead, J. (2008). Using a living theory methodology in improving practice and generating educational knowledge in living theories. *Educational Journal of Living Theories* 1(1), 103-126. Retrieved from <http://www.ejolts.net>
- Whitehead, J. (2009). Generating living theory and understanding in action research studies. *Action Research*, 7(85), 85-99.
- Whitehead, J. (2014). *How does the constraining power of education researchers influence the emergence of educational knowledge and theory?* Paper presented at the The American Educational Research Association Conference, Philadelphia. <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera14/jwaera2014indiv110314.pdf>
- Whitehead, J., & Delong, J. (2014). *Self-study contributions to a history of S-STEP*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Philadelphia.
- Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research living theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2010). *You and your action research* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Whitehead, N. (2004). The effects of increased access to books on student reading using the public library. *Reading Improvement*, 41(3), 165-178.
- Whitney, J. M. (2010). *Effects of social interaction on students' reading motivation and engagement after sustained silent reading*. (Masters of Arts in Education), California State University, Sacramento, CA.
- Wiener, C. (2007). Making teams work in conducting grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 293-310). Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 420-432.
- Wilfong, L. G. (2009). Textmasters: Bringing literature circles to textbook reading across the curriculum. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(2), 164-171.
- Wilkerson, I. (2006). *Varieties of social interactions during literacy instruction*. Berkeley, CA

- Wilkinson, I., & Son, E. H. (2011). A dialogic turn in research on learning and teaching to comprehend. In M. L. Kamil, P. D. Pearson, E. B. Moje & P. P. Afflerbach (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 4, pp. 359-387). New York: NY: Routledge.
- Williams, L. M., Hedrick, W. B., & Tuschinski, L. (2008). Motivation: Going beyond testing to a lifetime of reading. *Children Education*, 84(3), 135-141.
- Yahya, O., & Suraya, Z. (2007). An action research on promoting extensive reading. *Journal Penyelidikan Pendidikan Institut Perguruan Islam*, 10. Retrieved from <http://www.ipislam.edu.my/uploaded/an%20Action%20On%20Promoting%20Extensive%20Reading%20-%20Kajian%20Tindakan.pdf>
- Yang, A. (2001). Reading and the non-academic learner: A mystery solved. *System*, 29(4), 451-466. doi: 10.1016/S0346-251X(01)00038-0
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, LA: SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Yong, F. L. (2010). A study on the learning approaches of Malaysian students in relation to English Language Acquisition. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, 9, 5-11. Retrieved from <http://www.eurojournals.com/ajsr.html>
- Yoon, J. C. (2002). Three decades of sustained silent reading: A meta-analytic review of the effects of SSR on attitude toward reading. *Reading Improvement*, 39(4), 186-195.
- Zainal, Z., & Prema, B. (2010). *A comparative study of reading authentic and non-authentic text*. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://eprints.utm.my/11075/>

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Letter of Research Information
- Appendix B: Students Informed Consent
- Appendix C: Blurbs
- Appendix D: A Guide to the Reading Log Together with Set A and Set B  
Questions
- Appendix E: Reflective Writing Prompts
- Appendix F: Procedures
- Appendix G: Focus Interview Questions
- Appendix H: Snapshot of Initial Open Coding Process in NVivo
- Appendix I: Snapshot of the Interactive Data Analysis in NVivo
- Appendix J: Final Reflective Prompts
- Appendix K: Data Sample of Student Group Discussion
- Appendix L: Data Sample of My Conversations with Students in Class
- Appendix M: Data Sample of My Private Speech in Class
- Appendix N: Data Sample of My Conversation with Debriefers I
- Appendix O: Data Sample of My Conversation with Debriefers II
- Appendix P: Communicating with Debriefers II via Email on 18<sup>th</sup> February  
2014
- Appendix Q: The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement  
(CARE) for ELLS

## **Appendix A: Letter of Research Information**

(English translation)

Dear.....

I am a doctoral student currently studying fulltime at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato, New Zealand. I am exploring the teaching and learning of reading. Selection of participants will be a class of diploma students taking Business Management that I am assigned to teach. If you agree to take part, you will be selected as one of the participants in this study. The research will take place throughout the semester beginning December 2012.

### **Surveys, reflective writing logs, discussions or group interviews**

For this research, I hope to conduct two surveys at the beginning and at the end of the research. The surveys are meant to investigate your attitudes and behaviours towards reading. As part of the research, once a week, you will be asked to write comments a special copybook. You will be given a guide and writing prompts to write in your reflective writing log, and you can write in your first language or in English, whichever you find more comfortable. Reading, writing and discussing in groups will be a regular part of the reading programme, and from time to time, I will ask the students in your group if I might audio-recorded the discussion. Towards the end of the research, I will ask some of you if you would participate in group interview which will be audio-recorded.

You may want to contact me during the data collection period, and you can speak to me before and after the class, or email me at [yvl3@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:yvl3@waikato.ac.nz) or fix another time.

### **Your rights as participants**

This participation is voluntary. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw any time, or negotiate to leave or remove any collected data. If you decide you do not want to complete the questionnaire at the end of the course or decide not to take part in a group interview at the end, you may inform me. I will document your decision and let you sign. You may also ask any questions about the research at any time during your participation.

## **Confidentiality**

This research project has been approved by the rector of this university and by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Any questions about ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fassethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fassethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Te Kura Kete Aronui, University of Waikato, Te Whare Wananga O Waikato, Private bag 3105, Hamilton, 3240. You may also wish to contact either of my supervisors, at the University of Waikato email addresses below:

Dr Roger Barnard

[rbarnard@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rbarnard@waikato.ac.nz)

Dr Ian Bruce

[ibruce@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:ibruce@waikato.ac.nz)

## **The results**

The findings of this research will be used to prepare a thesis; some of the data may be used in journal articles in national and international refereed journals, chapters in a book, and presentations in national and international conferences. In all cases, your rights to confidentiality and privacy will be assured. The thesis will be available online.

## **Willing to participate?**

If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form attached and return it to me when we meet in our next class. If you have any queries or questions, please feel free to contact me at [yvl3@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:yvl3@waikato.ac.nz)

## Appendix B: Students Informed Consent

(English translation)

If you agree to participate in my research, please fill in the information below and sign the consent form.

I \_\_\_\_\_ of University of Technology Mara, Kota Kinabalu agree to participate in the entitled research on “Analytical reading skills to engage and motivate ELLs: A challenge to current pedagogical practices” by Jocelyn Lee Yee Vun.

- I have read the required information related to the research above.
- I agree to participate voluntarily, and fully understand my rights to withdraw from the research if I do not want to participate.

### I agree:

to complete the questionnaire at the start of the course.

Yes

No

to allow the researcher to read and photocopy my anonymous reading log.

Yes

No

to allow the researcher to audio-record some of my group discussions in class.

Yes

No

to take part in a group interview at the end of the course.

Yes

No

to complete the questionnaire at the end of the course.

Yes

No

- Confidentiality and anonymity of my personal identity will be protected as far as possible.
- I understand that the information collected will only be used for reporting the researcher's finding of this thesis, presenting papers in conferences, publication of articles in research and educational journals.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Blurbs**

### **Soapy's choice**

Madison Square is a place where Soapy hangs around. Winter is here soon and he is thinking of a place which he can call a home. He does a few things to get the attention of the police. Why is he doing that?

### **The oval portrait**

In the Oval Portrait, a man finds a portrait of a beautiful young woman in a lonely house. Who is this woman? Who painted her? Why is the man so frightened of her picture? What terrible secret does it hold?

### **Where are you going where have you been?**

In many ways, Connie is different from her sister. She wants her freedom and space. She just wants some excitement as a teenage girl. Is that wrong? Do you think by doing so she has to pay a high price for it?

### **Heroes**

Talking about heroes, we will talk about what they are like and what they do. What would a hero have to do to stop being one.

### **The body snatcher**

This story is about a group of medical doctors who are dedicated to their noble professions. They their unaccountable past while doing their internship. They are respectable doctors in our midst....

### **The waxwork**

A journalist wants to write more exciting stories to earn some extra money. He doesn't mind sacrificing his sleeping hours. Little does he realise that...

### **The purple pileus**

This story takes place at the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth. At that time in England, the behaviour of many people on Sundays was different from their behaviour on other days of the week. Their aim on Sundays

was to seem to be respectable. This meant that they wore their best clothes, avoided laughter and noisy enjoyment, and did not sing popular songs. In the story, Mr Coombes thinks he might lose business if his neighbours think he is not respectable.

### **The doll's house**

The Burnell children had a doll's house and they were excited to show all their friends except the Kelveys. What was special about the doll's house? Why were the Kelvey children different from others?

### **Avalanches (advance)**

A vulnerable young girl had an encounter with a middle-age man. Did she survive the *small avalanches*? What would happen to her?

### **Lord Mountdrago (Intermediate)**

Dr Audlin, a psychoanalyst, has been very successful in his career. However, he failed to treat a particular patient. Who is this patient? What is the problem that has beset him?

### **The complete life of John Hopkins (\*elementary)**

The complete life of John Hopkins is written by O Henry, a famous American Writer. It is about people in a big city. What really makes their daily life complete?

### **Luck (\*elementary)**

Luck is a story of a famous Englishman. Is he a great man? His teacher tells a different story. This story is written by a great famous American writer, Mark Twain.

## **Appendix D: A Guide to the Reading Log**

A reading log allows you to record or write your reading responses when you are reading. Your responses can be positive or negative. You can respond personally, ask questions, predict, or reflect on the characters, events, or language of a text. A log is like a conversation with yourself. It also prepares you for the group discussions.

When you use this guide, you should use three to four of the questions in each of the two sets. You should also avoid responding to the same questions every time.

### Set A questions

What did you see happening in the text? You might paraphrase or retell the story.

How do you feel about the character's actions?

If you were in that situation, what would you do?

Are there any words / phrases/ images /ideas/ incidents the character went through that you can relate to your experience or memories?

Did the text call to mind different memories, thoughts, feelings?

How did you respond to it emotionally and intellectually?

What similarities and differences do you notice in your experiences with the text?

### Set B questions

Whose viewpoint/interest is expressed?

Whose views are excluded (missing)?

What does the author want us to think?

How are children, teenagers or young adults constructed in this text?

Why is the text written the way it is?

Which positions, voices and interests are at play in the text?

What has been left out of the text?

What kinds of social realities does the text portray?

How would the text be different if it were told in another time, place or culture?

What kind of person, and with what interests and values, composed the text?

## **Appendix E: Reflective Writing Prompts**

Think of your reading practices before you participated in this research and compare to your present reading practices after the intervention. Focus on things that have affected you especially in your reading.

You might include the following:

- Write two changes in your reading.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  
- The work I have done this week has helped/ has not helped (choose one) me to:
  - 1.
  - 2.
  
- Your feelings or reactions, if any, about the reading strategies introduced to you.
  
- Your attitudes towards reading.

## **Appendix F: Procedures**

The duration of this study was 12 weeks over a period of a semester from 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013 at the university. Participants worked with the teacher researcher for a total of 36 hours. On average, class work was about three hours a week.

In the first meeting with the participants, Students had the option to decide whether to take part in the research. Those who volunteered were invited to be the potential participants of the subsequent phases of the study. Those who declined would still form part of the reading class, but no research data was collected from them.

Participants chose from a list of blurbs provided. In Phase 1, seven blurbs were prepared for students. In the light of ensuring participants with different competence could understand the story, a prerequisite before giving their responses, the first story “Soapy’s Choice” from an elementary graded reader was fastidiously chosen by the teacher researcher as a prelude to the reading invention. This left students another three stories to choose from, making a total of four stories in Phase 1. Other than showing the students the blurbs, the first page of each story was also circulated in class. Students read the first page to decide the story they intended to do. The stories chosen by the students were “The oval portrait”, “Heroes” and “Where are you going? Where have you been?” During the transitional period, responsibility was gradually transferred to students. Students looked up difficult words in the dictionary themselves. Moreover, students answered two questions independently, while the first two questions were modelled.

In Phase 2, two blurbs were shown on the projector for each participant to choose one. The rationale was that the class would do both stories at one time which was more manageable. The first pair was “The body snatcher” and The waxwork, while the second pair was “Purple pileus” and The doll’s house”. After reflections, changes were made. The researcher felt that more choices ought to be provided due to the diverse English competency of the participants. Instead of giving them the first page of the story, this time the levels of the stories were given in parentheses. The four options were “Avalanche” (advance), "Lord Mountdrago” (Intermediate), “The complete life of John Hopkins” and “Luck”.

Four students chose “Avalanches”, 27 students “Lord Mountdrago”, and six students “Luck”. The table shows the planned weekly schedule of the study from Week 1 to Week 13.

Week 1 to Week 2	<p>Briefing on the research each student draw a number</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Students choose six short stories out of twelve stories Learn how to use of a dictionary</p> <p>Brainstorm the title of the FIRST story pre-teach vocabulary students underline words they do not know look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework) read silently pre-reading while-reading post-reading retelling as a class introducing to a reflective reading log briefing on Questions prompts Set A &amp; Set B Choose four questions from Set A as a class Give some sentence starters Teacher demonstrate Student’s turn Choose four questions from Set B as a class Teacher demonstrate Student’s turn students write in their reflective reading log do as homework if cant complete in class</p>
------------------------	---

Week 3 to Week 4	<p>Continue writing reflective reading log Introducing to a group discussion</p> <p>selecting group members Teacher demonstrate group discussion Reflective writing Brainstorm the title of the SECOND story pre-teach vocabulary students underline words they do not know look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework) read silently pre-reading while-reading post-reading</p>
------------------------	---

	<p>retelling as a class</p> <p>Choose four questions from Set A</p> <p>Teacher demonstrate</p> <p>Student's turn</p> <p>Choose four questions from Set B as a class</p> <p>Teacher demonstrate</p> <p>Student's turn</p> <p>students write in their reflective reading log</p> <p>do as homework if cant complete in class</p>
--	--

<p>Week 5 to Week 6</p>	<p>Continue writing reflective reading log</p> <p>Teacher demonstrate</p> <p>group discussion</p> <p>Reflective writing</p> <p>Brainstorm the title of the THIRD story</p> <p>pre-teach vocabulary</p> <p>students underline words they do not know</p> <p>look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework)</p> <p>read silently</p> <p>pre-reading</p> <p>while-reading</p> <p>post-reading</p> <p>retelling as a class</p>
---------------------------------	--

<p><b>WEEK 7</b> Transition Period</p>	<p>Choose four questions from Set A</p> <p>Students try on their own</p> <p>Choose four questions from Set B as a class</p> <p>Students try on their own</p> <p>students write in their reflective reading log</p> <p>do as homework if cant complete in class</p> <p>Continue writing reflective reading log</p> <p>students lead group discussions</p> <p>Reflective writing</p>
--	--

<p>Week 8 to Week 9</p>	<p>Brainstorm the title of the FIRST story</p> <p>students underline words they do not know</p> <p>look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework)</p> <p>read silently</p> <p>retelling in a group</p> <p>Choose four questions from Set A</p> <p>Students try on their own</p> <p>Choose four questions from Set B as a class</p> <p>Students try on their own</p> <p>students write in their reflective reading log</p>
---------------------------------	---

	do as homework if cant complete in class Continue writing reflective reading log students lead group discussions
--	--

Week 10 to Week 11	Brainstorm the title of the SECOND story students underline words they do not know look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework) read silently retelling in a group Choose four questions from Set A Students try on their own Choose four questions from Set B as a class Students try on their own students write in their reflective reading log do as homework if cant complete in class Continue writing reflective reading log students lead group discussions
--------------------------	---

Week12 to Week 13	Brainstorm the title of the THIRD story students underline words they do not know look up words in a dictionary (may do as homework) read silently retelling in a group Choose four questions from Set A Students try on their own Choose four questions from Set B as a class Students try on their own students write in their reflective reading log do as homework if cant complete in class Continue writing reflective reading log students lead group discussions
-------------------------	--

## **Appendix G: Focus Interview Questions**

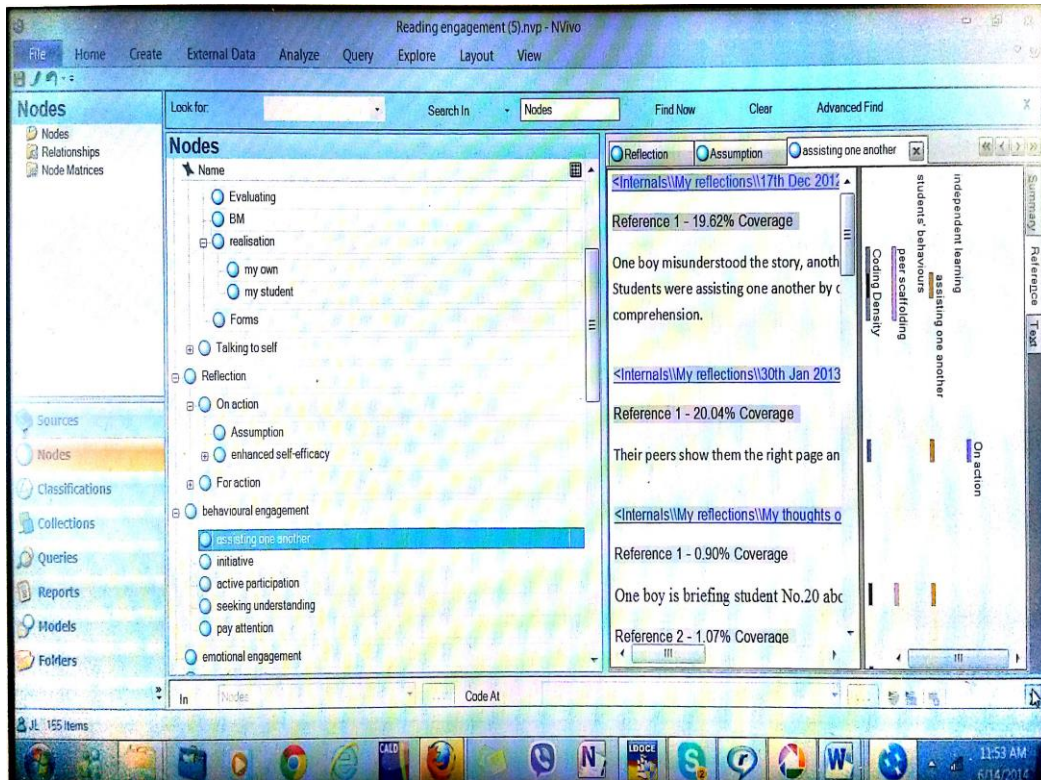
1. If there are any changes, what kind of changes have you noticed in the way you read?
2. How do you feel about the analytical reading approach you have learned?
3. In what ways, if any, does this intervention help you or hinder you?
4. Describe about your feelings.

## Appendix H: Snapshot of Initial Open Coding Process in NVivo

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface for a project titled "Reading engagement (2).nvp - NVivo". The main window displays a list of nodes, which are organized into a tree structure on the left side of the window. The nodes are listed in a table with columns for Name, Sources, References, Created On, Created By, Modified On, and Modified By. The nodes are organized into a tree structure on the left side of the window.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
↳ Sotto Voce	0	0	6/13/2013 7:37 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:45 PM	YVL
↳ Talking to students	14	46	6/13/2013 7:42 AM	JL	6/13/2013 7:43 AM	JL
↳ Talking to self	28	97	6/13/2013 7:48 AM	JL	6/13/2013 7:48 AM	JL
↳ Reflection	0	0	6/13/2013 11:17 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:45 PM	YVL
↳ On action	19	33	6/13/2013 11:18 AM	JL	6/19/2013 4:27 AM	JL
↳ For action	16	20	6/13/2013 11:18 AM	JL	6/19/2013 11:26 AM	JL
↳ Person	0	0	6/10/2013 6:28 AM	JL	6/12/2013 2:10 AM	JL
↳ evidence of positive engagement	3	5	6/13/2013 5:46 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:45 PM	YVL
↳ Other skills	5	47	6/13/2013 5:49 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:51 PM	YVL
↳ independent learning	7	9	6/18/2013 5:14 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:44 PM	YVL
↳ Exploratory Talk	18	22	6/20/2013 12:11 PM	YVL	6/20/2013 12:57 PM	YVL
↳ disputational talk	2	2	6/20/2013 12:38 PM	YVL	6/20/2013 12:41 PM	YVL
↳ cumulative talk	3	5	6/20/2013 12:44 PM	YVL	6/20/2013 12:45 PM	YVL
↳ evidence of negative engagement	0	0	6/18/2013 5:16 AM	JL	6/20/2013 12:45 PM	YVL
↳ short or incomplete answers	1	1	6/18/2013 5:17 AM	JL	6/19/2013 11:57 AM	YVL
↳ actions	10	14	6/18/2013 5:16 AM	JL	6/19/2013 12:31 PM	YVL

## Appendix I: Snapshot of the Interactive Data Analysis in NVivo



## Appendix J: Final Reflection Prompts

Write your final reflection pertaining to the analytical reading program.

After this reading program, two things that I have learned are \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ However, there were some problems. First, \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Second, \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_. The text I most enjoyed was because \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

I felt the instruction was clear / not clear (choose one) because \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ My final comment about the reading program is \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Thank You

## Appendix K: Data Sample of Student Group Discussion

25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013

1 F Apathetic

7 F Emergent/engaged

23b F Apathetic

34 F Apathetic

**1**

Start with our reaction.

**7**

OK. Let's start with the first question.

**1**

So, which position, voices and interests are demonstrated in the text?

**1**

Ok. I think it's obvious Connie's voice is demonstrated mostly like point of view.

**23b**

I think it's her mother.

**7**

Her mother? Why?

**23b**

Because Hmm...because ....

**34**

OK so next question.

**23b**

Because the mother[is] always controlling her child in this story. Connie was controlled by her mother.

**1**

Is it so?

**7**

Is it?

**1**

She lied to her mother.

7

Her mother doesn't care about her even she goes out with her friend at night...

**23b**

OK. I think it's Connie's voice.

1

Ya. I think it's also obvious Arnold Friend's interest in this story. He wants to take advantage of Connie.

**34**

He stalks her.

**23b**

I think the teenagers will be benefited when they read this kind of story. It's like an example for them. They will know whether how adults will take advantage of them.

7

But .....

**23b**

[They] will [exercise] caution.

1

They will be more aware

**34**

*jaga-jaga* (be careful).

7

*Orang yang apa ini faham boleh terima. Begitu* (people who understand will accept)?

**23b**

*Mustahillahkan kalau teenager dia mahu berfikir jadi...* ( If teenagers can think)....

**23b**

It's their lost.

7

It's their problem.

**34**

OK. Third question.

1

Does the text reflect the society we live in?

**23b**

Yes. I think so.

7

a lot of crimes.

**34**

rape cases

**23b**

Yes

1

Child abuse

7

I think this reflects our society.

**23b**

And most of them involve underage kids .

**34**

Such as teenagers as they are very fragile.

7

They are weak

1

They are curious and want to explore

**23b**

What question about itself the text not raised?

1

I think that hmmm well in my point of view. The state that Connie's parents raised....

**23b**

The way the current... she can be like so free and rebellious.

7

She don't listen to her mother.

7

How are teenagers and adults are constructed?

7

Teenagers in this text showed in a way that they are still young.

**34**

They want to explore the world.

**7**

They are very hmmm curious.

**1**

Do you think they are naive. [Is Connie naive?]

**7**

She still can't think rationally. At first she didn't want to go out . At last, she did.  
She still can't think because she is very young.

**1**

She did when [she was]with this stranger last time.

**7**

She just wants to explore about love. It's a new thing for her. (Silence/  
whispering)

**34**

OK what about the adult? I think the adult constructed here. They are not  
responsible, you know?

**34**

The adult should be ....

**7**

Protective.

**34**

Ya, protective.

**7**

Responsible

**1**

An example like her father, he didn't even like dia tak tahu kenapa anak dia  
buat.... (he didn't even know why his child did ...). controlkan...

**34**

*Anak akan lebih ganas* (The child will become wild).

**1**

*Lebih mahu mengganas* (become wilder).

**23b**

*Tetapi tidak terlalu mengongkong, at least sekurang-kurangnya sikit lah (but not too controlling , at least some control).*

7

Shows a little care.

1

*Ya tunjukkanlah dia ambil berat (Show her that he cares about her). Kalau tidak, nanti, anak akan jadi terlalu (If not, the child will become free.) Terlalu dimanjakan pun tidak boleh, terlalu control tidak boleh. (cannot be over pampered and cannot be over controlled), 50-50 balanced.*

**23b**

Next question. Why has the writer represented the character in a particular way? I think based on Arnold Friend, I think the writer *tunjuk character macam itu supaya teenager boleh tahulah mesti dia akan teenager akan tertarik pakaian begini serupa dia mahu kasih tunjukkan stranger selalu dating\_\_\_\_\_dia orang \_\_\_\_\_(the writer portrays the character in that way to show teenagers that strangers know how to attract for instance through the attires....dating....)*

7

*Kasih tunjuk walaupun culture yang begitu (to show that kind of culture) . Tidak semestinya baik (not that good).*

1

it has to be...

**34**

Cautious

1

Cautious the whole time. How would then contribute to your understanding at a critical stance?

7

More or less is the same.

**34**

*Apa soalnya (What's the question)?.*

7

It's a warning to parents and to teenager. They have to be careful.

**34**

Because in reality, we are also the same thing as in this text.

**23b**

We have to set our mind straight. Berjaga-jagalah (Be careful) as a woman.

**1**

Ya.

**23b**

Even some adults if we know them or something.

**34**

They have to be cautious

**7**

To the environment.

**1**

OK so then.

**7**

Last question. What message might you have learned?

**23b**

After this I will like...

**34**

Be careful

**1**

Do not trust people who have the same style.

**7**

Be careful. Do not simply go with someone we don't really know. Just because he is good looking, you know, right?

**23b**

Don't look so cheap.

**7**

If the boy has a sport car.

**34**

(clearing her throat).

**23b**

We might be rethink.

**34**

Not all the guys who are smart are good guys.

7

Don't be too grown up.

1

Just go with to the flow.

**34**

Just go with the flow.

**23b**

Ya just go with the flow.

1

Don't rush.

7

Just tell your guardian where you are going.

7

Make sure you have your cellphone with you 24/7, so they can like monitor you.

1

Ask them to install

7

GPS. (laughing)

**23b**

I think Connie is not wrong.

1

Strong or wrong?

**23b**

Wrong.

7

Because their parents tidak jaga dia bagus-bagus (because their parents didn't take care of them).

1

So it all comes down to the parents.

**34**

Ya. Because kita pun ... (Yes, because we also...)

**7**

Parents are responsible for everything.

**34**

*kita mana boleh belajar sendiri? Kita mesti ada diajar.* (We can't learn things ourselves. We must be told).

**7 & 23b**

Be responsible parents.

**7**

Don't be a parent if you can't.

## **Appendix L: Data Sample of My Conversations with Students in Class**

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 (1) and (2)

I am asking students to do set B questions again. Just now some students asked me about questions in Set B that they didn't understand. For instance the question "why is ...", I explained to them what it was. Another question was what kind of social reality does the text show? So I explained to them what social realities were. I also explained the meaning of the question "who was missing or whose interest was expressed?" I gave them 15 to 20 minutes to answer these questions. They did not do set B questions. I asked them just now. They said they only did Set A. So I ask them to write now. Later they will discuss in groups. Students are thinking and they are writing.

(I used Vision 2020 to explain some of the Set B questions for questions like whose interest is expressed).

I used BM to explain some of the questions. A few boys asked me.  
(students broke into groups).

(2)

Students are discussing again based on Set B. I am walking around to see. Again most of the girls are involved. They are discussing the topic. This time there are three groups of boys. But the same group of students can't really engaged. I think I will put a recorder in one of the boy groups. This group consists of Malay girls. They speak in English. One girl is playing with her phone but she contributes also. The two boy groups are talking to one another. I'm not sure whether they have finished. That group gets back to the discussion, but the other group doesn't seem to discuss. They are playing with their cell phone. It is encouraging to see that all of them are involved.

I have to see their facial expression whether they have finished. They look fresh today because it is in the morning.

I realize when girls are given a task, they will get involved. One group of girls is taking out the text to check.

T: "What are you checking?"

Ss: "want to check the end of the story?"

T: "What do you want to find out?"

Ss: "why did the policeman catch Soapy at the end?"

T: what did you discover?"

Ss: The ending of the story is not complete.

Ss: It is unfair.

T: not complete

Ss: something is missing.

....

(Talking to the groups)

T: what have you discovered? Anything new you discovered?

T: you did not know about Soapy's past. That's what your group discovered. Anything else?

S: Why the policeman arrested him when he did nothing.

T: anymore? Anything exception you discovered? Your group?

S: we agree almost everything. It shows that we have the same opinion.

T: You have the same opinion. What kind of opinion?

S: For example, when we talk about social reality, we talk about how the society thinks about poor people like Soapy. When he went to a restaurant, when they saw that his appearance was not really nice, so they threw him out.

T: Good.

S: In our group, we discovered that Soapy was a little bit frightened to go to jail. When the police caught him, he said the word "perhaps"...why couldn't he just say "It was actually me?" He was still defending himself.

T: Anything else? The boys?

S (boy): we discovered a question. How Soapy ended up being a homeless man and a loner.

S (boys): Soapy's background.

T: Why did he become that way? Have you discussed that in your group?

S (boy): Probably he did something wrong and was kicked out from the family. And he became homeless.

T: over this side, what have you discovered?

S: soapy's family.

T: What about soapy's family?

S: He suddenly remembered his family. I think he had a nice family because ...

S: He changed his view and he thought positively. That's all.

T: Do you want to add something?

S: yes. My group did Q5. We think the writer wants us to think that we should be independent. What happened to soapy, he tried to .....but he turned to the wrong way. ...we must make the right [decision] in our lives.

T: to learn to be independent.

S: Yes.

T: good. we haven't talked about being independent. The writer wants us to be independent.

## **Appendix M: Data Sample of My Private Speech in Class**

25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013

I am using my recorder to record another group who volunteer themselves. I'm not sure what number they are. I'm quite surprised that No.13, 5 and 16 (who never handed in his log) are willing to be recorded again. No. 13 is excited.

I'm asking them to write their reflective writing for the second time in the second round.

I don't think I can use the blurbs but today they bring their dictionaries. On second thought, I will show them the blurbs today. Oh dear I realize I have not given the first page of the story, so they just read the blurbs?

I am showing them the blurbs without the first page but I did mention the level of the story.

....

Yep, I am right. There are students choosing Avalanche – 4 of them at least. There are students who want to read challenging stories. Most of them want to read Lord Mountago. No one wants to read The complete life of John Hopkins. And 6 students choose Luck.

Avanlanche (original story) -4 students

Lord Moundrago (Intermediate)- 27 students

Luck (Elementary) - 6 students

## Appendix N: Data Sample of My Conversation with Debriefers I

I met Dr Arnold Puyuk, my debriefer after class on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 (the end of first week) at 12.30pm at a coffee shop. Prior to this, we met and discussed briefly the research I am undertaking. After our first meeting, I sent him the guide for being a debriefer. Our discussion on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012 was about my research, in particular what I did in the first three classes in the first week. I told him a comprehensive account. Below is the table that shows my action after discussing with Dr Puyuk.

		<b>What happened/what I did</b>	<b>Dr. Puyuk's advice</b>	<b>My action</b>
	Participants	18 participants are reluctant to be recorded during discussions and the interview at the end of the research and 4 students do not want their log to be read. I reckon that I can't use their data even they present in the class.	Data collected from them cannot be used except the data from the questionnaire in the beginning and at the end. Participants might change their mind in the process. If they do, I have to document their consent and signatures.	I will identify these students. I will not record their discussion or read their logs unless they change their mind later. However, the descriptive information from the questionnaire will be used. Whatever the class is doing, these students will participate.
	Field notes, researcher's reflective journal and audio-recording of the researcher	I write something during data collection. I also have a reflection log which I plan my lesson and reflect. I also record my sotto voce and also	Dr Puyuk shared what he did when he was doing his research. He typed everything on his laptop. He advised me that	I realise I don't need to write field notes if I record my own sotto voce each time I enter class. Besides I

		<p>classroom interactions during lesson. I'm concerned how I am going to use these data sources. I am also not sure how I can use my own recording. The last recording was about 23 mins which means I have to transcribe all. I thought of selecting my own sotto voce comments as a record of what happened in the class</p>	<p>this case study needs to be conducted in depth which means I need to transcribe all the recordings to avoid my own bias.</p>	<p>have a reflective journal. I should type my reflection instead of writing. This will make my work easier later. I become clearer and I need to transcribe my own audio-recording during lessons. I will listen to my recording and then I will transcribe immediately after each lesson. My reflective journal will be stored in Nvivo which means I will key in the computer straight.</p>
	<p>Research questions</p>	<p>I thought of gathering all the data and only then I start analysing.</p>	<p>Dr Puyuk suggested that I start writing immediately. Once I see the connection between the data and the research questions, I should move the data underneath the particular questions. This will make my</p>	<p>My strategies will be based on what has been suggested. I will open new nodes (files) in Nvivo and move the relevant data to the right node.</p>

			work a lot easier.	
	How I select 12 participants	I never exactly thought of when to select the 12 participants. 4 for each different degree of engagement- disengaged, apathetic, emergent and engaged.	Through our conversation, I am clear when to identify the 12 students and based on what criteria.	The selection will be in Phase 1 while students are doing the second or third story. The criteria for selecting will be based on what I observe during lesson (my reflective log and recordings), students' reflective logs and recording of the group discussion.
	Questionnaire	I wondered how I would analyse this data.	This is an interpretive research and it will be based on grounded theory. The data from the questionnaire will be descriptive. Since I am making a claim, the research must be "in depth" so that I can justify.	To make my research transparent from data collection right to the end. I will start analysing the data from the first survey.

Dr Puyuk requested a copy of my proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Puyuk                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jocelyn Lee                      Date

## Appendix O: Data Sample of My Conversation with Debriefers II

I met Dorothy Chin on 2nd Jan 2013 for the first time after the third week of the research. She requested a copy of my proposal. Our meeting was mainly about the pedagogy of my reading class. I recounted how and what I did in my reading class. Below is the table that shows my action after discussing with Dorothy.

	<b>What happened/what I did</b>	<b>Dorothy's advice</b>	<b>My action</b>
Transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2	I modelled by either thinking aloud or showing students my thoughts on the screen based on Set A and Set B questions in the first phase. I also explained the meanings of these questions. Then I invited students to do Set A and Set questions. I would walk around the class and assist students whenever they needed me. Students stopped me and asked me questions. I would explain, clarify and show them.	It will not be like in Phase 1 where I did all to show students during the transitional phase. I will only show some and let students do the tasks themselves. However, I will still assist them whenever they need help. This is one way to scaffold students to be independent later in Phase 2.	In the third story in Phase 1 - where are you going? Where have you been? I will release some responsibilities to students, and I will only explain both sets of the questions to students and model two questions (one from each set) to think aloud in class. I will then

			invite students to take part. My role then will be more of a facilitator to support their learning. I will approach different groups and make myself available.
Four categories of students	I am looking out for the four categories of students- Engaged, emergent, apathetic and disengaged	The objective is to help disengaged students to be engaged.	Since I want to see whether there is any change in students' reading,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dorothy Chin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jocelyn Lee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix P: Communicating with Debriefers II via Email on 18<sup>th</sup>**

**February 2014**

Jocelyn: Two or three students opined that reading does not help them improve their language learning.

Dorothy: I believe they are not able or will not be able to rate themselves thus because they are not in any position to know whether they would have learned anything. This would just be their modest assumption! To me only later-who knows when? If they continue to read, they will slowly come to terms and find themselves more enlightened but they won't be able to tell when or how they would have become better).

## Appendix Q: The Comprehensive Approach to Reading Engagement (CARE) for ELLs

