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Authoring lives : a case study of how grade 6 children in a South African township school construct themselves as readers and writers.

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2010-02-23T08:01:46Z
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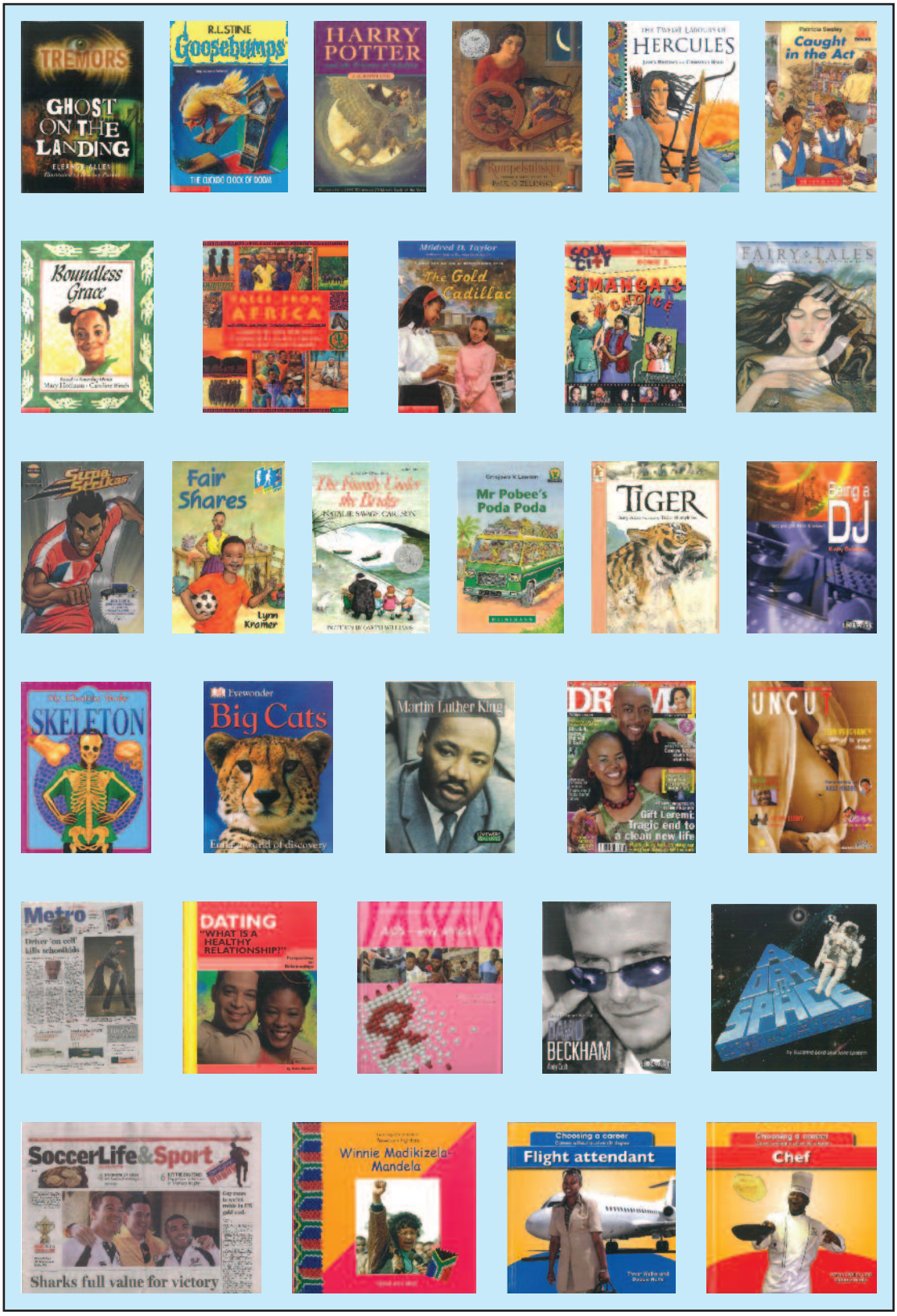


Figure 3.1: The front covers of texts used for Group Interview Two book selection activity.



Figure 4.1: The front page of Prudence's 'Reliever' magazine.

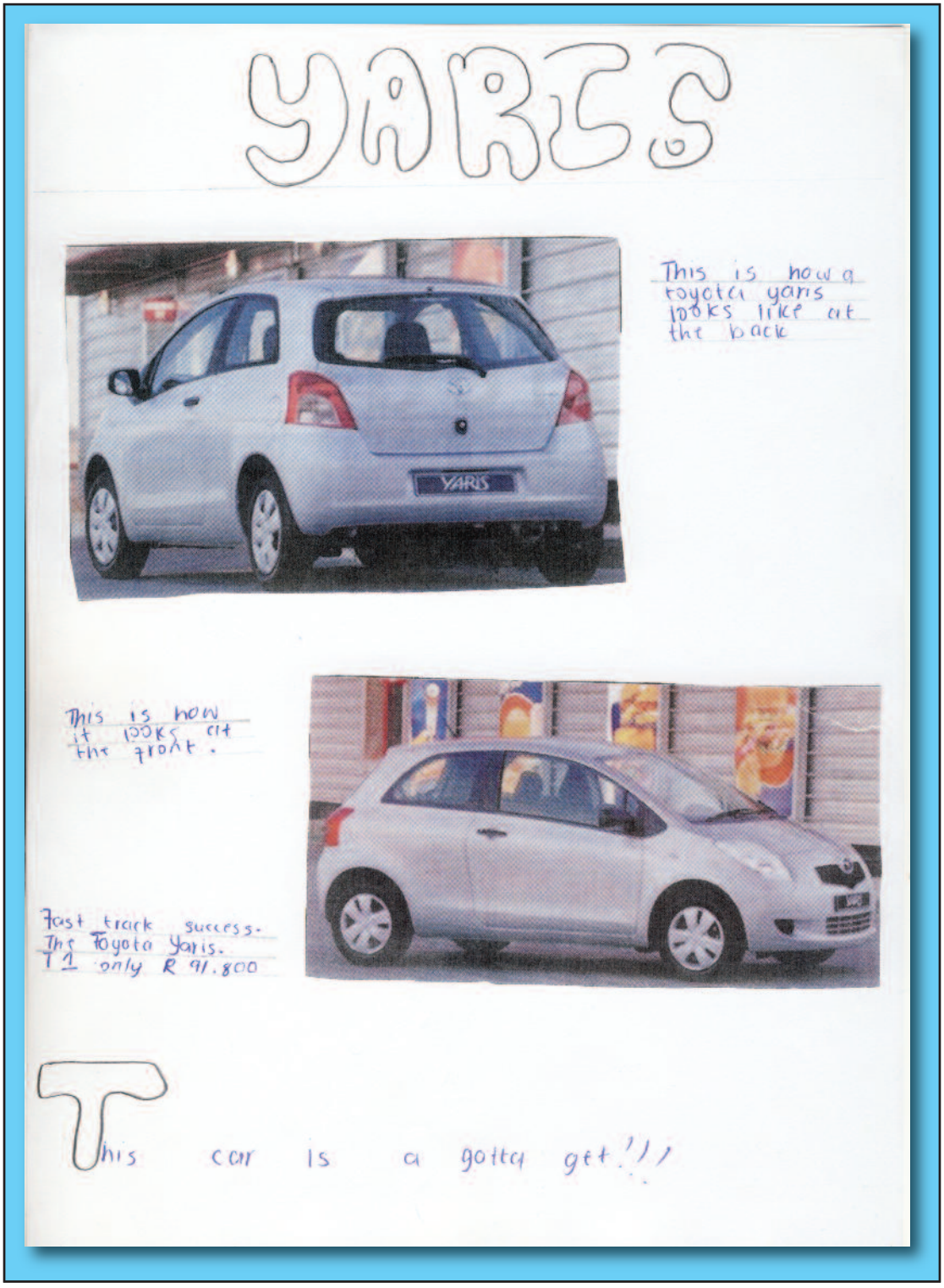


Figure 4.2: **Car advertisement included in Prudence's 'Reliever' magazine.**



Figure 4.3: Two double-page spreads from Refilwe's 'paper doll house'.

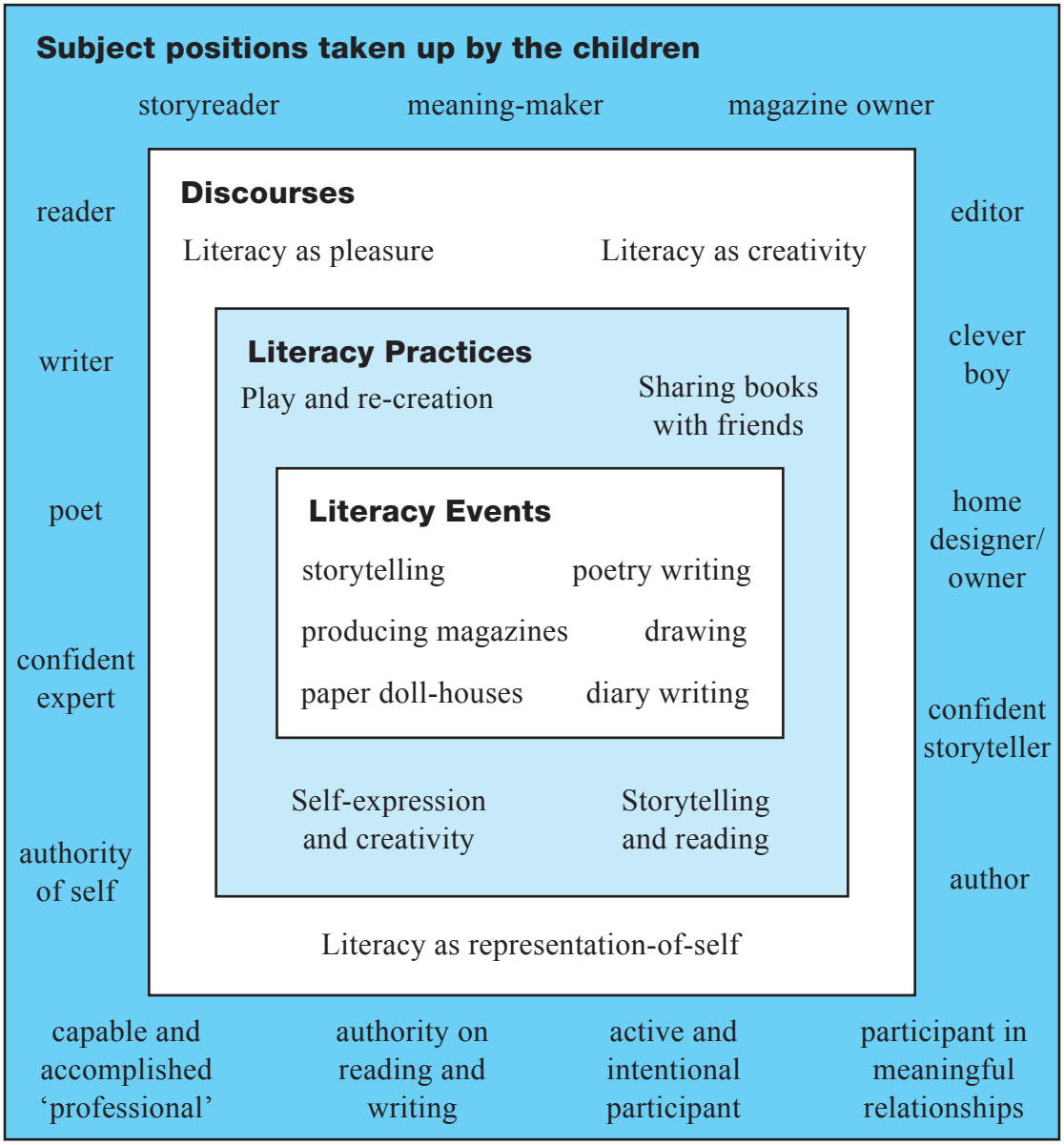
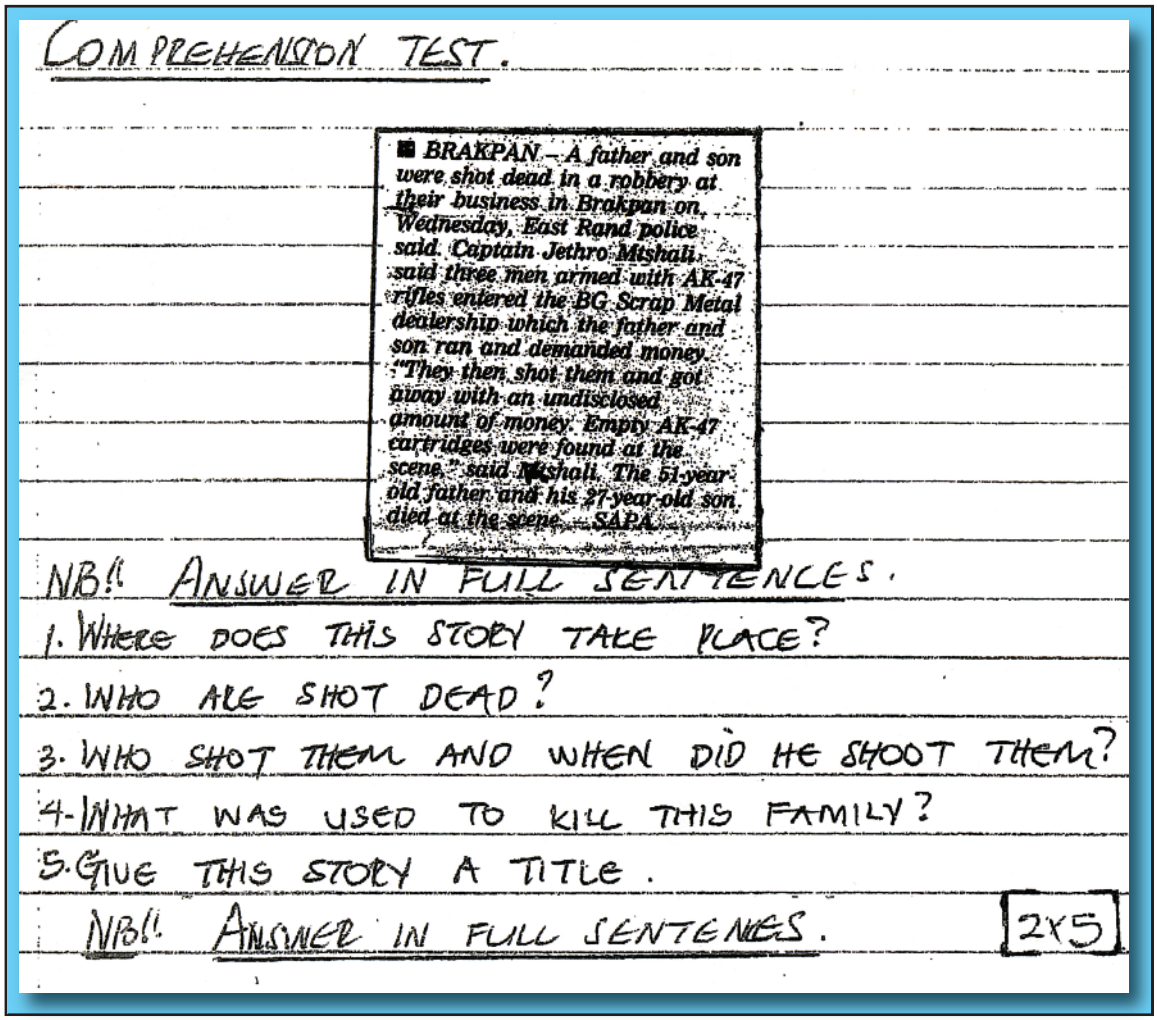


Figure 4.4: **Diagrammatic representation of literacy practices, Discourses and subject positions taken up in the children's out-of-school worlds.**

Finally, to conclude the chapter I would like to emphasise another important premise of a sociocultural view of literacy: literacy is intimately tied to individuals' identities and individuals therefore actively negotiate their practices (and identities) as they move across and within new contexts or worlds (Laman & Sluys 2008). The children's out-of-school literate identities as outlined in this chapter should therefore be borne in mind in orienting to the next chapter, in which I will consider the literacy and discursive practices of the children's in-school worlds.



COMPREHENSION TEST.

■ BRAKPAN – A father and son were shot dead in a robbery at their business in Brakpan on Wednesday, East Rand police said. Captain Jethro Mtshali said three men armed with AK-47 rifles entered the BG Scrap Metal dealership which the father and son ran and demanded money. "They then shot them and got away with an undisclosed amount of money. Empty AK-47 cartridges were found at the scene," said Mtshali. The 51-year-old father and his 27-year-old son died at the scene. – SAPA

NB!! ANSWER IN FULL SENTENCES.

1. WHERE DOES THIS STORY TAKE PLACE?
2. WHO ARE SHOT DEAD?
3. WHO SHOT THEM AND WHEN DID HE SHOOT THEM?
4. WHAT WAS USED TO KILL THIS FAMILY?
5. GIVE THIS STORY A TITLE.

NB!! ANSWER IN FULL SENTENCES. 2X5

Figure 5.1: Extract from a first term comprehension test.

Four of the five questions included in the comprehension test focus on low order cognitive processes and are restricted to basic 'fact-finding'. In terms of Anderson et al.'s (2001) revision of Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives' the use of rudimentary 'wh' questions (where, who, what) reflect the lowest order of cognitive demand. Although question five – give this story a title – asks the reader for a slightly broader understanding of the text, the reader is never required to perform higher-order thinking such as applying, analysing, evaluating or creating (Anderson et

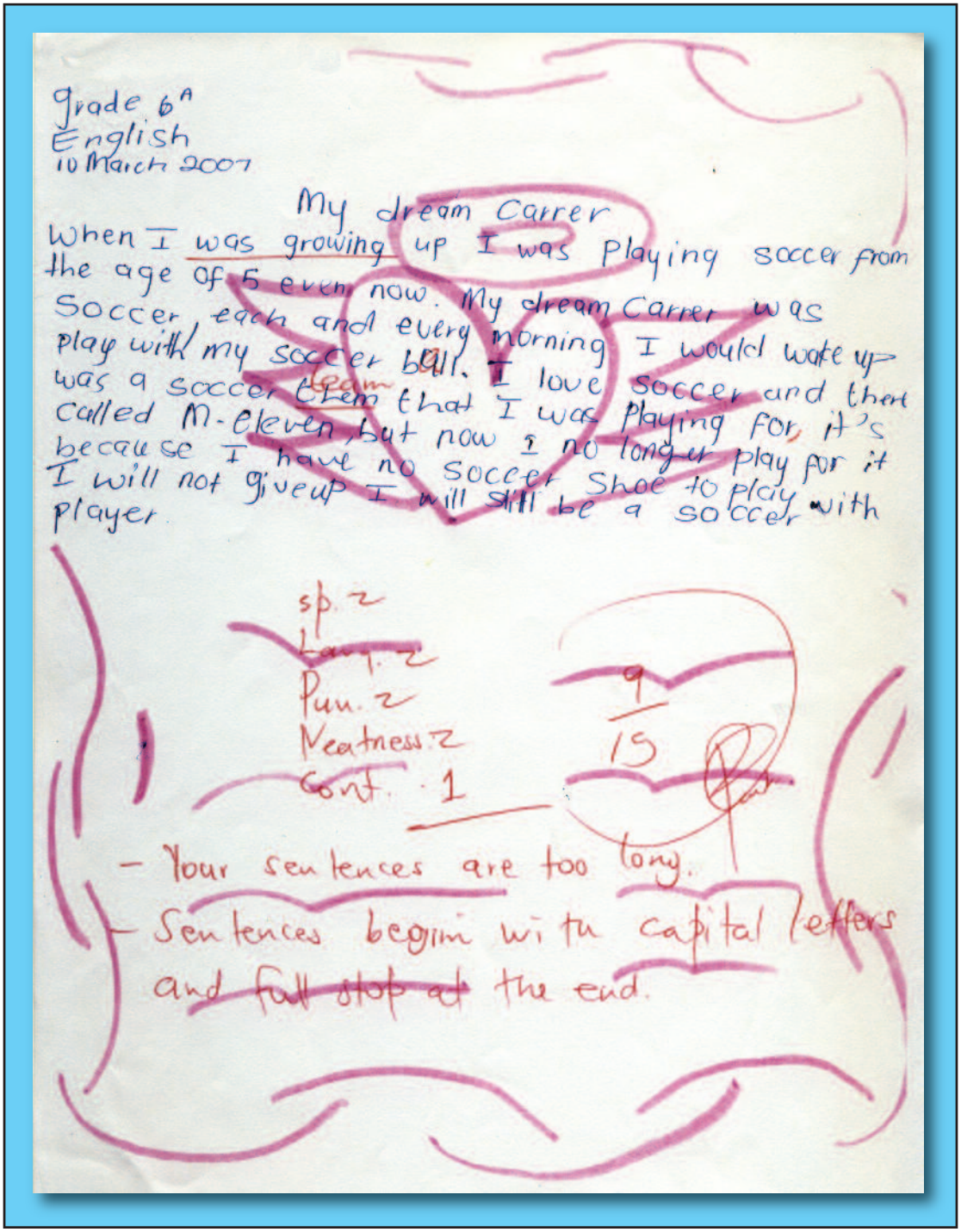


Figure 5.2: Frans's 'My dream career' text.

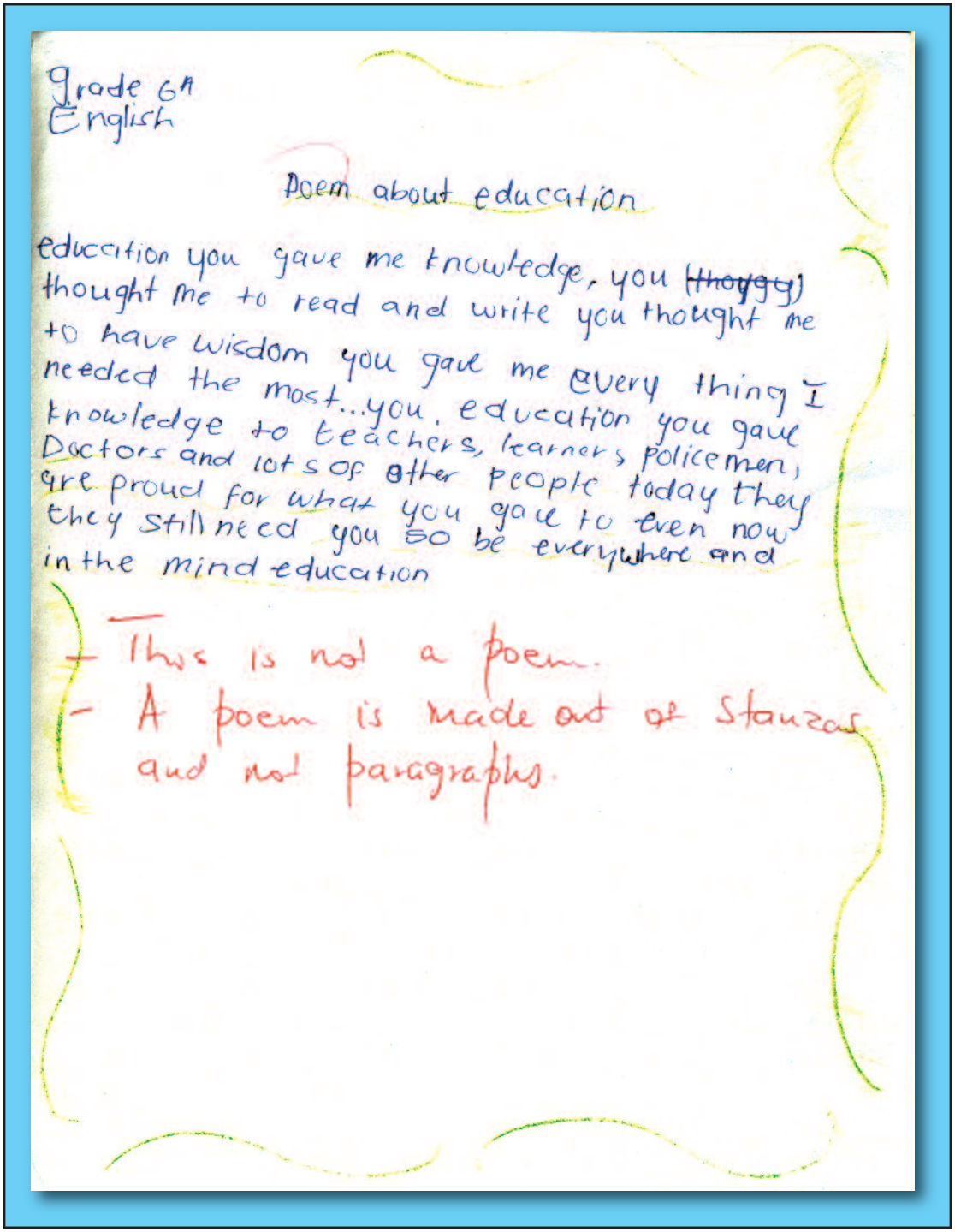


Figure 5.3: Frans's 'Poem about education'.

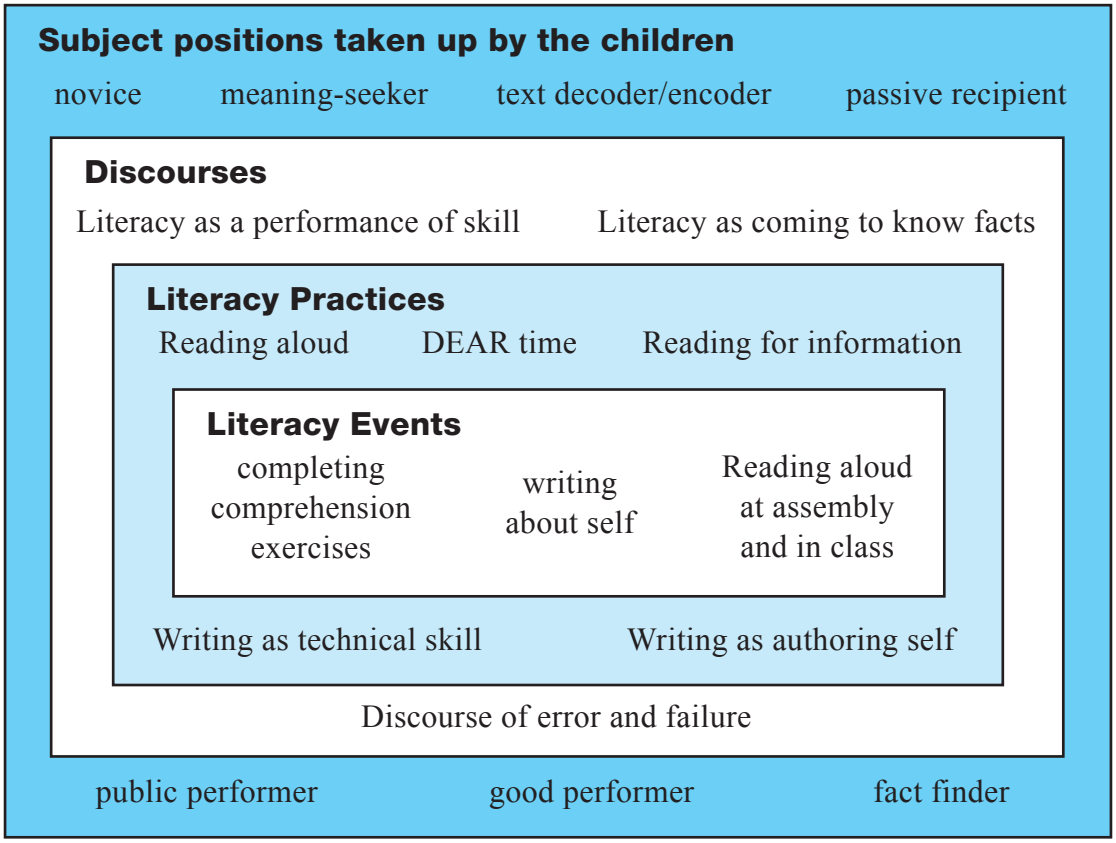


Figure 5.4: **Diagrammatic representation of literacy practices, Discourses and subject positions taken up in the children's in-school worlds.**

Given that the children's positioning within their in-school worlds affords them little, if any, power and control over their engagement in literacy activities (and the texts consumed or produced), it is however important to recognise their retained sense of personal agency. Albeit that the positions offered by their in- and out-of-school worlds are markedly different, the children retain a sense of personal agency by taking up these positions and excelling at them. This is evidenced by the school's recognition of the children as *'the good readers'*. Simply stated, the children demonstrate an awareness that the rules for playing the literacy game in their in- and out-of-school worlds are different but they have learned how to play the game in order to be 'successful' across both domains.

I would like to end this chapter by referring to Lindfors (1990) notion of 'memories that endure' as related to engagements with literacy. Lindfors (1990) reported that when she asked groups of students to write about successful moments in their

their secondary literacy Discourses. Drawing a theoretical thread around salient aspects of the findings thus far, the children's primary and secondary literacy Discourses are shown to be misaligned. The children's primary literacy Discourses comprise 'pleasure', 'representation-of-self', and 'creativity'. Within these Discourses the positions the children take up as 'facets of self' (Davis & Harre 1990) are as meaning-makers, readers, writers, poets, storytellers and authors. Contrasting this, the children's secondary literacy Discourses are shown to construct literacy as a set of neutral, technical skills to be displayed or performed. These secondary literacy Discourses comprise 'a performance of skill', 'coming to know facts' and a pervasive Discourse of error and failure. Within these Discourses the children are positioned as meaning-seekers, public performers, novices and passive recipients of literacy knowledge. The dominant secondary literacy Discourses of the children's in-school worlds are further shown to hinder their attempts to bring their primary literacy Discourses into the classroom. Finally, the findings demonstrate that to be recognised as members of the community identified as 'the readers' in the in-school domain, the children master their secondary literacy Discourses, taking up the positions offered within and excelling. The visual representation below (Figure 5.1) summarises the children's positioning within their primary and secondary literacy Discourses.

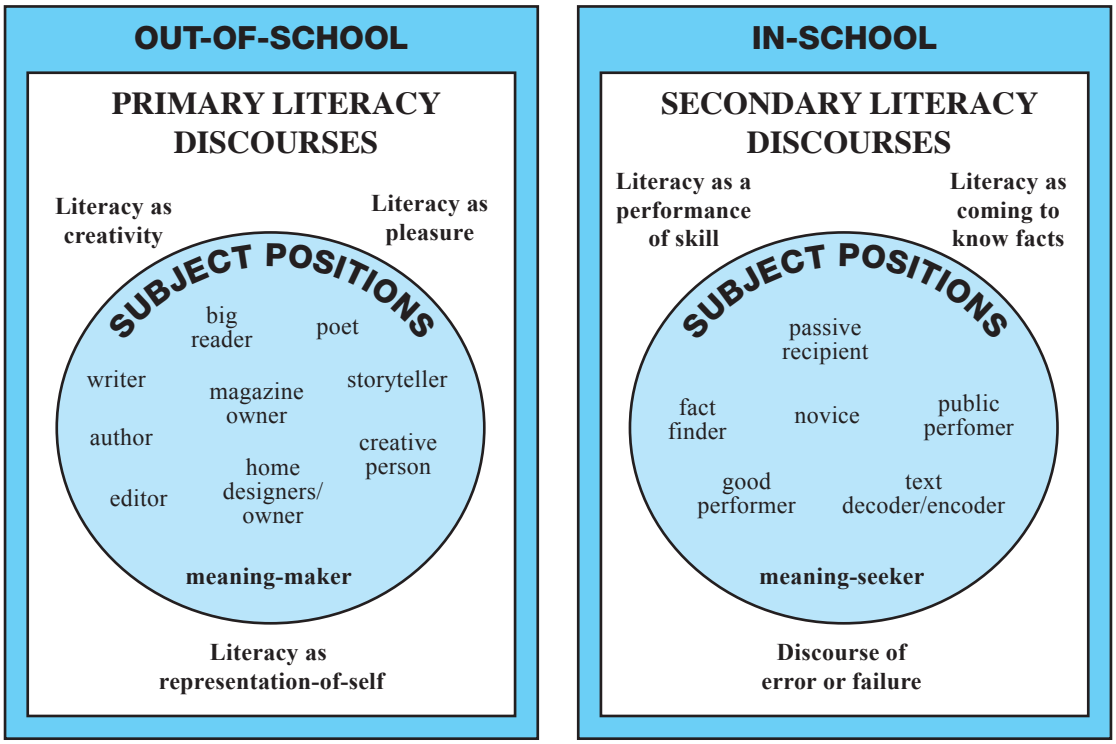
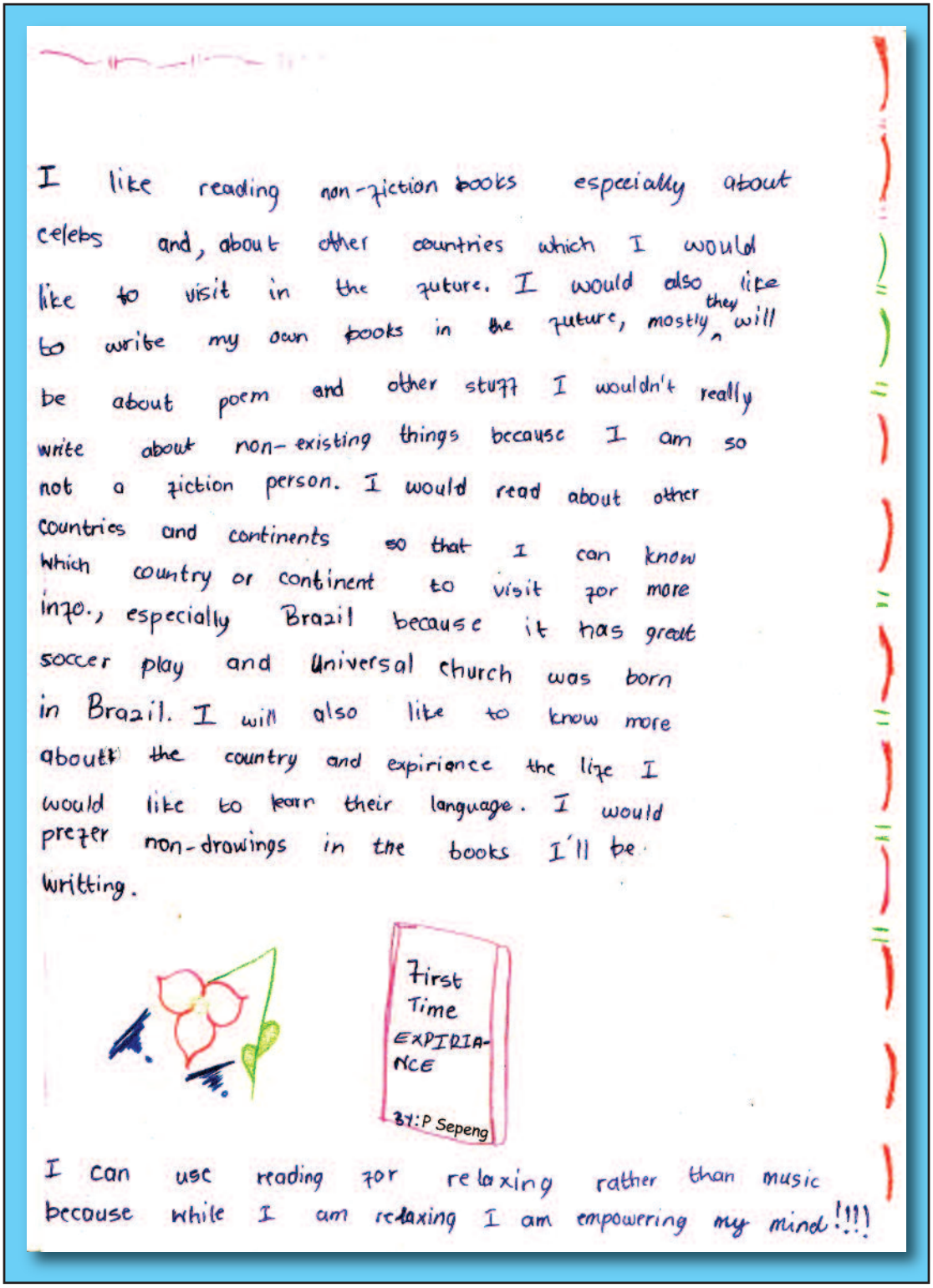


Figure 6.1: Diagrammatic representation of positioning within primary and secondary literacy Discourses.


I like reading non-fiction books especially about celebs and, about other countries which I would like to visit in the future. I would also like to write my own books in the future, mostly they will be about poem and other stuff I wouldn't really write about non-existing things because I am so not a fiction person. I would read about other countries and continents so that I can know which country or continent to visit for more info., especially Brazil because it has great soccer play and Universal church was born in Brazil. I will also like to know more about the country and expirience the life I would like to learn their language. I would prefer non-drawings in the books I'll be writting.

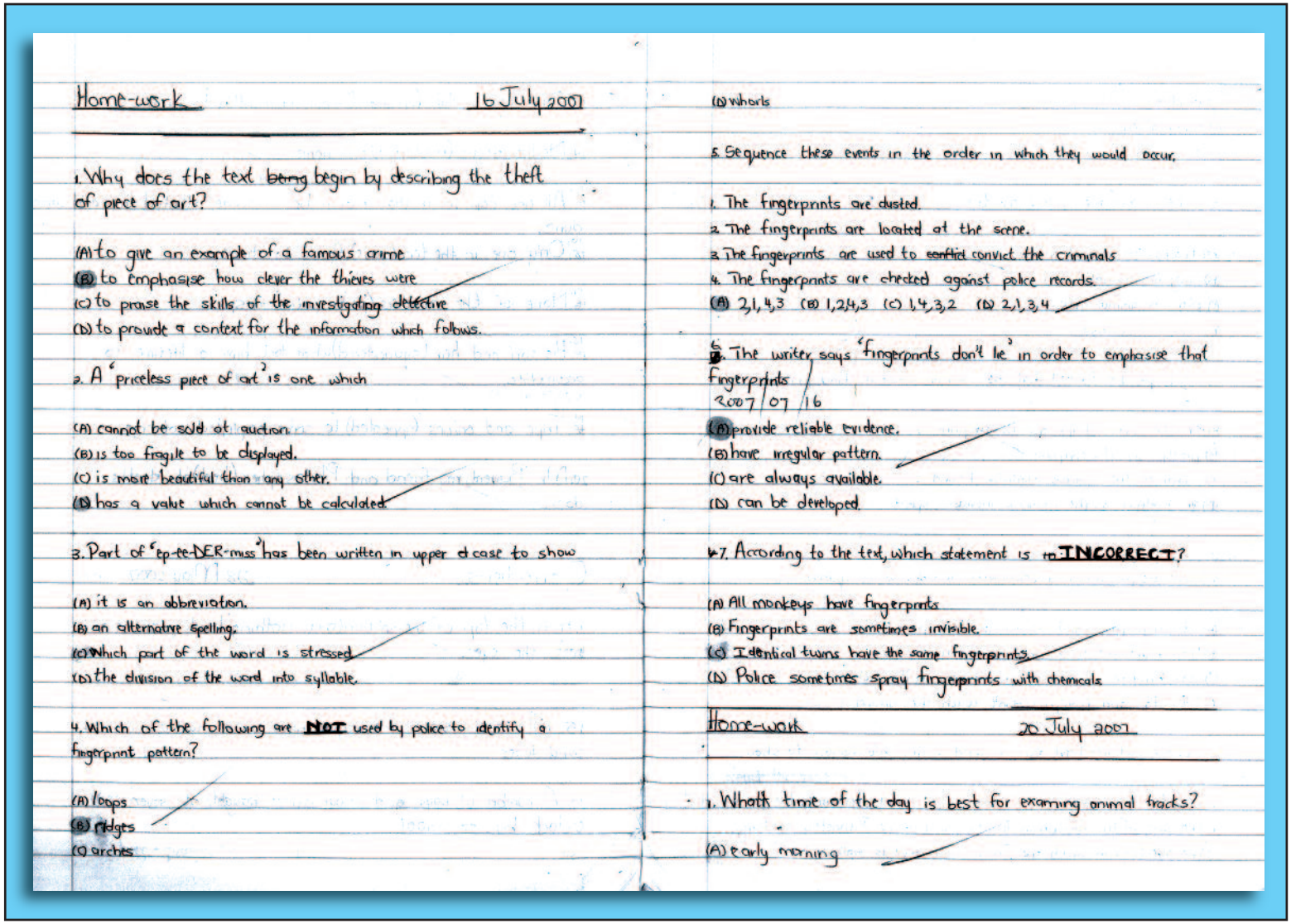
I can use reading for relaxing rather than music because while I am relaxing I am empowering my mind!!!!

Figure 6.3: Prudence's text written in response to Group Interview Five activity.



Figure 7.1: Boitumelo's 'I love to read!' drawing.

In discussing her drawing during her individual interview, Boitumelo explains her illustration as reflecting one of her favourite places for reading: *'sitting by myself on my mother's couch at home'*. Significantly she depicts herself reading a book but also draws three other books on the table in front of her. One of these books is an atlas and the other is laid open to reveal an illustration of a plant. Boitumelo's reading interests



Home-work 16 July 2007

1. Why does the text ~~being~~ begin by describing the theft of piece of art?

(A) to give an example of a famous crime
(B) to emphasise how clever the thieves were
(C) to praise the skills of the investigating detective
(D) to provide a context for the information which follows.

2. A 'priceless piece of art' is one which

(A) cannot be sold at auction.
(B) is too fragile to be displayed.
(C) is more beautiful than any other.
(D) has a value which cannot be calculated.

3. Part of 'ep-ee-DER-miss' has been written in upper d case to show

(A) it is an abbreviation.
(B) an alternative spelling.
(C) which part of the word is stressed.
(D) the division of the word into syllable.

4. Which of the following are **NOT** used by police to identify a fingerprint pattern?

(A) loops
(B) ridges
(C) arches
(D) whorls

5. Sequence these events in the order in which they would occur.

1. The fingerprints are dusted.
2. The fingerprints are located at the scene.
3. The fingerprints are used to ~~confirm~~ convict the criminals
4. The fingerprints are checked against police records.

(A) 2,1,4,3 (B) 1,2,4,3 (C) 1,4,3,2 (D) 2,1,3,4

6. The writer says 'fingerprints don't lie' in order to emphasise that fingerprints

2007/07/16

(A) provide reliable evidence.
(B) have irregular pattern.
(C) are always available.
(D) can be developed.

7. According to the text, which statement is ~~to~~ **INCORRECT**?

(A) All monkeys have fingerprints
(B) Fingerprints are sometimes invisible.
(C) Identical twins have the same fingerprints.
(D) Police sometimes spray fingerprints with chemicals

Home-work 20 July 2007

1. Whath time of the day is best for examing animal tracks?

(A) early morning

Figure 7.2: Sample of multiple-choice activity as reflected in Boitumelo's Languages exercise book.

Preposition
When I was young I was adopted
Proposition
8. The preposition is to indicate my relationship.
My proposition is to proof that I am the C.E.O.
Proceed
Procede
9. The president of the country is Mr Thabo Mbeki.
President
Nomfundo's case was taken to justification.
President
2007/05/21
10. My last words as I start a new speech.
Temper
People have been waiting on the queue for 3 hours.
Temper
21 May 2007
Class work
Corrections
1. I was bathing bowling to my friend yesterday morning.
I was playing with my ball and it fell next door.
1. Mom uses bawl to bake cakes.
2. On Saturday I was so bored.
The board meeting will be at 3:00 sharp.
2. My mother sings choir at the church.
3. My mother sings choir at church.
My father is going to buy home a 2 quire book.
3. As fresh as the morning dew.
4. Last night the weather was dew.
The due date of my account is on the 25 Dec 2007
4. I will sell those dolls and make a lot of profit
5. Today I received my mail from Nomfundo.
My brother is a male.
5. You will adopt to this weather
I will adopt a child from the orphanage home
6. Yesterday we made a lot of profit
The prophet of the Muslim is Allah.
6.
7. Mom said I must adopt join the adopt to the plug.
10. Snooker players use a cue for the game.

Figure 7.3: **Double-page spread from Boitumelo's Languages exercise book reflecting activity based on homonyms and homophones.**

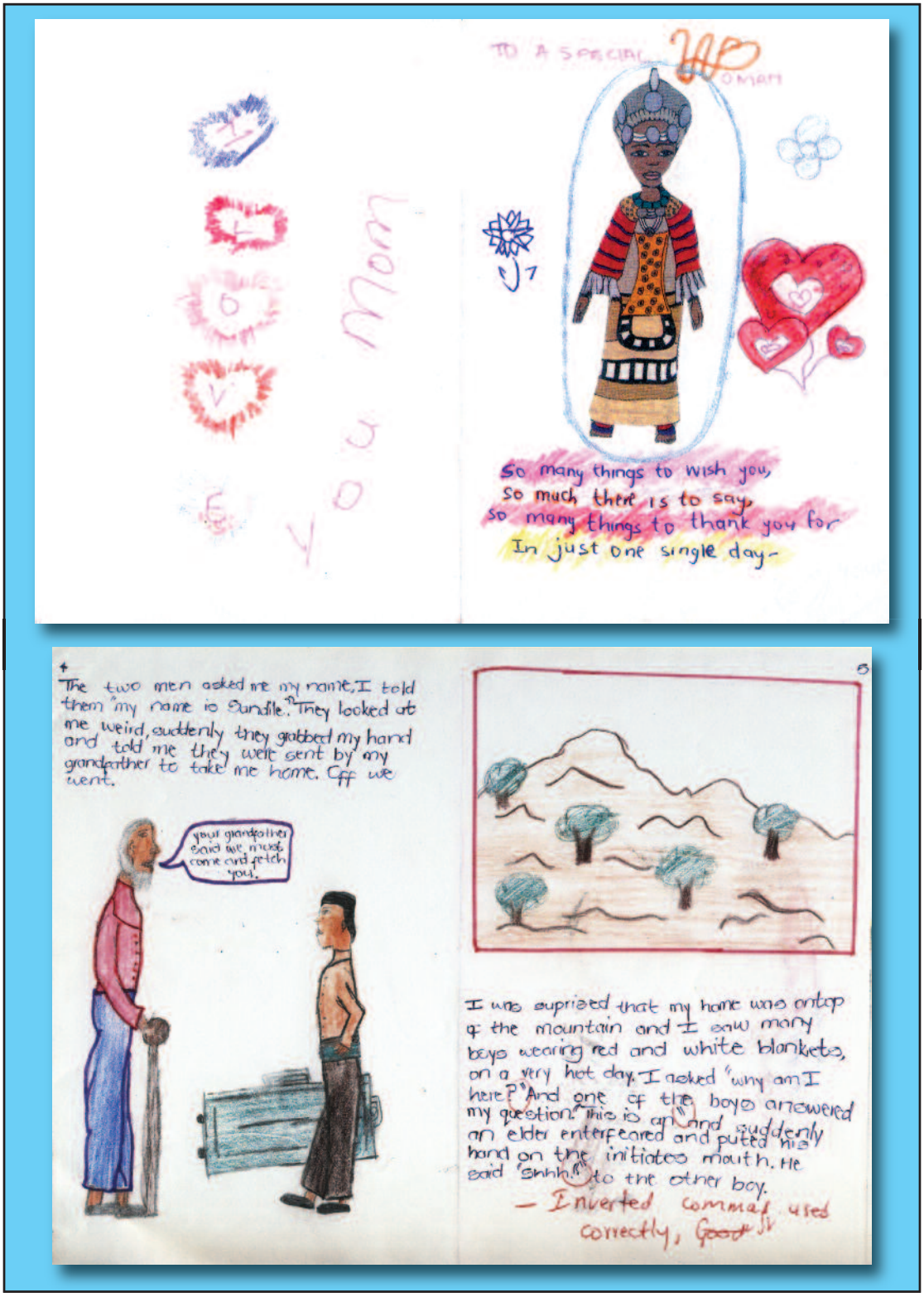


Figure 7.4: Boitumelo's Mother's Day card and an excerpt from one of her 'little books'.

Most contemporary definitions of literacy (Cope & Kalantzis 2000; Kress 2000, 2003; Kress & Jewitt 2003; Lankshear & Knobel 2003: New London Group 1996; Stein 2008) go beyond narrow and traditional understandings of being literate meaning 'being able to read, write or code' (Eisner 1985). Such definitions incorporate multiple modes of expressing or making meaning, moving beyond language symbols to that of multiple symbols, including, amongst others, drawing and visual images. Accordingly, school curricula are beginning to include multimodal representations which 'allow for the expression of a much fuller range of human emotion and experience, and which acknowledge the limits of language' (Kendrick & McKay 2004, p.111). Textual diversity embodied in opportunities to produce a variety of text types as well as pictures, drawings and computer-generated graphics is subsequently a foregrounded feature of the NCS (DoE 2002).

Accepting that teachers interpret and implement the curriculum according to their contexts and circumstances and that curriculum implementation therefore varies across contexts (Macdonald 2006), I would however argue that there is a marked overemphasis on drawing to the exclusion of other text types in Boitumelo's in-school world. This argument is supported by the extract from a comprehension test included below (Figure 7.5). (Aspects of this same comprehension test based on a short newspaper crime report were discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2.3.)

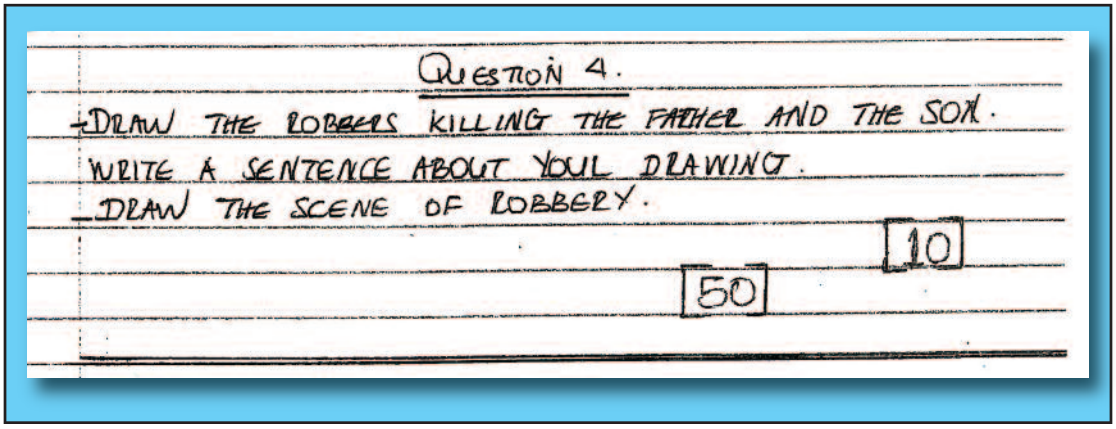


Figure 7.5: Second extract from first term comprehension test.

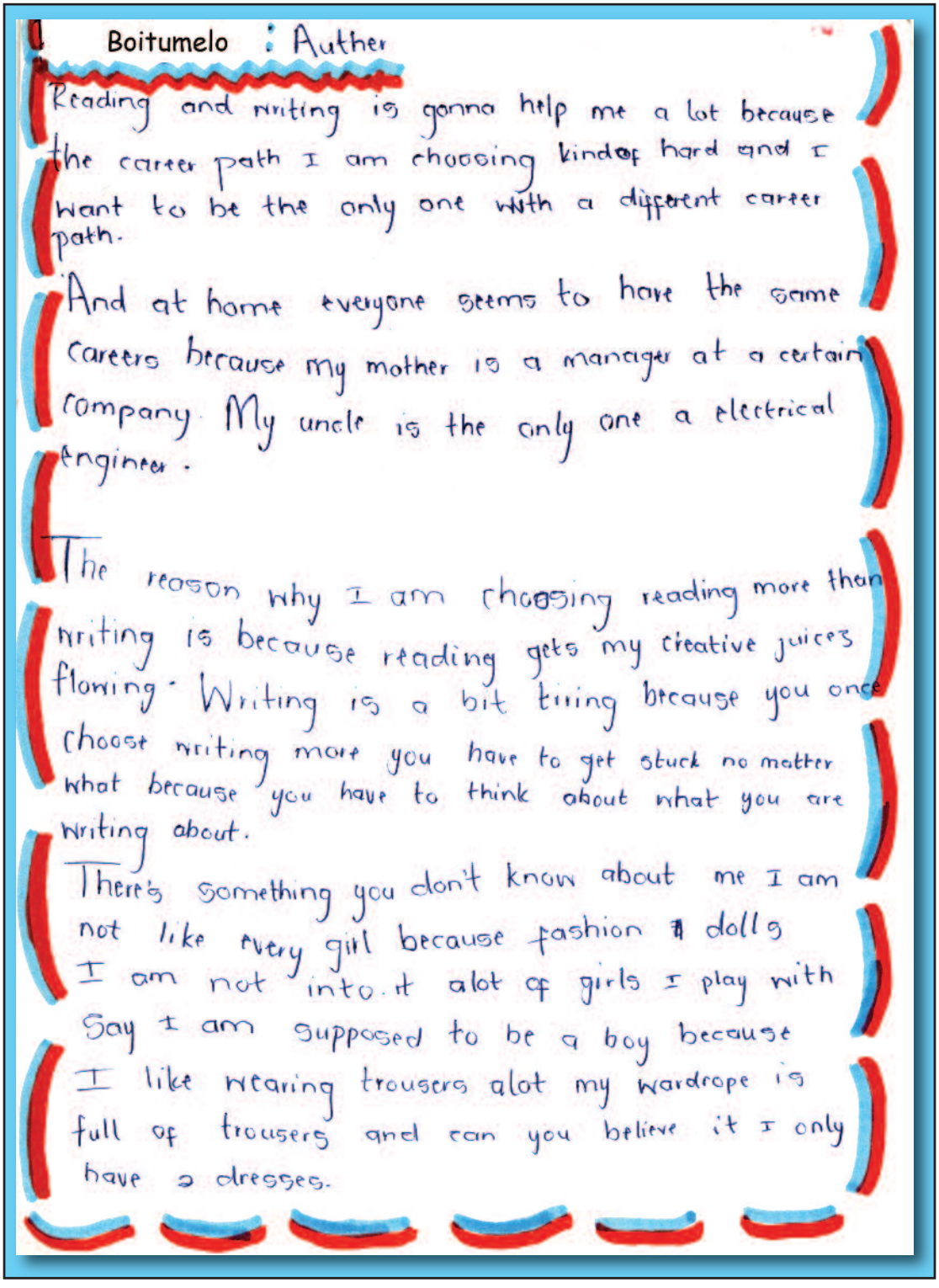


Figure 7.6: Boitumelo's text written in response to Group Interview Five activity.

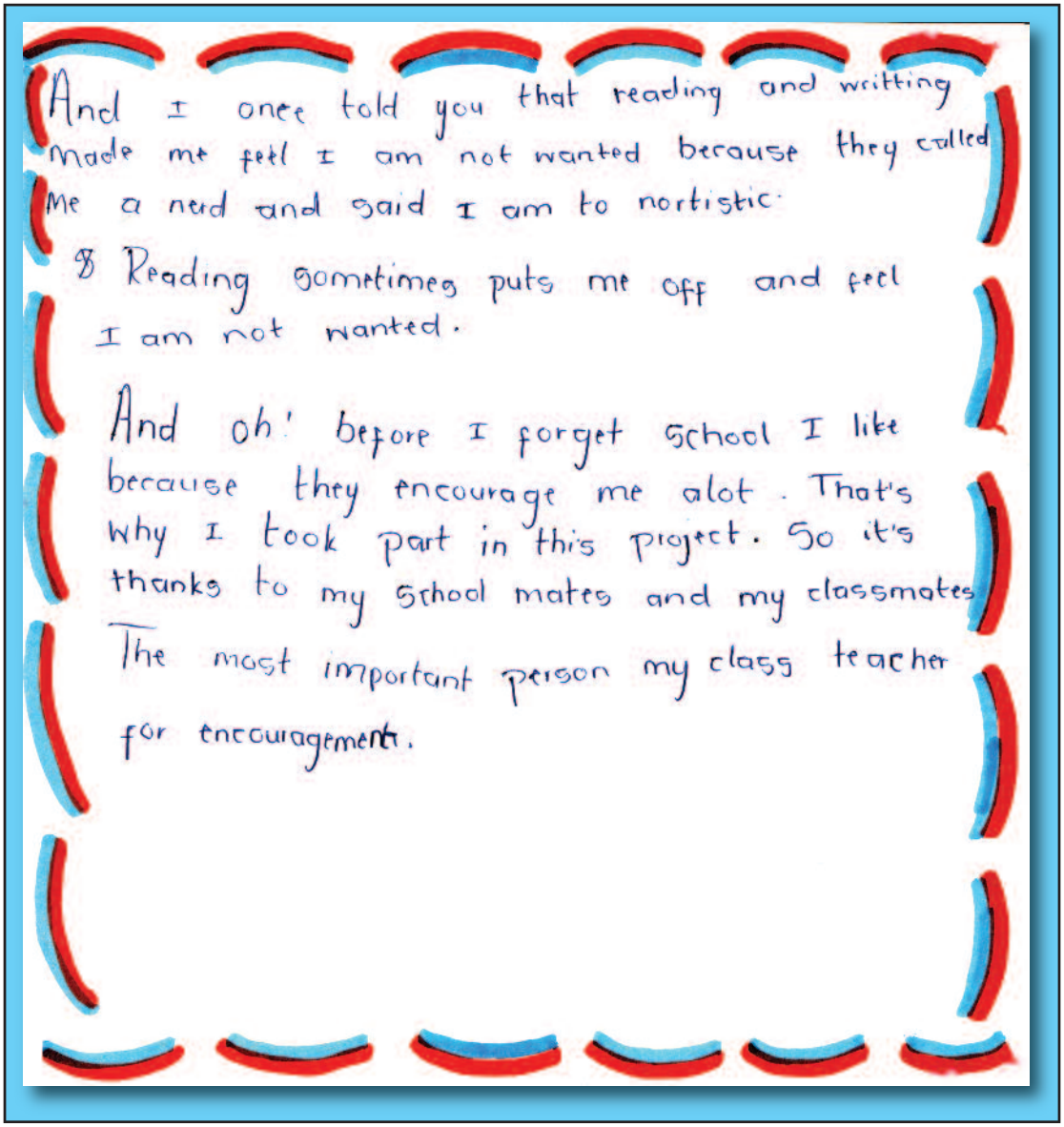


Figure 7.6: **Boitumelo's text written in response to Group Interview Five activity.**