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Transforming literacy teaching : a teacher's experience of implementing critical literacy and philosophy for children in a grade three South African classroom.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Preamble

On Friday the 29th of April 2011 Prince William married Kate Middleton at Westminster Abbey in London. I walked into my Grade 3 classroom the following Monday morning and opened my thick, heavy lesson file ready to teach the theme for the week: Transport. But the children in my class were buzzing with excitement about the wedding. That was all they wanted to talk about. I was caught in a dilemma of delivering my pre-planned lesson or discussing the royal wedding. My planned lesson seemed to be disconnected and unrelated to what was going on in the world. This incident was one of a series that left me with a growing sense of disquiet, as I realised how disconnected my lessons to current events.

This research project was borne out of a growing sense of disquiet which had developed over many years. I felt that my literacy teaching lacked meaning and relevance because it was disconnected from what was happening in the world. I suddenly realised that I had fallen into the rut of delivering a curriculum and not teaching literacy in a way that was dynamic and made a difference to the children I taught.

My studies at the University of the Witwatersrand made me realise that my literacy teaching was situated in the 'autonomous model' described by Brian Street (1984, p. 5). He believed that in most traditional classrooms literacy is taught as a neutral and cognitive skill for the purpose of mastering the ability to read and write. Language is taught in the form of decontexualised worksheets, flashcards and exercises, disconnected from real life-worlds or the interests of children. Hall (1998, p. 9) has argued that the autonomous model holds up language 'as an object for analysis rather than use.' It also privileges reading and writing above oral communication. In a traditional classroom, talk amongst peers is strongly discouraged and considered a distraction from what the teacher regards as the real work that should be happening in the classroom. For many teachers the sign of a productive class is children sitting quietly working on a written exercise. The classroom is set out in rows facing the teacher rather than in groups facing each other, where children can distract each other. Equally, most assessments are formal and written rather than oral and spoken.

During my studies I was introduced to two perspectives or lenses to literacy: Critical Literacy (CL) and Philosophy for Children (P4C). What inspired me was that these two approaches value a socio-cultural perspective on teaching literacy, where literacy lessons embrace the life-worlds and interests of the child. Both value democratic rather than hierarchical methods of teaching literacy as they start from the bottom and begin with the socio-cultural life-worlds of children, rather than the teacher's curriculum. Both of these approaches to literacy resonate with Dewey's (1990, p. 93) notion of democracy as a collaborative experience.

Another inspiring feature of these two orientations is that they provide tools for teachers and children to critique their life world, beliefs, values and taken-for-granted norms and teaching them to read texts in a critical manner. P4C has been described by Gregory (2012, p. 34) as, 'A way for children to not only think critically, but to be critical of the world'. Wooldridge (2009, p. 260) has described CL as an approach to literacy that involves 'decoding and encoding the social, political and ideological situatedness of literacy'.

Advocates of P4C and CL claim that they have transformative potential. Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 118) argue that 'P4C can be transformative, providing a key to a more inclusive and experiences of learning via communities of enquiry'. Janks (2010, p. 19) claims that a critical approach to literacy gives teachers and children tools to 'rewrite themselves and their local situations by helping them to pose problems and to act, often in small ways, to make the world a fairer place'. In doing so, they can become 'creators of language rather than consumers of it' (Freire, cited in Scott, 2004, p. 169) resulting in transformation.

I had two broad aims in implementing CL and P4C. Firstly, I wanted to enrich my teaching by adopting a more democratic and collaborative model of teaching literacy – and the means through which I planned to accomplish through the Community of Enquiry (CoE). One of the attractive features of the CoE is that it is a model of teaching that values a socio-cultural perspective of learning. This perspective recognises that learning is a social enterprise (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1991) that includes interacting with others around oral and written language. In this context learning is interactive and collaborative and children learn about the world, each other and their cultural values by interacting with each other.

Rather than delivering a curriculum in a decontexualised, 'autonomous' style, that did not relate to the lives and interests of the children I taught, I wanted to explore what Vasquez (2004, p.1) meant when she said, 'A critical literacy curriculum needs to be lived. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live.'

Secondly, from the children's perspectives, I hoped to extend the children's view of literacy, as more than the cognitive skill of being able to read and write, but also a way in which they could examine and critique their worlds. Thus, I was interested in the ways in which they would respond critically and philosophically using a picture book as a stimulus for discussion.

In order to implement this intervention, I recognised that this involved transformation on many levels. The first level being in my teaching practice, by creating a more collaborative and democratic environment through the Community of Enquiry, where the voices of the children I taught could be heard. Secondly, in the lives of the children by exposing them to two critical orientations to literacy.

My strategy was to implement CL and P4C, during a nine week period, using a Community of Enquiry with my Grade 3 class for an hour each week using the stimulus of the picture book *The Tunnel* (Anthony Browne, 1989). Since CL has no formal teaching method I wanted to experiment by implementing it in the CoE to see if it was a viable option. I also wanted to explore the differences and similarities in the context of the CoE.

1.2 Research questions

What happens when Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children are implemented in my Grade three classroom?'

Sub questions:

- How did implementing Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Critical Literacy (CL) in the Community of Enquiry change my teaching of literacy?
- How did the children engage with critical literacy topics?
- How did the children engage with philosophical topics?

1.3 Rationale

During my studies I recognised that my literacy teaching was situated in the 'autonomous' model of teaching literacy. My primary rationale in implementing CL and P4C, was to move away from the 'autonomous model' (Street, 1984) of teaching literacy to an 'ideological model' recommended by Street (1984) where 'literacy draws its meaning and use from being situated within cultural values and practices' (cited by Hall, 1998, p. 10). P4C and CL find a

natural home in this framework as they embrace a socio-cultural perspective that recognises that learning is a social enterprise (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1991) that includes interacting with others around oral and written language. This perspective recognises that children learn about the world they live in and their culture's values by interacting in a community setting with peers and more experienced mentors.

I believed by implementing this model that I would, firstly, enrich my own literacy teaching by incorporating the socio-cultural worlds of the children I taught in the Community of Enquiry, and secondly that I would extend their view of literacy as more than a cognitive skill that needs to be mastered through reading and writing only – in doing so enabling them to 'read the word and read the world' (Freire, 1972a, p. xiii) critically.

Pappas and Zecker (2010, p. 12) have argued that, 'the voices of teachers, their points of view, have been missing in traditional research because it has rarely addressed the questions of teachers'. Research has remained the ambit of academics at universities and often has very little practical value in the classroom. My voice is important in the classroom as I have the ability to make transformation happen.

In addition to the above arguments, CL and P4C are two orientations to literacy that have been well researched internationally. Dyson (1997) in San Francisco, has researched the social dimensions of literacy learning with young children, O' Brien (2001) in Australia has explored how texts construct gender identities with 5 to 8 year olds using mother's days cards. Vasquez (2004) in Canada has done research critical approach to social justice issues such as race and gender in the curriculum. In Singapore Cheah (2009) has examined what counts as critical literacy for children learning English as a second language.

There has been a limited amount of comprehensive research in South Africa. Dixon (2011) has conducted research on how children's bodies are regulated by literacy routines in the classroom. Stein (2009) has explored the implementation of a multi–lingual storytelling project with high school students in a black township in South Africa. This research report hopes to add to the body of knowledge in these two areas.

P4C is a well-researched approach in the United Kingdom, as well as other English-speaking countries. A study conducted in Clackmananshire showed that regular enquiries resulted in a whole population of children gaining on average 6 standard points on a measure of cognitive abilities after 16 monthes of weekly enquiry. This study also reported that pupils and

teachers made significant gains in communication, confidence, concentration, participation and social behaviour after 6 months (see http:www.clacksweb.org.uk/document/197.pdf).

In Scotland, Topping and Trickey conducted a large scale study with a experimental group of children once a week in 2004. This intervention showed a significant increase in children's IQ scores over a period of a year. The same research showed:

- Significant gains in verbal and non-verbal reasoning.
- Improvements in listening, communication, behaviour, questioning, reasoning reading and understanding.

Considering this argument, I believe that my research may provide a possible starting point for other educators in South Africa to implement Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children in their classrooms, and this makes this research a valuable endeavour.

1.4 Overview of the research report

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter maps out the theoretical context relevant to the research and discusses the relevant literature that provides a background to the study. I will discuss the literature related to Philosophy for Children and Critical literacy.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

In this chapter the research process is presented, outlining the methodologies used, as well as some of the advantages and disadvantages in their application and the methods used to analyse the data. I also give an account of the research site, Northview School, and the children who are research participants.

Chapter 4: Research findings

This chapter will discuss the main findings of the research. In particular, how implementing the CoE in my class changed my teaching and how this intervention enriched literacy in my classroom.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion draws out the main findings of the research and suggests further implications of this research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter will examine two different approaches to teaching literacy namely, philosophy for children and critical literacy. Scholars who inform the schools of thought that I draw on for this research are Janks, (1993a, 2010); Gee, (1990); Vasquez (2004, 2008); Freire (1972b), in the domain of Critical literacy; and Lipman,(1982-2003); Matthews and Kesner, (2003); Haynes, (2002, 2003, 2008); Murris, (2008, 2009); Haynes and Murris, (2012); and Fisher, (1998, 2006, 2008), in the domain of Philosophy for Children.

2.2 The Roots of Philosophy for Children

What do a fifth century Greek philosopher, Socrates, (469 – 399 BC) and a modern American philosopher, Matthew Lipman (1922 – 2010), have in common? Socrates, after observing his fellow Athenians said, 'The unexamined life is not worth living' (Socrates in Plato: Apology, 38a, cited by Fisher, 1998, p. 135). He believed an important characteristic of being human was to be critical.

In the late 1960s Matthew Lipman, Professor of Philosophy, after observing many American university students, was struck by their inability to think and express themselves creatively and critically. This led him to believe that critical thinking should be established in childhood and not at university level when it was too late. Lipman (1982, p. 37) asked , 'Why is it that while children of four, five and six are full of curiosity, creativity and interest, and never stop asking for further explanations, by the time they are eighteen they are passive, uncritical and bored with the learning?'. He blamed this on the nature of education in traditional classrooms that cultivates passivity and rote learning in children (Lipman, 1991, p.9).

Lipman founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclaire State University (USA), where he developed the thinking skills programme Philosophy for Children, based on Socrates' notion that 'if we are not reflective or critical we will lead unfulfilled lives and our thinking will become prey to prejudice and conflict.' (Socrates, in Fisher, 1998, p. 135). His aim was 'not to turn children into philosophers or decision makers,

but to help them become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate and more reasonable individuals' (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980, p. 15). Moreover, he believed that philosophy provided all the tools needed for critical thinking and argued that '[i]t cannot be sufficiently emphasised however, that there is nothing in the practice of critical thinking that does not already exist in some form or other in the practice of philosophy' (Lipman, 2003, p. 229).

Lipman's goal was to establish Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a fully fledged subject in the American public school system, a goal that has not yet been fully realised. This programme, however, has been introduced in more than thirty countries around the world and has particularly flourished in the United Kingdom, Europe and Latin America (Fisher, 2008, p. 38).

Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2012, p. 7) have divided the history of this movement into first and second generation Philosophy for Children.

The proponents of the first generation were Matthew Lipman and Gareth Matthews. What defined this generation was that it had a strategic and uniform approach, so that it could be implemented into public schools.

A second generation of Philosophy for Children scholars emerged out of the first discourse – including, among others, Ann Margaret Sharp, David Kennedy, Karin Murris, Walter Kohan, Michel Sasseville, Robert Fisher, Joanna Haynes, Jen Glaser, Oscar Brenifler, Michel Tozzi, Marina Santi, Barbara Weber and Philip Cam. They emerged with a wide variety of approaches with their own unique methods, techniques and strategies.

2.3 Philosophy for Children and Literacy

Second generation proponents such as Haynes (2008), and Murris (2008, 2009) and Fisher (1998, 2008) have used P4C as a tool to enrich literacy. Fisher has argued that 'The common bond between philosophy and the teaching of English is that they both involve a search for meaning' (Fisher, 1998, p. 43).

Murris further developed Lipman's Philosophy for Children programme by, incorporating picturebooks (Stanley & Bowkett, 2004, p. 13). Since then she has used the term Philosophy with Children (PwC), as she felt that it expresses the democratic and collaborative nature of her practice. Murris has explained that the picturebook approach has made philosophy

accessable to much younger children. The picturebook approach is used as it is the method used in this research project. Murris and Haynes (2000, p. 46) believe that picturebooks are good starting points for an enquiry, as they stimulate the imagination and they 'help the reader to imagine what it would be like to be someone else or live somewhere else.' Haynes (2008, p. 29) has also argued that picturebooks 'create a space for for meanings that children create from within their own experience, rather than meanings 'put in' by authors.' They also explore binary concepts such as bad/good, right/wrong, love/hate, life/death, making them ideal for philosophical discussion.

2.3.1 The Community of Enquiry

Philosophy for Children is located in the pedagogy of 'the community of philosophical enquiry (CoE). The CoE mirrors the Socratic ideal of philosophy that was practised in the agora of ancient Athens, where citizens used to assemble on the stone steps and discuss important philosophical questions that related to their lives. In the educational context Haynes and Murris have described the CoE as, 'A whole-class discussion where classroom organisation may vary from week to week' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 50). It is a pedagogy that is grounded in dialogue.

Murris and Haynes (2000, p. 45) have described how a literacy lesson in the CoE may be structured:

> The children and teacher sit in a circle facing each other to discuss a multi-modal stimulus such a picturebook, poem or newspaper article – the starting point for an enquiry. They would then take time to discuss the stimulus together. Once they have discussed the stimulus, the children would take some time to think about the stimulus – either in silence or by drawing or writing notes in response to the stimulus. In pairs the participants would explore the story and develop questions around the stimulus, collaboratively. The children would present their questions to the community of enquirers. They would democratically vote for the question for discussion. The teacher would facilitate the group through open questions. The children would be encouraged to build on each other's ideas during the discussion. The teacher would bring the enquiry to a close and the members would take time to evaluage the enquiry.

The CoE contains many unique and distinct features that separate it from traditional teaching and that are core in taking a philosophical approach. In the following section I will describe how the CoE enhances reading, oral communication and higher order thinking.

2.3.2 Philosophy for Children and Reading

Murris and Haynes (2000, p. 19) argue that P4C is a useful tool to enrich literacy because 'it utilises a rich variety of texts such as stories, poems, news reports and extracts from scientific or historical texts that extends their knowledge of reading. Fisher (2008, p. 43) elaborates on this by saying that P4C improves reading as it develops 'the ability to go beyond the literal meaning of texts and engages with texts on a more analytical and conceptual level. This enhances deeper comprehension of texts. Murris and Haynes (2000, p. 19) support this notion as they believe this approach to literacy is valuable because 'encouraging children to interogate texts on a more philospical level than merely de-coding text and that it improves their motivation for reading and re-reading as well as their self-confidence as readers'. Haynes (2008, p. 152) has explained that 'children develop a sense of power as readers and their right to question and challenge as well as celebrate the printed word'.

Murris (2009, p. 1) describes how using a picturebook as a stimulus for enquiry develops reading on many levels:

- **Text level -** Engagement with picturebooks develops thinking skills such as prediction, inference and deduction. As children interrogate, discuss and reflect on a picturebook, children learn to recognise aspects of an author's style, in terms of their ideas and writing style. The encouragement to use precise definitions, to reason and to present clear arguments helps children to write discursively.
- **Sentence level –** Close reference to a text heightens children's ability to compare the various forms of language that writers use to achieve particular effects.
- **Word level –** Children become interested in the precise meaning of words.

2.3.3 Oral communication

One of the distinctive features of the CoE is that it is a socio-cultural approach to literacy that recognises that learning is a social enterprise that includes interacting with others around oral and written language. What is characteristic of discussion in the CoE is that children are encouraged to bring their everyday lives into the classroom and engage in critical dialogue about philosophical issues that enable them to think critically, creatively and democratically

about concepts central to their lives. This reflects Vygotsky's theory that, 'Language is a way of sorting out our thoughts - a primary vehicle for cognition and socialisation.' (Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 30).

These notions are central because in attempting to transform children's view of literacy it is important to talk about concepts that are important to them. Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 11) define concepts as, 'Classifiers or collators of our thoughts as well as vehicles of thought.' Kennedy and Kennedy (2012, p. 103posit that, 'Concepts are also shaped by personal belief systems about how the worlds should work'. Philosophical concepts are common, central and contestable concepts. They can be summarised as the follows:

- **Common** because they are concepts that are common to all of us for example friendship, love, hate, life and death.
- **Central** because they affect our everyday thinking and our daily living and practice of life.
- **Contestable** because there are many versions of them and they change continually as a result of experience and reflection.

(Splitter and Sharp, 1995, p.11)

Engaging in philosophical dialogue around concepts has three main benefits. Firstly, Murris and Haynes (2000, p. 1) explain that 'thinking carefully about the meaning of these concepts addresses the 'core' of who we are and what we learn.' This makes learning more meaningful and personal by connecting literacy to the real life-worlds and interests of children. This fits in with Socrates' view of education. He believed that the aim of education was not about learning a whole body of knowledge but uncovering a personal understanding of truth. Socrates also believed that you could never know what you believe, unless you were able to articulate it in words. This was a way to clear one's personal thinking, so that one could come to a better understanding of oneself and of the world.

The second benefit of engaging of philosophical dialogue is that it enriches and extends vocabulary. In dialogue children have to think of the precise meaning of words that they use to communicate clearly. Fisher supports this notion by saying, 'A philosopher and a writer/speaker have the common goal of using precise language to communicate meaning' (Fisher, 1998, p. 43).

Thirdly, philosophical dialogue extends the children's view of literacy as more than a cognitive skill. It is necessary in order to give them tools to critique and examine their own worlds. In a philosophical enquiry these 'taken-for-granted' concepts are 'cracked open' (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012, p. 103) and subjected to scrutiny and debate – offering opportunities to problematise concepts. In doing so children need to know how to justify why they believe what they do.

In traditional classes, talk is not encouraged and is often dominated by the teacher. Spontaneous conversation among peers is seen as a distraction from real work. (Alexander, 2008, p. 14) has explained that international 'research shows that talk is intrinsically part of literacy and linked to reading and writing'. In order to move away from the 'autonomous' model of teaching literacy, it needs to be prioritised in the classroom.

2.3.4 The CoE and Cooperative Thinking

Lipman (1998, p. 142) has described the Community of Enquiry as a pedagogy of 'cognitive cooperation with peers and mentors.' His concept mirrors Vygosky's theory of the 'zone of proximal development' that posits that children learn more effectively with the help of more capable peers and mentors (Alexander, 2008, p. 8).

Knowledge is considered essentially the product of a community of enquirers engaging in 'a cooperative search for understanding through dialogue' (Fisher, 2008, p. 40). In listening, sharing and modifying their ideas, children learn to take responsibility for what they think by justifying what they believe - knowledge being defined in philosophy, as a 'justified true belief' (Benjamin & Echeverria, 1992, p. 67). In collaboration children gain experience in cultivating judgements. Lipman (1980, p. 17) defines judgements as, 'Settlements or determinations of what was previously unsettled, indeterminate or in some way problematic.' John Dewey (1932) described it as, 'To weigh pros and cons in thought and decide according to balance of evidence' (cited in Splitter and Sharp, 1995, p. 12).

In engaging in cooperative learning, children, cultivate a cluster of valuable dispositions that equip them to live better lives. Firstly there is the disposition called autonomy. In the CoE, children come to experience the tension of thinking for themselves and at the same time thinking with others. Out of this tension, children learn to form their own opinions and belief systems as they have to articulate their own thinking. In this way, they cultivate the social

disposition of autonomy. In Fisher's (2008, p. 81) words, 'Children are autonomous to the extent that their thinking and actions are truly their own.'

Secondly, they cultivate a self-critical disposition. Lipman (1996a, p. 81) describes the Community of Enquiry as 'self-critical practice,' involving children examining their own beliefs and values. Fisher (2008, p. 81) believes that children have two sources of beliefs:

- **Received beliefs –** These are beliefs that they derive from others and based on other people's interpretation of reality. Children may verbalise these beliefs but not necessarily incorporate them into their own belief system. What they say they will do is not necessarily always what they will do – they do things because 'my teacher tells me to.' Received beliefs control their words.
- **Operational beliefs –**These are beliefs are stem from an inner source defines how a child really thinks about the world**.** They are a result of the children making sense of the world and responding to the world in the light of their own feelings and self-interest. Operational control their actions.

Children often live between two belief systems and may not recognise contradictions between the two. It is only by providing a safe place for children to articulate their beliefs (and have them challenged) do they realise the apparent contradictions in them.

Thirdly, there is reasonableness. In 'cognitive co-operation with peers and mentors', members of the Community of Enquiry are encouraged to develop tolerance and respect for what is reasonable and not just rational. In this way, the characteristic of reasonableness is developed – Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 6) have described reasonableness as 'primarily a social disposition, involving beliefs attitudes and habits which bridge the gap between thought and action.' A reasonable person is one who respects others and is prepared to take into account other people's views and feelings - open to changing his/her opinion in the light of strong evidence. Reasonableness bridges the gap between the cognitive and affective domains of education and brings in a moral element to thinking. This notion mirrors Socrates' belief, that better thinking helps us to live better and happier lives.

Cultivating these dispositions may have no direct link to enriching literacy skills but they enhance relationships in the classroom, which is the key to good learning. This approach cultivates the emotional dimension of learning. This firmly places the CoE as a socio-cultural approach to teaching literacy.

2.3.5 Higher Order Thinking

Lipman, like Vygosky, believed that 'language provided the essential tools for thinking, and that children are able to function at a higher intellectual level in a cooperative and collaborative setting' (Fisher, 2008, p. 19). Lipman aimed to establish four kinds thinking in Philosophy for Children – critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking. He believed that this could be accomplished by generating a higher order of thinking in speaking, listening and reading. The meta-cognitive aspects of thinking skills in Philosophy for Children involve thinking about thinking. Central to this programme are the following thinking skills:

- **Collaborative Thinking**: Children experience collaborative thinking by thinking together and building on each other's ideas.
- **Critical Thinking**: Children engage in critical thinking through engaging in thoughtful discussion. They develop meta-thinking by critiquing their own thinking. In P4C the word 'critical' goes beyond the traditional understanding of the word 'critical', but it entails being critical of our own ideas and the ideas of others. Robert Ennis (1987) defines critical thinking as 'reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do' (cited by Fisher, 2008, p. 111).
- **Creative Thinking**: Children experience creative thinking through generating new ideas and building on the ideas of others. Haynes describes creative thinking as, 'An ability to think freely without constraints of given theory as well as the ability to construct other worlds' (Haynes, 2008, p. 59).
- **Caring Thinking**: Caring thinking is nurtured through developing awareness of self and care of others in dialogue. It emphasises learning to collaborate with others in community.

(Fisher: 2011, p. 2)

2.4. Socratic Teaching

Socrates believed that education was not a question of a transfer of knowledge but an activity of mind - not a curriculum to be delivered. He described education as 'a festival of the mind' where ideas are celebrated (Fisher, 2008, p. 121). The traditional model of education is teacher-centred and a 'transmission-orientated instructional model' (Pappas and Zecker, 2010, p. 3) where the teacher has a lesson plan and a clear direction and outcome for each

lesson. Therefore, implementing P4C in the classroom requires a different type of pedagogy from traditional teaching in order to experience the 'transformative potential' of the CoE.

Fisher (1998, p. 143) calls this Socratic teaching. Socrates compared the teacher's role in teaching to that of 'a mid-wife who assists children to give birth to their own ideas.' The teacher becomes a 'midwife of knowledge' because she helps children to give birth to their own ideas through philosophical questioning (Fisher, 1998, p. 143). In Socratic teaching the teacher's role changes from being the expert to being a facilitator - facilitating the discussion by inductive questioning. Gardner (1995, p. 3) argue that in the role of a facilitator the teacher 'lets go of the traditional reins authority' and 'creates a new set of reins' – through the art of good questioning. Good questions are open ended that encourage discussion, critical and creative thinking. (See appendix 1 for a list of Socratic questions)

Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 51) have described 'The role of the teacher in the community of enquiry is to assist children to take the enquiry wherever it may lead, while resisting the temptation to unnecessarily return to the text, or return to the ideas, themes or morals that adults find important.' This fundamentally changes communication patterns, in which the teacher asks most of the questions and sets the agenda for each lesson. Moreover, the teacher treats each child's question 'without prejudice' and needs to 'genuinely commit to the enquiry, while resisting the urge to drive it in a pre-planned direction' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 51).

Facilitators of P4C tend to emphasise 'dialogue across differences' (Fisher, 2008, p.118) where differences of opinion are open to be challenged and questioned. Lipman (1991, p. 229) compared facilitating a philosophical enquiry to 'a boat tacking in the wind.' On the other hand, Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 124) compare it to 'a string of spaghetti without beginning or end' – the product of an enquiry being 'reasonable judgement.'

2.5 Education for Democracy

For many educators the Community of Enquiry is primarily seen as a form of education for democracy. Tiffany describes it as a 'democratic laboratory' (cited by Haynes and Murris, 2012, p.183) because it encourages equal participation and collaboration amongst all its members. The children formulate the rules, their questions set the agenda for the enquiry and their voices are valued. In this type of pedagogy, there is less emphasis on the individual and

'more recognition of the diversity of the community and a variety of stakeholders' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 183).

2.6 The Roots of Critical Literacy

Janks (2010, p. 12) has described the origins of Critical literacy as historically rooted in Paolo Freire's (1972) political work with poor, illiterate communities in South America in the 1960s. Freire, (1972, p.46) spoke against what he defined as the 'banking concept' of education where 'knowledge is deposited as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who know nothing.' He believed that the 'banking' concept of education resulted in diminished creative and critical thinking.

Freire was one of the first to challenge the belief that literacy is just a neutral skill of simply being able to decode texts at a functional level (Scott, 2004, p. 169). He, (1987, p xvii) argued that 'we need children to become readers of the word and the world'. Freire believed that literacy was a socio-cultural activity that was strongly linked to our understanding of the world. Because of this, he believed that 'reading the world always precedes reading the word as it is always important to learn to first think correctly about the world and our daily lives' (Gee, 1990, p. 76). He also believed that education took place in dialogue and defined dialogue as 'the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world' (Freire, 1972, p. 60).

His two seminal books, *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1972a) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972b) explore how 'by reading the word and world', literacy learners are able to regain their sense of autonomy as agents who, act to transform the social situations in which they find themselves. He used literacy as a means of breaking the 'culture of silence' of the poor and disposed' (Janks, 2010, p. 13). Freire, (1972 a, p. 52) believed that the goal of education was liberation. He said the following, 'Liberation is praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it'. His views are based on neo-Marxist views because they look at how 'power relations are maintained by either coercion or consent.'(Gramisci, cited by Janks, 2010, p. 42).

His notion of democracy was influenced by Dewey (1990, P. 93) who defined democracy 'is a mode of associated living, of co-joined communicated experience'. Modern proponents of

Critical literacy (see O' Brien & Comber, 2000, Vasquez, 2004) support this notion of democracy and view Critical literacy as a community approach to literacy.

Considering the above argument, I believe that the Community of Enquiry provides a good approach for Critical Literacy.

2.7 Critical Literacy – a definition

Critical Literacy has no simple generic definition and is a contested term and practice. Internationally educators have worked out of a variety of theoretical positions and developed versions of Critical Literacy: Critical Linguists (Fowler, & Trew 1979; Fowler and Kress, 1979); Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989); Feminine Linguists (Cameron, 1985, 1990, 1995; Spender, 1980; Threadgold 1997; Weedon 1987); Critical Language Awareness Volosinov, 1986; Apple, 1979); and Critical Pedagogy (Apple, 1979 Giroux, 1981; Shor, 1980; Simon, 1992); and Critical Language Awareness Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1993), (as cited by Janks, 2010, p. 12).

Some of them emphasise critical language awareness, some critical discourse analysis, and others start from a feminist or anti –racist standpoint. They all agree that a critical stance towards literacy is concerned with the contesting unequal power relationships and a commitment to implementing them in educational systems (O' Brien & Comber, 2000, p. 155). Wallace (2009, p. 210), summarises this with these words, 'The one thing that is agreed upon is that critical literacy is concerned with the manner in which power circulates both in the real world and within particular texts'.

For the purpose of this research report I draw on O' Brien's definition of Critical Literacy:

'It is through language that we come to an understanding of the world, and it is through language that our world is constructed. We therefore need to consider critically what and how we learn about our world (including ourselves) through reading, writing and talking' (O' Brien, 1994, p. 36).

2.8 Critical Literacy in the classroom

There is no simple formula or method for implementing critical literacy in the classroom. In effect, this means it will look different in different locations. The underlying premise of Critical literacy is that it is about 'questioning and challenging ways things are in texts and in everyday life' (O'Brien, & Comber, 2000, p. 153).

2.8.1 The Principles of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is an approach to literacy that invites children not only to 'crack the code, making meaning and use texts, but also to critically analyse texts' (Luke and Freebody, 1999, cited in Comber & Nixon, 2004, p. 116).

The first principle of Critical Literacy is that it encourages a critical stance towards language. It is based on the assumption that language education is not neutral and that different texts represent world views that attempt to position them to see the world in a specific way. Janks (2010, p. 61) puts it this way, 'Texts work to position their readers and the ideal reader, from the point of view of the writer (or speaker)'. In other words the writer wants us to see the world through the lens of her particular worldview. Every text is in a sense one person's perspective of the world and works to create a particular view of reality. Critical Literacy recognises that there are power relations in literacy and texts can include and exclude and position of readers. In order to do this the reader needs to look with a critical eye at 'taken for granted' norms, stereotypes, and values of society. Therefore, Critical Literacy explores how texts construct our social selves (Shor, 2011, p. 1).

Secondly, Critical Literacy is guided by the notion that we can change the world through language. (1972a, p. xv) said the following, 'Language is the means of critical consciousness, which in turn, is the means of conceiving of change and making choices to bring about transformation'. The first step to transformation entails the reader distancing him/herself from a text by 'problematising' texts that seem 'normal' and 'taken for granted'. This involves problem posing. Comber (2001, p. 1), states 'When teachers and children are involved in Critical Literacy, the questions they ask will be about language and power, about people and lifestyle, about morality and ethics, about who is advantaged by the way things are and who is disadvantaged'. In this way the reader de-constructs texts to interrogate 'taken for granted norms and values of society' (O'Brien, 2000, p. 158) Freire (1972a) believed that pedagogy should be more about asking questions than giving answers and therefore should be 'radical because it is less certain of certainties' (as cited by Gee, 1990, p. 54).

Critical literacy gives children tools to critique ideologies, values, positions of texts and how they work. It has been assumed that critical literacy can only be taught once children have mastered the tasks of decoding, meaning making and functional uses of texts. Janks (2010, p. 183) has provided 're-design cycle' which provides teachers and learners the tools to apply critical literacy in the classroom:

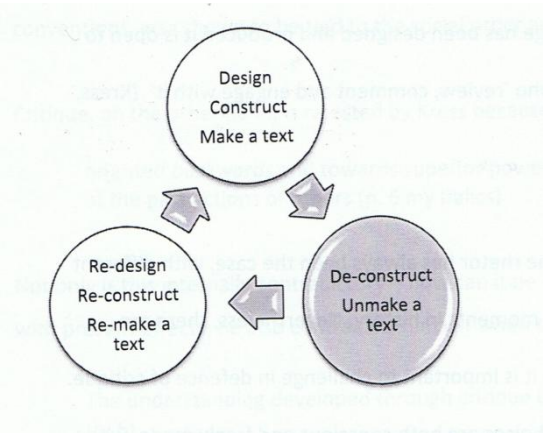

Figure 1: The redesign cycle (Janks, 2010, p. 183)

The re-dedesign cycle is oultined in the following steps:

The first step in the re-design cycle is to recognise that no text is neutral they 'positioned and positioning'. The second step involves deconstructing or unmaking the text by distancing ourselves from the text and problematising it. The third step involves re-constructing the text by producing an alternative perspective. The purpose of the re-design cycle is to empower people, so that they have a sense of more control of their lives. They can become more aware of how language shapes and 'constructs' them as particular sorts of social subjects, affecting their social identities such as gender, class, stereotypes.

2.8.2 The implications of Critical Literacy in the classroom.

Critical Literacy has been described as a 'situated' (Lankshear, Gee, Knobel & Searle, 1997, p. 77) approach to literacy because it is grounded in the socio-political world of the child. Therefore, it cannot be prescribed by curriculum content or prescribed lessons. Vasquez (2004, p. 1) made this powerful statement, 'A critical literacy curriculum needs to be lived. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live. As such it cannot be traditionally taught'. What Vasquez means by this statement is that it is a curriculum that is built on contexts in which children live in and which shape them. The implication in implementing this approach is that 'it starts with the concerns of the students through an exploration of student's histories and cultural locations (Pennycook, 1994, cited in Cheah, 2009, p. 79). This means teachers need to incorporate a critical perspective of children's everyday lives in order to help them understand the social issues around them. A critical perspective also offers teachers a way to think about the texts children are reading and writing and how it makes them see the world. Literacy therefore does not occur in a vacuum

and is not an autonomous skill of reading and writing but it is embedded in culture and social relationships.

Including learners in a Critical Literacy curriculum involves 'constantly listening to what children are talking about, their passions, their interests to build a curriculum' (Vasquez, 2004, p. 80). This runs counter to the discourse of most traditional classes. It represents a democratic rather than hierarchical method of teaching.

One of the benefits of Critical Literacy is that it builds what Searle (1988) would call 'imaginative empathy' by using a variety of texts to encourage learners to imagine themselves living life in the shoes of another person (as cited in Wray, 1997, p. 2). It encourages learners to see text to view texts from different perspectives. This requires critical and creative thinking.

Internationally teachers have been successful in implementing Critical Literacy in their classrooms with children as young as four years old when they still have not mastered the ability to decode texts (see Vasquez, 2004, O'Brien, & Comber 2000). An example of how Critical Literacy can be applied in a primary school classroom O'Brien's (2000 p. 152) interrogation of Mother's Day cards as a framework for looking at gender stereotypes. Through discussions the class were able to discuss how society constructs what males and females can and cannot do. By doing this kind of work children become 'text analysts' (Freebody & Luke, 1990, as cited by Vasquez, 2004, p. 58). In the light of this exercise the children saw that there is no such thing as a neutral text and 'all texts are ideological. They are all written from a particular standpoint and as such there is no such thing as an impartial, objective text or neutral position from which a text can be read, written, viewed or spoken' (Evans, 2004, p. 11).

Another example of of working with Critical literacy is Hilary Jank's notion of 'topdogs and underdogs' in the *Critical Language Awareness Series* (Janks, 1993a). Teachers in high school classes have found her workbook activities useful.

2.9 Criticisms of Critical literacy

Some teachers in primary school have been hesitant to include critical literacy in their classrooms because they feel that it may be un-pleasurable and 'steal childhood away from children' (Vasquez, 2004, p.79). Other teachers feel that think it is too political for young children and topic such as racism, gender, equity and stereotypes too cynical for them.

Essentially Critical literacy is about life we find ourselves living in. Vasquez (2004, p. 30) argues that 'critical literacy does not necessarily involve a negative stance, rather it includes looking at an issue or topic in different ways, analysing it and hopefully being able to suggest possibilities for change or improvement in ways that are both challenging and enjoyable'.

2.10 Conclusion

The table below outlines the similarities and differences between critical literacy and philosophy for children.

Table 1: A table of comparison between Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children

The Critical literacy lens	**The Philosophical lens**
Historically rooted in Paolo Freire's work with the oppressed.	Historically rooted in Matthew Lipman's work with critical thinking
Problematises ideologies, social relationships that are rooted in power. (The top dog and underdog).	Problematises the meaning of words and concepts such as love, hate and fear.
Critical questioning of the politics of meaning, how are dominant meanings maintained, challenged and changed?	Critical questioning of concepts such as 'what makes x, x?
Questions are more directive	Questions are more open-ended
Redesign is an important element and the focus of CL that leads to empowerment.	Transformation is important and happens when learners are exposed to a more inclusive and meaningful pedagogy.
Community based as they question power Relationships in the classroom and the community they live in.	Community based as the community of Enquiry creates a context for philosophical discussion
No formula or package to teaching CL.	Situated in the pedagogy of the Community of Enquiry.
Language based form of teaching.	Language based form of teaching
Dialogue: based on Freirian dialogue.	Dialogue: based on Socratic open-ended dialogue.
The aim is to deconstruct texts and to see how they position readers, which leads to	The aim is to cultivate good judgement and reasonableness.

some form of action in the form of reconstruction.	
Requires critical pedagogy	Requires critical pedagogy
Socio-cultural approach to teaching literacy.	Social Cultural approach to teaching literacy.
Influenced by Dewey's conception of democracy as a collaborative practice.	Influenced by Dewey's conception of democracy as a collaborative practice.

P4C and CL are problem-posing approaches to teaching literacy in the primary school. They also develop meta-cognitive thinking and creativity. P4C and CL enrich and expand literacy as they both 'develop the ability to go beyond information given and engage with texts not just in terms of their literal meaning but at an analytic and conceptual level'. (Fisher, p. 68). They are also ideological approaches to teaching literacy as they begin from 'children's everyday lives, takes their interests into account, and explicitly positions children as researchers and ethnographers of their everyday lives' (Comber & Nixon, 2004, p. 118). The literature reviewed in this section provides a foundation for the rest of this research project.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study is a qualitative research project. The focus of this chapter is to describe the methods used for this qualitative research report. The purpose of this study was to explore what happened when Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children were implemented in my Grade three classroom.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research is a form of enquiry that explores phenomena in natural settings. Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p.119) have explained that, 'Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, and use multi–methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning'. Qualitative research has a long history as a field of enquiry in the human sciences. A fundamental assumption of the qualitative research paradigm is that, 'A profound understanding of the world can be gained through conversation and observation in natural settings rather than through the quantitative, scientific approach to research' (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 119). A characteristic of this type of research is that it seeks an understanding of phenomena from multiple perspectives in a real world context. De Vos (1998, p. 2) has described the purpose of qualitative research to, 'Describe, interpret or reconstruct the depth, richness and complexity of an identified phenomenon in order to gain an understanding or insight into it'.

This research project set out to explore the implementation of critical literacy and philosophy for children in my grade three classroom, using the stimulus of a picturebook. As a teacher/researcher I wanted to gain insight into two areas - firstly, how my teaching changed by implementing the Community of Enquiry in my literacy lessons. Secondly, how the children in my class engaged in critical and philosophical topics.

A qualitative research design is frequently used in research conducted in education, as it assists educators in revealing perceptions and experiences. This research project embodies the notion of 'the teacher as a researcher' (Pappas and Zecker, 2010, p12) as it involves listening to the voice of the teacher in research. This is an important motivation for this research as it

'strengthens freedom of expression and democratic participation in education' (Haynes & Murris, 2012, p. 129). Moreover, 'the voices of teacher's (and) their points of view have been missing in traditional research because it rarely addresses the questions of teachers.' (Pappas and Zecker, 2010, p.12). Bassey (1986, p. 18) makes this important point, 'Academics are watchers of the world and teachers are the actors in it.' In this research project I became both 'watcher and actor' as I reflected on my teaching and the implementation of the Community of Enquiry in my classroom.

As a teacher, this design was important, as the research was underpinned by my desire to discover the ways in which the Community of Enquiry would enrich my own literacy teaching in the foundation phase. I was able to immerse myself in the situation and obtain information directly from the source. It is through qualitative data collection that the researcher can spend 'a considerable amount of time in direct interaction with the settings, participants, and documents' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 321).

3.2.1 Research site

One of the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is that it takes place in a natural setting such as a classroom school, clinic or neighbourhood (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 321). The school that provided the setting for this research is an independent primary school, catering for learners from grade 0 until grade 7. It is situated in a middle class suburb, north of Johannesburg. Since its inception in 1994 it has grown from fifty to 400 children. It is well resourced with a computer centre, classrooms, a library, a swimming pool and sports fields.

This particular school belongs to the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) and is registered with the Gauteng Department of Education (GED) and therefore follows the National curriculum and assessment standards. It is registered with the National Professional Teacher's Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA) and is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The school describes itself as a 'faith based school that aims to provide children with a quality education without discrimination of race and gender,' - aiming to cultivate high moral, spiritual and educational standards.

During the investigation, context sensitivity was taken into account, as the research was conducted with learners from different backgrounds. The setting was selected purposefully because firstly, I was working in the school at the time, and secondly because I was interested in improving my own practice it made sense that I worked in my own classroom with my own children.

3.2.2 Research participants

There were essentially two sets of participants – the teacher/researcher (me) and the children in my grade three classroom. My classroom provided a natural research site, as it was easily accessible to me, as I was the teacher and I already had a relationship with the children. Participants were automatically selected because they were the learners in my grade three classroom. My classroom provided the boundaries of the research project. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 322) have explained the significance of this by saying, 'The understanding of meaning is bound by social, political, gender, racial, class and technological factors.' My class initially consisted of twenty two children - twelve girls and ten boys. In September, two more children joined the research project making it twenty twenty-four. Five of the participants were not native South Africans - coming from other countries such as the Congo, Malawi, Korea and Egypt. Seven of them were not first language English speakers. They presented a broad ethnically diverse group that provided a rich context for this research, as represented in the tables below:

Table 2: Male research participants

	Pseudonym	**Age**	**Race**	**Home Language**
1.	Terence	10	Coloured	Afrikaans
2.	Lionel	9	White	English
3.	Ben	9	Black	Congolese
4.	Jay	9	White	English
5.	Sahid	10	White	Arabic
6.	Anton	9	White	English

7.	Brent	9	Indian	English
8.	Marcus	10	White	German
9.	Ming	9	Asian	Korean
10.	Shawn	9	White	English

Table 3: Female research participants

	Pseudonym	**Age**	**Race**	**Home Language**
1.	Tess	9	White	English
2.	Christy	9	White	English
3.	Lee	10	Black	Xhosa
4.	Angela	9	Black	English
5.	Kristin	9	White	English
6.	Ellen	9	White	Afrikaans
7.	Chantal	9	White	English
8.	Jessie	9	White	English
9.	Mona	9	White	Afrikaans
10.	Sue	9	White	Afrikaans
11.	Tandy	9	Black	English
12.	Amy	9	White	English

3.2.3 The Teacher

I acted as an observer as well as a research participant as I was reflecting on my own practice as a teacher. I am a white, forty-five year old female teacher who has taught for twenty years in the Foundation phase – mainly in grade three classrooms. My interest has always been in the area of literacy and storytelling. I am in charge of the Art and Drama department in the school and organise all the cultural activities in the school such as the school play, cultural days and art exhibitions.

3.3 Outline of the Research Intervention

For the purpose of this research, data was collected from the enquiries and not from the lessons that focused on other aspects of literacy that continued in other lessons, in order for me to meet the aspects set out in the curriculum.

3.3.1 The Data Collection

A variety of empirical methods were used in this research such as the personal reflections of the researcher and participants, observation, visual texts and discussions in the Community of Enquiry – which enabled me to 'describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's lives' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011,p. 2).

Three sets of data were collected, (1) audio recording of transcriptions of the enquiries, (2) picturebooks the children made (3) and my reflective journal:

3.3.2 The Stimulus

The stimulus to encourage greater dialogue in my literacy lessons was a picturebook called *The Tunnel* (1989) by Anthony Browne. I chose it because of its universal theme of a brother and a sister fighting and at odds with each other. This is a story I felt the children could relate to. Picturebooks have been successfully used by P4C practitioners as starting points for an enquiry as 'the gaps in picturebooks creates space where children can bring their own experiences and knowledge to the reading process' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 206).

The tunnel is a narrative about the resolution of conflict between a brother, Jack and his sister, Rose. They are at odds with each other because of their different temperaments – she

likes to stay indoors and dream while he likes to play outdoors with his friends. Their mother gets tired of their fighting and sends them to play outside together. Jack finds a tunnel in a piece of waste ground and decides to explore it, but Rose is afraid of going into the tunnel. She waits patiently for him, but when he does not return she decides to follow him into the dark tunnel. On the other side of the tunnel she finds a terrifying forest filled with wolves and strange creatures carved into the trees. After running through the forest she comes to a clearing and finds a stone statue of her brother. She hugs him and as she does so he regains his human form. They go home together where their mother is waiting for them with lunch.

The intervention spanned a nine week period - from the 4 of August until the 28 of September. A key part of the design was to use the Community of Enquiry as a research tool. Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 50) have described the Community of Enquiry as, 'A whole-class discussion where classroom organisation may vary from week to week.' The variation was important as a way of allowing the children to participate more fully in the lessons.

Discussions in the CoE provided one of the most important sources of data collection. Each enquiry lasted about an hour and took place once a week during the class's' literacy time. This approach focused on giving the children a voice in the classroom. This was an important factor in this research project as the researcher wanted to understand their point of view in their own voice (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 323). These enquiries were audio recorded to ensure accuracy in interpreting the data. These enquiries were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The group discussions added a richness and immediacy to the research but it should be noted that they could not be considered totally objective especially since the children knew they were being recorded and its presence in some cases may have left some children feeling that they were being watched by an adult.

The table below is an outline of the enquiries and lessons that took place from 4th August until the 28th of September. Not all of the sessions involved philosophical enquiries.

Table: 4 An Outline of the Enquiries and Lessons

Lessons/CoE	Date	Topic	Data collected
Lesson 1	4 August	Introduction to the Community of Enquiry. The children discussed and voted for their own rules for further communities of enquiry	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.
CoE 1	11 August	Different children were chosen to sit in the 'hot-seat' and asked questions about the book's cover as if they were the experts in the field.	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.
CoE 2	17 August	After reading half the picturebook up to the point where the brother Jack crawled down the tunnel, the children were posed with the dilemma - Should Rose, his sister, follow him down the tunnel or go home and call for help?	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal. The Children's picturebooks.
Lesson 2	25 August	The children dramatised crawling down the tunnel and thinking of adjectives, such as wet, dark, squishy etc.	No data collected
CoE 3	1 September	The picturebook was read until the end, where Jack was transformed back from a statue into a little boy. The children voted to discuss 'who had turned him into stone?'	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.
CoE 4	7 September	The stimulus for this enquiry was an interview with Anthony Browne. The question the children generated was, 'What makes a boy a boy, and a girl, a girl?'	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.

Lesson 3	14 September	The children created their own plays about a fight between a brother and a sister.	No data collected.
CoE 5	21 September	The children's picture books were used as a stimulus for our Community of Enquiry. The question they generated was 'what makes a super hero, a super hero?	Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.
CoE 6	28 September	The children discussed the characters in the book '*TheTunnel*' with the question in mind; 'Who were the top dogs and the underdogs in the story?'	Concept maps depicting a top dog and an underdog. Transcriptions of their discussions. My reflective journal.

3.3.3 Collection of Artefacts

The children designed their own individual picturebooks. These supported the transcribed data from the discussions in the Community of Enquiry. They were collected and provided rich descriptions and examples of the child's creative writing, for later analysis. Sixteen out of twenty one children created a picture book. Four children did not want their picturebooks to be utilised for data and one was absent during that time. The table below provides a broad outline of the titles of the picturebooks. (See appendix 3 for examples of some of the picturebooks).

Table 5: Titles of the Children's Picturebooks

Boys	Girls
The Tunnel of War –By Anton	The Tunnel of Rock and Roll - By Chantal
The Haunted Tunnel – By Jay	The Haunted Tunnel –By Ellen
The Art Tunnel – By Brent	The Spooky Tunnel – By Tess
The Dangerous Tunnel –By Lionel	The Treasure Tunnel – By Mona
The Haunted Tunnel- By Sahid	The Godly Tunnel – By Leanne
The Tunnel of Power – By Terence	The Haunted Tunnel – By Angela
The Construction Tunnel – by Zach	The Funny Tunnel – By Kristin
	The Tunnel of Forgiveness – By Christy
	The Tunnel – By Jessie

3.3.4 Reflective journal

The final data set comprised my own reflective journal. Personal documents have been defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p 361) as 'any first-person narrative that describes an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs'. These include diaries, letters and personal anecdotal records. Throughout the enquiries, I kept a reflective journal to enable me to analyse my role in the context of the research situation. In addition it was a useful tool to record the learners' reactions and to make observations and recommendations. The reflective journal provided me with time to reflect on the lessons and to develop my self-awareness, to reduce the presence of bias. Taking notes allowed me to collect a complete set of data that reflects the 'importance of the effect of the context' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 350).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research refers to the categorization and ordering of descriptive information in such a way as to make sense of the data. The data was analysed in order to identify patterns, themes and categories (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 113). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2011, p. 367) qualitative data analysis 'is primarily an inductive

process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories.'

I transcribed each enquiry almost immediately after each session and this enabled me to reflect on the data and make informed decisions regarding the data collection. Before data analysis began, all raw data was printed out. The enquiries were then transcribed verbatim and field notes summaries were expanded.

I divided the process into the steps below:

1. Reading and re-reading the transcripts of the enquiries, my reflective journal and the children's picturebooks to look for patterns, inconsistencies and contradictions in the data (Hammersley, 1999, p. 210) to see how Philosophy for Children and Critical Literacy enriched my pedagogy and the children's experience of literacy.
2. Connecting and linking parts of the data to see common threads and linking the data with theory.
3. Selecting data for in-depth analysis, including extracts from transcripts, the picturebooks and my reflective journal.
4. Further selection, interpretation and organisation of data and writing the data analysis.

Guided by my research questions the following themes emerged from the data. For the Children:

- The subject of gender and gender stereotypes.
- The theme of super heroes.
- The binary concepts of 'top dog and underdog'.

For the teacher:

- The issue of discourse
- The complexity of democracy in the classroom
- Listening philosophically
- Asking philosophical questions
- The conception of child

Reliability and Validity

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected in this research project, two practices were incorporated; (1) reliability and (2) validity.

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual research procedure. These transcriptions, as well as, the participant's creative writing documents in the form of their picturebooks and the researcher's journal were carefully analysed for a comprehensive integration of findings. During data analysis, I worked along with my supervisor to ensure that the categories selected to link with the data were accurate. Throughout the research process, components of the research project were reviewed and modified to ensure accuracy.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 331) identify validity in qualitative research, as the 'degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world'. To ensure validity in this study, several data collection techniques were utilized in the form of transcriptions of the discussions in the Community of Enquiry, learner's creative writing and the researcher's reflective journal. These were used so that the techniques become interwoven with one another. To further ensure validity, enquiries were mechanically recorded using a tape recorder. By recording these enquiries, accurate and relatively comprehensive records were attained.

To ensure validity in this qualitative research triangulation was used. Triangulation may be defined as the inclusion of a multiple of methods and techniques of data collection in the same research study (Mouton, 1996, p. 156). Essentially it is a multi-method way of collecting data in a research project. This is pertinent for qualitative research as it is interpretative and seeks to understand human behaviour, and eliminates the distortion of facts. The three sources of data were transcriptions of the enquiries, the children's picturebooks and the researcher's reflective journal.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

I utilised the BERA (2004) Ethical Guidelines as a guide. Firstly, ethics clearance was obtained from the ethics committee at the University of the Witwatersrand as the children were considered to be vulnerable because of their age and presented a medium risk.

Confidentiality was accomplished by using pseudonyms rather than the participants names to describe their responses and when reporting on the research findings. Informed consent was obtained on three levels, from the school headmaster, the parents and the children (see 4 - 6 for letters of consent). Firstly, I approached the headmaster, gaining written permission from the headmaster to conduct research in his school. Secondly the parents were given information letters concerning the research project, with letters of consent. The last, but most importantly, informed consent was obtained from the children.

3.6 Limitations of the Design

Despite the advantages of using a qualitative paradigm for the research project, there are also limitations to this approach. Using qualitative research is sometimes criticized for its lack of reliable and generalised findings. This qualitative research project was limited by certain constraints, which influenced the knowledge gained. The first constraint is the subjectivity of the researcher. The question frequently asked in qualitative research is 'will different researchers get the same results?' (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 133). The researcher's interpretation of the data may be coloured by personal bias. The teacher holds a powerful position in the classroom and this might have influenced the children's responses (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001 p.322).

The choice to conduct this research project in one social setting, a private, co-educational school in Gauteng, South Africa, posed limitations in that the findings did not reflect the population as a whole. However, due to the limited nature of this project, this narrow selection sufficed. This also influenced the participant selection, as the opinions and behaviour exhibited by the participants selected from one school, are not representative of society, as a whole. However, for the purpose of this study, it would not have been possible to include a wide selection of participants.

3.7 Conclusion

A qualitative research design was best suited to this study, as it was conducted within the context of education. By using a qualitative design the researcher has been able to understand the lived experience of the social phenomenon of the CoE. Data was obtained through transcriptions of discussions in the CoE, the learners' picturebooks and the researcher's reflective journal. Various forms of data collection allows for data to become interwoven

with one another to promote richness and validity. Data was then analysed inductively to allow for synthesizing, leading to general themes and conclusions emerging.

Much reflection and verification was undertaken to ensure that the processes followed were in line with all ethical considerations identified. The data collected has also been reviewed according to its reliability and validity to ensure its creditability and trustworthiness. These issues in conjunction with the limitations highlighted have ensured accuracy of the findings for this research project. An in-depth data analysis, discussion and interpretation of the research results are the topic of chapter four.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of this research project are presented and discussed. It endeavours to answer the main research question 'What happens when Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children are implemented in my Grade three classroom?' The primary aim of this project was to explore how my teaching changed by implementing Critical literacy (CL) and Philosophy for Children (P4C) in a Community of Enquiry (CoE). The secondary aim was to explore how the learners in my class engaged with philosophical and critical literacy topics in the Community of Enquiry (CoE) using the stimulus of a picture book.

Before I discuss the findings it is necessary that I briefly describe each Community of Enquiry. The intervention consisted of six sessions during the weekly silent reading period every Thursday. In the first three sessions the children and I looked at the picture book *The Tunnel* (Browne, 1989) as the stimulus for the enquiries. The book was not read in its entirety in the first session but rather read over three sessions to create interest and excitement.

In the first session the learners were invited to look at the cover of the book and brainstorm with each other questions they might like to ask about the book. Different children were chosen to sit in the 'hot-seat' and asked questions about the book, as if they were the expert on the book. The second Community of Enquiry involved the reading of the picturebook up to the point where the brother Jack crawled down the tunnel and Rose, his sister, had to choose to follow him or go home and find her mother. Out of these sessions the children expressed their own creativity and designed their own picturebooks anticipating their own conclusions to the book *The Tunnel* (1997). The third CoE involved reading the picturebook until the end, where Jack (the brother) was transformed back from a statue into a little boy. The question the children voted for discussion was 'who turned the brother into stone?' In session four the children watched an interview with Anthony Browne to give them a sense of who the author is. In session five the children's picture books were used as stimulus for the CoE. The final CoE was a Critical Literacy enquiry which explored the characters of the book through the question 'who were the top dogs and who were the underdogs in the story?'

4.2 Reflections on my Pedagogy

One of the aims of this research was to explore my own growth as a teacher while implementing a CL and P4C approach for the first time. Several findings emerge from my analysis of my own teaching.

On the first day of the intervention I wrote the following in my reflective journal:

My life as a teacher has been demarcated by timetables, curriculums, lesson plans and outcomes. I have become an expert in time management and attaining certain outcomes. My life seems to be controlled by time. Today I embark on a journey of discovery in facilitating Philosophy for Children and Critical literacy in the Community of Enquiry. I am aware that I am able to plan the lesson, but not the outcome. I have no idea what topics the children will raise. I hold up the story book 'The Tunnel' as a mirror to reflect their hearts and hear their voices. (11 August 2011).

This reflection in my journal describes my discourse as a teacher. The particular discourse that is described prioritises the transmission of knowledge as a body of knowledge in a specific time frame with specific goals and outcomes. I expressed excitement in my reflective journal about transitioning from a 'transmission model' of education to a more collaborative model of teaching literacy that incorporated the lives and interests of the children that I taught. Although, I was aware of the shift that needed to take place in my pedagogy, I did not anticipate what this shift would entail.

Initially, I thought that implementing P4C and CL in the Community of Enquiry (CoE) would be a simple exercise of implementing what I had learnt during my course from my notes and readings. What I did not anticipate is that in implementing a different pedagogy, I would have to deal with the powerful relationship between discourse and identity. A discourse has been described by Gee (1990, p. 172) as an identity kit. He defined it as the following:

> Discourses are ways of being in the world, which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances body positions and clothes.

My discourse as a teacher was characterised by imparting knowledge from a highly prescribed, fast paced, goal-orientated curriculum through the 'transmission model' (Papas and Zecker, 2010, p.3) of teaching. This involved me standing in front of the class and

imparting knowledge while the children, for the most part, sat passively receiving what I had imparted. CL and P4C, in the Community of Enquiry (CoE), required a shift in discourse because these two approaches to literacy unfold out of the children's interests and questions rather than from prescribed text books or lesson plans. One of the reasons I found this difficult was because I had to let go of a particular type of discourse that I was familiar with as a teacher. I realise now in implementing this intervention that my new idealised self and traditional self were constantly 'bumping into each other' throughout the project and I needed to learn a new way to 'be' in the classroom.

4.2.1 Layout of class

I knew that the CoE is a democratic and participatory pedagogy and with this in mind I knew that the physical layout of the classroom had to reflect this notion. Figure 1 below illustrates my classroom prior to commencing this research:



Figure 2: My Classroom Layout

My classroom was organised to suit the 'transmission model' (Pappas and Zecker, 2010, p.3) so that the learners sat in rows facing me. This format, for the most part, did not encourage dialogue or collaboration between the children. It represents a hierarchical format where the teacher is the ultimate source of knowledge as she stands in the front of the class as the focal point of the lesson. To create a more democratic and collaborative environment the learners and I prepared the class for the CoE by packing and stacking the tables and setting out all the chairs in a circle facing each other as can be seen in figure 3 below.



Figure: 3 My classroom in the CoE layout

In this layout, dialogue between the participants was enhanced because they were facing each other. This reflects a democratic style as it enables the teacher to become a 'co-enquirer in the construction of knowledge' (Murris and Haynes, 2000, p. 39) because the teacher sits with the class in the circle. This contrasts with the 'transmission model' where children sit in rows with the teacher in the front of the class and which places the teacher in a position of power.

It took a long time in the first CoE for the children to pack and stack their tables and set up the layout and so I decided, after the first enquiry, to set up a roster for children to pack and stack and set up the chairs at break in order to save time.

At the time it seemed like a good time-saving decision but in hindsight I realised that in this unilateral teacher move I had made - a decision that did not reflect the professed ideals of democracy that underpin the CoE. I had not involved the children in the decision-making process. It was a moment where my 'traditional teacher' discourse and new discourse had bumped into each other. In the traditional classroom learners are rarely consulted about decisions that affect them in the daily organisation of a classroom. They have no choice over where they sit, who they sit next to and what the classroom layout should look like as many of the daily decisions, large and small, are made by the teacher.

I reflected on my belief about democracy in the classroom and realised that it was far more complex than I anticipated. As I mentioned in my reflective journal I was an expert in time management and attaining certain outcomes. Facilitating a CoE required letting go of managing time and expected outcomes. Part of facilitating a CoE required taking time to dialogue with learners and letting go of expected outcomes. Fisher (1998, p. 81) confirms this notion by saying that democracy 'can only be achieved through genuine dialogue and

discussion.' While the decision I made was a pragmatic one to save time to teach, it is a reminder how small habitual practices contain assumptions about how we teach that need to be unpacked.

4.2.2 Listening 'Philosophically'

One of the things I learnt in implementing the CoE was that it requires a distinct type of listening. This requires one to be present in the moment in order to tune in to topics that are philosophically fruitful. I followed all the scripted steps of the CoE but I had not learned to listen fully to the learners. I had begun the first CoE by introducing the learners to the book by asking them to examine the front cover and asking them to predict what they thought the book was about (see figure 4) and collaboratively brainstorm questions they might like to ask about the book. Different learners were chosen to sit in the 'hot-seat', as if they were the expert on the book and the rest of the class asked them questions that intrigued them.

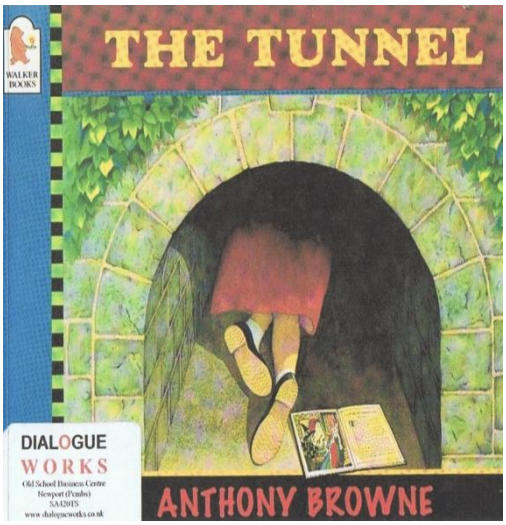

Figure: 4 The front cover of *The Tunnel*

In examining the transcript of this portion of the lesson, where Shawn is in the hot-seat, what emerges is my struggle with facilitating a CoE as a novice facilitator.

Amy: *Why is the girl in the tunnel?*
Lionel: *Maybe she dropped something in there*
Amy: *Like what?*
Shawn *Maybe she dropped her doll*
Monique *Why do you think that?*
Shawn: *Because girls like dolls.*

Girls: *All giggle.*

Angela *Some don't.*

Shawn *Most do!*

Angela *Not really!*

Teacher *Angela says that not all girls like dolls. Let's stop and discuss this.*

Kirsten *I say not all girls like dolls because some girls are tomboys.*

Ellen *When I was a little girl I really loved dolls and used to sleep with them, but as I get older I don't like them anymore. Now I like guns.*

Sue *I agree with Ellen because they are starting to get boring because they sit with their arms stretched out and do nothing.*

Jackie: *Like I am not saying that girls don't like dolls. I am agreeing with Ellen because I used to like dolls. I am agreeing with Ellen because I used to like dolls when I was younger.*

Teacher: *If you agree with Ellen swop places with someone who also agrees.*

Terence: *Girls like dolls and some boys like dolls too but they won't admit it.*

Teacher: *We have veered off track for a while so let's get back to the hot seat. Who is next?*

Tessa: *Where are her mom and dad?*

Ellen: *At home cooking.*

CoE 1: 11 August, 2011

In analysing this transcript several things emerge. At the start of the Community of Enquiry learners were really engaged in the topic and were recalling gender stereotypes related to their lives. Angela was challenging Shawn's belief that all girls like dolls. It was quite obvious that the gender issue was a subject of great interest to the class. The discussion had the potential to become a philosophical enquiry. As a novice facilitator I did not pick up on these concepts and themes that were emerging out of the socio-political world of the children.

Instead of building on the dialogue and allowing it to follow its course I introduced a scripted move called philosophical 'fruit salad' when I said: *If you agree with Ellen swop places with someone who else who also agrees.*

Philosophical fruit salad is a tool utilised in the CoE to encourage participants to engage in a topic by taking a stance on it. On analysis of the transcript I realised that this was not really necessary as the children were very engaged in the topic and had strong opinions about

gender stereotypes. I did not take the opportunity to explore the issues of stereotyping in gender more deeply because I was following the script, which runs contrary to what Haynes and Murris recommend by saying 'participants, including the teacher follow the enquiry wherever it may lead' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 51).

I then changed the direction even further because I wanted each child to have a chance in the hot seat by saying '*We have veered off track for a while so let's get back to the hot seat. Who is next?*

The consequences of my change of direction can be seen in Tessa and Ellen's remarks about the parent's cooking. The dialogue became a mundane and uninteresting. Although one of my main aims in implementing P4C and CL was to include the socio-political world of the child, I realised, in hindsight that in my last statement '*We have veered off the track for a while*' had worked against this aim.

I had returned to the discourse of being a teacher with a 'curriculum to be delivered'. Thus I had followed the impulse of the educator 'to anticipate, and correct, respond and direct answers towards the goals of the lesson' (Jansen, 2009, p.263). My goal was to introduce a critical literacy question; 'Looking at the front cover of the book, what kind of reader do you think would read this book?' I noted in my reflective journal that day:

As a teacher I think I am good at listening but in many ways I have trained myself to listen to certain answers to questions that I have posed. I listen to learners' chatter all day. Daily they tell me about their lives and their stories from home. I often listen with a goal in mind. Part of facilitating an enquiry requires listening in a different way.

(11 August, 2011)

This entry in my reflective journal highlights, that in the traditional discourse of a teacher, I have learnt to listen '*with a goal in mind'*. Going back to the topic is a very natural move of a teacher. I wanted the children to say they thought this book was written for girls because there is a picture of a girl on the front cover crawling through a tunnel. Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 51) have argued that 'the role of the teacher in the Community of Enquiry is to assist children to take the enquiry wherever it may lead, while resisting the temptation to unnecessarily return to the text, or return to the ideas, themes or morals that adults find important.' This is challenging and I struggled with letting go of the reins and allowing the discussion to go 'wherever it may lead' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 51). In order to let the

discussion ‘go’ required ability to listen to what the children say and not what I wanted them to say.

4.2.3 Questioning ‘Philosophically’

The CoE is inspired by the Socratic method of enquiry that requires the teacher not to ‘tell but to seek for truth through a sequence of questions’ (Fisher, 1998, p. 146). He goes on to elaborate that in the CoE the teacher needs to take on the role of a questioner and facilitator of discussion (Fisher, 1998, p. 150). Matthew Lipman (2003, p. 15) compares facilitating a CoE with the metaphor of ‘a boat-tacking-into-the wind’. This required me to be a facilitator who enabled children in the class to build on each others’ ideas, by asking the right philosophical questions.

The dialogue from the first Community of Enquiry (CoE) became more of a discussion and a swopping of personal stories and did not progress towards truth. It began to ‘float like driftwood’ (Lipman, 2003, p. 15) with no clear direction due to lack of grounded interventions from me as a facilitator. This is evident from the discussion between Ellen and Sue:

Ellen *When I was a little girl I really loved dolls and used to sleep with them, but as I get older I don’t like them anymore. Now I like guns.*

Sue *I agree with Ellen because they are starting to get boring because they sit with their arms stretched out and do nothing.*

On reflection, this discussion was not progressing towards any sense of truth as the girls were just swopping their opinions about dolls. Philosophical dialogue differs from a conversation or swopping of opinions as it requires a progress towards truth. Gardner (1995, p. 1) supports this notion by saying that ‘progress towards truth is vital to the practice of enquiry and that if such progress is not made the term ‘*Community of Enquiry’* becomes a misnomer’. In this sense the right questions become essential in the quest for truth.

In the fourth CoE I was beginning to get better at listening to and recognising potentially philosophical topics and at making connections. The starting point for this CoE was the discovery of the brother, Jack, by his sister Rose on the other side of the tunnel. She had to face her own fears by walking through an enchanted wood to discover her brother had been turned into a statue.

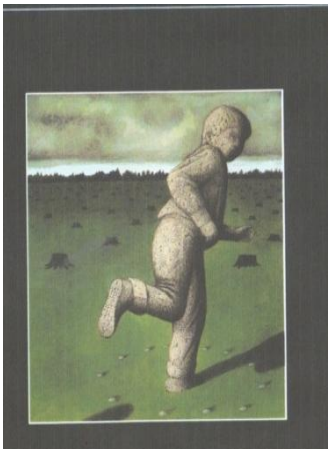

Figure 5: The brother turned to stone

The children thought independently of questions that intrigued them about figure 5 and wrote their questions down on a piece of paper. They discussed their questions in pairs and the class took a vote for the question that appealed to them. The question voted for in the CoE was 'Who turned the brother into stone? This is some of the discussion:

Ellen: *I think it was the mother because I think that she was a witch and lived in the house in the forest. So, I think the mother was a witch and the mother turned him into stone. And I think that she made that special tunnel for them and like other people came in and she turned them to wolves and the wolves and Little Red Riding Hood and the Fox, she turned them into trees. If you look in the story the fox is looking down on her and the hedgehog and that I think it was the mother's plan because she was pointing in the direction of the tunnel.*

Teacher: *Who would like to respond to Ellen?*

Lee: *I think the person who turned the brother into stone was the father because you don't see the father. I think it was the father who told the mother to point in the direction of the tunnel, like Ellen said. I have another question: why didn't the sister turn into stone when she stepped over the line into the tunnel?*

Sue: *I think the sister didn't turn into stone because her love for her brother was powerful, even though she didn't show it. Just because you are fighting doesn't mean you don't love each other. Her love was so powerful that she didn't turn to stone.*

At this point, I was beginning to listen more carefully to potential philosophical concepts that could be discussed and I began to ask better questions that opened up the discussion.

Teacher: *I am curious to know what you mean by the word love. What makes love, love?*

Brent: *I think it is the way a person feels and their emotions.*

Ellen: *I agree with Brent, it's like a deep emotion in your heart.*

Teacher: *Is love just an emotion?*

Tessa: *I think that love is more than an emotion.*
It is a decision you make to love other people.

CoE 3: 1 September 2011

The dialogue that emerged from this CoE had more depth than the first CoE as I was becoming better at asking the right questions. Good philosophical questions are essential in a CoE as they push for depth in an enquiry (Gardner, 1995, p. 1). An example of a question that is beginning to 'push for depth' is the question '*I am curious to know what you mean by the word 'love?'.* This type of question requires substantiation because I am asking Jackie to give reasons for her answer. This involves meta-cognitive thinking because it requires learners to think about their reasoning. This links with Socrates who believed that 'we should examine our lives and not just accept the views of others or rely on our solitary mediations' (Fisher, 1998, p. 2).

A philosophical question is not only an open-ended question but problematical or 'cracks open' (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012, p. 104.) the meaning of central concepts such as 'what makes love, love?' (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012, p. 104) describe concepts as 'shaped by beliefs about self and how the world should work'. Asking philosophical questions encourages reflection on our everyday language (e.g. categorisations) and experiences that connect with what preoccupies learners' (Haynes and Murris 2012, p. 104). In this way it is possible to connect the children's world to the world of the classroom to make education a living experience.

It took time to start asking the right philosophical questions that pushed for depth. This transcript provides evidence of me beginning to ask better questions in order to open up an enquiry. In the final CoE we talked about top dogs and underdogs. As I became more skilled as a facillitator the children also became more skillful at engaging in philosophical dialogue and not just conversation for the sake of conversation.

Teacher: *So who do you think the top dog and underdog were in the story?*

Anton: *I think the top dog was the mother because none of this would have happened if she didn't send them out. And then I think it changed it was Jack who was the top dog and then it was Rose.*

Teacher: *Can you elaborate on that?*

Anton: *First the mother says 'go out' and they have to listen to her because she is the top dog. Then Jack is yelling at Rose because he doesn't want to be with her. Then he goes into the tunnel, like brave and then she goes into the tunnel and frees him, which makes her top dog. So I think it could change any time being top dog and underdog. It can change not in months but in a few minutes.*

Teacher: *Would anyone like to agree or disagree with Anton?*

Ellen: *I agree with Anton because it wouldn't have happened if the mom didn't send them out. I also agree with Anton because you can be top dog and it could change in a few minutes. Like Jack and Rose. He was the top dog at first. She then became the top dog after that because she wasn't afraid to go down into the tunnel. At the end the mother was the underdog because she didn't know what was going on with Jack and Rose.*

Teacher: *Is there perhaps another point of view?*

Tessa: *I agree with Ellen and Anton. First Jack was the top dog because he was bossing Rose around. Rose became the top dog because she saved Jack. But then Jack and Rose became friends and they both became the middle dogs.*

CoE 6: 28 September

The learners' dialogue is far richer in this transcript and contained more depth. This is evident in the sophisticated dialogue between Ellen and Anton. Anton recognises that the position of topdog is transient and that we all play the role of a topdog and an underdog at different stages in our lives. Ellen builds on Anton's concept of a top dog in the story and then Tessa introduces a new concept of a 'middle dog.' The children are no longer working in binary opposites and their dialogue displays a more complex understanding of power relationships. This is in comparison to CoE 1 where their concepts of boys and girls were fairly black and white with no real 'progress towards truth' (Gardner, 1995, p.1), which ws partly due to my lack of facilitation. CoE 4 showed some progress towards truth was made as

the children began to engage in philosophical discussion by 'cracking open' (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012, p. 104) the concept of 'what makes love, love?'

Their philosophical discussions were becoming deeper as I was becoming better at guiding them with my questions and asking them to elaborate on their answers by questions like 'Can you elaborate on that?' What do you mean by that?' 'Can you explain?' I was learning to provide them with opportunities to agree or disagree by challenging the learners to 'dig for depth' in their responses. I was making a shift in my ability to facililitate a dialogue through listening to philosophical concepts and asking questions that built on the children's ideas. I was learning to relinquish control and becoming a 'co-enquirer' with the children.

My major research finding in relation to my pedagogy is that implementing P4C/P4C and Critical literacy in the Community of Enquiry required more than following the scripted steps but a fundamental shift in 'ways of being in the world' as Gee (1990) has described. In facilitating a CoE I had to let go of a particular type of discourse and acquire a new discourse. I discovered over the period of nine weeks these two identities kept 'bumping into each other'.

It began with a process of reconceptualising power and democracy in the classroom by letting go of my preconceived ideas of the outcomes of each lesson. It also involved learning to trust the children with the decision making processes in my class such as asking them to be involved in the everyday decisions that affect them. I began to learn to listen more attentively to what children wanted to discuss so that they could bring their socio-political worlds into the classroom. It started me thinking more carefully about the questions I asked children that would invite them to talk about their lives and experiences rather than shut them down.

Linked to this finding is a secondary finding that relates to my conception of child. My pre-service teacher training was greatly influenced by the developmental theory of Jean Piaget who posited that children are not capable of abstract thinking and therefore incapable of formal operations under the age of nine. I discovered that children are indeed capable of critical and creative thinking, and therefore abstract thinking. This was evident in CoE nine were the children conducted a very sophisticated discussion of the concept of a top dog, underdog and middle dog that involved a high level of abstract thought. This traditional epistemology of child has resulted in limiting children and what they are capable of doing which has resulted in a 'sanitised curriculum' (Haynes & Murris, 2012, p. 15) in my

classroom. This has forced me to re-evaluate my pedagogy and, critically reconfigure power relations in my class. This finding leads to the next section of my data analysis which explores how the children engaged with philosophical and critical literacy topics in the Community of Enquiry.

4.3 The Children's Engagement with Critical Literacy

The focus of this section is to explore how the learners in my class engaged with philosophical and critical literacy topics in the CoE using the stimulus of a picture book. One of my primary aims in implementing these two approaches to literacy was to create a space for the social and political life worlds of the children in my classroom to emerge so that they could learn to 'read the word and the world' (Freire, 1972a, p. 7). I wanted to experience what Vasquez (2004, p. 1) meant when she wrote that 'a critical literacy curriculum needs to be lived. It arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live.' In creating this space for children's voices to be heard in my classroom a number of themes emerged during this research project, which will be unpacked in this section of the research report.

4.3.1 Gender Stereotypes – Challenging Assumptions

One of the powerful findings was the way in which the CoE created a space for children to talk about their social and political worlds. This class had been together since grade 0 and what was evident in the Socratic dialogue with each other was that they had certain unspoken 'taken for granted' assumptions and gender stereotypes regarding each other. A stereotype is a generalisation or assumption that people make of all members of a group, based on an image (often wrong) about what people in that group are like Table 6 below is a broad overview of the assumptions that were made and challenged, by the children.

Table 6: Assumptions made and challenged

CoE	Assumption:	Challenge:
One	All girls like dolls (Shawn)	Not all girls like dolls, some girls are tomboys (Angela). Some boys like dolls but they would not admit it (Terence).
Two	Boys and girls cannot work together (Ben).	Girls could be another friend to play with (Ben). One day you may marry a girl and have babies (Angela). Girls and boys can work well together and be friends (Chantal). It is good to work with boys because if you do not get along with them you will never understand what boys are made of (Ellen).
Four	Girls like dresses, make-up, dancing, netball, and homework (Chantal).	Some girls don't like make-up, and dresses, netball and homework (Lee).
	Boys are strong and like sports, go goes (grandmothers) , rugby and Disney Extreme (Anton).	Some girls are tomboys and like boys' stuff (Kirsten). Some girls like to play soccer and rugby too (Ellen).
	Girls would never go down a tunnel they are not that adventurous (Ben).	Some girls like adventure like camping. (Susan). Some boys like girls stuff and are not 'tomboys' (Amy, Ellen and Lionel).
	Boys are unkind and girls are kind (Lee).	Boys and girls are just the same inside even if they look different on the outside (Ellen).

	Girls are calm (Lee).	Girls are not always calm and boys are not always rough and bossy. (Anton) Girls and boys are almost the same but a little different (Ellen). Some girls have bad personalities and some boys have bad personalities.

It is evident from column one that the children had constructed girls and boys in a binary opposites. These binary opposites are reductionist because they diminished male and female into broad stereotypes. These stereotypes do not acknowledge the complexity of human nature. Stereotypes also build a barrier between people and do not encourage authentic relationships. It is evident from this table that this is the lens through which the children had been viewing each other.

The following table provides a summary of the ways in which the children constructed each other through stereotypical lenses.

Table 7: Constructions of gender

How girls are constructed:	**How boys are constructed**:
• Girls like dolls, dresses, make-up, dancing, netball, and homework. • Girls like long hair. • Girls will get married and have babies. • Girls like to stay inside and read books. • Girls are calm. • Girls are kind.	• Boys are strong and like sports, go goes, rugby, soccer and Disney Extreme. • Boys like adventure. • Boys are rough. • Boys are unkind, bossy and mean.

Table provides a summary of the children's constructions of boys and girls. Gee (1990, p. 172) refers to these constructions as 'ways of being in the world, which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances body positions and clothes'. Girls are seen to like dolls, dresses, make-up, dancing, netball and homework. They have long hair; they get married and have babies. Girls prefer to stay indoors and read books and are kind. Boys are perceived to be strong and like sports, go goes, rugby, soccer

and Disney Extreme. They are rough and like love adventure. Boys are unkind and bossy and mean. Janks (2010, p. 58) has posited that these ways of thinking and understanding of truth (believing), and ethics (valuing) affects the way we see the 'word and the world' (Freire, 1972a).

4.3.2 Ways in which the children challenged each other

In the first CoE the children talked about the kinds of toys they liked to play with. Shawn posited that all girls liked dolls. Angela strongly challenged him with the notion that not all girls like dolls. Ellen supported this notion with an example from her own life world by saying that when she was a little girl she preferred teddy bears to dolls. Kirsten challenged Shawn further by proposing that some girls were tomboys. Terence was the only boy to challenge Shawn by proposing that boys could possibly like dolls, but would not admit to his own liking of dolls. The children challenged each other's assumptions of each other by bringing in examples of their own life experiences into the discussion.

Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 128) have argued that the CoE 'thrives on dissensus and disagreement as it enables opinions to be put to the test and subjected to critical scrutiny'. Fisher (2008, p. 118) describes it as a place which creates space for 'dialogue across differences' where different viewpoints can be challenged and questioned. This is clearly seen in this transcript as the children expressed differences of opinion regarding their constructions of gender. Shawn experienced moments of what Murris (2008, p. 354) would define as 'disequilibrium' as children challenged his concept of girls. Shawn had to re-define his concept of girl. Terence was the only boy who advocated the notion that possibly some boys liked dolls but would not admit it. The rest of the boys were noticeably silent. This is interesting because over a period of time the boys became more vocal in their opinions and even began challenging each other so that the CoE was not just reduced to a boy/girl debate with boys supporting boys and girls supporting girls.

In the second CoE the issue of gender emerged spontaneously again but in a different way. An argument erupted amongst the children as Ben refused to work with a girl in his group, when they had to discuss a dilemma. I stopped the lesson and asked the question 'Do you think boys should work with boys?' The nature of relationships between the sexes was examined and discussed in this enquiry. This is what transpired in this enquiry:

Teacher: *Let's discuss the boy/girl thing. Do you think boys should work with girls?*

Angela: *Yes!!*

Jessie: *Because boys and girls must learn to like each other so that they can be friends and if they are mean to each other they are just going to hurt each other.*

Ben: *They should be friends with each other so that they you can have an extra friend.*

Teacher: *What do the rest of you say? Do you think boys and girls should work together?*

Ellen: *I think it is kind of normal 'cos I had a friend and he was a boy and we used to fight but we used to say sorry and have a lot of fun and work together, so it is kind of possible.*

Angela *I think we should because um, one day a boy and a girl will get married and will obviously have children and if that didn't happen and boys and girls didn't like each other then we wouldn't be born.*

Lionel: *I think we should work together with girls because if boys sit together sometimes they talk to each other.*

CoE 2: 17 August 2011

In CoE 2, Ben was challenged by two of his classmates including boys. Ben proposed that girls and boys should work together because a girl is another option for an extra friend and Jessie and Ellen supported this notion. Lionel said boys and girls should sit together because if boys sit together in class they will talk to each other. Angela, who was vehemently

opposed to the notion that girls should play with dolls, articulated the stereotypical notion that boys and girls should work together because they will one day get married and have children. She is also providing a mature and practical view of relationships between boys and girls.

In CoE 4, Chantal began the philosophical enquiry by answering the philosophical question 'what makes a girl a girl and a boy a boy?' In this CoE the children supported their arguments once again with examples that came out of their own life worlds. These examples consisted of girls liking make-up and dresses and Disney and boys liking cricket, soccer, gogos and Disney extreme. This was taken up by Anton with his description of a boy who is 'strong, likes sports, gogoes, rugby and Disney extreme.' This was challenged by Lee.

Lee: *I would like to disagree with Chantal because some girls don't actually like make-up and dresses and stuff. I actually disagree - lots of girls in this class don't like these things.*

Angela: *Well, I kind of agree and kind of disagree because some girls in the class are girly girls and some girls are tomboys. Most girls do like dresses and make-up and all of that.*

This dialogue opened up space for Lee to challenge and 'problematise' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 136) Chantal, Ellen and Anton's concepts of girls and boys. This provided stimulus for further thoughtful discussion:

Ellen: *I disagree and agree because some girls are tomboys and some are girly-girls, but some girls are in-between.*

Teacher: *What do you think makes a girl in-between. Can you explain this to us?*

Ellen: *Well some girls like 'girly' stuff like make-up and dresses as well as playing cricket .*

Angela: *Like Rose in the story of The Tunnel. She is in-between a 'girly-girl' and a tomboy because she wanted to stay inside reading a book, but she went into this tunnel she hardly knows because she is adventurous.*

Ben *I want to disagree with Angela because you know a girl would never go*

into a tunnel.

Teacher *Are you saying girls are not adventurous?*

Ben: *Yes, they are but not into crazy places like that.*

Sue *I want to disagree with you Ben, because every holiday I go camping.*

CoE 4: 7 September 2011

From this transcript it is evident that the children began to explore the discourses of the concept of 'girl.' They played with the idea that some girls are in-between a 'tomboy' and a 'girly girl.' Ben remained firmly entrenched in his notion of a 'girl' and he made the claim that girls are adventurous '*but not in crazy places like that*.' This statement led to cries of extreme dissaproval from the girls. Sue contested his notion of girls not being that adventurous with an example from her own life of enjoying adventurous things like camping, bringing her own life world experience into the conversation.

The dialogue developed further on its own accord as the children began to contest the way Anthony Browne, the author of the Tunnel, had constructed the boy and girl in *The Tunnel (1989).* They recognised the gender stereotypes in the text.

Lee: *I think Anthony Browne saw Rose as very calm and not upset about things, she is just calm. I think Anthony Browne saw Jack as a mean boy.*

Teacher: *Do you think that is true?*

Ellen: *Girls can be mean and bossy too. Some boys can be kind too. I think that Anthony Browne wrote about his children. I think his daughter was a girly-girl and she always sat inside and read books. That is where he gets his ideas. He then mixed it up with another story to make it more interesting.*
I also think that boys and girls are almost the same and some girls have bad personalities and some boys have bad personalities. Some girls are kind and some boys are kind. They are almost the same but a little different.

Anton *I think the book he made is nice but he did not make the characters so nicely because girls are not always calm and boys are not always so rough and noisy.*

CoE 4: 7 September 2011

What is evident in this dialogue is that the children's thinking has become more critical of the ideas and concepts in the book *The Tunnel* and they are beginning to recognise that binary opposites are problematic. Ellen problematises the notion that boys are mean and argues that boys and girls are intrinsically the same with a few differences. Anton recognises the bias in the book by recognising and 'problematising' the way boys are constructed in the books. He poses the argument that not all girls are calm (like Rose in the book) and not all boys are rough and noisy (like Jack in the book).

In making these observations the children began to discern that no text is neutral and has a certain amount of bias contained in them such as the construction of Rose and Jack in the story. Janks (2010, p. 97) points out that 'all texts are positioned and positioning' This means that the writer of a text holds a particular point of view, which has an effect on the way they construct the text they are writing. The children, by drawing on their own life experiences, begin to realise that binaries set up a reductive way of constructing male/female and boy/girl. They realise that they are more than their constructions of each other and that they do, act and behave (Gee, 1990, p. 172) beyond these narrow constructions of each other.

4.3.3 Ben and Shawn: Enacting change

The CoE created a space for the children to articulate their own interpretations of the world and bring these into dialogue with others in the class. In doing so this 'positioned them as researchers and ethnographers of their everyday lives.' (Comber and Nixon, 2004, p. 115). As a result of dialogue the children were able to point out the inconsistencies in their arguments and to be involved in collaborative Socratic discussion on issues that were meaningful to them.

In dialogue with each other children's 'taken-for-granted' stereotypes, from their own lives, had an opportunity to be scrutinised and challenged. This led to discovering the transformative potential (Haynes & Murris 2012, p. 5) of the Community of Enquiry. For many of the children, and in particular Ben and Shawn, the CoE provided a space for transformation to occur. They were the main proponents of the gender stereotypes regarding boys and girls. In CoE 1, Shawn boldy claimed that all girls liked dolls. In CoE 2, Ben refused to work with girls. In CoE 4, Ben proposed that girls were not as adventurous as boys. In each enquiry their peers challenged them on their prejudices.

The CoE provided a place for sustained dialogue in a safe place that did not moralise or condescend. This created a space for change in Ben and Shawn as their assumptions were challenged by their peers. In the CoE they began to critically think about their own thinking and assumptions. In doing so Shawn and Ben had to examine the nature of their prejudice. In challenging each other the children engaged in critical thinking by redefining the concept of a 'boy' and a 'girl' and that there were multiple ways of 'being' a girl or boy. By doing so they became 'creators of language rather than consumers of it' (Freire, cited by Scott, 2004, p. 169)

This is evident in the final enquiry were the children gave feedback on what the CoE meant to them. Shawn and Ben commented on their learning:

Ben: *I actually learnt a lot from this like I always thought boys were stronger than boys but now I know some girls are stronger*

Shawn: *Some girls are stronger than boys like Tessa is for some reason or other reason is stronger than Terence. She just acts like another boy*.

In recognising this Shawn and Ben recognised that they had limited constructions of girls which did not describe the fullness of their lives. The CoE created a space that enabled Ben and Shawn to engage critically with concepts and taken-for-granted assumptions about each other.

4.4 The Children's Engagement with Philosophical Topics

Fisher (2008, p. 107) has defined philosophy as 'thinking about thinking' and Stanley and Bowkett (2004, p. 15) has posited that philosophy builds higher order thinking skills and problem solving capabilities. Hamman and Echeverria (cited by Biesta, 2012, p. 139) have elaborated further by saying that 'the development of higher order thinking skills takes place through the interaction between four 'key elements' collaborative thinking, critical thinking, creative thinking, and caring thinking.' In this section I explored the key concepts of creative, critical, collaborative and caring thinking in relation to the children's engagement in philosophical dialogue.

4.4.1 Creative thinking

Creative thinking has been defined by Fisher (2008, p. 161) as 'using imagination to generate ideas, suggest hypothesises and look for alternative plans'. Murris (2011) describes the characteristics of creative thinking 'the ability to make new connections, putting oneself in the shoes of others, using imagination, problem creating, considering alternatives and other possibilities and multi-modal expressions of thought.' For the purpose of this research report I will use Murris' (2011) and Fisher's (2008) definitions as a framework for creative thinking. (see appendix 2 for Murris' table of Critical, Caring, Collaborative Thinking Skills/dispositions).

In CoE 2, *The Tunnel* was read to the children up to the juncuture where the brother crawled down the tunnel and left his sister waiting for him. A moral dilemma was posed to the children 'Should the sister go down the tunnel and find her brother or should she go home and call her parents? This is how the enquiry began:

Ben: *I thinks she should go down the tunnel because there are lots of exciting things down there like vampires, witches and superheroes.*

Terence: *She should not go down there because what if he got hurt or there was a crocodile chasing him*?

Brent: *She shouldn't go there because what if she was going to be eaten by a crocodile? She should go and tell her mom.*

Anton: *She should go and fetch her brother so that she doesn't get into big trouble with her mother.*

Shawn: *I think that usually in tunnels they hide treasure and they don't want anyone to get the treasures so they like make booby traps or something.*

Lionel: *Maybe they put mouse traps and he had no idea and he got caught in one and his sister didn't hear it and she decided to go in and she is facing her fears?*

Ben: *What if the tunnel is full of sweets?*

Roars of laughter from the class

Angela: *She should go down the tunnel because the tunnel is full of sweets.*

CoE 2: 17 August 2011

It is evident in this transcript that the children are expressing their creativity by using their imaginations for playful speculation. In hypothesising what could happen if Rose crawled down the tunnel they are playing with ideas. The first possibility was posed by Ben who imagined that the tunnel might be an exciting place full of vampires, witches and super heroes, thus drawing on his rich imagination and the influence of current popular fiction that he has been exposed to. Terence, Brent and Anton posed an alternative possibility and argued that Rose should not go down the tunnel because a crocodile might chase her. This argument is based on thinking about consequences to actions. Anton built on this argument as he considered the possibiltity that Rose would get into trouble with her mother if she did not fetch her brother. Anton was considering the virtues of responsibity and accountability in his argument. According to Fisher (2008, p. 88) creative thinking and moral thinking are linked because they both encourage imaginative reasoning. Anton introduced a moral consequence to Rose's dilemma. This indicates a flexibility of thinking by using diffent ideas and expressing originality by presenting new ideas. He also displays the skill of building on the ideas of others.

In addition to creative thinking in dialogue the children created their own picturebooks to resolve Rose's dilemma. In creating their own picturebooks and writing their own stories the children engaged in multi-modal expressions of thought such as art and creative writing. For the purpose of this study I will briefly describe three different picture books (see appendix 3 for full copies of the picturebooks). What is striking about all three of these picturebooks is their aesthetic value. Kant (as cited by Fisher, 2008, p.182) has said, 'art is a representation of the imagination which induces much thought.' In their art the children extended their concepts and ideas of what they envisiged lay in the tunnel.

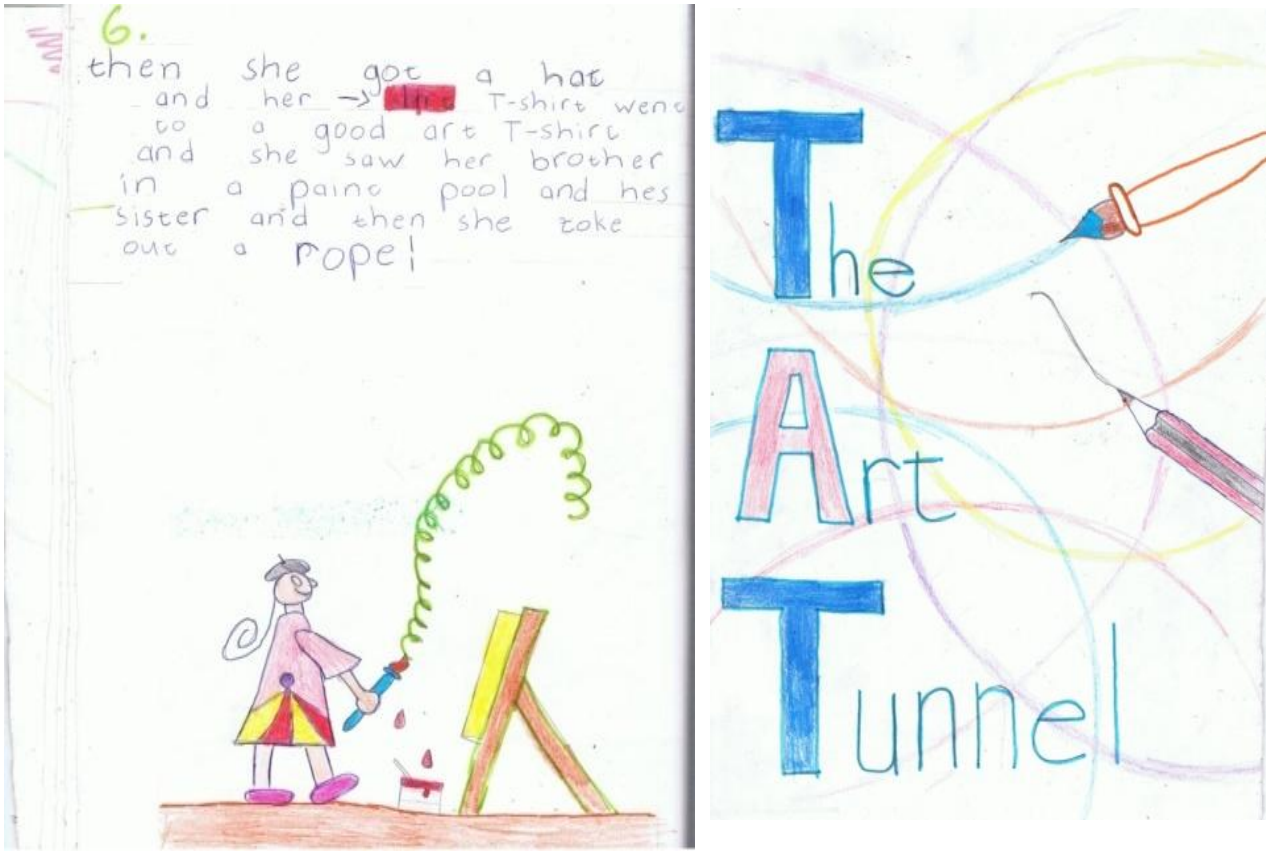

Figure 6: The Art Tunnel by Brent

Brent created a picturebook called *The Art Tunnel*, which relates to his interests because he enjoys art and drawing. In *The Art Tunnel* the sister discovered paint brushes, canvas, art room and a box filled with magic. Rose and her brother fell down a hole and she drew on the magical power of art to rescue him and they escaped the tunnel and went home to eat lunch.

Ben wrote a picturebook called *The Haunted Tunnel.* It was an action packed thriller with a multitude of super heroes.



Figure 7: The Haunted Tunnel by Ben

Jack (the brother) crawls down the tunnel to find an iron-man fighting a dragon.



Figure 8: The Haunted Tunnel continued

A super-hero called Thor saves the brother from a shark. Jack also met the Hulk as well as Ninjas and Elephant Cheetahs. His picturebook was full of action and superheroes and

reflected his interest in superheroes. Jack and Rose eventually escape and are chased by a giant crab. They arrive home in time for dinner.



Figure 9: ***The Haunted Tunnel*** **by Ellen**

In Ellen's book Rose meets a witch who turns Jack into a super-hero. Rose meets a vampire and he bites her and she turns into a vampire. The story has a happy ending as she marries the vampire and they live happily ever after and Jack becomes the greatest super-hero ever. Tessa's book reflects her interest in the 'Twilight Zone' which is a popular series about vampires and witches that is currently on circuit.

The children demonstrated creative thinking in their picturebooks by the creative content and colourful illustrations. They creatively resolved Rose's dilemma with their own stories that incorporated their socio-cultural worlds. In their colourful picturebooks the children brought their peer play life into the official school world by writing about popular cultural symbols such as super-heroes, Ninjas, vampires and witches. Dyson (1997, p. 2) calls this their 'cultural capital' and in doing so the children explored their social roles and social identities in the world (Fisherkeller, 1995; Jenkins, 1992; Moss, 1989, as cited by Dyson, 1997, p. 4). In the stories they wrote it seems that children all have a desire for adventure, and action, power, freedom of choice (autonomy), power and love.

4.4.2 Critical and Caring Thinking

Robert Ennis, a pioneer of the critical thinking movement has said that 'critical thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do' (cited in Fisher, 2008, p. 30). The transcript below from CoE 5 provides evidence of the children becoming a 'community of reasoners' (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 6). For the sake of clarity I have explained their chain of reasoning in bold after each speaker.

Teacher: *What makes a super hero a super hero?* **(initial question)**

Ben *His abilities like flying, laser eyes and camouflage. He can turn into anything and stuff like that.* **(Explaining and defining)**

Kirsten *I kind of agree and disagree. What makes a superhero a super hero is that you do not have to have powers to be a super hero, it just matters how strong you are. Even if you do not you think you are one you might be one.* **(Arguing by analysing, contrasting and justifying.)**

Kristin: *I agree with Kirsten because not everybody is like strong, they may be nerds.* **(Analysing by comparing and contrasting**).

Class: *Roar with laughter*

Angela *Well, I don't really think that there is such a thing as a nerd because everybody is smart in their own way and maybe you don't have strength and maybe you are good at something else like running or swimming.* **(Arguing from a particular instance to a general rule).**

Shawn *I think a nerd is when you wear glasses and you study too much and you know everything and you always wear glasses. That is what I call a nerd.* **(Explaining and defining a nerd by clarifying and illustrating the meaning).**

Ben *I would like to disagree with Shawn because my brother wears glasses and he is not a nerd because he is strong and he picks me up by my shirt. And all my brothers study but they don't wear glasses.* **(Justifying by giving an example from his own life).**

Lionel *I think super heroes can be made from nerds because Captain America was a little skinny guy and he wore glasses and they said we need a super hero and so he signed up and there were all these strong men and they picked him up and put him in water and that made him strong and they turned him into Captain America.* **(Arguing from a particular point of view by comparing and**

justifying from an example from popular culture).

Tandy *I don't really think calling someone who is smart and wears glasses a nerd. Because Shawn is kind of calling Lionel a nerd because Lionel is smart and he wears glasses. So I don't think there are nerds in this world because some people just want to get a good grade and a good job. And what Kirsten said I am sorry but I am going to have to disagree with you. I don't think being a super-hero means you have to be strong. Rose, in the tunnel, wasn't that strong but she had to fight her fears. She didn't even know that she would save her brother. I think she would be a super hero because she is the one who saved her brother. It isn't just Rose who is a super hero. A super hero encourages other people.*

(Arguing by justifying by giving supporting reasons for her answer, analysing and contrasting it by giving an example from the book)

Angela *I agree with Tandy. I think that it is not just the people who have muscles who are super heroes. It is also about caring for others. It is not about strength it is about actually caring for others.* **(Providing further justification for the definition of a super-hero).**

CoE 5: 21 September

Three things emerge from the analysis of this transcript. The first is that the children were developing concepts. Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 11) have defined 'concepts as classifiers or collators of our thoughts as well as vehicles of thought.' The transcript shows how the children are 'defining, classifying, and extending conceptual links and frameworks' (Fisher, 2008, p. 32) in dialogue with each other.

The first one to classify and define the concept of a superhero was Ben who posited that a superhero should have qualities that include super powers such as the ability to fly, have laser eyes and camouflage. His argument supported the current popular cultural and literacy view that superheroes have super powers, laser eyes and camouflage. Kirsten provided a counter argument to Ben's definition of a superhero by positing that it was not just super-powers that make a superhero but also physical strength. Kristin provided a binary concept of a nerd to the dialogue that added more fuel to the enquiry. Angela problematised the concept of a nerd by saying she did not believe there was such a thing as a nerd and that everybody had a talent.

Shawn picked up on the concept of a nerd and argued that a nerd wore glasses and liked to study. Ben was quick to pick up on his bias and challenged him with the personal example of his brother who wears glasses but was not a nerd because he is strong. Lionel extended the argument by saying that even superheroes such as Captain America started off as skinny. By refining their ideas of what constitutes a superhero, the children are engaging and developing higher-order thinking skills. Being part of a discussion enables the children to become aware of the complexity of concepts and recognise what Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 9) define as 'the grey between the black and white.' What emerges from the discussion is that the concept of a superhero had multiple meanings and interpretations.

The second thing that emerges in this portion of the transcript is that the children are learning to exercise judgement by challenging each by saying 'I agree or I disagree.' In doing so they are demanding reasons for their answers. According to Lipman, strengthening judgement is a central aim of P4C (cited in Fisher, 2008, p. 32). Another word for judgement is 'critical evaluation'. What the children were exercising in this transcript is critical evaluation of each other's ideas. Critical evaluation is the highest form of thinking skills according to Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills (Fisher, 2008, p. 33). The transcript shows the children's ability to provide arguments and counter arguments and present examples to show reasoning to defend their point of view.

The third aspect that emerges from analysis of this transcript is that Tandy's thinking transcended from just exploring and classifying the concept of a super hero. She engaged in 'multi-logical thinking' (Fisher, 2008, p.31), which is the ability to see things from another point of view. She is showing fair-mindedness and intellectual integrity by recognising Shawn's dogmatism in his definition of a nerd. Tandy is able to see things from Lionel's point of view. She displays 'caring thinking' which according to Lipman is defined as 'the linking of emotions with thinking' (Fisher. 2008, p. 31). She unites reason with empathy for Lionel. Tandy also conceptualised a moral ideal to the concept of a superhero. She defined a hero as someone who has inner strength such as courage to face one's fears and the ability to encourage other people.

4.4.3 Collaborative Thinking

Murris (2011) has defined collaborative thinking as 'responsive listening, building on others point of view, contributing constructively, turn taking, detecting similarities and differences

and following the enquiry where it may lead'. Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 6) have hypothesised that it is through collaboration in the CoE that the disposition of 'reasonableness' is cultivated, which is a cornerstone of P4C.

In CoE 6, the children put their heads together and in small groups discussed their concept of a top dog and an underdog to clarify the meaning of this concept. They presented their findings to the rest of the class. This is one of the discussions that emerged from the group discussion:

Angela: *In our group we discussed that the top dog is like the leader of everything and the underdog is like a tiny ant. For example the top dog is the bully and he just bullies the underdog. The top dog dresses nice.*

Terence : *I would like to disagree with Angela because sometimes the top dog can be really nice and the underdog can be really mean.*

Ellen: *I just want to disagree with Terence because he said the underdog can be mean but I do not really think so because the underdog just follows what the top dog says because he is scared of the top dog.*

Chantal: *I think the top dog is sometimes mean because I guess the top dog would be the popular one and like sometimes the popular one can be rude and stuff.*

Lee: *I actually agree with Terence that the underdog gets jealous of the top dog and is mean to him. Sometimes I am the top dog and sometimes I am the underdog.*

Amy: *I would just like to say about Terence's thing that if the underdog starts being bossy to the top dog doesn't it make the top dog the underdog?*

Anton*:* *I drew a scale from top dog to underdog. I don't see the top dog as mean, I see the top dog as the leader and makes things happen. The middle dog is the one who gives ideas and listens and the underdog is someone who follows. And that is the way I see it because you can get a middle dogs like say me I am not the top dog. I have my own opinion and I do not have to follow the top dog all the time.*

Ellen: *I agree with Anton because you can be the top dog and it can change in a few minutes. Like Jack (in the story) he was the top dog because he wasn't scared to go into the tunnel. And then what happened was that Rose saved Jack and she became the top dog. But then Jack and Rose became friends and they became the middle dogs.*

CoE 6: 27 September

In this short dialogue children engaged in a discussion to establish a collective understanding of power by exploring the concept of the top dog and underdog. Angela argued that the top dog is the leader, is a bully and dresses well while the underdog is a tiny and weak. This is a common and perhaps stereotypical view of power. In using this analogy she was presenting two binary opposites around the concept of power. She saw the top dog as powerful and the underdog as weak. Terence provided a counter argument by problematising this binary concept and providing an alternative point of view of the top dog being nice and the underdog being mean. Ellen provided another counter argument by positing that the underdog follows the top dog because he is afraid of the top dog. In her argument she supported the notion of a bully being the top dog and the underdog being fearful and a follower. Chantal supported this notion by saying the top dog is the popular person. Lee countered her argument by saying that the top dogs and underdogs are interchangeable positions and that sometimes these positions can change and one can change position from being a top dog to an underdog. Amy challenged the community of enquirers even further by supporting the notion of power being fluid and changing as she asked the question 'if the underdog starts being bossy doesn't the underdog become the top dog?' Out of this dialogue Anton created a new concept that breaks the two binary concepts of a top dog and underdog and introduced a new concept of a middle dog. Tessa related this concept to the story *The Tunnel* and draws on the analogy of Rose and Jack whose positions alternate in the story. Initially Jack is the top dog and Rose is the underdog because she is afraid. Through the action of saving Jack, Rose became the top dog. She developed it even further by saying when they become friends they become middle-dogs. The hypothesis is that the act of friendship levels the playing field and creates an equal relationship of power. Through philosophical dialogue Tessa engages more deeply with *The Tunnel*.

As the dialogue developed so did the quality of the children's thinking become more sophisticated as they built on each other's ideas? In collaborative dialogue the learners were cultivating the social disposition of reasonableness (Splitter and Sharp, 1995) by giving reasons for their answers. The engaged in collaborative dialogue and showed respect by saying 'I agree and disagree.' They were taking into account each other's point of view and feelings by building on each other's ideas and challenging each other. There is evidence of the children actively listening to each other as each child contributed to the dialogue so did their concepts of the top dog and underdog evolve and develop. Initially Tessa subscribed to the concept of the top dog being mean and the underdog being weak and a follower. By the end of the dialogue there is evidence of change in her point of view. She acknowledges that the position of a top dog can shift and change. She relates her thinking back to the story of Jack and Rose who become friends therefore they become middle dogs. Tessa is showing evidence of a willingness to be reasoned with.

4.4.4 Ellen -The unexpected consequences of implementing the CoE

In the final week of school the children received the good news, passed down by the Head of Department (HOD), that there would be no homework that week. This was met with great jubilation and celebration by my class who anticipated a week of freedom in the afternoons. Their jubilation was short-lived as my HOD changed her mind in the middle of the morning. She came into my classroom to tell me that the children would be receiving homework that week as they still needed to be kept busy after school. As anticipated the children did not receive the news very well. They were genuinely angry with me for changing my mind. When I explained to them that it was not my decision but the decision of the HOD, Ellen jumped out of her chair, before I could stop her, and knocked on the HOD's door to query the decision for homework that week. Ellen's complaint was not met with favour but anger by the HOD. The HOD was outraged that a child could dare to challenge her decision. Ellen and I had to face the consequences of challenging her and were severely reprimanded by the HOD.

Several lessons emerged out of this experience. Unfortunately, Ellen had to face the negative consequences of challenging authority without thinking. On the positive side Ellen won the respect of her peers, especially the boys, for her courage to face authority over an unfair act. One of Ben's comments: '*I actually learnt a lot from this like I always thought boys were stronger than girls but now I know some girls are stronger.'* Angela commented '*Like Ellen*

had the guts to go to Mrs B to complain about the homework. No other boy had the guts to do that'.

The children were empowered and transformed through the pedagogy of the Community of Enquiry. They were treated with respect and experienced a symmetrical relationship with me the teacher and became 'equal companions in thought' (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2012, p. 3) where their opinions were listened to and respected. They developed a growing sense of autonomy. Autonomy is indicated by evidence of a child thinking for themselves, for example in taking a minority viewpoint or challenging the viewpoint of others. Fisher (1998, p. 85) argues that 'children are autonomous to the extent that their thinking and actions are truly their own.' They learnt to argue and counter argue and provide justification for their point of view. This was evident in the manner in which they were able to agree or disagree and took responsibility for their own opinions in dialogue. They also experienced a small taste of democracy. According to Fisher (2008, p. 81) 'democracy involves a mutual understanding across differences of opinions through genuine dialogue'.

4.5 Conclusion

Their experience of democracy did not translate into the broader environment of the school. What I learned from this experience is that the CoE is a pedagogy that cannot be contained in a classroom as it cultivates a way of thinking critically and creatively about the world that spills into every area of school life. The carefully nurtured democracy that the children had experienced in my class unfortunately was an ideal that they did not experience in other areas of school life. I learned that I had not prepared my children to deal with power relationships outside the classroom in a responsible manner. The children had begun to learn a different discourse during the course of nine weeks where they listened to and challenged each other's thoughts and ideas. In these discussions they became more aware of their thinking and the operation of power relations. What I had not prepared the children for was how to be heard in an undemocratic environment. I had not mediated the transition for them effectively. I learned in order to implement this type of pedagogy it was necessary to mediate the process of acquiring a voice and becoming responsible in the practical outworking of this. Ellen's story highlighted this for me. I had taught them about fire but had not taught them how to respectfully deal with fire. In the future when I implement this type of pedagogy into the classroom I will follow the example of Vivian Vasquez (2004) and prepare the children to deal responsibly and respectfully with power relationships.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In the concluding chapter I return to the primary motivation for conducting this research - to move away from the 'autonomous model' (Street, 1984) of teaching literacy to teaching literacy from an ideological model where literacy is contextualised within a cultural and social paradigm.

I had two broad aims in implementing Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children. Firstly I wanted to enrich my literacy teaching by adopting a more democratic and collaborative model of teaching literacy – through the pedagogy of the Community of Enquiry (CoE). I also wanted to explore what Vivian Vasquez (2004, p. 1) meant when she said, 'A critical literacy needs to be lived, it arises from the social and political conditions that unfold in communities in which we live'.

Secondly, from the children's perspectives I hoped to extend their view of literacy as more than the cognitive skill of being able to read and write, but also a way in which they could examine and critique their worlds. Thus, I was interested in the ways in which they would engage critically and philosophically to a well known picturebook, *'The Tunnel'* (1989) by Anthony Browne.

My third aim was to explore if I could use the CoE as a pedagogy for Critical Literacy, since it had no prescribed method.

5.2 Reflections on the findings

The question that guided this research was, 'What happens when 'Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children are implemented in my Grade three classroom? I narrowed down this very broad question to the following short questions:

- How did implementing Critical Literacy (CL) and Philosophy for Children (P4C), in the Community of Enquiry change my teaching?
- How did the children engage with Critical Literacy topics
- How did the children engage with philosophical topics?

5.2.1 How the Implementation Changed my Teaching

One of the aims of this research was to explore my growth as a teacher while implementing these two approaches to literacy. A logical extension of implementing this intervention was to reflect on my own teaching. In doing so I was making 'power more accountable' (Haynes & Murris, 2012, p. 118).

The major research finding in relation to my teaching was that implementing P4C and CL in the Coe required more than following the scripted steps that I had read about but required a fundamental shift in the discourse (Gee, 1990) as traditional teacher.

Firstly, I had to reconceptualise my notions of democracy and power in the classroom. Dewey (1990, P. 93) defined democracy 'is a mode of associated living, of co-joined communicated experience'. Haynes and Murris (2012, p. 183) have described democracy as collaborative where there is 'less emphasis on the individual and more recognition of the diversity and a variety of stakeholders.' This was a lovely ideal on paper until I had to practically implement it. This involved learning to trust the other 'stakeholders', the children, with the everyday decisions in the classroom that affected them, such as organising the classroom for a CoE session.

Secondly, P4C required radically open listening that required me to be present to the moment in order to tune into philosophically rich topics. Initially I struggled to listen properly to the children because I had a goal in mind. I was used to making all the decisions and steering conversations in the way I thought they needed to go, which stopped me from really listening to children. In the first CoE I wanted to introduce a Critical Literacy question, 'Looking at the front cover of the book, what kind of reader do you think would read this book?' In my traditional discourse as a teacher I had learnt to listen with a goal in mind. I struggled to let go of the reins of control and allow the decision to go 'wherever it may lead' (Haynes and Murris, 2012, p. 51).

Thirdly, I learnt about the power of asking Socratic questions. Socratic questions require the teacher not to 'tell but to seek for truth through that included a sequence of questions' (Fisher, 1998, p. 146). They are open-ended, not closed and open up discussion. In CoE 1 the discussion lacked direction and began to 'float like driftwood' (Lipman, 2003, p. 15) because I did not ask the right philosophical questions. When I began to ask the right philosophical questions the discussions opened up and began to make progress towards truth

(Gardner, 1995). The children began to bring up topics that related to their socio-cultural worlds. I learnt not only to ask open-ended questions but questions that required the children to substantiate their answers. As I began to ask the right questions I began to experience the 'transformative potential of the Community of Enquiry.' (Haynes and Murris, (2012), p. 118).

One of the surprising findings of this research project was that I discovered that children are far more capable than I thought. They easily engaged in critical and creative thinking in a highly sophisticated manner, given the right environment. My traditional epistemology of the child was based on Piaget's developmental theory - that children are not capable of abstract thinking under the age of nine. On reflection this had resulted in a limited view of children and what they are capable of doing – resulting in a 'sanitised curriculum' (Haynes & Murris, 2012, p. 15). I discovered that children are able to courageously explore topics about gender and power that adults often steer clear of. These findings made me re-evaluate my view of children.

I also discovered that the CoE is not a pedagogy that can be contained in a classroom as it cultivates a way of thinking critically and creatively about worlds that spills over into every area of school life. I had exposed them to this powerful pedagogy that valued democracy and freedom of speech that, unfortunately did not translate into every area of school life. I had not prepared the children to cultivate a voice that could be heard in an undemocratic environment, as Vivian Vasquez (2004) had done in her classroom. Ellen's story highlighted the importance of mediating this kind of transition carefully. I had exposed them to fire but not how to respectfully deal with fire. I realised that this kind of pedagogy needs careful mediation in the future.

Initially, Critical Literacy and Philosophy for Children seemed to be at odds with each other and I kept trying to direct the enquiries towards critical literacy questions. But, as I let go of my agenda, the children naturally brought up Critical Literacy questions into the CoE. They began thinking philosophically about concepts such as 'what makes a girl a girl and a boy a boy?' This opened up CL questions on a much more sophisticated level. I did not have to moralise or direct the discussions. The children began to challenge each other about their 'taken-for-granted' norms and stereotypes. Thinking philosophically about concepts gave them a reflective meta-stance that enabled them to critique their own worldviews.

5.2.2 The Children's Engagement in Critical Literacy Topics

One of the powerful findings of the CoE is that it created a safe space for the children to articulate their own interpretations of the world and to critique them. This was important because, 'Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world' (Freire, 1972a, p. 35).

The most popular subject that the children brought up was the subject of gender. What was surprising is that although they had known each other since grade 0, their discussions revealed that they had viewed each other through the reductionist lenses of gender stereotypes. In Socratic dialogue, the children's beliefs and assumptions were challenged and scrutinised by their peers. In challenging each other they engaged in a critique of their own worlds and had to re-define their concepts of what it means to be a boy or a girl. They discovered that there were multiple ways of 'being' (Gee, 1990) a girl or a boy. This provided a space for change- particularly for Shawn and Ben. In critical discussion they had to re-define their concepts of 'boys' and 'girls.'

They also began to discern that no text is neutral and they began to problematise the way Jack was constructed in the book *The Tunnel.* In making this powerful observation the children began to discern that no text is neutral.

In engaging in Critical Literacy topics the children 'positioned themselves as researchers and ethnographers of their everyday lives' (Comber, & Nixon, 2004, p. 115) as they began to research their own socio-cultural worlds. In doing so they discovered the 'transformative potential' of the Community of Enquiry (Haynes, & Murris, 2012, p. 5). They also became 'creators of language rather than consumers of it' (Freire, cited by Scott, 2004, p. 169).

5.2.3 The Children's Engagement with Philosophical Concepts

The children engaged in three elements of philosophical thinking, collaborative, creative, critical and caring thinking.

In the second CoE 3 they examined a dilemma 'should the sister go down the tunnel and find her brother or should she go home and call her parents?' By examining a dilemma they engaged in creative thinking by 'generating ideas, suggesting hypothesis and looking for alternative plans' (Fisher, 2008, p 161). They used their imaginations to playfully speculate

over the dilemma. In doing so they engaged in moral thinking as they had to consider the virtues of responsibility in their arguments.

The children utilised multi-modal expressions of thought using art and creative writing to resolve Rose's dilemma. This provided space for their socio-cultural worlds to be expressed in the form of art and creative writing. They included their 'cultural capital' (Dyson, 1997, p. 2) in their stories, popular cultural symbols such as superheroes, Ninjas, vampires and witches.

In addition to creative thinking the children engaged in critical thinking by problematising their everyday concepts of a superhero in CoE 5. They had to re-define their concepts of a super hero by recognising what Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 9) called the 'grey between the black and white'. This enabled them to see that concepts have multiple interpretations and interpretations of concepts. This was valuable because they learnt to exercise judgement. For some children their critical transcended into caring thinking by recognising dogmatism in certain children's beliefs.

In the CoE they learnt the power of collaborative thinking where they learnt to listen to each other and they build on each other's ideas. In doing so they developed a collective understanding of the concepts of 'top dog' and 'underdog'. In collaborative dialogue they were cultivating the disposition of 'reasonableness' (Splitter and Sharp, 1995) by giving reasons for their answers. By engaging in collaborative discussion, they problematised the binary concept of 'top dog' and 'underdog.' In doing so they created a new concept the 'middle dog'.

In conclusion my class and I experienced transformation on many levels. I as a teacher had to reconceptualise my role as a teacher and how to create a safe place in my classroom for children's socio-cultural worlds. The children experienced transformation as they reconceptualised their taken-for-granted norms of each other. As they interrogated concepts, challenged each other they realised that the world was not as black and white as they had thought.

5.3 Research implications and recommendations

This research report touches 'the tip of the ice-berg' as far as implementing CL and P4C in a Foundation class is concerned. The findings of this study cannot be viewed as comprehensive, as the participants were limited to a class of grade three children in a private

co-educational school over a period of nine weeks. It was also a study that was open to interpretation as I took the role of the teacher/researcher. Adopting this view, a longitudinal study of these two interventions from the Foundation Phase, through the Intermediate Phase and on to the Senior Phase could be of great value.

It would be useful to research these two interventions over an extended period of time using a quantitative and qualitative research framework. Pre and post testing could be a useful tool to gauge the impact of these two interventions, such as the research done in Wales with Trickey and Topping (2004).

Further research could be done with teachers to think through their own practices in making literacy more relevant to the lives of the learners by including a socio-cultural perspective of learning literacy.

On a much wider scale it would be useful for Universities and Colleges to include a socio-cultural model for teaching literacy into their training.

In the light of the above mentioned findings the following recommendations have been made:

1. Teachers need more knowledge and experience of literacy in the socio-cultural model of teaching literacy.
2. Teacher training courses should include teaching literacy not just as a cognitive skill but a socio-cultural practice
3. Philosophy for Children and Critical Literacy are subjects that need to be included in primary school curriculums, and not later at high school or university level.

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Appendix 1

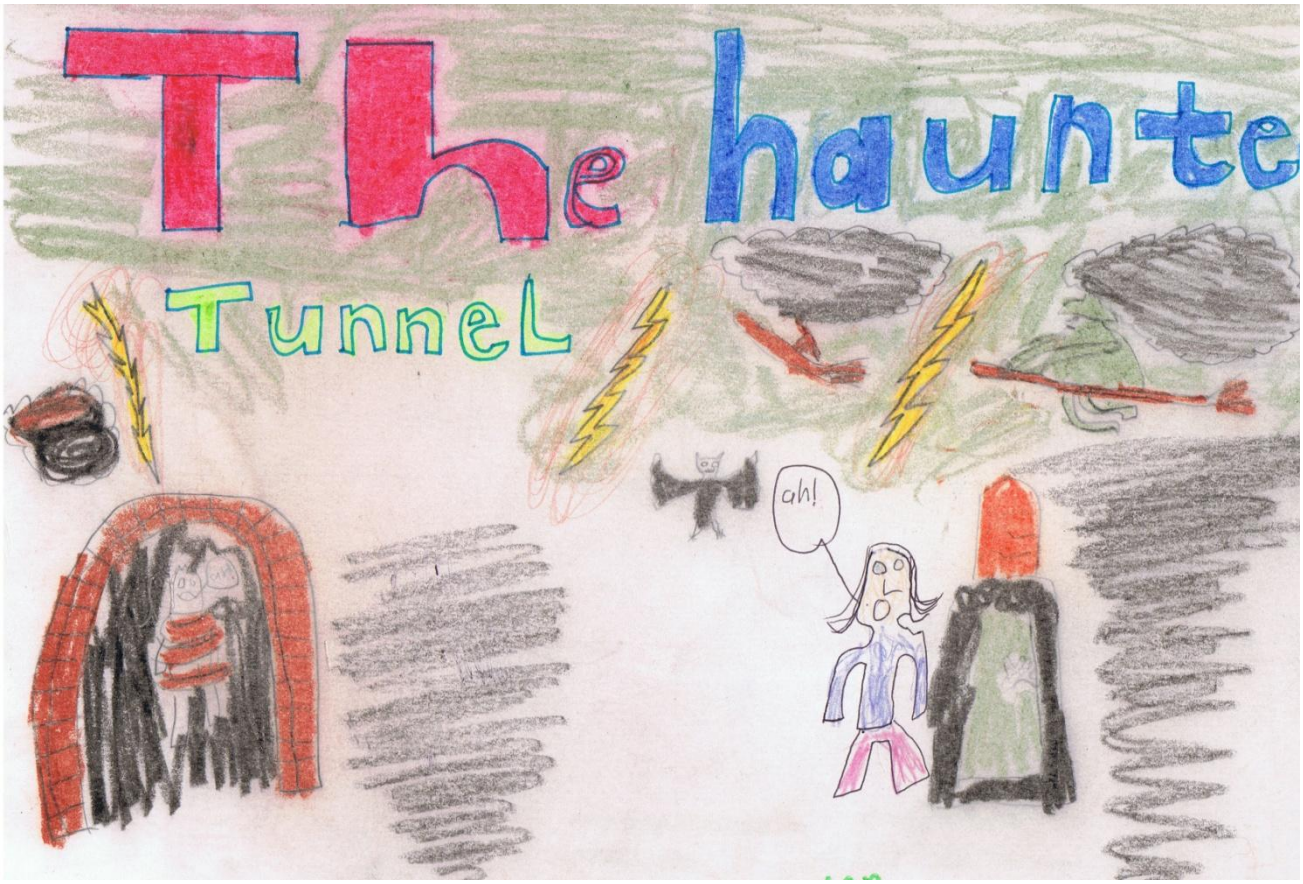
Examples of Socratic questions (Fisher 2008, p. 122)

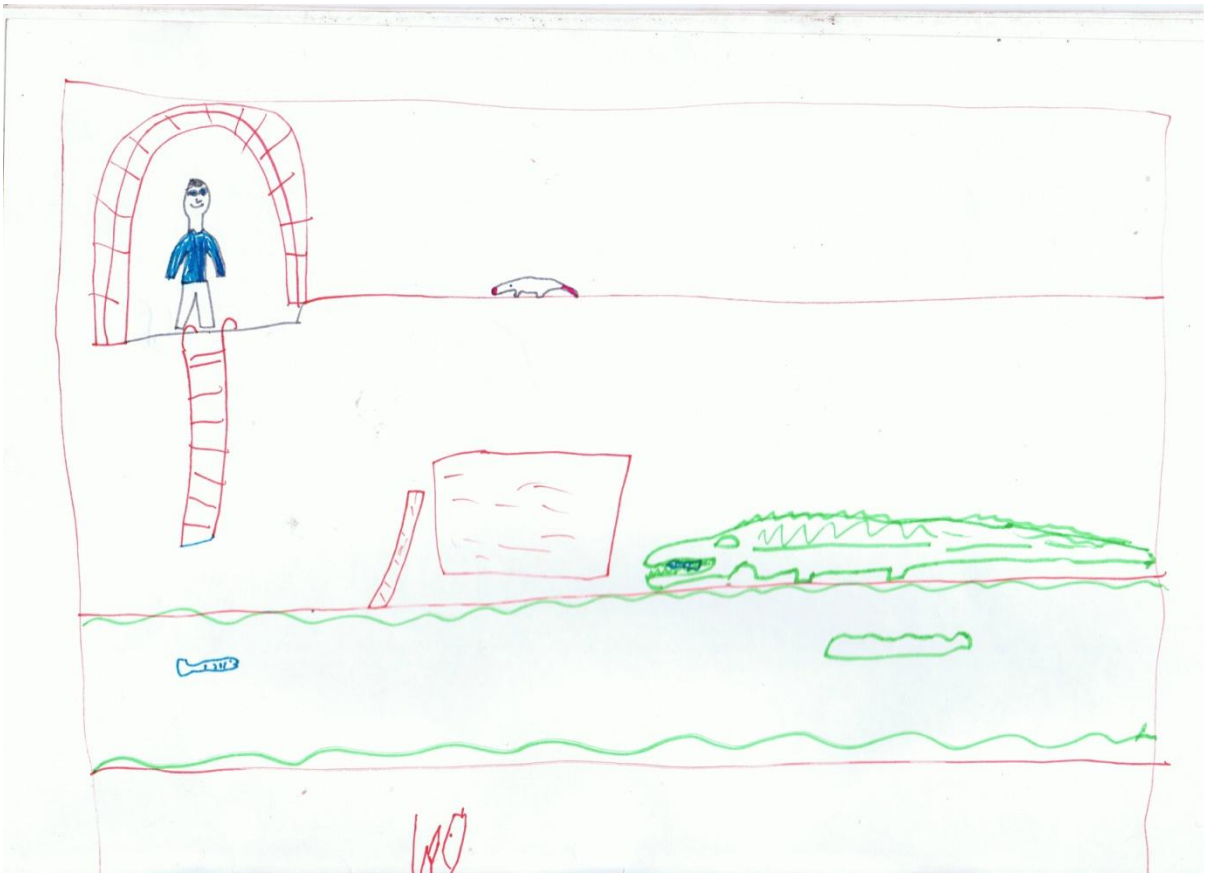
Questions that seek clarification	
Can you explain that?	Explaining
What do you mean by that?	Defining
Can you give me an example of...?	Giving examples
How does that help?	Supporting
Does anyone have a question to ask?	Enquiring.
Questions that probe reasons and evidence	
What do you think that?	Forming an argument.
How do we know that?	Challenging assumptions
What are your reasons?	Asking for reasons
Do you have any evidence?	Asking for evidence?
Can you give an example/counter-example?	Asking for counter examples.
Questions that explore alternative views	
Can you put it another way?	Re-stating a point of view
Is there another point of view?	Speculation.
What if someone were to suggest that?	Alternative point of view.
What would someone who disagreed with you say?	Counter-argument.
What is the difference between these points of view?	Distinction.
Questions about the question/discussion	
Do you have a question about that?	Questioning
What kind of question is that?	Analysing.
Are we any closer to answering the question?	Coming to a conclusion

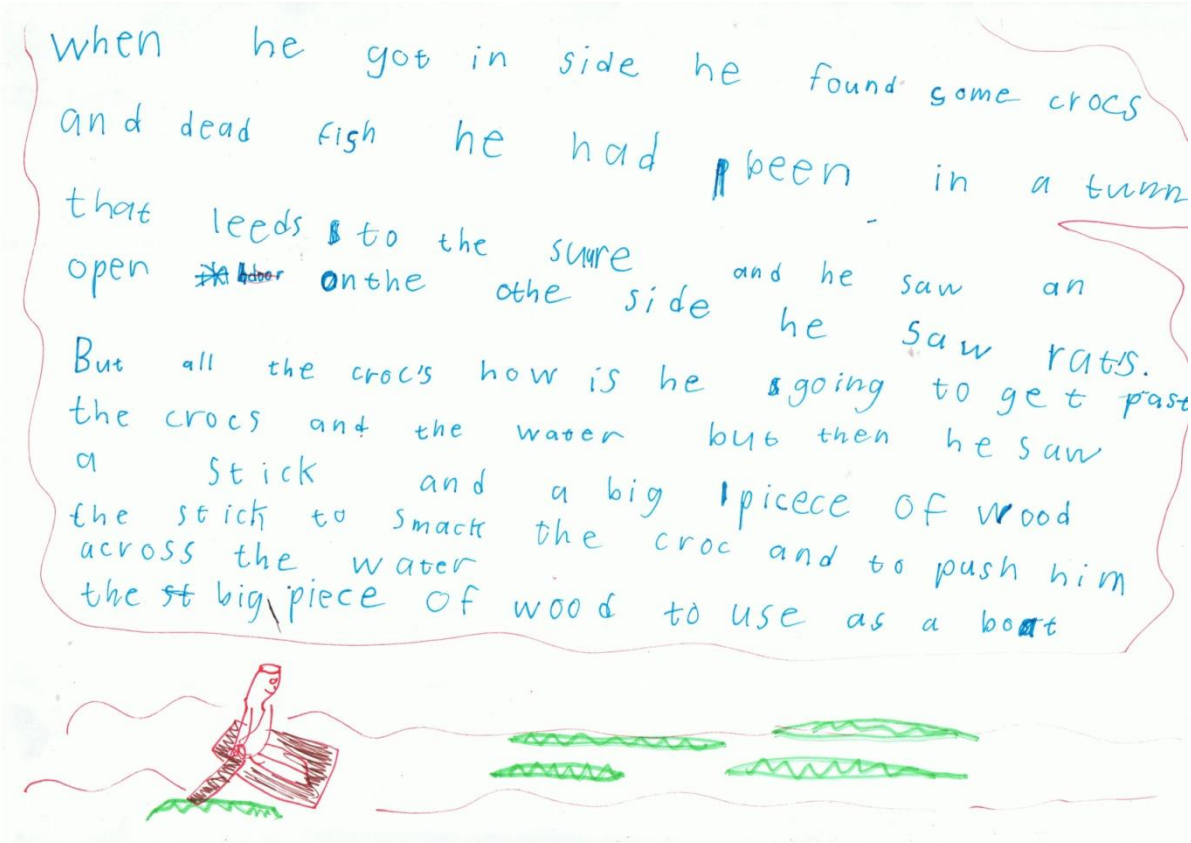
Appendix 2

Critical	Creative	Caring	Collaborative
Making inferences	making new connections	Attentive listening	Responsive Listening
Giving reasons	Putting oneself in the shoes of others.	Putting oneself in the shoes of others.	Communications skills.
Making analogies	Playing with ideas.	Projecting ideal moral self, world.	Building on other's point of view.
Critical of own ideas	Using imagination.	Open to difference	Intrapersonal
Spotting assumptions	Universalising	Moral imagination	Interpersonal
Logical deduction	hypothesising	sensitivity to contrast	Responding to others (including body language)
Classifying	Multi-modal expression of thought: e.g. art, drama, music, soccer	Normalising disagreement	Turn-taking
Analysing	Modification	Supporting others to articulate	Supporting others to articulate
Relationships (e.g. cause/effect	Synthesising	Contributing constructively	Contributing constructively
Sorting	composing	Using emotions as information	Putting ego in perspective
Demanding criteria; Asking for evidence	Considering other possibilities/alternatives.	Taking responsibility for own growth and others	Following an enquiry where it may lead.
Problem-solving	Problem-creating	Self-correcting	Detecting similarities and differences
Evaluating	Integrating	Making moral distinctions	Validating other possible ways of thinking.
Justifying	Inventing	integrity	Validating other possible ways of thinking
Testing for consistency	Illustrating, exempting	Detecting own bias & prejudice	Detecting own bias and prejudice
Interpreting	Re-organising	Fair judging	self-correcting
Curiosity, Independence, openness, risk-taking, patience, perseverance and fallibility			Tolerance, Self control, sensitivity, courage, respect, compassion, empathy.

Appendix 3: The Children's Picturebooks





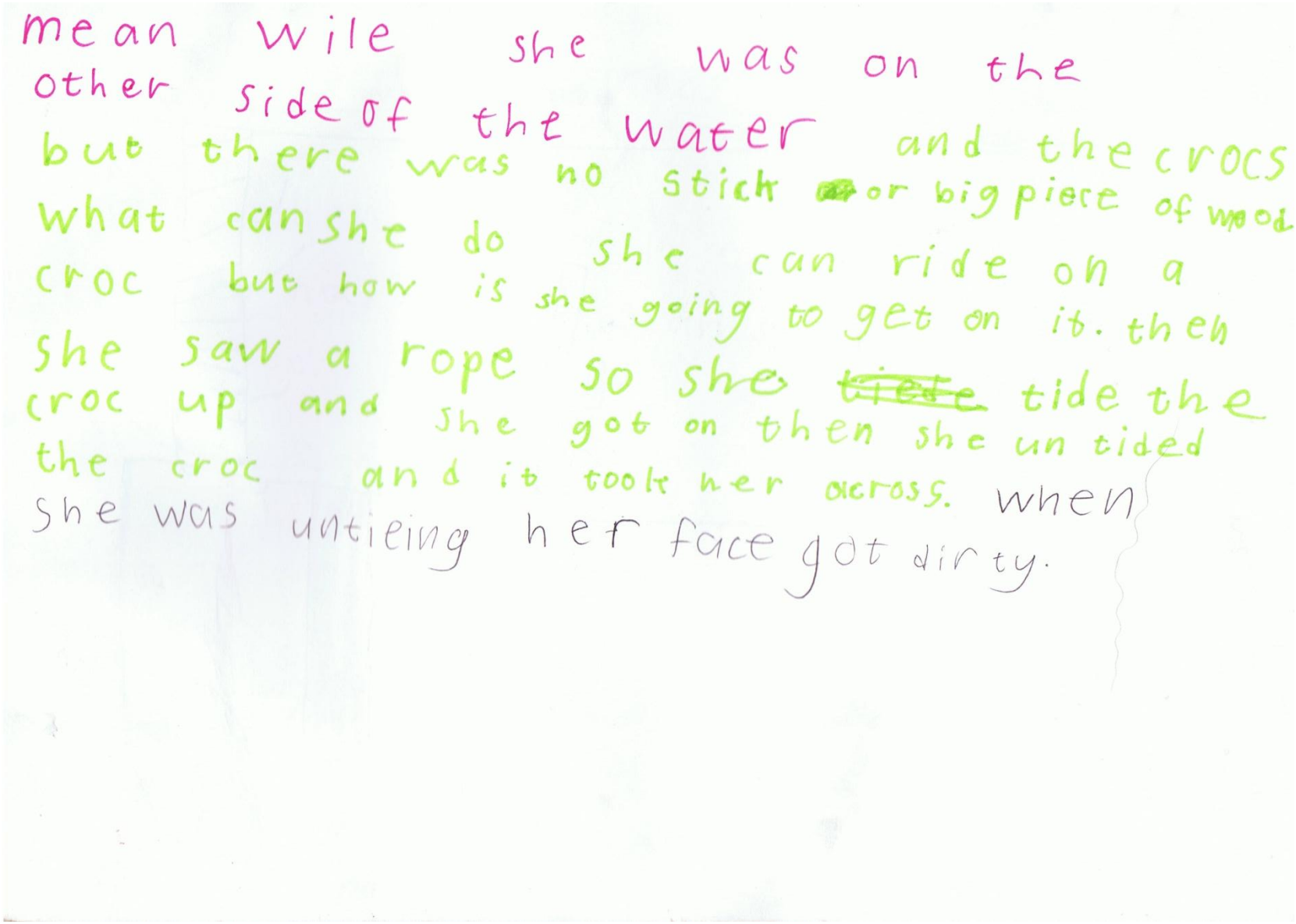

when he got in side he found some crocs
and dead fish he had been in a tunn
that leeds to the sware
open ~~the door~~ on the othe side and he saw an
he saw rats.
But all the croc's how is he going to get past
the crocs and the water but then he saw
a stick and a big picece of wood
the stick to smack the croc and to push him
across the water
the ~~st~~ big piece of wood to use as a boat





when he got to the other side the lader was broken.
So he had to fix the lader, but how can he fix it. then he reached into his pocket and he pulled out some tape.
I can tape it back together.
So he taped it back together and he went through the door

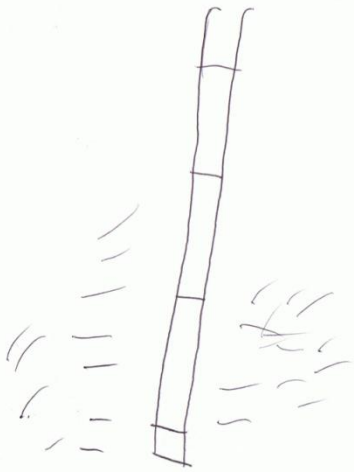


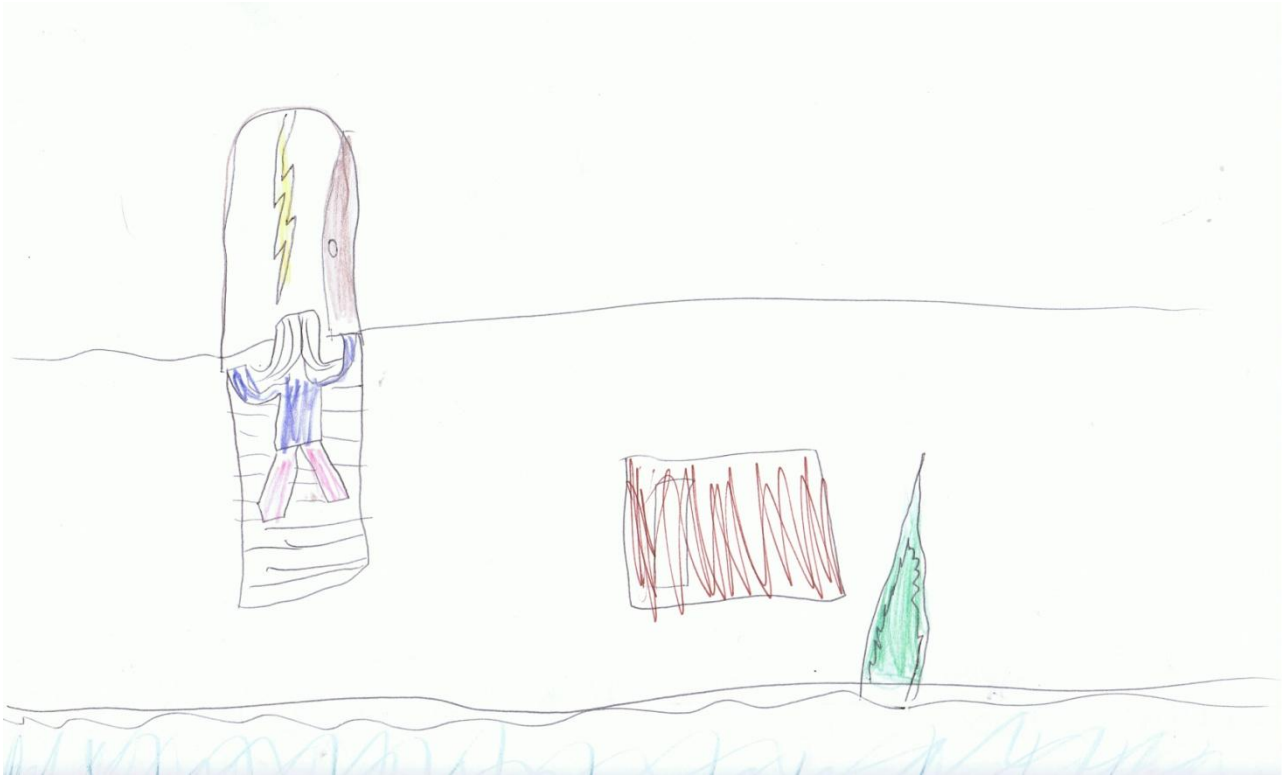


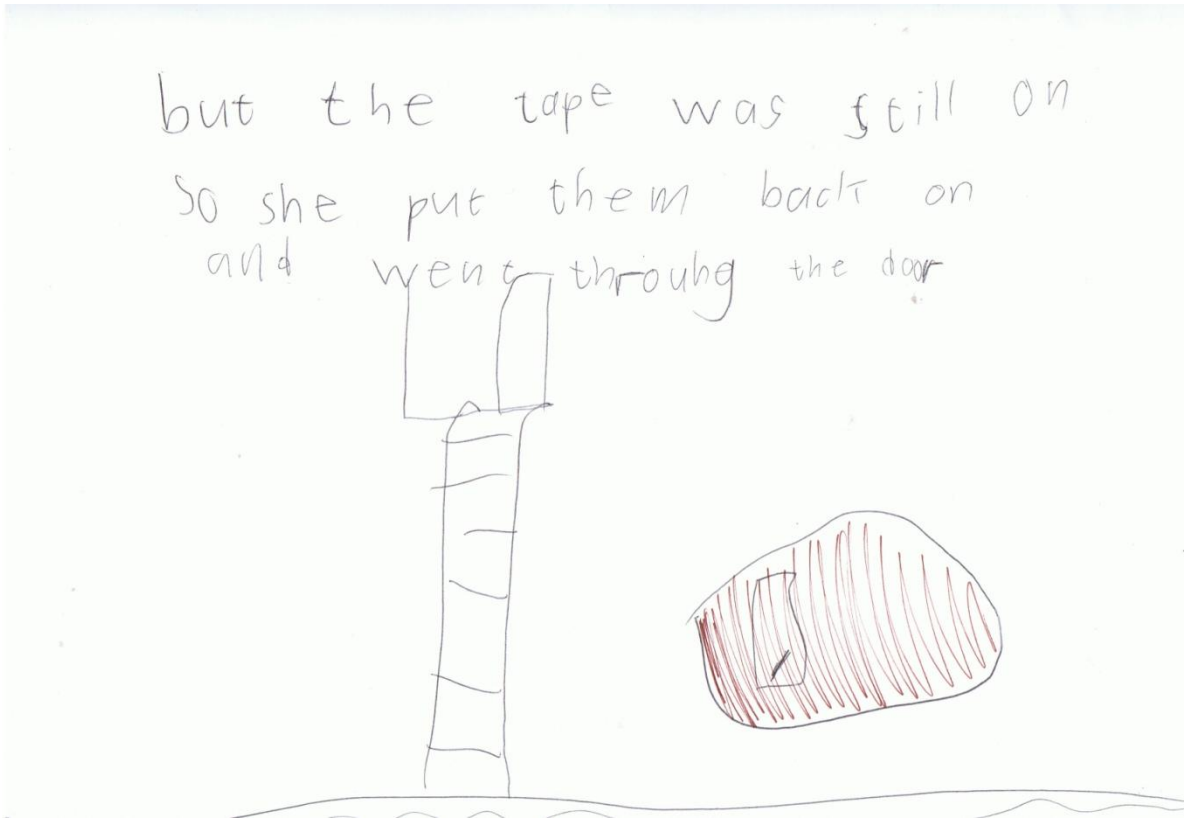
mean wile she was on the other side of the water and the crocs but there was no stick or big piece of wood what can she do she can ride on a croc but how is she going to get on it. then she saw a rope so she ~~tiede~~ tide the croc up and she got on then she un tided the croc and it took her across. when she was untieing her face got dirty.

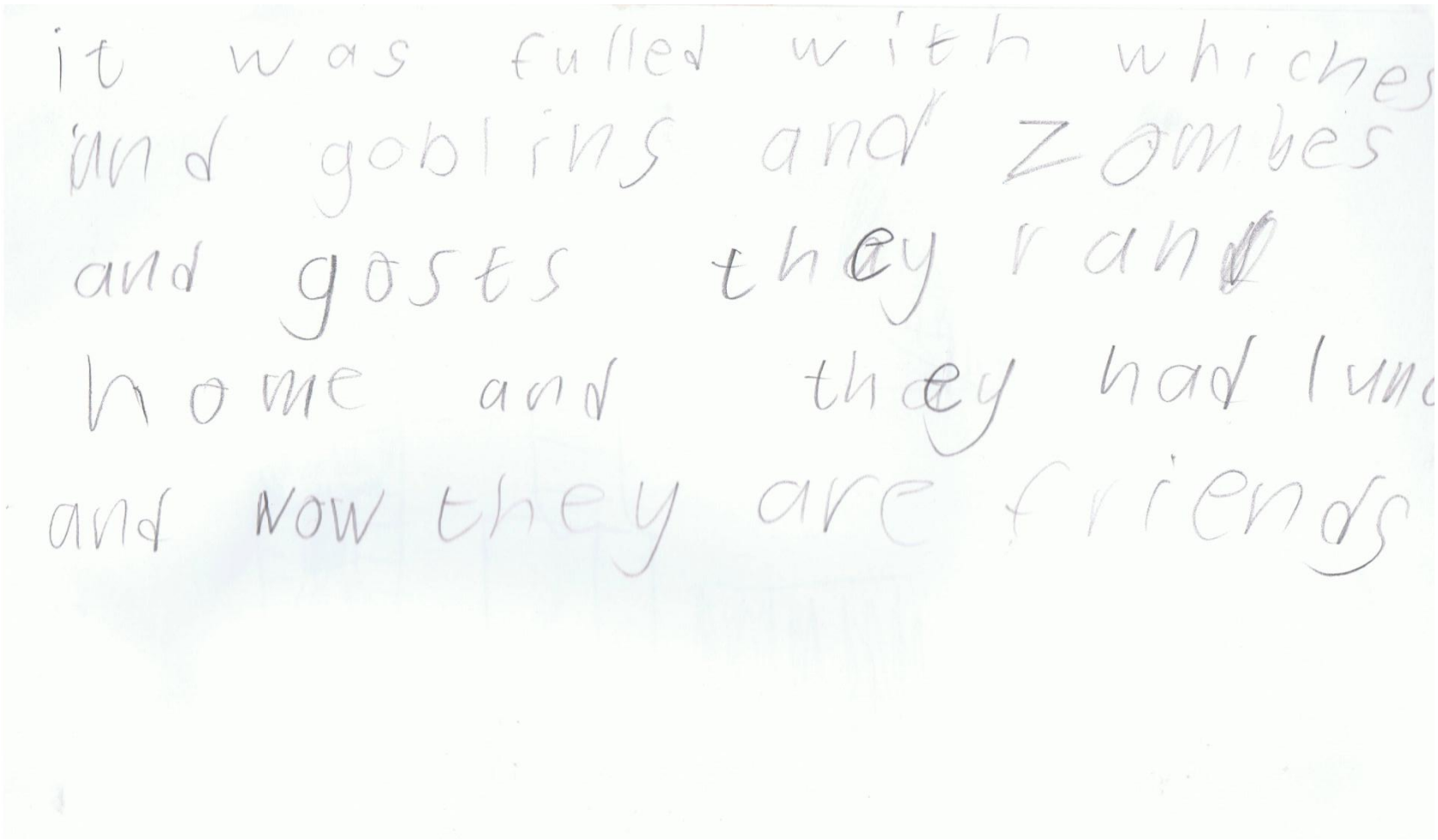


So she got across the water
she all so went through the door
but when she tried to. the lader brolte
now what can she do






but the tape was still on
So she put them back on
and went throubg the door


it was fulled with whiches
and goblins and zombes
and gostes they rand
home and they had lun
and now they are friends


The
Art
Tunnel

Once apon a time the girl was by the art tunnel and her brother went in to the tunnel and she loved her brother but she did not tell him then she sed. I need to Help him and see what hes doing



2.

then when she went in the tunnel her dress went to a old T shirt then her book went in a old paint brush she was still sad, so she went off.

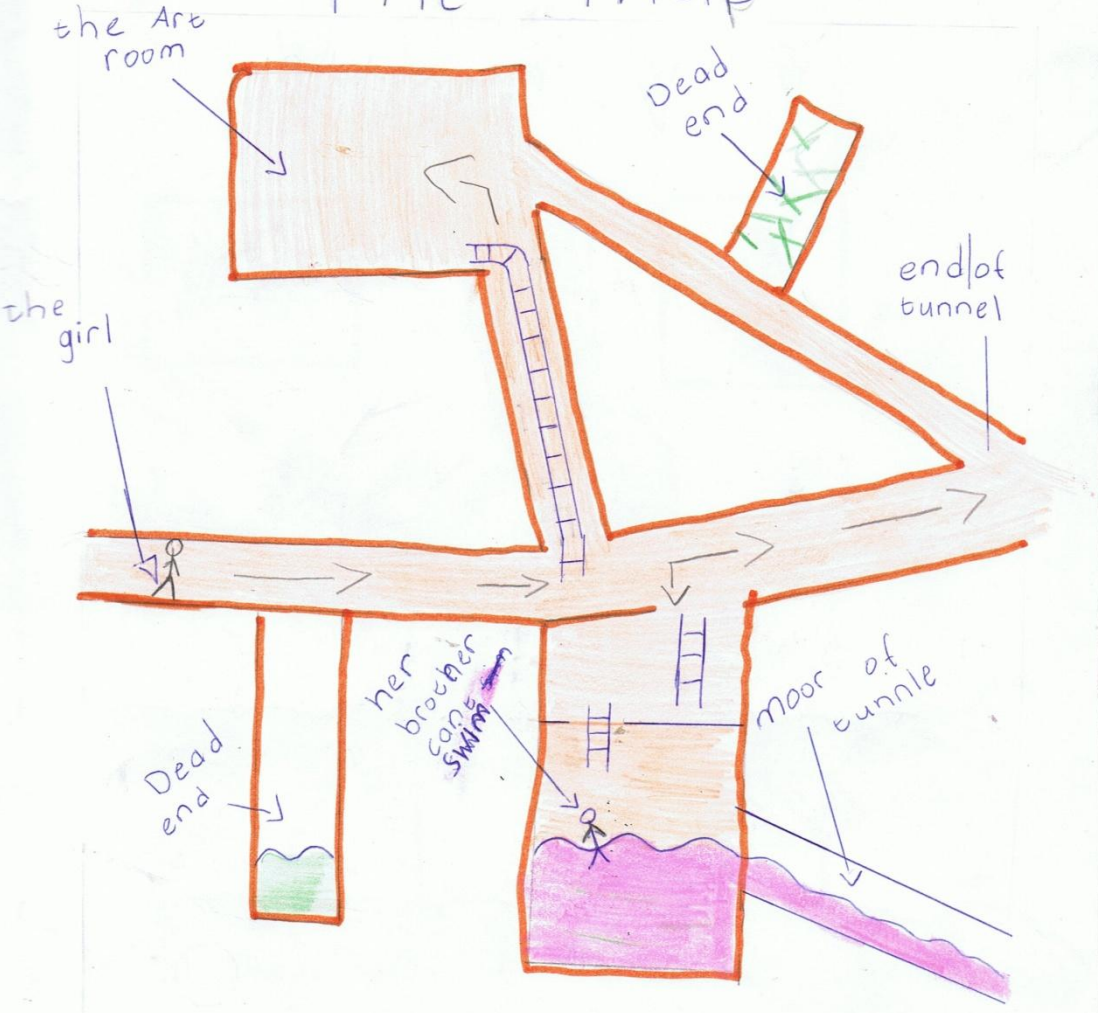


3

3.

then she saw so much stuff and she was so happy, she loved it. the paint brush was paiting on canves she had so much fun but she never saw her brother she was sad.

The map



4. she sa

She was very hunger and she saw something strang she went and got the strong thing



5.

she grabed the strong thing and ran to the Art room and she saw magic in the Box. and then she got. magic of Art.

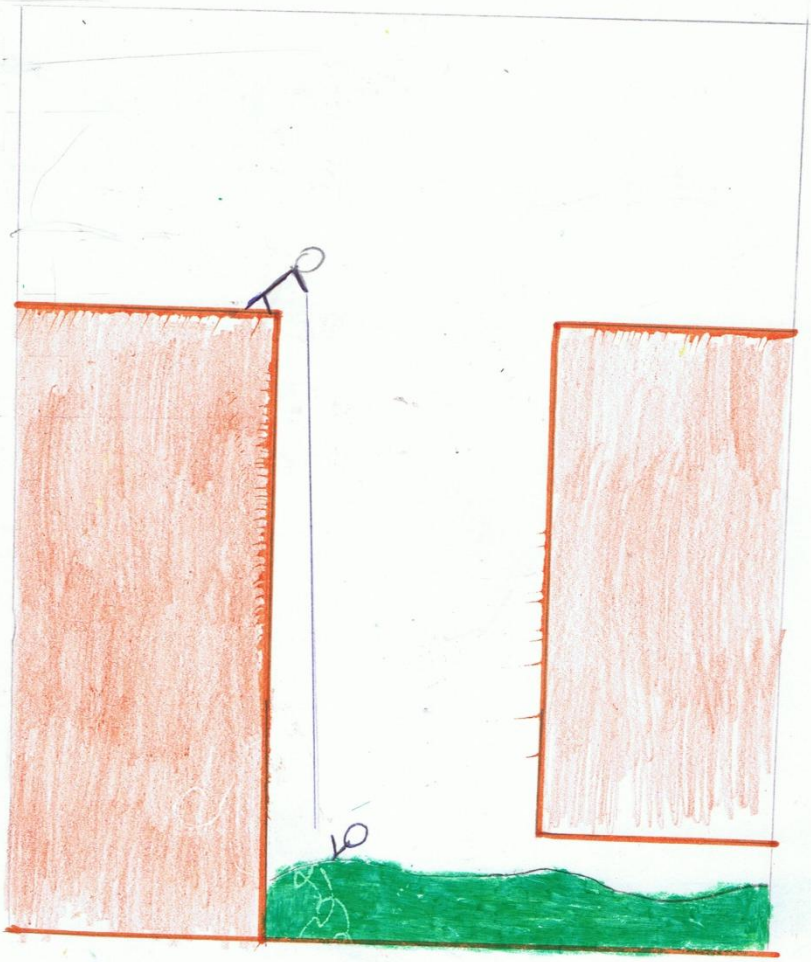


6.

then she got a hat and her -> shirt T-shirt went to a good art T-shirt and she saw her brother in a paino pool and hes sister and then she toke out a rope!



7.



her brother got the rope.
he climd up and up so she
said how did you get ther.
he said I was wlarking on until
she said look go out ther is a
thing comeing move.

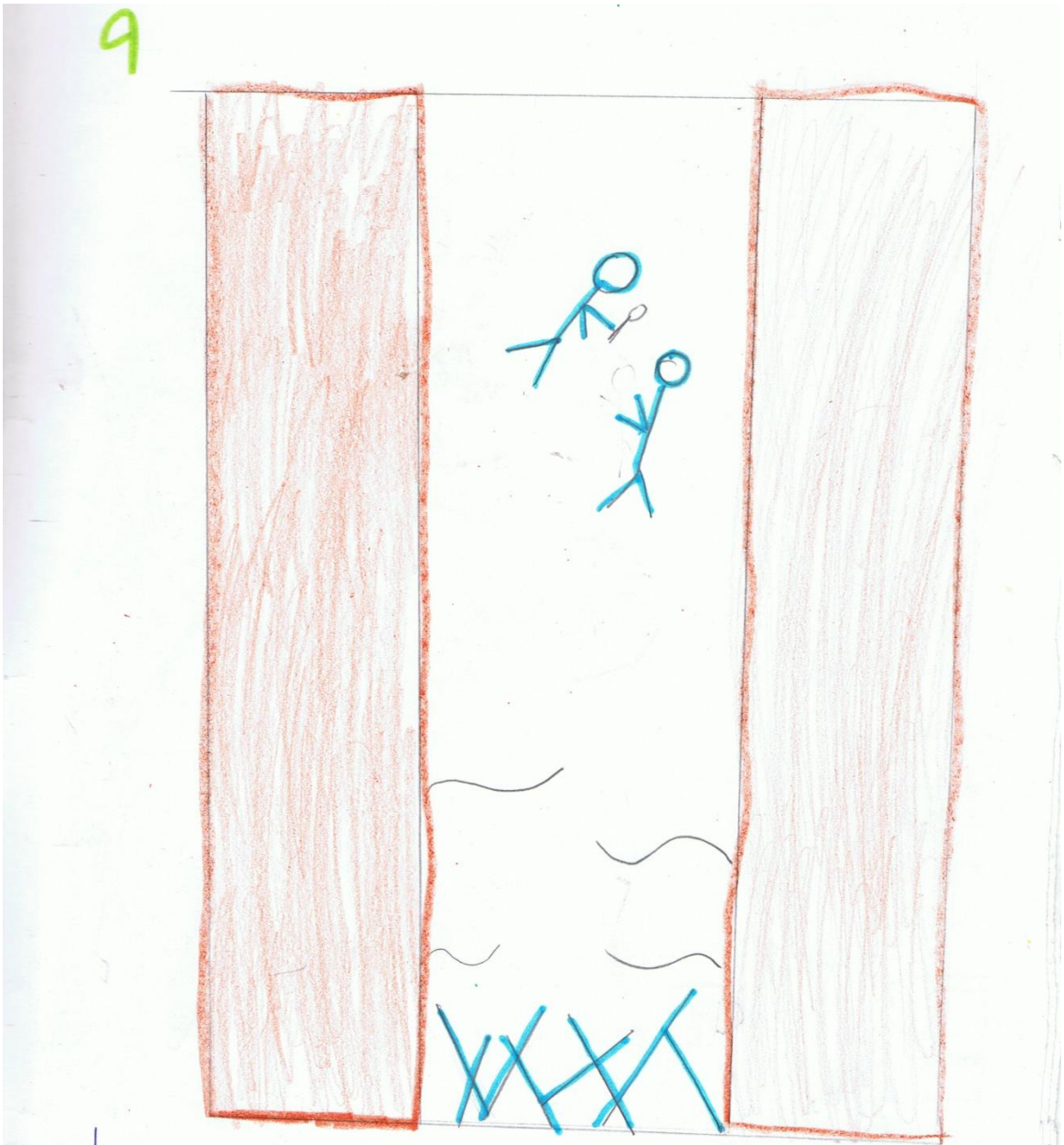
8.

what was that the boy said I do not no. ~~wh~~ wow you look so nice said the boy. ~~[illegible]~~ now what did you do I got magic Art power.

then ~~ty~~ they fell in a hole

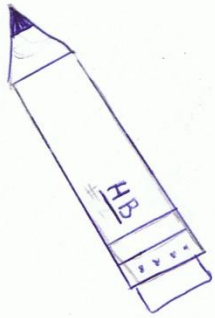


9

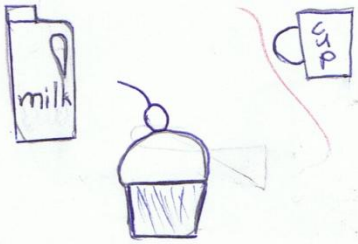


do something the boy ->
~~said~~ said do something
yous your power Help

then she fix it and they went off to the other part of the tunnel.

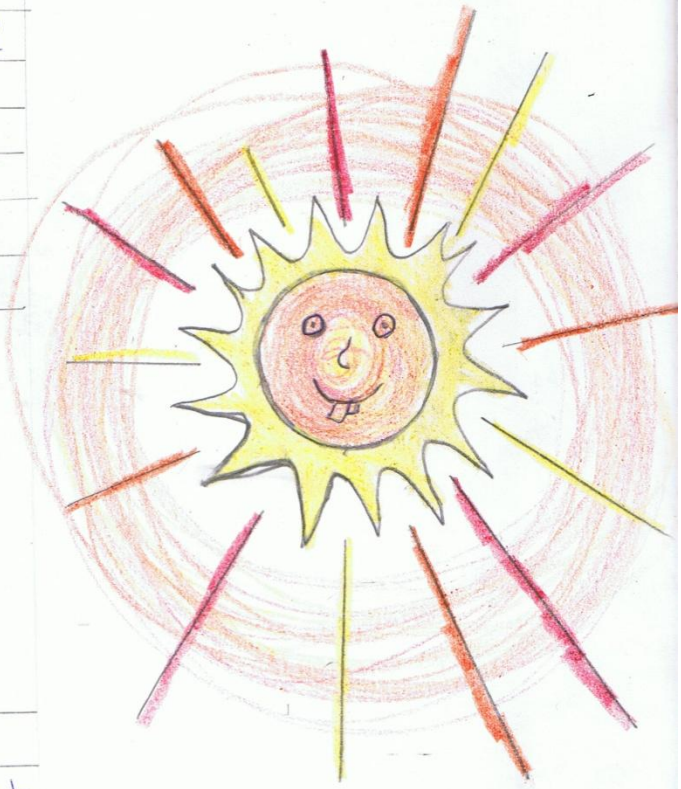


then! she siad we mith be late for lunch



on no then she saw some ligth look.

4.



then they saw the end of the tunnel she said I am going to



miss the tunne so much



she said that she will come to see it. agin

10.




Ima dead mommy
I'm coming for you child!
beware of my deadly spirit...
for the lord have mase on his saul
Rip
Shane

The girl climed into the hole of the tunnel and she crawled and crawled until she found three spit roates she sat down and thought wich way to go into for a well then she chose the tunnel in the center and she began to crawl in and she saw Iron man fighting a dragon in the in the tunnel meanwell her brother was drowning in a nother room and with a deadly shark and he wasnt a very good swimmer.



here brosher was about to be shark bate when (2)
Thor enterd the room and pulled the bog out then
Then Thor shocked the waber with ~~the shark in it~~
his thunder power the shark turned into French fries
and fish wich Thor took and até for the tastynes



but his sisterwas still in trubble the dragon (3)
could just blow fire out it's mouth and burn the
girl so she ran out and went into the third tunnel
She found and saw a jint killer ninja with spikes
to throw and Sum Spikes could shoot out the wall straite
to her so she screemed like a mad parson with
big eyes with lobab sudently out of nower the HULK
entered the room.



The [illegible] finally beat up the ninja and broke every spike that came his way and he threw the ninja right out planet earth into space without a space suit with him. (4)





after that the hulk met a man named la
he gets the name laser because he can shoot
lasers out of his body any time and he can
also become a laser himself but the
was not afriad of of laaaaseeeer
so the the hulk smashed laser into the
ground and laser shot out lasers.



The girl and boy met each other every one had left it was so quite until the man named Mr sent his fighter to fight the girl and boy but when he entered guess who entered as well it was Vegeta entered to with a masive aurt quake.




The haunted
Tunnel
WC
die

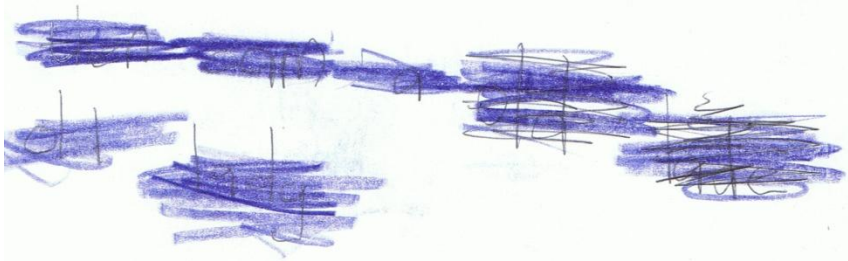

abra cadabra
She
said

then cam a vampire the vampire was starvinge so the vampire desided to bite the girl in a minet or tow the girl turnd in a vampire

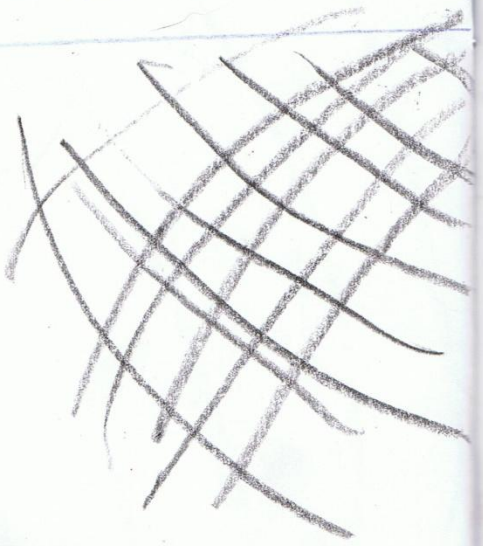


the girl was also starvinge because the girl was jist turnd in a vampire

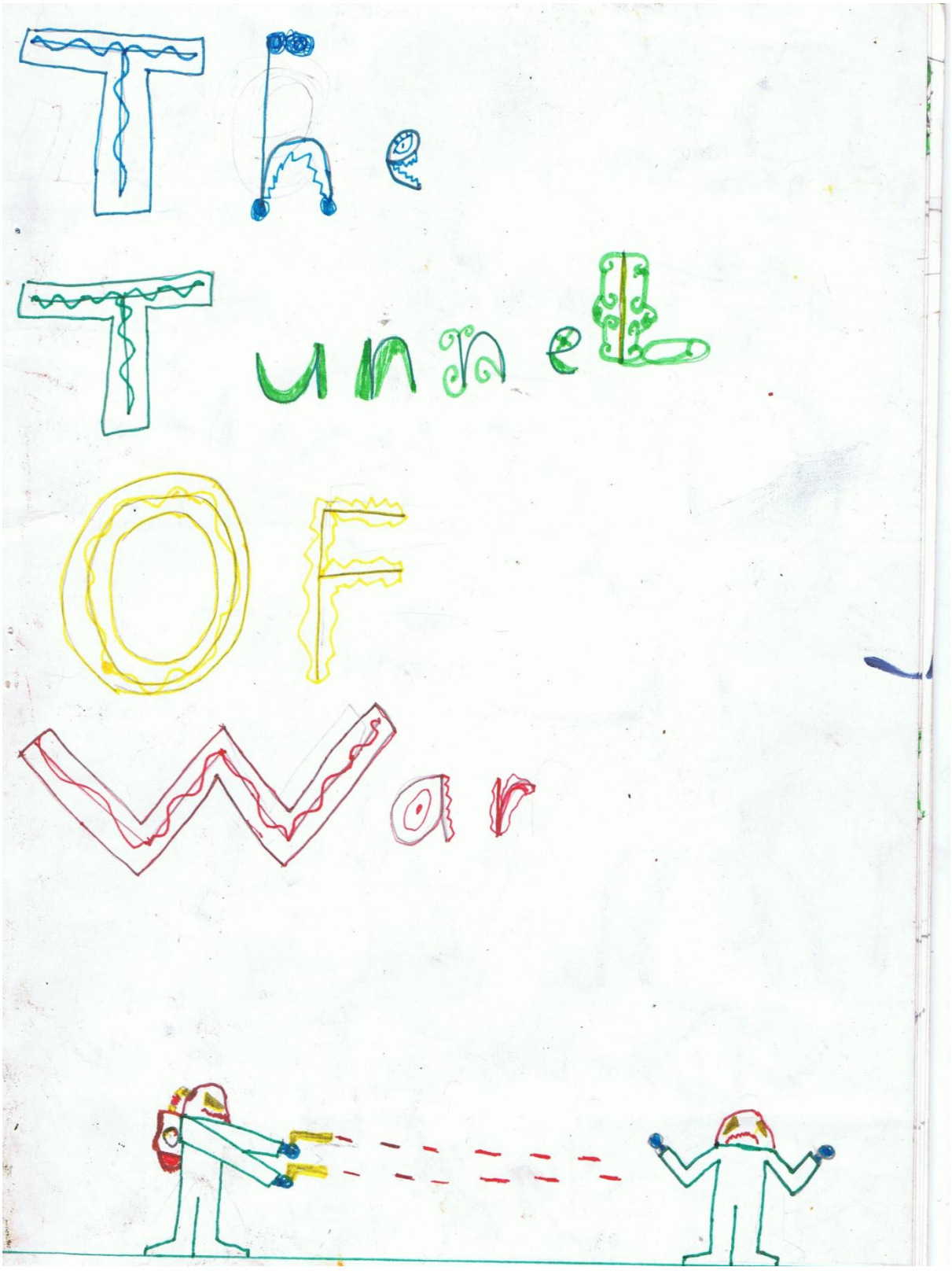


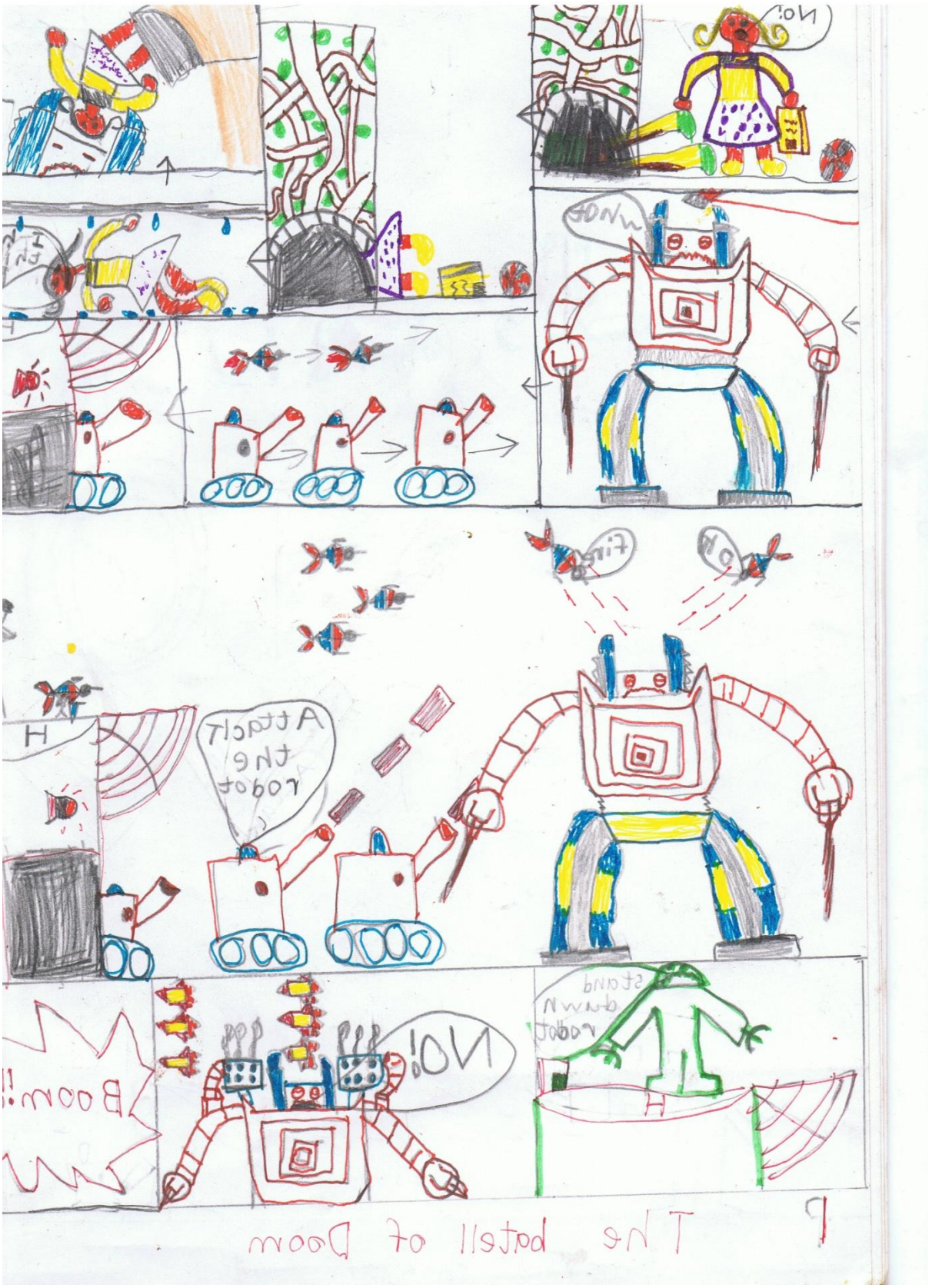


then the two of teme went to iksplor the hunnted tunnel






The
Tunnel
OF
War


No!
Attack the robot
Boom!
No!
stand down robot
The batell of Doom

Appendix 4: The headmaster's letter and consent

2 August 2011

Dear Mr Headmaster,

Request for permission to conduct research at your School

As you know, I am currently doing research for a Masters degree in education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My aim is to implement Philosophy for children and Critical Literacy, using picture books, to develop literacy. More specifically I am interested in questions such as:

For the teacher:

- How does implementing critical literacy and philosophy for children in the Community of Enquiry change my teaching?

For the children:

- How do the children engage with philosophical topics?
- How do the children engage with critical literacy topics?

I would be so grateful if you could please grant me permission to conduct action research in our school. I hope to conduct the research with my whole class for an hour each week over ten weeks during their normal literacy lesson.

I will keep detailed lesson plans of each lesson and write a reflective journal for my own personal growth as a teacher.

The children will participate in group discussions that will take the place of an ordinary literacy lesson and will last for about an hour a week. In Philosophy for Children the discussion will take place in the Community of Enquiry. In Critical Literacy it will be a critical discussion group. Both of these approaches are aimed at developing thinking skills and giving children a voice in the classroom. They are both dialogical approaches to education and are child-led. They will be able to express their opinions and engage that does

not simply accept the views of others (Fisher, 1998, p.2). They are both pedagogical methods that promote democracy.

I would like to tape record the group discussions to ensure accuracy. In order to ensure confidentiality I am providing consent forms to the parents and children, and that once signed become effective. Before I continue with my research project I will need the consent of the school and the school principal. As the principal your signature on the school consent form below will allow me, the researcher, to conduct research at the school site, to hand out questionnaires, record discussion groups, conduct interviews and take photos of the children's work, images.

At no stage in the research will the identity or of the school, the identities of its staff and the identities of the learners will remain anonymous. The school and any research participants referred will be given pseudonyms. The school, parents, learners may withdraw permission for conduction the research at any time and it will not be held against them.

If you choose to participate in this project, the research findings will contribute both to the larger body of knowledge on Philosophy for Children and Critical Literacy, as well as the school's understanding of literacy and literacy teaching.

I would be happy to answer any questions relating to the proposed research and can be contacted telephonically on 082 7560 659 or via email dancingpepper@gmail.com. My supervisor is Dr Kerryn Dixon and she can be contacted on 0824640043.

Kind regards

Nicolette Anastassopoulos.

School consent form

I _____consent to allow Nicolette Anastassopoulos to conduct research in our school for her Master's research project.

I understand that:

- Participation in this research report is voluntary;
- The school, parents and learners participating may withdraw from the project at any time;
- Participants may refuse to answer questionnaires at any time;
- No information that may identify the school or any research participants will be included in the research report or in any presentations or publications on the findings of the report, and all responses will remain confidential;
- The participants small group discussions will be tape recorded and
- Small group discussions will be conducted on the school grounds in my classroom during the school day in the literacy lesson.
- The children's visual images and written work will be displayed on the wall of the classroom.

Name: _____

Date:_____

Appendix 5: The Parent's Letter and Consent

2 August 2011

Dear parent/guardian

Request for your child to participate in a research project

I am currently doing research for a Masters degree in education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My aim is to implement Philosophy for children and Critical Literacy, using picture books, to develop literacy in the classroom.

As a researcher I am hoping to work with the whole class as co-enquirers looking at picturebooks to enhance literacy in the foundation phase. The children will participate in group discussions that will take the place of an ordinary literacy lesson and will last for about an hour a week over nine weeks. The lessons will not interfere with normal schoolwork; in fact it will enhance their literacy skills. With your and your child's permission, the group discussion will be tape recorded in order to ensure accuracy.

Participation in all activities in this research project is entirely voluntary and will not take place without written permission from you and your child. I do not believe there is any direct risk to your child. If you do not wish your child to participate she/he will not be disadvantaged in any way. If you do not want your child to participate she/ he may withdraw at any time.

Your child will not be mentioned by name in the final report or in any presentations or publications on the findings of that report. She/he will be given a false name (pseudonym). The name of the school will not be mentioned. If your child draws a picture or writes some sentences about reading for me, I may include his/ her writing or drawing in my final report. The names of any people mentioned in your child's drawings/writings, including their own will be erased. I would like permission to use your child's drawings/writing in my final report or in presentations or publications of the findings of that report.

If you have any questions about this research or about your child's rights you can contact me on my cell phone on 082 7560 659 or on my landline (011) 782-7848 or email me at dancingpepper@gmail.com.

Thanking you

Nicolette Anastassopoulos

Please sign each section, indicating whether you give consent.

Consent to participate in research project

I _____(full name) the parent/guardian of _____
_____understand the contents of the above letter and GIVE/DO NOT GIVE permission for my child to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw my child at any time.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Consent to use information involving your child

I understand that information regarding my child may be used anonymously in Nicolette Anastassopoulos' final report or in presentations or publications on the findings of that report. This information will take the form of a picture or sentences my child writes about literacy. It also involves taking photographs of your child's work.

I DO/DO NOT give consent to any information pertaining to my child being used in research.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Consent given to record your child's group discussions

I give permission for Nicolette Anastassopoulos to tape record my child _____

(Full name) in group discussions about literacy.

I understand that:

- No-one else will hear the tapes or see the notes made from them
- My child's name will not be used in any transcripts, written reports or in presentations or publications based on those reports and;
- The tape recordings will be safely stored and destroyed when all research is finished.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Consent given to interview your child

I give permission for Nicolette Anastassopoulos to interview my child _____

(Full name) in group discussions about literacy.

I understand that:

- No-one else will hear the tapes or see the notes made from them
- My child's name will not be used in any transcripts, written reports or in presentations or publications based on those reports and;
- The tape recordings will be safely stored and destroyed when all research is finished.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Appendix 6: The Children's Letter and consent

Dear learner,

As you know I am also going to school, university, in the afternoons to help me become a better teacher. I am doing some homework for my university and I need some help from you on reading and picture books.

We will be having group discussions once a week in a circle for about an hour instead of silent reading and we will be discussing a picturebook. I might ask you to draw a picture or write about the picturebook.

I will tape record our discussions, so that I can remember all the important things you said. No-one else will hear the tapes, or read the notes on them. I will make sure no-one knows what you said because I will not use your real name.

You will not have to answer any questions you don't want to or take part in our discussions, or do anything you don't want to. You can leave at anytime you want. I will not be upset with you and you will not get into trouble.

If you want to help me with my homework please write your name on the form below and sign it.

If you would like to discuss this homework with me you can speak to me after school.

Thank you

Miss Anastassopoulos

Agreement to participate in the research project

I _____(your name and surname)

Want to take part in Miss Anastassopoulos' (homework) research project about reading and writing.

I understand that:

- I can choose to join the project;
- I don't have to answer questions that I don't want to
- No one will know what I said
- I can leave the project and I will not get into trouble
- My name will not be used in reports, presentations or publications
- If I draw anything or write anything it can be copied/used in Miss Anastassopoulos' homework for the university.
- I also give Miss Anastassopoulos permission to take photographs of my work.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Agreement to tape-record my talk

I _____(your name and surname)

Give Miss Anastassopoulos' permission to tape record our discussions in class.

I understand that:

- no-one else will hear the tapes or see the notes;
- my name will not be used in written reports, presentations or publications;
- The tape recordings will be safely stored when all research is finished.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Agreement to use your pictures and writings and take photographs of your work

I understand that:

- Miss Anastassopoulos will use my pictures and writings for her project and
- She may even take photographs of my work

Signed:_____

Date:_____