



**To what extent can a critical literacy
intervention develop Grade 3 children's
capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts
from a critical perspective?**

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa critical literacy is evident in Literacy lessons in higher grades of schooling but are lacking in the lower grades. This study explores an intervention in which I attempted to implement critical reading and writing with young children. It aims to worthily fill a gap in the field of research pertaining to critical literacy with young children in South Africa. This research study investigated to what extent a critical literacy intervention can develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts from critical perspectives. In addition, the study explores what the texts produced by Grade 3 learners show about their developing criticality, and the obstacles and limitations to developing their ability to engage critically with texts. 28 children from an ex-model C school in Johannesburg participated in this study. The study followed a qualitative approach where children deconstructed and (re)read fairytale texts and then reconstructed and (re)designed them. The data collected from class discussions, role plays and written work was analysed using thematic content analysis and thick description. The findings show that the role of the teacher, alternative texts and the affordances of the performative mode had a significant impact on the success of learners' capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts from a critical perspective. However, the learners' uptake of critical literacy was uneven and not linear. While the learners' collaborative performances showed signs of emerging criticality, many of them reverted to dominant discourses in the individual, written mode.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my past, present and future learners.

I never stop learning from you.

You are an endless source of inspiration.

“To teach is to learn twice” - Joseph Joubert

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction:

As a newly qualified teacher I was very apprehensive about engaging in critical issues with my class. I work in a conservative school and I was concerned that engaging in critical work could risk getting into trouble with the management team. I can recount a story that happened in my Grade 3 classroom where I made the effort to open up the space to engage in critical work. The theme for the week was rights and responsibilities, and children were given the homework task to write down examples of rights children have in South Africa. One child answered said that every child has a right to equal education. Everyone did not realise what equal was, so I explained that equal means that everyone gets the same education. I further went on to say that during Apartheid, children were not allowed to go into any school of their choice, and had to attend a school according to the colour of their skin. I mentioned that the school that we are in was for white people only. They were in disbelief, so I asked them to reflect on the old photographs in the foyer and they were quick to point out that all the children were white. At that point, I could see their mind expanding. A week later, we went to the bird park as part of a school field trip, there was a private school and our school in attendance. We were sitting and waiting for the bird show to start and one boy in the class looked at the other school and said in a loud voice: “Ma’am why are there only white people in that school and why are there only black people in our school, you said Apartheid was over!” From that point onwards, that particular boy started looking at pictures and different texts differently, asking questions of inclusion and exclusion and influencing the other children in the class to do the same.

It was from this experience with my class at the time where I realised that much of critical literacy work in Foundation phase classrooms starts with micro politics and it empowers teachers to attend to issues that affect children directly (Dixon, 2020). Sometimes these stay at the degree of the micro and sometimes they move into the domain of macro politics as it did with my class (Dixon, 2020). It was remarkable to experience the effect of one, spontaneous critical thinking discussion with my class and how it prompted a learner to read his world differently with a questioning mind. This experience was powerful to my pedagogy as a Foundation phase teacher on so many levels.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement document (Department of Basic Education, 2011) states that the National Senior Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is based on the principals of “social transformation” and “active and critical learning” (p.4). However, this is not followed through in the curriculum for Foundation phase. The English Home Language curriculum for Foundation phase does not encourage critical literacy and instead focuses on lower to higher order comprehension skills (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Here, critical thinking skills in terms of analysing and evaluating for a deeper

understanding of the text is emphasised. However, in order to achieve “social transformation”, the text needs to be deconstructed to uncover the ideological meanings embedded in the text (McLaughlin and DeVogd, 2004). I believe that Foundation phase children do have the capacity to engage in discussions that tackle critical issues and it is my responsibility as a teacher to open up spaces for these kinds of discussions with children.

The need to develop critical literacy skills has become increasingly important in the 21st century. Fake news is a catchphrase of our time, but its influence is substantial (Douglas, 2017). It threatens our democracy, our confidence in governance, our trust in journalism and more notably, it misleads children’s view of the world (Douglas, 2017). In the digital age we find ourselves in, we can no longer read, hear or see media at face value regardless of how reliable we consider the source (Douglas, 2017). As more young people use digital media as their main source of information and entertainment, children are reported to increasingly be likely to encounter fake news (Douglas, 2017). Therefore, it is important that children be equipped with the relevant skills.

Critical literacy encourages the reader to read the world and surpass the conventional beliefs about reading the word in everyday texts (Janks & Dixon, 2014). It assists learners to acknowledge that texts are not neutral and recognise that texts are imparted with socio-cultural and political values. Critical literacy helps learners recognise the socio-cultural and political values that are embedded in texts (Janks and Dixon, 2014). Learners are encouraged to raise questions about whose voices are represented in the text, whose voices are missing, who is empowered and who is disempowered by the text. Critical literacy motivates readers to construct new texts that express alternative perspectives.

Traditional fairytales are usually the first genre of literature young children encounter. These tales contain the elements of good versus evil and royalty which carries issues of power relationships, injustices and inequalities.

When I was in Grade 1, I was a part of the annual school concert. The theme of the concert was fairytales. I auditioned for the role of Cinderella, but instead I was given the role of Jasmine because I looked the part. As a little girl I did not understand why I did not get the part of Cinderella.

Fairytales contain ideological messages and positioning and reproduces sexist and racist stereotypes, such as the ugly duckling being a duckling of a darker skin tone and Snow-White cleaning and cooking for the seven male dwarves. Like many other children at that age, I was

ignorant to race as a concept, but that experience remains a core memory of my first experience of positioning and racist stereotyping. These implicit messages embedded in fairy tales and other genres of texts become ingrained and naturalised in young children. This study aims to investigate how a critical literacy intervention can develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)rewrite fairytale texts from critical perspectives.

1.2 Aims and Rationale

According to Dunn (2012) critical literacy is necessary for any individual to be justified literate in the 21st century. The ability to read a text alone is insufficient and one needs to be able to read with the contextual knowledge of the social and cultural values that influence text (Dunn, 2012). Critical literacy is important as it provides readers with strategies and a disposition to recognise that texts have social effects and that it engages the reader to accept their position (Janks, 2014). Readers need to know that texts are not neutral and be aware of the effect of their design on us as readers (Janks, 2014). The aim of this research is to explore the possibilities and limitations of working with critical literacy with young children.

After qualifying as a foundation phase teacher, I have taught across Grade 1, 2 and 3 and I have discovered that children regard text as truth. I was interested in finding out how a critical literacy intervention could enable young children to not only read literature differently, but also to read and perceive the world around them differently. I wanted to find out how learners respond when they are encouraged to read from a critical stance, by exploring alternative perspectives, reflecting on whose voices are silenced and taking action by writing counter narratives. This study was helpful to get learners to recognise that texts are not neutral and that they are written from particular perspectives that carry ideologies.

As a Grade 3 teacher, my experience with the foundation phase curriculum is that it underestimates children and their roles as a reader. One of the general aims of the South African curriculum is to promote “active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 5). Critical Literacy is evident in Literacy lessons in higher grades of schooling but are lacking in the lower grades. In the Foundation phase, Literacy is constructed around four main components: listening and speaking, reading and phonics and handwriting and writing. Much of the literacy activities involve using alphabetic principles, sight vocabulary and conventions of print to decode texts and practise comprehension strategies, such as background knowledge and visual cues to understand texts.

Literacy lessons in the Foundation phase predominantly focus on developing learners into code breakers and meaning makers (Luke & Freebody, 1990). The curriculum shows that it misjudges foundation phase learners' ability to adopt the role of a text user and a text participant (Luke & Freebody, 1990). I got a sense that young children are capable text users and text participants during my Honours course in Early Literacy. I was given a copy of *Doing Critical Literacy* (Janks & Dixon, 2014) and assigned to choose one activity, adapt it for young children and then pilot it with my class of Grade 2 learners. I chose an activity focused on accents and stereotypes and I was successful in supporting the children's awareness to the dangers of judging individuals by their accent. As part of my initial literature review for this research, I found that there is a large body of international literature relating to the topic of critical literacy in elementary grades, however, very little research seems to be done specifically in South Africa with foundation phase learners. I therefore believe that this study worthily fills a gap in this field.

Curricula globally require children to be exposed to fairytales in reading and writing instruction. The CAPS document (Department of Education, 2011) stipulates that the genre of Fairytales is to be taught in Grade 3, Term 3. The objectives for fairytale units expect learners to learn and identify the elements of a fairytale, identify common themes and character traits found in fairytales and write original fairytales. While studying traditional fairytales offers many advantages to reading and writing such as: sparking imagination, teaching story structure and exposing children to rich vocabulary amongst many others (Braun, 2014), it also simultaneously reinforces stereotypes and anachronistic values which tend to be left unquestioned by the reader (Petter, 2018).

I have discovered international literature that encourages critical literacy through fairytales by exploring fractured and alternative fairytales. Fractured and alternative fairytales make use of traditional fairytales but offer a critique of the ideas in the earlier or original version (Lynley, 2018). The aim of fractured and alternative fairytales is to draw the reader's attention to the idea that these stories offer a particular version that position the reader to maintain the writer's beliefs, and that the meaning these tales seem to suggest should be interrogated (Lynley, 2018). The meaning of these tales is (re)constructed by the reader. Fractured fairytales tend to take the view of moral relativism (Lynley, 2018). Moral relativism is the notion that moral judgements are true or false only relative to a particular stance (that of a culture or historical period) and that no stance is exclusively advantaged over all the others (Lynley, 2018). Moral relativism fits in with Fraser's (1997) concept of

representative social justice, which supports the purpose of literacy to represent the interests, values and viewpoints of one's communities and cultures (Luke, 2012).

Traditional fairytales use a technique known as naming which determines a character's subjectivity (Lynley, 2018). When a character is nameless (the witch, the big bad wolf, the wicked stepmother) it reinforces their lack of existence and lack of the character's agency (Lynley, 2018). Fractured fairytales retell traditional tales from different perspectives to name previously unnamed characters (Lynley, 2018). I believe this study showcases how a fairytale unit can be transformed into a critical literacy experience for children by exploring alternative fairytales in relation to reading and writing. This intervention trained learners to read critically and gave them an opportunity to redesign alternative fairytales. It also serves as a means to help improve my professional practice in teaching critical literacy and inform my pedagogy with regards to literacy going forward.

1.3 Research questions

To what extent can a critical literacy intervention develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts from critical perspectives?

- What do the texts produced by Grade 3 learners show about their developing criticality?
- What are the obstacles and limitations to developing their ability to engage critically with texts?
- What aspects of critical literacy are they receptive to?
- What aspects of critical literacy do they resist?

1.4 Outline of chapters

The research study is organised into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: This serves as an introductory chapter in which the background and context of the study, aims and rationale for this study, and research questions are clarified.

Chapter 2: This chapter maps out the theoretical framework relevant to this research.

Chapter 3: In this chapter I present a review of literature pertaining to the core concepts of critical literacy relevant to my study.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the research methodology which describes the paradigm, methods and tools for data collection. Chapter 4 also accounts for the research site, participants and procedures followed.

Chapter 5 and 6: These chapters present an analysis and discussion of the data collected from class discussions, learners' performances and written work.

Chapter 7: In this chapter, the conclusions, implications, shortcomings and recommendations are presented. My conclusions are based on my interpretation and serves as an attempt at answering the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This framework draws on Janks's (2000) critical literacy interdependent model, Lewison et al., (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy and Mendelowitz's (2017) work on critical imagination, that brings criticality and imagination together. It was necessary to utilise these three instructional models as a pedagogical tool to frame my intervention as well as a means for textual analysis. In addition, engaging in all three instructional models serves as a contribution to knowledge as it extends the usual tools of critical literacy beyond the rationalist underpinning, showing how the critical imagination can be harnessed in the South African foundation phase context.

2.2 Janks synthesis model

I utilise Janks' (2000) model as a conceptual tool to frame my teaching and as the explanatory framework in the analysis of data in chapter 5. Janks (2010) model is especially useful for exploring how learners deconstruct and reconstruct texts from a critical perspective by delving into the relationship between language and power. There are four main aspects of critical literacy that investigate the relationship between language and power that are discussed below.

2.2.1 Power

Language and other symbolic forms of text and discourse is viewed as an influential instrument of preserving and reproducing relations of supremacies (Janks, 2000). Critical literacy aims to raise awareness of the ways in which language works to position readers in the interests of power (Janks, 2000). It draws on Critical Language Awareness from the work of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) which emphasises the element that texts are constructed and anything that is constructed can be deconstructed and reconstructed or redesigned (Janks, 2000). Critical literacy brings to light every choice in the text that foregrounds what the writer has chosen to select and hide (Janks, 2000). Our consciousness of the choices that the writer makes is raised when we unravel the text (Janks, 2000). In doing so, it grooms the reader to ask critical questions like *why did the writer make these choices? Who does this text benefit? Who is disempowered by the language used?* (Janks, 1995).

2.2.2 Diversity

Janks (2000) stresses the significance of acknowledging learners' diverse identities. Their identities are established by their personal social and cultural values, languages and literacies

(Janks, 2000). Their diverse identities influence their ways of reading and writing in a variety of modalities (Janks, 2000). Janks (2000) recognises that learners' diverse languages and literacies are not given equal value by an educational system. In the South African context, there are diverse learners who are multilingual, and often treated unjustly (Vasquez et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to include children's linguistic repertoires in the classroom (Vasquez et al., 2019).

2.2.3. Access

Janks (2000) argues that teachers have the responsibility to provide access to power, but still promote and value diverse language and literacies of learners and the wider society (Janks, 2000). There are dilemmas associated with access. The teacher assists in the perpetuation of dominance when they use the dominant genre or language. However, they also risk marginalising learners if they deprive learners of the opportunity to participate in a discourse that favours the dominant language (Janks, 2010). The teacher needs to consider this access paradox in their practice (Janks, 2010). Teachers therefore need to provide learners with critical access to English and its dominant forms as well as access to their home languages, as one's language is connected to one's identity (Janks, 2000).

2.2.4 Design and redesign of texts

"Design" refers to the productive power of text and involves the examination of the how modes such as linguistics, visual, audio, spatial and gestural all work to create meaning that serves an ideological function (Mantei & Kervin, 2016). Critical literacy encourages learners to deconstruct power relations and to critically (re)design texts for different purposes and audiences (Janks, 2010). Janks (2010) states that transformation can occur through understanding and responding to the design of a text through redesign. Janks (2010) argues that design and redesign processes engage the learner in critical literacy education through deconstruction and reconstruction of the text. Learners will *name the problem* by considering power and examining interests at play when deconstructing a text (Janks, 2010). In this process, learners identify perspectives shared and explore ways meanings are represented (Janks, 2010). During the process of reconstruction, learners consider voices, viewpoints and experiences that are not represented in the original text which leads to the creation of new texts (Janks, 2010). The act of redesigning a text is transformative as it represents new meanings through new authorship within unique sociocultural setting (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) and it focusses on issues of social justice and action (Janks, 2010). When learners engage in this, they understand the process of designing texts to (re)position readers, combine

modes to convey a comprehensive message and recognise the potentials and shortcomings of each meaning making mode (Janks, 2000). However, this conceptualisation of design does not take account of imagination and affect. Hence, the second strand of my theoretical framework draws on these missing components and elements.

2.2.5 Interdependence of the synthesis model

Janks (2010) emphasises the interdependence of her model of critical literacy and argues that one aspect of the model without the other can be problematic. In table 1, Janks (2010) summaries all the key elements of the interdependence model.

Table 1: The interdependence model for critical literacy

Domination without access	This maintains the exclusionary force of dominant discourses
Domination without diversity	Domination without difference and diversity, loses the ruptures that produce contestation and change
Domination without design	The deconstruction of dominance, without reconstruction or design, removes human agency.
Access without domination	Access without a theory of domination leads to the naturalisation of powerful discourses without an understanding of how these powerful forms came to be powerful.
Access without diversity	This fails to recognise that difference fundamentally affects pathways to access and involves issues of history, identity and value
Access without design	This maintains and reifies dominant forms without considering how they can be transformed.
Diversity without domination	This leads to a celebration of diversity without any recognition that difference is structured in dominance and that not all discourses/genres/ languages/literacies are equally powerful.
Diversity without access	Diversity without access to powerful forms of language ghettoises students.
Diversity without design	Diversity provides the means, the ideas, the alternative perspectives for reconstruction and transformation. Without design, the potential that diversity offers is not realised.
Design without domination	Design, without an understanding of how dominant discourses/practices perpetuate themselves, runs the risk of an unconscious reproduction of these forms.
Design without access	Runs the risk of whatever is designed remaining on the margins.
Design without diversity	This privileges dominant forms and fails to use the design resources provided by difference.

According to this model, there are four key elements to teaching critical literacy: domination, access, diversity, and design. These approaches are interrelated and must be maintained in

“productive tension” (Janks, 2010, p.27) in order to achieve equity and social justice, which Janks (2010) considers a common intent of critical literacy work in the classroom. Educators need to teach learners to challenge dominant discourses through the process of deconstructing and reconstructing texts (Janks,2010). The process of deconstructing and reconstructing text involves interrelating the four key elements that give learners opportunities to design and redesign texts, and to take action to challenge dominant discourses (Janks,2010). Analysing Dominant discourses entails utilising a critical discourse analysis methodology in which dominant texts are deconstructed in order to uncover whose interests are being served by identifying foregrounding and silences (Janks, 2010). Access entails providing learners with critical access to dominant discourses and languages that uphold social power and perpetuate inequalities (Janks,2010). Educators need to facilitate the process of exposing how the characteristics of these dominant discourses advantage learners who have already assumed those discourses previously and disadvantage learners who have not (Janks, 2010). Diversity entails using a variety of modalities as resources and incorporating the different languages and literacies of the learners that mirror the learners’ identities (Janks, 2010). Ultimately, design encourages teachers to harness learners’ productive power and provide opportunities for learners to write back and reconstruct unjust texts (Janks, 2010). Learners must be given opportunities to create texts that matter to them and to write themselves into texts, which is key to agency and identity transformation (Janks,2010). Table 1 highlights the interdependence between the four elements and criticises the unitary orientations that ignore the other elements. The interdependence model shows the importance of combining all four concepts while teaching critical literacy, because one element without the other creates an imbalance that prevents learners from receiving a comprehensive critical literacy education (Janks,2010).

In this project, I wove in Janks (2000) four concepts of critical literacy in intricate movements that move from deconstruction to reconstruction. The class discussions that tackled the power dynamics between characters and instances of injustice during our read aloud of traditional fairytales was an important part of the deconstruction process. However, Janks argues that deconstruction is not enough. Hence the redesign process served as a key step in the process that encouraged learners in this project to implement critical literacy to their reading and writing. The role plays and story outline served to engage learners in the redesign cycle with texts by disrupting and reimagining the traditional fairytales. Diversity and access were an important aspect of this process as learners were given opportunities to

write themselves into the text. While Janks's interdependence model does not include creativity as a key element, it is important to note that redesign would not be possible without creativity (Mendelowitz, Ferreira & Dixon, 2023). Janks (2010) argues that these several actions must conflict and counterbalance one another. Working on just one concept of the synthesis model at a time is still possible, despite the integration of these ideas. One can switch between the four elements of critical literacy if such work is balanced out by later activities that make use of the other orientations (Janks, 2010). What is key is that all four elements are given equal weight when creating the critical literacy curriculum, and that these elements pull together like "ropes on a tent" (Janks, 2004, p.12) to support critical literacy work. The ideal approach to teaching critical literacy offered by Janks (2010) suggests that educators move between the various elements of the synthesis model in order to achieve a comprehensive critical literacy experience for learners.

2.3 Four dimensions of critical literacy

According to Lewison et al. (2008), adopting a critical perspective calls for deliberate engagement, contemplating other ways of being, accepting responsibility for inquiry, and being reflective. It may be necessary for readers to read a number of texts, compare them, and read texts against one another in order to better understand a text's point of view. To look more closely at what is involved in my intervention and critical analysis of texts in this project, I benefitted from Lewison et al., (2008) four distinct dimensions of critical literacy: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues and taking action and promoting social justice.

In disrupting the commonplace, critical literacy creates ways to challenge common assumptions in our everyday lives that we passively accept (Lewison et al., 2002). Disrupting the common place assists us to "use language and other sign systems to recognise implicit modes of perceptions and to consider new frames from which to understand experiences (Lewison et al., 2002). In doing so, we interrogate texts by identifying how texts position us and develop a language of critique.

When interrogating multiple viewpoints, we reflect on how the story might be different if told from an alternative perspective (Lewison et al., 2002). It leads to a cognizance that the "truth" is a partial perspective (Lewison et al., 2002). We become conscious of whose voice is being included and whose voice is being excluded in the text (Lewison et al., 2002).

A key feature of critical literacy is the analysis of the social issues and politics behind the design of texts (Lewison et al., 2002). Focusing on socio-political issues is recognising that teaching is not a neutral act, and that education is political (Lewison et al., 2002). Critical literacy draws attention to the power relationships in society and education and the possible economic, political and social interests the writer upholds (Lewison et al., 2002). It challenges unequal power relationships by studying the relationship between language and power (Lewison et al., 2002). By focusing on socio-political issues, it “increases opportunities for subordinate groups to participate in society as an ongoing act of consciousness and resistance” (Lewison et al., 2002).

The other dimension of critical literacy is taking action and promoting social justice. This dimension focuses on participating in reflection and action to empower oneself and others to become the driving force for change (Lewison et al., 2002). It involves using and analysing language as part of our everyday lives to “exercise power to enhance everyday life and to question practices of privilege and injustice” (Lewison et al., 2002, p. 384). It also encompasses how language can be used to preserve supremacy and legitimise knowledge, power and culture (Lewison et al., 2002). Critical literacy encourages learners to take social action by protesting orally or writing to persons in authority (Vasquez et al., 2003). This framework shaped the phases of my intervention.

2.3 Imagination

Within Janks synthesis model (2000), imagination plays a significant role in the dimensions, particularly in power, design and diversity. Mission and Morgan (2006) critiqued critical literacy for its rationalist and analytical underpinnings and disregard for creativity in redesign. As mentioned previously, imagination is not explicitly mentioned in Janks (2000) (2010) synthesis model which contributes to a conceptual gap in the model. However, drawing on Mendelowitz (2017), I confront this conceptual gap and extend the synthesis mode to acknowledge the role of imagination in critical literacy. Mendelowitz (2017) highlighted the significant role imagination plays in critical literacy through her conceptualisation of the critical imagination (2017) and critical-creative moves (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). Critical-creative moves holds on to the premise that creativity and criticality are interrelated concepts that empower learners to move sinuously between creative and academic fields (Mendelowitz, Ferreira & Dixon, 2023). Vally Essa and Mendelowitz (2022) argue that classroom spaces that maximises learners’ imagination enable them to

critically re-imagine a range of social issues at a greater level. Shank (2015) contends that imagination-based pedagogies support young children in their development of critical redesign. Imagination enables learners to acknowledge diversity, as it allows them to broaden the production of mental images and engage them in human experiences and possibilities that expand their domains of their own experience (Shank, 2015). It generates creativity, divergent thinking and opportunities to envision alternative realities (Shank, 2015). During imaginative based activities, children are involved in a negotiation of power and identity, as they embody the identities of different characters and transform the story through the exchanges with them (Shanks, 2015). Here, imagination enables empathy to allow learners to project themselves into the story (Mendelowitz, 2017). Redesign emerges as children engage critically in this process through critical questioning like “why is the stepmother mean?” (Shanks, 2015). During the engagement of imagination, learners assert their agency to reflect and imagine other realities (Comber, 2001). Awakening learners’ imagination proved to be especially useful in this study, as it enabled learners to retell the story of Cinderella in a way that challenged the dominant discourse and power relationships. In this sense, I believe the learners in my study drew on their critical imagination to redesign the text.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter described how Janks (2000) critical literacy interdependent model, Lewison et al., (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy and Mendelowitz’s (2017) work on critical imagination were utilised as a framework in this research project. A detailed description of all three instructional models were provided to justify why it was applied as a pedagogical tool and an instrument for textual analysis, as well as emphasising the role of critical imagination in critical literacy in the South African foundation phase context.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a structured review of literature pertaining to (re)reading and (re)writing texts from a critical perspective. This chapter will provide a brief explanation of what critical literacy is and the historical underpinnings of it. It describes the pedagogy of critical literacy in the classroom and how to facilitate critical literacy with young children. This chapter will also illustrate the influence of diversity and identity on critical literacy and finally, it will consider the role that affect and embodiment plays in critical literacy.

3.2 Critical literacy

In order to understand how a critical literacy intervention could develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts from critical perspectives, it was necessary to acquire an understanding of what critical literacy is. Critical literacy is entrenched in the connection between literacy and power (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). It does not support the view that reading and writing skills are autonomous, technical, neutral and universal (Searle, 1993), instead, it views literacy as the "process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations" (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. 82).

3.3 Historical underpinnings of critical literacy

When considering what is meant by critical literacy it is useful to consider the historical underpinnings. Critical literacy draws on the work of Paulo Freire (1972) who adopted a socio-political perspective of literacy. He worked in relegated, native and peasant communities in Brazil and introduced vocabularies that were meaningful to their daily experiences. Freire (1972) contended that schooling was founded on a "banking model" of education where learners' lives and cultures were inapt. He promoted a dialogical approach to literacy established on principles of reciprocal exchange. This in turn, would transform the dualistic relationship of teacher and learner, and oppressor and oppressed (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire's contribution to critical literacy makes us understand that critical literacy is not simply a method of teaching but a way of viewing and interacting with the world (Vasquez et al., 2019).

In South Africa, the work done under the umbrella of *critical literacy education* has generally drawn on both emancipatory and linguistic orientations to language and power, with a

particular emphasis on the critical analysis of texts (Ferreira, 2019). The production of resources for critical literacy in South Africa started out as an overtly political and moral endeavor, and they were made expressly to combat the country's pervasive apartheid discourses, which were used to justify injustice (Janks, 2001). After 1994, when a Mandela government was in power, the question for work in critical literacy education was how to envision it as a project for reconstruction rather than deconstruction; how to envision its role in constructing a new order (Janks, 2001).

In 1994, South Africa finally achieved complete democracy after decades of racial and ethnic subjugation, first under colonialism and later under apartheid (Ferreira, 2019). Therefore, it is not unexpected that the early critical literacy work in South Africa, which appeared in the late 1980s under the oppressive apartheid regime, treads the line of emancipatory education (Ferreira, 2019). Racial segregation and extreme inequality were present in the way that education was provided, both in terms of the quality of the various curricula and the availability of resources (Ferreira, 2019). The official view of the state was that education should be ideologically neutral and that students should not discuss sex, politics, or religion in the classroom (Janks, 1990).

Peoples English advocated for the politicisation of the English curriculum in the late 1980s by defining language competency as the capacity to hear what is spoken and what is hidden, to examine personal, structural, and political links, and to comprehend the connection between language and power (Janks, 1992). When describing the work Janks (1992) was doing to create classroom-based teaching resources for critical language awareness, Janks said that choosing CLA in South Africa constituted a political commitment to improve education for democracy (Ferreira, 2019). Janks tested the teaching materials she believed would be available for use under the new political era in the independent education sector, which at the time was the only place where alternative teaching methods could be experimented with (Ferreira, 2019). Janks's work on creating classroom teaching resources for critical literacy demonstrates her capacity to make complex theory understandable to students, and a significant portion of her writing theorises classroom instruction for critical literacy education. Her synthesis paradigm for critical literacy (Janks, 2000) has received recognition both domestically and abroad (Ferreira, 2019).

Curriculum reform started shortly after independence and the transition to democracy in 1994 (Ferreira, 2019). The second of seven language related aims, that students demonstrate

critical awareness of language usage, was made explicit and apparent in the new outcomes-based education curriculum (Ferreira, 2019). Since teachers were required to acquire knowledge and abilities in the field of critical literacy, it was at this moment that critical literacy started to stand out as a distinct feature of teacher education (Ferreira, 2019). It was no longer adequate to merely include the phrase in the curriculum (Ferreira, 2019). Work has been done in particular on how to advance pre-service teachers from simple text decoding or comprehension questions to questions that interrogate how language was employed to uphold particular power relations (Ferreira, 2019). In the decade immediately following the end of apartheid, there was a stimulating discussion about what critical literacy might or should look like in South Africa now that a democratically elected government was in place and a new constitution was in place, which guaranteed the rights of all in various ways. Since designing was inexorably preceded by and guided by critique, it was contended that the relationship between critique and (re)design was crucial. During this stage, Janks (2002) created her synthesis model of critical literacy, which emphasises the interdependence of power, access, diversity, and design in order to achieve the goals of both deconstruction and reconstruction (Ferreira, 2019). This concept was developed in response to the demand for a more intricate, multifaceted understanding of social justice (Ferreira, 2019).

Despite raising the profile of critical language awareness, outcomes-based education curricula showed a rudimentary knowledge of language and power, focusing only on its capabilities of persuasion and manipulation rather than acknowledging language's fundamental ideological nature (Janks, 2001). It is stated that the second wave of curriculum revision, known as the NCS, significantly weakened the absence of critical literacy rather than improving it (Ferreira, 2019). Under the most recent and rigid implementation of the curriculum, known as the CAPS curriculum, which was unveiled in 2012, it is said that even the most skilled teachers find it challenging to cover anything in depth (Ferreira, 2019).

Despite the fact that South African schooling now has one curriculum for all its learners, the inequalities in the provision of material and human resources within the schooling system remain entrenched (Ferreira, 2019). Research conducted in severely underfunded township schools reveals that the reading orientations provided were characterised by an emphasis on the surface meaning of texts and lack of critical engagement (Ferreira, 2019). In this view, critical literacy has been marginalised in the curriculum and, as a result, is less prevalent in the classroom. Research into critical literacy education continues in South Africa particularly in teacher preparation programs in higher education (Ferreira, 2019).

3.4 Critical literacy in the classroom

Critical literacy is a teaching and learning practice that encourages the reader to look beyond the literal meaning of text. It has an explicit instructional emphasis on teaching learners how texts work (Luke, 2011). The learner is exposed to language through symbolic forms of text such as visual, narrative, fiction, non-fiction and drama (Janks, 2000). Hill (2006) states that texts are not neutral, it reproduces the cultural and ideological practices of the society.

Critical literacy involves the teacher encouraging the learner to assume a critical stance by (re)reading and interrogating the ideas presented in the text to establish the implicit messages that are meant to preserve social hierarchies and marginalise certain groups (Vasquez, 2015). Janks (2015) argue that critical literacy does not encompass taking a negative stance towards the text, instead, it embraces looking at the text in different ways, examining it and being able to propose possibilities for change or improvement. It challenges the traditional comprehension of texts and the conception that there is a single interpretation of a text.

Critical literacy encourages learners to examine the author's beliefs held at the time the text was produced and how readers may passively accept these beliefs and how they may be influenced or positioned to maintain the writer's beliefs through language, images, layout and other textual features (Alford, 2001). McDaniel (2004) emphasises that the teaching of critical literacy needs to entail the adoption of an attitude towards texts. Teachers of critical literacy need to think about the curriculum in terms of what conversations they want the learners to engaged in (Harste, 2000). Furthermore, Vasquez et al., (2019) advocate that critical literacy is a "way of being" (p.302) across the curriculum. This means that teachers need to model reading texts with a questioning stance to determine the implicit ideologies contained in a text, encourage multiple readings and analyse the structures that maintain the status quo through critical conversations with learners. It involves teachers developing a growing repertoire of interrogation to instil a meta-awareness and a meta-language in learners when they read texts and their world (Comber, 2001). Rereading was an important component of my research as I posed questions to encourage learners to examine textual features of traditional fairytales and the effect it had on readers.

Critical literacy entails a process of questioning the ideologies conveyed within a text with the goal to redesign the dominant text and account for more diverse perspectives (Luke, 2012). Vasquez et al., (2019) state that text production and redesign is essential to critical literacy as it provides opportunities for transformation. Redesign of texts refer to the creation of multimodal texts that consider perspectives and experiences that the original text does not

represent (Mantei and Kervin, 2016). It is transformational because it exemplifies new meanings through authorship within alternative sociocultural settings (Mantei and Kervi, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that all texts work to position readers, including redesigned texts (Janks, 2005). Even though a redesign may work to contribute to social justice, it still only offers a particular representation of reality and will work to silence another. The writer of redesigned texts makes motivated linguistic and semiotic choices to produce effects on the reader to believe in its perspective (Janks, 2005). Janks (2012) believes that both the power of domination and subordination should be subjected to analysis. Redesign is of interest in this research project as learners were expected to redesign fairytales from an alternative perspective.

3.5 Critical literacy and young children

Comber (2012) laments the insistent untruth that critical literacy is not viable with young children due to the assumptions of childhood innocence. Janks (2010) believes that many teachers fear instilling critical literacy because they consider it to be too political but, she draws a distinction between big P politics and small p politics. Big P politics refer to the macro politics of the world such as government, wars, genocides and money laundering (Janks, 2010). In contrast little p politics refer to the micro politics of everyday life, such as, politics of identity, desire and fear, winners and losers and how we treat people day to day (Janks, 2010). Vasquez (2015) states that critical literacy arise from social and political conditions that unfold in the communities we live in. Vasquez (2019) suggests that teachers often think critical literacy requires language skills from children that they do not have. However, it is the role of the teacher to draw from the knowledge, experiences and language that they do possess and use it to teach critical literacy. Therefore, young children can participate in conversations that tackle issues of power in little p politics that are local and meaningful to their personal lives (Vasquez, 2015). Critical literacy is viable in the foundation phase classroom with young children when teachers focus on the little p politics and issues that affect children directly.

Vasquez (2003) believes that to engage young children in critical literacy, teachers need to incorporate a critical perspective into their everyday lives with the use of everyday texts. Vasquez et al., (2019) maintain that critical literacy is a way of being and not just a teaching method. This means that critical literacy extends beyond the curriculum and be adopted as an orientation to everyday texts and practices in their everyday lives. Everyday texts refer to spoken and written as part of everyday life (Vasquez, 2015). Everyday texts are not organic

representations of the world, and they can be interrogated, deconstructed and analysed to expose different views of the world they could represent (Vasquez, 2015). Teachers should encourage children to “read” their worlds with a questioning mind in order to understand the social issues around them (Vasquez, 2015). This includes looking for underlying meanings in television programmes, movies, advertisements, public texts and images (Vasquez et al., 2019).

Teachers like Vasquez (2004) and O’Brien (2001) offer a glimpse into their own early childhood classes by demonstrating how they developed a critical literacy philosophy with young children. Vasquez draws on her own classroom experience to demonstrate how issues raised from everyday conversations with pre-kindergarten children can be used to create an integrated critical literacy curriculum over the course of one school year. When working with children between the ages of three and five, Vivian Vasquez (2001, 2004) used both texts from children's literature and everyday texts to explore questions of social justice and equity (i.e., food packaging, media ads, popular culture). In one instance, one of the girls in the class objected when the cashier presumed that they preferred the toy doll over the toy car in their Happy Meal, prompting her pupils to critically assess the gendering of toys and children through an analysis of the McDonald's Happy Meal. In the study of O'Brien's (2001) classroom research with young children, O'Brien and Barbara Comber (O'Brien, 2001) established spaces for critical literacy in an elementary school classroom utilising newspaper and magazine advertisements as the starting point for conducting critical analysis. The young learners were instructed to examine books critically and analyse them in order to challenge popular perceptions of reality. To exemplify, O'Brien (2001) investigated how Mother's Day commercials positioned readers of such texts in particular ways, assisting her students in exploring how women are portrayed and giving them specific reading, writing, and talking activities.

Pandya and Avila (2014) believe that critical awareness equips young learners more directly for critical work. Critical awareness focuses on how language works to accept ideology that advantages some over others (Pandya & Avila, 2014). This approach focuses children to consider the work of representation in including, excluding perspectives (Pandya and Avila, 2014). Here, young children will be made to unpack and unmake ideological choices of the author and illustrator (Janks, 1993). Pandya and Avila (2014) assert that critical literacy in the early years is not a unified approach but is adapted to the specifics of each context. It consists

of a range of approaches for teaching and learning about cultures, societies, texts and discourses (Pandya & Avila, 2014).

3.7 Identity and diversity

Critical literacy highlights the importance of the role that one's identity plays in the development of their literacy practices (Lourdes, 2008). From a poststructuralist perspective, it views the individual as fluid, diverse, and changing over time and social space (Norton, 1997). In this way, the identities of a person are socially constructed, as it shifts over time in different contexts and for different purposes. Norton (1995) mentions three defining characteristics of social identity. The first being that identity is multiple, this means that an individual labels themselves as members of particular groups. This leads to many social identities such as, ethnic identity, cultural identity, gender identity, religious identity etc. The second characteristic is that multiple social identities raise sites of struggle. This is when an individual takes up subject positions in social sites and these positions are always in a process of competing with each other. Here, the subject plays an active role in the exercise of agency and a person can resist the way they are positioned within a given discourse. The third characteristic is that the multiple and contradictory nature of social identity is subject to change as time passes and social spaces.

According to Botsis and Bradbury (2018) language is performed and is a visceral site of identity construction. Language in this sense encompasses linguistic repertoires, which are languages, dialects and accents that are intertwined with ideological categories such as class, race, ethnicity and gender (Botsis and Bradbury, 2018). The identities of an individual are conveyed in languages of relationality, placing them into communities of meaning. Identities consequently are shaped by social relations (Botsis and Bradbury, 2018). As a result, assumptions are made based on one's linguistic repertoires. This raises tension between an individual's self-chosen identities and the efforts of others to position them differently (Pavlenka and Blackledge, 2004). Learners asserted their identities during the redesign of fairytales and their linguistic repertoires are made apparent in the texts they produced.

From a social perspective, identities are influenced by texts (Moje et al., 2009). Texts can take multiple forms such as written, visual, spoken, performed, signed etc (Anderson and Macleroy, 2017). The texts that learners engage with in reading influence their sense of self and the texts that they write is an expression of their intercultural life experience, linguistic repertoires and their multiple and fluid identity positions (Anderson and Macleroy, 2017).

Individuals are distinguished by categories they belong to, such as their culture, gender, class (Kucer, 2009). These different categories reflect norms and values that are embedded in literacy practices that shape an individual's literacy identity (Kucer, 2009). Norton (1995) recognises the complex nature of social identity and integrates the conceptions of agency and identity by developing a notion of "investment". She says "...I take the position that identity is related to desire – the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety" (p.410). An individual choosing to speak in the dominant language reflects their desire to learn and practice the language and is largely structured by social conditions of power regarding race, gender, ethnicity and class (Norton, 1995). The individual therefore invests in their social identity as they are organising and reorganising how they relate to social spaces (Norton, 1995). Literacy practices with language in school suggests that there is a constant process of organising and reorganising the sense of self and the ways one views their relationships with society.

South Africa is a multicultural society, and the diversity of learners' literacy identities need to be accounted for in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, language learning is socially constructed and children engage in literacy practices that are culturally situated (Kajee, 2011). Differing domains such as school and home contain the practice of differing literacies (Gee, 1996). This in turn creates a classroom filled with children who come to school with different experiences and beliefs regarding literacy (Kajee, 2011). For some learners, their understandings of literacy are consistent with that of school and for others it is not (Kajee, 2011). Since literacy is situated in social practices, reading and writing is successful when it is exercised in its respective social domain (Gee, 2000). The consequence of this approach to learning literacy is that it disempowers learners who did not previously have access to the dominant literacy being taught and it privileges other groups who did (Gee, 2000). All learners bring valuable cultural capital from home to school, unfortunately if it falls under the minority culture it is not legitimised or counted as literacy and is marginalised in the school environment (Gee, 1996). When children's primary culture and literacy practices are not valued in school, it has a negative effect on their literacy learning aptitude and creates a social distance from their primary cultural identity (Kajee, 2011). It is therefore important in the educational sphere to capitalise on learners' cultural identities, knowledge, experiences that they bring to the classroom.

McKinney and Norton (2007) propose critical pedagogies that address such diversity in the classroom. Janks (2000) synthesis model for critical literacy that links domination, access,

diversity and design foster critical pedagogical practice that takes the diverse identities of the learners seriously (McKinney and Norton, 2007). Anderson and Macleroy (2017) highlight the importance of including multimodality in the classroom- texts that take multiple forms such as written, oral, visual, performed etc. This will act as a mirror that reflects learners' identities back to them in a positive light. Similarly, McKinney and Norton (2007) identify a study conducted by Stein (2001) that show the significance of including multimodal pedagogies as a way of addressing the diverse needs of learners. The study demonstrates how learners were able to draw on their cultural resources in an oral mode that was not captured in a linguistic mode (McKinney and Norton, 2007). In addition, McKinney (2004) emphasises the importance of (re)design in critical literacy that afford them the opportunity to create their own texts that validate the knowledge they bring and display a vision for an alternative reality that express their relationship between academic knowledge and their own lived experience. This is considered critical when the redesign text challenges the ideologies in the dominant text and considers an alternative reality that is not represented in the original text (Mantei and Kervin, 2016).

3.8 Critical literacy, affect and embodiment

Lewis (2014) recognises embodiment and affect as new perspectives for research and pedagogy in critical literacy. Affect here encapsulates visible bodily and emotional reactions (Lewis, 2014). Anwaruddin (2016) and Janks (2002) point out that critical literacy practices in the classroom tend to focus on rational, analytical readings of texts which overlooks emotional influence of texts. Anwaruddin (2016) advocate that learning is always an emotional endeavour as texts seek out an affective reaction from readers. Johnson and Vasudevan (2012) argue that critical literacy is an embodied performance as children use their bodies to engage critically with texts. In a study, Johnson and Vasudevan (2012) show how youth use their bodies to share critical views on texts and reveal how learners' performances of critical literacy go unnoticed by teachers due to the verbo-logo-centricity of critical literacy. Similarly, the role of affect in critical literacy is demonstrated by Kuby (2012) who illustrated how learners' emotional responses prompt dialogic conversations about critical literacy topics. Kuby (2012) frames this as *emotional collision* whereby emotions arise during unexpected interactions that occur naturally throughout the school day. These interactions invite emotions when learners make personal connections to topics. They are then able to challenge presupposed values and assumptions and consider differences in relationships of power (Kuby, 2012). These collisions are opportunities for young learners to

engage in critical literacy conversations (Kuby, 2012). Critical literacy therefore must embrace embodiment that invites affect.

3.9 Conclusion

Literature has indicated that there are multiple factors that contribute to learners' capacity to (re)read and (re)write texts. It shows that the teacher needs to encourage learners to assume a critical stance towards texts by interrogating the text and uncover the relationship between language and power. Learners must be afforded the opportunities to redesign texts to offer alternative perspectives and contribute to social justice. It shows that critical literacy is possible with young children when teachers focus on little p politics and issues that affect children directly. The review of literature has also shown that the multiplicity of identities has a significant effect on the development of literacy. It highlights how critical literacy addresses diversity in the classroom by drawing on the literacy practices that learners bring to the classroom. In addition, the literature also emphasises how affect and embodiment allow learners to engage critically with texts.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design and the methods that were used with the cohort of participants. It begins describing the features of qualitative, action research and why they are the most appropriate design method for this project. A brief discussion of the main participants and the research site of this study is next. It is followed by a description of how the data was collected and analysed. Finally, it concludes with an explanation of the ethical procedures that were followed in conducting this research.

4.2 Research Design

This approach made use of the qualitative design method. A qualitative approach to research design involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter (McLeod, 2008). In this way, qualitative researchers study the phenomenon as it unfolds in the natural setting, like the classroom, and cannot try to manipulate variables but rather allow the participants' to direct change (Patton, 2002). By employing a qualitative approach, it allowed me to gain a more in depth understanding into the extent to which critical literacy can be developed with young children, by focusing on the practical significance of the finding which is the quality of learners' responses rather than quantity. As a researcher I gathered data through written and spoken texts through class discussions and role plays. Learners spoke in depth while choosing their own words. This approach allowed for rich descriptions of written texts and spoken which invite readers to share in with my experiences. It gave me the opportunity to reflect on my findings of the intervention and how it contributed to a better critical literacy practice.

The research design chosen for this research was action, practitioner-based research. Practitioner-based research involves research being done by the researcher into their own practice (Bartlett & Burton, 2006). It involves action, evaluation, critical reflection and changes in practice (Bartlett & Burton, 2006). The goal of practitioner-based action research is for teachers to focus on ways for practices that can be improved by engaging in the reflection of their own practices. In this study, I undertook the dual roles of researcher and teacher. This uniquely offered me as a researcher a study of critical literacy enactment over a period of time and afforded me teacher insights along the way. Through participation in practitioner research, I was able to develop my practice and assert myself by providing evidence from my teaching which serves as an empowering developmental tool to me as a

teacher (Bartlett & Burton, 2006). Herr and Anderson (2005) note that “unlike traditional research, action research produces knowledge grounded in local realities that is also useful to local participants” (p.98). This research offers many protentional implications for foundation phase teachers as well as researchers in the critical literacy field, by providing a glimpse of what critical literacy can look like with young learners and the types of critical work they are capable of. It shows what the successes and challenges can be when integrating critical literacy into the foundation phase classroom. This study can also inform and guide educational policy as Herr and Anderson (2005) indicate that “local problems and local settings are parts of larger problems and broader social forces” (p. 67). This small-scale research that is specific to one practitioner’s setting can develop the current notions held of what types of literacy practices are viable with young learners.

While practitioner-based research has great strengths, it also came with challenges. When teachers assume the role of teacher-researcher, they tend to experience “psychological and social challenges” (Steenhouse, 1975, p.159). The boundaries between inquiry and practice can become blurred and it can be challenging for the teacher to be self-critical and interrogate their own practice (Steenhouse, 1975). For this reason, it was important for me to critically reflect on my work. I kept a journal to make field notes in order for me to reflect on my work outside the classroom space, through my researcher lens. This approach provided me with an opportunity to observe my personal reflections as a teacher on the feats and challenges of integrating critical literacy into a Foundation phase classroom. I am now able to draw on my findings to move my pedagogy forward.

4.3 Research Site

The research was conducted in a single school in the eastern suburbs of Johannesburg. The school is an ex-model C school and has been running for over 100 years. There are currently about 850 learners in the school. The majority of the learners come from middle class families who are financially stable however there are a minority who come from low-income, working-class families. The Language of Learning and Teaching in the school is English, however the majority of learners are English First Additional Language speakers. There are 4 classes per grade with 13 teachers in the Foundation phase and 5 interns. The number of learners average about 28 per class. The school has a remedial teacher, social worker and is well resourced. Hawthorne and Bristow (1993) has noted that this school reflects the history and changing character of the city and has always been a fusion of children from diverse

socioeconomic, language and cultural backgrounds. I chose to conduct my research at this school specifically, firstly, because I work at the school. This allowed me to collect data at my convenience and made the process comfortable for the participants as well as myself as I have predeveloped relationships with the children and teachers. Secondly, I chose this school specifically because of the diversity of participants. This gave me an opportunity to work with children from different sociocultural backgrounds.

4.4 Research Participants

This was a small study in which research participants comprised of a focus group of 28 children in my Grade 3 class. Conducting research in my own class allowed me to consciously consider my own teaching strengths and weaknesses in series of critical literacy lessons as well as the evolving/ developing criticality of my learners. The findings had immediate practical significance for my teaching decisions.

4.5 Data Collection Process

Janks model (2000) and Lewison et al., (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy framed my intervention.

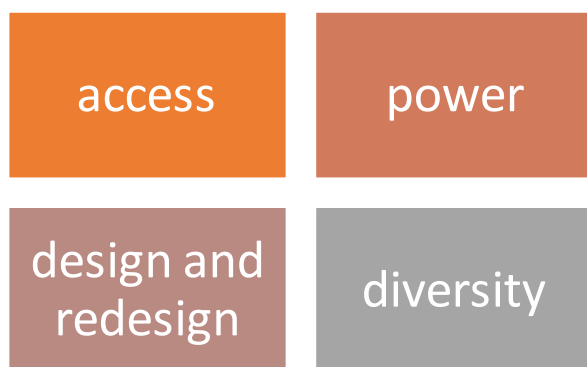


Figure 1. Janks synthesis model (Janks, 2000)

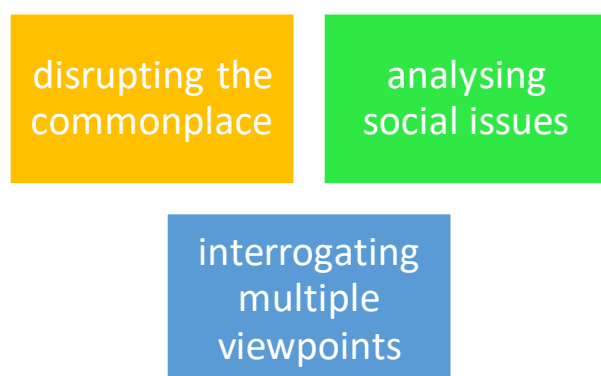


Figure 2. Four dimensions of critical literacy (Lewison et al., 2002)

Some concepts from figure 1 and figure 2 overlap but they were both necessary as they sought slightly different things. I incorporated multimodal texts and I scaffolded critical literacy in order to make it a more productive literacy intervention programme.

Table 2: Timeline of data collection

Lesson one	Three days	
Multiple viewpoints	Day one: 40 minute lesson	The Three Little Pigs read aloud followed by class discussion. The True Story of The Three Little Pigs dramatic read aloud followed by class discussion. Showcased picture book covers of fractured fairytales told from an alternate viewpoint.
	Day two: 30-minute lesson.	

	Day three: 45-minute lesson.	Cinderella group role play planning session. Learners rehearsed and performed.
Lesson two Social and cultural identity	Over the course of two weeks. 7 x 10-15-minute mini lessons. 40-minute lesson.	Learners watched videos of alternate fairytales followed by a brief analysis of the social and cultural changes included in the stories. Story map outline and illustration of book cover.

Janks' model (2000) and Lewison's et al., (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy framed my intervention. Some concepts from these two frameworks overlapped but they were both necessary as they seek slightly different things. The process I followed with learners was the following: I first read aloud a fairytale text to my class. The text that was chosen is *The Three Little Pigs*. It is about three pigs who build houses out of different materials and the wolf blows down the house made out of straw and sticks. This appealed to the component of access (Janks, 2000) of providing learners with the access to the dominant form of discourse as it is a well-known fairytale that is part of the children literature Western canon. After reading the story, I drew on the component of power (Janks, 2000) and asked questions that raised the consciousness of the choices the writer made. It drew on the aspect of *disrupting the common place* (Lewison et al., 2002) and the aspect of analysing the social issues and politics (Lewison et al., 2002) by identifying how this text positions use as readers and by studying the relationship between language and power. I then asked children critical questions that challenged the author's purpose and interrogated how the text established power over readers and whose interests it serves (see appendix 1 for question prompts).

Thereafter, I drew on the component of *interrogating multiple viewpoints* (Lewison et al., 2002) and reviewed how a story might be different from an alternative perspective. To do this, I dressed up as the wolf and read out dramatically *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. This is an alternate, fractured tale of the Three Little Pigs told from the wolf's point of view. It is about a wolf who is suffering from cold and accidentally blows his pig neighbours' houses down. I then asked learners a series of questions which prompted them to recognise that there are different versions of a story and that there are different viewpoints to consider when reading (see appendix 2 for question prompts). I video recorded both read aloud interactions before transcribing them.

As part of lesson two, I drew on access (Janks, 2000). I showed learners seven videos of alternative fairytales that are retold from different social and cultural perspectives and closely linked to their personal identities. The first fairytale being *Refilwe* written by Zukiswa Wanne which is an African retelling of the fairytale *Repinzel*. The princess is an African girl with long, black dreadlocks and the story is set in the Lesotho Mountains of South Africa. The second alternative fairytale is *Yeh-Shen* by Ai-Ling Louie, a version of *Cinderella* about a young Chinese woman who finds solace in her pet fish. *Anklet for a Princess* by Meredith Brucker and Lila Mehta, is an Indian retelling about a young woman named Cinduri who befriends a godfather snake. The fourth fairytale is *The Ghanaian Goldilocks* written by Dr. Tamara Pizzoli is a modern twist on the classic *Goldilocks* fairytale that tells the story of a boy named Kofie with sun lightened hair. *The Three Ninja Pigs* written by Corey Rosen Schwartz is the fifth alternative fairytale about three Japanese pigs who take up martial art lessons to combat a wolf that threatens their village. The sixth alternative fairytale - *Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion* by Alex Smith is about young, black girl who charmingly outsmarts a lion in the African savanna. *Prince Cinders* written by Babette Cole is the seventh alternative fairytale and is about a young man with three older brothers and sets out on an adventure to win the heart of a princess. The alternative fairytales chosen offer readers new twists on the western versions. They confront traditional gender roles and position traditional fairytales within more multicultural contexts so that children of all backgrounds and experiences can recognise themselves in the characters and story.

I drew on design and (re)design (Janks, 2000) which deconstructed power relations and creates new texts that considers voices, viewpoints and experiences that are not represented in the original text. Learners got to redesign the fairytale of Cinderella, in small groups, from a

critical perspective by dramatising the story from the alternative, subversive perspective such as one of the stepsisters or the stepmother. I foregrounded diversity (Janks, 2000) and encouraged learners to incorporate their personal social identities to redesign a fairytale of their choice by reproducing a story outline and an illustrated book cover. They were encouraged to draw on their racial, cultural, language, gender backgrounds in their redesign. Performances were video recorded and written work was documented. Both modes were analysed in depth to gain an understanding of the extent learners were able to take a critical stance in their thinking and redesign.

4.6 Research Instruments

In this research, class discussions, role plays, illustrations and a reflective journal was used as the method of collecting data.

Table 3: Research instruments

Research questions	Research methods
What do the texts produced by Grade 3 learners show about their developing criticality?	• Role play • Story outline map • Book cover illustration
What are the obstacles and limitations to developing their ability to engage critically with texts?	• Reflective journal • Analysis of all the texts learners produce (visual, spoken and written).
What aspects of critical literacy are they receptive to?	• Class discussions • All the texts learners produce (visual, spoken and written).
What aspects of critical literacy did they resist?	• Class discussions • All the texts learners produce (visual, spoken and written).

4.6.1 Class discussions

Two discussions were conducted with the whole class of children to generate qualitative data through the use of open-ended questions. The first class discussion was based on the traditional version of *The Three Little Pigs*, and the second-class discussion was based on the alternate version *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Class discussions allowed the child

to talk in some depth, choosing their own words. This gave me a real sense of how they responded to critical questions. It also gave me the opportunity to probe for deeper understanding. These class discussions were recorded by the use of video which was later transcribed for data analysis.

4.6.2 Role play and video recording

In addition to the class discussions, learners were divided into groups of four learners and were expected to produce a role play of a scene from Cinderella from a critical perspective. When learners worked in groups it stimulated feelings, perception, and beliefs that they would not express if done individually (Gall & Borg, 2010). It allowed participants to commit in expressing their views and drew out the views of others in the group and had scope for brainstorming, which resulted in generating ideas (Gall & Borg, 2010). It was important that I as the teacher managed the role play brainstorming process as conflicts were bound to occur amongst group members and if not mediated by an adult it could have decrease the efficiency of the group. The performances were recorded by the use of video which was later transcribed for data analysis. These role plays allowed me to draw information to gain a more in-depth understanding of the extent of learners' emerging critical stance.

Video recording offered me an essential advantage of capturing useful interaction and behaviour during the class discussions and role plays. Loizos (2008) states that teaching in the classroom and situations of learning are instances of complex sets of human action. The use of video recording is necessary to view multiple interactions at the same time, and when human actions are too complex to be carefully described by a single researcher as it unfolds (Loizos, 2008). Video recordings were especially appropriate for the young children that I worked with as it gave visibility to their reasoning, and meaning-making process by means other than verbalisation (Ferreira, 2020). Video recording also allowed me to view the video recording, repetitively during data analysis and provided a basis of reliability and validity.

4.6.3 Reflective journal

In addition, as the researcher, I kept a reflective journal, documenting possible findings, thoughts and notes during the process. I was not a neutral participant in this research project given my personal and professional involvement. By detailing a log of pedagogical decision points and personal introspections in my reflective journal, it made my thinking transparent to

both myself and to the reader, thus improving the reliability of research (Lincoln and Guba, 1982).

4.7 Data Analysis

The data from the from the dramatizations and written work were analysed using a thematic content analysis. This analysis utilised Janks's (2000) synthesis model and Lewison's et al., (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy to identify recurring themes across the data and coded them into categories, guided by the research questions. Similarities and differences in the participants' responses from their written work were organised into the category of gender. This was done because there were striking differences between the redesigns of male and female students, and I wanted to understand the extent to which learners rely on the dominant discourses and ideologies of gendered order in their redesign. I also made use of the principles of thick description to analyse the data by describing the phenomenon in adequate detail which creates an image in the reader's mind and can learn vicariously through my narrative accounts (Merriam, 2002).

4.8 Ethics

Permission was obtained from all parents of the learners before the research was conducted. The learners' names remain confidential and pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants involved. The participants' contribution was completely voluntary and they were aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences. Furthermore, all ethical considerations were in line with the specifications provided by the University of the Witwatersrand and the Gauteng Department of Education. Ethics protocol number: 2021ECE015M.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter described how a qualitative research paradigm and an action practitioner-based approach were chosen as the best methods to respond to the questions of this research project. A detailed description of the research site, participants, process of data collection, research instruments, analysis and ethical considerations were provided. Janks (2010) shares a design/redesign framework that engages the learner in critical literacy through the deconstruction and reconstruction of text. The process this framework follows encourages learners to assume a critical stance towards texts, their worlds and themselves.

The two data chapters that follow will document the development of critical literacy in my foundation phase classroom, utilising Janks's (2010) framework.

Chapter Five: Deconstruction – getting learners to (re)read fairytales

Chapter Six: Reconstruction – getting learners to (re)design fairytale

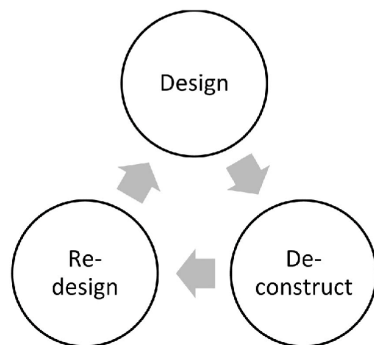


Figure 4. The redesign cycle (Janks, 2010)

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS- deconstructing fairytales

5.1 Introduction

Comber (2012) deplores the myth that methods for developing critical literacies are not practical in the early years. This chapter presents the data collected and an analysis of the findings thereof. This research aimed to find out to what extent can a critical literacy intervention develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)write fairytale texts from critical perspectives, what the texts produced by Grade 3 learners show about their developing criticality, what the obstacles and limitations are to developing their ability to engage critically with texts, what aspect of critical literacy are they receptive to and finally what aspects of critical literacy do they resist. Chapter five follows learners' critical (re)reading of texts that focus on language and power, making connections and disconnections to the text, and considering multiple viewpoints through juxtapositioning texts and reinterpreted fairytales.

5.2 Getting learners to (re)read with new lenses

As I began the routine shared reading lesson in my classroom, children honed in on the picture book cover of *The Three Little Pigs*. "That's my favourite story!", exclaimed Mickey, a nine-year-old boy in my class, when I presented the title of the story. Children immediately expressed their familiarity and fondness for this classic tale. Little did they suspect, this shared reading lesson was going to transcend the phonics, decoding approaches and comprehension strategies they were so accustomed to. Their views of the porky heroes were about to be challenged by questioning and revealing the "ulterior motives and below surface ideas" (Ciardiello, 2004, p. 138) that are favoured in the text (Bourke, 2008).

As we read through the traditional version of the story together, the children enthusiastically joined in on the iconic dialogue between the wolf and each of the pigs: "Little Pig, Little Pig, let me in!" "Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin!" "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down!". As the story unfolded, the excitement in the classroom grew until the grand finale – the wolf came down the chimney and fell into the scorching water and burnt his behind. With satisfaction the children cheered, applauded and rejoiced at the wolf's demise – the unanimity was clear and the solidarity with the pigs was evident. In their minds the pigs were the good guys and the wolf was the bad guy and I was confronted with a challenge – how was I going to elicit a critical stance from these learners when the notion of good and bad had become so entrenched in their minds? Jones (2006) stated that "critical

literacy is like a pair of eyeglasses that allows one to see beyond the familiar and comfortable: it is an understanding that language practices and texts are always informed by ideological beliefs and perspectives whether conscious or otherwise” (p. 65). This means learners need to be able to view texts in the socially situated realm in which they are created. As the teacher I knew I needed to take Jones (2006) analogy of the eyeglasses and apply it to my classroom instruction to enable learners to denaturalise common sense assumptions.

In order to encourage learners to take a critical stance towards this fairytale text, learners need to view the text from a different perspective and think beyond the text (McLaughlin and DeVogd, 2004). Chafe et al., (2007) contends that young children’s competence to contribute to discussions that critically analyse how a text attempts to position readers significantly relies on the teacher’s use of critical questions. When children are given the opportunity to respond to questions that interrogate the intention of the author, they begin to develop a critical consciousness of how texts work to position readers. However, this is not a linear process as the data analysis will show. Questions can include “who is telling the story?” “What does the author want us to think?” “Why does the author want us to think that?”. Children acquire reading and thinking skills that lead to a strong awareness of how texts work and how they play a part in the social world around them (Chafel et al., 2007).

5.2.1 Language and power

After we read the story, I posed the first question: Who do you think is the “good guy?” the class, in unity declared “the pigs!” Donald’s reasoning for this was “the pigs didn’t allow the wolves to eat them”. This was followed by the next question: “who is the “bad guy?” once more, in cohesion and with satisfaction the class exclaimed “the wolf!” Anna came to the conclusion that the wolf was the “bad guy” because “he huffed and puffed their houses down.” Woody thought the pigs were “intelligent because they ran away and made a plan”. He knew this because “the pigs said: not on my hair of my chinny chin chin.” Stella thought the pigs were “so cute” because of the word “little.” Pluto held the idea that the wolf is “scary” because he is “big and bad.”

Language can be viewed as an influential means of preserving and reproducing relations of dominance (Janks, 2010). The author of the text uses language as their main tool to position readers to maintain dominant ideologies and existing forms of power (Janks, 2010). My class of learners unknowingly illustrated the relationship between language and power. Learners quoted direct phrases from the text and in turn verified how the pigs were positioned as the victims by language that elicited sympathy such as “little” and “not on my hair of my chinny

chin chin” while the wolf was positioned as the predator through language that elicits negative reactions such as “big and bad” and “huffed and puffed”. The language used in the text were positioning them to accept the implicit message that the pigs are of good character and the wolf is of bad character. Learners were taking the text at face value without interrogating the author’s intention. I realised that if I wanted to develop my class’s capacity to read and rewrite texts from a critical perspective, I needed to develop my reading instruction to go beyond phonics, vocabulary, fluency and general comprehension I so adamantly promoted before. I needed to encourage the habit of recognising and questioning how language contributes to injustice (Comber, 1998).

5.2.2 Making connections and disconnections

In an attempt to get learners to question the ideological choices of the author, I decided to use Pluto’s response and go a step further and ask Pluto why is he big and bad? Pluto answered with conviction “because he eats pigs” in a sneery tone as if the answer to my question is so obvious. His answer was a perfect example of a common naturalised assumption that wolves are evil. Remembering Jones’ (2006) analogy, I then responded: “so the wolf is bad because of what he eats?” a silence overcame classroom and all eyes were on Pluto. Pluto uncomfortable with the attention, paused and with scepticism answered with a long drawn out “yeeeeeeess”, as he answered his eyes anxiously look to read me for the “right” response. Gaston who was quiet up to this point, commented with contemplation, “it’s part of nature.” The attention shifted from Pluto to Gaston who straightened up in his chair adding to the answer he just posed “it’s nature, wolves eat other animals just like lions eat zebras.” This was the moment I was waiting for. The learner began to read their world differently with a questioning mind and I decided to keep the momentum up by posing the next question:

Teacher: just like some of us eat chicken? Does that make us bad?

Class: noooooooooo

Marlin: because chickens are chickens, they don’t talk!

Jasmin: pigs don’t talk also! It’s just a story!

Alice: but do you know eggs are baby chickens that were supposed to be born?

Class: (muttering) nooo

Alice: yes! How are chickens born? From eggs!

Dory: ugh! I’m never eating eggs again!

Class laughs

Teacher: why Dory*?

Dory: because it’s bad to eat baby chickens!

Jones and Clarke (2007) maintain that another way for learners to engage in unpacking the ideological beliefs embedded in texts is to make connections and disconnections with the text. Critical literacy for Clarke and Whitney (2009) involves situating the self into a broader, socially constructed context. The above extract highlights a conversation amongst a group of children who applied the text to their own experiences and analysed the social issue of animal consumption. The silence of the class and Pluto's hesitant "yes" to my question "so the wolf is bad because of what he eats?" was a clear indicator of a sudden enlightened critical awareness. Gaston explored the issues of power by accessing his background knowledge of animals by suggesting that the wolf wanted to eat the pigs because it is "part of nature" like every other animal predator and not because there is something morally corrupt about it. My question "just like some of **us** eat chicken? Does it make **us** bad?" startled learners. I candidly challenged learners to confront their reasons for their beliefs and values for eating animals. Dory suddenly made the connections between herself and the text when she compared herself to being just as "bad" as the wolf in the story for wanting to eat eggs which are "baby chickens that were supposed to be born" as pointed out by Alice. The development of instructional scaffolding can transpire when issues of power are contextualised in a way that directly taps into schema (Clarke and Whitney, 2008). Explicit connections between issues of power and the personal life of the reader builds a pathway to having profound, critical conversations about issues of social justice (Clarke and Whitney, 2008).

5.2.3 Considering multiple viewpoints

Teacher: Who gets to speak?
Dory: I think the pigs get to speak
Teacher: Why?
Dory: I don't know why
Gepetto: the pigs are the main characters so they get to speak.
Teacher: Whose voice is missing from the story?
Marlin: mine!
(class laughs)
Roo: the mum
Aladdin: the wolf
Woody: the wolf is speaking!
Teacher: what does he say?
Class- Huffed and puffed and blow house down.
Teacher: Okay, but who is telling you he said that?
Woody: the author
Teacher: Right, not really the wolf.

Ciardiello (2004) suggests that critical literacy is a "set of practices and civic competencies that help the learner develop a critical awareness that texts represent particular points of view while often silencing others" (p.138). When Aladdin recognised that the wolf's voice is

missing and therefore being silenced, Woody quickly interjected and exclaimed that wolf does speak, because the wolf “huffed and puffed and blew the house down”. A sense of illumination dawned on his face when he recognised that the author was telling the story from the pigs’ point of view, and therefore positioning him to accept that narrative. Roo recognises that the voice of the mother of the three pigs is also missing, considering the possibility of the story being told from another perspective.

Teacher: why do you think the author chose to tell the story from this point of view? (the pig) and not from the wolf’s point of view?

Alice: he wants to make the story interesting and nice.

Daisy: because wolves are mostly bad and pigs are mostly good so that’s why they telling it from the pig.

Teacher: who told you that?

Geppetto: t.v (mutters under his breath)

Pluto: because they know what side wolves are more scarier because they eat meat but pigs are not because they mostly eat normal stuff. **That’s why they making the wolf bad but some wolves are good.**

Teacher: Why do you say some wolves are good?

Pluto: they help.

Moana: like transport in the ice areas.

Teacher: oh like for a sled.

Gaston: wolves are only bad when you only when you provoke them.

Teacher: interesting Gaston*, what does the word provoke mean?

Gaston: provoke it means like attack you to make someone attack you on purpose.

Vasquez et al., (2019) maintain that texts are never neutral as they are socially constructed from a particular perspective with the purpose to convey particular messages to readers. In an effort to equip my learners with a critical lens to examine the effects of text design choices, I decided to ask my learners why they thought the author chose to tell the story from the pigs’ point of view and not from the wolf. Alice and Daisy’s compliant attitude towards fairytale texts are evident in their response. To them only the “good guy’s” story and voice matters which reflects how the good and bad binary concept of the genre is so ingrained in their discursive history. Gepetto’s response describes how he has taken up a position towards fairytale texts based on his access to the story which has only been told from the perspective of the good character. It exemplifies his inherent acceptance of "the ways things should be," to texts and neglecting to question the framing of the wolf.

Gregroy and Cahill (2009) state that a critically literate reader is able to problematise the consequence of including some and silencing others. Pluto’s reasoning for why the author chose to tell the story from the pigs’ point of view and not the wolf’s demonstrates his

awareness to the way the text and other texts convinces readers to accept the normative value that wolves are bad and not to challenge this perspective.

We see a shift in Pluto's thinking when he said: "that's why they making the wolf bad but some wolves are good." He engaged with the writer's meaning and identified that by the author choosing to tell the story from the pigs' point of view, the text established power over readers to favour pigs and condemn the wolf. Pluto was able to recognise that the text was positioning readers to accept an ideology that wolves are bad which sparked a process of disruption by suggesting that wolves can be helpful. This prompted Moana to join in and mention the role wolves play in human lives. Gaston took it further by drawing once more from his pre-existing, factual knowledge of wolves and stated that "wolves are only bad when you provoke them." Janks (2014) says that critical literacy embraces looking at the text in different ways and proposing possibilities for change. Gaston embodied what it means to be a critical reader and disrupted the issue of "good guy" and "bad guy" and suggested an alternative perspective that the wolf in the story might actually have been provoked by the pigs.

As the discussion transpired, I needed to help my learners progress from being readers who accepted texts at face value to readers who questioned texts. I decided to facilitate more pertinent questions that would require learners to place themselves in the unique perspective of the characters and consider the text from a different point of view (Bourke, 2008).

Teacher: and how would you feel if you were a wolf reading this story?

Stich: I'd feel happy.

Class laughs

Teacher: why happy?

Stich: because I want to eat the pigs and I want them to be scared of me.

Pluto: sad, because they trying to make everyone be scared of me and make me evil.

Teacher: and how would the story change if it was told from a different point of view?

Silence

Teacher: like how would the story be if it was told from another character's point of view?

Say the wolf? How would the wolf retell the story?

Lilo: uhm uhm I think wait what was the question again?

Teacher: how would the story change if it was told from another character's point of view?

Lilo: uhm it would change uhm uhm I dunnow.

When I asked, "...how would you feel if you were a wolf reading this story?", Pluto's response was that he would feel sad because "they" are trying to make everyone scared of him and portray him as evil. This is an excellent accomplishment in critical reading of a text.

Pluto engaged with the writer's meanings and attended to the effects of the omission of the Wolf's voice in the text. Luke et al., (2009) assert that critical literacy involves not only analysing text and how they work, but also attending to the possibilities of how else other voices can be represented in the process of redesign. Bearing Luke et al., (2009) in mind, I decided to pose how the story might change if the Wolf retold the story. Judging from the class's silence and Lilo's disorientation we can see how destabilising they found my question. This was not the usual question that they encounter during a read aloud which highlight the necessity of teacher critical questions in developing learners' critical stances towards texts. The class's reaction and how Lilo could simply not grasp the idea of the wolf telling the story, makes their resistance towards alternative perspectives apparent. Parsons (2004) note that we are only able to assume reading positions that exist within our discursive histories. Learners found it difficult to read the text from an alternative perspective because they did not have the discursive histories to consider a perspective that challenged the dominant text.

5.2.4 Juxtaposition: The "True" story of the Three Little Pigs as told by the Wolf

Given the resistance to alternative perspectives of the *Three Little Pigs*, I knew I had to open up the possibilities of alternative perspectives by exposing learners to multiple and contradictory perspectives. Luke and Freebody (1999) assert that to teach critical literacy encourages the critical reading of multiple texts, alternative readings and writing that attempt to bring to light the foregrounding of discourses represented and underrepresented in the text. The next day I had explained to the class that we were going to continue with the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, but differently. The atmosphere seemed unsettled, perhaps the questions I asked the previous day made them uncomfortable. It seemed that the previous day's discussion disturbed what made the story, in Alice's words "interesting and nice". The learners were excited to hear that a "special guest" was going to tell them a story. That excitement soon died down after being reminded that it would be a retelling of Three Little Pigs, denying the possibility that the story could be different. I left the classroom and entered the class impersonated as a wolf. In a split second the class's excitement level immediately escalated. The children thoroughly enjoyed the "wolf's side of the story" and were completely enthralled by the dramatization. The vignette below summarises this interaction:

Wearing a wolf faced mask, I claim that all I wanted was to borrow a cup of sugar so that I could bake my grandmother a cake for her birthday. I went to my neighbour's house to borrow a cup of sugar, but due to my awful cold, I let out a big sneeze, which caused the first little pig's straw house to collapse, killing him instantly. So, I ate him

because it would be a shame to let food go to waste. The second little pig experienced the same thing in his stick home. The third pig, who resided in a brick home, insulted my grandmother in a nasty manner. I was so enraged by this that I started pounding on the door and the pig called the cops on me. I was arrested under false pretences.

Luke and Freebody (1999) state that juxtapositioning texts foster classroom debates that help to highlight how texts work ideologically. When I asked the question “What do you think of the Wolf now after hearing this version of the story?” Pluto responded by saying:

“I think **he’s** not treating him not fairly because that’s **why they saying** big bad wolf in the other story and just trying to make him bad, it has a **bad word** in it.”

According to Luke and Freebody (1999) critical reading involves the awareness of how words and grammatical structures construct portrayals of the world and manipulate readers. Pluto’s response displays excellent critical reading in this regard. Even though he does not directly answer the question, Pluto recognises how language choice is used to position readers when he said “...trying to make him bad, it has a bad word in it” - Pluto refers to “he” which refers to the author and points out how the author uses language strategies such as the device repetition of the word “bad” to portray the Wolf as the villain in the previous, traditional story and subsequently positioning readers to admit to that narrative. This matches Luke and Freebody (1999) assertion that critical reading is about seeing through texts and how it works to position you as a reader to be a part of their descriptions of cultures and worlds.

Lewison et al., (2000) states that multiple versions of stories invite conversations about fairness and justice. When learners were asked if they thought the reporters in the story treated Alexander T. Wolf fairly, they had the following to say:

Whole class: nooooo

Teacher: why do you say that?

Zazu: because the pig never let him give a chance to say what he wanted to say.

Gaston: no because his skin is dark.

Teacher: what colour was it in the story?

Class: grey black brown (arguing)

Gaston: It’s still dark! If it was a white Alaskan wolf you would see it would be different.

The learners’ response exemplifies the children tackling the question of why the Wolf is positioned as “others”. Gaston firmly believed the wolf was being discriminated in the story

because of the colour of his skin. I was not purposeful when selecting the colour of the mask when I dramatized the story. This demonstrates the role that social and political conditions play in the environment we live in. Gaston's knowledge and awareness of colour discrimination is not rare amongst children given the socio-political context we live in as South Africans. I was so excited to see children begin to see texts as being socially constructed and tackle social inequalities that exist implicitly in texts. Lewison et al., (2000) believes that books that showcase alternative perspectives build learners' consciousness of how meaning and power influence people and how they conduct their lives.

Juxtapositioning texts, specifically fractured fairytales retell traditional tales from the perspective of previously unnamed characters. One of the key aspects of critical literacy is to explore unequal discourse in text by paying attention to those voices that are silenced (Luke and Freebody, 1999).

Teacher: In the original story, the author did not tell us the wolf's name is Alexander T Wolf, but in this version of the story the author did, why do you think the author made this choice?

Ariel - I think to make him look bad because wolves eat animals

Geppetto- because **he didn't come up with the name**, the big bad wolf

Nemo – he's the big bad wolf in the other story but in this story **he is just a normal guy** asking for sugar and trying.

Teacher: What does it mean when someone doesn't call you by your name?

Ana- it means they don't want to meet you

Jasmine- don't wanna know you, doesn't care about you, **doesn't want to know your story**.

Marlin- no respect you judging people on what you're getting called like the name but your name, like chatterbox.

We can see the role that affect played in the above extract. I posed questions to the learners that made learners look at the familiar story of the *Three Little Pigs* from the unique perspective of the Wolf which elicited emotional responses from learners. When I asked learners why the author chose to omit the wolf's name in the original story, Nemo's response was, "he's the big bad wolf in the other story but in this story he is just a normal guy asking for sugar and trying." We can see how the question invited empathy from Nemo as he made a personal connection to the wolf and relates to the Wolf's feelings and understands his actions. The wolf is now represented as a sympathetic character in the alternate text. Nemo's response demonstrates his consciousness of moral relativism as the morality of the Wolf as previously being an evil character changes after being exposed to an alternate text narrating his side of the story. Nemo showcases the view that moral judgments are relative to a particular perspective (Lynley, 2018). Learners' emotional response also prompted a dialogic

conversation about the critical literacy topic of naming. They were able to recognise the effects of nameless characters of being unfairly perceived which is evident when Ariel said “I think to make him look bad because wolves eat animals”. Ariel’s answer also highlights her recognition of how labelling characters in a story have the effect of leaving anachronistic values unquestioned – such as by referring to Alexander T Wolf as the “big bad wolf” in the traditional text. Jasmine further emphasises how when someone does not refer to you by your name it means they do not want to know your story which demonstrates her awareness to how enforcing a label like “the big bad wolf” imposes a judgment on someone without recognising the individual.

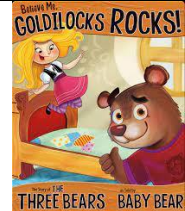
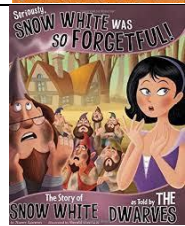
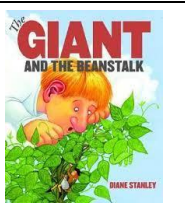
The learners in my class became aware how the “truth” is partial. Pluto expressed that if he was a pig reading *The True Story of the Little Pigs* as told by the wolf, he would feel “just fine” he went on to say “I would feel nothing because I can’t believe what they say because I’ll be Switzerland like in the middle and not be involved”. Boutte (2002) stated that the goal of using multiple perspective texts is to avoid simplistic dichotomies of “good” and “bad”. When learners were asked if it is possible to determine which version of the *Three Little Pigs* is the truth, Pumba said “uhhh, no because either way someone is going to upset, there’s so many sides”, Zazu added “there’s also the police side, the wolfs, the mother”. Through this discussion, learners began to avoid the simplistic dichotomies of “good” and “bad” and recognise that it is actually a lot more complex due to the number of perspectives that can be established.

5.2.5 Exploring other reinterpreted fairytales

Jones (2006) states that all texts are embedded with multiple meanings and one way to examine some of those meanings is to peel away the layers through the consideration of perspective, positioning, and power" (p. 79). The next day learners explored a series of picture book covers representing various reinterpreted fairytales told from alternative perspectives (see table 4). These versions of fairytales are narratives from the alternative points of view of villains or marginalised characters in the story providing a fresh perspective to the original tale. The reinterpreted fairytale book covers were aimed to get learners to become conscious of other points of view and how our opinions can change when we view the story from an alternative perspective. As a class, we studied each illustrated cover and using visual and contextual clues, the class inferred whose voice the story includes and

excludes and imagined how the story might be different from the original version of the fairytale.

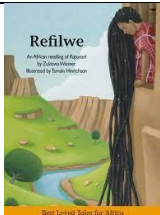
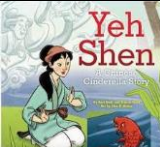
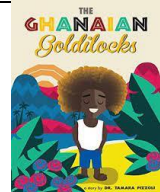
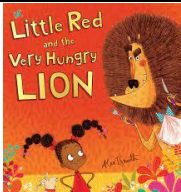
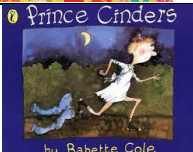
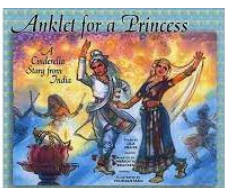
Table 4: Reinterpreted fairytales retold by alternative characters

	Trust me, Goldilocks Rocks! The story of the Three Bears, as told by Baby Bear by Nancy Loewen
	Seriously, Snow White Was SO Forgetful! The Story of Snow White as Told by the Dwarves by Nancy Loewen
	The Giant and the Beanstalk: The story of Jack and the Beanstalk as told from the Giant by Diane Stanley

Boston (2019) notes that mirror books that reflect the child’s own culture, race, gender, traditions, family and religion helps them build a positive identity. When learners do not see themselves reflected in the texts used in the classrooms, it creates a sense of invalidation and subordination in a larger social system. When learners have access to mirror texts that reflect their culture and experiences, they learn to see that their narrative matters and, in this way, it can be powerful tools of social justice (Boston, 2019). Over the course of two weeks, I showed learners videos of alternative fairytales to encourage learners to think critically about texts, their worlds and themselves (table 5). After each video we analysed the social and cultural changes included in each of the stories. These video stories opened up possibilities and perspectives of their favourite fairytales that they could not have possibly imagined on their own. Learners were eager to explain cultural elements that were represented in the books that they are personally familiar with. As we went through each of the stories, children were quick to point out which of their peers were represented on the text. In the story *Refilwe*, all the children in my class spoke about how beautiful the African landscape was portrayed in the illustrations. Some children said that it was similar looking to “mkhaya” which is their homeland. In my journal notes, I recalled the excitement children experienced when they came across localised character names like “Refilwe” and “Prince Tumi” and

other familiar vocabulary such as “morogo”, “hhayi” and “ancestors”. The texts were deliberately chosen as they challenge the original gender ideologies in the traditional versions. I recalled in my journal, how boys were entertained by the gender reversion of the main character in *Prince Cinders* and Koffie in *The Ghanaian Goldilocks*, while girls were delighted with the assertive personalities of the heroines in *Little Red and the very Hungry Lion* and *The Three Ninja Pigs*.

Table 5: Alternative retellings representing alternative gender and cultural perspective

	Refilwe by Zukiswa Wanne
	Yeh Shen by Ai-Ling Louie
	The Three Ninja Pigs by Corey Rosen
	The Ghanaian Goldilocks by Dr Tamara Pizzoli
	Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion by Alex Smith
	Prince Cinders by Babette Cole
	Anklet for a Princess by Meredith Brucker

5.3 Conclusion

And so went my first attempts at developing critical literacy with my class. The study focused on the (re)reading and deconstruction of *The Three Little Pigs*. The data analysis showed that learners struggled with the skill of deconstructing the familiar story of the *The Three Little Pigs* and demonstrated their passive submission to the prejudiced power relationships between the wolf and the pigs in the story. Reading critically does not come naturally to young learners, and they require support. I had to pose deeper questions to my learners and provide instructional scaffolding. Thus, the role of critical teacher questions proved to be key to the success of this intervention. The (re)readings of the texts illustrated practices that align with the framework of Lewison et al., (2002) which is considered as critical. In disrupting the commonplace, I posed questions that assisted learners to explore the relationship between language and power to recognise the ways in which the fairytale worked to position us. In considering multiple viewpoints, learners made personal connections to the text and considered other ways of constructing meanings from the story as they weighed their experiences, factual knowledge beliefs and values with the text. Learners identified with the traditional fairytale as the familiar and resisted the possibilities for how the story would be different if it was told from an alternative perspective. This was overcome through the provision of juxtaposed texts and other reinterpreted fairytales which revealed to learners that stories can be transformed by multiple perspectives. In focusing on the socio-political, affect played a part in moving learners beyond the personal and into a larger social system by exploring discrimination and naming. This (re)reading intervention played a significant role in preparing learners for the (re)design element of this research project. It motivated learners to make an effort to take a critical stance in their thinking and design of their self-authored fairytales that are discussed in chapter six and seven. However, what emerges in these two chapters that follow is an uneven and non-linear continuum of criticality. Huge gains are made in chapter six in the dramatization of *Cinderella* counter stories (Morrell, 2008) but some of these gains are lost in their written counter-stories in Chapter Seven. Hence, as with all new knowledge construction, the new knowledge is partial and unstable.

CHAPTER SIX: REDESIGN – reconstructing fairytales

6.1 Introduction

Literacy for Freire (1972) is an integrated network of reading, writing and re-writing the text and the world. Janks (2006) maintains that redesign is essential in this network because it encourages us to go beyond the critique of texts and progress to action. This means that critical literate learners must move beyond the critical reading of texts, where they examine the social inequalities within the text, to the creation of new texts that express their social identities and challenge the status quo (Mantei and Kervin, 2016). Janks (2014) further asserts that the deconstruction of texts has limited value unless we can reconstruct them in a way that attends to new meanings and diverse representations of identity thereby engaging in an act of ongoing transformation. The critical (re)reading sessions outlined in chapter five prepared the learners with the agency and opportunity to redesign their own texts. Chapter six of this analysis will showcase the extent to which critical (re)reading enabled children to imagine other ways of thinking and to challenge stereotypes which facilitated their critical thinking in order to redesign fairytale texts. It is divided into two sections – redesigning Cinderella from an alternative perspective using role plays, and redesigning a fairytale from a different social and cultural perspective.

6.2 Using role play to recreate Cinderella with a critical lens

Mendelowitz et al., (2022) strongly argues that it is not possible to redesign a text without imaginative play. Imagination allows learners to experiment and take risks with ideas which produces new texts and notions that are considerably different to the original text and also challenges the assumptions implied in the original text. In a study that investigated the relationship between imagination and narrative writing, Mendelowitz et al., (2023) found that during imaginative play, learners are active participants in dialogue which allows them to redesign a text from an outsider's perspective. This process offers formidable possibilities for learners to invent alternative realities through envisaging multiple worlds, and enacting multiple voices (Mendelowitz et al., 2023). Redesign encompasses critical-creative moves which is the interrelatedness of repositioning of the writer, challenging dominant discourses and power relations and the (re)construction of identities (Mendelowitz et al., 2023). This part of the chapter identifies the key role of imagination in re-imagining other possibilities.

Clarke and Whitney (2009) recommend redesigning a familiar story from multiple viewpoints as a strategy when reconstructing texts and Cahill (2009) suggest prompting

learners to generate a new text which provides a voice to a perspective that was previously silenced. Following the critical reading activities of both the classic and alternate version of Three Little Pigs, discussed in chapter six, learners were invited to produce a role play of a scene from Cinderella. We read the classic version of the story of Cinderella, paying close attention to how the story privileges Cinderella's perspective and how it marginalises the stepmother and stepsisters' perspective, as well as interrogating the stereotypical views against women as being either ideal or evil. Learners were then arranged in groups and given a scene to redesign and to act it out from the stepmother and stepsisters', Drizella and Anastasia's point of views (see appendix 3 for group task cards.) Learners were given wigs, costumes and artefacts to bring their drama to life. Bourke (2008) states that younger children should be given "power as a writer" to readjust the power in story by offering them an opportunity to redesign a story from a different perspective.

6.2.1 Imagining other ways of being

Giving voice to the voiceless

Janks (2016) state that during the process of reconstruction, power can be ameliorated by accounting for viewpoints and experiences that are not embodied in the original text. In scene one, we see learners engage in a drama strategy known as *tableaus* whereby one actor comes into the spotlight and speaks to the audience while the other tableaux actors remain frozen. The stepmother and stepsisters, Anastasia and Drizella who were previously silenced in the original text each took a moment to explain their feelings and experiences to the audience. Martello (2001) identified *role* as one of the key elements of drama that support critical literacy. When learners adopt an alternate or multiple perspectives through role, it enables one to step into a character's shoes and begin to understand how others might feel, think and respond in particular circumstances (Martello, 2001). Stepping into role engaged affect, empathy and imagination which allowed learners to reimagine new possibilities. Anastasia expressed how she does not feel good about being called "ugly" which is an excellent illustration of how the learner stepped into the role of the stepsister and recognised the feelings of the previously silenced character. The stepmother told the audience how she is pleased that Cinderella likes her as a stepmother and goes on to say "she's like my own daughter". Drizella expressed to the audience that she and Anastasia should be "more kinder" to Cinderella and Cinderella voiced that she is fond of her stepmother because she is "kind" and "fair". The learners in this group challenged the antagonistic relationship between Cinderella and her stepmother which depicted Cinderella's stepmother as "wicked" and her stepsisters as "jealous" in the original text and offered a different perspective of Cinderella as

being slightly bossy and the stepmother as a kind and caring maternal figure. These samples showed that children broke absolutism of the good and bad characters, represented as Cinderella and her stepmother by switching perspectives. Affect played a significant role here to enable learners to project themselves into the characters of the stepmother and stepsisters and imagine other worlds, perspectives and feelings. Learners took what they learnt about power, positioning and perspective in deconstruction and re-created a new narrative by representing alternative points of views that were missing in the original text.

Alternative ending

In addition to *role*, Martello (2001) also identifies *tension* as another key element of drama that supports critical literacy. In drama, fictional conflict motivates learners to become actively involved in the drama activity by generating an excitement that engages them emotionally and intellectually (Mortello, 2001). When there is a problem present in a narrative, there is a need to talk, think and act (Mortello, 2001). *Tension* motivates learners to explore and problematise alternative ways of resolving fictional conflict by enacting relationships between beliefs, language and social action (Mortello, 2001). In the traditional narration of Cinderella, the tension in the text is that Cinderella is unable to attend the ball, the resolution is that the prince and Cinderella get married and live happily ever after. The below extract demonstrates how learners imagined an alternative way of dealing with the tension.

Prince: Cinderella will you please marry me?

Cinderella: No thanks I already have a boyfriend, but thanks for the offer.

The group of learners resolved the conflict by Cinderella rejecting the prince's marriage proposal and together with her family take over the monarchy. Medina and Campano (2004) states that drama creates an imaginative space that affords learners the opportunity to write back to the dominant practices and assert their own identity. This group of learners resisted the heterosexual practice of romance and opposed the traditional concluding device of the happily-ever-after situation of marriage as the resolution to the conflict in traditional fairytales. Giving learners the opportunity to change the ending generated new possibilities and ideas which highlighted their repositioning of gender identity.

Connections to the text

Jones and Clarke (2007) state that readers are presented with the agency to create alternative possibilities when they acknowledge their connections with the text. In the traditional

retelling of Cinderella there is a royal ball where the prince will choose a bride, and Cinderella's step-family prevent her from attending by giving her more chores than she can complete. To retell this scene, learners connected with their schema and redesigned an alternative experience to what is similar to their lives by using their personal experience of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as inspiration for their roleplay and therefore situated themselves in a larger social context (Jones and Clarke, 2007). Learners went as far as asking if they could borrow the classroom sanitizer and thermometer to enhance their scene. In scene two, learners revealed that Cinderella was sick with a flu and had a dry cough on the day of the royal ball. Cinderella begged and pleaded with her family to attend the ball but she was strictly refused by her stepmother and was ordered to quarantine to reduce the risk of infecting everyone else at the ball.

Cinderella: Cough cough

Drizella: What's wrong Cinderella

Cinderella: I have a flu

Anastasia: Mooom

Stepmother: Yes darlings

Drizella: Cinderella says shes sick

Stepmother: Take her temperature

Anastasia: Wow she's hot!

Cinderella: Does that mean I can go to the ball?

Drizella: Are you crazy do you want to make everyone sick? You need to isolate and quarantine!

Learners dramatized an alternative possibility as to why Cinderella's stepfamily won't let her attend the ball by imagining an alternative situation animated by their own social experiences of the world. In addition, what is striking in this scene is how the group of learners portrayed Cinderella as defiant, persistent, assertive and determined to go to the ball, even though she risks infecting the other guests. This speaks against the stereotypical portrayal of women as being virtuous, submissive and helpless in traditional fairytales.

6.2.2 Challenging stereotypes

Meanings constructed in text are ideological and serve to produce, reproduce and maintain arrangements of unequal power (Powell, 2001). This is achieved by portraying characters in stereotypical ways which are often left unquestioned and reinforce unequal ways and problematic social practices (Vasquez et al., 2019). One of the key aspects of critical literacy is that learners should be involved in understanding the socio-political systems that govern us and question these systems (Vasquez et al., 2019). The following examples shows how

children confronted the stereotypical ideas of gender and family structure in the fairytale of Cinderella after being exposed to the alternative texts of fairytales.

Feminist re-visions

During the analysis of the performative redesigns, gender positioning was found to be the most predominated idea interrupted by my Grade 3 learners. Their drama performances displayed rich resistance to the gender stereotyping portrayed in the classic version of Cinderella. They reconstructed the story into a more powerful narrative of Cinderella by retelling the story from an empowered female protagonist perspective.

Drizella: Please can I dance with the prince?

Cinderella: No! Can't you see we're busy?! Prince teach me how to tango!

The dialogue above illustrates how learners redesigned the story by resisting the gendered female stereotype of passivity and dependence. Traditional fairytales reproduce patriarchal values by portraying men as powerful, dominant and active while women are portrayed as submissive and dependent (Parsons, 2004). Texts from a feminist perspective provide alternatives to gendered subject positions (Parsons, 2004). In scene three of the drama, the learners portray Cinderella as being in a position of power by refusing her stepsister's request to dance with the prince and demanding that the prince teach her how to tango. The commanding tone of Cinderella and the passivity of the prince deviates radically from the timid and compliant representation of women and the assertive representation of men in the original version. This illustrates how learners' reimagined gender roles by shifting the proportion of power from male to female. Learners reconfigured the gender representation of female characters from being submissive in the classic version to taking on an assertive leading role in their rendition through language, register and tone.

Prince: You don't want to marry me? Guards bring me my sword, well then I will have to kill you

Cinderella: Ahhhh

Stepmother and stepsisters rush onto stage

Stepmother: Wait wait wait! You want to kill my daughter. We will have to kill you!

Stepsisters tackle the prince

Stepmother: Guards take him to the Dungeon; I am your new queen and we are the new royal family.

Cinderella: All three of us are princesses now!

All characters: Theeeee ennnnd.

The above dialogue from scene six highlight how learners resisted romantic ideology. Parsons (2004) notes that in classic fairytales the protagonist is always rewarded and rescued with a man and marriage as a result of her submission. Trites (1997) argues that in feminist texts, the protagonist is empowered by adopting a subject stance in which she is an active agent. Learners unswervingly contrast this ideology as in their rendition, Cinderella is not rewarded with a man or marriage, instead Cinderella is portrayed with freedom and choice which is evident when she declines the prince's marriage proposal. Parsons (2004) note that in traditional fairytales the female characters are often isolated with their submission and lack of power. In this scene, the learners empowered all the female characters by embracing self-determination and celebrating a sense of sisterhood. This is shown when the stepmother and the stepsisters rush to Cinderella's side and dethrone the prince. Cinderella, her stepmother and stepsisters to demonstrate autonomy and determine their own destiny by taking over the monarchy. In the original story of Cinderella, as in the case of many other traditional fairytales, a negative image of a female gender is shown through rivalry. The females in fairytale narratives compete with one another whether it be in the ranking of beauty, social status or for male attention. Learners reformulated this power hierarchy by making Cinderella and both her stepsisters princesses in the end.

This group of learners also challenged the stereotype about stepmothers and stepfamilies which emphasised their critical thinking. They confronted the stereotypical ideas associated with stepfamilies such as denying the stepchild food and proper clothing, making them do impossible things and encourage others to mistreat the children (Bealle, 2019).

The below extract learners show that Cinderella's two stepsisters were also expected to do household chores and not just Cinderella highlighting that the children were treated fairly.

Cinderella: Anastasia sweep inside, Drizella sweep outside.

Learners portrayed the relationship between Cinderella and her stepsisters as loving and supportive. This is illustrated when the stepsisters show empathy towards Cinderella when she is too sick to attend the royal ball.

Anastasia: I feel sorry for Cinderella I think we should surprise her with a fruit basket and some flowers.

In excerpt below, learners displayed an apology from Cinderella to her stepfamily. It illustrates how learners debunked the stereotype that stepfamilies actively hurt the stepchild and considered the possibility that a “good” character is capable of misconduct (Wee et al., 2017). Traditional fairytales portray a clear bias against female characters. In the original fairytale of Cinderella, the female characters are represented as two extremes. One type is Cinderella who is innocent, obedient and listening. The second type is the stepmother and stepsisters of Cinderella who are evil, jealous and vindictive. Cinderella’s defiant behaviour of sneaking out and her honest apology for just wanting to have fun escapes the good/evil binary stereotype of women perpetuated in fairytales. Learners deflate the two extreme types of women and provide an awareness into the reality of grey areas of ambiguous morality.

Cinderella: Sorry stepmother I may have snuck out and gone to the ball because I thought it was going to be fun and it was fun I danced with the prince.

Lewison et al., (2006) argue that a child exhibits critical literacy when they are able to move beyond the text to social action to disrupt what is seen as normal. The critical imagination affordances of this performance genre activity powerfully show the ways learners were able to able to disrupt hegemonic ideas regarding gender roles in the original version of Cinderella by imagining other possibilities. Transformative texts are redesigns that represent new meanings through new authorship (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). The transformative nature of this redesign was learners’ ability to write against traditional gender positions by embodying perspectives, voices and experiences of marginalised characters which accounted for more diverse perspectives. In the next section, learners shift from a performative redesign mode to a written one, and interestingly they fell back into a stereotypical gendered a mode of writing.

6.3 (Re)designing a fairytale from an alternative social and cultural perspective

One of the key features of redesign in critical literacy is to initiate agency and social change by repositioning oneself in relation to the dominant discourse (Vasquez et al., 2019).

Learners were encouraged to redesign a traditional fairytale of their choice by producing a story outline and illustrated book cover from an alternative social and cultural perspective.

The analysis of the 28 rewritten fairytales reflected the range of ways in which children were able to re-imagine and write back to the dominant ideas of cultural and gender roles in fairytales by asserting a range of their own gendered, cultural and religious identities. A

continuum of critical-creative moves (Mendelowitz et al., 2023) was displayed. Learners demonstrated a faint critical engagement with the text by merely representing their cultural and religious identities in the fairytale. Learners drew on the critical literacy aspect of diversity and made no substantive changes to challenge the author's ideologies, overturn the reader's positioning or raise issues of subjectivity, agency, voice or power issues.

6.3.1 Representation of culture

All learners in the class produced redesigns that changed the cultural setting depicted in the original fairytales. Their retellings of fairytales reveal how they have, to varying extents, recycled the European cultural metaphors by their own culture through the use of symbols, artefacts and rituals (Rogers, 2006). It gave learners an opportunity to display an alternative reality of the fairytale that validated their own lived experience (McKinney and Norton, 2007). Livingston (2018) recognises this approach as *transcultural writing* which is described as the adoption of alternate cultural practices by the socio-cultural recontextualisation of the dominant culture. Pratt (1992) states that within transcultural writing, writers utilise elements of self-representation to recreate discourses. The following examples of illustrations and written texts show learners' range of their self-representation in their fairytale redesign, it is then followed by an analysis that describe their critical engagement.

Sumayyah living with a new family

This is a redesign of the traditional fairytale of Cinderella. The learner's Muslim identity comes through in her illustration of "Sumayyah" who is depicted wearing the Islamic veil covering as well as the mosque, stars and moon – all symbols of Islamic culture. The learner sets her version of Cinderella at the "wedding mosque in Benoni". The problem in the story is that "Sumayyah wants to go the wedding and go for the mendi night but she has to iron the family members clothes". Instead of the ball, the learner uses a mendi night, which is an event whereby Indian women get together to put henna on before a wedding as well as the wedding ceremony – two events that are significant in her culture. The learner highlights her identity of being a praying and practising Muslim in the story's resolution by stating that Sumayyah "makes dua to Allah to help her and He does because Allah is the most helpful".



Figure 5. Illustrated book cover of “Sumayyah living with a new family”

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning activity: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives based to my personal identity by comparing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: Cinderella	Fractured title: Sumayyah living with a new family
Traditional characters: good: Cinderella bad: step-mother and step-sister	Fractured characters: good: Sumayyah bad: step-family
Traditional setting: Roses	Fractured setting: wedding mosque in town
Traditional conflict: Cinderella wants to attend a ball at the castle but her mean stepmother and her sister try to stop her from going to the ball.	Fractured conflict: Sumayyah wants to go to the wedding but go for the wedding night but she has to join the family wedding night.
Traditional solution: The fairy godmother gives Cinderella a magic dress and she goes to the ball.	Fractured solution: Sumayyah makes other people help her and he does because that is the most help that.

Figure 6. Story outline of “Sumayyah living with a new family”

Maria

This take on Cinderella, set in Limpopo is strongly influenced by the learner’s Tsonga traditions and beliefs. The illustrations depict a rural village and an African main character wearing the traditional tsonga skirt. Maria could not attend a tsonga ceremony because she had to clean her father and stepmother’s house, but with the help of her ancestors she manages to escape.



Figure 7. Illustrated book cover of “Maria”

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning activity: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives based to my personal identity by comparing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: Cinderella	Fractured title: Maria
Traditional characters: good: Cinderella bad: stepmother and step-sister	Fractured characters: good: Maria and brother bad: father and stepmother
Traditional setting: Roses	Fractured setting: Limpopo
Traditional conflict: Cinderella wants to attend a ball at the castle but her mean stepmother and her sister try to stop her from going to the ball.	Fractured conflict: Maria couldn't attend a tsonga ceremony because she had to clean her father and stepmother house.
Traditional solution: The fairy godmother gives Cinderella a magic dress and she goes to the ball.	Fractured solution: But with the help of her ancestors she manages to escape.

Figure 8. Story outline of “Maria”

The Three Nglobe’s (pigs)

This version of the Three Little Pigs features brown pigs wearing the Zulu male attire and a villain named “inja” which translates to “dog” from isiZulu to English. The

story is set in Cape Town and is about a wolf that wants to eat the pigs. Instead of the Wolf falling down the chimney to his demise, as in the classic version, the pigs “make sharp spears” to stab the wolf, highlighting the cultural identity of the learner as a spear is symbolic in Zulu culture.



Figure 9. Illustrated book cover of “The Three Nglobes”

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning outcome: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: The Three Little Pigs	Fractured title: The Three Nglobes
Traditional characters: good three little pigs	Fractured characters: good three nglobes
bad Big Bad Wolf	bad ngoba
Traditional setting: woods	Fractured setting: Cape Town
Traditional conflict: The three little pigs were scared to build a house for the Big Bad Wolf.	Fractured conflict: The nglobes want to eat the pigs.
Traditional solution: The three little pigs built a house that was strong enough to keep the wolf out.	Fractured solution: They make sharp spears and stab the wolf.

Figure 10. Story outline of “The Three Nglobes”

The visual analysis of learners’ illustrations and the narrative analysis of their writing revealed that Grade 3 learners were able to tap into their specific cultural identity and engage in self-representation of their cultures in their rewritings of fairytales. What is also evident in their redesigns, is a shallow reconstruction of a fairytale from an alternative perspective which reflect their continuum understandings of critical literacy. Learners’ retellings while rich in showcasing their diverse cultural background, involved translocation of setting and transmission of names- the simple substitution of localised settings, cultural names and a reliance of cultural stereotypes. *Cinderella* was renamed “Sumayya”, *The Three Little Pigs* became “The Three Nglobes” and the fairytale settings were found in the localities of Limpopo, Benoni and Cape Town. The learners engaged in contextual analysis of the fairytale and developed expressive renditions that were rooted in their cultural identity, however showed limited critical perspectives that showed an awareness to social issues as they did in their performances. Only 1 out of 28 retellings showed some evidence of critical engagement with social issues that can be considered transformative:

The illustrated book cover of “Wulisani and the Stepfather” is a recreation of *Repunzel* is striking and unique in the sense that it depicts an interracial love story between the male black protagonist, Wulisani and a white princess imprisoned in a tall tower. This redesign exposes how the learner was able to tap into one of the elements of the critical literacy framework of social justice, by challenging the stereotype of same race relationships.



Figure 11. Illustrated book cover of “Wulisani and the Stepfather”

The redesign of fairytales varies in ways, however render the same perspective, themes, plot, morals and ideals as the original European fairytales. Learners simply changed the traditional tale into more localised settings which represents, what Livingston (2018) describes as a token effort at diversity. This was much to my disappointment as I had anticipated for more transformational changes to be made in the redesigns of their fairytales in terms of challenging social issues as they did when it came to their drama renditions of *Cinderella*. In redesigning a fairytale from an alternative social and cultural perspective, I had hopes that learners would showcase the repositioning of their fluid and multiple identities in response to confronting stereotypes against genders, cultures, race etc. to contribute to transformation. Despite my high hopes, it is worth acknowledging that their redesigns showcased a foundation of thinking about other possibilities of telling stories with diverse characters that include parts of themselves.

6.3.2 Representation of gender roles in the fairytales

During the analysis of the written redesigns, gender roles were found to be the most predominated ideas left uninterrupted by the Grade 3 learners. This result resonates with Zipes’ (2013) contention that fairytales have been designed to maintain the dominant patriarchal ideology that continued through the 19th and 20th centuries. Patriarchal ideology positions women as the binary gender, and fairytales commonly portray women in this manner (Novianti, 2021). The data revealed that learners were unable to reposition their gender identity and reenvision new gender roles and relationships, as they continued to reproduce stereotypical ones that were deeply ingrained in them. Although there was a brief

repositioning of gender roles in the drama redesigns, it was quickly reversed and learners reverted to patriarchal positioning of gender roles in the written mode. This speaks to how dominant the written mode is in the multiple areas of the children's lives. This did however, shed light on an interesting finding regarding the affordances and limitations of written and performative modes.

The excerpts below exemplify the different ways boys and girls in Grade 3 represented gender roles in their written redesigns and is followed by analysis.

Boys' representation of gender roles

50% of boys chose to redesign animal fairytales such as *The Three Little Pigs and Goldilocks and the Three Bears* that omit romance. The striking feature of the animal fairytale retellings is the way that all the characters are exclusively male. This promotes the idea that men can exist alone.

“The 3 chickens fought the jackal and he never came back ever again” - *The 3 inzinkhuku*

The other 50% of boys chose to rewrite fairytales that originally had a female protagonist with a male protagonist, 83% of which deliberately excluded romantic ideology in their narrative.

In “Sizwe” the male protagonist wants to play in the soccer tournament but Ntando, the school bully steals his brand-new soccer boots. In the end, Sizwe plays barefoot and wins the school tournament. The protagonist is identified as being ambitious by pursuing his love for soccer. This learners' gender identity is closely tied to his participation in soccer.



Figure 12: Illustrated book cover of “Sizwe”

My Fractured Fairytale	
Learning outcome: I can redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my Fractured Fairytale.	
Traditional title: Cinderella	Fractured title: Sizwe
Traditional characters: good: Cinderella bad: Step mother and step sisters	Fractured characters: good: Sizwe bad: School bully Ntando
Traditional setting: Kingdom	Fractured setting: School
Traditional conflict: Cinderella wants to go to the ball but her family gives her too many chores	Fractured conflict: Sizwe wants to play in the school soccer tournament but Ntando steals his brand new soccer boots
Traditional solution: Fairy god mother helps Cinderella and lets her go to the ball and the prince falls in love with her and marries her	Fractured solution: Sizwe plays bare foot and wins the tournament for his school.

Figure 13. Story outline of “Sizwe”

In the “Sad Prince”, Kolabe was trapped in a high tower, everyday a clown would come to make him laugh, in the end the clown cried on Kolabe and made him happy again. This redesign draws inspiration from the original telling where Repunzel’s tears cure the prince’s blindness, however the learner blatantly replaced romance with friendship establishing his disregard for heterosexual romantic practices.



Figure 14. Illustrated book cover of “The Sad Prince”

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning Outcome: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to acceptably my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title	Fractured title
Traditional characters	Fractured characters
good Repunzel	good Kolabe
bad Witch	bad Prince
Traditional setting	Fractured setting
Forest	Forest
Traditional conflict	Fractured conflict
Witch keeps her prince up and closed in a high tower	Prince is sad and the clown tries to make him feel better
Traditional solution	Fractured solution
The prince saves Repunzel and she cures his blindness	Clown cries and makes him happy again

Figure 15. Story outline of the “Sad Prince”

I found it fascinating that majority of boys in my class omitted romance from their retellings. Peterson (2006) maintains that creative writing can be perceived as an expression of social gender identity. Gender is understood as a hegemonic social representation and construction of norms, behaviours and speech patterns that are marked as masculine or feminine, and gender identity is developed through the public performance of these practices (Murphy and Ivinson, 2003). The classroom is viewed as a social setting and the attitudes learners bring to their writing is a consequence of their participation in other social contexts (Murphey and Ivinson, 2003). When boys were given the opportunity to rewrite a fairytale text from a male perspective it required them to draw on upon social constructs that are familiar to them. This finding provided me with a window into the expression boys’ gender identities in which they view romance as a genre that is feminine. As a consequence, they chose to rewrite fairytales that incorporated action as it is deemed more masculine, thus maintaining their gender identity in society and constructing themselves as active and agentive in their lives (Murphey and Ivinson, 2003).

Girls' representation of gender roles

All the girls in the class on the other hand, chose to redesign fairytales that originally featured romance. Despite the strong presence of feminism in the alternative texts presented in the previous chapter of critical rereading, all the girls in my class locked their female protagonists into the stereotypical behaviour of being passive and helpless.

57% of girls chose to include romantic ideology and female dependence on male protection in their retellings. In “Melissa and the Scary Witch” Melissa was abandoned by her family and was found by a witch who locked her in a tall tower. In the end, she was “rascude (rescued) by a brave knight”. This story also reproduces the good and evil binary of female roles – women in the fairytale are either good and innocent or evil witches. In “Indebele Lesedy” the prince finds Lesedy and “got mermaid (married) and got a child twins.” In these stories, the girl writers are still trapped within the traditional generic frames of identity. Traditional fairytales present romance as an ideological construct of female subordination and the learners passively accepts these conventions in their writing.



Figure 16. Illustrated book cover of “Melissa and the Scary Witch”

My Fractured Fairytale	
Learning outcome: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.	
Traditional title: Repurzel	Fractured title: Melissa and the Scary Witch
Traditional characters: good Repurzel bad witch	Fractured characters: good: Melissa bad: witch
Traditional setting: forest	Fractured setting: Forest
Traditional conflict: Repurzel was trapped in a tower. She was planning to escape with the prince. She fell from the tower and went blind.	Fractured conflict: She was abandoned by her family and found by a scary witch who put her in a tall tower.
Traditional solution: Repurzel cried and him and cured his blindness.	Fractured solution: rascude by a brave knight.

Figure 17. Story outline of “Melissa and the Scary Witch”



Figure 18. Illustrated book cover of “Ndebele Lesedi”

My Fractured Fairytale

LEARNING OUTCOME: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: Rapunzel	Fractured title: Ndebele Lesedi
Traditional characters: good Rapunzel bad witch	Fractured characters: good Lesedi bad witch
Traditional setting: forest	Fractured setting: Impopo
Traditional conflict: Rapunzel was trapped in a high tower, the witch found out she was planning to escape with the prince, she pulled out her hair and was left blind.	Fractured conflict: Lesedi was trapped in a high tower, the witch found out she was planning to escape with the prince, she pulled out her hair and was left blind.
Traditional solution: Rapunzel cried on him and cured his blindness.	Fractured solution: Prince found Lesedi and got married and got a child.

Figure 19. Story outline of “Ndebele Lesedi”

21% of girls embraced a sense of sisterhood and had female heroines to rescue their female protagonist. In “Diamonds in the DRC”, “Charollte” is trapped in a hole trying to escape evil people who want to cut her hair. In the end her sisters come to her rescue and help her escape where they uncover diamonds. The learner displays some resistance towards traditional gender role positioning by exploring the theme of adventure instead of romance, and female friendship instead of female rivalry. However, these redesigns still reduce the female protagonist to the traditional position of being powerless.



Figure 20. Illustrated book cover of “Diamonds in the DRC”

My Fractured Fairytale

LEARNING OUTCOME: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: Rapunzel	Fractured title: Diamonds in the DRC
Traditional characters: good Rapunzel bad witch	Fractured characters: good Charollte, Maraville, Janina bad witch, evil king
Traditional setting: forest	Fractured setting: Congo Hole
Traditional conflict: Rapunzel was trapped in a high tower, the witch found out she was planning to escape with the prince, she pulled out her hair and was left blind.	Fractured conflict: Maraville is stuck in a hole, the witch found out she was planning to escape with the prince, she pulled out her hair and was left blind.
Traditional solution: Rapunzel cried on him and cured his blindness.	Fractured solution: All now they escape and find diamonds.

Figure 21. Story outline of “Diamonds in the DRC”

The remaining 22% of girls’ writings equated feminine power with spirituality. These girls tapped into their cultural resources and reflected their religious identity in their writing. In these fairytale retellings, aid comes to their female protagonists from a higher power. In

“Sumayya living with another family” the female protagonist receives help from “Allah” by offering prayer to attend an event and in “Maria” the female protagonist is guided by her “ancestors” to escape her harsh circumstances. These views promote the message that it is not natural for women to be active and in control of their own destiny.

In their retellings of the classic tales, learners were comfortable with reconstructing the story to depict their cultural identities, but in some cases did not challenge the ideological gender roles of own cultural practices. The success of this exercise relied on the learners’ ability to engage critically with silenced voices, power relations and the new possibilities of gendered relationships which learners found challenging.

6.4 Affordances of written and performative modes

My findings resonate with the work of Vally Essa and Mendelowitz (2022) in a number of ways. Their study explored the affordance of learners collaboratively transducing written stories into the performance mode. My project started with the collaborative performance mode and then shifted to the individual written mode. Although Vally Essa and Mendelowitz (2022) involved Grade 7 learners and were at a different developmental stage to my Grade 3 learners in this study, there are a number of commonalities which is discussed below.

There was a significant difference between girls’ written (re)designs and the performative (re)designs. The drama renditions afforded learners to better understand multiple perspectives and rendered a deeper critical redesign than that in the written mode. During the performative redesign, learners were able to collaboratively reimagine a fairytale that challenged and reconstructed the hegemonic gender roles represented in the original but struggled in print-based format. One of the greatest affordances of the performative mode in this project was that it was collaborative. Each learner took on a role of a character, which required learners to take responsibility for the overall redesign and their cooperation as a group was essential for the success of the story (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). For instance, the relationship between group members in group one proved to be vital because they needed to work together to produce distinctive character traits to express the experiences of the marginalised characters in the original story. Their collaboration allowed them to challenge the antagonistic relationship between Cinderella and her stepmother and stepsisters. It served as a form of academic responsibility which taught them the process of collaborative writing that often happens in performative design (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). The performative mode in this way created a space for learners to engage with practical storytelling skills, creativity and collaboration (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). Another affordance of the

performative mode was in terms of the linguistic repertoires and out of school literacy practices. The performance mode created a space for learners to showcase their rich range of linguistic repertoires due to the affordance of using verbal language. The performative genre also required a shift of audience to make their story accessible to their peers by depicting realistic social communication (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). This is illustrated in the excerpt below:

Anastasia: Where is she running to?

Drizella: First she steals my prince and now she runs away. What a **weirdo**!

The scene above shows the fluid mode of performance which allowed learners to play with colloquial language due to the affordance of using language in a different setting and amongst a different group of people (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). The use of familiar languages drew on their out of school literacy practices which assisted learners to develop their characters as well as progress the plot of the story at a faster pace than the stories in written mode (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). It showed a development of the story in a way that was not reliant on the standard forms of language but rather through verbal expression. Encouraging out of school language practices created a hospitable space for identity and voice to be explored and negotiated as learners were able to produce an alternative reality as well as challenge the stereotypical submissive behaviour of females presented in the original version (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022).

Although the written mode can facilitate all of the above affordances mentioned for the performative mode, there is stronger association with school-based writing, formality and standard English (Vally Essa and Medelowitz, 2022). The written mode creates a more policed space than performance as learners may assume that they need to be more constrained and traditional in this mode. Unfortunately writing does not have to have these limitations, but in the context of school-based literacy, this is often the perception. The story outline below shows how the learners wrote with correct grammar and spelling and expresses a straightforward plot.

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning outcome: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: <i>Rehuzel</i>	Fractured title: <i>Zion's long hair</i>
Traditional characters: good: <i>Rehuzel Prince</i> bad: <i>Witch</i>	Fractured characters: good: <i>Chedha Rehuzel</i> bad: <i>Hloness Jaguereagle</i>
Traditional setting: <i>Forest</i>	Fractured setting: <i>Jungle</i>
Traditional conflict: <i>Rehuzel was trapped in a high tower. The witch found out she was there to escape with the prince. He fell out the tower and was hurt.</i>	Fractured conflict: <i>He lost his family and he got trapped from a Jaguar.</i>
Traditional solution: <i>Rehuzel cried on him and cured his blindness.</i>	Fractured solution: <i>He attacked her. He attacked the Jaguar and found his family.</i>

Figure 22. Story outline of “Zion’s long hair”

Another limitation of the written mode in this study was that it was an individual task whereas the performance was collaborative. In this sense the performance had a strong sense of play as learners literally engaged in play with peers to create a role play. In addition, developmentally the children in my Grade Three class have much more developed spoken language than written which may be another factor as to why their written redesigns lacked nuance. The story outline below shows how the learner’s limited writing ability restricted her ability to communicate her ideas.

My Fractured Fairytale

Learning outcome: I am redesigning a traditional fairytale from different social and cultural perspectives linked to my personal identity by completing a story outline and illustrating a book cover to exemplify my fractured fairytale.

Traditional title: <i>Cinderella</i>	Fractured title: <i>Grace neiy</i>
Traditional characters: good: <i>Cinderella and Godmother</i> bad: <i>Godmother</i>	Fractured characters: good: <i>Grace neiy</i> bad: <i>Coedittle pig</i>
Traditional setting: <i>ball</i>	Fractured setting: <i>go Cret</i>
Traditional conflict: <i>Cinderella wants to attend ball at the castle but her mean stepmother gives her a lot of chores to do.</i>	Fractured conflict: <i>Grace neiy want to get weht but coedittle gives her to speet gocreti.</i>
Traditional solution: <i>The Fairy Godmother gives cinderella a beautiful dress and she goes to the ball.</i>	Fractured solution: <i>The neiy grace weht to the coedittle dress and she wath home The Ead.</i>

Figure 23. Story outline of “Grace neiy”

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the extent to which critical (re)reading and (re)writing enabled learners to imagine other ways of thinking and to challenge stereotyping which facilitated their critical thinking in order to (re)design fairytale texts in the performative and written mode. This analysis demonstrated the significant role affect and imagination played in the performative mode. It enabled learners to (re)design *Cinderella* from an alternative perspective by allowing them to attend to the voices of marginalised characters, imagine an alternative ending, make connections to the text and challenge stereotypes. Learners' written (re)designs showcased how learners attended to diversity by (re)designing a fairytale from a different social and cultural perspective by asserting their own gendered, cultural and religious identities. The performative and written modes showed to provide different affordances in terms of understanding multiple perspectives and rendering a deeper critical (re)design.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In the concluding chapter I return to my leading motivation for conducting this research - to better understand the ways in which critical literacy can be developed with younger children in the Foundation phase. The main research question focused on how a critical literacy intervention can develop Grade 3 children's capacity to (re)read and (re)rewrite fairytale texts from a critical perspective. I was interested in what the texts produced by Grade 3 learners showed about their developing criticality, what the obstacles and limitations were to developing their ability to engage critically with texts and what aspects of critical literacy they were receptive to and which aspects did they resist.

Young children are able to engage in critical literacy to some extent. Four key findings arose from this research:

7.2.1 Resistance and unevenness of learners' take up of critical literacy

One of the findings of this research was that the learners' uptake of critical literacy was as Luke (2014) describes as "utterly contingent" (p.29) and most certainly not a linear process. My intervention with my Grade 3 learners showcases how this was a process filled with stops, starts, resistance and regression. Learners first showed resistance in the critical (re)reading session when considering multiple perspectives, but showed progress to an uptake towards multiple perspectives when they were exposed to alternative texts. Their performative redesigns showed fleeting signs towards emerging criticality by writing back to the hegemonic ideologies in the dominant text, but many of them regressed when it came to their written designs. McKenzie and Jarvie (2018) recognise that reading and writing against the dominant text can leave learners feeling unsettled as they are confronted with questions that challenge ideas that they once held to be true. The learners' resistance to (re)reading and (re)writing are considered as "growing pains" (p.130) according to McKenzie and Jarvie (2018) and are part of the process of engaging learners in critical literacy.

7.2.2 The role of teacher

One of the key findings of this research was that the critical (re)reading sessions of fairytales encouraged learners to become resistant readers which contributed to their capacity to (re)design fairytales. Important to the (re)reading of the texts was the role I played as a teacher in developing children's ability to assume a critical stance towards a text. Ferreira

(2019) strongly believes that teachers must model a critical literacy orientation towards texts through questioning. During the (re)reading sessions of the *Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, the scaffolded questions I posed promoted discussions that *disrupted the commonplace* by getting the learners involved in thinking beyond the text to unravel the ideological text design choices of the author embedded in the text and to understand how it positions them as readers. Their resistance in the class discussions proved how powerful dominant discourses are in their lives. The questions asked facilitated discussions that explored the relationship between language and power, connections and disconnections to the text and considering the text told from multiple viewpoints. My questions helped to denaturalise some of their ingrained ideas and showed them that there are multiple ways of reading a text and that writers make choices about who speaks, who is silent and how they are represented. The significance of guiding learners to (re)read the fairytale texts allowed learners to develop an attitude of critique towards texts and instilled an awareness that texts are not neutral.

7.2.3 Alternative texts

A second finding of this research was that exposing learners to alternative texts of fairytales during (re)reading, allowed learners to *interrogate multiple viewpoints* which translated into their (re)design. The alternative texts open up the possibility of multiple versions of stories and multiple ways of reading and writing the same story. It provided strong challenges to traditional ways of reading, writing and knowing. The alternative texts in this study narrated the points of view of characters from different socio-cultural backgrounds who were previously silenced and marginalised. In this way it *focused on socio-political issues* that challenged gender and cultural stereotypes in traditional fairytales. The alternative texts showed learners how different meanings can arise from different perspectives. It also sought out an affective response from learners and made a significant contribution to their ability to (re)design *Cinderella* from the perspective of the stepmother and stepsisters. It enabled them to step into role and project themselves into the lives of the characters and imagine how they feel which assisted them in challenging the binaries of good and bad and gender roles from the original story. I believe that the alternative texts to the traditional versions of fairytales were a marvellous way to make learners aware of what they internalised as “truth” about fairytales and afforded them with an opportunity of establishing a critical attitude towards the genre.

7.2.4 Affordance of the performative mode in critically (re)designing a text

The third finding of this research was that the performative mode of role play provided learners with a powerful means to (re)design texts from a critical perspective. Learners were able to get closer to the socio-political issues regarding gender and understood multiple perspectives better in their performative (re)designs than in their written designs. The performative mode allowed learners to break away from the rationalist constraints of writing and open up new possibilities for retelling the story from an alternative perspective. By engaging in affect and imagination, learners were able to reimagine a range of social issues.

7.3 Implications of this research as a teacher

This research has personally informed my pedagogy as a teacher. I now have a better understanding about how to develop critical literacy in the Foundation phase. It has made acknowledge my important role in posing critical questions during read alouds, providing alternative texts and engaging in writing activities that stretches across a range of different modes.

7.4 Shortcomings

This study has one major shortcoming and that is the sample of this research. As this is a Masters research project the research was a small-scale project. Only 28 children limited to Grade 3 from 1 school participated in this study over a period of 3 weeks. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be viewed as comprehensive, and leaves room for future research on a broader scale which may yield different results in different classrooms and contexts.

7.5 Recommendations

More research on critical literacy practices needs to be conducted in the Foundation phase to consider the relevance and importance of critical literacy with young children. There is a need for a more systemic critical literacy intervention in the Foundation phase and primary schools. It is recommended that workshops be directed with foundation phase teachers so that critical literacy can be integrated into literacy practices. Teachers in the Foundation phase must engage with learners in deconstructing texts to make hidden ideologies visible and open to learners' questioning. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate alternative texts to value the diverse backgrounds of learners in their classrooms and also consider other perspectives. Teachers are finally urged to explore multimodalities such as performances to enhance critical writing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Class discussion 1

Before reading the story, the teacher will discuss the meaning of “point of view” with learners, that it is a particular attitude and way of considering a matter or situation. The teacher will also explain that in a story, there are many characters, but usually it is only told from one character’s point of view.

1. After reading the story, who do you think is the “good guy”? Why do you say so?
2. Who is the “bad guy”? Why do you say so?
3. From what point of view is The Three Little Pigs told?
4. What do you think of the pigs? Which words and images make you think this way?
5. What do you think of the wolf? Which words and images make you think this way?
6. Why do you think the author chose to tell it from that point of view?
7. Who gets to speak?
8. Who speaks for whom in the story?
9. Whose voice is missing from the story?
10. How would you feel if you were a pig in the story?
11. How would you feel if you were the wolf in the story?
12. How would the story change if it was told from a different point of view, like the wolf?

Appendix 2

Class discussion 2

1. From whose point of view is the True Story of the Three Little Pigs told from?
2. What do you think of the wolf after hearing this version of the story? What words or gestures make you think this way?
3. What do you think of the pigs now? What words or gestures make you think this way?
4. In the original story, the author did not tell us the wolf’s name is Alexander T Wolf, but in this version of the story the author did, why do you think the author made this choice?
5. Is Alexander T Wolf treated differently because he is the only wolf, living next door to neighbours who are only pigs? How so?
6. Do you think that the police and reporters treated Alexander T Wolf fairly? Explain.
7. If Alexander was a pig, do you think anybody would have believed his story? Why or why not? What do you think would have happened?
8. Imagine that you are a pig in this society. How would you feel when you heard about what happened to the Three Little Pigs?

9. Is it possible to determine which version of the story is the truth? Why?
10. Have you ever disagreed with somebody about something that happened? Did you figure out what really happened?

Appendix 3

Cinderella: Group 1

Remember this is a retelling of Cinderella as told from the stepmother's and stepsisters' point of view. You must act out the scene from the eyes of these characters. Choose how you would like to portray each character (kind, friendly, rude, bratty etc.)

Prepare the following scene and act it out in front of the class:

In this scene, the stepmother finds it difficult to be accepted as Cinderella's new mother. Cinderella does not like her stepsisters, Anastasia and Drizella. Act out an argument between Cinderella, the stepmother and the stepsisters.

Artefacts: Household cleaning items

Characters: Stepmother, Anastasia, Drizella and Cinderella (4 characters)

Cinderella: Group 2

Remember this is a retelling of Cinderella as told from the stepmother's and stepsisters' point of view. You must act out the scene from the eyes of these characters. Choose how you would like to portray each character (kind, friendly, rude, bratty etc.)

Prepare the following scene and act it out in front of the class:

In this scene, two royal messengers arrive at the house with an invitation to a masquerade ball held at the castle. Cinderella is not allowed to go to the ball.

Artefacts: trumpet, invitation, shopping bags, pieces of different coloured material, masks.

Characters: Cinderella, Anastasia, Drizella, stepmother, royal messenger 1, royal messenger 2 (6 characters).

Cinderella: Group 3

Remember this is a retelling of Cinderella as told from the stepmother's and stepsisters' point of view. You must act out the scene from the eyes of these characters. Choose how you would like to portray each character (kind, friendly, rude, bratty etc.)

Prepare the following scene and act it out in front of the class:

In this scene, the stepmother and stepsisters are at the ball having a great time. Cinderella makes a grand entrance at the ball. The scene ends with the prince running after Cinderella as she leaves one of her glass slippers behind.

Artefacts: Pieces of different coloured material, crown, masks, shoe.

Characters: stepmother, Cinderella, Anastasia, Drizella, the prince (5 characters)

Cinderella: Group 4

Remember this is a retelling of Cinderella as told from the stepmother's and stepsisters' point of view. You must act out the scene from the eyes of these characters. Choose how you would like to portray each character (kind, friendly, rude, bratty etc.)

Prepare the following scene and act it out in front of the class:

In this scene, a few days have passed since the ball. Two royal messengers visit the house and announce that the prince is looking for the maiden with whom he danced with at the ball. Cinderella and her stepsisters are ordered to try on the shoe.

Artefacts: Drums, shoe

Characters: royal messenger 1, royal messenger 2, stepmother, Anastasia, Drizella, Cinderella (6 characters)

Cinderella: Group 5

Remember this is a retelling of Cinderella as told from the stepmother's and stepsisters' point of view. You must act out the scene from the eyes of these characters. Choose how you would like to portray each character (kind, friendly, rude, bratty etc.)

Prepare the following scene and act it out in front of the class:

In this scene, the messengers take Cinderella to meet the prince where he proposes to her. Decide what happens to the stepmother and the stepsisters and how the story ends.

Artefacts: crowns, ring

Characters: Cinderella, prince, royal messenger 1, royal messenger 2, stepmother, Anastasia, Drizella (7 characters)