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Transforming Literacy Teaching

A teacher's experience of implementing Critical literacy and Philosophy for Children in a Grade Three South African Classroom

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Declaration

I, Nicolette Anastassopoulos, hereby declare that the contents of this research report represent my own unaided work and that the research report has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not those of the University of the Witwatersrand. I am aware that the plagarism (the use of someone else's work without permission and/or without acknowledging the original source is wrong. I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas in my writing.

Nicolette Anastassopoulos:_____

Place:_____

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Abstract

Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Critical Literacy (CL) are orientations that embrace a socio-cultural perspective to literacy by including the life-worlds of children. They also encourage meta-cognitive thinking by encouraging children to explore written texts. The focus of this qualitative project research was to explore the impact of implementing CL and P4C in a Grade Three classroom using a Community of Enquiry, and the stimulus of a picturebook, *The Tunnel* by Anthony Browne, (1989). The researcher explored the impact of this intervention on the teacher as well as the children.

The data collection consisted of the teacher's reflective journal, transcripts from six Communities of Enquiry and the children's creative writing and artwork in the form of picturebooks. The data collection indicated two main findings. Firstly, teaching in the CoE required a different discourse for the teacher. Secondly, the children's experience of literacy was enriched by adopting a socio-cultural perspective that enabled them to explore and critique their worlds. The overall positive results indicate that implementing these two approaches enriched the children's creative, critical and collaborative thinking, while improving relationships in the classroom. Further research could help to broaden and develop the scope of this study as it was a small-scale study in a private, middle class school in Johannesburg.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACSI: Association of Christian Schools International

CL: Critical Literacy

CoE: Community of Enquiry

GED: Gauteng Education Department

HOD: Head of Department

NAPTOSA: National Professional Teacher's Association of South Africa

P4C: Philosophy for Children

PWC: Philosophy With Children

OFSTED: The office for inspecting standards in the United Kingdom. It reports directly to parliament and is considered to be independent and impartial.

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