University of Reading

A grounded theory study of secondary pupils' and teachers' perceptions and conceptualisations of reading and reader identity, and the influence of policy and place.

Doctorate in Education

Institute of Education

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May 2022

Declaration of original authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the perceptions and conceptualisations of reading and reader identity of secondary school pupils and their teachers. In a context where adolescent readership is presented as in decline, the study analyses the ways in which participants value and foreground reading as predominantly of fiction and primarily for pleasure in motivating and sustaining reader identity. The study explores the lived experience of reading where the authentic and affective nature of the experience is highly valued but contrasted with the often objective and analytical reading of school. Finally, the ways in which socio-cultural factors influenced participants' experiences, and were further enacted within the study, are explored.

The research employed an interpretative constructivist grounded theory approach. Data were gathered through focus groups, with discussions facilitated through use of a mosaic approach of participatory methods. Sixteen secondary school pupils and two teachers from schools in the South-East took part. Data were analysed in accordance with the iterative and repeated inductive methods of the approach to afford arising theorisation.

This study contributes new theoretical knowledge because it challenges the narrative of declining adolescent readership and instead illuminates the complex amalgam of factors that contribute to on-going and sustained reader identity. It contributes to the body of professional knowledge by illustrating some of the current perceptions of reading in the secondary context and implications for practice are discussed as a result.

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1. Introduction

Reading has numerous benefits, but in educational terms is seen as significant because of the links with improving educational attainment and outcomes (OECD, 2010; Sullivan & Brown, 2015). As a result, reading in schools remains a central focus of government attention, often framed in a rhetoric of raising standards and increasing rigour (DfE, 2015). However, research into improving reading is often focused on development of reading in the primary context, such as the debate about the place and role of phonics (Wyse & Bradbury, 2022). As a result, the perspective offered about learning to read is typically one of primary experience and context.   Research into reading in the secondary context is often focused on addressing perceived reading gaps in attainment (Quigley, 2020). Whilst both types of research stem from a desire to better understand how children learn to read in order to develop effective practice, the focus of such work tends toward an emphasis on pedagogy and practice from a teacher perspective. Studies which offer the perspective of the reader tend to large-scale studies of habits, preferences and behaviours, such as the studies of the National Literacy Trust (NLT) (Clark, 2019; Clark & Picton, 2020). As a result, research into secondary reading practices is limited in comparison with primary counterparts and tends to either the large-scale, often quantitative, or to very specific identified enquiries looking for causal links or to address perceived deficits.

Moreover, given that learning to read is often assumed to be the domain of primary education, focus on reading in the secondary context tends to debate and commentary, often on the nature and content of the reading curriculum and related pedagogy (Bleiman, 2020; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021).   Such literature suggests a narrowing of the conceptualisation of reading as a result of an increasingly demanding assessment regime (Hall, 2015; Marshall,

2011; Sainsbury et al., 2006). However, empirical evidence to support these critiques is limited. As a result, there are few studies offering the perspective of the secondary adolescent reader (Cliff Hodges, 2016).

Furthermore, this study takes place in the context of on-going debate about the contested nature of English as a secondary school subject and the knowledgebase thereof (Eaglestone, 2020; Elliott, 2020; Goodwyn, 2020; Roberts, 2020). It follows a relatively recent National Curriculum (NC) revision and reforms to GCSE assessment frameworks which position reading in particular and specific ways (DfE, 2013, 2014). The most recent iterations of the NC require development of a love of reading alongside critical readings of works of challenging and high-quality literature. Moreover, the reforms to GCSE Literature have been critiqued because of the highly reductive and challenging ways that they assess knowledge of reading (Stock, 2017). Thus, the nature of the school curriculum offers the possibility of encoding particular views and ideas about the nature of reading.

1.1. Personal and professional background

My interest in reading is life-long: I am a self-proclaimed reader. As an English teacher and teacher educator of many years, a career entered into from a love of reading, I am aware of my own subjectivity, of the values, beliefs and experiences about reading and the teaching of reading that I hold. I have been an avid reader my entire life, enjoy reading and the pleasure, escapism and fulfilment that it brings. Reading has always been easy for me and I have understood and experienced its many benefits, personal, educational and professional in many facets of my life. I take for granted my own skill and competence in reading and the automaticity with which I am able to switch between the many different purposes that

reading serves in my life.   The transitions from reader to scholar to professional teacher and iterations between whilst deliberate have, in the main, remained largely unconscious. This, and previous related scholary activities have been the main catalyst for deliberate reflection and reflexivity. I therefore consider readership to be a core component of my identity: being a reader is an essential part of who I am. I acknowledge, as a result, my own default position when conceptualising reading and of the deep perceptions that I already hold, based on both conscious and unconscious experience. I needed to be mindful throughout the study not to look for specific data or to seek affirmation of this view in the review of the literature and data. I needed to recognise and acknowledge the existence and validity of alternative positions and be conscious that my own positionality would influence what I saw (Charmaz, 2014).

Thus, my interest in reading is central to both personal and professional identity and it was importance to understanding and acknowledge my positionality in respect of both. My particular interest in research into reading and reading education started during my teaching career, with constant reflection on what it means and what it takes to be an effective teacher of reading in the secondary context. My teacher training and professional experience and development were framed primarily within a socio-cultural view of reading informed by key theorists whose work has become increasingly side-lined in current debate. The work in particular of Rosenblatt (1978; 1980), Meek (1982, 1988, 1991; 1977) and Cliff-Hodges (2002; 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2016) has been seminal in my thinking and central to my development as an English teacher and teacher of reading.   I have recognised the challenges that current developments in policy and pedagogy have presented to my world view and attempting to understand some of these relatively new-to-me ideas was a key driver for the research questions. Moreover, understanding of my positionality and that emerging

theorisation of the study is dependent on this was one of the key reasons for adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014).

More specifically, an on-going interest in central and fundamental attending epistemological ideas, including what it means to know English (Grossman & Shulman, 1994) became particularly pertinent when I moved into my current role in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) as a co-ordinator for the secondary PGCE English route, working alongside school-based training too. Stemming from sixteen years of experience as a classroom practitioner and ten years as a subject leader, I continue to find myself naturally inclined to pedagogies and practices founded within socio-cultural view and more wary and critical of the recent evidence and tendency for direct instructional approaches. I have become increasingly aware of my own and, more importantly, what appeared to be emerging tensions for student teachers as they navigated potentially conflicting ideas, philosophies and pedagogies about teaching. Whilst I aimed to developing their identities and practices as autonomous professionals, able to make informed decisions about their practice, I found that this sometimes conflicted with advice that they were being offered elsewhere, including in their practical placements. I needed to continue to be aware of the potential for seeking confirmation as much in my analysis of the data in the study as I am in my professional responsibilities, extending too to the professional participants in this study.

I initially investigated this potential for cognitive dissonance within a dissertation completed as part of my MA ED, exploring how student teachers navigated their journeys from readers to teachers of reading, utilising critical incident collages and discussions thereof to seek student teachers' perspectives of their experiences (Hickman, 2013). One key finding of this work was the significant influence of assessment in framing practice. This current study

thus continues and pursues unanswered lines of enquiry and interest arising, including the extent to which perceptions and conceptualisations of reading are influenced and shaped by experience and policy.   More significantly, being better informed about the perspectives and experiences of those working and learning in the secondary context has implications for on-going development of pedagogy and practice. This includes within my own context, where I hope to be able to better support and enable student teachers to succeed and thrive in the contemporary secondary context.

1.2. The context of the study

This study took place at a time of continuing debate about the nature and purpose of schooling, where it is argued that current reading practices in school do little to support or develop a life-long love of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2010b; Westbrook, 2007). At the same time, large-scale surveys continue to report a decline in reading amongst adolescents (Clark, 2019; Videbaek, 2020).

Whilst current studies tend to prioritise a more scientific view of reading (Shanahan, 2020b), this study was interested in investigating the lived experiences and perspectives of those most involved at the 'chalkface.' The project aimed to give voice to those currently under-represented in research, to better understand their perspectives in offering insights into the impact of practice and policy. The intended outcomes included to inform my own role as a teacher educator and support the work that I do with practitioners in the field.

Moreover, the timeline and context for the study included a once in a generation socio-historical event in the form of a global pandemic. This meant that the study had potential for affording insights into experiences particular to this time.

1.3. Overview of the research

This study was borne from a desire to understand how secondary school pupils and their teachers perceive and conceptualise reading. The key research questions at its heart are:

1. How do pupils identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
   a. How do pupils identify as readers?
   b. How do pupils conceptualise (their own) reading and reader development?

2. How do teachers identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
   a. How do teachers identify as readers and as teachers of reading?
   b. How do teachers conceptualise reading and reader development?

3. Do reading spaces shape or influence reading?

4. What do participants' responses suggest about the influence of policy and practice of teaching of reading within English in the secondary school?

The study adopted a socio-cultural view of reading from the outset, on the basis that this is an aspect of reading development currently neglected in favour of more scientific views (Shanahan, 2020a). The study was framed by an understanding of the complexity of reading and that efforts to shine a light on one aspect inevitably leads to marginalisation of others (Meek, 1991; Meek et al., 1977). Thus, the constructivist grounded theory methodology and methods on which the research design was founded enabled theorisation in the light of the data. Further, the research design adopted an approach attentive to the voices and lived experiences of adolescent readers and their teachers. It sought to value their positions, seek

their perspectives and better understand the influences by which identities and conceptualisations were informed and shaped.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter 2 reviews underpinning literature and research about reading and education. My grounded theory journey was central to all aspects of the study, including during the writing process (Charmaz, 2014). The writing of the thesis was iterative, including that of the literature review where key ideas and concepts needed to be included, revisited, revised and reconsidered in the light of the data collection and analysis. Considering the positioning and conceptualisation of reading are the foundation for considering ideas of 'readership' and what it might mean to be a reader. The chapter therefore begins with a review of key theoretical constructions. However, the adoption of a socio-cultural perspective of reading, an initial idea and personal leaning at the outset of the study, was only consolidated once this view became a prevalent pattern in the data (Charmaz, 2014). The chapter considers the specific nature and purpose of reading in the secondary context, exploring the debates and existing research about secondary school English, curriculum, pedagogy and practice, centred on ideas arising from the data and emerging during analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Similarly, the final sections of the chapter consider the concepts of identity and place and their value and contribution in the context of reading and readers, attending to particular ideas as raised by participants. Thus the writing of the literature review was 'emergent' rather than linear (Charmaz, 2014, p. 290).

Chapter 3 sets out the methodological approach taken. It considers the choice of an interpretivist paradigm and constructivist ontology. It justifies the use of a constructivist

grounded theory approach to foreground participants' perspectives and lived experience. The chapter rationalises the use of a mosaic approach employing a range of participatory methods to shift focus to different aspects of reading and readership and enable a holistic view of reading from the perspective of participants in order to illuminate the aspects of reading that are most significant to them. It explains the use of data collection via focus groups and the ethical considerations attended to in the design and enactment of the study.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 present the findings and provide the journey arising from the systematic and iterative analysis of the data. Each chapter provides an explanation of the central themes and findings. Chapter 4 presents the finding of reading defined as by material and content, predominantly fiction, described and presented variously to illustrate the elements that participants found particularly memorable and to demonstrate the highly personalised development of reader identity. Chapter 5 presents findings related to the theme of the experiential nature of reading and that its immersive and engaging nature is part of the motivation for reading and for the sustaining and development of reading habits and reader identity. Chapter 6 discusses the themes of places and spaces and people within, considering factors which influence participants' reading experiences within a wider, social culture for reading. It finds the importance of family members and homes, particularly in participants' formative reading experiences. Moreover, in the school context it finds particular and distinct reading experiences associated with reading for study purposes. Chapter 7 discusses themes relating to the socio-cultural contexts for and experiences of reading, with a particular emphasis on the role and nature of talk.

Chapter 8 discusses the findings of the preceding chapters. It identifies that participants predominantly conceptualised reading as of fiction and for pleasure, valuing the aesthetic and

affective nature of the experience. It explains how pupil participants' perceptions are framed by lived experiences of reading in comparison with teachers' perceptions which are framed by curriculum demands and expectations. It also explores the value and significance of social and collaborative approaches to learning and knowledge construction as illustrated in and arising from the study.

Chapter 9 concludes the study, considering the limitations and identifying the theoretical and professional contributions that that are made to research and knowledge in the field, and the professional implications thereof.

2.   Literature Review

Considering the positioning and conceptualisation of reading matters as the foundation for reflecting on ideas of 'readership' and what it might mean to be a reader. Therefore, this review of existing literature begins by discussing the theoretical construction of the concepts of reading and the reader.   The chapter then reviews the specific nature and purpose of reading in school with a focus on the secondary English context and curriculum. The chapter discusses literature which critiques how reading provision has been shaped and informed by policy with attendant impact on pedagogy and practice, where much of the current research into reading exists. The final sections present how the concepts of identity and place are particularly relevant to reading and readers.

2.1. The importance of readers and reading

2.1.1. Why does reading matter?

Reading matters because it benefits the individual (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; Dombey et al., 2013). Reading contributes to personal development and enrichment (Chambers, 2011; Cox, 1989; Daly, 2014; Eaglestone, 2019). Reading enables readers to: experience different, other worlds (Cliff Hodges, 2016); make sense of the world in which they live (Brindley, 2015; Daly, 2014; Dombey et al., 2013; Hall, 2015), as well as subvert and challenge it (Meek, 1988, 1991).   Moreover, reading affords opportunities for thinking, reflection and contemplation (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Hall, 2015; Westbrook, 2007). Reading also benefits and enables participation in society and democracy (Eaglestone, 2019; Greenleaf et al., 2001;

Jerrim & Moss, 2019; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Sutherland et al., 2017; Traves, 2017) and is seen as promoting social mobility (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Sullivan & Brown, 2015).   As a result, reading in schools remains a central focus of government attention, often framed in a rhetoric of raising standards and increasing rigour (DfE, 2015) and seen as significant in improving educational outcomes (Clark & Cunningham, 2016; Clark & De Zoysa, 2011; OECD, 2010; Sullivan & Brown, 2015).   However, the benefits to the individual, it is argued, are in danger of being lost in the intense focus in schools on testing and examinations (Cliff Hodges, 2010b; Daly, 2014).

Furthermore, there is wide agreement that it is difficult to define exactly what constitutes 'reading' and 'a reader' (Brindley & Marshall, 2015; Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2016; Daly, 2014; Dean, 2003; Fletcher, 2017; Harrison, 2004; Myers, 2009).   It is important, initially, to be clear about the concepts of 'reader' and 'reading' as distinct but interlinked: the different between reader as noun and therefore object and reading as verb and therefore action.   To focus on the reader means to focus on the person, whereas to focus on reading means to focus primarily on the action.

2.1.2.   Socio-cultural views of reading

Many theorists argue the difficulties and challenges of attempted definition of reading, explaining that such attempts fail to capture its complexity (Meek, 1988; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Smith, 2012).   Smith (2012, p. 179), for example, asserts that definitions for and of reading are not helpful, creating instead a list of possibilities 'to illustrate the richness.'   The difficulties and complexities of attempting to define what is meant by reading is further compounded because it is difficult to observe what it is that people do when they read: it is

often considered a silent and solitary act (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Yandell, 2013). As a result, there is wide-spread debate about reading (Brindley & Marshall, 2015; Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2016; Daly, 2014; Dean, 2003; Fletcher, 2017; Harrison, 2004; Myers, 2009). Given the contested nature of the concept at the heart of this work, this study values and adopts a socio-cultural view. Socio-cultural theories of reading are not new but merit revisiting in the current climate which is more likely to prioritise and value a cognitive and scientific view of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Shanahan, 2020a, 2020b)

A socio-cultural position values the ideas of Vygotsky (1978), who emphasised the collaborative and negotiated nature of learning as a practice enacted with others. Moreover, Vygotsky (ibid) stressed the significance of interactions with others as central to learning. Key, therefore, to Vygotsky's ideas are the connections between thoughts and language (Vygotsky, 1978). Because cognitive development is dependent on others, it is also heavily reliant on spoken language for both communication and developing ideas. The 'others' with whom a learner might communicate can be equally an adult or peers.

This constructivist ontology is central to pedagogy and practice in school-based English; the world is socially constructed and therefore the subject of English in schools provides ways of understanding and navigating this world through language and communication (Eaglestone, 2020; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Nystrand, 2006; Roberts, 2020; Yandell & Brady, 2016). Moreover, the importance of spoken language in supporting thinking has been investigated and asserted by the work of Mercer (1995, 2002; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). He argues that human beings uniquely use language to collaborate, pooling mental resources to collectively create knowledge and understanding. Mercer (ibid) thus argues the powerful place and

contribution of social interaction and talk, comprising many permutations, in learning and development. This study therefore posits a socio-cultural position on reading, asserting that there are many aspects of reading, including learning to read, which occur with other people.

Socio-cultural theories of reading place significance on the social and cultural elements of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Cremin, 2014; Daly, 2014; Pearson et al., 2014; Ruddell & Unrau, 2013; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Smith, 2012; Yandell, 2014). Reading is an 'amalgam of a whole set of cultural practices' (Dean, 2003, p. 7) rooted in the importance attached by society to being literate (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Meek, 1991).   Moreover, all texts are a form of cultural reproduction, reflecting the values, attitudes and times of the context in which it was produced (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Eaglestone, 2017, 2019). Indeed, even what is meant by the term 'text' is subjective, with some arguing that defining reading as being of particular types of texts, or of texts exclusively, is limiting (Hopper, 2005; Meek, 1991; Yandell, 2014). Meek (1991) warned of the increasing complexity of defining reading in the light of the growth of an increasingly diverse range of texts, suggesting a need for a definition which recognises the multiplicity and plurality of texts, reading and readers.   Accordingly, this study adopts a post-modernist definition of text whereby reading might encompass the way that we read the world and all representations and forms within (Kress, 2004), such that what might be defined as texts and reading will continue to change over time (Meek, 1991). Additionally, texts are formed from and shaped by particular linguistic and literary conventions and patterns which are, in turn, socially constructed (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Tennent, 2014).   A socio-cultural view, in the light of this, thus constructs reading as complex, fluid and adaptable.

Socio-cultural theories also place emphasis on reading as determined by and within the context of its use (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Richmond, 2017; Turvey et al., 2006; Yandell, 2013).   It draws on the Vygotskian (1978) idea that the nature of learning is such that it cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs.   The context in which the text is read and the context of the reader, including their background, beliefs, values and experiences all further contribute to the reading process (Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Luis et al., 1992; Richmond, 2013; Rosenblatt, 1978; Stanovich, 2008; Yandell, 2014). Several studies of reading acknowledge that texts might be read differently because the experiences and perspectives which influence interpretation are also shaped in a social and cultural context (Daly, 2014; Dombey et al., 2013; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Indeed, Grossman and Shulman (1994, p. 7) argue that, 'All knowledge is text in context.' Moreover, reading is social in nature, an act embedded in the social practices of its uses with and alongside others (Meek, 1991).   As a result, such theories suggest that the nature of reading and thus reader identity are constantly shifting and changing, in life-long development (Hall, 2015; Meek, 1991).

Furthermore, socio-cultural theories highlight that reading is social in practice too, whereby the reader is active in meaning making (Turvey et al., 2006; Yandell, 2014; Yandell & Brady, 2016). It is enacted with other people, firstly authors but also people within as well as beyond the text (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Eaglestone, 2019; Meek, 1988). The nature of the process is not neutral: there is transaction between the text and the reader and thus the role of the reader in the process cannot be ignored (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Fish, 1980; Iser, 1978; Meek, 1988, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1978). Eaglestone (2019) describes the nature of this process as a conversation.

There are further ways in which reading might be seen as social, part of processes involving others (Meek, 1991; Yandell, 2014). Chambers (2011) argues, for example, that when we have enjoyed a reading experience, not only do we want to relive this, we also want to share the experience with others, to talk about in what he coins, 'profoundly important gossip.' (Chambers, 2011, p. 78). Thus, Chambers (2011) builds on the ideas of Rosenblatt (1978) who suggested that, because each reader engages with a text in a different and unique way, discussion enables readers to not only share these experiences but also to collaborate and make meaning together. Accordingly, the social aspects of reading are not only emphasised but also recognised for their significance (Pierce & Gilles, 2021; Yandell, 2013). This study therefore values a socio-cultural position because this underpinning world view is significant in multiple aspects of research and theories about reading.

2.1.3. Scientific views of reading

Socio-cultural views and reader response theories as outlined in the previous section are relatively recent in the theorisation of reading (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Other views of reading exist, however, particularly in the educational domain. It is commonly acknowledged that those who read, however defined, get better at reading (Clark, 2019; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Cremin, 2014; McGeown et al., 2016; Meek, 1988; Stanovich, 2008; Topping, 2016). It is therefore understandable that reading is the focus of much attention from those involved in education: it seems logical that a better understanding of the concept would lead to better support for developing readers. In current education debate and rhetoric, including in the recently published Ofsted (2022) review of research into factors that influence the quality of English education in schools in England, a more mechanistic 'science of reading' is currently prioritised (Afflerbach, 2016; Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Shanahan, 2020a, 2020b), This

view foregrounds particular research into primarily metacognitive and psychological processes which tend to marginalise wider, socio-cultural influences (Hattan & Lupo, 2020; Shanahan, 2020a). An emphasis on a 'scientific approach' is made, it is argued, on the assumption that teaching in accordance with science will guarantee the best outcomes. This includes addressing disadvantage by attending to cultural deficits seen as arising from differing backgrounds (Lemov et al., 2016; Quigley, 2020; Webb, 2019).

A scientific view of reading favours cognitive processes and strategies (Afflerbach, 2016; Richmond, 2013). Reading is reduced in this model to a simple correlation between word recognition and comprehension and where skilled reading is seen as the accurate, fluent and efficient co-ordination thereof (Rose, 2006; Scarborough, 2002). Meaning making is positioned thus as 'derived,' (ibid) and comprehension and understanding potentially positioned simply and objectively. Deficits or difficulties with reading are then considered in the context of the component factors of and with areas of language comprehension and word recognition (Scarborough, 2002). This leads to an identification of factors which can be addressed through 'instruction' with an emphasis on improved attainment (Lemov et al., 2016).

Such a simple view foregrounds reading as information acquisition and often does not take into account socio-cultural influences and contexts and the significance of the affective domain (Cremin, 2020; Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020). Positioned thus, reading has been described as reduced to 'decontextualised skills' and 'pragmatic competence' (Locke, 2015, p. 18). Elliott (2020) further argues that such emphasis on a scientific construction of knowledge has coincided with the growth of a 'what works' agenda for teaching where sharing of practice-based strategies and approaches are valued and prioritised over more academic and

theoretical perspectives which acknowledge complexity and ambiguity.

The complexities of reading are acknowledged to be such that attempts to shine a spotlight on one aspect invariably thus fails to represent all elements adequately (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Dean, 2003; Meek, 1991). This has led some theorists to argue for an understanding of reading which includes a 'meaningful integration of these orientations' (Alexander & Fox, 2013, p. 35) so that they are seen as complementary rather than competing and conflicting (Locke, 2015). This study acknowledges the importance of attending to both cognitive and affective domains. However, given that much research into reading tends to focus on particular causal connections within reading, this present study investigates whether different orientations are seen as significant in current reader conceptualisations and perceptions.

2.1.4. *What or who is the reader?*

Conceptualisations of reading which focus primarily on the process or practice of reading can also obscure or minimise the place and role of the reader. Many argue that attempts to categorise readers are limiting not least because, in the light of a socio-cultural view of reading, what it means to be a reader continues to change with context and therefore over time (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Daly, 2014; Hall, 2009; Manguel, 2010, 2013; Meek, 1988, 1991; Traves, 2017). Because reading is a subjective, personal experience, there is no such thing as a typical reader or typical reading experience (Fish, 1980; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Meek, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1980; Yandell, 2014). Meek (1988) suggests that when we ask a reader about the texts they are reading, their answer tells us more about the reader rather than the text. This idea is central to the aims and design of this current study

and this section therefore explores what or who is meant by the concept of the reader so as to understand and prioritise the individuals and their experience.

Evidence from the National Literacy Trust (NLT), a charity dedicated to improvement of literacy in the UK, suggests that many young people, during and after leaving school, do not hold positive attitudes towards reading and of themselves as readers (C. Clark, 2014, 2016; Clark, 2019; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020).   Indeed, regular studies such as their large-scale annual surveys, have attempted to shed light on the reading habits and attitudes of young people. These surveys are typically of approximately 56,000 children and young people aged between nine and eighteen. Most recent findings (Clark, 2019; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020) suggest that reading engagement (defined as being enjoyment, frequency and attitude) continues a four-year decline, most prevalent amongst adolescent readers. Whilst these, and other similar studies (Topping, 2016, 2019), offer some useful insights into reading trends among children and young people, the use of quantitative data and scope and scale of the sample size provide generalisations which offer limited detail to illustrate the potential complexity and individuality of reader identity.

Studies such as these can also objectify reading and frame it as 'a measurable result rather than a lived experience' (Cremin, 2014, p. 7). They tend to focus on very specific questions about children's reading rather than on their rationale or conceptualisations (Moss & McDonald, 2004). When such questions are included, the nature of the research design can present a pre-figured view of reading which limits young people's responses (Cliff Hodges, 2010a). Qualitative findings can also lack detail about the contexts and factors which shape readers and reading. Thus, existing studies focusing on reading choices and preferences offer

only a partial and limited view of what it might mean to be a reader. This study contributes to knowledge in this field by offering a more detailed, qualitative view of reader experience.

For example, Cliff Hodges' (2010b) study illustrates the value of a qualitative approach in seeking young people's perspectives. Her investigation into the reading histories of a class of 12–13-year-olds involved use of critical incident collages in the form of reading rivers. The method proved valuable in promoting talk and providing deeper insights than had been previously known into the complexities of children's reading identities. As such, this present study seeks to build on this earlier work by incorporating its method as well as seeking to provide more recent insights into contemporary adolescent readers.

Similarly, one very recent enquiry, Chapman's (2020) study of the perceptions of a Year 9 (14-15 years old) class, investigated the reading lives of a particular group of female students. The study found that although participants were reading on-line content such as blogs and Instagram posts, they did not consider these to be reading. The study also found that participants struggled to find material of interest and that they valued the escapist opportunities afforded by reading. These findings add detail which provide those working with adolescent readers some insight into readers' lives and illustrate a more complex dimension of concepts of reading and readers. This current study seeks to add to the knowledge in this field in a similar way by foregrounding the conceptualisations and perceptions of readers through use of their own words and language.

2.1.5. The active reader

Socio-cultural theories of reading recognise the role and significance of the reader as an active participant in, rather than passive receiver during or of, the reading process (Fish, 1980; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Meek, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1980; Yandell, 2014). The nature of the relationship between reader and text/author is thus an area of considerable interest and commentary. Barthes (1977) initially critiqued the idea that the meaning of a text lay within, waiting to be unlocked by the reader. Instead, he argued that meaning is realised at the point of reading and is therefore unique. Reader response theories (Iser, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1978) build on this idea and acknowledge the context of the reader, contending that each reader brings to the text experiences and understandings which not just inform but are influential in creating meanings and interpretations. Rosenblatt (1978) argued that the reader is thus active in and contributes to the process of making meaning such that the process is transactional, rather than transmission of a singular meaning in or of the text. Additionally, this event in time is contextual and therefore susceptible to change; different meanings might arise from readings in different times and places. Rosenblatt (1978) also posited that readers can experience different types of responses: efferent, which focus on what might be retained from the text and aesthetic, focused on the affective experience of the text. She argued for the aesthetic, particularly of literature, describing the emotional response being 'shaped through the lived-through experience' (Rosenblatt, 1980, p. 386). Iser (1978) similarly argued an individualised reading and interpretation of a text by a reader which affords transcendence over reality.

Additional insights into the nature of the relationship between reader and text and/or author present the relationship as one which empowers the reader. Meek (1988, p. 10), for example, terms the relationship between reader and text as 'symbolic interaction' , whereby readers pick up the authorial voice and perspective as both teller and told. Chambers (2011)

describes the relationship between author and reader as one of mutual respect, situated in and focused on the text whereby the books that matter most to readers are those that speak to and for them.

Furthermore, Chambers (2011) argues that reader response is a psychological inevitability. He highlights two responses as being of particular significance to a reader. The first is a need or desire to experience the pleasure again which might involve rereading the same book, reading another book by the same author or more books of the same genre. It might also include reading for the sake of reading, to experience the pleasure afforded, echoing the connection posited between success and motivation in many studies (McGeown et al., 2015; McGeown et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2016; Stanovich, 2008). The second response that Chambers (2011) cites as significant is that of the need to talk to someone, in part to relive and make sense of the importance of the experience for ourselves but also because of a desire for others to have the same experience.

Such is the significance of the relationship, there have been multiple studies investigating the relationship between pleasure and success in reading (McGeown et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2016). Whilst these insights are useful and helpful in conceptualising and positing the reader as active and engaged in the process of reading, studies such as those cited tend to focus on children of primary school age. This present study therefore looks to add to the knowledge in this respect by considering the extent to which affective factors are significant in adolescent readers' conceptualisations and perceptions of reading.

2.1.6. Reader motivation and agency

This chapter has already highlighted the significance of the interaction between reader and text and pointed to the relationship between success and motivation. Several studies find a compelling link between motivation and reading, concluding that children will read more if they enjoy it (Chambers, 2011; C. Clark, 2014; Clark & Cunningham, 2016; Clark & Rumbold, 2006; M. M. Clark, 2016; Cremin, 2014; McGeown et al., 2016; Richmond, 2017). Whilst these offer useful findings on the virtuous link between enjoyment and attainment, they tend to offer very little detail about what it is that makes reading enjoyable and therefore sustainable, particularly for adolescent readers (McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2016). It is argued that it is not just enjoyment but also curiosity which compels and sustains reader, through intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; McGeown et al., 2016). Extrinsic motivation to read tends to be linked to external rewards such as better grades and improved attainment, whereas intrinsically motivated reading is seen as reading for its own sake (McGeown et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2016).

The connection between reading, motivation and pleasure is therefore well-established. However, the term 'reading for pleasure' is also often used interchangeably with ideas about reading engagement, independence and wider reading (Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Cremin, 2014). For the purposes of the study reported in this thesis, the idea of reading for pleasure is, at least in part, reading for its own sake (Cremin, 2020; Laurenson et al., 2015), including that this refers to reading undertaken as a result of readers' interests, choices and preferences (Westbrook, 2007) . Thus, choice and agency are also seen as significant in development of readers (Chambers, 2011; Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Cremin, 2014; Cremin, 2020; Pennac, 2006). Cremin (2014), however, argues that reading for pleasure can also incorporate reading which

is sustained by the reader even when started at someone else's behest because it has sparked their interest.

The significance of the roles of agency and control have also been argued, not just in making meaning, but also over and during the reading process (Chambers, 2011; Fish, 1980; Pennac, 2006; Smith, 2012). This ability to control the experience provides readers with power (Smith, 2012), intellectual freedom (Hartsfield & Kimmel, 2021) and is argued by Pennac (2006) as being exercised through 'rights' such as the right to stop and start, to choose what they read and whether or not to finish and to reread. However, the exercising of agency over reading is not just the domain of those who can and do read. Both Greenleaf (2001) and Dombey (2013) describe that struggling or poor readers equally develop positions and assert authority as 'a-readers' (Greenleaf et al., 2001) in order that their reading identity reflects their struggles. Moss (2000) reports a category of 'can but don't' readers who choose not to. It is, therefore, important to understand factors that impact readers' choices including that, as they age, children's reading will be increasingly influenced by their interests (McGeown et al., 2016).

Whilst there are some studies which focus on identifying trends in preferences and attitudes, such as those carried out by NLT referenced in section 2.1.4 of this chapter, the scope and scale of the studies tend to offer generalisations rather than the detail of lived experience so central to conceptualisations of reading already discussed. They also tend to focus on outcome as attainment rather than pleasure. Furthermore, there are calls for greater focus on the affective rather than cognitive domains, including the perspectives of children, in order to understand the motivational and affective factors which influence their development (Cremin, 2020; McGeown et al., 2015; McGeown et al., 2016). This section has highlighted the

significance of motivation and agency for readers and also signposted the lack of empirical examples demonstrating this in the context of adolescent readership. This present study therefore aims to add to the body of work in this respect.

2.2. Reading and education

Previous sections of this chapter have discussed conceptualisations of reading and readers in a range of contexts. Specifically, however, reading is seen as essential for success in school (Sullivan & Brown, 2015; Topping, 2019) and therefore learning to read sits not just within the domain of school's influence (Cremin, 2014) but as a fundamental and central concept in education (Goodwyn, 2012; Sainsbury et al., 2006). Nonetheless, there are many who have problematised the narrowing of reading in schools, in conceptualisation, process and practice (Goodwyn, 2012; Goodwyn & Findlay, 2003; Hall, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Yandell, 2014).

Within the secondary school, the responsibility for development of reading sits explicitly within the curriculum for English. However, the identity and purpose of the subject of English is much-contested (Bleiman, 2020; Elliott, 2020; Gibbons, 2013; Goodwyn, 2020; Locke, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Roberts, 2020; Turvey et al., 2012). It is afforded an 'awkward status as a medium as well as object of study,' (Green & Mcintyre, 2011, p. 8). Moreover, it is widely assumed that learning to read has been 'done and dusted' by the end of primary school (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Dean, 2003; Hall, 2015). Therefore, the exact nature and purpose of reading in the secondary context is contestable as the purposes for and practices in reading become increasingly specialised and specific (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Hall, 2012; Yandell, 2014). This has the potential to limit or narrow

reading identity formation and development to 'institutionalised norms around reading,' (Hall, 2012, p. 369). It is necessary, therefore, to consider the extent to which reading in school, defined primarily in and by the curriculum and subsequent pedagogical practices, might create and encode institutionalised norms and identities. This is an important consideration for this study which aims to explore the ways in which secondary school pupils and their teachers conceptualise and perceive reading.

Policy reforms, particularly for English, increasingly occur within the context of high stakes assessment and testing. Developments in and changes to educational practice, particularly in the teaching of reading across Key Stages 1-4, are commonly presented within a broader socio-political rhetoric of declining standards (Sainsbury et al., 2006).   Data sets such as trends in GCSE results, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) league tables, and the relative position of England's students in comparison with other nations, have led to on-going calls to raise standards (Isaacs, 2014; Stock, 2017). Results of such assessments, and historical, national and international comparisons thereof, are seen as key references for and sources of information about the strengths and weaknesses of the education system. They are significant drivers for reforms of policy and justification for the assertion of particular ideologies and beliefs manifested within which then direct practice (Brindley & Marshall, 2015; Cremin, 2014; Flynn & Stainthorp, 2006).(Sainsbury et al, 2016).   In fact, many theorists attest to and problematise an increasing focus and emphasis on preparation for formal, external assessments as key in determining practice (Allington & Swann, 2009; Cremin, 2014; Davison & Daly, 2014; Dean, 2003; Fleming & Stevens, 2015; Harrison, 2004; Marshall, 2011; Pearson et al., 2014; Stock, 2017).

Furthermore, there is continued and on-going concern about a seeming decline in reading, and in particular reading for pleasure, amongst teenagers (Clark, 2019; Clark & Cunningham, 2016; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020; OECD, 2010). Promoting reading for pleasure should be high on the agenda for those working with children and young people in schools (Cremin, 2014; McGeown et al., 2016). Accordingly, Cliff Hodges (2016) argues that key research questions of interest are those related to motivation and perceptions of purposes for reading and it is this research gap that this current study seeks to partially fill.

2.2.1. The reading curriculum

Since the inception of the National Curriculum (NC) in 1989, the official context for reading in the secondary school has been enshrined in statute. This has, in turn, been revised and reformed five times within the space of twenty-five years. Regardless, reading has always comprised a central focus in the secondary English curriculum, positioned highly as if to imply a hierarchy (Roberts, 2020). However, current policy changes have been regarded as particularly controversial, because of both their ideological underpinnings and the implications for pedagogy and practice (Bleiman, 2020, Eaglestone, 2020, Elliot, 2018). Most recent changes in education policy have increasingly focused on the promotion of 'knowledge-rich' curricular (Eaglestone, 2020; Elliott, 2020; Hodgson & Harris, 2022), largely attributed to the influence of ED Hirsch (1983; 1988) and Michael Young (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013). Hirsch's (1988) concept of cultural literacy suggests the importance of a shared body of knowledge: a common cultural knowledge, including of language and literature. He argues that this, accessed through schooling, would enable all to actively participate in society. He further argues for commonly agreed literary knowledge, focused on an approach to literary interpretation which determined authorial intention (Hodgson &

Harris, 2022). These ideas have been critiqued, not least for being counter to the reader-response theory and ideas discussed in section 2.1 of this review and which have been influential in framing more recent literary theory and criticism (Eaglestone, 2020; Hodgson & Harris, 2022).

In common with some of Hirsch's ideas, Young's (2010) notion of powerful knowledge is that it is knowledge which defines a society and is therefore needed by children in order to interact with society. Like Hirsch, Young argues that all children should access to a body of powerful knowledge. However, he distinguishes this as different to that of the knowledge of the powerful (Muller and Young, 2013), held by ruling classes in society, who both define and dominate access, deliberately kept separate from the knowledge generally encountered by most. As a result it belongs to those with power; the powerful. Whilst it might be seen as a form of social justice to argue for equal access to such knowledge, Young also argues, however, that this serves only to entrench social differences, for example in the types of literature seen as valuable, where the knowledge of reading powerful canonical authors is foregrounded over more diverse reading. Central to Young's (2009, 2012) argument, instead, is the idea of powerful knowledge to which all children should have access, defined as specialised, abstracted, theoretical knowledge, particular to academic subjects and only available through schooling. In this context, knowledge is distinguished more by what it can afford and what it can do (Young, 2009) and is acquired through transmission by an expert teacher to a novice learner.

Despite the differences in definition, both sets of ideas have been attributed to a new focus in policy and therefore schooling, on a more scientific, objective, positivist view of knowledge rather than on skills and processes (Eaglestone, 2020; Elliott, 2020). Eaglestone (2020)

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argues that this is a philosophical error with significant implications for English and the teaching in particular of literature because of the tendency to frame knowledge in ways that are not particularly relevant or helpful to English. Nonetheless, the influence of these ideas is discernible in the latest iteration of the NC (DfE, 2013) for English, for example in the opening purpose section which states that pupils are 'effectively disenfranchised' (ibid) from society if they do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently. They are, for example, identifiable in the sections of the curriculum for KS1 and 2 which outline the specific language and linguistic knowledge that pupils must know, focused most explicitly on grammatical terminology and ideas of correctness of form, expression and use of Standard English (DfE, 2013). More specific examples of the influence of ideas of both Hirsch and Young are further discernible in aspects of the sections of the NC for KS3 and 4 specifically related to reading and literature, and therefore to the subject of this study, explored in section 2.2.2 of this chapter.

In terms of the statute more broadly, the current NC documents for both Key Stage Three (KS3) (DfE, 2013) (typically pupils aged 11-13) and Key Stage Four (KS4) (DfE, 2014) (pupils aged 14-16) both prioritise reading in the sections directing what pupils should be taught. Both documents open with the same introduction, including the aim that pupils 'develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information,' (ibid). Whilst separating reading thus might seem to echo Rosenblatt's (1978) efferent and aesthetic ideas, the positioning here focuses on purpose for reading rather than effect on the reader. It presents ideas about reading simply and broadly, prioritising the process and purpose and implying that these are the prime and only reasons for reading.

To elaborate on reading for pleasure, the curriculum for KS3 commands that, 'Pupils should be taught to develop an appreciation and love of reading,' (DfE, 2012, p. 4) whereas for KS4 the requirement is for pupils to be taught to choose and read books, 'independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment,' (DfE, 2014, p. 5). Whilst the former implies that a love of reading does not yet exist in early secondary school pupils, the latter suggests that choice for enjoyment is secondary to challenge and interest. The significance of agency in reading, however, having been discussed in the previous section, is neatly summarised by Pennac's (2006, p. 13) declaration that, 'you can't make someone read.' This neatly highlights the dissonance in the positions of reading in theory and policy and the contrasting emphases on agency and self-determination on the one hand and compulsion and expectation on the other.

Nonetheless, there are practices in secondary school which have developed from a continued recognition of the importance of promoting and encouraging reading for pleasure, including reading during tutor time, through formalised reading schemes and in dedicated library lessons (Cremin, 2020; Topping, 2016, 2019; Westbrook, 2007). Westbrook's (2007) small-scale study, however, problematises such approaches, arguing that these reduce the development of reading and particularly reading for pleasure to the position of a 'spontaneous, happy accident' (Westbrook, 2007, p. 147) rather than an integral part of the reading curriculum. Her interviews of six secondary English teachers found that although all teachers involved spoke passionately about reading and the value of wider reading, there was little focused time in the curriculum for the development of reading for pleasure. The need to cover the formal curriculum meant that this aspect of reading was marginalised. Given that Westbrook's study predated the revisions to the current NC, this current study offers the opportunity to see if policy changes have impacted on teachers' perspectives and practice.

Moreover, Westbrook's (2007) study supports the argument that the formal reading curriculum itself might not support students in becoming enthusiastic readers, focusing instead on achieving curriculum aims (Cliff Hodges, 2010a). This idea is not attributed to particular changes or reforms to the NC but instead points to a tension between broader aims of promoting and valuing reading for pleasure and the particular and recurrent curricula focus on and study of text (Dean, 2003; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Nightingale, 2011). Several studies suggest a potential for divergence between students' own reading and that experienced and expected in school (Hopper, 2005; Mason, 2016; Richards-Kamal, 2008). For example, Hopper's (2005) study of students and teachers' reading habits, through self-assessment questionnaires, found that many students were reading at home and that this comprised material including books, newspapers and the internet. The study also found that students were reading a wider range of fiction than had been anticipated or expected, and that teachers' influence over students' private reading choices was very limited. As previously stated, this current study aims to add to knowledge in the field by considering whether contemporary perspectives have changed in the light of policy reforms.

Whilst school, therefore, might be a place of reading and where many readers' conceptualisations of reading might be formed, these may not always be concerned with pleasure or enjoyment (Dean, 2003; Mason, 2016). In the cited studies and arguments, the consistent thread of concern is that of a reading curriculum being imposed and therefore limiting rather than extending reader development and identity. The reason for this, it is argued, is partly because of the emphasis on particular types of texts as the focus of study and also the pedagogical practice arising which promotes reading as a particular form of thinking and activity. These will be further explored in the next sections.

2.2.2. The particular case of literature

Secondary school English, seen as a high-status subject, positions literature as a central force (Goodwyn, 2020). The aims of the NC for both KS3 and KS4 state the key role of literature in students' cultural, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development (DfE, 2013, 2014). The curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read texts including 'high-quality works' at KS3 and to 'read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage' at KS4 (ibid). It is here that the policy seems to be promoting ideas of powerful knowledge and cultural literacy posited by Young and Hirst respectively as discussed in section 2.2.1 of this chapter. However, there remains little published but much implied and commonly understood rationale for the study of literature within the English and reading curriculum (Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). The particular problems and issues arising from this dominance will be explored in this section.

The benefits of reading literature are numerous and include that: it can be both enjoyed and appreciated; it reflects the present and the past; it enables the reader to engage with and make sense of the world and of human experience; it is both secret and shared, private and public; it deals with ideas that matter; it provokes a personal response and involves the reader; it affords opportunity for reflection (Eaglestone, 2019; Webb, 2019). Yet within the various iterations of the National Curriculum over time, whilst reading has been presented variously as process, skill and content, there has been an overwhelming emphasis on the study of literature, such that the central domain of English as a secondary school subject has long been understood to be developing understanding and analysis of literary texts (Davison & Daly, 2014; Dean, 2003; Fleming & Stevens, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017).

Despite the NC for KS3 identifying the need for study of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, the description of this as including 'in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays' clearly prioritises the literary form as of most value (DfE, 2013, p. 4). More significantly, reading in the NC is presented in three broad strands of appreciation, understanding (comprehension) and critical reading (analysis and evaluation) (ibid). Understanding and comprehension seem to reflect the simple view of reading considered in section 2.1.3. Appreciation and analysis are the continued, contested aspect of this section. More broadly though, whilst the aims for the English curriculum state a holistic impact on the individual reader, the way that this in enacted in the further content of the document appears to be narrower.

Furthermore, there remain on-going disputes about the extent to which the NC foregrounds a narrow and particular form of literature, seen as traditional, canonical and out-dated (Locke, 2015). Whilst the text matters in a reading curriculum (Roberts, 2019; Sutherland et al., 2017; Webb, 2019), the requirements for and notions of a 'rich and varied literary heritage' (DfE, 2013, p. 2) and 'high-quality works' (ibid, p.4) are equally critiqued on the grounds that these are highly subjective and contestable, connotated with wealth and power (Goodwyn, 2012; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Daly (2004, p. 20), further, argues that in a curriculum model which foregrounds such texts as favourable, reading is offered as absolute and objective, within which literature is 'a universally agreed construct.' Moreover, books read in this context are more likely to be viewed as set texts than narratives to be read for pleasure (Wyse et al., 2012). Reading becomes, thus, increasingly objectified (Martin, 2003; Sainsbury et al., 2006), contrasted with the subjective and aesthetic experiences discussed in the previous sections of this review.

Others similarly contest the current reading curriculum as the positioning of readers as increasingly detached, scholarly receivers of uncontested information which prioritises the focus of study on the form and content (text) rather than the medium and experience (reader and reading) (Davison et al., 2010; Eaglestone, 2019; Lindsay & Yandell, 2014; Locke, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Yandell, 2014; Yandell & Brady, 2016).   Ward and Connelly (2008), for example, argue that the prescriptive study of literature in schools is intrinsically bound to standards and to national moral and social welfare. They argue, furthermore, that this configuration of literature teaching reinforces the idea that some texts are better than others. These ideas are supported by Mason's (2021) on-line survey of 644 self-identified readers, which found that some works of literature are seen as being of higher value than others, such that some participants, including a significant number of teachers, would lie if they had not read them. Wilhelm (2014) similarly argues that ideas such as this position the reader as a passive consumer of culture rather than active in an interpretive and responsive relationship. The arguments therefore contest that the current statutory reading curriculum, dominated as it is by reading and objectifying particular literature in particular ways, is at odds with the socio-cultural model of reading valued in this study and presented earlier in this review. Moreover, the position of reading as an objective activity, in contrast with the reciprocal nature of reader response theories that are central thereto, is therefore problematic.

English teachers report as being particularly keen on literature and it is this love of reading and literature which is often the motivation for and attraction to the English teaching profession (Goodwyn, 2012; Green, 2006, 2011). However, there are few published studies specifically on the ways in which teachers frame this love of reading and literature, to explore the possible tensions as outlined above and the possible impact on practice and therefore

pupils' experience. This present study seeks the perspectives and conceptualisations of teachers to contribute to knowledge in this respect.

2.2.3. Reading – Pedagogy and practice

The previous sections of the review of literature presented competing tensions and attendant discourses about the reading curriculum in the secondary sector. This section discusses the impact of these on practice, given that different 'discourses are instantiated in a range of pedagogical practices' (Locke, 2015, p. 16). Locke (ibid) acknowledges that discourses of English are unlikely to be found in a 'pure form' in a particular teacher's practice and may also result in cognitive dissonance. Others have argued, too, that government policy is a particularly dominant and powerful discourse which has a disproportionate impact on practice (Brindley & Marshall, 2015; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Yandell, 2014). However, what teachers know and believe about their subject informs and influences their pedagogical practice (Cremin et al., 2009; Fletcher, 2017; Flynn, 2007; Green & Mcintyre, 2011; Grossman & Shulman, 1994).

Grossman and Shulman's (1994, p. 17) study of novice teachers teaching the same text led to the conclusion that all English teaching is truly constructivist: 'an activity of continuing transformation of subject matter by both teacher and students.' Similarly, Yandell's (2013) narrative-based enquiry focused on the social process of reading a class novel and the resultant meaning-making, on the premise that the shared reading experience is valuable because it is enacted within and as part of the social relationships of the classroom. The investigation into narrative study in a single English lesson argues the collective power of readers in meaning-making. However, the study, based on observer's notes, captures the

perspective of the observer rather than the student participants. This current study aims to add to work such as this by foregrounding the perspectives and voices of student and teacher participants in considering their perceptions and conceptualisations of reading, including in the classroom context.

Shared reading such as that described in the study above, typically understood as being the sharing of reading including reading aloud between more skilled readers such as the teacher and children and groups of children, is common practice in English classrooms (Bleiman, 2020; Elliott, 2020; Mason, 2016; Westbrook et al., 2019). Shared class reading is thus a reading experience particular to school (Elliott, 2020; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Yandell, 2013). There are many cited benefits of shared reading, including the value of listening to a skilled reader reading aloud. It enables a less skilled reader to experience autonomy and fluency and creates a community of readers (Smith & Kelly, 2021; Sutherland et al., 2017). Listening to skilled reading aloud also enables exposure to books, contributes to vocabulary and comprehension development, including being able to link to one's own experience and think critically (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2005). Warner et al's (2016) study, by questionnaire, of teachers' practice found that reading aloud was highly valued, even in teachers who were not English specialists, including in aiding comprehension of texts. Sutherland et al's (2017) mixed methods study of twenty English teachers in the South of England was conducted on the premise that hearing a novel being read aloud by a more expert reader supported poorer readers in particular as it enabled them to enjoy the sustained experience of a narrative without having to pore over and struggle with aspects of fluency and decoding.

Moreover, practice in the secondary English classroom might also include what Cunningham

and Zibulsky (2005) call dialogic reading, whereby an adult reader encourages a child reader to become more actively involved by eliciting comments. This more dialogic and constructivist approach to learning has been cited as being the central benefit of shared reading of texts, affording co-construction of knowledge and understanding (Bleiman, 2020; Smith & Kelly, 2021; Turvey et al., 2006; Yandell, 2013, 2014). Bleiman and the English and Media Centre's (EMC) 'It's Good to Talk' project with two Year 7 classes and their teachers, focused on the use of group work in studying poetry. It found that, amongst other benefits, students valued and learnt more through working together and collaborating, developing their ideas through talk. Similarly, Yandell's (2013; 2016) studies highlight the benefits of and opportunities for social construction of knowledge and understanding in the English classroom. However, studies such as these are few and far between and tend to focus on the practice and impact of the teacher, rather than seeking the views and perspectives of students. This study therefore aims to fill this gap in the field.

Additionally, other aspects of pedagogy and practices in teaching of reading in secondary schools have been problematised. For example, Daly (2004) argues that approaches to readers and reading practices have become fragmented and mechanistic whilst Dombey et al (2013) argue that there has been a narrowing of the conceptualisation of reading. The shared reading of texts has also thus been critiqued: the nature of the experience means that there is potential for disruption of process of reading as for reading for pleasure (Elliott, 2020; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Westbrook et al., 2019). As such the shared reading of the class novel is seen as a poor substitute for the authentic, personal act of private reading (Yandell, 2013).

Sutherland et al's (2017) study was borne of concerns about the fragmented nature of the reading experience in secondary English classrooms. The project considered the impact of a fast, immersive read whereby teachers working with Year 7 pupils (aged 11-12) in their classes read two challenging novels in a twelve-week period. This contrasted with the more typical experience of reading interrupted by periods of analysis. The study found that comprehension, behaviour, motivation and engagement all improved: reading and the text were seen as part of a coherent, collaborative and engaged experience and reading was positioned as the central rather than marginalised activity of the classroom. However, qualitative data gathered during the course study was largely dependent on observation and on interviews with teachers: the views and perspectives of students themselves were inferred or presented via the lens of teacher perspective. This present study therefore adds to the work in this field by seeking the perceptions of pupils, including of reading in the context of school. Additionally, the study also found strong articulation of ideas and beliefs about reading practices in the secondary classroom, such as distinguishing between 'just reading' and 'teaching reading.' This current study seeks to add to this picture by seeking teachers' conceptualisations and perceptions of reading in more detail.

This section has considered shared reading, seen as a 'characteristic pedagogy,' of the English classroom (Elliott, 2020, p. 33). The emphasis thus far has been on the collaborative nature of the experience and the benefits and pitfalls of the practice. However, much of the critique of current pedagogy and practice centres on the role of the teacher, rather than specific practices in the English classroom. The next section will therefore focus explicitly on the role of the teacher.

2.2.4. The reading teacher

The teacher as an important and powerful role model of a reader has been widely documented (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; Cremin, 2014; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Moss & McDonald, 2004). Moreover, conceptualisations of teachers as role-models for reading seem to be founded on a socio-cultural view, in which self-actualisation and self-determination, achieved through dialogue and negotiation, are central. Bearne and Cliff Hodges (2010), for example, argue that teachers are more experienced role models, not just in behaviour, but also because they are experienced readers with whom students are able to talk about reading. These conversations act as models for discussion of and about reading which students can learn to internalise (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010). Greenleaf (2001) continues this theme, asserting that the teacher serves as a 'master' reader, akin to the expert other proposed by Vygotsky (1978). These ideas suggest the role of teacher in modelling readerly behaviours and thinking rather than as instructors of procedure.

The studies of both Moss and McDonald (2004) and Cremin (2014) discuss the different ways that teachers might, additionally, have an impact and influence on pupils' reading choices and habits. However, this is a responsibility which, it seems, has shifted increasingly to the librarian rather than being seen as core to the secondary teacher role (Westbrook, 2007).

Moreover, Mason's (2021) 'Talking about Texts' project illustrates the problematic idea of a professional reader identity for teachers. Her on-line survey added to existing studies which highlight the importance of reading to English teacher identity (Goodwyn, 2012). However, the findings (of which 75% of participants identified as working in the Education sector)

revealed tensions between private and professional reading identities, with participants highlighting the idea of 'right kind of literature' and commenting on their own perceived gaps and deficits with embarrassment. This present study aims to add to work in this field by exploring teachers' perceptions of reading and of their own identities as teachers of reading.

Cremin et al's (2014, 2019; 2009) work with primary teachers focused on the importance of knowledge of children's literature and books and how this contributed to a culture and community of reading in the primary classroom. The study explored how teachers' growing knowledge helped them to facilitate open-ended discussions about reading and to make recommendations as a regular feature and expectation of their practice. The study coined the term, 'Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach,' (Cremin et al., p. 9) to describe practitioners who positioned themselves as fellow readers in a classroom community sharing their practices, preferences, habits and histories to create a positive climate for reading for pleasure as intrinsic to the reading curriculum. Whilst the impact of this project and its further work (OU, 2022) have gained significant traction in the primary context, there is no equivalent for secondary practice, such that sharing of reading and talk about books is still limited (Smith & Kelly, 2021). OfSTED, (2012) have problematised the secondary position, arguing in their last subject specific summary report that there is too little conceptualisation for what makes a good reader and a perception that there is not enough curriculum time for reading for pleasure. This current study offers an opportunity to see if either research and/or policy changes have made an impact.

More recently too, however, there has been a tendency to position the secondary reading teacher as an expert rather than role model (Lemov et al., 2016) . This position prioritises the role of the teacher as an instructor rather than of the other numerous roles and purposes that

might be part of a wider English pedagogy, with their expertise situated in knowledge of texts (Bleiman, 2020; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021) or in addressing perceived reading deficits (Quigley, 2020; Webb, 2019). It is a position which is further enforced in the wording of the Standards for Teachers (the statutory definition of minimum expected practice) which requires that they 'impart knowledge' (DfE, 2012), implying a transmission rather than construction model of knowledge.

For example, Mason and Giovanelli's (2015) study found that, in the literature classroom, the teacher remained a figure of authority because of their prior knowledge of the text. As a result, they were able to influence the ways in which reading was enacted and the types of responses that were prioritised. This power imbalance meant that teachers had more developed and informed narrative schema so often foregrounded and influenced the reading experience such that it potentially interrupted the aspects of the text to which first-time readers were drawn. As a result, students' reading of the text were likely to be manufactured rather than authentic.

This section outlined and problematised aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy and practice of reading within the secondary English context. It highlights the significance of the role and place of the teacher in supporting reading and reader development. The ways in which this might be manifested in experience are central to the lines of enquiry of this study.

2.3. Reading and identity

So far this review of the literature has considered the conceptualisation of readers and reading, theoretically and as enacted in educational legislature and practice as well as

investigated by various research studies. It has focused on the extent to which reading and readers are contextually framed and influenced. However, the review has yet to consider the extent to which reader identity is something that is self-determined. This, and attending to the wider concept of identity, is the focus of this next section.

One recent National Literacy Trust (NLT) study (Clarke & Teravainen, 2017) referred to the idea of reader self-concept as the way that one views oneself as a reader. Conducted as part of the National Literacy Trust's annual survey as outlined in section 2.1.4, the study suggests that reader self-conceptualisation is often linked to ideas about achievement and attainment. Whilst this study recognised a broader conceptualisation of reading, including the significance of the affective domain as discussed earlier in this chapter, studies into reader identity are often linked to ideas about efficacy and skill (McGeown et al., 2020; McGeown et al., 2012). Links are similarly made between reading confidence and feelings of competence (McGeown et al., 2015). Nonetheless, these studies highlight the importance of self-conceptualisation to reader identity.

The concept of identity is recurrent in literature about readers and reading and as such suggests that reading is more than just an action or activity, it is a part of who one is (Chambers, 2011; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Cremin, 2014; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Pearson et al., 2014; Turvey et al., 2006). It is, therefore, a central concept when considering conceptualisation and perception of reading. However, it is acknowledged that studies which seek to explore how children and adolescents define a reader are limited (McGeown et al., 2020). Furthermore, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) suggest that the concept of identity can be a useful analytical lens for the educational researcher, to examine aspects of teaching as well as the influences on students (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Gee (2000, p. 10) suggests that identity can provide a useful lens for research as any person can have multiple versions of themselves, depending on context, with each version being 'ambiguous and unstable.' However, there is a 'core' identity which is more stable across a range of contexts. He therefore offers a framework of four perspectives linked to being 'a certain type of person'(ibid). These comprise: a 'nature-identity' (N), developed by and subject to forces to be found in nature; an 'institution-identity' (I) developed through influence and power of institutions; a 'discourse-identity' (D), constructed and sustained through dialogue such that this identity is then owned and recognised and an 'affinity-identity' (A), which is shared through practice with others in an 'affinity' group. Gee (ibid) argues that these are not separate identities but that they co-exist and interrelate in numerous, complex and important ways.

It might, therefore, be possible to see elements of different reading identities and traits in different individual readers. For example, previous sections of this review have suggested a powerful 'institution-based' reading identity such that might be demonstrated by a school-based reading identity and practice. This might be different from an 'affinity-identity' that a reader might develop with others through shared practice, for example, in a reading group. Perhaps what is more important, however, is how and by whom these identities are viewed and, perhaps more importantly, why.

Hall's (2012), study of adolescent readers in the United States (US), for example, asserts the importance of helping students to find their voices so that they engage with texts in ways that are meaningful to them. He found that institutionalised identities were dominating his students' identities to their detriment and concluded that what they needed was to develop

their own understanding of what it meant to be a reader, to read and to have space for these ideas to develop. Hall's (ibid) study also found that some reader identities were constrained by institutionalised norms which prioritised students' particular responses to academic texts. He argued that positioning reader identity in this way failed to acknowledge the variety and depth of reading students might engage with outside of school.

Turvey et al. (2006) critique school-based reading assessment practices for similar reasons; that such frameworks limit the identity of students to what they can do. The implications of their argument are that they reduce students to a nature/institution-based identity of 'I can do…' rather than a discourse or affinity identity of 'I am'. Cliff-Hodges (2010b) adopts a similar stance in her research. Her study of adolescent readers and readership, (discussed also in section 2.1.4 of this chapter), focused on successful, 'I am' readers to learn about the complexity of reading. The rich data generated by her study demonstrated the multiplicity of her reader participants' experiences and led her to conclude that teachers can learn significantly more about their students as readers by finding out about their interests and histories beyond the classroom. This current study has similar foci, central to the research questions, to the studies cited. It aims to offer contemporary, contextualised perspectives on reader identity, investigating the ideas that arise when adolescent readers are given time, space and opportunity to investigate what it means to read and be a reader.

These arguments and ideas attest to a powerful and complex connection between concepts of reading, reader and identity. They acknowledge and problematise the complexity of identity and how it is formed and negotiated. Several of the arguments outlined broaden reader identity beyond being more than someone who engages in and responds to texts and assert the importance and centrality of reader identity being core to sense of self. This study

therefore attends to limitations in current research by considering the perspectives and experiences of secondary school readers and their teachers to provide further insights into and examples of reader identity, conceptualisation and perception.

2.4. Reading Spaces and Places

Like the concept of identity, the ideas of space and place are recurrent in literature about readers and reading. Section 2.2 of this chapter, for example, has focused specifically on the space and place of school and argued that it is one in which a particular type of reading occurs and that this is not always a space which is enjoyable or which promotes reading as a pleasurable activity (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; Clayton & Giovanelli, 2016; Dean, 2003; Hopper, 2005; Mason, 2016; Nightingale, 2011). This section therefore explores the importance of the concept of space in reading and reader formation. Moreover, this section considers that the concepts of space and place are also socially and culturally constructed (Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 1994, 2004; Tuan, 1977) and that, in adopting a socio-cultural position, schools and classrooms are not the only spaces and places in which reading and reader development occurs.

'All reading has to happen somewhere' (Chambers, 2011, p. 13) and where actions and activities take place has significant bearing on how they take place (Chambers, 2011; Wyse et al., 2012). For example, Clark and Teravainen's (2018) analysis of NLT survey data found a positive correlation between library use and attitudes towards and enjoyment of reading. They found that school libraries were used for access to interesting material and provided a friendly relaxing space. However, their data provided little specific illustration of what this might mean and acknowledged the limited picture of provision in the UK. Rudkin and

Wood's (2019) review of international research into the impact of school libraries found positive correlation between school-library use and reading attainment but also acknowledged the limited knowledge in this field, even less so in the UK and secondary context. Thus, the impact of some places and spaces associated with reading are under researched.

Chambers (2011), nonetheless, argues that many readers will endure the discomfort of a space if in pursuit of a hobby to which they are devoted – in other words, ardent readers will read even if and when conditions appear unfavourable. However, school-based reading might not be considered pursuit of a hobby and he also argues that, 'If we are forced to read as a duty, expecting no delight, we are likely to find it a boring business' (Chambers, 2011, p. 23). In these contexts, mental, rather than physical, 'space' is thus seen as more significant.

The study in this thesis values that the idea of space is different to that of place (Cresswell, 2015). Nonetheless, the physical space in which reading occurs can be significant. For example, spaces that are dedicated specifically to reading signal to children as well as other stakeholders that reading is an essential and valuable occupation (Chambers, 2011; Cremin, 2019). However, without commensurate attention paid to developing genuine engagement with and enthusiasm for reading, these physical spaces can become purely performative (Cremin, 2019). Cremin (2019) posits that, as part of creating a genuine community of readers, children need reader-led 'comfy' places to read, echoing Pennac's (2006) assertion of the right for readers to read anywhere. The ideas here contrast with typical secondary classroom spaces, which might not always be the most conducive physical space for encouraging reading.

The need to transform settings in school so that they become places which are more attractive serves to problematise further the nature of the school-based reading places. Massey (1994, p. 4) suggests that space is often seen as static, 'singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity.' She instead argues a more fluid and flexible conceptualisation of space as uniquely defined by the particular mix of social relations that occur therein. Social relations are significant, therefore, to and at the heart of a place. In schools, for example, the meanings attributed and ascribed to the space of the classroom are an articulation of the relationship between teachers and students and between those people and the subject.   Accordingly, readers' ontologies and epistemologies of reading in school are not connected with elsewhere, specifically the home (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). It is therefore suggested that the classroom is not, in and of itself, a problematic space. It is the relationships which exist there, including between teachers, students and reading, which might be problematic.

The concept of space, rather than place, however, affords the opportunity to consider multiplicity and plurality (Massey, 1994).   The meeting of a reader with a text has been conceptualised as space (Hirschkop & Shepherd, 2001), interaction (Rosenblatt, 1978) and dialogue (Eaglestone, 2019). In other words, the place where reading happens might describes the physical location of the activity, whereas the concept of space offers opportunity to consider the different types of activity which occur at the point of interaction. Rosenblatt (1978), for example, argues that readers' interactions with texts through interpretation and response are not singular, linear actions but specific to the situation. Thus there is a relationship between the situation and event and particular time and place in which it occurs which impact each other (Rosenblatt, 1978). Reading is thus conceptualised as a lived space whereby we become absorbed, intellectually and emotionally (Rosenblatt, 1980).

In this respect, therefore, the fictional space or world of a text can feel like and be mistaken for the real world (Pennac, 2006) because it replicates and is fleshed out by readers' experiential knowledge (Cushing, 2020). Given the varied text worlds offered, reading might then become an escape from the real world (Cremin, 2014) or an opportunity to transcend reality (Cliff Hodges, 2010a). Reading is thus an embodied experience, a lived space achieved as a result of construction of meaning, including the aesthetic and affective response, in part through engagement with textual patterns. Furthermore, it is an experience which may extend beyond the point at which the text has finished (Pennac, 2006).

Thus, reading offers a dynamic rather than static space (Massey, 1994), requiring the reader to 'move' through an embodied experience of the text world (Mackey, 2010). Text World Theory engages specifically with this idea that readers can be transported to and immersed in alternative worlds to the extent that we feel a part of them (Cushing, 2018; Gavins, 2007). It offers a cognitive conceptualisation of reading whereby the space of the text world becomes, temporarily, the lived space and an alternative to that in which the reader is physically present. The idea of being 'lost' in a book is much referenced (Laurenson et al., 2015) and the term is often used to explain the experience of being immersed in a text to the exclusion of other external, physical sensation. The reader becomes immersed and absorbed such that the text can, 'invoke rich, real, emotional responses,' (Cushing, 2020, p. 142). Additionally, space is conceived of as being intellectual: Mackey (2010) argues that the concept of space in reading is three-dimensional (emotional, embodied and intellectual) because the reader is, on some level, conscious of their mind being at work. Moreover, it is this intellectual activity that enables the one-dimensional page to morph into a three-dimensional world that the reader is capable of occupying.

Space, therefore, can be conceptualised as physical: a situation or situated event. It can also be an experience, an intellectual and/or an emotional response. It can be seen as temporal as well as spatial. Cliff Hodges (2010b, 2016) considers reader identity from a temporal, spatial perspective, focusing on readers' trajectories as they have been shaped over time and as they make contact with other trajectories at particular times and in specific places. Cliff Hodges (2016) argues that this enables the space and world of the reader both social and cultural reach which extends far beyond that of their immediate world, including other readers, authors, texts and their characters.

Readership is developed, some argue, through this temporal shaping, as readers learn to relate the specifics of one text to all others that they have previously experienced (Bleiman, 2020; Eaglestone, 2017, 2019; Mason, 2016). Reader identity is developed not just through encounters with a range of reading, but also in learning about the relationships and connectedness, the intertextuality, between them (Bleiman, 2020; Mason, 2016). Thus, each reader identity, including trajectory, is unique and formed by each individual's encounters with different texts (Cliff Hodges, 2010b).

However, the temporal space is also social, encompassing other readers, such that the reading space is one of community, of 'intersecting social relations' (Massey, 1994, p. 120). Sometimes these intersections are constructed over significant time and others are only temporary. Cremin (2014) suggests that central to reading communities, and therefore one possible intersection, is the idea of books in common which creates social groups connected through shared experiences and pleasures of a common text. Classrooms might afford opportunities for intersecting social relations through the wide and common practice of

shared experience of text at the point at which it is encountered, such as discussed in section 2.2.3, and of sharing experiences, with others, of texts that have been read outside of school. Turvey et al. (2006) argue, thus, that the classroom is therefore also a social space where students should be able to make connections between the reading of their academic and social lives.

2.4.1. The particular space and place of Covid

Although not anticipated at the outset of the project, data gathering was interrupted by the imposition of extended periods of lockdown because of the Covid pandemic. This created a particular socio-historically situated space and place which therefore needs to be considered. Clark and Picton's (2020) on-line survey found that lockdown increased children and young people's reading, across all age-groups in their 8–18-year-old sample, because it gave many a chance to discover reading. Increased time, including away from school and social activity, was seen to be the most significant contributing factor. However, they also found that lack of access caused by the closure of schools and libraries created barriers for some readers. This current study therefore contributes to the field of work in this new and very specific context.

Spaces and places are thus conceptualised as complex and multiple, but central to readers' experiences and development. The study of this thesis thus includes the concept of space and place within the line of enquiry as an important and potentially significant factor in readers' conceptualisations and perceptions.

In summary, this chapter has discussed the complex and multiple conceptualisations of reading and readers, valuing a socio-cultural perspective in a landscape which currently

favours a scientific and cognitive view.   The specific but contested nature of reading in

secondary school has been discussed, including review of most recent curriculum policy

developments. The study values a constructivist ontology as underpinning conceptualisations

of reading and of learning, but has identified tensions in the secondary curriculum with

attendant implications for pedagogy and practice. Given the significance of schooling as a

site for developing perceptions of reading, the final sections of the chapter attend to the

equally complex concepts of identity and place as they relate to reading and readers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction and research questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which readers' conceptualisations of reading and their reading identities are shaped by their experiences in school. The study sought to understand how young people and their teachers in secondary school identify reading and as readers, and the extent to which this is influenced by national curricular frameworks and school practices. These are themes which have been highlighted and problematised in the review of the literature and the resultant enquiry is framed through the following research questions:

1. How do pupils identify and conceptualise readers and reading?

   a. How do pupils identify as readers?
   b. How do pupils conceptualise (their own) reading and reader development?

2. How do teachers identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
   a. How do teachers identify as readers and as teachers of reading?
   b. How do teachers conceptualise reading and reader development?

3. Do reading spaces shape or influence reading?

4. What do participants' responses suggest about the influence of policy and practice of teaching of reading within English in the secondary school?

The nature and purpose of the research, including the type of knowledge being pursued, is significant. The underpinning principles of the research, linked to the approach and methods being employed, are central (Pring, 2000). The review of the literature highlighted the

complexity of reader identity formation and of the range of external and internal influences (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010; Cliff Hodges, 2010b; Meek et al., 1977).   This study demanded a methodology and methods that enabled and acknowledged the complexity of these underpinning concepts and thus, the rationale for this study was rooted in an exploratory, grounded approach within an interpretivist and socio-constructivist paradigm. This chapter explores the paradigm and resultant ontological and epistemological assumptions which underpin the study. It considers the philosophical stance that shaped the rationale for the choices and methods of the research design.

3.2. Ontological and epistemological stance: the choice of an interpretivist paradigm

Research within the socio-educational domain deals with phenomena which are both complex and subjective (Cohen et al., 2011; Crotty, 1998).   The study saw as problematic, therefore, the seeking of generalisations about knowledge and human experience (Hammersley, 2005; Pring, 2000; Whitty, 2006). Accordingly, this study rejected a positivist paradigm and the seeking of simple solutions in favour of an interpretivist paradigm and seeking understanding (James, 2014).   The purpose being improved understanding, the study sought to 'illuminate' (Pring, 2000, p. 96) and look for the 'complexity of views' (Creswell, 2013, p. 24) rather than to generalise. An interpretative paradigm and the according centrality of subjectivity was therefore more appropriate.

As a result, the study demanded a constructivist rather than objectivist ontology. Constructivism in this respect is understood to be an ontological position which views meanings as constructed by humans as actors in the course of their engagement with the social world and therefore denies the notion of an objective reality (Mills et al., 2006).

All meanings are therefore interpretations (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism, and therefore this study, is located within an interpretivist epistemological position given that it is not therefore possible to provide a universal theory of human behaviour, linked as it is to situation and context (Cohen et al., 2007). The activities and positions referenced in the research questions (reading, readers, schooling, teaching etc) and as explored in the previous chapter are defined as socio-cultural constructs and reflect the socio-cultural view of learning and development as posited by Vygotsky (1978), outlined in section 2.1.2 of the literature review. Moreover, they are suggested as being 'situated activities' such that they 'evolve over time and are richly affected by context,' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 17).

This study, thus, sought to investigate the meanings made by pupils and teachers, of their engagement with and experiences of reading. Reading has been explored as a social, human construct with multiple meanings and ideas (Cliff Hodges, 2016). Positivism may well result in a reduction in complexity to arrive at simple solutions (Pring, 2000), which is not the purpose of this study and which is a theme recurrent in the critiques considered in the preceding chapter. Said literature about reading and reader identity consistently frames the key concepts underpinning this study as social, complex, dynamic, situated and flexible, and cautions against generalisations. The study therefore defines reading primarily as socially constructed and requiring of a methodology and methods that suit (Cliff Hodges, 2010b, 2016).

Acknowledging the situated and particular experiences of the readers, as represented by 'identity' and 'conceptualise' in the research questions, means adopting a constructivist stance which views understanding tentatively and sensitively (Crotty, 1998). The preceding literature review problematised the content and impact of aspects of government policy for

reading which instead approaches knowledge as generalisable and thus seeks simple solutions in line with a positivist paradigm. Such approaches are seen as problematic, particularly for social and educational research (Hammersley, 2005, 2014a; Pring, 2000; Whitty, 2006) and for work with children and young people (Robb et al., 2014).

This study problematises the definition of reading within current curriculum policy and, instead, seeks to 'illuminate, to look for the 'complexity of views,' (Creswell, 2013, p. 24) *commensurate* with many of the theories and debates about reading and reader identities outlined in the review of literature. Given that a model of improved understanding, rather than certainty or generalisation, is the purpose of the study then an interpretative paradigm was most appropriate in offering opportunities for qualitative approaches which focus on meanings and interpretations (Cohen et al., 2007; May, 2001; Taber, 2017). It was, therefore, a study of what happens in the 'real world,' during which participants were encouraged to speak in their own terms.

Qualitative approaches were adopted to avoid the danger of the central concepts of reader and reading being lost by being reduced to measurable or objective quantities. Indeed, one of the central drivers of the research questions was that educational practices in reading have been problematised for exactly that (as outlined in the literature review chapter). This research thus seeks a perspective to gain new understanding which captures a 'complex, contingent and context-sensitive character of social life' (Hammersley, 2014b, p. 178). In adopting this approach, this study walks in the path of Cliff Hodges (2016) with the intention that more developed understanding will inform future work with teachers, both those during their initial period of teacher education and the qualified teachers who support them.

However, despite the largely constructivist and interpretivist views of reading and reader identity that exist in literature, the review demonstrates the focus in research on particular aspects of reading. Meek (1991), for example, explains that research which shines a light on one particular aspect of reading tends to cast other, equally interesting, aspects into the shade or cause them to wriggle away. Furthermore, the review of the literature and previous research highlighted the contested nature of reading, particularly in school contexts and the on-going tensions and debates between theory and practice as directed by policy. This current research project was therefore intended to consider experience and meaning rather than to seek or disprove preconceived ideas (Mills et al., 2006). This lent itself to a constructivist, exploratory grounded theory approach whereby the researcher looks primarily to emerging issues of importance to the participants (Mills et al., 2006; Taber, 2017). Ideas are theorised as rooted in the data (Taber, 2017) rather than represented in fixed and static nuggets of data (Kvale, 1996).

3.3. Researcher subjectivity and reflexivity

The notion of objectivity in the context of this study is problematic given that I, as a researcher of the social and educational world can only ever act subjectively, and that all data is open to interpretation (May, 2001). This constructivist view is contrary to a positivist epistemology, which asserts that facts about the social world can be gathered and generalised, independently of interpretation (May, 2001). Pring (2000), however, argues that it is not possible for an educational researcher to be detached from the structures and values being considered because the world that they are investigating does not exist independently of their interactions with and interpretations of it. This is even more significant, given that my background as a teacher and teacher educator means that I have daily interactions, and

therefore interpretations, of the educational world (Hammersley, 2014b). Furthermore, Bucknall (2014) argues that the concepts and categories identified in the data often correspond to the knowledge that the researcher brings to the study. Hence, objectivity is further problematised.

In seeking and analysing the perspectives and views of participants it is important, therefore, that I understand my own subjectivity, as outlined in section 1.1 of the introduction to this thesis. As an English teacher and teacher educator of many years, a career entered into from a love of reading, I am aware of my own subjectivity, of the values and positive beliefs and experiences about reading and the teaching of reading that I hold. This experience has been influential and of benefit in shaping and supporting the project: I bring to the conversation with participants my experience of talking about and discussing reading and writing with young people and teachers. However, it was important to be aware of the extent to which these experiences and beliefs might have shaped my interpretation of the data as it unfolded. Reflexivity and critical reflection were therefore intrinsic to the integrity of the research process. As a result, I sought to maintain a reflective journal, captured primarily in memos, for the duration in order to better understand the research process (Needham et al., 2016; Slotnick & Janesick, 2011). For example, I recognised that, in places, I was particularly enthusiastic and excited about participants' interests in and enthusiasm for reading, as they aligned with my own views and experiences. However, there were times when my journal also acknowledged the differences in the experiences of the participants. For example, my own personal dislike of science-fiction did not override my recognition of the passion and enthusiasm displayed by one participant. Additionally, the different historical context of the study meant that much of the reading referred to by the participants was different to my own childhood experience. Indeed, given that the study was undertaken to investigate current and

contemporary conceptualisations of reading, at all times I needed to be attentive to the data and participants' perceptions and at times the stark contrast in experience made reflexivity easier. Thus, the research further contributed to my developing identity and practice as a researcher, giving opportunities for reflection and new understanding (Kvale, 1996).

In addition, although my experience working in education was of benefit to the organisation of the study, I sought to be mindful of the potential conflicts of interest in working with colleagues in schools who were known to me in other respects. Of particular importance was understanding perceptions of 'power' that might be held of my role as teacher educator and researcher, with all participants (Cohen et al., 2011). I needed to be aware of the possibility of this shaping responses and also of the potential vulnerability of the participants in opening up their practice to critique. Being aware of my own preferences for particular pedagogical approaches and having an openness to understanding the positions and perspectives of the teacher participants remained important at all times of the study. Additionally, Bucknall (2014) argues that researchers can be guilty of misunderstanding, misrepresenting or disregarding children's perspectives. Given that this study centralised children and young people's voices, I needed to reflect on how and why this might happen in this context. My past experiences, including as a teacher, might have some bearing, particularly if participants' ideas conflicted with my own. I hoped to be honest in recognising this possibility with participants, and in encouraging trust and freedom of discussion throughout (Needham et al., 2016).

3.4. Constructivist Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is understood to be both a methodology and a series of methods and strategy for data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Mills et al., 2006; Taber, 2017). In this instance the use of a constructivist grounded theory approach and associated methods aimed at deepening understanding and illuminating experience through carefully considered patterns (Taber, 2017) rather than viewing experience through the lens of a pre-existing theory.   Theorising was focused on understanding and accounting for meaning, actions and how these were constructed by the participants (Charmaz, 2006).

Given that the concepts at the heart of the investigation, as already outlined, are social and complex, this study therefore lent itself more significantly to a grounded theory approach which tried to understand, make sense of and therefore theorise research participants' lives through careful and methodical collection and analysis of data (Charmaz, 2006). The outlined methodology and methods aimed to capture some of the complexity of participants' lived experiences in data which was 'rich, detailed and full' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14). Data was consequently co-constructed with participants through interaction (Charmaz, 2006).

A constructivist grounded approach positions the researcher as involved in the construction of meaning, and thus theorisation, through engagement with the data. In this respect, the role of the researcher is similar to Kvale's (1996, p. 4) traveller whereby the 'potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveller's interpretations'. As a result, the subjectivity of the participants and the researcher was acknowledged and seen to be a strength (Charmaz, 2006).

There were further benefits afforded by the selection of a grounded theory approach. As discussed, there is extensive and sometimes contesting and debated literature and research

about reading and reader identity. This was seen as contributing a useful voice rather than providing a lens through which data was analysed (Taber, 2017).   The study afforded a variety of 'angles of repose' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 478) on reading and reader identity as well as schooling and school-based practices, commensurate with the iterative process of the grounded theory approach (Taber, 2017). Data collection and analysis was therefore through open-ended, inductive inquiry (Charmaz, 2006).

3.5. Participatory research

This study adopted a participatory approach to research for two key reasons: an acknowledgement of the social construction of knowledge as well as the value of seeking the collective and individual perspectives of participants (Ingram, 2014), both of which are fundamental to the grounded theory approach discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

3.5.1. Children's perspective and voice

Contrary to some of the practice critiqued in literature and research about reading in the secondary school, this research was predicated on the notion of children as active participants in representing their own ideas and experiences, rather than existing as 'mere units of statistical aggregates' (Hammersley, 2014a, p. 178). The research design was therefore built on an underlying assumption that 'every child has views and experiences that are of value' (A. Clark, 2014, p. 207). My primary interests were the students' experiences as readers and so their participation, perspective and voice were central to the rationale and design of this project (Cliff Hodges, 2010b; Shah, 2015). Cliff Hodges (2016) describes that recent case

studies about secondary school readers are relatively rare, particularly those that are carried out in the context of current policy and practice. Accordingly, this research project contributes more recent and detailed knowledge to the already existing picture.

Researchers interested in finding out about children and young people's experiences argue that although schools are often central to students' lives, they are places where students exercise little power or control but where they also can be best placed to comment on the experience (Barker & Weller, 2003; Bucknall, 2014; Harris & Haydn, 2006; Shah, 2015). The review of literature about practices in secondary English schools identified the potential for pupils' voices to be marginalised in the classroom to the authoritative voices of both texts and teachers. Therefore, this research sought to redistribute power: both methodology and methods were chosen to foreground children's views. Thus, use of grounded theory afforded, anticipated and acknowledged that children and young people might share experiences, themes and ideas which might not otherwise be considered from an adult perspective (Cooper, 2014). The 'otherwise unattainable views' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 24), afforded by the grounded theory approach further offered opportunity for the research as a process of discovery where initial assumptions might need to be revisited and revised (Hammersley, 2014b; Taber, 2017). Additionally, these otherwise unattainable views, often lacking in research about reading and central in the research questions underpinning this study, therefore offer an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The key focus of this research was therefore to understand participants' situated experiences in a way which allowed them to have control over both the space and content of the research (Barker & Weller, 2003). Moreover, asking participants to document their experiences in order to illuminate their priorities and values was central to the design of this study, in which

the participants were placed at the centre, as subjects in rather than objects of research (Barker & Weller, 2003; Bucknall, 2014; Hammersley, 2014a; Ingram, 2014).   This project therefore not only sought but also gave weight to children's lives and experiences to shed light on the influences that shape their lives (Bucknall, 2014), (as illustrated in the arising scrapbooks presented in appendices 4.2C-P).

Arnot and Reay (2007, p. 373) further argue that pupils tend to speak in a common 'pedagogic voice' which is created, in part, by school practices. They suggest that this voice is distinguished by different types of talk – classroom talk, subject talk, identity talk and code talk. In setting out to capture participants' voices outside of, in a forum, and through methods not commonly used in the classroom, this study sought to focus on the final three types of talk. The purpose was therefore to gather pupils' pedagogic voice in an attempt to understand, in part, the impact of pedagogy. Interestingly there is no common 'pedagogic voice' for discussion of child participants in educational and research contexts: the terms students and pupils are used interchangeably. For clarity, the term pupil has been used typically throughout this study in order to distinguish these participants from the student teachers with whom I typically work and for whom the findings of this study have implications. Where literature, documents and research studies have referred to child participants, the terminology used within the context of the reference has been retained.

3.5.2. Teachers' perspective and voice

Although the primary focus of this research was on children and young people, the school-based focus and context of the enquiry demanded the participant perspectives of teachers too. Research suggests that teachers' pedagogical decision-making and choices are influenced by

their beliefs, attitudes and experiences, and that these, in turn, impact on students' learning and engagement (Clark & Teravainen, 2015; Cremin et al., 2009; Fletcher, 2017; Flynn, 2007; Green & Mcintyre, 2011; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Harris & Burn, 2016). In seeking to investigate pupils' perceptions and experiences of reading and conceptualisations of reader identity, this study also needed to consider the views of those in a position of influence. Thus teacher participation was essential.

Furthermore, Muijs and Reynolds (2010) describe that teachers might act differently than they believe and therefore are not always the best judges of their own practice. Whilst the purpose of this project was not to investigate or provide support for this claim, it did offer potential to investigate perceptions and conceptualisations through a process intended to be of mutual interest and value (Kvale, 1996). This study thus sought to better understand teaching, its discourse and teachers' decision-making in the broader context of conceptualisations of readers and reading (Alexander, 2004). Teachers' perspectives and perceptions were sought both independently from, as well as on, the discussions involving pupils. This maximised the opportunity for reflection, including in recognising limitation of understanding in the light of children's knowledge (Clark & Moss, 2011). The research project was therefore viewed as 'as an act of dialogue' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 316), deliberate in involving teacher participants in analysing and interpreting their students' conversations and contributions. This afforded further opportunities for reflection and reflexivity for both researcher and practitioner, arising from working alongside each other and not always afforded to practitioners alone.

Additionally, research affords opportunities to insights into practice in order to affect change (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Cooper, 2014). The study therefore had the potential to engage

participants in the research process through opportunities for co-constructed knowledge and joint understanding (Simons, 2009). If, as some literature suggests, teachers' pedagogy and practice is significantly influenced and directed by external policy decisions, then this research project also attempted to redress this balance. Ellis (in Goodwyn & Fuller, 2011) problematises the bureaucratic tendencies of the profession to judge its effectiveness based on the efficiency of delivery rather than in response to the changing and diverse nature of the children it serves. Historically there has been very little research on what has been studied in English classrooms and more importantly how students have responded to it (Cliff Hodges, 2016). The purpose of this study was, in part therefore, to consider the extent to which students' experiences and conceptualisations of reading were aligned with policy as outlined in the statutory English curriculum and enacted in practice. It therefore had the potential to contribute new and original knowledge to the field, including contributing to teachers' knowledge and understanding of their pupils, potentially moving beyond the administrative to the philosophical (Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2016).

As a result, the findings of this study have the potential to extend knowledge, understanding and practice. There are implications for my own work and practice in the field of initial teacher training and education, and also for the teachers with whom I work in a broader sense, such as mentors and subject leaders. This study therefore demonstrates a commitment to professional development, both my own and that of others with whom I work (Dadds and Hart, in Burton & Bartlett, 2005).

3.6. Contextualising the case: the schools and participants

Given that reading is valued in this study as socio-cultural practice (Vygotsky, 1978), it is seen, therefore, as situated: fluid and changeable evolving over time and 'richly affected by context' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 17).   The selection of participants in and from two different secondary schools was therefore purposive (Cohen et al., 2011) because the study sought, in part, to understand the extent of school influence on reading conceptualisation and reader identity. Whilst other studies about reading provide data about reading habits and choices (Clark, 2019; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020; Topping, 2019), the decision to select participants on the basis of their context in secondary school was deliberate.   Furthermore, the choice was made to include multiple settings in order to build up knowledge in a field (Hammersley, 2014b).

The sampling was also purposive (Cohen et al., 2007). Secondary school teacher participants were recruited through being known to me in an on-going professional relationship and through shared involvement in the university partnership in which I work (as PGCE subject co-ordinator with teacher participants as mentors and subject leaders). As a result of this relationship, I was aware of English departments who were willing and had capacity to be involved in research projects and as such, selection is argued as convenience and opportunity sampling (Basit, 2010).

Although both schools have comprehensive intakes within urban settings, the schools have slightly different contexts in terms of size and administration: School A is a large, local authority-maintained school in the centre of a city conurbation, whereas school B is the only secondary school in a very small multi-academy trust, situated on the outskirts of a large town. Information available in the public domain (www.gov.uk, 2022) highlights the key

demographic features of each school and illustrates the variety of backgrounds of students therein:

Pupil population in 2018/2019

The figures below are for the 2018/2019 academic year, which is the latest year for which performance results have been published. National figures are for state-funded schools only.

	School	England – mainstream secondary schools
Total number of pupils on roll (all ages)	1752	3327970
Girls on roll	49.6%	49.8%
Boys on roll	50.4%	50.2%
Pupils with an SEN Education, Health and Care Plan	2.4%	1.7%
Pupils with SEN Support	13.2%	10.8%
Pupils whose first language is not English	14.6%	16.9%
Pupils eligible for free school meals at any time during the past 6 years	25.4%	27.7%

Figure 3.1 Screen shot from www.gov.uk showing background information for School A

Pupil population in 2018/2019

The figures below are for the 2018/2019 academic year, which is the latest year for which performance results have been published. National figures are for state-funded schools only.

	School	England – mainstream secondary schools
Total number of pupils on roll (all ages)	521	3327970
Girls on roll	47.6%	49.8%
Boys on roll	52.4%	50.2%
Pupils with an SEN Education, Health and Care Plan	3.8%	1.7%
Pupils with SEN Support	6.7%	10.8%
Pupils whose first language is not English	6.5%	16.9%
Pupils eligible for free school meals at any time during the past 6 years	31.1%	27.7%

Figure 3.2 Screen shot from www.gov.uk showing background information for School B

Teacher participants were approached on an informal basis in the first instance to ascertain enthusiasm for the project. Formal approaches were then made to the heads of department (when they were not the participant) and thereafter headteachers. As part of ethical considerations, potential participants were made aware that they should not feel compelled to be involved and that their involvement was separate to their partnership with the university, in accordance with ethical consideration of informed consent and avoidance of harm (BERA, 2018). One teacher participant was recruited from each of the two participating schools.

Both teacher participants had been teaching for a minimum period of five years at the start of the programme. Both trained as specialist secondary English teachers via a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) route following undergraduate degrees in English related subjects, including English and American literature and aspects of media studies. One participant completed her Master's degree in Education (MA Ed) in the two years following

the newly qualified teacher induction period. By the completion of the project, both teachers

had been promoted to positions of responsibility within their respective schools. Ms Griffiths

was promoted to the position of KS3 co-ordinator with responsibility for the curriculum for

years 7-9. Ms Curtis was promoted to role of subject leader, with overall responsibility for

English in her school. Both teacher participants were therefore considered experienced and

knowledgeable in their field and by the end of the project were senior colleagues in their

respective departments, responsible and accountable for curriculum and provision, including

for reading.

The selection of pupil participants was also purposive, quota sampling (Basit, 2010).

Participating teachers recommended and selected eight pupils from a range (age and gender)

across the classes that they taught in the academic year 2019-20. Pupils were selected based

on their willingness to engage in and likelihood of completing participation, rather than for a

particular enthusiasm for or aptitude in reading.   The participating pupils remained the same

for each of five focus group discussions. Pupils who demonstrated significantly negative

attitudes towards and barriers in reading were excluded from selection on the grounds that

they would be less likely to engage in or complete participatory activities. In addition, pupils

in Year 11 (aged 15-16) were excluded so that participation didn't interfere with their focus

on preparing for terminal GCSE examinations. Therefore, participating pupils were within

the 11-15 age group. (This is an age group of particular interest, given that it is usually in

this period where enthusiasm for and engagement in reading falls (Clark, 2019; Topping,

2019).   Because the study did not set out to explore particular aspects of identity, including

that related to socio-economic status, individual participant details in this respect were not

sought. Some students made reference to aspects of their background during the course of

the study and such data has been included only when these were raised by participants in

relation and being pertinent to their reading and reading identity. Other identifying data, when not directly linked to reading and reader identity, was excluded in order to protect to individuals involved.

Participation waxed and waned across the extended time of the project (because of Covid and pandemic related issues discussed later in this chapter). The following chart indicates the participants, identified by pseudonyms, by school, their year group and indicative age at the start of the project and their involvement in the various meetings across the time of the project. Ticks indicate participation in focus group sessions and shaded boxes indicate non-participation. Totals indicate the number of sessions participated in by each participant and the total number of participants per focus group session:

	Year group	Age	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	Total
School A								
Jacob	7	11-12	✓	✓		✓		3
Kanisha	7	11-12	✓	✓	✓	✓		4
Holly	8	12-13	✓		✓			2
Tom	8	12-13	✓	✓				2
Cassie	9	13-14	✓	✓	✓	✓		4
Daniel	9	13-14	✓	✓				2
Dawid	10	14-15	✓	✓		✓		3
Olivia	10	14-15	✓	✓		✓		3
Total			8	7	3	5		
Ms Griffiths pre and post discussion	Teacher participant		✓	✓	✓			3
			✓	✓	✓	✓		4
School B								
Emma	7	11-12	✓	✓				2
Evan	7	11-12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Charlotte	8	12-13	✓					1
Lauren	8	12-13	✓	✓				2
Jude	9	13-14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Kayla	9	13-14	✓					1
Jessica	10	14-15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Lily	10	14-15	✓	✓		✓		3
Total			8	6	3	4	3	
Ms Curtis pre and post discussion	Teacher participant		✓	✓	✓			3
			✓	✓	✓		✓	4

Table 3.1 showing participants' year group and involvement in the study

3.7. Ethical considerations

It was especially important, given that the research was conducted in schools known to the researcher, and that participants were young people and professional colleagues (Barker & Weller, 2003; Basit, 2010), that the research was conducted in the most 'responsible and morally defensible way' (Gray, 2014, p. 68). The research was designed and conducted, therefore, mindful of key ethical principles of inclusion and integrity, reflecting the values and principles of participants, avoiding harm and deception, ensuring informed consent and respecting the privacy of participants (BERA, 2018; Gray, 2014).

Although I brought to my conversation with participants my experience of working as an English teacher and teacher educator, I needed to be aware of the potential conflicts of interest in working with colleagues in schools who were known to me in other respects. I was particularly mindful of the perception of 'power' than I might hold in my role as teacher educator and researcher, with all participants (Cohen et al., 2011). I therefore encouraged trust and freedom of discussion throughout and was mindful of the possibility of discomfort and to ensure the well-being of participants throughout (Needham et al., 2016). I ensured that participants' voices were listened to and taken seriously, mindful that the context and setting might lead to them being more subdued (Bucknall, 2014). In addition, in the findings and discussions chapters, data was excluded which was considered sensitive or potentially harmful (Basit, 2010).

An application for ethical approval outlining the project and detailing how ethical considerations were addressed, was submitted to the university ethics committee (see Appendix 3.5). When the project was adjusted to take account of the need to move to on-line meetings because of the COVID 19 pandemic, further ethical approval was sought and approved (see Appendix 3.6 for adapted Ethics form and specific considerations arising from working whilst in lockdown). In addition to seeking and provision of informed consent, firstly from the school gatekeepers (headteacher and head of department) and then from teachers, parents and pupil participants, all were also guaranteed the right not to participate or to withdraw at any time. Additional participant information sheets were provided for pupil participants in order to ensure that the nature of the project was understood, and that consent was properly informed (see Appendix 3.5a for sample participant information and consent forms). The privacy of participants was also protected in the latter stages of the project when discussions were conducted on-line: pupil participants were offered the option of blurring their background or turning off their camera if they did not wish for their background to be observable.

All recordings were transcribed as soon as possible after meetings, with recordings then destroyed. Data was stored and maintained, within Ethics' committee guidelines, on password protected devices. All potentially identifying information was changed immediately to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

3.8. Data collection methods

3.8.1. Focus groups

The research design and data collection were centred on a sequence of semi-structured focus groups and interviews organised over five separate occasions which were designed to 'encourage, foster and facilitate interaction' (Needham et al., 2016, p. 143). Each focus group discussion was initiated by and centred on different stimuli to support participants and to help them to talk (Burnard et al., 2008). The focus on talk was two-fold. Firstly, it reflected the social construction of knowledge central to the socio-cultural ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and thus to reading and to reading pedagogies discussed in the review of the literature (Eaglestone, 2019; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Mercer, 1995, 2002). Secondly, the use of group talk was intended to generate a type of meta-thinking not afforded by interviews or by other methods (Cliff Hodges, 2009).

The emphasis in the focus group was therefore on data construction rather than gathering (Bucknall, 2014), a form of 'elicited account' (Hammersley, 2014b, p. 116) seen as a key feature of the grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). The adjustment in emphasis and of method in each meeting acted as a change of lens, not only to shift the focus, but also potentially to bring longer scenes, such as the significance of school-based practice, into closer view (Charmaz, 2006). It additionally facilitated an iterative approach to data collection and analysis (Taber, 2017).

Each focus group session comprised three separate events: a focus group discussion with pupil participants including the teacher and pre and post group discussion with the teacher participant alone. The first teacher session, (signposted in findings chapter as session a), enabled the teacher participant to engage with the participatory method of the session in the same way as the pupil participants. The post-focus group session (signposted as session c) afforded time for reflection on and consideration of the pupil participant discussion.

3.8.2. *The Mosaic Approach*

Permeating much of the literature and research about readers and reading is an awareness that it is rarely possible to observe what it is that readers do when reading independently. The largely unseen and typically silent aspect of reading is therefore difficult to research and researchers are usually reliant on readers' representations of what they do (Cliff Hodges, 2016). In an effort to capture the complexity and richness of these readers' representations to illuminate reading conceptualisations and reader identities, a mosaic approach was adopted to provide 'a kaleidoscope which brings into view new colours, shapes and patterns whenever it is shifted' (O'Brien in Basit, 2010, p. 37). Each focus group discussion was intended to shift focus in order to bring different aspects of and for each participant, as well as broader social phenomena of reading, into view (Gee, 2005, in Needham et al., 2016). This opportunity to shape, reshape and refine data has been described in grounded theory through a camera analogy, in which research methods are seen as a camera to sweep landscape and whereby the researcher changes lens several times to shorten focal points and to bring key scenes closer (Charmaz, 2006). The first focus group activity therefore acted as a landscape sweeping exercise and each subsequent activity used to shorten focal points. As a result, the deliberate and focused mix of methods enabled insights into otherwise unobtainable views of reading as well as of participants' lives and experiences (Charmaz, 2006). It also provided a contrast to the survey-style approach favoured by many researchers interested in children and young people's reading (Cliff Hodges, 2010b).

Focus group	Participatory method	Key focus
1	Image and metaphor elicitation.	Reading conceptualisation
2	Reading histories and scrapbooks	Reading conceptualisation and identity
3	Reading Relational Maps (Pie Chart)	Reading conceptualisations and perceptions
4	Reading Relational maps	Reading spaces and places
5	Work sample	Perceptions of school-based reading practice

Table 3.2 showing each focus group method and focal point

As well as being well-founded within a grounded theory methodology and methods, the mosaic approach adopted and drew on methods utilised in other reading research with children and young people (Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2010b; Cremin, 2014). As the table illustrates, these were sequenced over the course of the study to bring together different components and factors (Clark & Moss, 2011). A mosaic approach was used by the Spaces to Play project (Clark & Moss, 2005) to enable young children to participant in decision-making about changes to play provision. The project found that the mosaic approach, which utilised several methods, enabled all children to have a voice and also revealed how small details, arising from the variety of methods, proved to be important.

Clark and Moss (2011), furthermore, argue that a mosaic approach is founded on key epistemological views which align with its underpinning methodological principles and assumptions. Thus, a mosaic approach promotes knowledge creation rather than 'extraction' where participatory methods are used to facilitate co-constructed meanings that might be variously presented in thoughts, words, objects, events, images, and interactions (ibid). Comparable approaches were used in Shah's (2015) study of schooling in India and Ingram's (2014) study to investigate gender perspectives of schooling: similar collaborative and participatory methods ensured participants expressed themselves and created data from the gaze of the participant rather than the researcher.

Thus, the mosaic approach challenges dominant discourses about whose knowledge counts. In this respect, the research intended to capture the experiences and voices of the groups on whom schooling has the most impact positioning, in particular, children and young people as experts in their own lives and experiences. In this context it was therefore particularly significant that data arising from the study was co-constructed by participants, in keeping with a grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006; Ingram, 2014; Mills et al., 2006).

Finally, knowledge was constructed using different forms of communication which allowed participants to explore their experiences in ways which might play to their different strengths. Hence, the set of different stimuli provided for each focus group discussion. Furthermore, the use of different foci allowed for crystallisation, rather than triangulation, of ideas and theory: each different focus group with its change of method allowed for a shift of emphasis and focus, to acknowledge that 'what we see depends on our angle of repose' (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 478). The accumulation of data across the focus groups, through use of

this approach, afforded the opportunity for illumination of the multi-dimensional nature of reading and the reader.

3.8.3. *Use of active and participatory research methods: scrapbooks, image and metaphor elicitation, critical incident and relational mapping*

A variety of participatory and active methods were therefore adopted to promote and provoke discussion about reading, on the basis that this offered opportunities for plurality. Clark (2014, p. 200) argues that the mosaic approach, when working with children and young people, affords an opportunity for methods which move beyond the spoken word 'in order to capture the complexities of everyday experiences.' Participatory methods were also intended to generate 'richly -textured, interconnected,' data (Cliff Hodges, 2016, p. 137). The use of a variety of methods ensured that there was potential for each to speak to the interests and strengths of individual participants (Robb et al., 2014). Furthermore, it provided some semblance of control for pupils to select the means by which their views might best be presented (Bucknall, 2014). The range of methods therefore enabled opportunities for points of consensus as well as contrast, for individual as well as group perspective (Ingram, 2014). As outlined in Table 3.3 below, methods were also selected carefully to align with the identified research questions at the heart of the study:

Focus Group	Key research questions	Participatory Method
1	How do pupils and teachers **conceptualise** reading?	**Image and metaphor elicitation**: Participants discussed a range of provided images and the extent to which they might be seen to represent 'reading'. They were asked to complete a series of metaphors to describe aspects of reading.
2	How do pupils and teachers **identify** and **conceptualise** readers and reading?	**Reading histories** Participants were asked to share reading scrapbooks and histories.
3	How do pupils and teachers **perceive** and **conceptualise** readers and reading?	**Relational Map** (Pie Chart) Participants were asked to consider the range of different types of texts they read over time, including revisiting their scrapbooks to see if different types of texts were represented.
4	Do reading spaces **shape** or **influence** reading?	**Relational maps** Participants were asked to create relational maps showing the influence and impact of different spaces and people on and to their reading and reading habits
5	How do pupils and teachers **identify** and **conceptualise** readers and reading? What do participants' responses reveal about the **influence** of policy and practice of teaching of reading within English in the secondary school?	**Work Sample** Participants were asked to bring and share an example of a piece of school work based around or on reading.

Table 3.3 outlining the research questions and how participatory methods central to each focus group discussion were aligned with research questions

3.8.4. Scrapbooks

Participants were provided with scrapbooks primarily for their reading history. They were initially intended as a depository for the documents created and gathered through the participatory methods of the study but the adaptation to the study to on-line meetings (discussed in section 3.1.3 of this chapter) made this unsustainable.   Nonetheless, the scrapbook formed an essential component of the reading histories task central to focus group 2 and referenced by some participants thereafter.   Each scrapbook constituted an accrual, over time, of small, individualised detail to illuminate and make explicit the nuance of each reader's identity (Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2010b) (evidenced in appendices 4.2c-p, photographs of each participants' reading scrapbook).

Furthermore, the scrapbooks provided some cohesion for and of each participant, as a record of their reading (Bearne & Cliff-Hodges, 2010) and in prompting discussions about reading perceptions and conceptualisations as at the heart of the research questions. The scrapbooks comprised a visual record of a part of their reading journey and were considered a 'dynamic set of research methods' (Cliff Hodges, 2010b, p. 183) to reflect the potential for shifting and changing perspectives over time (A. Clark, 2014). For example, participants were encouraged in each focus group to consider how the ideas of the current discussions might be reflected in or differ from the material already collated in the scrapbook. This process and documentation therefore embodied the principle underpinning the use of grounded theory approach that data is co-constructed, using comparative and iterative strategies which lend themselves to inductive analysis (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, the scrapbooks provided a distinct set of data for each participant which enabled them, their identities and practices to be viewed as individuals rather than as part of an homogenous group of 'pupils' or 'readers' (Yandell, 2014).

3.8.5. *Image elicitation*

Pink (2007, p. 22) asserts not just that 'images inspire conversation' but also that 'any image or representation is contingent on how it is situated, interpreted and used to invoke meanings and knowledge that are of … interest (ibid, p23). Photographs were therefore used to prompt discussion in the first focus group meeting (Appendix 3.1 details the full range of images used). Although images can be made by the researcher or participants during research, images used in this project were 'found' and selected from a random internet search (Hearn & Thomson, 2014) in order not to subconsciously transmit my own messages about reading. Participants were asked to select from the sample provided and then explain how their chosen image represented 'reading' to and for them. Harper (2002) argues that images can evoke deeper elements of human consciousness and it was hoped, therefore, that the use of images would enable participants to reflect on their experiences of reading in order to provide insights into their conceptualisations and aspects of their reader identity. This was underpinned by the use of grounded theory and an inductive approach whereby data is firstly co-constructed and then analysed to 'emphasise[s] interpretation and give[s] abstract understanding greater priority than explanation' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 230).

The arising discussion was intended as an effective method for illuminating participants' conceptualisations through collaborative and co-construction of meaning, both of the images themselves and also arising associations with reading (Harper, 2002). Moreover, Harper (2002) considers the resultant conversation to be an example of post-modern dialogue, based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher and a means of bridging the gap

between researcher and researched. This method, therefore, was in keeping with the principles of the grounded theory approach on which this study was founded.

3.8.6. Metaphor elicitation

Just as identity is a recurrent theme or concept in literature about reading and readers, the use of metaphor, within texts and as a form of exploring readership and reading, is just as prolific. Meek (1988, p. 16) argues the significance and importance of metaphor in meaning making, 'as each one of us stretches our language to reconstruct, remake, extend and understand our experience of living in social contact with each other.' Eaglestone (2019) further argues that metaphors are simultaneously a tool and vehicle for expression of thought. As a result, one key data generation tool for the first focus group discussion was the creation of a range of metaphors to explore what might be meant by reading. Participants were asked to complete and then share and discuss a range of pre-provided metaphor stems (Appendix 3.2 details the full range of metaphor stems provided to participants). This method provided a means for exploring and explaining the complex concept of reading (Devon, 2006) and encouraged participants to construct 'identities [which] reflect meanings and preferred images of self' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47).

3.8.7. Critical Incident collages and relational mapping

The mosaic approach and use of scrapbooks presented participants with a multimodal vehicle through which they could capture, present and articulate their ideas and identities as readers. Greyson et al (2017) argue that photovoice, usually demonstrated through participants' photography, can be a means of eliciting participant generated information about social processes. As a result, the study aimed to include a method by which participants generated multi-modal images and representations in the forms of critical incident collages and a

relational map. Critical incident collages are an image-based reflexive tool to promote thinking and talking (Burnard et al., 2008). This was therefore selected as a potentially useful tool to inspire discussion (Pink, 2007) and in recognition that meaning is contingent, situated and interpreted (ibid).

Cliff Hodges (2010b) employed critical incident collages in her study of adolescent readers, asking them to retell their reading histories through use of a visual image presented metaphorically as a river of reading to represent the fluidity and movement of reading. This method was, therefore, similarly employed in the second focus group of this study. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) suggest the value of narration as a method for identity construction, arguing that the integration of old and new, including the identification of both ordinary and exceptional, provide personal, coherent accounts, interpretations and evaluations. The critical incident collage, in the form of a reading history, accordingly provided opportunity for such narrative.

In a similar vein, participants were asked to create relational maps in further focus groups 3 and 4. In these instances, participants were asked to consider and represent initially the kinds of texts/materials read and then latterly the various people and places which were significant to their reading, represented in scale to denote significance and influence. These relational maps encouraged participants to reflect and represent complex relational concepts and worldviews through concrete means (Greyson et al., 2017).

3.8.8. Work sampling

The final stage of the research project involved participants talking together about some of the work they had produced in school, on or about reading. The precise focus of the work was left for participants to identity, because what they say about what they had done is important (Cliff Hodges, 2009). This final stage afforded a further opportunity to triangulate ideas and conceptualisations from initial data gathering with situated and enacted practices as potentially exhibited in the work presented. Thus, the material that the pupils selected for the focus of the discussion, being articles of evidence of classroom-based practice, were integral to the educational and research processes being investigated.

3.9. Research in practice

This project was planned to capture 'an instance …embedded in time,' (Stenhouse, 1978). The original plan was to carry out the project over the course of an academic year, with focus groups positioned periodically throughout (see timeline, appendix 3.3). The arrival of the pandemic and the need for extended lockdown, whereby participants and the researcher were working from home with intendant pressures on time, meant that the timeline for the project was extended beyond the end of one academic year. This led, in part, to some participant attrition. However, given the value afforded to participant perspective, the smaller focus groups enabled more detailed contributions from the remaining participants.

3.9.1. The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted at a different school from the main study, selected specifically for this purpose. A sample, consisting of two focus group interviews, was held with a group of pupils similar in composition to that of the main study. Focus groups were selected to test

the efficacy of the key research instrument as a suitable method for data collection and to see if the discussion yielded data which related to the proposed research questions (Basit, 2010). It was decided to sample two of the key tools: photo and metaphor elicitation and scrapbooks.

Both yielded some interesting and useful data which demonstrated the strength of focus group discussions as an opportunity for participants to communicate ideas. There was some hesitation and shyness at first, perhaps because of lack of familiarity with the researcher and anxiety about the process. Participants were happy to share ideas (although the conversation was a little stilted at time and tended to turn taking rather than the discussion that had been anticipated). It was hoped that, in the main study, as participants became more familiar with each other and with the research project, that the conversations would become more dialogic. In the final study, therefore attempts were made repeatedly to create a supportive and open climate for discussion, to put participants at ease and to emphasise the importance of shared discussion.

There was some overlapping of ideas and themes across the photo and metaphor elicitation activities which raised questions about how many metaphors to ask participants to complete. However, initial analysis was really revealing: the repetition provided a sense of an emerging identity for each participant which suggested the importance of offering a range. The original number was therefore retained.

Participants' responses to the scrap book were also very positive: they seemed keen to work on these outside of the session. Findings for the second pilot session yielded contradictory data, however. Participants commented that these had been completed with limited degree of success and gave multiple reasons including: a lack of ideas of what to include and limited

time and momentum. In addition, there was some anxiety about 'getting it right.' This provided a useful opportunity for reflection on the purpose of the scrapbook. Although originally intended to be open-ended to capture pupils' perceptions and conceptualisations without interference or guidance, it appeared that participants wanted some direction in order to maintain momentum and focus. The decision was therefore taken to provide some illustration in the form of my own reading history at the end of the first session. Participants were also provided with additional written guidance (Appendix 3.8). They were further encouraged to speak to teacher participants in the interim period if they started to doubt the validity of their work. This experience provided an opportunity to reflect on and realise the need to respect and respond to the experiences and views of the participants (Bucknall, 2014): one of the underpinning principles of the research design.

The discussion with the teacher participant at the end of the first focus interview was also interesting and revealing. Her comments revealed that the activity provided otherwise unknown information about pupils, some of which contrasted or contradicted previously held ideas. The teacher was keen to be further involved in the project, highlighting its potential. This reinforced the purpose of the inclusion of teacher participants in order to encourage reflection and reflexivity, as well as learn from and about children's perspectives (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Clark & Moss, 2011).

3.10.   Data Analysis

Data for the main study was analysed from the outset. Analyses were inductive, on-going and iterative, in keeping with the methodology and methods of the grounded theory approach, which meant 'stopping, pondering and thinking afresh' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 244).   This study is therefore grounded in the data (Basit, 2010; Taber, 2017), with theory constructed as a

result of repeated involvements and interactions with the data (Charmaz, 2006; Gibbs &

Flick, 2007). Throughout I was mindful of the subjective nature of the analyses and

interpretations as well as the data (Gibbs & Flick, 2007).

3.10.1. Transcription

Focus group discussions were transcribed in full, word for word, acknowledging that

transcription is, in and of itself, part of the process of analysis and interpretation of data (Cliff

Hodges, 2016; Cohen et al., 2017). The transcription process is, itself, subjective, being a

translation from spoken to written language (Collins et al., 2016; Jenks, 2011) and a selection

of transcripts across the focus group discussions have been included in appendices 3.7a –

3.7f. Repeated listening during transcription also enabled analysis and these formative ideas

were captured on memos, as demonstrated in the illustrative example in figure 3.1:

Olivia - school is more significant than for her, but this is a participant who says that she doesn't read much - so for established readers, school registers as as a smaller space, whereas for those who identify as not reading much,, schol is seen as significant perhaps becasue it is the only sapace they associate with reading, (Ironic/problematic, given that schooling doesn't seem to actually encourage them to read other than for school?).

Jacob - circa 250 - special place in the woods where he is not disturbed and he can sit on a log and read

Also, further evidence of sounding things out as part of the converstaion - Kanisha - I guess, when thinking about and responding to ideas about comfort and whether this is important to reading = importance of talk, and of talk as a space to think, to share reading as well as a space to share thoguths about what reading means.

Olivia circa 450ish - good links with socio cultural aspects of reading - not just being friends with people who read, but forming friendships as a result of talking about reading ... talk and reading are the reason and the route for the friendships.

Also, different ways of talking about kinds of readers (their definitions of identifying readers) a 'massive' reader, and a 'turbo' reader.

Jacob circa late 400s debateing with self if it is the book or the author that is significant/influential. - and then deciding that it is the context - that this was the first book that was enjoyed and that was what maikes it influential - attributed to beginngin identity as a reader who enjoys

Also, I'm beginning to notice a subtle distnction between reading for school and reading at school - the former being the rationale, whereas the latter is the space (hence some books read at school are seen as enjoyable and pleasurable, perhpas because they are not seen as being read for school, whereas not all books read for school are viewed in the same way?

Figure 3.3 showing screen shot of a memo captured on NVivo during the transcription process

3.10.2. Coding

A deductive and inductive analysis was conducted on all transcripts, using reading to be sensitive to but having a grounded approach to emerging themes and ideas (Charmaz, 2006). Coding was therefore undertaken as part of a decision-making process to make sense of the data (Elliot, 2018). The initial coding of the transcript for each focus group discussion began with line-by -line coding through NVivo, using gerunds to convey action (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2011). Charmaz (2014) argues that the use of gerunds encourages the researcher to stay close to the initial data but also to define implicit meanings and crystallise significant

points. Figure 3.2 is a screenshot illustrating indicative gerunds captured on NVivo during

the coding process:

Name

- comparing books
- describing author as influential
- describing change of genre preference
- describing non-reading
- describing not remembering
- describing only being able to remembe...
- describing reading before watching film
- describing reading development linked...
- describing reading intention
- describing reading less variety
- describing selecting reading
- describing unlimited reading time
- explaining rereading
- giving reasons for reading - being moti...
- how I read - ease
- making a connection between reading...
- motivation and enjoyment
- places and spaces reading for school
- refelecting on non-reading
- referring to love
- reflecting on reading content not being...
- reflecting on reading experience
- reflecting on reason for reading
- reflecting on reasons for persevering
- reflecting on reasons for preferences
- reflecting on reasons for reading

Figure 3.4 screenshot illustrating indicative gerunds as captured on NVivo software

Each stage of the process began with line-by-line coding of the transcript for each episode of

each focus group, in three steps: pupil participant discussion transcript followed by each of

the teacher pre and post interview transcript (see figure 3.3).   In these instances, coding was

seen as attaching labels to indicate what each segment of data was about (Charmaz, 2014,

Elliot, 2018).   After the initial line-by-line coding was completed for one participant school,

the process was repeated for the second participant school. At each new cycle, participant

schools were rotated so that each cycle did not always begin with the same participants, as represented in figure 3.3

Focus group 2

Focus group 4

- Pupil participant discussion A
- Pupil participant discussion B
- Teacher A pre-discussion
- Teacher A post discussion
- Teacher B pre discussion
- Teacher B post discussion

Focus group 1

- Pupil participant discussion A
- Pupil participant discussion B
- Teacher A pre-discussion
- Teacher A post discussion
- Teacher B pre discussion
- Teacher B post discussion

- Pupil participant discussion A
- Pupil participant discussion B
- Teacher A pre-discussion
- Teacher A post discussion
- Teacher B pre discussion
- Teacher B post discussion

Focus group 3

- Pupil participant discussion A
- Pupil participant discussion B
- Teacher A post discussion
- Teacher B post discussion

- Pupil participant discussion A
- Teacher A post discussion

Focus group 5

Figure 3.5 showing sequence of line-by-line coding

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic influenced the attendance and availability of the participants in the latter stages (seen previously in Table 3.1 in section 3.6): there were fewer pupil participants in later discussion groups and in the final stage only one participating school. Because of the on-line nature of the latter meetings and the increased pressure of time, there was not always time for pre-meeting discussions with teacher participants and limited time for post-meeting reflections.   This meant that there were fewer teacher data than anticipated at the outset. However, this study was founded on the situated, contextualised and subjective nature of lived experience (Hammersley, 2014a). It was not aiming for generalisation, but instead valued the singular, the particular, the unique' (Simons, 2009, p.

3). Accordingly, each participant was seen as contributing valuable detail to the research questions, regardless of the number in attendance.

Line-by-line coding was followed by incident-with-incident coding. Each episode (the specific, individual school discussion) within each focus group (specific section of the research project with key questions and research activities common across both participating schools) as outlined in figure 4.1 was treated as a single incident for purposes of comparison of initial codes. Thus, each group's discussion was deemed an episode, but the combination of both schools' and teachers' discussions comprised an incident, being centred on a common research question and participatory method. Then, as the project continued and more data were gathered through subsequent focus group sessions, the cycle included returning to previous incidents and episodes (see figure 3.4).
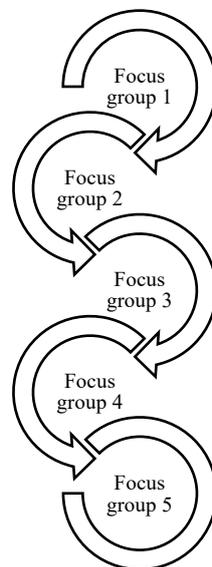
Figure 3.6 illustrating the iterative nature of incident with incident coding

Each episode of each focus group was therefore revisited to make comparisons and explore on-going emerging ideas across incidents and to contribute to and develop emerging

theorisation. The opportunities to revisit the transcripts and previously identified codes enabled repeated interaction with and analysis of the data and supported repeated cross-referencing and comparison as well as within to look for interactions between and interplay in patterns across the data (Saldaña, 2011). At each stage, memos were kept to document reflection and possible insights (Saldana, 2021) as illustrated in Figure 3.5:

Describing reading - moves away from current reading and conceptualisations to reflecting on patterns which seem to reflect preferences and habits.

Some cross-over with previous session where participants were talking about thier current reading and framing this in a broader context of 'I like to read ...' whereas in this context they are able to/seem more able to reflect on emerging parrters that they have identified about themselves - eg a tendency to reead a particular genre, or the particular influences of a family member on reading.

Another possible emerging theme - only being able to refer to selected detail of what has been read - not remembering everytihgn, but only remembering that which seems particulalry significnat. threfore, whole reading experience not demonstrated - only selective memory. Are there any hints as to the kinds of things that make the experience memorable? enjoyment?

Also, emerging theme of developing and exercising agency - being able to stop, start reread etc.

New theme - how books are recommended or aqcuired?

Note change in coding - use describing for FG1 sessions because participants were often describing current experience or responding to prompts to describe etc. FG2 moved to reflections on reading history, so coding changed to recall - to indicate the difference in foucs or emphasis, even when contnt of code remained similar - eg describing or recalling books by genre, title etc. coding helps to distinguish difference in the context in which the reading was being referenced.

Figure 3.7 showing screenshot of example memo from NVivo capturing reflections and emerging theorisation during coding

Figure 3.6 summarises how each of the stages of the data analysis led to initial focused codes and then emerging categories to arise. Codes were therefore seen as the primary stage of engaging with and analysing data and emerging sub-themes arising from the categorisation of these codes (Elliot, 2018). Sometimes codes signalled a pattern emerging, but, as well as being descriptive, required revisiting in order to ensure analysis of the data with an adequate

degree of detail (ibid). For example, the descriptions of particular a book led to an initial code of fiction. Arising categorisation required a return to the initial nodes to explore the different ways that fiction texts had been described. This then led to the emergent category of reading as classified by material such that the final theme and theorisation was focused on reading as conceptualised by content. The figure illustrates how each step contributed to further emerging conceptualisation and theoretical categories in order to answer identified research questions. Throughout the coding process substantive codes, closely reflecting the raw data, (Oktay, 2012) were used to 'crystallize participants' experience' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 133).
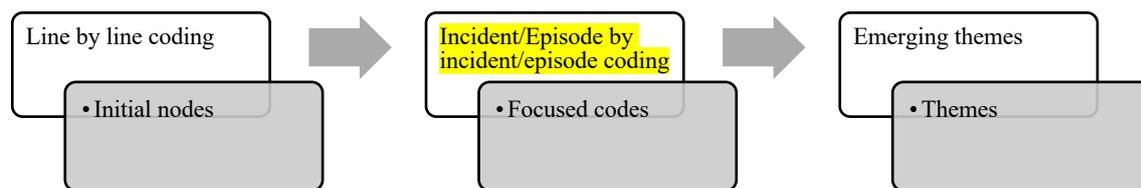
Figure 3.8 Sequence of development of codes and themes

Initial nodes (the term employed by Nvivo software used for the purpose of coding) were used to name, label and illuminate segments of data (Charmaz, 2014). These initial nodes/codes were extensive and numerous, open and provisional (ibid). As the analytic process moved to comparison across incidents and episodes to look for patterns, second, more focused codes were quite quickly identified when they indicated or established analytical direction based on aggregated common ideas (Cresswell. 2013). For example, many of the nodes in the initial data sets described the way that participants identified their

reading. A common sub-theme of 'fiction' (one possible analysis of the pattern in the data)

emerged (a broad term for a more nuanced and individualised range of responses and ideas

from which further theorisation began to emerge.) Sub-themes and then themes therefore

arose when patterns enabled the data to be put back together in ways meaningful to the

research questions (Creswell, 2015).   For example, continued engagement with and analysis

of codes related to descriptions of what had been read resulted in the emergent idea that part

of reading identity appeared to be connected to material and content read.   This iterative

process of engaging and analysing the data constantly therefore led to coding structured along

the lines of themes confirmed and new themes arising, commensurate not only with

constructivist grounded theory but also with the opportunities afforded by changing the

research tool for each focus group as outlined in the mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2005).

So whilst the sub-theme of fiction texts emerged from the focused codes of the initial data

sets, latter incidents and episodes added additional clarification of the significant of this

seemingly descriptive theme, which was underpinned by various ideas illuminating the

significance of why, as well as what, of fiction. Axial coding was therefore consciously

avoided because of the possibility of restricting analysis and coding (Charmaz, 2014).

Moreover, the iterative nature of the analyses in seeking patterns meant that simultaneous

coding was sometimes employed when single datum was seen to be connected to more than

one emerging theme (Saldaña, 2021). The revision of themes and conceptualisations at each

stage further enabled the development of emerging and on-going theorisation and final

themes were decided on the grounds of most plausible explanation and interpretation of the

patterns in the data and subthemes (Saldaña, 2011) as illustrated in table 3.4 (see Appendix

3.7 for full table of codes, sub-themes and themes, which are too numerous to list here).

Sub-themes	Themes
Fiction Other	Reading by content and material: the kind of reading that I do
Immersion/engrossed Transported Visualising, seeing Satisfying Rereading	Reading experience: what it feels like to, and why I, read
People (parents, other family members, siblings, peers, teachers) Places (Home, libraries, bookshops, other, school)	Reading influences (places and people within)
Nature of relationships/ Interactions/Community Talk	Socio-cultural factors

Table 3.4 showing indicative sub-themes and themes

Findings are presented to 'blend[s] a description of events with an analysis of them' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 252), which was fundamental to addressing the research questions as well as to portraying the richness in the cases (ibid). Bucknall (2014) argues that the process of selection from the data as part of and in the analysis means that researchers need to think about which views to select.   The analysis process ensured that selected examples and quotations represented the faithful utterances of the participants. However, it is acknowledged that these will have been selected to illustrate

or make a point and that, as interpretations of the data are driven by the research questions, they will therefore be as subjective and context bound as the data.

3.11. Validity, Representativeness and Reliability

3.11.1. Validity

Basit (2010) argues that validity requires that research measures or describes that which it purports to measure or describe and that validity in qualitative research is achieved through the honesty, richness, depth and scope of the data. As outlined previously in this chapter, the data collected through the course of the study aspired to richness and depth, achieved through the breadth and scope of the methods used and the participants involved.

Initial and tentative findings were discussed with participants during and as part of the on-going enquiry to ensure that findings represented the ideas and thoughts of the participants.

3.11.2. Representativeness

Bucknall (2014) suggests that there are key considerations that a researcher must ask about the representativeness of their data. These include of participants, in relation to the population they represent, and the data, presented in relation to that generated.

As discussed in section 3.12.1 of this chapter, focus group discussions were transcribed in full to create a record of spoken data (Jenks, 2011). In addition, non-verbal cues such as nodding, smiling, laughing, as well as pauses and simultaneous speech, were included in the

transcription to ensure that the nature of the discussion and how meanings were communicated, constructed and received, were captured (Cohen et al., 2017). Where these were relevant to meaning, they have been retained in the data cited, given that the transcripts were intended to be representative of the social nature of the discussions (Cohen et al., 2017; Jenks, 2011). However, this study recognises that this was a selective, partially 'closed' process: some verbal tics such as 'like' were retained in order to capture the authentic voices of the participants but others, such as 'em' and 'er' were not captured in order to retain some fluency in the data and body of the report (Jenks, 2011). Full transcripts of some of the focus group discussions have been included in appendices 3.7a – 3.7f, so that the selection of data in the final report can be compared to the sample, if required, in assessing the rigour of the analysis and selection, and to provide illustration of the broader context for some of the data cited in the study.

In addition, with regards to representation within participants, it is acknowledged that the voices heard within this study were selected. The schools were selected by the researcher and the pupils within selected by the teacher. The selection does not include, for example, pupils who teachers deemed were not interested in research or reading and they represented, therefore, a sample selected by the teacher as 'appropriate'. This is not the same, however, as representative, and this study therefore worked from the position that, 'No one child's voice can speak for all,' (Bucknall, 2014, p. 79). As a result, this study does not seek to make a claim to represent all readers or all reading nor to generalise about all readers and reading on the basis of the findings. Instead, this study recognises the subjectivity of the participants involved (Gibbs & Flick, 2007). Accordingly, this study represents reading and reader identity as it was seen by some.

3.11.3. Reliability, rich description, sedimentation, and crystallisation

Hammersley (2014b, p. 113) argues for the use and reliability of case studies on the grounds of the 'richness' of the detail that they can provide. Whilst this study is not argued primarily as a case study, it did not seek to generalise about all pupils' and all teachers' perceptions and experiences of reading. It acknowledges, instead, the contextualised and individual nature of such concepts and looked, therefore, to 'create an enriched and detailed description' (Simons, 2009, p. 3).

Thus, the creation of vivid and thick descriptions offers multiple perspectives to enable others to make connections with their own experience as well as experience vicariously (Simons, 2009). Furthermore, the rich descriptions generated by the data and analyses demonstrated an interest in and valuing of the specificity of young people's experiences and perceptions (Cliff Hodges, 2016). This research project was interested in the richness, depth and complexity of reading, of the practices in teaching and learning of reading including in schools and was predicated on the assumption that both pupils and teachers have something worthwhile to say about these. Because of the intricacies involved, not only in this complex activity known as reading but also in attempting to understand the nuanced relationship between teacher and pupils, and teaching and learning, thick description was essential (Cliff Hodges, 2010b). Moreover, the process of research was an 'act of dialogue' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 316), aiming for layers of interpretation rather than generalisation.

This research project considered the complexity of both reading and impact of practice from a range of angles. Each subsequent focus group added new data, thus layers of interpretation and resultant 'sedimentation,' (Crotty, 1998, p. 59). Moreover, each new set of data required

revisiting and the iterative nature of these analyses added further layers in the creation of rich description and resulting crystallisation. Richardson and St. Pierre (2008, p. 479) describe crystallisation as providing, 'a deepened, complex and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic' whereby a researcher might learn something rather than everything. As such, this study sought to contribute further, partial and situated detail to the already accumulated data and existing picture of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2012). It is therefore the situated practices (Cohen et al., 2011) in the focus of the research which offer originality.

3.12. Limitations

The partial, situated, and contextualised data set arising from this study could be seen as a limitation and open to suggestions of minimal relevance. Similarly, the focus on perceptions and conceptualisations, rather than on specific aspects of practice, might also be seen as lacking further relevance, including for participants. Additionally, the perceptions and conceptualisations of the participants may be seen as limiting or irrelevant to others who have a different view. However, the extensive arguments within the literature review which point to the subjective nature of the underpinning concepts remain compelling. Moreover, this research did not seek generalisations but instead leaves other readers to make connections where they see application (Nisbet & Watt, in Cohen et al., 2011).

Additionally, one intended outcome of the project was informed and developed understanding, not least of the participants, with potential for impact on practice. There was an additional limitation in that the perceptions and conceptualisations as revealed of the participants might be seen as limiting, irrelevant or inconclusive to others who have a different view. This is particularly pertinent, given the on-going contested nature of English

and related pedagogies as discussed in the literature review chapter.   Thus, inconclusive outcomes sit within the epistemological conceptualisations and principles of this study.

Given the complex nature of schools and education, there was ample opportunity for participant attrition, both pupil and teacher, due to unforeseen or pressing circumstance.   The sample size for each school, and across both schools, was formulated to mitigate pupil withdrawal. Although the consequences for teacher drop-out were more significant, it was hoped that the purposive nature of the sampling would mitigate this possibility. Further, it was hoped that as the research project progressed and participants became more engaged and invested in the project, then drop-out would be less likely to occur.

 In addition, the focus on practice and impact was likely to lead to potential for critique. Whilst there was, therefore, potential for lack of consent, again purposive sampling hoped to mitigate by selecting schools and participants who had expressed an interest in and enthusiasm for the benefits of research in affording opportunities for reflection and development, particularly but not exclusively for teacher participants.

4. Findings – 'The kind of things that I read': reading as content and material

4.1. Overview

This study set out to understand how secondary school pupils and their teachers conceptualise and perceive reading and identify as readers.   A recurrent idea, emerging in both the data collection and analysis stages, was that reader identity and attendant perceptions and conceptualisations appeared to be framed and informed by a complex amalgam of several factors. The deliberate use of a mosaic approach in the research design, in order to enable a shift in lens and focus and examination of complex concepts from a variety of angles over time, was therefore particularly useful in this respect (A. Clark, 2014; Clark & Moss, 2005). The emerging factors, identified initially in the series of codes, led to the creation of key and sub-themes describing patterns in the data (Charmaz, 2014). Whilst one purpose of the study was to seek to understanding participants' experience, this per se was not the intended outcome of the study. Because the research questions and study design centralise perceptions and conceptualisations arising in part from experience, the findings will therefore be presented and discussed in relation to the related key themes and underpinning evidence, rather than as narratives around and of individuals.

Participants' identification of and identities as readers thus seemed to be framed and informed by three important components: the kind of **material** that they read and deemed significant (findings chapter 4); the **experiences** that they had as readers including what it felt like to read, (findings chapter 5) and **places and spaces**, including the people (findings chapter 7) within which reading occurred. It became apparent over the course of the study

that whilst these might appear as distinct and clear categories and influences, reader identities (and how readers perceive and conceptualise reading, therefore) were formed and revised as a result of a dynamic and iterative relationship between these factors, illustrated in figure 4.1:
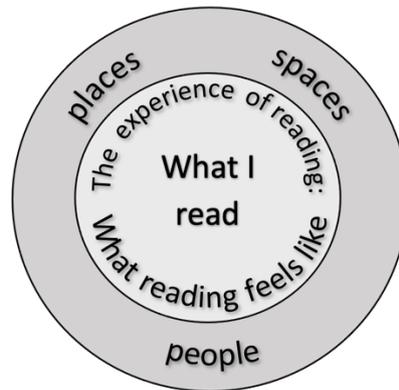
Figure 4.1 showing the relationship of the themes influencing reader identity and conceptualisation

The central circle represents the individualised, private and usually unseen experience of reading, brought about by the nature of the material. The outer circle represents the factors which influence the type of material read and the nature of the experience. Given that this often provides the context for the reading, the outer circle represents the more social culture of reading.   Additionally, the **social** nature of reading and readership were highlighted as repeated patterns in the data, including in the nature of the discussions in the focus groups themselves (findings chapter 8).

Thus, one of the first significant themes was the way in which reading was referred to as being of **material** and **content**: this findings chapter illustrates the breadth and range of participants' reading. Whilst capturing and cataloguing these references, the chapter highlights the variety and scale of the reading material described, signposting the elements of reading which participants found most significant: primarily fiction material.

4.2. 'The kind of reading that I do'

Participants in the study repeatedly defined reading and their reading identity in terms of the reading that they engaged in. Participants made and were asked to refer to examples from their own reading, partly to facilitate discussion and explanation and as part of their reflections. Sometimes this was the direct result of a question or prompt, such as, 'What are you currently reading and why do you like reading it?' or in response to an activity central to the research design, such as the reading history captured in the scrapbook. In other instances, the references arose as participants sought to illustrate and illuminate points made, such as:

> *when I read 'Lord of the Rings' for the first time it took me six weeks to finish and that was a long time for me but I did get to the end of it* (Jude, FG1).

As a result, one key theme that emerged was '***The kind of reading that I do***': descriptions and recollections of, as well as reflections on, material that participants had read or were currently reading. The research was designed to prompt conceptualisations and perceptions, anticipating that participants would refer to, and therefore by inclusion identify, reading that they found significant. The framework of the project did not therefore place any definitions of or limitations on reading ahead of the discussions. Consequently, the data illustrated that, when recalling reading, participants identified primarily **fiction** material. This displayed, in the initial focus group stages at least, an unconscious assumption that reading was equated with fiction.

4.2.1. Fiction

The key finding of the theme of 'the kind of reading that I do' is that participants' references were dominated by examples of fiction texts, mainly in the form of prose narrative and novels. Even when participants began to suggest and consider other types of reading material (deliberately, as part of the research design), the reading that appeared to be most significant for all participants was that of fiction, a wide range of which was cited across the various focus group sessions (Appendix 4.2A for full range of fiction referenced, too numerous to list here but of interest because of the breadth and range. The listed reading is also interesting because there are more titles read by individuals than there are read in common).

To facilitate emerging insights into conceptualisations of reading in the initial session, participants were invited to introduce themselves to the rest of the group by saying something about their current reading. Although reading was referenced and described variously (Appendix 4.2B is an inclusive list of all of the ways that reading was referenced), all of the examples provided were of novels. An indicative selection, A Place called Perfect (Duggan, 2017), Running Wild (Morpurgo, 2010), Maze Runner (Dashner, 2014), illustrate some of the range of reading of the participants.

Although they all had fiction in common, there were, nonetheless, small but significant differences in the way that the texts were described: participants identified and foregrounded the specific quality or aspect of their reading that had been most salient or significant. Almost all material was referenced by title, but sometimes additional detail was included, such as the author, when numbers of texts by the same author had been read and were being recalled or described. Lauren (FG1), for example, explained:

I started reading a new book. I haven't read it before. I forgot what it's called. It's by Michael Morpurgo, I think it's called 'Running Wild'... I've read all of his other books.

In this instance, author seemed to be more significant than title, as signalled by the explanation that she had read all of his other books and that she was able to remember the author more easily than the title.

In other instances, details of plot and/or character were shared, suggesting that these were the memorable and significant features of the book. For example, Jude (FG1), explained, *'I'm reading an Alex Rider book called 'Snakehead' ..., I just read it 'cos I've been reading the series for a long time.'* The reference firstly to the central character suggests this was a significant and defining feature of the reading, as was the inclusion of reference to a series.

Thus, for each participant, particular and slightly different aspects of the text were significant. Even though the common factor was fiction, in this initial data set and then thereafter, these descriptions demonstrated subtle distinctions in the way the participants chose to reference reading: there was no common pattern of identification. Participants prioritised and referenced aspect(s) of and details that they found pertinent and/or significant and this differed from reader to reader. Therefore, whilst all participants identified firstly and commonly that what they read was fiction, they differed in the aspects of the material that they recalled and the detail which they considered important. For example, Holly (FG1) recalled her current reading by title but added some contextual information that hinted at the reason for her choice: '*I'm almost finished reading this book called 'Alex and Eliza' and it's based on the musical 'Hamilton'.*'). Evan (FG1), on the other hand, recalled his current reading by an overarching title: *'I have been reading the book called, 'His Dark*

Materials: Northern Lights' ... It's the first part of the trilogy which has just started airing on BBC.'

This recurring pattern of referencing predominantly fiction texts and illuminating by including additional significant detail continued into the second focus group when participants were asked to reflect on their reading histories and autobiographies as collated in their scrapbooks. Commonly presented chronologically, all reading histories were populated with significant, almost exclusive, reference to fiction texts, demonstrating the high value afforded to fiction over other types of texts. As in the first focus group, the references to fiction differed not only in terms of content, but also in terms of the identifying features which participants indicated had made the reading significant for them.   Sometimes these were highlighted in the content of the scrapbook and in other incidents the participant provided further elaboration during the focus group discussion.   Samples of reading autobiographies have been shown in this section but the full range has been included in Appendix 4.2C, in part in recognition of the participants' efforts but also as illustration of the very personalised nature of each individual reader identity. The scrapbooks and discussions therefore provided useful insights into the ways participants conceptualised reading and identified as readers, both central to the research questions at the heart of this study.

Participants Kanisha, Cassie, Olivia and Emma all arranged their reading histories chronologically, starting with picture books recalled from an early age to current reading. This suggested an awareness of development in reading and reader identity over time.   For Kanisha, whose chronological history is sub-divided into 'destinations', there was a shift in emphasis from books recalled by title in early memory to a focus on works by favoured authors:

Like things like 'How to catch Star' and 'Lost and Found', because, I don't know, I just really liked those. Also 'The Gruffalo'. I also read a book … I don't know if it's very well known, called 'Each Peach Pear Plum. I, I read that like quite a lot because I really liked it. And so this is when I was around like, like much younger. And I remember that at the beginning my mum would read to me. But then I started reading by myself and then rereading the books by myself again. As I got older, I read David Walliams, J.K. Rowling, Jeff Kinney, Roald Dahl and especially Roald Dahl, things like 'James and the Giant Peach', 'The BFG', 'Matilda'. Those were like my favourite books. Kanisha, FG2

Figure 4.2 Photograph of extract from Kanisha's scrapbook with corresponding discussion

Her references to exclusively fiction texts were arranged firstly by title and then predominantly by author. It is apparent from the additional notes in the scrapbook that

Kanisha had read a range of titles by each of the cited authors, further illuminated by additional comments within the scrapbook on particularly memorable aspects of style, such as Walliams' books being '*hilarious*' and Rowling's books being '*captivating*'.
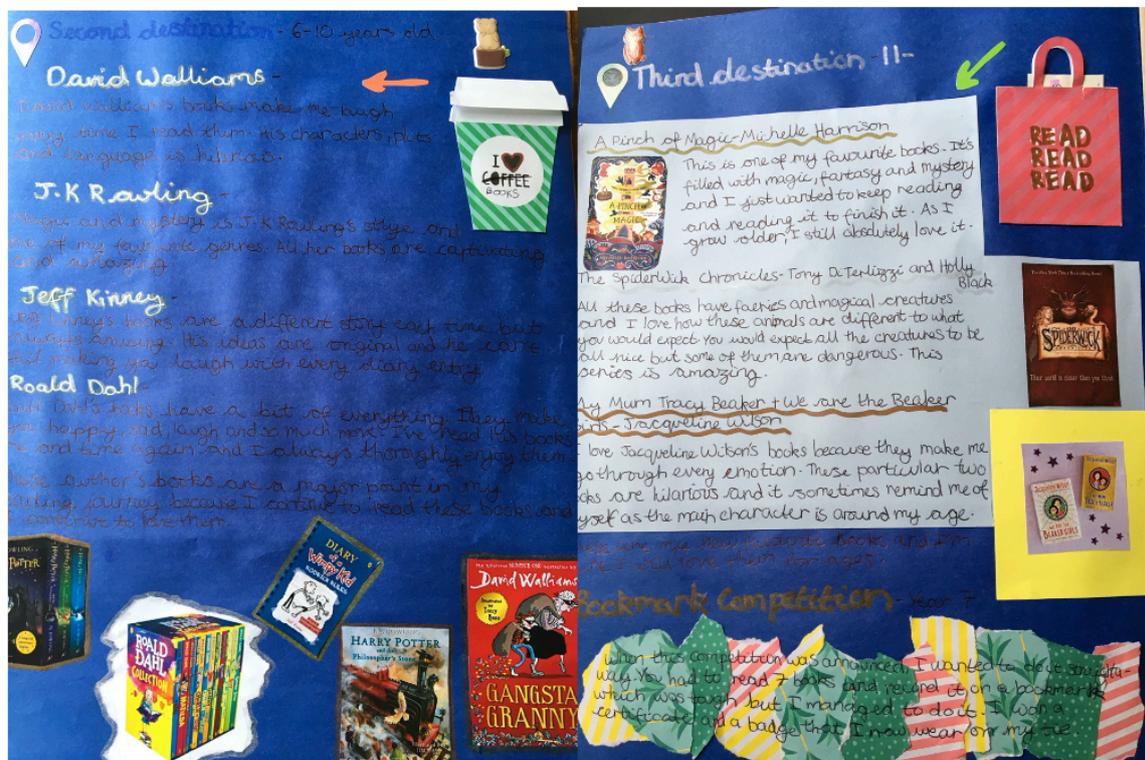
> *And I also got the illustrated versions of the Harry Potter, which is, it kind of made me want to read it more because I wanted to see all the illustrations. So it, it got me through the book quicker. So yeah. And yeah, 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'. I still have those books, I still read them again and again. I could probably get through like one a day. I just keep reading it until I finish it. So this is when I was around, so like in primary school, but I still read these books again and again. I also read this book, 'A Pinch of Magic' by Michelle Harrison.* Kanisha, FG2

Figure 4.3 Photograph of further extracts from Kanisha's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

Other details which were significant in her recall of favoured reading memories, include illustrations and remembering aspects of the experience, such as being read to, repeated rereading and reading at speed.

Olivia (FG2) similarly began her chronological recount of her reading, grouped in stages of 'Young', followed by 'Junior School' and 'Secondary School.' Her scrapbook annotations were brief but her accompanying explanation elaborated significant detail. For example, she presented a range of picture books, including one identified as a '*favourite*' before shifting emphasis to an identified favoured author, '*I read every Jacqueline Wilson book*', and further elaborated in her comments during the discussion that she, '*was obsessed with every book that she wrote*,':

The Secret Henhouse Theatre. That's a really, really good book. I think it's about a girl. She went to, I can't remember, I read it such a long time ago … Yeah, it's really, really good. And then things like Jacqueline Wilson. I was obsessed with every book that she wrote.
Olivia, FG2

Figure 4.4 Photograph of extract from Olivia's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

Olivia's recollections also included additional significant detail, such as being read to by a parent, reasons for the remembered enjoyment of texts, such as its interactivity and that the stories taught something which she had connected to her own experience.

> When I was young, I read like a lot. I was kind of very much into books and I read like, 'Sharing a shell" and 'For that kind of love. It just kind of taught values, in, like, 'Five Minutes Peace'. That's why my mum read that to me when she wanted five minutes peace. And then, like, 'Flat Stanley' or 'That's not my Fairy.' Because it's very interactive. Olivia, FG2

> And then kind of secondary school, it's kind of where it just kind of stopped. Because of the things that, I kind of, I, the way it's, so like Rupi Kaur was kind of core. She's like, just poems. But they're really, really deep. Milk and honey, it's kind of a book that you have to read when you're a bit older… I love, I love just reading them because they made me feel emotion. Olivia, FG2
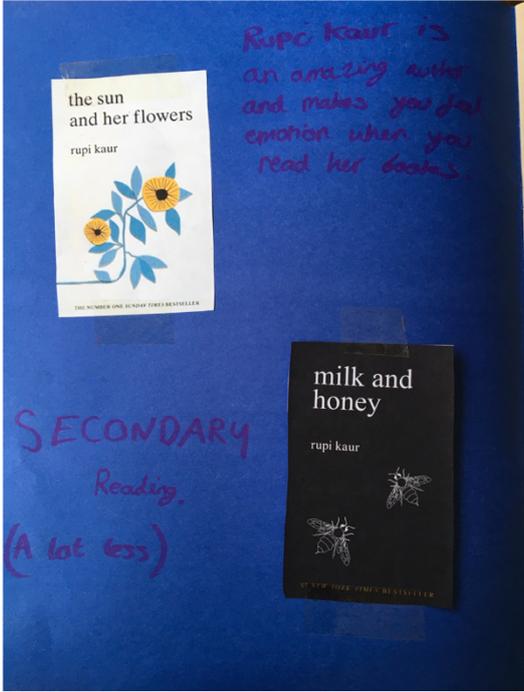
Figure 4.5 Photographs of further extracts from Olivia's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

Uniquely, Olivia was one of the only participants to include poetry in her reading history. For Olivia (FG2), the particular poet and their works were '*core*' in her reading: she referenced the emotional impact of this reading, both in her written annotations and her oral explanation. However, it was the only reading referenced in the 'secondary' section of her scrapbook, where she commented that reading '*kind of stopped.*' However, Olivia also acknowledged, on the final page of her scrapbook, that this might be temporary:
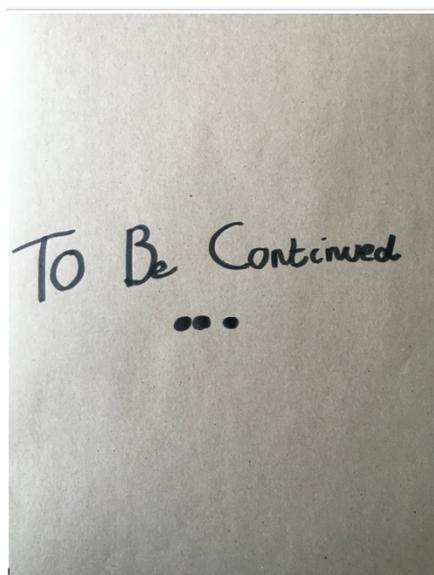
Figure 4.6 Photograph of final page of Olivia's scrapbook

The data from the outset, therefore, suggested the kinds of ways that participants conceptualised reading and identified as readers. Olivia, for example, identified as a reader in her primary years but saw herself as no longer reading, ironically contrasting with her reference to the on-going significance of poetry.

Emma, on the other hand, presented herself as someone who still identified as a reader. She displayed her autobiography similarly in chronological order, beginning with early picture

books and finishing with current favourites: the scrapbook itself provided less detail than the subsequent oral commentary. Emma also presented her autobiography developmentally, but with greater emphasis on age group as an organisational feature.

Yeah. I've been reading recently, I've been getting like a lot into, like, crime books. I don't know why Emma, FG2
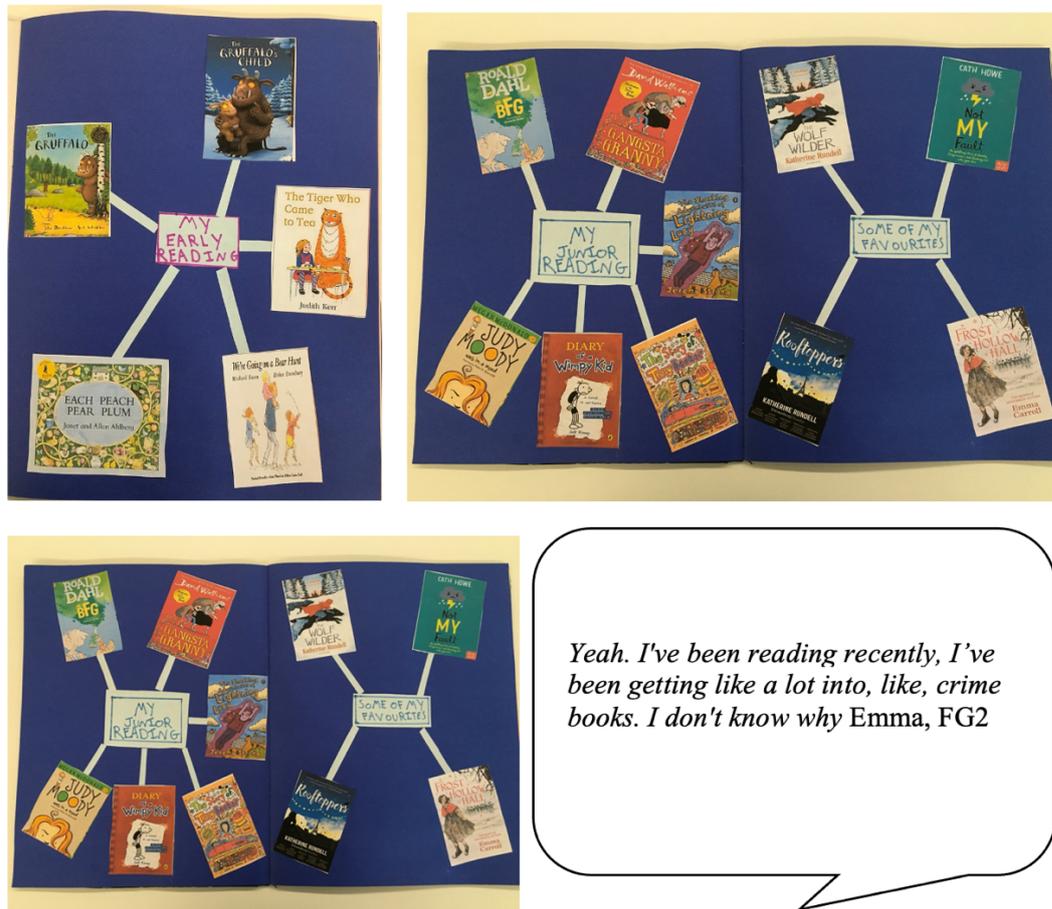
Figure 4.7 Photograph of extracts from Emma's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

The development illustrated in her scrapbook, supported by her comments in the discussion, indicated a growing preference for a particular genre and her development and identity were therefore framed in this regard. Thus, Emma differed from previous participants who had placed an emphasis on named authors.

Lily, on the other hand was a participant who emphasised the significance of one specific

author and book. Her reading scrapbook, in terms of range, was rather sparce but it is

memorable for the way that she refers to The Great Gatsby (Fitzgerald, 1925), a book that she

loved and had reread '*at least 1,000 times.*'
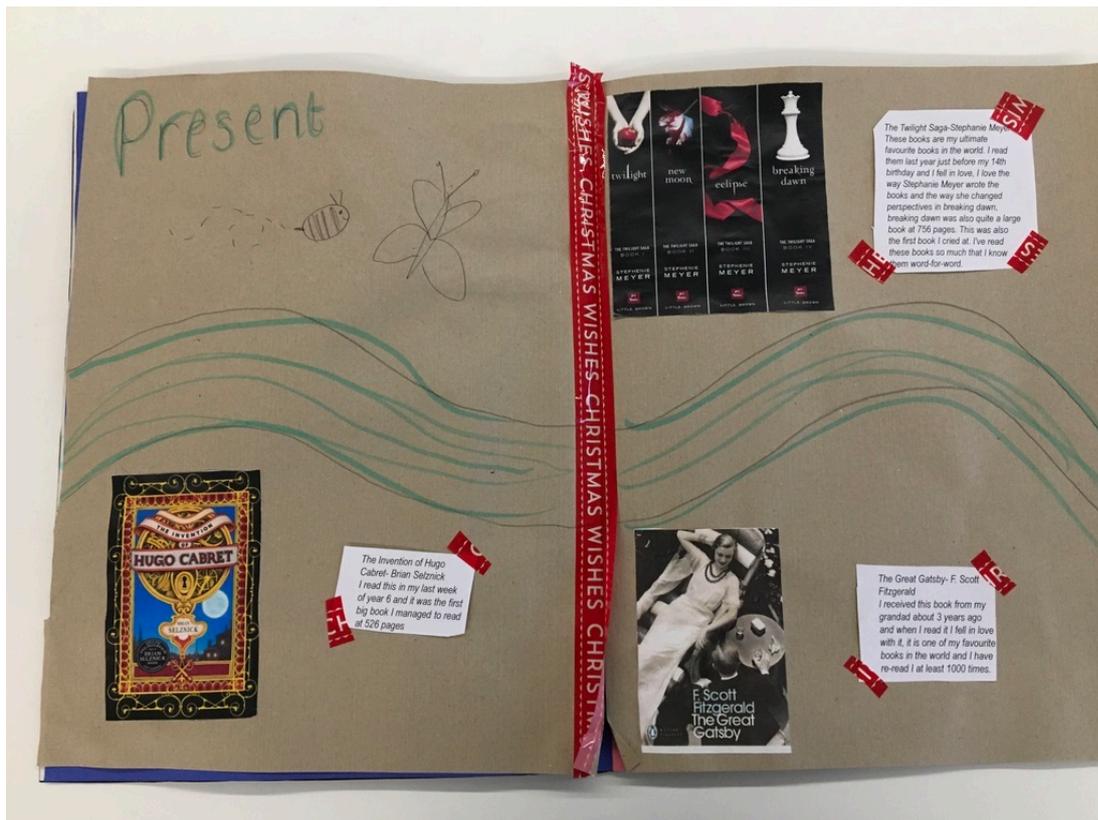
Figure 4.8 Photograph of extract from Lily's scrapbook

Cassie (FG2) was the only pupil participant to refer in her scrapbook to reading factual

books, inspired by a particular topic: '*I quite enjoyed animals so I read a few factual books,*

which is very fascinating.' Although this seemed a significant memory for Cassie during

discussion, there was only a singular reference to non-fiction texts in the scrapbook:

So I started at under six, my parents liked reading to me a lot and it was something we'd do every night. So I read books like 'That's my...' So we had 'That's not my' books. We had loads of them. And I reread them quite a lot. And then Mr. Men, I read, I quite got into animal story books.   'Cos I was quite a big fan of animals when I was younger, so I liked reading about that. Cassie, FG2

And then from seven to nine I got into more Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Tom Gates and I quite enjoyed animals so I read a few factual books, which is very fascinating. And I think that, yeah, that kind of made me feel a bit more grown up than reading the kiddie books. And then Diary of a Wimpy Kid and Tom Gates. I reread these quite a lot. I felt like I was, I'm quite a fast reader, and I felt like I could just get through them really fast, so I'd reread them again. And then the 'How to Train Your Dragon' books. Cassie, FG2

Figure 4.9 Photograph of extracts from Cassie's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

Cassie (FG2) also included additional significant detail about her reading experience, such as being read to by a parent, reading books in a series and repeated rereading of favourites. She also commented: '*I felt like I was, I'm quite a fast reader.*' In this respect, therefore, Cassie was framing reading identity not just in terms of content and preferences but also by perceptions of self-efficacy.

Like other participants, Dawid also included the reading of books in a series in his autobiography. His scrapbook contained a narrower range of entirely fiction series, initially categorised by theme and then by identifying character, with accompanying detail:
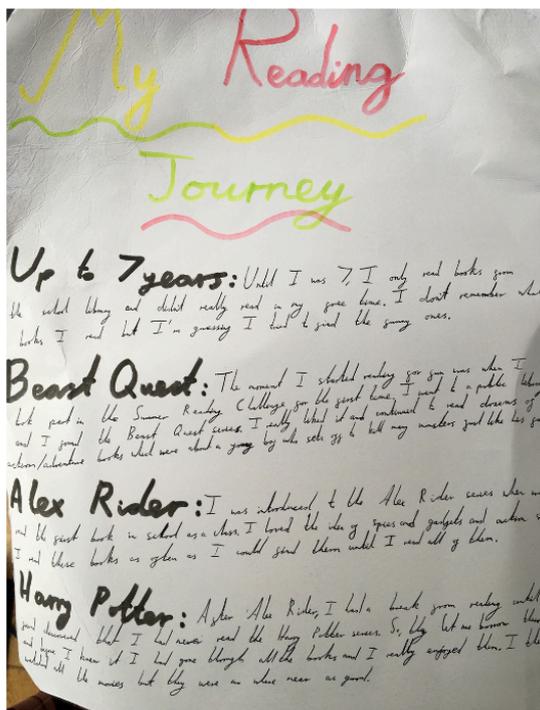
But then when I started reading by myself, it was like the first time I ever went to like a public library and I found this book series called 'Beast Quest' and I, just like fell in love with it because ... There's like dozens and dozens. And I was addicted to them and I just kept going back to the library and getting more and more and more and more, because there's just so many. I'd say there's like more than a hundred. I just kept them reading them. Dawid, FG2

Whenever we'd go, so like every week to the library, we'd just get a book. But it wasn't really like 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' and stuff like that, it was more like just books, I can't remember them, but it was books that no one else really read because I just wanted to read something that, like everybody wasn't talking about. So I wanted to be a bit different. And then in like year six we started reading Alex Rider. We read the first Alex Rider book and I was like obsessed with spies and ninjas and stuff like that. And then yeah, I loved it. And I like, for year six, year seven and year eight I finished the whole Alex Rider series. I don't know. There's just something so satisfying about finishing a whole book series. And I just loved them because the idea of being a spy and this like boy going to be a spy, I just loved, the whole idea of it. And then more recently, friend got me into 'Harry Potter' because they found out I'd never read it Dawid, FG2

Figure 4.10 Photograph of Dawid's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

For Dawid, therefore, serial reading was a significant feature of the reading that he engaged in. There was a hint of pride in identifying that, '*there's more than a hundred,*' of the Beast Quest series and that '*I finished the whole Alex Rider series*' (ibid). Both suggest that the sustained interest in and completion of this and other series comprised an important element of Dawid's reader identity. It was also important to Dawid that he read things that others

hadn't and weren't talking about. Thus the individuality of his reading identity was very important.

Like previous participants mentioned, Jessica's scrapbook was also arranged chronologically with some references, in the labels and in the extensive written commentary, to the age at which the reading occurred. Similarly, there were references to the reading of series and to repeated readings of favourite texts but, as her commentary indicated, the most significant factor in her reading history, and therefore identity, was the genre of texts:
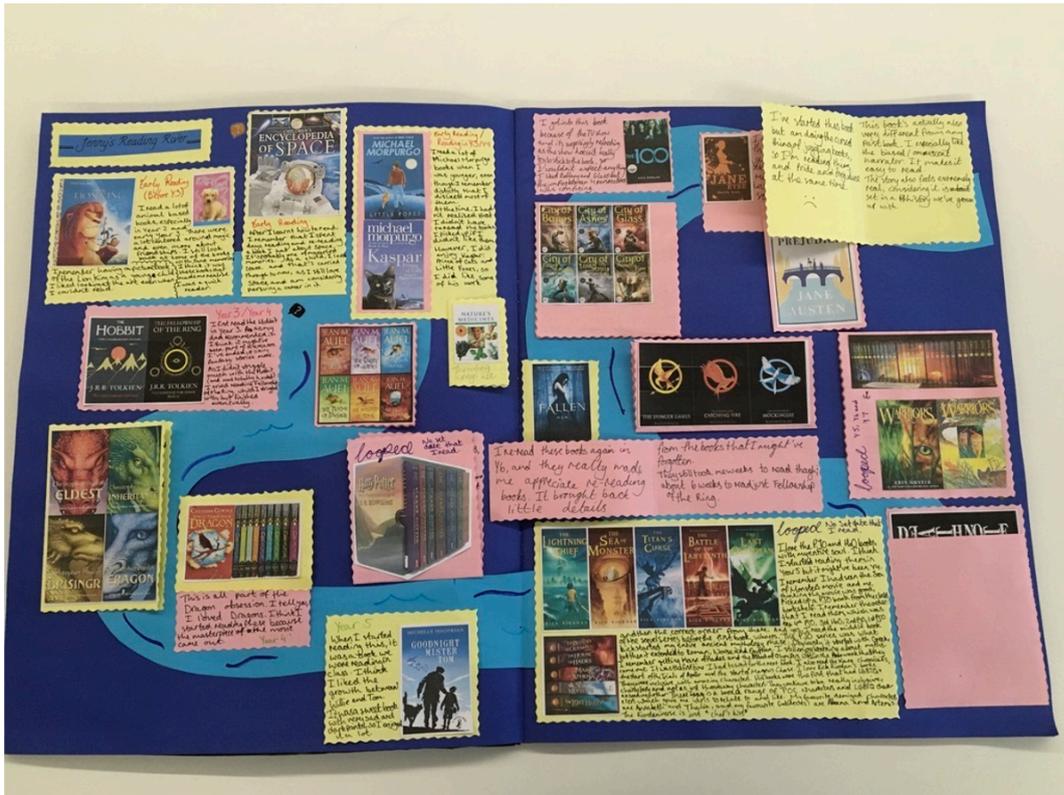
I've read a lot of fantasy, which became very evident when I went through the reading history, because it turns out that over half of this is either fantasy or dystopian. And you can see where I've tried to change a bit more as times go on, but it's not very clear, because when I was very young, I was reading things like The Hobbit and Harry Potter and things like that. And then when I was in my year nine, I was reading things like Sandra Clark which is all very fantasy and it's all very, within two or three genres. Jessica, FG2

Figure 4.11 Photograph of extracts from Jessica's scrapbook and subsequent discussion

Interestingly, Jessica's reflections described an explicit awareness, resulting from the completion of the reading scrapbook, of her love of, '*fantasy or dystopian*.'   Her further comments indicated favoured texts as being '*within two or three genres*'. Like many other participants, her reading identity was framed by preferences of increasingly understood genres and subtle distinctions thereof.   Her reflections and growing self-awareness as a reader seemed, in part, to be the result of engagement with the scrapbook activity, as

signalled in comments such '*looking back at it,*' and '*I realise that it's probably what has inspired my love in swords and weaponry*':
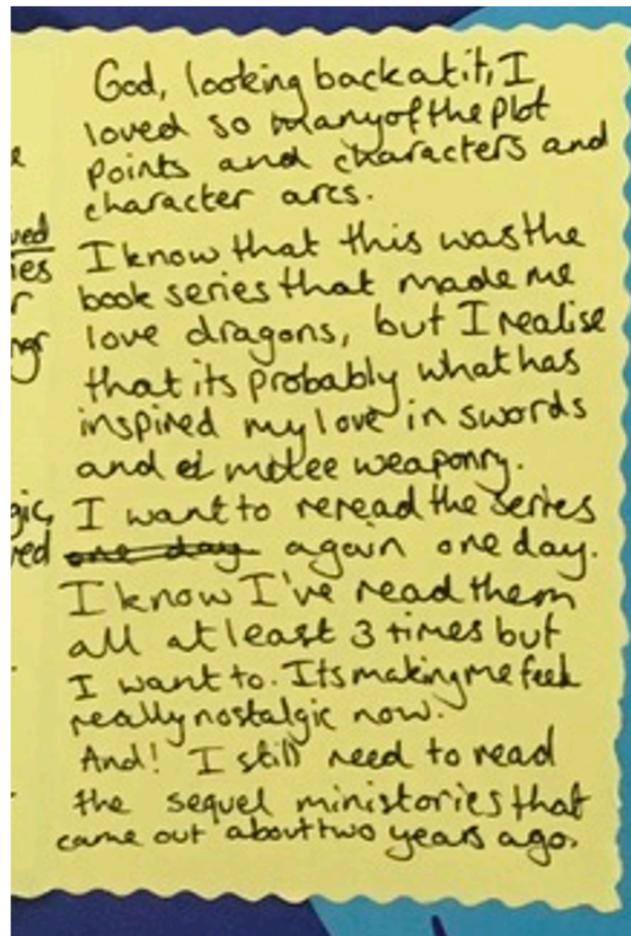
Figure 4.12 Photograph of further extract from Jessica's scrapbook

Interestingly, both teachers' scrapbooks included a greater range of reading material, including non-fiction. This is perhaps not surprising, given their longer reading experience. Both included reference to books read for scholarly purposes, during their time at school and university. For Ms Griffiths (FG2a), some texts read in school were particularly significant:

> *I always remember having kind of real memories of To Kill a Mockingbird and my teacher reading it with us, and just loving English and English literature in school.*

Additionally, Ms Griffiths (FG2a) also included reading in the context of her role as a teacher, as illustrated in Figure 4.13 and commented on in discussion:

> *I thought at the end I would dedicate a page to some of the books that I read through actually teaching. So my texts, like A Christmas Carol, Macbeth and Inspector Calls, books that I teach my GCSE classes*

The emphasis in her comment on 'read' in the present tense, rather than as 'read' in the past, suggested a conceptualisation of reading as active and on-going, including texts that were read in the context of a professional role.

Also outlined in figure 4.13, Ms Griffiths discussed the importance of non-fiction texts in the more recent development of her reading habits.

Figure 4.13 Photograph of extracts from Ms Griffith's scrapbook

She included texts related to teaching and indicated the significance and centrality of reading to her professional development and therefore professional identity.

I do quite a lot of reading around the actual teaching, the actual job. I like to read about my subject and I like to read about how I can become a better teacher and a better practitioner (FG2a)

Ms Curtis, (FG2a/c), presented her scrapbook both chronologically and thematically. She explicitly commented on the scrapbook as representative of the development of her reading identity and elaborated on how the theme of clowning had been the thread connecting books that she had read, a particularly significant theatre experience and the study of film in university.

Figure 4.14 Photographs of extracts from Ms Curtis' scrapbook

However, she also noted as significant that her own reading scrapbook had not included any school-based titles prior to her own study of GCSE.

Both teacher participants therefore demonstrated the development of a reader identity over a greater period, illustrating a potential (but not inevitable) path for some of the younger readers in the study. What was interesting about these teacher paths, however, was the more notable differences, highlighting the individuality of reader identity and development as indicated by the material that they had read and included as significant. As with pupil participants, this was dominated by fiction (as illustrated in appendices 4-2c-p, photographs of participants' scrapbooks).

To summarise, participants' reflections on the reading that was most significant and memorable for them were dominated by fiction texts, predominantly in book form. This initial finding began to reveal participants' perceptions and conceptualisations of reading. The references to non-fiction and to fiction other than novels or narratives, were interesting in their exception. Whilst high value was afforded to fiction texts uniformly, however, there were several features which seemed significant and particular to the individual reader, adding nuance and plurality to the possible conceptualisations. Whilst title and author were common identifying features, it was also clear that some authors were memorable and significant in and of themselves, such as in Olivia's reference to Jacqueline Wilson, Jessica's reference to Michael Morpurgo and Kanisha's references to Roald Dahl and David Walliams. Individual book titles and series were also significant features referenced by several participants, for example, as in the reference to Harry Potter by Kayla and Dawid. Similarly, some participants framed their references to texts by the name of the central character: in addition to references to Harry Potter, other participants referred to books by central character such as Percy Jackson (Cassie, FG2) and Tracy Beaker (Evan, FG2). The central significance of the protagonist in some reading was further reasserted by Jacob, whose metaphor for reading

described that, '*If reading were a person, it would be the main character because they are the structure of the book*,' (Jacob, FG2).

Thus, whilst the reading autobiographies were dominated by references to fiction and contained several texts and authors in common, they were equally interesting and useful because of the notable differences in the way that texts were referenced and remembered, and in the uniqueness of the range of texts within (illustrated in the summaries in appendices 3.1 and 3.2 and in 4.2c-p: photographs of participants' scrapbooks). There were far more texts mentioned only by one participant than there were common texts mentioned by several. Thus, the unique and individual preferences of each reader was illuminated, as Lauren (FG1), observed explicitly: '*Some people like enjoy the way a book's written or the plot of it but other people might not like it.*'

What also began to emerge as a concurrent theme, addressed later in this chapter, was the relevance of references to the experience of reading. Whilst reference to fiction was dominant, it was not just details of content and/or form alone which seemed memorable. Participants discussed details of the texts alongside comments on the reading experience itself, such that it appeared that aspects of the reading experience were at least as meaningful. This seemed to be an important theme, such that these ideas will be revisited and considered in more detail as an additional finding.

4.2.2. The specific example of Jacqueline Wilson

Discussion of Jacqueline Wilson books, in particular, led to some further consideration of the idea of 'meaningful.' Ms Curtis and Ms Griffiths both made particular and specific

references to their own reading of Jacqueline Wilson, demonstrating that they shared some common childhood reading experiences with several of their pupil participants. Ms Griffiths considered the author significant enough for inclusion in her scrapbook (Appendix 4.2O). However, further discussions, specifically about this author, added an extra teacher perspective.

Ms Curtis (FG2) explained, in response to several of her pupils discussing this author that *'(whispered) I've read all of them.'* In the pre-focus group discussion, Ms Griffiths (FG2a) described signing up to a mail-order Jacqueline Wilson Book Club and having the books delivered. She explained the significance:

> *I remember just reading them all in one go, just completely falling in love with reading every time I got this new set of books… that was something that always has stuck out as kind of my earliest memories of reading.*

The author therefore appeared to be significant in both participants' childhood reading experiences. However, the data demonstrated that for both, there was a tension between their own childhood reading experiences and their professional roles as English teachers. Ms Griffith's (F2a), commented about this author and that:

> *we have kind of conversations around reading all the time as English teachers and there's the right types of books and the wrong types of books … certain things are too mainstream or too easy*

This initiated a conversation about tension between her own reading history and her role as a teacher in promoting reading. Although this author had featured in both of their reading experiences, in Ms Griffith's (FG2a) case significantly, neither were convinced that they should be recommending them to their own pupils as '*the right types of books*.' Ms Griffiths added (FG2a) that, '*I am fearful as an English teacher that they'll get stuck with it*.' Ms Curtis (FG2c) described an example of one of her pupils, who she had been concerned about for exactly that reason:

that the maturity level was staying in one place. Because she'd just been reading these same stories since she was about ten.

Both teachers discussed, because of the reading scrapbook activity and discussions, their roles in promoting reading for pleasure and a love for reading. However, the example of this author highlighted a tension between personal and professional conceptualisations of reading and what might make for meaningful reading.

In the pupil participants' discussions as explored thus far in this chapter, reading seen as significant and meaningful had been read primarily purely for pleasure. For the teachers in the study, 'meaningful' took on a different dimension in the context of school. For Ms Curtis (FG2c) this was expressed as trying to '*widen the net*' whilst Ms Griffiths (FG2a) explained that this meant:

> *trying to promote novels that are going to be challenging… and thought provoking … something that's going to really lead them into being a more mature reader.*

Thus, both expressed that their roles as English teachers included the need to introduce pupils to a range of reading material that would support their reader development, understood as works of increasing challenge and difficulty. This inevitably led to recognition of some tension with their own experiences and beliefs. Ms Curtis' (FG2c) acknowledged that this tension was:

> *Hard … because everything we've just said about reading being a comfort. And thinking about that individual person, maybe they needed that.*

Ms Griffiths (FG2a) suggested that:

> *There is definitely a conflict … I don't think that it's my place to say, oh, well, you can't read that, or that's not the right type of book, because I don't believe that.*

Thus, both teacher participants explored that school, whilst wanting to and valuing the promotion of reading for pleasure, was not always conducive to this, given that it is also where it is the teacher's *'role and responsibility to offer them other options,'* Ms Griffiths (FG2a) and*, 'to move them along,'* (Ms Curtis, FG2c).

4.3. Summary

This chapter found that participants presented reading predominantly as that of fiction: they assumed a default position of talking about reading for pleasure when talking about reading. However, this seemingly simple idea is in fact nuanced and complex. Individually and collectively the data demonstrated the wealth and breadth of literature read by participants, reflecting the individuality of readership and reader identity. This was dominated by children and young adult fiction, but the teacher participants referred to a wider range, revealing their lengthier experience of reading and demonstrating a possible reading journey. References to fiction were presented variously, demonstrating the different ways in which material had been memorable and significant. The data showed that many participants were developing clearly articulated reading habits and preferences. Some were also developing a keen self-awareness as readers, promoted in some cases by participation in this study. The chapter finds too, that for teacher participants, there was some tension around promoting reading for pleasure and their reflections began to explore some of the reasons for this.

Included also within some of the data in this chapter and emerging as an additional emphasis was a central theme about what it felt like to read. This was sometimes, but not exclusively, linked to ideas about purpose for reading and emerged during the coding process as a theme

related to the experience of reading: 'what it feels like to read and why I read', being

significantly different to the idea of 'what I read'.

5. Findings: What it feels like to, and why, I read: reading as experience

Given that the focus of the project was to seek to understand participants' perceptions and conceptualisations of reading, the metaphor elicitation activity in the first focus group was chosen in response to the research questions and to generate data accordingly. Analysis of this first data set saw the emergence of a second, key theme: ***what it is like to read***, which was consolidated and further illuminated in and by analyses of subsequent focus group discussions. Most significantly, ideas in this context were presented in the data predominantly as experiential, reading closely associated with and described as feeling: ***what it feels like to read***. There were also concurrent and continued references in the data to the value and importance of, as well as the actual, experiences of reading. This led to a further related and concurrent sub-theme of ***why I read***: the theme of what it feels like to read provided additional insights into and illuminated motivations for reading.

5.1. Reading as experiential

Within the theme of what reading feels like, various aspects and representations of a range of different aspects of participants' lived experiences were illuminated:

- being **immersed** and **engrossed**;
- being **transported**;
- **visualising**, **seeing**, **imagining** and **guessing;**
- being **satisfied**.

Interestingly, these themes encapsulate different experiences at different stages of the lived experience of reading such that reading is presented as a journey. The reader, according to the data, experiences a range of emotions and feelings at various points and stages of their travels within each text, beginning with immersion and being transported which creates a sense of momentum concluding with satisfaction. The combined effect of this journey is to create a need to repeat, so that the cycle is a self-perpetuating motion as illustrated in figure 5:
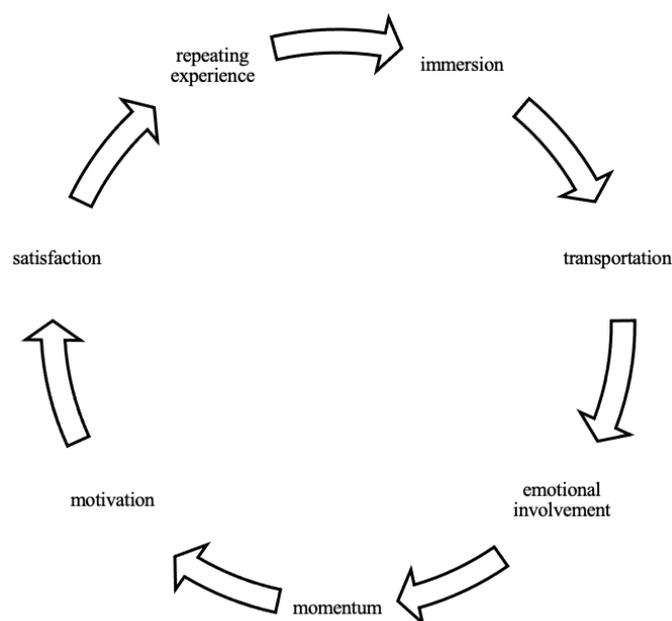
Figure 5.1 illustrating the cycle of the experience of reading

5.1.1. *Being immersed and engrossed*

One of the repeated refrains within this theme of what reading feels like, presented in terms of lived experience, was the idea of the reader being **engrossed** in or **gripped** by their reading (with relevance to and within the context of the predominance of fiction). The idea of being 'gripped' by reading was repeated by more than one participant and this particular verb encapsulated other comments whereby participants explained becoming involved and

immersed in or by a book or with reading.   This notion was presented variously, as indicated in the following comments:

 '*Really excited about reading it*,' (Jude, FG1);

'*I got really involved in it*,' (Holly, FG3) and,

'*But this one, it felt like more grip to it. And that really made me happy*,' (Cassie, FG2).

Words such as '*excited*,' '*involved*,' '*grip*,' '*made me happy*,' signal an experience which prompted, evoked, and was thus expressed in terms of strong emotions.

Additionally, there was, in some participants' comments, a sense of momentum and creation of a feeling of wanting to read more.   For example, for Evan (FG1), '*no matter how tired you get, you read on*,' and Holly (FG3), '*I look forward to reading it, ... I can't wait to see what happens next*.' It was significant that this idea of wanting to read more was commented on by several of the participants, across the range of focus group discussions.

This was illuminated, but also remained personalised, by the slightly different ways that this was described and articulated. For example, whilst Tom (FG1) described feeling, '*like you're in the moment*,' and Holly (FG3) used the verb '*invested*,' both comments indicated a desire to capture the sensation of being captivated.   Holly (FG3) developed this idea slightly further to explain that the feeling of being '*really involved in it*' meant that she would '*literally just wait, ... I was actually excited to read it. And I was wanting to read it*.' This sentiment was further echoed in Cassie's (FG2) comments when she discussed the idea of not wanting to put a book down and for Dawid (FG2), who described the experience of reading at night when he was supposed to be sleeping. These examples all illustrated participants being so meaningfully captured by reading that they wanted to continue to inhabit and sustain that experience, such that:

> *You want to constantly be reading it. If I'm really enjoying a book, I'll find every spare moment in my day to try and read it* (Lily, FG4).

This sentiment was echoed by Emma (FG2) who observed, *'I just remember finishing them in a couple days and not stopping.'*

Thus, various data indicated that a substantial aspect of reading for participants was its tendency to immersion, often sustained and sometimes to the exclusion of all else. This experience was a dominant pattern in the data but, as some of the comments illustrate, this sense of gratification required patience, perseverance and was sometimes delayed. Nonetheless, it was a repeated and significant experience for many participants and began to explain not just what reading felt like, but why they were motivated to read.

5.1.2. Being transported

Whilst these comments illuminated how these readers felt when they were caught up in reading, there were additional comments which helped to explain why the experience of reading might be immersive and engrossing. Some comments made explicit the experience of **being transported** elsewhere, enabling an experience beyond that of the actual. For example, Lily (FG1) commented on '*unlocking a new world,*' and Dawid (FG1) asserted that, '*a book can take you anywhere you like really*.' For both, reading transported them to a place and/or space beyond their current reality, indicated by '*new world*' and '*anywhere you like really*.' This idea was developed further by the comments of Cassie (FG2) who suggested, '*you want that to be real … I wanted it to be like a true story*,' and Daniel (FG2) who observed that books are '*more interesting than your life can be*.' Both comments developed ideas from the previous section of immersion, indicating possible reasons for, rather than illustrations of, the significance of the experience.

Similarly, Cassie (FG2) offered that:

> *it felt quite unrealistic but then also realistic, like he had quite a normal life, but then it just turned extraordinary. And I quite enjoyed that.*

This developed further the idea of reading offering something new, exciting and/or adventurous for participants. In this respect, Dawid's (FG2) further comments combined the ideas of being both transported elsewhere and afforded a view of reality which is better than the actual:

> *It's just the fantasy aspect of it. It was really cool because it's just not like this world. It's just things that you dream about. But it will never be real.*

This encapsulated why reading and being transported made for such an engrossing experience and illuminated why some readers described their reading experience as gripping, such that it promoted a sense of wanting more.

Ms Griffiths (FG1) provided a similar insight presented very differently:

> *I just had this image of a mountain and this idea of ... nature and ... noises but also silence and the fact that it's disconnected from everything and that's kind of how I feel whenever I read. It's this space that I can be connected to so many different things but also completely...involved... that everything else gets shut off*

Her comment reflected some of the pupil participants' ideas about being transported elsewhere, but whereas they described their experiences primarily as being transported to the extraordinary, Ms Griffiths' reflections suggested an immersion which offered a sanctuary from reality, an experience that is '*disconnected*,' such that that it is a refuge from, rather than a transportation to a different form of, reality. The immersive experience of reading excluded '*everything else*.'

In all the illustrations so far, therefore, there is a connection to another aspect of the research questions related to the relevance of space and place. Data suggested a space or place

occupied during reading which was different to the physical space and place occupied by the reader. Reading, as described by some participants, literally enables you to occupy and experience a different space. Additional participant comments explained or illustrated how and why this was achieved and sustained, resulting in a third sub-theme of **visualising, seeing, imagining, guessing**.

5.1.3. Visualising, seeing, imagining and guessing

Participants referred to detail to identify and illustrate this further dimension of their reading experience: the extent to which reading enabled them to **see** and **imagine**. Jude (FG5), explained that seeing and visualising were an important part of the imaginative and immersive experience of reading:

> *...For it to bring you into the book, you would have to visualise what you're reading for that to actually happen ... I can't just read a book and not think about what I'm reading as an image.*

The reference to the immersive nature of the experience as '*to bring you into the book,*' and the assertion that, '*for that to actually happen'* you would need to *'visualise ... think about what I am reading as an image,'* illustrated the iteration between seeing and immersion. This also illustrated not just the experiential nature of reading but also provided indication of motivation by, *'being drawn in.'*

It is interesting that this comment was made in the context of the final focus group discussion. Jude had made comments earlier in the project about visualising, notably during the metaphor elicitation activity when he observed that:

> *When you light a new match, when it burns down that's the story, when you're about to end it and the flame is you picturing it, it's lighting up the image inside your head, of the book'* (Jude, FG1).

Thus, visualising and seeing were consistent and recurrent themes in Jude's conceptualisation of reading, as illustrated in his additional comment that:

> *It's nibbling away at parts of the story and then its growing, its imagination, it's growing an extent where you can picture it fondly in your head* (ibid).

The idea of '*nibbling away*' was a sub-theme in other participants' comments about the pleasure of the experience when being kept **guessing**. For example, Daniel's (FG1) observation that, *'books are meant to be mysterious, you're not meant to know what's gonna [sic] happen.*' Other participants provided detail demonstrating that the reading experience was a pleasurable one because it, '*spark[s] off something in your brain and ... make[s] you want to read on*,' (Olivia, FG1), keeping the reader, '*on edge waiting for something to happen*,' (Lauren, FG1). Thus, the experiential nature of reading was in part achieved through the prompting of images and imagining. Perhaps the most illustrative summary of this was made by Dawid (FG2) who observed:

> *There's just something magical about reading a book for the first time because you genuinely don't know what's going to happen.*

Dawid's comment provided a succinct summary of the immersive, imaginary and unpredictable experience of reading as '*magical*'. This was an image echoed in Ms Curtis' metaphor for reading:

> *When I'm reading I'm like a bee on a flower, looking for magic! And when I leave the flower behind, some of the magic stays with me* (Ms Curtis, reading scrapbook)

This metaphor took the idea of the immersive nature of reading one step further, suggesting that it leaves some residue behind such that the lived experience of reading remains beyond the closing of the final pages.

5.1.4. Being satisfied

These previous three sub-themes thus illuminated the importance of the experiential nature of reading. Data demonstrated what it feels like at the point when a reader is, or is just about to be, engaged in reading. For a number of these readers, these significant components of lived experience provided the momentum for reading, resulting in a feeling of **satisfaction**: an '*accomplishment*' (Tom, FG1). This was best summarised by Jacob's (FG1) observation that, '*If reading were a food it would be a roast because after you finish a book you feel content and full.*'

5.2. Rereading - repeating the experience

Given the significance of the sensations and emotions of the lived experience described in this section thus far, it was not surprising to see and hear many of the participants refer to **rereading** in order to repeat a much-enjoyed experience, further adding to the theme of satisfaction. Most comments related to this theme emerged during the second focus group sessions when participants were sharing their reading histories. Nine of the participants, a significant proportion, made at least one reference to the idea of rereading favourite books.

Some participants gave straightforward explanations of repeated and recurrent readings, such as '*I've read it loads of times*,' (Lily, FG1), that they '*just kept reading them on repeat*,' (Jessica, FG2) and '*I still read them again and again*,' (Kanisha, FG2). Kanisha (FG2) reiterated this idea several times, highlighting the connection between experience and enjoyment, such as '*I enjoy reading those and I read them again and again*,' and '*I read that like quite a lot because I really liked it*.' The most striking example of rereading of a much-

loved text was in Lily's scrapbook: '*I read it. I fell in love with it. It's one of my favourite books in the world and I have reread it at least a thousand times*.' The use of '*love*', '*like*' and '*enjoy*' in these examples indicated an emotional attachment to this particular book, both accompanying and prompted by the recall of the reading experience.

Other comments provided further illumination for why participants chose to reread:

> *I think I was just so gripped to them. And even though I'd read them before and probably knew it was on the next page, I still couldn't help starting it over. It felt like I was mesmerised by this book. It happened again with 'The Hunger Games'. I felt like even though I know what was going to happen, it's still so gripping to read it.* Cassie, FG2

'*Gripped,*' and '*it felt like I was mesmerised*' relate to some of the previously made comments about immersion and being engrossed by the book, such that the rereading was a (successful in this case) attempt to revisit and recapture the experience, despite its familiarity. In Cassie's case this was not just repeated with one series of books, but was a regular occurrence, as indicated by her comment, *'It happened again with 'The Hunger Games.'*

However, for Evan (FG2), rereading afforded a different opportunity:

> *Yeah, and if it's sometimes a bit sad, like if a character died or something and they're really significant, it's, well, he's not going to be here for long.*

His comment suggested that rereading enabled him a heightened enjoyment of aspects of the story that he knew, with the benefit of hindsight, were only temporary.

Other observations provided slightly different but equally illuminating ideas about rereading as providing opportunities for revisiting meaning. For example, '*you can pick up on stuff that you didn't notice before*,' (Evan, FG2) and, '*it was meaning to go over*

things that I've missed,' (Jessica, FG2). The idea of rereading as enhancing the experience

and meaning was elaborated upon by Olivia (FG2), who explained the importance of

rereading as part of grappling with the writer's ideas:

> *I might look at it over and over again and kind of analyse it and think 'why she's saying*
> *that, why she's using?*

In some of these examples, therefore, the motivation for re-reading was the opportunity that

was afforded for further or enhanced understanding. Jessica (FG5), for instance, made an

interesting observation about rereading texts which were too complex at the time of the

original reading:

> *It was just so much content to read ... I just had to say, oh, I'm going to have to stop*
> *reading this for now and then try and come back to it at a later day.*

Thus, Jessica was both conscious of the need, and confident in her motivation, to return

and reread.   Rereading, for other participants, however, was about familiarity and ease

rather than a chance for development: '*there were things which I could read it easily and*

they were really comfortable to read. Like they just felt nice,' (Jessica, FG2).

Although the idea of rereading, albeit for many different reasons, was a recurring pattern in

the responses of several participants, it was not universal. Dawid (FG2) was adamant that the

experience of reading a book for the first time can't be recaptured:

> *Ok, for me it's kind of the opposite. If I've read a book, I just can't read*
> *it again ...when you know what's going to happen it's like 'Do I want ...?*

For Dawid, the idea of being gripped by and immersed in a book was part of the '*magic*'

but it was a unique and one-time only experience, lived only in the first time of reading.

Jude (FG2) had similar ideas, stating that, '*I only think I've reread a page if I didn't really*

understand. I don't really reread whole books so much.'

5.3. Reading a series/books by the same author.

The data discussed in this section thus far suggested that central to participants' perceptions and conceptualisations of reading was that of sustaining an enjoyable and pleasurable experience, which can be and was repeated for many by returning to the same book deliberately and sometimes frequently. This finding sat equally well with another sub-theme emerging from and within the section on what participants read: the idea of **reading books in a series and/or by the same author**. In the same way that data illuminated many participants' preference for revisiting to further sustain an enjoyed experience, some of the data about participants' engagement with books in a series also suggested similar motivation.

In some instances, participants referred to a book or series as part of the identifying information: this defining feature was therefore seen as significant. The idea was further enhanced by participants keen to explain that they had completed an entire series such as Lily (FG2), who explained of the Twilight series, that, *'This is the first big series I read. It was last year and it's my favourite series.'* Another illustration was provided by Cassie (FG1) who explained, '*I was just reading 'The Maze Runner' series*.' Others were engaged with part of a series as part of a whole, for example, '*I really wanted to read them as soon as I can because I really enjoyed the first three*,' Kanisha (FG2).

This suggests an on-going theme of sustaining interest and engagement with, and of commitment to, a particular narrative and/or character, similar to previous ideas of being engrossed in a single book. This was illustrated in Cassie's (FG2) explanation:

> *I struggle with stand alones [sic] because I feel like I just want so much more of the content. ...They're all series so I always have more of them. And I prefer getting more content from the book because I just love the characters and I want to see more of them.*

Her observation that, '*I just love the characters and I want to see more of them,*' indicated a commitment and desire to maintain a relationship with the character within, resulting in the sensation of*, I just want so much more of the content.*' Ms Griffiths (FG2a) also commented more broadly on the idea of commitment: '*I just think it's a real privilege to love to read and to be able to fully commit to a book.*'

As with previous themes in the data, the ideas were not universally accepted or presented by all participants. For instance, Lauren (FG2) was keen to explain why she did not particularly enjoy reading series on the grounds that, '*I feel like it gets boring after reading the first book … it feels like it's dragging out.*' This example indicated that for one reader, at least, there was no pleasure in sustaining an experience for longer, '*unless it ends on like a really good cliff-hanger or there's stuff that's in the book and then it reappears in the other book*,' (ibid).

For participants who did enjoy reading a series there seemed to be other motivating factors. For example, there was a sense of pride in maintaining an interest, such as in Dawid's (FG2) love of Beast Quest (Blade, 2007):

> *I was addicted to them and I just kept going back to the library and getting more and more and more and more, because there's just so many. I'd say there's like more than a hundred. I just kept them reading them*

His reference not only to repeated returns to the library but also, '*I just kept them reading them*,' illustrated the sense of addiction he described. The repetition of 'more' served to highlight the scale of the series and emphasised, therefore, the achievement in reading them all. He elaborated, in a slightly later observation, on the pride of completing another series:

> *I finished the whole Alex Rider series. There's just something so satisfying about finishing a whole book series (*Dawid, FG2).

Both examples are commensurate with the idea of sustaining an interest or being engrossed explored in section 1.22, but with the additional dimension of this being sustained and maintained over the course of a narrative or character-based series.

Dawid's (FG2) introduction of the Beast Quest series to the discussion illuminated other interesting elements of reading a series:

> Dawid: *But then when I started reading by myself, it was the first time I ever went to a public library and I found this book series called 'Beast Quest' and I just fell in love with it because*
> Tom: *Oh I remember that, I remember that ...*
> Jacob: *I just died. I have the entire series at home, in first edition signed.*
> Cassie: *I've heard of them.*
> Tom: *There were too many for me to read.*
> Dawid: *There's like dozens and dozens (FG2)*

Firstly, he described the experience relationally, as '*fell in love with*' along with his previous comment of '*was addicted to*' (ibid). His description, complete with evoked emotions, relayed a strong sense of his relationship with and personal and emotional investment in the books. Moreover, other participants shared his sense of excitement as illustrated in the further interaction. Tom's immediate excitement and memory were both captured in his reply but there was also a tinge of regret that '*there were too many for me to read*' (ibid). Jacob has an equally emotional response: although he '*just died*' (ibid), he was keen to share his ownership (and presumed knowledge) of the entire series too. These readers demonstrated here another significant feature: deeply held feelings about their reading of a series which they have in common. They were keen to share this knowledge and common identity, discussed further in chapter 7.

A different exchange demonstrated other, simultaneous ideas about reading series. Lily (FG2) indicated how an interest in one series prompted interest in books another author:

> *This is the first series I read, and it was like a bunch of toys in it. I vaguely remember it, but I remember it got me into Enid Blyton which I read quite a lot of. Then, I remember seeing this in a bookshop when I was seven. And it's the first Jacqueline Wilson book I read.*

The initial reflection on a single book created momentum: the reading of one book led to another with a common theme and resultant interest in and further reading of a collection, in this case by the same author. The reflection then further sparked a conversation between several participants who had tried books by the same writer with differing degrees of enthusiasm. Lauren, Jessica, Emma and Ms Curtis discussed having read the books of Jacqueline Wilson: some had loved and read all or most, whereas Emma had tried one or two but not really enjoyed them. Jessica (FG2) commented that she had, '*read a lot of them. I just, it completely slipped my mind when I was doing, when I was printing of all of the books.*' Although apparently one of the more prolific readers of these books, she had not included them in her reading scrapbook, but her memories had been prompted by the discussion.

These exchanges demonstrated that not all readers are equally engrossed in or sustained by the same material or author and that the participants were willing to share their individual likes and dislikes thereof within this context. These aspects of the conversations therefore not only illuminated the different ways that readers similarly and differently conceptualised reading, but also illustrated the very particular and individualised nature of reader identity.

In a similar exchange in the corresponding focus group meeting (FG2), Jacob recalled how reading of one series of a particular genre had created a sense of momentum in reading other series in the same genre:

> *Blue Exorcist is just an amazing series. And yeah, there is another book, series that I didn't put down. FullMetal Alchemist*

Whilst in the first example, several participants briefly discussed an author/series in common, in the second example, one participant explained how an interest in one type of book led to reading of others by the same author and then by different authors. In the third, an interest in one series led an interest in series in the same genre. These equally, but differently, illustrate a sense of momentum created and sustained, each demonstrating the development and maintenance of a reading habit with particular interests and preferences for individual readers.

In another example, Tom (FG2) referred to enjoyment of the work of the same author and assumed common, shared knowledge:

> *But it's Julia Donaldson. She did a lot of books. I read The Gruffalo, Room on the broom, Stick man and The Highway Rat. That's when I was about three to six. So we probably all know the books. Does everyone know them?*

Also demonstrated was that, for some participants, a reading identity was formed, developed and sustained over time. Thus, there was a sense of momentum maintained not just by and in what was read, but also in the formation and development of being a reader. Regardless of whether it was the narrative, character, genre, author or series which engaged and sustained the interest (and these were different for each of the participants), the overall image emerging from the data was of a group of readers for whom reading over a significant period of time and/or body of work was a sense of achievement, commitment, and development.

This chapters finds, then the value afforded to the experiential nature of reading and to the affective experience. Across the data presented in this chapter participants provided rich illustrations of what it felt like to read, manifested variously. This further provided insights into why they read, with participants providing exemplication of the ways in which their

motivation and engagement in reading was maintained and sustained. The idea of sustained

and maintained reading related not just to singular experiences of experiences across a series,

but also to the development of a reader identify over time. Many participants started their

reading histories with early memories and experiences and catalogued a journey over time to

their current position, demonstrating the habitual nature of reader identity.

6. Findings: Where I read and who influences me.

Findings chapters 4 and 5 have illustrated the importance of motivation and compulsion to read. Given the significance in the research questions of the importance of conceptualisations of reading and reader identity, these previous chapters present a group of participants who conceptualised reading primarily as pleasurable and undertaken for the purpose of enjoyment, and who were confident in sharing this as an important aspect of their own reader identity.

Emerging from the data, however, was an additional theme of influences on reading as significant. This theme stemmed, in part, from the deliberate inclusion in the research questions and methods of a focus on places and spaces. References to this theme emerged in data from across the focus groups however, and as a result the theme of the influence of places and people therein was another significant code and then theme.

6.1. Places and spaces

One of the research questions of this study asks, 'Do reading spaces shape or influence reading?' Some of the ideas from the previous findings chapters provided insights into spatial conceptualisation as an aspect of reading and in particular to the idea that reading transports the reader to a space other than that that of their current reality. This idea was captured by Dawid's (FG1) initial metaphor that, '*if reading were a place, it would be anywhere and everywhere because a book can take you anywhere*.'

The relational map activity of the fourth focus group of the sequence, where participants were asked to diagrammatically represent spaces that were important to their reading, was included specifically to further prompt participants' discussion on the significance of place and space. Consequently, participants made references to key places such as **home** and spaces therein, and **libraries**. Sometimes the reference was purely identification of a place where they regularly read. However, in discussion, participants provided further information about the significance of these places, offering insights into what induced (and sometimes impeded) reading.

6.1.1. Home

'Home' was included by all participants on their relational map and was referenced therein by most participants as being the largest and therefore most significant place or space. The discussion illuminated how and why various aspects of the home were particularly significant.

The first idea emerging from this data set was that home provided places and spaces described in terms of **well-being**, such as for Jessica (FG4) who explained that, '*I just like to read in the living room because it's comfortable and warm.*'

Dawid (FG4), equally, described that:

> *I think if I do read, then it's just in bed, because it's the most comfortable place. It's just nice ... and relaxin*g.

For both participants, one of the most significant features of places conducive to reading was that they were comfortable and relaxing.

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Other participants described the significance of home in enabling **access** to reading material. Holly (FG3) explained that, '*I do have a lot of books at home I can … read from.*' The significance of being able draw upon material in the home was echoed by Kanisha (FG2):

> *I didn't realise there were five books, but I have this series, because they were just in my attic, stored away.*

As for Holly, Kanisha's access to reading material in the home provided a supply to feed and maintain her habit. The idea of needing regular, free access to reading material was further confirmed by Cassie's (FG4) comment that:

> *I think its importance lies because it's just a place where I can get the book, without having to pay, and that's really important because, you always need, because if you read fast, then you need that constant supply.*

Closely linked to this sub-theme of access was that of **opportunity** to read, seen by some participants as being a significant feature of their home environment. For example, Kanisha (FG4) explained that:

> *I did put my own bedroom as important as well, because I think it is important for me to have that time to myself when I'm just reading.*

Home provided Kanisha with access to material, time and seclusion, which combined afforded opportunity to read.   These were closely linked to routines in the home for two participants (Cassie and Lily) who both explained their habit of reading before going to sleep at night. Cassie (FG4) provided further elaboration of the significance of this habit, explaining that this routine had been promoted by her primary school, '*and I still find myself doing that now.*'

6.1.2. Libraries, bookshops and other spaces

Home, however, was not the only space that participants referenced as providing **access** to and **opportunity** for reading. Some participants referred to a library or libraries as being a significant space on their relational map. Some also referred to bookshops and to other spaces which appeared to be significant.

Kanisha and Dawid referred to the library as a space where they, '*could just get a book*,' (Dawid, FG2) or '*if you want to find a book that you want to read, you can just go*,' (Kanisha, FG3). Holly and Cassie both provided further insight. Holly (FG3) explained that the library afforded choice and the opportunity to try to the book out first:

> *Well, I feel like the library, it gives you such a various amount of books and you can ... start reading a book and if you don't like it, you can just put it back on the shelves ... In the library, you can just pick up a book and stop reading if you really don't think it's what you want to read, or your, type of book, you can just put it back on the shelf ... next to it there could be the book that you want to read.*

Holly's comment provided insight into and underscored, through repetition, the importance of selection, choice, and trial before commitment. Thus, ease and choice were seen to be important.

Equally important was Cassie (FG3) observation that:

> *I do have quite a lot to be read, but sometimes there are just those books that you see and think, oh, I really want to read that, but you don't have it.*

In this instance, the sense of momentum, as described in chapter 5, and the feeling of needing to read immediately can only be fulfilled if access is provided to the desired material. In these instances, the library afforded such opportunity.

Libraries also appeared to have some features in common with home as a favourable reading space, being, '*a quiet place and ... a nice place to read. And it's just quite a nice atmosphere*,' (Holly, FG3). Lily explained (FG4), '*I spent, every time I was*

waiting, before tutor I'd read it, every break and lunch, I'd go into the library,'

suggesting that it was the library which provided the default, specific place to escape

and read in school. Evan (FG4) offered a further explanation of the library as a unique

space, where '*there's just something about it*.'

Participants thus indicated the importance of access to material and that the library

(both school and community libraries were mentioned) was a particular and important

space. Recognising the value of these spaces was also of interest to one of the

participating teachers. Ms Griffiths (FG3c) commented that:

> *I found that quite interesting. It wasn't something that I'd necessarily thought about...*
> *And so it was quite interesting to hear them kind of talking about the importance of the*
> *library to them.*

This observation suggests that, prior to the discussions of this study, she hadn't

considered the value of libraries to pupils' reading lives. This implicitly attests to ways

in which she conceptualised her role as a teacher of reading and, more importantly the

factors considered (or not) when thinking about her pupils.

Other participants offered illustrations of places that were uniquely significant for their

reading. Kanisha, Lily and Jessica all mentioned reading whilst in transit, in the car or

on the bus. The most interesting and unique space, however, was offered by Jacob

(FG4):

> *… a spot in the woods where I sit on a log and it's nice to read there… it's*
> *very remote, so you're not getting disturbed by people.*

These examples demonstrated that for some participants, spaces for reading included

any comfortable spot and opportunity.

6.2. School

Patterns in the data arising from the relational maps suggested that school featured as being of various significance for participants. Sub-themes emerging from the discussion about the particulars of this space seemed to fall into categories of ways in which school was a place either supportive of or an impediment to reading and reading experiences. This contrasted with spaces mentioned previously as almost universally conducive to reading.

6.2.1. Supporting reading

Data suggesting that school was supportive of reading seemed to be grouped into four main sub-themes, some in common with places previously discussed:

- Provision of content

- Opportunity

- Imperative

- recommendation

Like data referencing home and libraries, school was mentioned by some participants as being significant in providing **content**. Some participants included some school-based reading in their reading histories from focus group 2 (Jessica, Lauren and Evan). Although these were the exception rather than the norm, texts mentioned in this context had been included because they were seen as significant in reading histories. Interestingly, however, more participants didn't include any school-based reading material in their reading scrapbook initially. Subsequent conversations reminded some of books that they had read in school and then wanted to mention (Emma and Lily). For other participants, significant school-based

reading appeared during the discussion of their relational maps (Jacob, Kanisha, Cassie). These data suggested that the reading material and content provided in school registered as being of varying significance in the context of participants' whole reading history and identity and were not foregrounded in their initial perceptions.

In almost all instances where participants referred to texts read in school; however, these were recalled positively and favourably. Some recalled that reading in school had prompted them to continue reading the book in their own time:

> *We got about halfway through it in class. And then I bought it for myself because I liked the book. And then I read the rest by myself and got back into school where we read through it again…It was nice having my own copy … which I was allowed to read myself* (Jessica, FG2).

> *With 'Boy 87', I got the book because we were halfway through as a class and then I got the book and then I finished it and then we finished it in class because I was really hooked to it* (Cassie, FG2).

In both examples, school provided material which the participants were keen to pursue into their own, personal reading space. Cassie's comment that, '*I was really hooked to it*' suggests a similar immersive experience to that explored in chapter four of this study. Jessica's observation that, '*It was nice having my own copy to like, which I was allowed to read myself,*' (ibid) indicates, however, that the degree of independence and ownership was also significant. Both comment on their completion of the reading outside of school though, hinting at the need to sustain momentum in the reading.

Other observations about positive school experiences provided further insights. For example, Jacob (FG4) commented on one particular reading experience because it:

> *was one of the first books that I was actually interested in that wasn't just reading because I had to for school.*

His comment suggested that his school reading experience included material that he was reading solely because he '*had to*' (ibid). It implied that reading material previously provided by the school hadn't been of interest.

In other examples, participants' comments foreground the **opportunity** provided by school rather than the content. For example, Holly (FG4) mentioned an art project she had been asked to complete where she had enjoyed reading about surrealism. Additionally, Jessica (FG4) presented the transactional aspects of school-based reading:

> *Even if it's just passive knowledge, you end up reading off the board and everything and it's all still reading.*

References such as this to reading as transactional, both within and outside of school, were unusual, however.

For Olivia (FG4), school was the most significant space for reading:

> *I don't really read that much, in general. So I think school is such a big space for me because of the fact that, obviously, in English lessons I am reading and… I'm looking at books and trying to analyse things.*

School was therefore her primary space, most associated with reading, but this was an exception rather than common across participants. Interestingly, both teachers referred in their discussion to school-based practice of libraries lessons (FG2), where pupils were provided with space to pursue reading of their own choice and volition. Despite these existing in practice, no participants made reference to these experiences in their scrapbooks or discussions, suggesting that this school practice was not significant for them.

6.2.2. Impeding reading

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There were additional data about reading in school which informed a sub-theme of '**impeding reading**'. These data illustrated how and why school presented a barrier to participants' reading and provided continuing insights into the ways in which participants' conceptualised reading, including as attending to their motivation. Within this data set, there were four sub-themes:

- **Not enjoyed or significant**

- **Time**

- **Feeling compelled**

- **Prioritising schoolwork**

Whilst in the previous data set, participants referred to reading in school which they had enjoyed and/or remembered as being significant, there were also examples where participants felt differently. Jessica and Lily both commented that they had not included school-based reading on their reading histories because they had forgotten or not remembered the material as being significant. Kanisha and Cassie both commented that school impeded on the time available to read. Kanisha's (FG3) comment in particular suggested that time for reading is constrained in school when compared with at home:

> *at school, you might have a lesson, well, you can read for like an hour but you don't necessarily have the opportunity to read for like three hours. But, when you're at home 'cause you have so much flexibility, you can really do whatever you want.*

Although not explicit, this comment attends to previous ideas about immersion in and momentum for reading: the reference to extended time for reading in the home implied that, for Kanisha, this feature of her reading habit was not accommodated in and by school reading practices.

In other data, participants indicated that schoolwork itself placed a constraint on their reading. Jude (FG3), for example, when asked about his reading in the interim between group meetings, identified that:

> *here and there whenever I can, but apart from that I haven't been reading as much as I previously did, with school and everything.*

Olivia (FG4) made a similar observation:

> *Outside of school, because I've had a lot of mocks recently, all I've been doing is reading revision books…It's been okay … but it's quite hard to find time to actually read anything because of the fact I'm trying to focus on me, actually kind of getting good marks*

Her comment signalled her perception of reading for revision as being a different kind of experience from other reading. It was also implied as being of less value: '*actually read anything*' signalled as distinct from, '*all I've been doing is reading revision books.*' Whilst this signalled a shift in perceptions and conceptualisations from previous data to include schoolwork and revision as comprising reading, there was, however, an on-going emphasis on and foregrounding of reading as being primarily and most importantly for pleasure which had been side-lined to focus on preparing for examinations.

Thus, another theme emerging from these examples, and further illustrated by additional data, was the idea of reading as part of schoolwork and for revision being different to the reading for pleasure which dominated other discussions (as discussed in previous sections). As the focus groups progressed, this theme became more prominent and explicit and attested to participants' shifting conceptualisations of and motivations for reading.

6.2.3. Comparisons of home and school reading

The focus group conversation about significance of different spaces for reading (FG4) led to data which illustrated not just the spaces of home and school, but also offered comparisons and contrasts between reading experiences within. In many instances, participants were continuing discussion of school-based reading, but their elaborations illuminated how reading within school was different to reading most typically experienced at home. Sometimes participants provided a direct comparison between and elaboration of the differences; on other occasions these were more implicit. What arose from this data set, therefore, were sub-themes related to the different factors which seemed to be significant in different places. These seemed to significantly alter reading experiences, both positively and negatively, for the participants between home and school.

Some participants' comments indicated an explicit awareness of difference. Cassie (FG4), for example, described simultaneous reading of different texts across the home-school spaces:

> *So we just finished 'Of Mice and Men', in English which was really interesting. And also outside of school, I recently finished 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy and "The Hobbit.'*

Similarly, Olivia (FG4) observed that:

> *In class we've been doing Macbeth, which is really good. Outside of school, because I've had a lot of mocks recently, all I've been doing is reading revision books*.

Both comments associated different spaces with different content, but their comments additionally reflected that both participants were able to manage this concurrent and simultaneous reading of different material with seeming ease.

Other comments provided direct comparison between the experiences of each space, such as Kanisha (FG4) who commented on the physical difference where school, '*isn't as comfortable as my own home*.' Dawid (FG4) commented that:

> *And it's the same thing with everybody reading slow and then stopping to analyse and talk about what happened. But I just wanted to read on and find out what's happening in the story of it.*

For Dawid, the physical experience of reading together and '*reading slow*' impeded his own experience.

Despite some of these observed differences, participants commented positively on aspects of their school-based reading. For example, Cassie (FG4) discussed the reading of 'Of Mice and Men' (Steinbeck, 1937) as being '*really interesting*,' and Olivia (FG4) described 'Macbeth' (Shakespeare, 1623) as being '*really good*.' Dawid's (FG4) explanation that '*I just wanted to read on and find out what's happening in the story of it*,' implied a desire for the kind of immersive reading experience explored in chapter 5 of this study. Evan (FG5) observed, similarly, that:

> *a lot of the time the book you're reading in school is actually really really good. For example, we're reading 'Noughts and Crosses' at the moment and it's actually really enjoyable*

Interestingly, the repeated use of the word '*actually*' for emphasis implies that this enjoyment of school-based reading was a surprise to Evan. Thus, despite the setting of school as being of secondary significance in comparison to home, '*a smaller category*' as described by Kanisha (FG4), some of the material read in school was described favourably, as enjoyable. Reading in school was therefore sometimes described in terms similar to other examples of reading for pleasure, even when it had not been registered as significant in reading histories.

Evan (FG4), however, made a clear distinction. He referenced the idea of '*proper reading*'

associated with pleasure and enjoyment and, in this context, some of the reading he engaged

with in school was not viewed in the same way:

> *I feel like 'properly reading' is things that you're really interested in .... And obviously in school, there are some sorts of things that I read, like in drama and music, so I'm really interested in those sort of things. But … there are some which I just don't really care about that much, which I'm not really interested in …and I feel like when I'm reading them I'm just looking at words on a page, not exactly reading … Because I'm not actually enjoying it*

The reference to, '*just looking at words on a page, not exactly reading,*' as being

distinguishable from, '*proper reading,*' indicated a nuanced conceptualisation of reading as

including engagement: '*Because I'm not actually enjoying it*.' The lack of affection in some

reading, '*I just don't really care about that much … which I'm not really interested in,*'

implied a procedural-based conceptualisation of some aspects of school-based reading.

Evan (FG5) made a further observation about the differences in reading experienced in

school and at home:

> *But like reading reading is, like, about for me at least, is about enjoyment and anticipation, and, overall like, just like enjoying it*

This personal observation '*for me*' indicate an explicit awareness of individual reading

experience and identity, conceptualised by him as including, '*enjoyment and anticipation.*'

These features underpin '*reading reading*' which is seen as different from that engaged in at

school. Evan's emphasis suggested a prioritisation of the home reading experience, with its

fundamental emphasis, '*at least*' on pleasure and enjoyment, as distinguishable from a more

particular type of school-based reading.

Further data elaborated on these differences and provided insights into how and why other participants saw school-based reading as particular and distinct:

> *School's when I really think about the book I'm reading, because we obviously do the whole analysing thing and delving into the quotes and more detail. So I really think about what I'm reading more at school* (Cassie, FG4).

That reading in a school setting enabled a different reading experience was also alluded to by Jude (FG5):

> *But if I'm reading at school … it's more engaging towards what you're reading because then you can have quiet and then you can talk about it after*.

The data in both examples suggested the inclusion of additional thought and discussion as part of school-based reading. For Cassie, school-based reading provoked deeper thinking and for Jude, discussion made school-based reading more engaging. However, this view was not consistent across the data and whilst some participants described their school-based reading as enjoyable, there were allusions to school-based reading as involving not just a different kind of experience, but somehow a different type of reading from that experienced outside of school.

Interestingly, Ms Griffiths (FG2a) observed, during her discussion of her reading autobiography, that there was no distinction in her experience of texts that she read as a pupil in school:

> *I didn't feel like it was for an exam…I know that some kids will find it, 'Oh, well, I have to read this text because I'm going to do an exam on it.' I knew I had to do an exam. But I loved the books. I loved what I was reading.*

6.2.4. A particular kind of reading: analysis

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Much of the data about the experience of reading in school were connected by a central theme of reading for the purpose of study and provided insights into the nature and impact of this specific type of reading. This appeared in the data typically as 'analysis': the word used commonly and mentioned several times in participants' comments. The essence of this was perhaps best summarised by Jessica (FG5) who, when commenting on her work sample, observed that:

> *This is an analytical work of paragraphs explaining an idea or something, which isn't quite the same as taking you to a different world because it's shining a magnifying glass over a work or something* (Jessica, FG5).

Jessica's observation was interesting in suggesting that the reading was different because the text is treated differently by the reader in school than it would be when read by choice. The idea of '*shining a magnifying glass over work*' implied the perception of the text, and thus also positioning of the reader, as objective. This contrasts starkly with the perceptions in chapter 4 of reading as experiential and where the reader is immersed in the text and transported to its world.

The theme of scrutinising what has been read, as if through a '*magnifying glass*' as representative of school-based reading was echoed in other comments too. Evan (FGF5) observed that when, '*you've looked at it in more detail so you have more to say about it*.' The description of '*in more detail*' in order to be '*actually thinking about it properly*,' (ibid) suggest a contrast or difference afforded by this kind of reading.

Jessica (FG5), too, suggested that school-based reading '*definitely make me look at things in a more critical way*' because '*if you have a full understanding then you can fully appreciate what is trying to be told*.' The use of '*full understanding*' combined with '*more critical way*' distinguish this kind of reading. As Jessica (FG5) summarised, this '*isn't quite the same*

as taking you to a different world.'   Again, this offers a different perception and

conceptualisation of reading than that of the experiential of previous chapters. The

descriptions of '*actual*,' '*full*' and '*detailed*' understanding assume an objective or accurate

reading, contrasted with the subjectivity of experience. Cassie's (FG4) comment provided

further clarity on the perceived difference:

> *But I'm not ... thinking about the deep meanings and the deeper imagery in the*
> *book. I'm just enjoying it, the content and the plot and the characters, rather than*
> *really delving deep into themes and contextual stuff ...So, at home, it's more for*
> *my enjoyment. I don't really have to think about that kind of thing. But at school,*
> *when you're analysing, it's a lot more focussing on what the author means by*
> *doing this*

The suggestion is, therefore, that reading in school is different because it involves '*delving*

deep' to enable the reader to focus on '*what the author means.*' This alignment of authorial

intention and purpose with correctness is starkly different to the experience which allows the

reader to be '*just enjoying it.*' Cassie's (FG4) insights described her reading experiences in

the difference spaces of school and home as leading to different degrees of understanding:

reading at home seems to result in '*a base kind of understanding* whereas reading and

analysing in school leads to '*deep meanings.*' For Cassie, at least, there was a clear

distinction and explicit articulation of a difference, not just in the nature of the reading

experiences but also the understanding gained.

Ms Curtis (FG2c) commented on the point in her reading history when she recognised this

kind of difference in reading at school. She described this as a moment of '*transition*,' when

she, *'realised what it was, what the study of literature was about.'* It is interesting to note,

though, that this transition moment occurred for her when she was older than the pupil

participants in this study and indicates how, perhaps, some were currently navigating this

transition.   She commented on this in the last focus group session (FG5c) and observed that

the pupils had seen the differences as, '*a clear distinction, whereas maybe as adult readers we might think of it more as on a continuum.*'

For Cassie (FG4), the distinction between and transition to a different type of reading and deeper understanding is achieved at the cost of enjoyment:

> *If you look into it too much … it just takes away from the enjoyment and … you can spot things that are really interesting, but I think it takes away from the overall meaning of the book … if you look into themes in a book too much, and you just focus on the underlying meanings too much, you kind of forget to just notice the enjoyment of the setting and the plot and the characters. If you're always thinking about what this means and what the author is trying to do, it takes away from the whole just enjoying it*

The repetition of, '*takes away,*' suggested that studying and '*look[ing] into it too much,*' can be reductive, limiting the experience as to remove, '*from the whole just enjoying it,*' and resulting in a deficit reading experience. Dawid (FG4) drew a similar conclusion, also suggesting that a scholarly approach to reading disrupts the immersive nature of reading:

> *If you approach a book academically, then you don't really get lost in the story and maybe you don't really connect with the characters as much because you're constantly pausing to analyse quotes and really dig deep into every single tiny bit. Whereas when you're just reading for enjoyment, then you just get more lost in the book, in the story*

For both Cassie and Dawid, therefore, the affordances of scholarly reading as opportunities to '*look into it too much*' and '*dig deep*' were at the cost of, '*not really appreciating the story as much.*' Jessica (FG5), too, described her experiences of studying Shakespeare at KS4 as '*trudging through mud.*'

Ms Curtis (FG5) commented specifically on the students' observations of differences in reading in school and attributed it, in part, to the pressures of examination preparation at KS4. (FG5):

> *The difference between Evan's experience of reading a novel in a Key Stage three setting where we can be more exploratory ... and Dawid and Jessica feeling that exam pressure through reading Shakespeare, which is difficult*

However, she made a further, interesting observation that it might be possible for different students in the same class to be having the same experience but feeling and perceiving it differently. For example:

> *You have one student who's totally internalising the whole thing. It's about her own pressure and her own exam performance. And everything is about what she is doing, her looking at it. Whereas Dawid is saying the thing that he enjoyed the most is the outward looking sharing .... Is it possible, plausible that both of those things could be happening simultaneously in the same lesson?*

There was recognition, too, of the differences of the pupils in that:

> *Jessica isn't immersing herself in the reading experience in the way that she might if it were a private read, whereas Dawid clearly is*

Furthermore, pupil participants offered further insights into the differences in perceptions, linked by some participants to the idea of motivation:

> *I don't know if it's just because in school, you have reason to read it. And maybe, I don't know if outside of school I need a reason to read a book* (Olivia, FG2)

Olivia's comment here implied an understanding of the difference between explicit and implicit motivation and indicated a preference for the latter as more indicative of her reading identity: '*I don't know if outside of school I need a reason to read a book.*'

Evan's (FG4) comments further reflected this theme and foregrounded the importance of choice over compulsion: in school he reads '*because obviously you have to*' but at home, '*I actually like properly read and ... with my choice, I'm actually very interested in what I'm reading.*' This distinction was further problematised by Lily (FG4) who observed:

> *In school it's like, you all fit into one category and have to read the same thing. And some people might like it, and some people might just hate it.*

Her observations indicated the study of a single, common text in school, '*the same thing*' as an impediment: the grouping of readers as if, '*you all fit into one category,*' indicated her understanding of plurality of reader identity which is not, in her view, catered for in school-based reading practice. She understands that readers might have established reading tastes and preferences and that this might not coincide with that presented for study in school.

Olivia (FG4) provided further insights, connecting motivation and attitudes as additional factors influencing reading in school:

> *If someone who really, really enjoys reading is reading a book in school, they're going to be a lot more engaged and kind of wanting to than if they're someone that really hates reading, even outside of school and inside of school, they're not going to enjoy it either way. So I do think it kind of depends on the person*

In these insights in particular, the themes of purpose, motivation, enjoyment and identity are connected and co-dependent such that the issue of reading content is less problematic for those who are motivated readers. In this respect, Olivia's perceptions differed from Lily's. Thus, whilst participants perceive and conceptualise reading differently in the spaces of home and school, they also indicated that factors underpinning reader identity and practices are not always clearly distinct: they overlap and can be mutually beneficial or limiting.

6.3. The particular space of Covid

One unforeseen factor at the outset of the project, which needs to be considered and which emerged in the data, was how the pandemic and enforced lockdown affected participants' reading. This specific context created a particular reading space, described in the data, with differing impacts on their existing habits and preferences, broadly grouped into three sub-themes:

- material

- time

- access

For some, lockdown affected the type of **material** that participants read. For example, both Jessica and Cassie observed that they were reading more news articles and information texts. Cassie (FG3) further commented that, '*it has been a new development, because there's just so much going on,*' and she also observed that she was reading more emails, associated with the increased communication involved with home-schooling. Kanisha, on the other hand, noted a change in her habits to include more recipe books because she was engaged in more baking during the pandemic. These participants, therefore, noted a difference in the type of reading that they were engaged in because of lockdown.

Other data indicated that lockdown also impacted the amount of **time** that participants spent reading. Cassie, Holly and Evan all noted that they had been reading more. Cassie and Evan both attributed this to the availability of time. Cassie (FG3) observed that this would otherwise have been occupied by school: '*And you've just got more time in general. So I've found myself reading a lot more often*.' Evan (FG3) similarly observed that, '*I've had more time to keep on reading*.' Holly's (FG3) comments provided further insight into why this might be perceived as particularly welcome and usefully illustrated the amalgam of some of the factors discussed in previous chapters, aligning in the specific context of the pandemic: the need for time/opportunity: '*lockdown has given me the chance to read a lot more'*; the importance of motivation: '*I find it a little bit hard to get motivated into it*' and then when these are combined, the importance of sustaining interest and momentum: '*if I do get motivated to read the book, I think I can read more in that day than I would if I just picked it

up at the end of day.' Enforced isolation at home rather than in school provided Holly with

an opportunity to maintain her reading for a more sustained period: *'I feel I want to read it*

more and then I read it more.' Both she and Evan, therefore, provided further illustration of

the immersive and engrossing experience of reading discussed in chapter 4, in the very

specific space and place of enforced lockdown, which might not otherwise have been

afforded.

For other participants, however, lockdown had the opposite effect. Both Jude and Jessica

commented that they had been reading less during lockdown. For both, the increased

amount of schoolwork left less time for reading. Jude (FG3) described his schoolwork as

'*piling up, a lot of it.'* Jessica's (FG4) observation further indicated the very specific impact

of the pandemic and emphasis on catching up:

> *a lot of school is being, oh, we missed six months. Do this much revision and this*
> *much and this much and this much because obviously its GCSEs this year.*

The repetition of '*this much*' indicates her perception of sustained and substantial

additional work, with the implied impact that this left less time for leisurely pursuits

like reading for pleasure.

Lockdown also appeared to limit reading for other participants because it limited access

to reading material. Kanisha, Cassie and Evan all commented on the lack of access to

the library. For Cassie (FG3), who had started reading a new series, this had particular

consequences: '*I didn't have the next book and I wanted to go to the library but I*

couldn't and that was quite annoying.' Her frustration at not being able to pursue and

sustain interest in reading a series was clearly signalled.

However, not all participants were affected in the same way. Kanisha (FG3), for example, described the significance of having access to her own books at home which enabled her to maintain her reading habit: '*I started reading this one, 'The Boy at the Back of the Class*.' She commented that lockdown had affected her reading because, '*I don't think I've read less. I just think I've read less variety of books that I usually read*.' Thus, for Kanisha, access was not lessened, just limited in variety.

Interestingly, Ms Griffiths (FG3b) commented specifically on the glimpse afforded by the study into participants' reading lives during Covid:

> *It's been interesting to hear their perspective because you feel a real kind of disconnect from them until you actually hear that they have been keeping on with reading, that they've been reading new things.*

It appeared that the opportunity of the study enabled another perspective for this teacher participant that would otherwise would not have been available; the study facilitated a connection that had been temporarily disconnected because of lockdown and this further afforded a glimpse of reading that might not have otherwise been seen.

For both teacher participants, Covid lockdown also provided time for reading for professional development purposes. Ms Griffiths, FG3a) described reading a range of books related to teaching that she had in her, ' *little mini CPD library*.' She explained how lockdown had afforded time and opportunity:

> *what I would typically do if I was in my normal life and in my kind of usual busyness, I would usually dip more into it sporadically… I've been afforded a little bit more time to really think carefully … the first time since, you know, teacher training and my PGCE*

Lockdown provided time and opportunity for more sustained rather than sporadic reading and thinking which, Ms Griffiths went onto explain, she had been able to apply to her practice in developing a new scheme of work. She described the iterative nature of this development, from reading to application, repeated over an extended period of time.

Ms Curtis (FG3a) explained a similar experience, using the period of extended lockdown to read and prepare for a new role in school. Like Ms Griffiths, she attributes this to the opportunity afforded by extended lockdown because, '*If I'd been teaching all this time, I might not have had as much time and headspace to do that*,' (FG3a). The use of the term '*headspace*' seemed to echo Ms Griffiths' reference to '*think carefully*,' suggesting that lockdown had provided an intellectual 'space' and opportunity as well as time.

Whilst the impact of Covid was not the intended or dominant focus for the latter focus group sessions, the arising data did, nonetheless, provide useful insights into the impact and consequences of the pandemic on the reading habits and experiences of some of the participants in the study, evoking a specific, unanticipated and unforeseen, space in this study. Moreover, this space served to reinforce and demonstrate the interplay of some of the themes and ideas of previous sessions as participants provided narratives of their own experiences.

6.4. The research space

There was a final sub-theme arising in the data about the nature of involvement in the project providing a particular space for thinking about reading and reading experience. Pupil participants were asked in their final (FG5) discussion about their involvement in the study.

Evan (FG5) discussed how participation, '*has boosted my enjoyment for reading because I've started to read more*,' and he made specific reference to reading the 'One of Us is Lying' (McManus, 2017) series as a result of another participant's recommendation.

Jude (FG5), on the other hand, focused on the specifics of the project and how one of the different methods had been particularly useful:

> *I have enjoyed doing these. I think the first one, when we looked at the images, I think that was very productive in how we would represent reading as one of the images.*

He made a further suggestion for how the study might have been improved: use of a reading project centred on rereading and sharing of a favourite book with the rest of the group as a way of promoting and recommending books.

Other participants referred to the value of aspects of the project across the course of the study and how, specifically, the scrapbook had become something of value and importance. Kanisha (FG3) for example described how she had been using her scrapbook over lockdown as a record of reading and how this contrasted with other work that she had been doing:

> *I write a summary, my favourite lines and quotes and maybe some drawings or something. And I feel with other things like schoolwork or news, it's just a bit more boring*

Cassie (FG3) added to this by explaining how the process of completing the scrapbook had further supported her:

> *I didn't just put writing I also put images. So I drew some stuff from the book as well and I also think that helped me understand the book more and I really got into it more.*

Jude (FG3) who didn't ever share his physical scrapbook, described it as '*showcasing*' his reading. Ms Curtis (FG3c) made a similar observation when she explained her need to complete one of the activities in draft so as not to affect the aesthetics. Thus, the project

afforded an additional space for participants which was valued both for the nature of some of the activities themselves, and also for the way that it contributed to the self-awareness of readers and their identities.

Teacher participants were given regular and frequent time and space within the study to reflect on the project. The structure of the project, with pre and post discussion conversations with teacher participants was deliberate: to afford them time to consider their own perceptions and experiences prior to listening to the pupils' talk and to then offer some opportunity after to discuss what they had heard. Inevitably, then there was resultant data specifically related to this sub-theme that has already been discussed during the findings chapters, such as in section 4.2 where both teachers reflected on the tension between their private and professional reading identities.

However, a further explicit opportunity was provided in the last session for Ms Curtis (FG5c) where she commented on the affordances of a few aspects of the project. Most significantly, she commented on the space that the project had enabled in allowing her to look at the impact of her practice and:

> *take a critical view. I'm having to look at it in depth, whereas I might otherwise have taken it at face value*

She provided further elaboration that *'I find this stuff fascinating and I wish there was more time for research.'* The opportunity to listen to pupil perspectives was particularly important.

> *I think that having this kind of setting when it's not about me, they're not talking to me … it's interesting to hear them voice things that that they might have held things back because an English teacher was present. I think that was invaluable, and I wish I could get those responses by sitting down with them.*

This was an interesting observation about the nature of the teacher-pupil relationship whereby pupils might hold back certain ideas. The opportunity to overcome this barrier, it appeared, was both a challenge and a benefit:

> *there's so many moments when my teacher instinct is to jump in and prompt them and say, you know, could you said a bit more about this or that... My role is to just allow them to speak, hear what they have to say, allow them to sort of try to phrase in their own words.*

There was, therefore, a recognition of the differences in the role of teacher and researcher that might be particularly relevant when prioritising pupil voice. This conversation then led on to ideas about pedagogic voice in the classroom, particularly if the teacher impulse is to, *'to jump in and prompt.'* Ms Curtis identified the challenges in this:

> *Even with something open ended, I know I am laying down the breadcrumbs, how I want them to respond and why I want them to think ... So everything that we do when we're teaching a text, whether it's a novel or poetry or non-fiction, we've already got an angle from which we want them to engage. We've got a learning objective.*

The research project provided the vehicle through which she was able to identify and consider what appeared to be inherent tensions in different reader positions in the English classroom. However, she demonstrated, too, the significant value that she placed on pupil perspective, when commenting on the opportunities afforded by the study for reflection on curriculum provision. She (FG5c) identified, discussing Jessica, *'such a realisation that English is not something that she's really enjoying at the moment.'* The research project had highlighted this, including a recognition that:

> *I'm in a position that [I] can do something about it. That's important. So I think this helps me to reflect on the curriculum, our approaches.*

Thus the data also provided insights into the opportunities afforded by the research space itself. It highlighted the value of participation in research and the different relationships that exist within the study and within the classroom practice on which this was focused.

6.5. The significance of people

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, participants' comments about the significant reading spaces and places were not limited to just insights about physicality. Sometimes, their associations with places and spaces were linked to the significance of the people with whom the space was shared. In the fourth focus group discussion, the relational maps exercise was deliberately included to enable participants to elaborate on this aspect. There were clear sub-themes about identified people and their influence on participants' reading:

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Authors
- Media

6.6. Family

Family members appeared as significant in the data from across a number of the focus group discussions. They were referenced more than any other group of people and, in their relational mapping exercise, most participants identified family members as most significant in their reading lives. Their influence on and involvement in participants' reading

experiences, however, was referenced in several ways, leading to a set of sub-themes which illustrated the subtle but distinct ways in which family members played a part:

- Reading with and to

- Providing access

- Making recommendations

- Being a role model

6.6.1. Reading with and to

One sub-theme that was consistent in the data across focus groups was the idea of being **read to or reading with** family members. For several participants, reading with parents started early in their reading histories and many cited, during their discussions of their reading scrapbooks, books that they had remembered being read to as a small child. Lily, Evan and Cassie (FG2) all referred to being read to every night: '*My parents liked reading to me a lot and it was something we'd do every night*.'   Others described being read to as a frequent and regular occurrence. For some, the memory of the experience seemed to be particularly significant, such as for Lily (FG2):

> *And then this one which my dad read to me about a chicken or a cockerel. I can't remember that much but I remember him doing it*

For Lily, then, memory of her father reading to her regularly was of foremost significance and the material/content was of secondary importance. For Evan (FG2) equally: '*Though my parents would read to me every night very often, I don't remember any of it*.' For both, the memory of being read to by parents was longer lasting than the memory of the material itself. For Evan (FG2), however, sometimes the material was

significant: '*My mum had to read that to me every night because like otherwise I'd start crying and have a tantrum.*' The story, *'that',* being referenced in this example, was an important part of the experience and therefore the memory.

Dawid's (FG2) memories of being read to by his parents were equally focused on a particular aspect of the experience:

> *Whenever my parents would read to me it would always be Polish books, I guess, bedtime stories and stuff, because I'm Polish. So they'd always read Polish things to me*

The experience of being read to by his parents was intrinsically connected to being Polish. The repeated references suggest that this is both an important and significant aspect of the experience and of his identity. The connection between reading and identity specifically related to cultural background and heritage was also echoed by Ms Griffiths who explained her love of Irish literature and of the poetry of Seamus Heaney in particular (FG2a).

6.6.2. *Access, provision and recommendations*

In the previous sub-theme, participants commented explicitly on being read to by family members and their comments foregrounded the importance of the experiential. In this further, related sub-theme, participants referred to the ways in which family members provided **access**, foregrounding the reading material instead.

Jessica and Cassie both referenced, in their reading histories, books that they had been given by parents. Dawid (FG4) referred to being taken to the library by a parent to borrow books and described his mother as, '*influential in the sense that she kind of gave me the option*.'

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Lily, Tom and Cassie also referenced grandparents as a source of books, in Lily's and Tom's cases as gifted but in Cassie's (FG2) experience as the owner of a series borrowed over time:

> *I got through the series in a summer and I was really gripped, because we didn't have the books, my grandma did and I'd keep going back to her and I was like, 'Grandma, I need the next book*

Participants' comments, therefore transitioned from family members providing access in terms of sourcing books to a frame of reference as another reader. This sense of shared readership was also alluded to by Lauren (FG2) who commented that, '*my sister had the old books and then she ...passed them down to me and I started reading them.*' Jessica (FG2) shared a similar experience with her father who:

> *gave me the books. And he said that he had read them when he was younger and thought that I was probably able to read it.*

These comments described the way that family members tacitly **recommended** reading by passing on books that they themselves had enjoyed. The mention of this in participants' experiences indicate the significance, therefore, not just of the material itself, but also of these recommendations.

Other data provided more explicit examples of the ways in which family members gave recommendations for reading. Kanisha (FG4) commented, '*if they've read a book that they've liked, then they might recommend it to me,*' when describing her relational map and the significance and influence of family members.   Dawid and Tom both described examples of incidental recommendations too. For example:

> *My brother's in your year and I remember it because I've always wanted to read that book, mainly because he keeps on going on about it at home, like, 'It's a really good book, it's a really good book.' … It's kind of like an influence to read it* (Tom, FG2)

He was promoted by a participant's reference to a book and then explicitly

acknowledged his brother's influence, embodied in, '*I've always wanted to read that*

book ... he keeps on going on about it at home.'

In other examples the recommendation is more explicit. Jessica (FG4) provided insight into

the ways that her dad encouraged her to read, through making regular recommendations over

time, including those that he had read himself, such that:

> *that's how I ended up reading things like The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings, I*
> *loved those books and so he's influenced the stuff I've read a lot*

Jessica's explanation that, '*he's influenced the stuff I've read a lot*,' indicated her dad's

sustained and significant influence on her as a reader, extending beyond specifics of any

individual book or collection of books and suggesting an understanding of and influence on

likes and preferences. Jacob (FG4) made a similar observation about his mum, who

recommended books based on, '*it's the sort of stuff you always say you like. So I was, okay,*

I'll read that.'

Ms Curtis (FG2.c) described a unique to this study example of her Mum influencing her

reading through a book club that she set up. Ms Curtis' friends and their Mums were invited

to read and then meet to discuss a common text, because her Mum '*was aware that reading*

was a thing that I shouldn't let go off.' Whilst Ms Curtis explained that the group eventually

disintegrated as the teenagers lost interest, she did explain that the book club had introduced

her to*, 'lots of different types of voices and stories.*'

This sub-theme thus provides insights into participants' lives and ways in which family

members promoted and encouraged reading, including through providing access to and

recommendations of reading material in influential and significant ways. These insights also

provide additional context, and perhaps further explanation, for their presentation as avid and enthusiastic readers.

6.6.3. Role Model

The previous sub-themes illustrate ways in which family members were significant in influencing participants' reading. Previously cited examples illustrated the tacit ways that family members acted as role models though making recommendations of books that they had read themselves. This final sub-theme provides some insight into specific ways in which participants' family members appeared to act specifically as **role-models** for reading. Jacob, Dawid and Olivia all presented their family members in these more explicit terms. Jacob and Olivia described their family members variously as, '*a massive reader*,' (Olivia, FG4) and, '*a turbo reader*,' (Jacob, FG4). Both descriptions allude to several characteristics that might be ascribed to readers: quantity, speed, ease, for example, which demonstrate the ways in which participants' family members might have presented and encouraged reading. For Jacob, it seemed important that he was '*just like her'* (ibid). Dawid (FG4) also summarised the significance of a parent who role-modelled being a reader, by commenting that, '*she's been influential in the sense that ... she used to read as well, so I wanted to too*.'

6.7. Friends

Given the different places and spaces mentioned by participants as important to their reading, it was not surprising that family members were not the only people present in the data. There was sufficient reference to the importance of friends and friendship groups to be included as a sub-theme of significant people. Friends were mentioned in ways similar to family members,

typically as providing recommendations for books. Both Dawid and Evan referenced titles that they had been motivated to read because of friends' recommendations. Jessica (FG4), however, mentioned the influence of her friends in more general terms, that '*just from them recommending things that they enjoyed has influenced the things that I've liked to read as well*.'

For Cassie (FG2), however, the influence of her friends extended beyond the recommendation of a particular text such that it, '*really changed the read, the whole reading thing for me*.' She described that, having not previously read the Harry Potter books, being convinced by friends to try them, with profound impact:

> *I got through the series in a summer and I was really gripped ...I really enjoyed them and I read, reread them a lot, throughout until Christmas.*

Her admission that the experience not only introduced her to a series which she read initially and then repeatedly reread is significant. However, she provided further insight into the way that friends changed her attitude to reading, demonstrating the sustained and significant influence that a single book recommendation by peers can have. Cassie's remarks suggest that the recommendation of her friends didn't just motivate her to read a recommended series, but that this experience was transformative in changing '*the whole reading thing for me*.'

For Olivia (FG4), the significance of the influence of her friendship group also extended beyond that of recommendation into something more profound. She described not only that her friendship group used to read a lot, but that this created, '*a situation where you kind of bond over a certain author*' and where friendships were forged and maintained over conversations about books in common. Data such as this further informed the theme of, and is therefore discussed in chapter 7, the final findings chapter.

6.8. Teachers

Given that some significance was attributed by participants to the place and space of school, there was a final data set which provided illustrations of the different roles of teachers. For some participants, teachers appeared to fulfil roles in some of the same ways as family members. However, teacher participants also provided some insights into their conceptualisations of their roles.

Firstly, participants cited examples of teachers who had made recommendations for reading, such as Cassie and Emma. For Cassie, the recommendation was for a particular book, whereas Emma recalled recommendation of a particular author. Jessica and Kanisha, though, recalled recommendations made in more general terms by teachers, such as:

> *whenever I read a book my teacher'd be like, oh yeah, read this one because this one is very similar and I think you'll like it* (Kanisha, FG4).

These teacher recommendations, however, were made in the context of primary school experience. Moreover, this was not a universal experience: Evan (FG4) commented that, '*I just don't think I've been recommended books that much, or at least I can't remember it,*' (Evan, FG4).

Participants discussed other ways in which teachers were significant, including how they provided access to reading. Dawid and Emma both mentioned positively books that they remembered reading in school. Furthermore, Dawid was motivated to continue reading after experiencing a particular book in Year 6. Some participants painted illustrations of their teachers as being a significant influence because they were role-models in the same way as

parents had been. Emma (FG2) remembered that, '*My year six teacher really loved reading, and she would … always read loads of books with us*.' The lasting and positive memory of a teacher being enthusiastic about reading was also recalled by Cassie (FG4), who described her teacher as both encouraging reading and encouraging her to read because, '*They had this amazing way of making it sound exciting*.'

What was also significant about this data was the way that teachers fulfilled very similar places in participants' reading experiences to family members and friends. However, this role was particular to primary school teachers. Interestingly, both teacher participants provided some insights into why they might not be perceived as fulfilling the same role as their primary colleagues. They both, for example, observed that they didn't regularly recommend books to their pupils and that this was not something that they felt was integral to their role as English teachers. For example, Ms Curtis (FG1c) commented that, '*It's not something that comes out of lesson time,*' but that it could be part of the informal chat before lessons began. Ms Griffiths (FG1c) provided detail which illuminated this a little further, suggesting that whilst there might be a role for teachers in recommending and talking about books with pupils:

> *it's not perhaps as central to what we do in the sense that we're obviously following a curriculum and we have things to do*

In a later focus group discussion (FG5c) when reflecting on the project, Ms Curtis commented that, despite her attempts to promote and share reading for pleasure, pupils didn't seem to see this as her role. She described the ways that she tried to promote wider reading, including, '*I've got books everywhere, I've got a poster on my wall saying what I'm reading at the moment.*' She cited examples of the kinds of conversations that she might have, incidentally, about her own and her pupils reading but that, '*might not be enough to break*

down the whole teacher barrier.' She had provided elaboration in an earlier meeting (FG2), where she suggested that this hitherto under-developed aspect of her role ought to be given more priority:

> *I think if you want to get the best from your students you need to know them, and as an English teacher, a big part of what you need to know about them is their reading identity and you want them to feel confident to share that with you as well and I want them to know what mine is too.*

It seems, therefore, that the project had enabled further reflection on this and that what had emerged was a sense of a barrier or tension presented by the nature of her role, because of the times when, *'I need to be authoritative and get them to do things that they don't particularly want to (Ms Curtis, FG5c).*

Ms Griffiths also commented favourably on involvement in the project, including how it had afforded her a more detailed glimpse of her readers. Initially she was surprised and pleased by their very positive outlook on reading which contrasted with her own perception of declining enthusiasm or reading in secondary schools (FG1). She attributed this, and acknowledged that this was an assumption, to interest in social media, such that she was interested and surprised to hear about participants visiting the library (FG3). Hearing about and knowing reading histories, furthermore, made her more acutely aware of how she might make recommendations to specific readers. Like Ms Curtis, she also provided further insight into how and why she might not be as aware of the readers in her classrooms as she would like. She commented that reader identity was sometimes an aspect of themselves that pupils kept hidden, often due to peer pressure. She used the phrases '*covert*,' '*hidden,'* and '*concealed*' to variously explain how pupils covered their enthusiasm for reading because, '*they don't want to embarrass themselves ... in front of their peers*,' (FG3).

Ms Curtis further reflected in a later focus group (5c) on the dangers of side-lining the value of reading for pleasure.   With reference to pupil participant Jessica, she described that:

> *when she started in year seven, she was always coming in in the morning and talking excitedly about books.   Maybe I just put her in a pigeonhole: avid reader full stop and just made assumptions based on that.   But talking to her during this year, she's much more, so much more than that.*

Both participants therefore reflected on the importance of looking beyond generalisations to see the individual pupil. Ms Curtis' reflected on the need to look, not just at qualities such as 'avid' reader, but also habits and preferences and how these might change over time, such as revealed by the scrapbook and reading history activity. Ms Curtis (FG5c) also recognised that she hadn't known about Lily's love of 'The Great Gatsby,' (Fitzgerald, 1925) and the number of times that she had read it, acknowledging her unease in, *'not knowing that, and how that made her feel that I've made these assumptions.'*

Furthermore, she also discussed that pupils in the study were probably the students that she had spent more time talking to but also that there would be others. Knowing and understanding their reading histories and habits would be even more problematic as:

> *they sit the back of the classroom. And we just got on with the work and I don't have a chance to sit and have conversations (Ms Curtis, FG5c).*

Thus, whilst there was some reference to reading in secondary classrooms that suggested that secondary teachers did provide access to positive reading experiences in their classrooms, the explicit reference to teachers as a significant influence in participants' relationship with reading, particularly associated with promoting a love of reading, was almost exclusively about primary teachers. Moreover, the secondary teacher participants painted a picture of secondary classrooms which were not always conducive to supporting reading for pleasure. They appeared conflicted, too, about the nature of their own roles, wanting to but not always

having the time to talk about wider reading because of the priority to ensure curriculum coverage. They also referred to generalisations that their more detailed knowledge of pupil participants had highlighted and disproved.

Pupil participant comments, however, about the significance of teachers as role-models and in recommending reading, suggest that there is some merit, as indicated in Ms Curtis' acknowledgment, of this aspect of the role as '*essential*' whilst also acknowledging the challenges thereof.

This section has focused on the themes in the data relating to the significance of places, and the people within, to the reading and reading experiences of the participants. They illustrate and exemplify ways in which participants were involved in a culture and community of reading. Thus, data increasingly demonstrated another, final theme, that of reading being the focus of or central to social interaction. This is discussed in the final findings chapter of this study.

7. Findings: Reading as Socio-cultural practice

Throughout the data thus far, there has been an underpinning pattern in the iterative and recursive nature of the ideas, such as to illustrate the complexity and inter-related nature of reading and reading practices. Additionally, the study is underpinned by a theoretical framework that posits reading as socio-cultural: being with others, in the context of lived experience and rooted in talk.

The socio-cultural nature of reading was illuminated in numerous ways throughout the data and as coded through the emerging themes and sub-themes. This illumination attends to several aspects of the research questions, including conceptualisation and perceptions of reading and the significance of spaces and practices therein. If, as this study posits, reading is a complex amalgam of a range of factors and influences, this study also then highlights the significance of the socio-cultural practices of reading that sit at the heart and intersection of the various components:
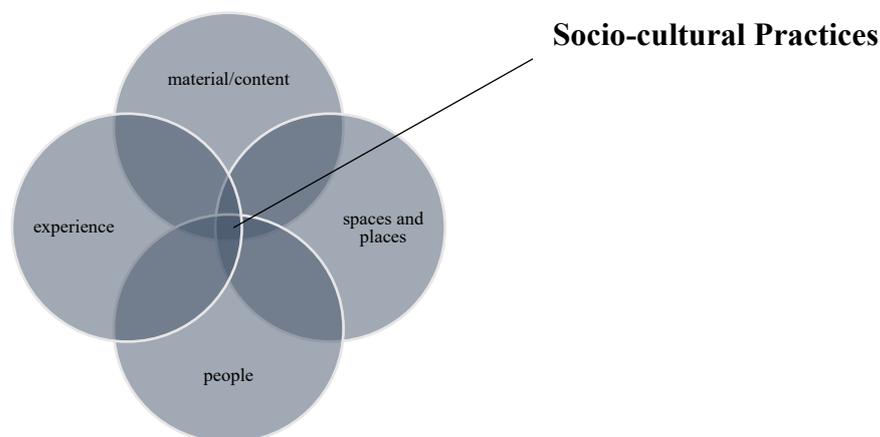
Figure 7.1 Showing overlapping themes and the centrality of a socio-cultural practices to reading

7.1. Reading with others

Participants illustrated a key social aspect of reading when variously describing reading experiences as shared with others. Some of this data has been analysed in previous chapters, such as when participants referred to reading with family members or in school. Because this section specifically explores the theme of reading as socio-cultural practice, data are referenced where the emphasis is on the experience of social interaction, rather than on the people with whom or places in which it occurred. Subsequently data have been repeated, arising from simultaneous coding which recognised the interconnectedness of the behaviours and experiences (Saldaña, 2021).

There were interesting distinctions in the data in the ways in which reading was referenced as a communal social activity, being described variously as '**being read to**', '**reading**', and implications of '**reading with**'. In the previous chapter, data illustrated many participants being read to by family members. Some recalled similar practice in early experiences in school. For example, Jacob (FG2) recalled two books being, '*read to the entire class,*' in the context of his primary school experience. Other participants, Jessica and Emma, and additionally Jacob, referred to experiences which were described in terms of 'reading' in school:

'*Goodnight Mr Tom which we read in year five,*' (Jessica, FG2);

'*I do remember reading, that we read A Monster Calls in year six,*' (Emma, FG2);

'*In my English class we read Holes,*' (Jacob, FG4).

Although participants provided no further elaboration, there was a shift in the data: '*read to*', to '*read in*' and then '*read,*' from framing reading as something that was initially perceived as being 'done to' participants, to something that was subsequently 'done with and alongside'. This shift is indicative of differing degrees of agency and inclusion in the experience. In the former experience of Jacob, the teacher was indicated as the reader, similar to other examples where participants described being read 'to' by family members. In the latter examples, participants included themselves as within a group of readers, togetherness implied in the use of the verb '*read*' independent of prepositions. Thus, although all the examples described reading in the context of common, shared experiences, there appears to be a subtle relational shift and according difference in the ways in which reading was perceived.

One example illuminated in more detail the implications of degrees of agency. Jessica (FFG2) described the experience of reading the novel 'Goodnight Mr Tom' (Magorian, 1981) in year five and reaching the halfway point. She then bought and read the rest of the novel by herself before returning to school:

> *where we read through it again. Cos, school, obviously, reading things as a class ... It was nice having my own copy which I was allowed to read myself.*

Jessica clearly distinguishes between the occasions of reading together with others '*as a class,*' and reading alone. Furthermore, the final observation that '*I was allowed to read myself,*' hints at the importance of agency in and control over reading. There is also an interesting reference in this example to the ideas of ownership and permission in being '*allowed*'.

7.2. Shared reading

The next sub-theme, however, focuses on an aspect of reading which was explicitly more social and shared; that of '**reading in common**', as being clearly and distinctly different from the '**reading together**' illustrated above.

7.2.1. Reading in common: Bonding

In this sub-theme and data set, participants highlighted another social aspect of reading when describing reading that they had in common with others. In these examples, the emphasis was placed more explicitly on the shared, **bonded** nature of the experience, moving beyond something that is done together to something that participants and others, '*bond over*,' (Ms Curtis, FG2a). For Ms Curtis, the shared experience of reading a series with her brothers was central to her reading history and to her relationship with her family. This idea of familial shared experiences was illustrated by other participants too. For instance, Jessica, Lauren and Dawid all described books that they had read, recommended by family members who then '*passed them down*,' (Lauren, FG2). This created a sense of a shared family experience, of a reading in common and an emerging family literary heritage, which participants were keen to share. Lauren (FG2), for example, described reading 'Hunger Games' at the same time as her sister, '*and we raced to see who could finish it first*,' suggesting that the sense of shared 'bonded' experience extended beyond the book/content in common and into the associated experiences and memories of both camping and being in competition. Thus, in this example, the central reading experience is positioned within the significance and importance of the broader, social familial relationship.

Other examples suggest an assumed or taken-for-granted shared reading heritage. For instance, Tom suggested (FG2), when discussing Julia Donaldson's books, '*So we probably all know the books. Does everyone know them?*' and '*So Tom Gates, has everyone read Tom Gates?*' Although references were made to reading which took place in the home, there was an assumption of common knowledge and experience, illustrating how a shared and common reading culture and heritage might be built.

In another example, Tom (FG2) illustrated how this might manifest and develop. He described being persuaded about a book by his brother, not explicitly but because he:

> *keeps on going on about it at home, like, 'It's a really good book, it's a really good book,' … and our Mum's read it. So he talks to her about it* (Tom, FG2, Appendix 981-987).

This illustrated a shared experience which extended beyond reading a book in common. Tom was engaged by and wanted to be included in a number of respects: with his brother's recommendation; with his brother's repeatedly communicated enthusiasm; with the wider family discussion and with wider family experience of all having read the same book which inspired and facilitated opportunities for 'bonding.' Similarly, Jacob (FG2) described reading his dad's favourite series, '*so I could talk to him about them*.' These examples, then, demonstrate the social nature of reading in common. Reading provided a point of common and shared experience as well as of reference. Reading as the point of reference also highlights the centrality of talk to sharing. The importance of talk, thus, emerged as another sub-theme central to the wider social domain of reading.

7.2.2. Reading Talk

Jacob was not the only participant for whom talking about reading was a significant and important experience. Other participants' reflections on their experiences and ideas illustrated that, for them at least, **talking** about reading was an important component of the reading experience. Jessica (FG2), for example, explained:

> *My dad gave me the books. He said that he had read them when he was younger and thought that I was probably able to read it. And I read it. And then I'd been talking to him while I had been reading it, with like thoughts and things that happened. And then the movie came out and we watched those together.*

Her example illustrates several ways in which talk was significant. Firstly, her dad used talk to recommend specific books, based on his own experience, and to share his expectation that Jessica would be able to read and enjoy them too. Jessica explained that she also used to talk to her dad while reading, about, *'thoughts and things that happened,'* further illustrating the 'bonding' theme discussed earlier in this chapter. This shared enjoyment and experience then led to another social experience where they watched the films of the books read and, in this respect, '*together*', seemed particularly pertinent. In this extended experience, therefore, the social dimension of reading is both rooted in and dependant on the talk which occurred between father and daughter.

Olivia (FG4) provided further illustration of the centrality of talking about reading, this time in the context of a friendship, rather than family, group:

> *I like sometimes reading because then it means that... you can have a good conversation with people ... I've had a few friends I've met through talking about books before ... So I remember when I was younger, I used to always read Jacqueline Wilson ...and because her stories are so good a lot of people would all talk about the emotional aspects of her stories*

In this example, reading is significant because it gave the friendship group something to talk about: '*you can kind of have a good conversation with people*' and '*we would all talk about the emotional aspects of her stories*'. However, talking about books was not just the common, bonding factor in this friendship group because Olivia, moreover, suggested that

talking about books was the founding factor in creating the group in the first place: '*I've had a few friends I've met through talking about books.*'

Evan alluded to a similar idea when discussing how he spoke to his mum and sister to ask them about his early reading experiences: they talk both because of and about reading. The social dimension of reading emerges because reading was not just the focus of the talk, it was the reason for the talk. Ms Curtis (FG2a) explained an example of this in her experience too: the release of a new book was cause of significant excitement which led to '*so much conversation*' between her and her brothers. Reading causes talk as much as it is the focus of talk.

Another sub-theme that also emerged was that involvement in the research project gave some participants addition opportunities to talk about reading, and in particular to talk about the nature of reading. Jude and Evan (FG5) both discussed that the project had enabled them to hear other people's perspectives and views about reading, which had been interesting in itself:

> *it's quite interesting to see all of our different opinions on it …it's made me look at reading through a whole new aspect* Evan (FG5).

Jude (FG5) further commented that he had been interested in finding out other's experiences of the private and assumed aspects of reading:

> *I think it has been useful where it's finding out about how other people think about reading, because when you're by yourself, you just think when you read, it's oh yeah, this is what reading is but the difference between different people, that's interesting to find out.*

Jessica (FG5) also commented on how otherwise assumed and private aspects of reading had become more visible:

When you read, you just don't pay attention to what you're doing and how you think and all of that. But this has definitely meant that you have to focus in on what you're actually thinking and what it's like to actually go through the process of reading and analysing.

Thus, another sub-theme emerged, related to the wider social dimension of reading. Across the examples, a strong theme emerged of reading moving beyond the individual, personal and private unseen activity to one where readers are engaged in a wider, social community, through sharing of ideas and experiences, as represented in figure 4.1. As with many themes throughout this study, this also emerged over time.

7.2.3. Reading community

The significance of family, friends, and school in contributing to the reading experiences of the participants has already been presented in the findings particularly in chapter 6. However, there were, in addition to some of the data referenced hitherto, some occasions where participants explicitly referred to themselves as being willing and enthusiastic members of a reading **community**, comprised in part of the groups already mentioned. Participants discussed how family members were significant and influential in several ways, such as Dawid's connection between being read to be family members and their Polish identity and Ms Curtis' 'mother and daughter' book club. The importance of the family as creating a reading community was not, however, universal. Cassie (FG4), for example, observed that, '*None of my family are massive readers. So, yeah, it's just kind of me.*' Family was not, therefore, the first or default reading community for all participants.

For some, friendship groups created a reading community, where reading was the common factor around which participants bonded, as illustrated by Olivia in the previous section. It

was not, however, just discussion and recommendation of reading that members appeared to have in common. For example, Tom (FG2) described that:

> I've got friends that read, and they love to read and they say to me, you need to start reading again. And so, I think, having peers tell me that I need to read … I do take it seriously.

In this experience, Tom described his friends as people who '*love to read*,' more than just people who read, to indicate the significance of reading to their identity and to Tom's perceptions of them. Moreover, this group of friend-readers encourage Tom to read, not by recommending material or texts of interest but in the recognition of the importance of reading as a feature common to all of their identities. He took this encouragement and their inducements to '*tell me that I need to read*' seriously, indicating both the importance of this community and this aspect of its identity to him. There are similarities here, in friendship groups being created because of reading, with Olivia's experience as outlined in the previous section. Ideas of reader community and reader identities were echoed in other participants' comments about their family members as '*turbo readers*' etc as discussed in chapter 6.

Also emerging from this sub-theme of reading communities was an increasing sense, both at the time of discussion and then in the coding of the data, of the group developing as a reading community in and of itself. This was perhaps best illustrated in the following example from focus group session 2, where, as Dawid was discussing reading scrapbook, other participants became involved:

> *Dawid: I found this book series called 'Beast Quest' and I, just like fell in love with it because*
> *Tom: Oh I remember that, I remember that*
> *Jacob: I just died. I have the entire series at home, in first edition signed.*
> *Cassie: I've heard of them.*
> *Tom: There were too many for me to read.*
> *Dawid: There's like dozens and dozens*

The conversation developed very quickly as other participants demonstrated their enthusiasm to join the discussion of a book series that they had in common. Tom's enthusiastic intervention of '*Oh I remember that, I remember that*,' signals more than recognition of book in common, but a demonstration of solidarity in response to Dawid's observation that this was a series that he had '*fallen in love with.*' The conversation continued in this vein when Jacob shared his equal passion of the series, with a dramatic,' *I just died.*' All three boys at this point appear to be communicating more than acknowledgement of a book that they all recognise. They are recognising a shared love and passion for this series and creating a book club which Cassie also seemed keen to join, even though she hadn't yet read them. She might, at this point, have been excluded from this community group, were it not for the seeming sympathy of Tom, who tempered his initial enthusiasm slightly by acknowledging that, '*there were too many for me to read*.' This idea is subsequently continued by the instigator of the conversation, Dawid in his acknowledgement that there are, '*dozens and dozens.*' This conversation, therefore, demonstrates a social dimension extending far beyond sharing of information and acknowledgement of books in common. There was illustration of strong emotions about reading which were then echoed and reinforced once members began to realise that they were in safe company. This inclusive, social community, created though and by the talk of the focus group, demonstrated the extending of empathy and sympathy among its members. All were welcomed and supported, regardless of the extend of their knowledge of the books at the centre.

Ms Griffiths (FG1) recognised the potential for this community from the outset of the project. She observed the importance of:

> *putting them into this group where actually it was okay for them to say 'oh, yeah, I really like that. Oh I was reading this book and it was really interesting.*'

There was appreciation of the potential for a community, in and created by the focus group, of readers to share reading. There was some tacit acknowledgment of her role in, *putting them*

into this group,' and therefore of identifying the readers who would most benefit from and contribute to the project. There was also an acceptance of the experience as being positive for the participants and for her.

In summary, this chapter presented the insights the participants provided into the significance and importance of various reading communities in their lives. They illustrated how, for each individual, these communities grew and intersected with other, related communities, including that of the research groups. A key factor was the role of talk in enabling the individual reader to move from the personal, private reading space into this wider, social reading community. Within this social aspect of reading, an additionally significant element thus emerged: the importance and richness of the talk itself.

7.3. The importance of talk

The theme of the social nature of reading also then illuminated the centrality of talk. Coding resulted in a series of sub-themes specifically about the role and nature of talk in relation to reading which is the final section of this chapter and of the findings more broadly. The focus group sessions utilised and facilitated discussions about reading in a number of ways including supporting participants to communicate, develop and explore their ideas; this was a central tenent of the research design and use of focus groups. The data demonstrated a variety of ways in which participants contributed to the talk:

- Agreeing
- Adding
- Recapping and referring back
- Responding

- Clarifying

Firstly, participants variously signalled **agreement**. Participants offered agreement when others explaining reading experiences which aligned with their own. For example:

> DH: Do you ever feel guilty about stopping?
> Cassie: Yes.
> Kanisha: Yes.
> DH: You do.
> Cassie: Yes, (FG2)

In this exchange, Cassie responded to the initial question and Kanisha followed with a simple statement of agreement, iterated again by Cassie. This type of exchange was a typical and regular feature of the focus group discussions as participants signalled agreement with and consensus of ideas. Sometimes this agreement was signalled non-verbally but in other instances, participants followed their non-verbal signal with some explanation. For instance:

> DH: because the book's captured your attention. Would you say that's happening for both of you?
> Holly: [Nodding]
> Kanisha: Yeah, I think so
> Holly: Yeah, I always get more into books the more I read … I really do get involved. And I read like, I look forward to reading it, if you know what I mean, [Kanisha nodding] I'm, I can't wait to see what happens next (FG3)

Both Holly and Kanisha responded to a prompt from the researcher and although Holly's initial response is non-verbal, she added an extended explanation of her agreement. Kanisha's contribution was to continue non-verbal agreement, demonstrating that she was listening and to offer her on-going support for Holly's ideas.

In other examples, participants contributed to the talk by **adding** ideas to previous participants' comments and observations. For example, in a discussion of the picture book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', originally shared by Daniel as part of his reading history,

Jacob added not only that he also had it in his scrapbook, but also that, '*It's just such a good book*,' (Jacob and Daniel, FG2).   Similarly, Tom added to Daniel's recall of a book read in primary school by offering, '*I definitely remember reading that,*' (Daniel, 5 and 6, FG2).

Sometimes participants demonstrated in their responses that previous contributions had promoted an idea or memory. For example, both Ms Curtis and Jessica explained, in their discussion of their scrapbooks, that other participants contributions had promoted memories of books that they hadn't included but then wanted to mention. Thus, participants were demonstrating listening to and reflecting on previous participants' comments which in turn enabled them to add to, extend or elaborate their own contributions.

In other instances, participants seemed to deliberately **refer back** to the contribution of others as the prompt before offering their own explanation or reference. For example, Cassie (FG3) referred back to Kanisha's comment about not being able to access the library during lockdown, and then elaborated on this to explain her frustration at lack of access to material. Kanisha's initial comment acted as a prompt for Cassie's own ideas and was used as a point of reference to signal the thinking.

In a different focus group and exchange Jacob (FG2) referred back to a previous participant's comment about scripts in general to introduce a different example, suggesting that the initial comment had prompted his own thinking in this direction. Interestingly, Tom added another contribution for a different reason, passing judgement on the quality of the text under discussion:

> *Jacob: I don't know if we mentioned this last time, but you know that you said about scripts about 'Harry Potter, the cursed child', because it is literally a giant script.*
> *Tom: I think it's just I don't like Harry Potter*
> *Jacob: Oh no [murmuring/chatter then laughter].*
> *Tom: I just find it quite basic* (FG2)

In these examples, therefore, the discussion is seen to develop variously because the interaction between participants enabled them to develop both their own and other's contributions in different ways.

In further examples, these developments emerged as a result of participants directly **responding** to a previous comment. In a number of exchanges, including those already mentioned, these appeared as simple comments where participants signalled their support for ideas, such as agreeing that a book was really good (Jacob and Daniel, FG2) or agreement with an idea (Cassie, FG3). In other instances, however, participants seemed to be responding in a different way, signalling that they were listening to and were interested in the ideas and contributions of others. For example, during FG2, one participant explained one of the examples in their scrapbook and two others signalled their interest in this hitherto unknown text:

> *And the younger brother used Alchemy to transfer the soul of the younger brother into a suit of armour. So,*
> *[inaudible] That's quite interesting*
> *[inaudible] sounds cool* (FG2)

On other occasions, participants responded to others by **seeking or providing clarification**. For example, during FG3, participants were trying to recall a text that had been shared in school and used the conversation to revisit and reconstruct the details. In another example participants, including the teacher, discussed a shared knowledge and

enjoyment of Jacqueline Wilson books and used the discussion to clarify details about titles, character names and plot detail (FG3).

The data therefore suggest that the use of talk as the focus for considering reading enabled participants not just share, but to discuss and collaborate in constructing ideas about reading. They shared memories and experiences in conversations which led to supporting, clarifying, reinforcing and developing each other's contributions. The collaborative nature of this talk therefore contributed to the co- construction of ideas about what it meant to read and be a reader. This co-construction of ideas was demonstrated explicitly in a few places, such that this enabled the coding of a specific sub-theme.

7.4. Collaborative talk

There was a number of instances where participants' conversations moved beyond shared and developed knowledge about their own reading towards a collaborative co-construction of ideas about what it meant to read and be a reader. These ideas were developed directly through, and because of, the collaborative thinking afforded by the talk central to the focus groups.

For example, during FG2, Jacob, Kanisha and Tom engaged in a discussion about 'The Gruffalo' and in the process disputed detail:

> *Tom: Yeah. It's just like a stick who's alive or like a Gruffalo in the*
> *woods, like a magical creature. And ??: a bear*
> *Jacob: poisonous stuff on him.*
> *DH: Is it a bear? I don't know what it is.*
> *Jacob: He's a mythical creature, he could be anything ??: a strange*
> *creature.*
> *Tom: I call him a bear because he's got fur on him.*
> *DH: Yeah.*

Tom: So.
Kanisha: that's not fur, its purple prickles (FG2)

In the process of this discussion, participants reconstructed and co-constructed ideas, not just of the narrative of the book, but to negotiate meaning specifically about the nature of the central character and its features. For example: the 'to-ing and fro-ing' between '*creature*' and '*bear*' illustrates attempting to find some consensus; the use of questioning tone to signal uncertainty and to seek clarification from others and in the final contribution, a direct challenge and disagreement. Later in the same group meeting, Cassie and Tom discussed 'The Secret Henhouse' (Peters, 2012) a book that they had read in common. During their conversation, they not only signalled their agreement that it was a good book, but they also began to discuss and negotiate a reconstruction of the plot (FG2).

In other exchanges, participants' discussions moved away from a focus on the content of a specific text and began to explore different experiences that contributed to being a reader. For example, Jacob, Daniel, Cassie, and Olivia extended their conversation about reading of a particular text and author to discuss and share their experiences of a 'Meet the Author' event. More significantly, they also discussed the extent to which this type of experience contributed to their reading and acted to promote or motivate. Rather than each offering an opinion through turn taking, though, the conversation developed as each participant contributed to and built on each other's ideas, sometimes with an assumption of shared agreement (FG2).

Similar negotiations were demonstrated when Jacob, Daniel, Cassie, Tom and Olivia discussed their lack of willingness to share their views of books with the authors if they were given the opportunity. They discussed, negotiated and co-constructed a agreed position that

this would be uncomfortable (Jacob, Daniel, Cassie, Tom, Olivia FG2). Ms Curtis, Jessica, Lauren, Evan (FG2) similarly engaged in a conversation about what it meant to be a reader and, in the process, considered and agreed on a range of ideas and experiences which built on and developed other's contributions to construct a shared, and sometimes different, understanding of the reasons for rereading books.

Ms Griffiths (FG1) also commented on the contribution and value of collaborative talk when reflecting on the development of ideas during the metaphor elicitation task:

I actually think that you get more of those insightful ideas … it allows the conversation to open up a lot more and … the dialogue becomes a little more interesting and they all wanted to, you could see that when one of them is offering kind of an interpretation it was 'oh yeah, yeah, I thought that' or 'oh I, you know, I agree with this

Her reference to, '*more … insightful ideas'* which developed the conversation to one that was, '*more interesting*' through offering of different '*interpretations*' illustrated the value of talk to the development of thinking that was central to the group sessions and is essential within English in the secondary context.

Talk therefore made a valuable contribution to the study. There were, additionally, some explicit and clear references in the data which illuminated a final sub-theme of talk about talk, where participants reflected on the relationship between talk and reading.

7.5. Talk about talk

This final section considers the data in which explicit references were made to the contribution of talk to participants' reading and understanding of reading. Jude (FG5), for example, described finding the experience of talking about what has been read in school much more

engaging. He cited the example of studying An Inspector Calls (Priestley, 1945) and described that:

> *So from what we've read with 'An Inspector Calls' it was engaging to talk about it and talk about the characters and how they acted towards Eva and their feelings by the end of the play from the start.*

Although there was no elaboration on how and why talk was more engaging, there was reference to ideas that might have been developed through talk, such as '*how they acted towards Eva*' which hints at the interpretative and contested nature of knowledge about a text and how this might be better explored through discussion. Ms Griffiths (FFG2a) also commented on the significance of talk to her learning, with specific reference to experiences at university and '*just absolutely adoring these seminars because we just talked about these books and talked about the human condition.*'

Evan's (FG5) observation seemed to support the idea of the value that talk can add to reading and interpreting texts:

> *what I like about that is there's lots of varied opinions about it ... it's quite cool to think about it, sort of like Jude was saying, it's cool to look at other people's opinions because you can see how much they differ from yours* (Evan, FG5).

The reference to other people's opinions and seeing how much they differ suggests an understanding that reading might result in more than one understanding and, as above, that these underpinning central aspects of reading are usefully explored through talk.

Ms Griffiths' (FG1) comment at the start of the project demonstrated an enthusiasm for talking about texts, when she explained that:

> *I love talking about reading. I love talking about the texts that we study and I love poetry and I love discussing, you know, the ideas that they come up with.*

Her comment, in particular the reference to '*the ideas that they come up with*' suggested that this type of discussion was a regular feature of her practice. However, what was also interesting was that both she and Ms Curtis described that informal talk about reading and texts read outside of class feature less regularly. Thus the '*talk about reading*' was of a particular type. For example, Ms Griffiths (FG1) explained that the type of talk demonstrated in the focus group was '*not perhaps as central to what we do.*' Ms Curtis' (FG1) description concurred, suggesting that these 'in-between conversations' might occur if there was a chance to '*have a bit of time stolen to have a conversation,*' (Ms Curtis, FG1). Both teachers therefore indicated that whilst they valued the role and place of talk within their practice and classrooms, the type of talk was more focused on '*following a curriculum*' (Ms Griffiths, FG1) rather than informal chat about reading.

Whilst Jude and Evan confirmed the significance of talk to their experience of reading in the classroom, other participants also indicated that they had found the more informal talk of the focus group discussions valuable too. This was best summarised by Evan (FG5) who, when reflecting on the value of participation in the project explained that:

> *it has been useful and definitely things where it's finding out about how other people think about reading, because when you're by yourself, you just think when you read, it's like, oh yeah, this is what reading is but the difference of that between different people, that's interesting to find out*

Thus, the discursive nature of the project enabled participants to move from solitary and isolated practice to social practice and find out about each other and themselves, as well as hearing a range of ideas about reading and what it means to be a reader. This was the focus and purpose of the study and the significance of talk in this respect, therefore, underscores the importance of the socio-cultural nature of reading.

8. Discussion

There has already been substantive discussion of the findings in the previous chapters. This chapter therefore addresses the research questions in the light of these. The study illustrates, enabled by the underpinning grounded theory methodology and methods and the mosaic approach, the complex, multiple and fluid nature of reading and reader identity. Reader identity is comprised of and formed by a variety of inter-related factors, including but not exclusively: **reading material and content** (what I read), **the nature of the experience**, both during and around reading (what reading feels like and why I do it) and the **places, spaces and people** therein where reading occurs. The significance of the latter, in particular, helped to highlight the importance of the socio-cultural nature of reading, with implications for school practice.

8.1. Conceptualisations and perceptions of reading and the implications for developing reader identity

The first research question at the heart of this study sought to investigate how pupils and their teachers identify readers and reading. This question comprised additional sub-sections to afford separate consideration to the ideas of identity and perceptions and conceptualisations. Similarly, pupils and teachers were addressed in individual questions to acknowledge the possibility of contrast and difference between the two. Nonetheless, the study finds that the ideas of conceptualisation, perception and identify are overlapping and interconnected. The findings illustrate the complexities and layers of reading and reader identity, as sought by the

methodological approach. Additionally, while there were some clear and distinct differences, some of the findings related equally to pupil participants and their teachers.

The data and emerging themes of the study adds empirical evidence to theories that reader identity is comprised of and developed through the influence of a complex combination of factors and influences (Basit, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; A. Clark, 2014; Dean, 2003; Meek, 1991). Additionally, readers in the study described themselves in various ways (in part led by the design of the study) such that reader identity was itself constructed within and as part of the study (as illustrated in the individual scrapbooks in appendices 4.2c-p). What was illustrated in participants' conceptualisations, in alignment with research in this field, was a coherent sense of self-determination and self-identification (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

8.2. Pupil perceptions, conceptualisations and identity

Metaphor elicitation was chosen deliberately to support and enable constructions of everyday experience (Meek, 1988) so it was unsurprising to find reading typified repeatedly as primarily lived experience. This emerging theme was further facilitated through the use of gerunds in the coding and analysis of the data, which emphasised action and participant experience (Charmaz, 2006).

Conceptualisations and perceptions of reading were, it initially appeared, simple. Participants' conceptualisations of reading were founded on and informed by the kind of material that they read and considered meaningful. Participants identified and foregrounded specific quality and aspects of their reading that had been most salient or significant (Sainsbury et al., 2006).   Data in chapter 4 demonstrated the different and more complex

ways that this was meaningful for individual participants and adds evidence to the claim that there is no such thing as a typical reader (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Meek, 1991) or that readers are not a single, homogenous group (Yandell, 2014).

The data discussed primarily, but not exclusively, in the findings in chapters 4 and 5 present participants' overwhelmingly positive perceptions of reading. Data indicate participants' significant enthusiasm for and participation in reading which is, in part, self-perpetuating and self-sustaining and which might be argued as a form of disciplinary powerful knowledge (Young, 2009): that of knowing the power that reading can afford. Pleasure and enjoyment were therefore central to the concept of reading and being a reader, aligning with previous studies (McGeown et al., 2020). This positive perception of reading is contrary, however, to findings of other, significant studies which suggest a decline in interest in reading, particularly during adolescence (Clark, 2019; Clark & Picton, 2020; Topping, 2019; Videbaek, 2020). All participants referred to reading in ways which indicated that they self-identified as readers and where this identity was taken for granted. Even when participants referred to a declining participation in reading, this was framed in the context of other pressures and demands on time, rather than a lack of interest, such as Olivia who explained a transference of pleasure from reading to music and also cited the demands on her time as limiting the opportunities. Despite this, she still described an interest in poetry and also made explicit reference that this was a temporary suspension, indicated in the final comment of her reading scrapbook. She demonstrated her understanding of and illustrates the life-long nature of reading development and of changing habits and interests over time (Hall, 2015; Hall, 2009; McGeown et al., 2016).

These positive perceptions of reading foregrounded reading for pleasure, comprised almost entirely of reading fiction, aligned with other studies (Clark & Picton, 2019; McGeown et al., 2020). The latter stages of the project demonstrated participants conceiving of reading for different purposes, particularly in the secondary English classroom. Thus, this study demonstrates the significance of reading for pleasure to participants' lives and foregrounds this view as dominant within a context where reading is framed in other ways. Participants perceived and presented reading for pleasure as a legitimate and favourable way to spend time: reading in this context is conceptualised as a valid and enjoyable activity and participants presented as intrinsically motivated readers who read for its own sake (McGeown et al., 2016).

Data presented in findings chapter 5 (sections 5.1-5.4 in particular) illustrated participants' further construction of an experiential concept of reading, foregrounding the feelings and sensations evoked during reading as essential in a meaningful, enjoyable and significant reading experience. These conceptualisations of reading as lived experience and emotional transaction illustrate existing theories and ideas about reading and the importance of an authentic, personal response (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Rosenblatt, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1980). Participants' insights into what reading felt like echoed and further illustrated Rosenblatt's (1978) ideas of aesthetic and affective response: their presentations of reading and of specific, identified texts were full of emotional reactions. This conceptualisation of aesthetic reading was central, indicating the significance of the affective in reader development. It also attended to and enabled understanding of their choices, including why they read (McGeown et al., 2016).

The conceptualisation of reading as primarily experiential was manifested in descriptions of reading as immersive, seen as particularly significant. Ways in which reading was described as being engrossing, enabling transporting to different worlds illustrate text world theory in action (Cushing, 2018, 2020; Gavins, 2007). Furthermore, the immersive experience described by almost all participants and the value of reading in providing an escape from reality to an imagined world illustrated the 'lived experience' of participants and of reading more broadly, again attesting to reading motivation (Iser, 1978; McGeown et al., 2016).

There was also a clear link in the data, in section 5.1.3 in particular, between this conceptualisation of reading and motivation, with various iterations of '*being drawn in*' to different books. Participants suggested that the engrossing nature of books motivated them to sustain reading and to repeat the experience, including rereading favourite books (section 5.2). The nature and value of this aspect of reading was also seen as one of the factors contributing to the development of reader identity of the participants: they demonstrated how their personal and individual habits and preferences were developed over time, illustrating ideas of both reader apprenticeship and trajectory (Cliff Hodges, 2010b; Meek et al., 1977). Participants demonstrated that they sought to regularly repeat, revisit and/or relive the experience (Chambers, 2011). Reading was perceived in this regard as involving high degrees of agency and control, including but not limited to, of material, place, time and decision-making (Cremin, 2014, 2019; Pennac, 2006).

Moreover, enjoyment of reading was demonstrated as one of the key factors likely to lead to further reading, aligning with previous studies in this field (Clark & Poulton, 2011). Participants demonstrated the sustained commitment required for reading (Jerrim & Moss, 2019). However, there was very limited conceptualisation of reading identity linked to efficacy or skill as presented in the focus and priorities of many previous studies (McGeown

et al., 2020; McGeown et al., 2012; Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020). Reader identity therefore is presented as being fluid rather than static, agentive rather than passive and highly individualised rather than generalisable, illustrating a number of broad aspects of identity theory as embodied in practice (Gee, 2000). The study presents a snapshot of adolescent readers as a personalised rather than homogenous group (Yandell, 2014).

This experiential, authentic and pleasurable conceptualisation of reading is perhaps not overly surprising given that participants perceived reading as being predominantly of books. Their central reading diet was typically of fictional narrative accessed via books. The breadth signalled in this data indicates a range of interests not always captured in studies which proports to reflect reading habits and texts popular with adolescent readers (Topping, 2016, 2019). Lily's reference to a love of 'The Great Gatsby' (Fitzgerald, 1925) and Jacob's passion for the 'Blue Exorcist' (Kato, 2011) comic-book series, for example, signal titles that are not reflected in these studies. The large-scale and qualitative nature of such studies present conclusions which are rather limited. The individual accounts and emerging reader identities of this study, by contrast and as illustrated in appendices 4.2c-p, present a more complex and nuanced illustration of the development of reading and of preferences and interests not captured in studies of this type.

Significantly, data in the study suggest that specificity of reading material is important and was one of the ways by which participants defined their reading identity: the text matters (Webb, 2019; Westbrook et al., 2019). For some participants the declaration of a known, particular area of interest was, in and of itself, indicative of reader development and identity; such as Jessica's self-proclaimed love of all things dystopian and fantasy. There was certainty and confidence in having found one's niche, such as Dawid's obsession with Beast Quest and

Jacob's openly declared repeated reading and reviewing of the Harry Potter books and films. In this respect, therefore, reading identity was constructed by the individual rather than imposed on them by others (Hall, 2012; McGeown et al., 2020).

Reading recommendations that were significant and influential were often made to participants by others in the context of knowing what they might like, rather than an expectation of must be read. Reader development and identity in this context thus reflects socio-cultural theories of development which suggest that learning is constructed within context of use (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, this suggests that reader identity, which includes claims such as, "I am a reader of …' emerges from the connection of the reader with the right book (Lesesne, 2003). This refutes the idea that readers are created or motivated by reading something universally declared to be of value or as a result of reading something determined by others to be the right book (Allington & Swann, 2009). This study indicates that there is likely no such thing and that promotion of ideas of a core cultural literacy and of common works of value (Hirsch, 1983, Young 2014) are not likely to be key to promoting reading for pleasure.

Many of the participants thus regularly referred to themselves and therefore self-identified 'as readers' and for some, the distinctions and nuances of their individual journeys are signposted in their reading scrapbooks (see appendices 4.2c-p). Reader development and identity therefore emerged because of engagement with a wide range of influences and factors, including but not exclusive to family and friends, school, access to material, finding preferences and building habits. The development of the reader and of a reading identity was the result of the complex amalgam of these factors and the interplay of the personal and private dimensions of the individual reading experience and the wider, social and cultural

influences and contexts (as illustrated in figure 4.1), rather than the influence of a single expert other (Vygotsky, 1978, Young, 2009). These were of varying significance and influence for each participant: even when exposed to similar influences, there was seemingly different impact for each participant. The result, however, is the demonstration of an individual and unique reading identity demonstrated in various ways for each participant. The data in this study celebrate, and therefore also illustrate, underpinning theory which recognises, the individuality and plurality of reader identity (Meek, 1988, 1991; Meek et al., 1977; Smith, 2012). One is more than a reader or not: reader identity might mean many different things and be represented in numerous ways. The depth and richness of the data of this study creates a detailed picture of readers, their experiences and their lived realities. For participants, powerful knowledge of and about reading comprised the personal benefits: the enrichment afforded and experiences provided (Chambers, 2011; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Cox, 1989; Daly, 2014; Eaglestone, 2019, Young, 2009).

8.3. Teachers' perceptions of and implications for their role

Teachers' perceptions of and conceptualisations of reading fundamentally matched and overlap those of the pupil participants. Their own personal reading and reading identities were similarly framed primarily in terms of fiction and reading for pleasure. In the teachers' reading histories, however, there was reference to a wider range of texts, including non-fiction, which reflected the extended trajectory of their reading experience. Their love for and of reading was expressed in similar terms as pupil participants, as lived, experiential and essentially of fiction. Teacher participants' reflections on reading also incorporated the significance of the texts studied at undergraduate level (as illustrated in their reading scrapbooks in appendices 4.2o and p). Both cited that a love of reading and for literature was

one of the factors influencing their decision to become teachers of English, commensurate with studies in this regard (Goodwyn, 2012; Green, 2006, 2011).

This section deals primarily with areas where data diverged: particularly in teacher participants' perceptions and conceptualisations of themselves as teachers of reading. In particular, valuing and promoting reading for pleasure did not seem to be a high priority. There was evidence of dissonance between beliefs and experiences and practice (Locke, 2015). The example of discussion of the value of reading Jacqueline Wilson books in section 4.2.2 adds an example to existing studies which problematise categorising reading in terms of 'the right book' (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Moreover, they highlighted a perception of the teachers' role in promoting reader development that seemingly diversified from promoting reading for pleasure. Whilst reading for pleasure was foregrounded in their own reading histories, their perceptions of their role as teachers of reading, and therefore as being an expert other (Vygotsky, 1978, Young, 2009), were framed more by policy and curriculum requirements and demands than by personal experience (Brindley & Marshall, 2015; Sainsbury et al., 2006; Yandell, 2014). In this respect, therefore, teacher participants foregrounded a particular form of powerful knowledge (Young, 2009) and illustrated Gee's (2000) institutional identity, adopting institutionalised norms and conventions over an affinity identity (ibid) of shared love of reading for pleasure. Both teachers articulated attendant tensions and challenges of negotiating these different, competing positions: lack of opportunity in the context of curriculum pressures; the challenges of teacher authority; perceptions of lack of interest or enthusiasm for reading amongst adolescents and the problems of peer pressure silencing reader enthusiasm.

There are clear implications for classroom culture and expectation, therefore, if reading is framed differently by teachers and pupils, particularly for the promotion of a 'love of reading' (DfE, 2013), if teachers feel uncomfortable about allowing pupils to read books that they have declared that they enjoy. There is a potential for lack of agency signalled at the heart of promoting reading (Pennac, 2006) and instead a priorisation of a particular form of powerful knowledge and cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1983 Young, 2009). There is also a danger, as suggested by previous studies, that pupils will conceptualise reading as something other than for pleasure and, moreover, that the curriculum itself will not enable pupils to become enthusiastic readers (Cliff Hodges, 2010a; Mason, 2016; Westbrook, 2007). This was seen demonstrated in some of the data in chapter 6, for example by Jessica's description of reading Shakespeare as wading through mud and in some of the descriptions of reading analytically as being less immersive than private reading. The seeming powerful knowledge and cultural literacy that might be viewed in the study of Shakespeare had a negative impact on this participant's perceptions. Implications for practice are, therefore, that teachers might develop and create a more positive culture for reading, including greater coherence between reading for pleasure and the reading of the English classroom; powerful knowledge in this respect constitutes more and better understanding of the benefits and pleasures afforded by reading than the promotion of particular cultural artefacts.

Moreover, that pupil participants might comment favourably on reading seemed to come as a surprise to one teacher. Both participants expressed interest in what the study had taught them about their pupils' reading habits and experiences (indicatively illustrated in the discussions in appendices 3.7c and 3.7f), in keeping with the findings of Hopper's study (2005). The very positive experiences and perceptions of reading expressed by participants was commented on explicitly by Ms Griffiths as being a particularly interesting outcome of

the study. Her observation that secondary school aged pupils demonstrate declining interest in reading is reflective of a general perception and narrative as suggested in some studies (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020) but to which this study provides a counter-narrative. It further offers an interesting example of cognitive dissonance between the teacher participants' own experiences as developing readers with the expectations and recognition of the pupils they teach, suggesting that these are more likely to be framed by wider narratives and discourse than by personal experience.

Furthermore, other teacher perceptions were based on generalisations such as 'avid reader,' rather than on specific knowledge of histories, habits and preferences. This has implications for the culture of the English classroom in constructing conceptions of who and what counts as readers and reading (Alvermann, 2001). The study suggests that being afforded the perspectives and histories of pupils was of value and interest to teachers. Moreover, this also attested to the merit of the use of Grounded Theory approach in offering these otherwise 'unattainable views,' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 24). Both participants commented on the value of learning differently about their pupils and learning by listening to them, confirming the significance of the project in affording opportunity for reflection (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Cliff Hodges, 2009).

For both teachers, and a strength of the study more broadly, is that it illustrates how and why children identified as readers. Both participants demonstrated a keen enthusiasm to support and develop pupils as readers, although this was primarily defined within the context of English in the classroom and was framed as needing to be '*challenging*' and '*thought-provoking*'. Their perspectives, therefore, reflected the institutional language of the NC (DfE, 2013), rather than that of pupil participants and more broadly of a reading for pleasure

pedagogy and practice (Cremin, 2014, 2019). The increasingly popular and powerful influence of Cremin et al's (ibid, 2022) work has yet to reach the secondary context (Cliff Hodges, 2016). Whilst acknowledging the pleasure and desire to support and develop readers' individual interests, both teachers perceived this to be a luxury, rather than essential, element of practice.

There are, therefore, implications for on-going pedagogy and practice. Firstly, there are implications for the positioning of reading within the secondary context, as highlighted by the debates outlined in the literature review (Dean, 2003; Greenleaf et al., 2001; Nightingale, 2011); the study suggests that there are significant benefits to be gained from promoting the powerful knowledge of what reading can afford, rather than promoting powerful knowledge as represented in particular canonical texts (Young, 2009). Also, there are implications for the pedagogical voices (Arnot & Reay, 2007) that are valued in the secondary English classroom, as further signalled in the literature review and supported by data in chapter 6.

Both teacher participants cited pressures on their time as the potential reason for their inability to dedicate more time and practice to reading for pleasure (Cremin, 2020; Smith & Kelly, 2021). Both intimated that the pressures of the curriculum meant that a more specific aspect of reading was foregrounded in their practice (Goodwyn, 2012; Hall, 2012; Martin, 2003; Sainsbury et al., 2006). Thus, the significance of reading spaces and places on the nature and purpose of reading that occurs therein comes to the fore.

8.4. The significance of physical and social spaces

This study recognised that where reading occurs affects the resultant reading experience (Chambers, 2011; Wyse et al., 2012).   The second research question - Do reading spaces shape or influence reading? - was posed specifically to investigate the significance of particular spaces on reading experiences and practices.

The data and themes illustrate vividly reading as situated practice (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants discussed reading that had taken place in various places and how those spaces had contributed to their development, thus illuminating the spatial components of their reading identities (Cliff Hodges, 2016). Furthermore, participants used the space of the focus groups similarly: to share experiences and co-construct ideas about reading. One of the key findings of the study is that pupil participants' perceptions and conceptualisations were founded on experiences that occurred typically and primarily outside of school-based spaces. Whilst classroom spaces were not insignificant, reading within was conceptualised very specifically and as being particular to that space. This finding and the contributing data demonstrate the contingent, context-sensitive and socially constructed nature of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Hammersley, 2014a).   Additionally, this section discusses the socially and culturally constructed nature of spaces and places in terms of the contributions made to participants' reading (Cresswell, 2015; Massey, 1994, 2004; Tuan, 1977, Vygotsky, 1978). Put simply, this study finds that spaces and places do influence reading and that, when positive, these spaces create the social and cultural community of readers. This section discusses how and why these places and spaces seemed so significant in participants' lives and experiences.

8.5. Significant spaces

Most significantly, the data in this study illustrated the importance of reading to participants, because of the lived experience and embedded, social practice of reading therein (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Meek, 1991). Spaces that were conducive to both environmental and social aspects of reading were particularly significant. These spaces also demonstrate the reach of the space of participants' lives (Cliff Hodges, 2016) and the intersection of social relationships within and across this space (Massey, 1994).

Homes and spaces within were identified as important because they provided and enabled access to material, comfort, privacy and sustained time. This facilitated the sustained, immersive experience discussed in the previous section. Readers need access to suitable material (Clark, 2011) and to a rich diet of reading (Dombey et al., 2013) and the study provided illustrations of ways this was provided by the social network of family, friends and the wider community (Clark & Hawkins, 2010; Clark et al., 2008; Cremin, 2014). The references to the seeming ease with which some participants were able to access reading material is significant: many cited book ownerships, being gifted reading material and being able to access libraries and other shared reading spaces, such that this was presented as part of an entitlement for readers (Clark & Picton, 2018; Clark et al., 2021; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2018). Conducive spaces were additionally conceptualised as being individual and private, both in the space being occupied and the space being transported to and immersed in.

Home spaces were additionally significance because of the nature of the social interactions therein (Massey, 1994). These interactions variously led to, arose from or were part of reading practices. Participants recalled fondly being read to by family members as part of their early reading experiences. They described reading material being discussed and shared

with and among family members and friends and picked up recommendations as a result of these interactions. Their recollections therefore reflect and provide examples of the theorised socially active nature of reading (Cliff Hodges, 2016; Meek, 1991). The spaces that emerged in this regard were significant because of their social, communicative and relational features (Cremin, 2014).

These spaces illustrated and exemplified social relationships that exist within (Massey, 1994). These important and pre-existing relationships supported participants, who were able to engage with reading role models who provided access to reading material, made recommendations, shared experiences and promoted a positive view of reading. Sometimes these relationships existed outside of the immediate home, such as with friends or other family members and developed specifically in response to and because of reading. More often than not these were with supporting adults (Chambers, 2011) but sometimes these were sibling and peer relationships. Within this space, therefore, the relational aspect and the contribution made were more important than the specific identify of individuals: they were people who encouraged and supported the developing reading identities and practices of the participants. The implications for practice are, therefore, that teachers should adopt a similar position if they are to have a role in promoting reading for pleasure in their practice and widens the scope of the idea of the 'expert other,' (Vygotsky, 1978, Young 2009).

Teachers were sometimes referenced as having a similar role but these were more often in the primary context. There were occasional, but fewer, references to secondary teachers. When they were referenced, it was implicitly in connection with reading associated with their classroom spaces and in the context of the particular reading therein, contrasting in a number of ways with those outlined above.

8.6. Reading in school

The findings demonstrate that whilst participants identified some value in the reading of their English lessons, their priorities and preferences, and perceptions thereof, were typically largely for the kind of reading that happens without. A very specific and particular conceptualisation of reading arose from references to classroom spaces and reading practices within. Participants' perceptions of a shift in practice between personal and school spaces reflect a shift described and discussed as disruption in and by some research studies (Fish, 1980; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Westbrook et al., 2019). Contributing explanatory factors included that the commonly shared nature of reading in the secondary classroom leads to lack of control of and over the reading (Sutherland et al., 2017). Moreover, the exercise of choice over reading material and process that is typified in personal reading is contrasted with the teacher's choice of text in the classroom (Hopper, 2005). School-based reading therefore offers an artificial and specific representation of reading which does not replicate the experience and practices of participants' wider reading lives.

This was demonstrated when contrasting the primarily lived, experiential and affective nature of personal reading cited with participants' experiences in school. The lack of appreciation for school-based reading cited by some was explained as being the result of too much emphasis on analysis. This revealed tensions with the intended aims of the NC DfE (2013) that pupils 'learn to appreciate works of literature' (ibid). Some participants suggested that reading that they undertook in school, conceptualised primarily analytically, was at the expense of said 'appreciation'. In other words, the powerful knowledge that readers already

had about reading was seen as different to the type of powerful reading knowledge being instructed in school (Young, 2009).   However, it was also clear that some participants felt that the reading that they engaged in during school required them to think deeply about texts (Jerrim & Moss, 2019).

Furthermore, in this context, analytical reading was conceptualised as being primarily about objectivity and deconstruction (Daly, 2014; Martin, 2003). Participants perceived reading in the secondary classroom as being about reaching a 'manufactured' or 'authorised' reading rather than the authentic, experiential reading of their personal lives (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015, pp. 42-53). In articulating school reading thus, participants demonstrated the clear pedagogic voice dominating their school experience (Arnot & Reay, 2007). Moreover, pupil participants did not, in the main, cross the private/school space and perceive the reading within each as being inter-related.   They valued the personal, emotional and immersive experiences and their 'authentic' reader response (Rosenblatt, 1978) over the analytical response. However, they conceptualised these as different and distinct purposes for reading, rather than as a spectrum for reading where one might be informed and strengthened by the other.

In this context, therefore, spaces and places are highly significant. The stark contrast and distinction between the experiences that occur within difference spaces, and the specific nature of the school-based reading experience, are at the fore of current critique of school-based practices: experiences of literature in school are minimalised because emotional and personal responses are being ignored or marginalised (Mansworth & Giovanelli, 2021).   This study finds and illustrates variously how this is the case.

Nonetheless, when discussing the nature of their experiences in school, participants demonstrated that they enjoyed the social and discursive nature of reading. This was illustrated initially in their enjoyment in sharing in and listening to each other's reading (Chambers, 2011; Rosenblatt, 1978) but also in their explanation of the importance of the social nature of reading in their own, wider experiences (Pierce & Gilles, 2021). During the discussions participants both articulated and enacted the ideas of an infinity group or 'tribe' (Gee, 2000), an identity-talk of readers (Arnot and Reay, 2007). They demonstrated how the development of their reading identities and trajectories made contact with others, including during the course of the study (Cliff Hodges, 2016). They therefore illustrate the implications for school practice and how this might be developed to create a more positive and wider conceptualisation of and therefore culture for promoting reading.

Furthermore, when discussing school-based practices, participants explained that they preferred more social and supportive reading pedagogies (Eaglestone, 2019; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017). For example, Dawid discussed that he enjoyed the discussion of elements of study of texts, underscoring the benefits of talk as detailed in the recent Ofsted research review (Ofsted, 2022). If aspects of reading are individual and private and others more social, talk provided the gateway from one to the other. Also, therefore, significant was the demonstration of the socially constructed nature of learning and reading (Yandell, 2013; Yandell & Brady, 2016). During the focus group participants demonstrated how shared talk contributed to and supported the development of their thinking, whereby they were able to draw on the collective mental resources of the group and co-construct ideas about reading (Mercer, 2002; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). For example, the FG2 group discussion about the Gruffalo (chapter 7.4) illustrated how talk and shared experience enabled a co-construction of a version of the text (Smith & Kelly, 2021).

This study demonstrates, through both participants' responses and also in-action, the significance of social-cultural theories of learning and development. It highlights the importance of social spaces and in particular of talk to participants' reading experiences and development and therefore the central importance of this in reading spaces including in school. There are therefore implications for pedagogy and practice in the English classroom.

8.7. The specific and particular space of Covid

This section of the study cannot conclude without some discussion of the very specific and particular context of the Covid pandemic which affected the organisation and development of the study and more significantly the lives and experiences of the participants. The resultant enforced lockdown occupy a particular socio-historic space, with ramifications for the participants and this study. As described in Findings Chapter 6, participants' reading lives and experiences were variously affected. Some participants found more time and capacity to read, as a result of enforced time at home. For others, enforced lockdown limited their reading opportunities. The additional pressures of being schooled from home limited the time available for reading. Some were frustrated by the lack of access to familiar reading spaces such as the library and bookshops, which meant a diminished supply of material. Each of these experiences adds exemplification and illustration to the generalised findings of studies in this field (Clark & Picton, 2020, 2021). Moreover, the appreciation of the sustained time available supports the claims made for the significance of the immersive experience of reading, contrasted explicitly with the interrupted and fragmented experiences of school-based reading.

These experiences all serve to further demonstrate the socio-cultural nature of reading, contingent on opportunity for and access to material but limited by the constraints of the socio-historical and political events and context of the time.

8.8. The impact of policy on practice in the secondary classroom.

This study was prompted by a curiosity about and experience of cognitive dissonance between values, beliefs and personal experiences and narrower, school-specific concepts of reading (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Goodwyn, 2012; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Sainsbury et al., 2006). The implications of such dissonance have ramifications for pupils' experiences of and development in reading, particularly in school. The final research question was therefore interested in exploring the extent of the influence of policy and practice on teaching of reading in the secondary context.

As previous sections have discussed, there was incompatibility in participants' perceptions of reading in school when compared with their wider lives, described by them as different purposes. Reading in school was perceived as something different and, more significantly, often unrelated to their wider experiences and conceptualisations. This section sets out to discuss insights provided by the data about the extent to which current policy for reading has imposed and resulted in this narrowing conceptualisation as enacted in practice.

8.8.1. The curriculum in action

Section 2.2 of the literature review outline debates and critiques of current policy for reading in schools. Participants' responses provided illustration of this in action in the secondary

context, in two respects: lack of promotion of reading for pleasure, and the particular reading demands experienced. Their descriptions of reading in secondary classrooms as predominantly analytical, with illustrations of how this was manifested, suggest a foregrounding of particular aspects of the curriculum and a resultant 'pedagogic voice' created by these school practices (Arnot & Reay, 2007, p. 373). Their perspectives and conceptualisations illustrate some of the problems of promoting a singular view of cultural literacy and powerful knowledge (Hirsch, 1983, Young, 2009).

In respect of the first, participants' references to significant and valued reading were striking because of the limited reference to secondary experience. Whilst several participants mentioned the influence of primary teachers on their reading, through recommending books or sharing books that had been enjoyed, references to similar influences of secondary practitioners, in contrast, were scarce. The data suggested that the habit of reading for pleasure had been largely established before and during primary school and that secondary practices contributed little in comparison. Teacher participants further supported this idea. They expressed regret that they did not have the time that they would like to spend on reading for pleasure and for taking time to recommend texts to pupils, even though they considered it important. Both participants attributed this to their focus being prioritised elsewhere (Cremin, 2020), such that the promotion of reading for pleasure and talk about wider reading were relegated to a position of 'happy accident' than design (Westbrook, 2007) . The study problematises, therefore, expectations in the NC, for Key Stage Three (DfE, 2013), that pupils should be taught to develop a love of reading. The participants in this sample illustrate an already well-established love of reading, not through direct instruction but through supportive reading communities and social relations before and outside of the context of secondary education. The study suggests that what participants need, therefore, is further

nurturing and fostering of this love so that their well-founded habits continue to grow. Policy in this respect appears to have limited impact on practice: despite statutory requirements, teachers in the study foregrounded other priorities.

Participants made no reference to practices in promoting and sharing reading for pleasure so these therefore either did not register as being significant or were not part of their experience. There was little sense in the data of deliberate and explicit promotion of a love of reading in the secondary context. As suggested in some literature on this subject, there are reasons why the secondary context might not always be conducive to reading for pleasure (Dean, 2003; Hopper, 2005; Mason, 2016; Nightingale, 2011). Participants cited several factors which contributed to reading for pleasure practices, including sustained periods of uninterrupted time, comfortable environment, and choice over reading material. Each of these could be challenging to provide in the secondary context.

Some participants mentioned texts that they had read within their English lessons as being significant, although these were limited in scope and scale. Participants enjoyed and engaged with this reading because of the nature of the texts, rather than as a deliberate policy and practice emphasis on promoting reading for pleasure.

Participants' reflections on their English lessons were interesting therefore for what they suggested about the nature of reading in this context. That reading was cited as being for a different, analytical, purpose, was significant. Their rich and varied illustrations of reading for pleasure contrast starkly with the experience of reading for analysis of literary texts. The policy requirement in the sub-section of the KS3 curriculum, that pupils be taught to 'read critically,' is prioritised (DfE, 2013) and books read in school were perceived more as set

texts for literary study than as narratives to be engaged with for pleasure (Cliff Hodges, 2016). Promotion of cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1983), therefore, was not synonymous with reading for pleasure.

Interestingly, participants made very little reference to the benefits afforded by reading to their general educational abilities and attainment (Clark & Cunningham, 2016; OECD, 2010; Sullivan & Brown, 2015). There was little in the data to indicate that participants read for or recognised the contribution of reading for academic benefit, other than when compelled to for the purpose of study. They did not equate their own reader identity as contributing to their academic attainment. This suggests that this dimension of reading pertains more to educators than to the pupils they serve.

The study suggests, therefore that the impact of policy on practice is variable: certain aspects are given higher priority than others, such that pupils might develop a 'love' of reading, but it is not shared equally across all contexts, is disproportionally felt towards reading outside of school and is not perceived by pupil participants as something that is actively promoted by school. The influences which promote and develop a love of reading and positive, sustained reading habits come primarily from outside the secondary context such that policy aims of the NC (DfE, 2013) to develop a love of reading and to use literature for pupils' emotional development are only tenuously fulfilled.

8.8.2. *Reading and knowledge as socially constructed*

During the course of the study, participants both highlighted and demonstrated reading as social practice, engaged in with and alongside others (Meek, 1991, Vygotsky, 1978). They

commented on and provided insights into their lived experience and social interactions with family members and friends. They illustrated this in action in their participation in the focus group discussions. Participants commented positively on the social and discursive nature of reading, including in school and when discussing particular school-based practices, they foregrounded and explained that they preferred more social and supportive reading pedagogies (Cremin, 2020; Eaglestone, 2019; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Mason & Giovanelli, 2017; Smith & Kelly, 2021; Yandell, 2013). There was reference to the value of hearing other's opinions and views of texts and an appreciation of co-construction of knowledge where they and others contribute equally. This acknowledges the interpretative nature of reading and of the subject of English more broadly (Bleiman, 2020; Eaglestone, 2017; Eaglestone, 2020; Goodwyn, 2020, Vygotsky, 1978). This presents a broader and richer conceptualisation of ideas about knowledge deemed as powerful (Young, 2009) and implies that pupils would value their school-based reading more in the event of continued inclusion and development of such pedagogical practices.

The illustration of the importance and value of the social constructed nature of learning and reading is significant, central to which is the prominence of talk (Vygotsky, 1978). During sessions participants demonstrated shared talk that contributed to and supported developing thinking, whereby they were able to draw on the collective mental resources of the group to make sense of ideas about reading (Mercer, 2002). Underpinning these dialogic exchanges was the key theme of participants co-constructing ideas about what it means to have read and thus to be a reader. Participants valued and enacted this because it reflected the socio-cultural aspects of their reading development as experienced in the contexts of their homes and friendships. Thus, the data demonstrate, in-action, the value of supportive pedagogies which support and enable participants to share and co-construct knowledge. This view

contests some of the ideas and pedagogies about reading as promoted in and by the recent Ofsted research review and indicate a need for on-going discussion about subject-specific and appropriate pedagogies (Ofsted, 2022).

Moreover, they demonstrated socio-cultural theories of reading in the construction of a particular group within the study. The nature of the study and the talk within meant that participants participated in a reading community aligned to those with which they engaged outside of school. Participants and their teachers commented favourably on the value afforded by bring the group together. This supportive community shared a love of reading and created and occupied a space for this to be celebrated. This mirrored the experiences that they illuminated and in which they were immersed in their own homes. The home experiences provided insights into the nature of the culture of reading which participants cited as being significant influences on their identities of readers. They learnt about being a reader by being exposed to a wide culture and community of reading (Cremin, 2014). The focus group sessions provided a similar opportunity and thus illustrate some of the ways this might be further developed in school practice.

9. Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate secondary pupils' and their teachers' perceptions and conceptualisations of reading, considering how identities and practices might be shaped by the places and spaces where reading occurs and the influence of policy. This concluding chapter indicates the ways in which this study contributes to the already existing bodies of theoretical and professional knowledge and the implications of its findings for professional practice.

There are several key findings arising from this study. The first is that the adolescent reader participants foregrounded and valued reading for pleasure above all else. When talking about reading they made a default assumption that this was primarily related to reading undertaken on their own volition for enjoyment and leisure. Much of the material cited in this context was fiction. Secondly the study found that participants conceptualised reading primarily experientially and affectively. They valued the power and joy of being immersed in a good book and the potential therein to be transported elsewhere. These were seen to be powerful motivating factors.

Much of the reading conceptualised thus was experienced outside of school. Wider social and familial networks were found to be significant and powerful influences in developing readers and reader identity. Extended family members, siblings and friends comprised a wider reading community in which social aspects of reading, such as sharing of reading, recommending texts and talking about reading, were centralised and habitual.

The study therefore found that there was little association between reading for pleasure and reading in school: these were perceived to be distinctly different types of reading for different purposes. Although there was some engagement with, and enjoyment thereof, reading within school was perceived to be primarily for purposes of analysis and the experience and nature of this experience was found to be significantly different to that described as for pleasure. Whilst reading for pleasure was framed almost exclusively as subjective, lived experience, analytical reading in school was perceived as objective and microscopic.

The reading conceptualised and valued in this study is predominantly socio-cultural. Opportunities to talk about reading and the demonstrations in the data of co-construction of knowledge indicate the importance of similarly supportive pedagogies in schooling. Participants identified that they enjoyed these aspects of school-based reading and of participation in the study. The study found both explicit and enacted examples of socio-cultural theory, enabled through and facilitated by the emphasis placed in the study on talk.

The study therefore makes several contributions to the existing body of both theoretical and research knowledge and also to professional knowledge and practice.

9.1. Contributions to theoretical knowledge and research

9.1.1. Methodological contributions

The study demonstrates the value of grounded theory in practice, enabling theorisation from the data and facilitating otherwise unseen views (Charmaz, 2006). Studies into reader attitudes, behaviour and habits tend to the large-scale survey (Clark & Picton, 2020; Clark &

Teravainen-Goff, 2020). This study offers a contrast which values participants' everyday lived experience and therefore values their perspective over pre-figured views of reading (Charmaz, 2006; Cliff Hodges, 2016; Meek, 1991). This study therefore makes an original contribution in this sphere, adding illustration to and illumination of aspects of some of the more generalisable findings arising.

Within the grounded theory methodology, the study employed a mosaic approach to cast various lens on reading and reading conceptualisation (A. Clark, 2014; Clark & Moss, 2011). The multi-layered and qualitative nature of the study adds an alternative perspective in a field predominantly populated by quantitative studies primarily about reading habits and preferences.   The mosaic approach has more typically been used in studies with young children (Clark & Moss, 2005) so this study provides originality in the application of methods with participants in the secondary school context.

The participatory methods enabled opportunities for individual realisation and representation of reader identity through methods that best suited participants. (Bucknall, 2014; A. Clark, 2014; Robb et al., 2014). Some scrapbooks were seen as valuable and on-going and were embraced by participants as the vehicle for showcasing their experiences and interests. Others preferred to talk, valuing the methods as stimuli for the discussion where they were avid contributors.   The study therefore provides illustration of the value of participatory methods in giving voice to under-represented voices.

9.1.2. Contribution to research knowledge

This study attends to and illustrates the complexities and layers of reading and reader identity. The data and emerging themes of the study add empirical evidence to theories that reader identity is comprised of and developed through the influence of complex combination of factors and influences (Basit, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; A. Clark, 2014; Dean, 2003; Meek, 1991). The study foregrounds aspects of reading that had been most salient or significant for participants in contrast to the wealth of studies which look for causal links between particular factors.

The arising and distinctive data capture the highly personal, individualised and unique nature of contemporary adolescent readership, adds evidence to the claim that there is no such thing as a typical reader and in contrast to the often generalised, homogenous representation of readers (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021; Meek, 1991; Yandell, 2014) . Moreover, the study centralises the perspectives of adolescent readers in the secondary school context and therefore makes a valuable contribution in a field where these voices are rarely heard. Current research on reading tends to large-scale surveys (Clark & Cunningham, 2016; Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020; Topping, 2019) or with a focus on children of primary school age (McGeown et al., 2016). This study adds to the arising generalisations, for example by exemplifying and illustrating the range of fiction secondary children are reading. More significantly, the provision of lived examples and experience provide insights into why and how this reading has been significant, in experience and in contributing to the development of a reading habit and therefore emerging identity. The study therefore builds on the work of Cliff Hodges (2010b) in highlighting the value of listening to and learning about children's

reading history and adds to that work by considering reading as including that within the school context.

The illustrations of the richness of adolescent readers' lives and experiences provide a counterargument to popular narratives and studies which suggest a lack of interest in reading among teenagers (Clark & Cunningham, 2016; Clark & Picton, 2020; Topping, 2019). This study refutes these claims on the grounds that this appropriates and misrepresents the lives and experiences of adolescent readers and offers instead a positive and detailed picture of participants' lived realities, adding further to studies in the same field (Chapman, 2020; Hopper, 2005). This present study further adds additional data, in part through use of alternative methods, to explore pupils' perceptions of reading beyond that of attitudes and practices in order to illuminate the ways that they conceptualise reading.

The study, therefore, makes additional contributions to the already existing body of theoretical knowledge about reading. It offers rich and detailed illustration to supplement and support existing ideas about reading, especially in the recognition of its complex, situated and subjective nature (Meek, 1991). The study offers unique illustrations and exemplifications of a sample of contemporary readers' experiences and perceptions (Cohen et al., 2007) . The finding that participants valued the authentic, affective and aesthetic experience of reading over all else illuminates and provides contemporary examples of Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory in action. Moreover, highlighting and providing illustrative examples that participants value the immersive, transportive potential of reading, seeking to repeat the experience in the formation of a reading habit, attends to the motivation for reading called for in the conclusions of McGeown's recent studies (2020; 2016).

The study acknowledges and embraces the highly contextualised and situated nature of lived experience and posits this as strength of the design. That the study was undertaken within the specific socio-historical context of a global pandemic cannot therefore be overlooked. The study was reshaped and reconfigured in response to the particular challenges and demands of the situation. Moreover, the participants were asked and reflected explicitly on the way that the pandemic and the requirements for extended period of lockdown and isolation changed their reading habits and experiences. This study therefore adds useful perspectives and experiences to the emerging body of knowledge in this respect (Clark & Picton, 2020, 2021).

9.1.3. Contributions to professional knowledge and implications for practice

Historically there has been very little research on what has been studied in English classrooms and more importantly how students have responded to it (Cliff Hodges, 2016). This research project afforded an opportunity to consider practice and its impact beyond measures of efficiency and, in seeking to understand a sample of the population of children served, it therefore makes a contribution to the professional knowledgebase (Ellis, 2009).

The current body of research about secondary school practice, including that specifically focused on reading, is predominantly focused on the pedagogy and practice of the teachers (Bleiman, 2020; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015). Pupil perspectives are sought, sometimes as observable and observed data, primarily as evidence of impact. This study therefore makes a contribution in foregrounding pupils' voices about reading, including but not exclusively focused on school. The study sought first to learn from pupils' conceptualisations and perceptions and to investigate patterns arising that might illuminate the impact of practice, finding that pupils valued and foregrounded reading that was primarily outside of the

classroom context.   The study therefore offers some originality in its design and implementation.

Teacher participants commented on and valued the opportunities afforded to learn more about and from their pupils and for reflection, including the impact of their choices on pupils (Cliff Hodges, 2009, 2012).   The study, therefore, in contributing to teachers' knowledge and understanding of their pupils and in moving towards philosophical considerations, contributes further knowledge to the field (Cliff Hodges, 2016).   It offers implications for practice in suggesting ways that teachers might similarly seek to learn from the views and perspectives of their pupils, and then capitalise on their readership and reader identity.   The research project was positioned dialogically, deliberately involving teacher participants, in analysing and interpreting pupil' conversations and contributions (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The further afforded opportunities for reflection and reflexivity, observed by both researcher and practitioners, adds to the relevance and contributions to the knowledge of those involved.

9.1.4. *Promoting reading for pleasure in the secondary context*

The study identified and illustrated the predominant value of reading for pleasure in participants' lives and demonstrated the breadth and richness of knowledge and experience that this affords. However, the study finds that there is limited space for valuing and developing reading for pleasure in the current secondary school experience and that, despite its statutory position (DfE, 2013), there has been little change since previous studies (Cliff Hodges, 2009; Westbrook, 2007). This study posits that policy changes have hitherto made little impact and offers a strong rationale, therefore, for continued development and efforts in this respect. In particular, the study illustrates that an emphasis on cultural literacy and

particular forms of powerful knowledge do not contribute to pupils' positive perceptions of reading (Hirsch, 1983, Young, 2009).

That participants prioritised and preferred the kind of reading for pleasure that occurs more significantly outside of school has implications for practice within. The study offers and recommends that teachers more actively promote a pedagogy for reading for pleasure, drawing on available knowledge, experience and research-rich approaches such as those advocated by Cremin et al's work (OU, 2022). The study asserts the value of the Reading Teacher concept (Cremin, 2014) which needs to begin with Initial Teacher Education (ITE) but extend beyond to all teachers' continuing professional development. This would include the need, and therefore support, for teachers developing a wide, in-depth and on-going knowledge of children and young people's literature, perhaps shared through professional networks, so that they can make regular recommendations to individuals to enable them to build their habits.

Both teacher participants commented repeatedly on the value of listening to their pupils talk about their own reading and the insights that this afforded. This study therefore offers that on-going book talk of this kind, including between peers as well as with teachers, ought to be part of a rich diet of reading experience in the secondary school. Participants talked enthusiastically about the importance of choice, of learning from other's recommendations and of the value of the library. All of these opportunities might be further promoted and afforded in the context of a secondary reading curriculum where a reading for pleasure pedagogy is developed that is reader led, dictated and owned (Cremin, 2020).

The study demonstrates that pupils have valuable knowledge and experience, itself a form of powerful knowledge (Young, 2009), that should be recognised and offers methods in how this might be developed, such as sharing of reading histories through discussion and scrapbooks. Moreover, the study illustrates the importance of a wide social community of readers. The work recommends the value and importance of developing, extending and maintaining reader networks, both within and beyond the school walls, acknowledging the role and significance that home lives play in developing reader identity. It advocates drawing on participants' knowledge of reading beyond school, in and of itself to value the experiences therein. Significantly the study offers sound evidence of pupils' willingness, enthusiasm and capacity to engage with each other, including as part of said community. Thus the study asserts the importance of enabling pupils to share, through both formal and informal channels of communication, experiences of and recommendations for reading. This could be facilitated through formal and informal book groups, promoting and enabling sharing and recommendation of reading through various means, including book sharing and book swaps.

This would enable a culture to be established and maintained which celebrates the diversity of reader identities and which enables habitual readers to share their experience and enthusiasm with others. It would create a celebratory classroom climate where reading for pleasure is valued and promoted so that readers do not have to conceal their habits or identities from others. The study also highlights the need for further research, for example, into perceptions and conceptualisations of those who do not identify as readers.

9.1.5. *The value of socio-cultural views and development of supportive pedagogies*

This study provides rich, descriptive data about readers' lives to support the view of reading as rich, complex and socio-cultural. The study counter-acts a common deficit model of reading which is contributing to an increasingly instructional, rather than socio-cultural model of reading in school (Lemov et al., 2016; Quigley, 2020).   The study therefore recommends the need to acknowledge a wider view of reading, both in policy and practice and recommends a wider conceptualisation which incorporates the importance of the affective, specifically in children's development as readers (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). This finding is particularly pertinent to the field of ITE, in which I work, which needs to ensure that the profession has sufficient subject and pedagogical knowledge to support a complex conceptualisation of readers and reading and to create readers for life (Cremin, 2020).

The role and place of co-construction of knowledge and understanding is highlighted throughout this study. Furthermore, the design of the study valued a socio-cultural, constructivist position of knowledge generation and acknowledged the significance of this to reading and to English teaching (Goodwyn, 2020). As the project progressed, participants demonstrated the centrality of collaborative and exploratory talk, suggesting the powerful and important role that this should play in readers' continuing development. The study demonstrates the place of talk in supporting participants, not just in their engagement but also with their understanding of the very concepts which sit at the heart of their study in English lessons.

The study highlights the dissonance between school and wider reading arising when reading is positioned in the secondary classroom as being predominantly for analysis: pupils perceived their reading in school to be for a different purpose. They framed analytical

reading as more objective and disconnected from the aesthetic and immersive experiences of their private reading. Recent studies which explored the impact of different pedagogical choices in reading highlight the dangers of this false dichotomy (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2017). This study advocates, therefore, in line with these findings, a pedagogy which promotes and values the aesthetic, immersive reading as complementary to rather than separate from analytical reading. This might include opportunities for more immersive reading, such as researched in Westbrook's (2019) study. It might also include opportunities for extended and uninterrupted reading such as pre-reading before more formal study, including enabling and encouraging reading of the shared text outside of and beyond class time to replicate authentic reading experiences.

It should include opportunities for diverse and inclusive access points for reading which acknowledge and celebrate the affective domain of reading, as promoted by the approaches of the English and Media Centre (Bleiman, 2020).

Most significantly, this study finds for the centrality of talk, including in enabling co-construction of knowledge, and therefore illustrates and supports the need for dialogic approaches (Mercer, 2002; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Nystrand, 2006). This study is timely because it adds weight to current debate that suggests that emotional and personal responses to texts are being ignored or marginalised (Mansworth & Giovanelli, 2021). There is potential, too, for further work in this field and for future research to explore how these ideas might be enacted and received in practice. This includes within the context of my own work in ITE.

The study also thus contributes to the on-going debate about the nature of English as a school subject. This project values and illustrates the interpretative and constructivist nature of reading and of the subject of English more broadly (Eaglestone, 2020; Goodwyn, 2020) and therefore also adds to work in this field. The study demonstrates the significance and worth of the knowledge constructed and valued by pupils. themselves. It makes a contribution to and calls for continued discussion and debate about the forms of knowledge deemed powerful (Hirsch, 1983, Young, 2009). The study illustrates the value of continuing subject specific and focused pedagogies based on impact, rather than generic based on ideology such as some promoted in the recent Ofsted research review (Ofsted, 2022).

9.2. Strengths and limitations of the study

The socially constructed nature of the concepts and situated activities that underpin this study mean that it is limited to its context, including time and participants (Cohen et al., 2011; Cohen et al., 2007) and to the perceptions of a very small sample. However, the study never sought to make claims of generalisation and argues instead the value of a detailed and rich understanding of situated experience which illuminates and values complexities and nuances of different perspectives (Cresswell, 2015; Pring, 2000). The purpose of this study was improved understanding rather than certainty and in this respect the project fulfilled its aim (Cohen et al., 2007).

Nonetheless, the study's position during a time of a global pandemic had impact. Lockdown required adaptations that were not anticipated at the outset. There were inevitable delays whilst I and the participants adjusted to our new reality which extended the timeline for the study. This invariably led to attrition of a few participants who then needed to focus their

time and energies on their studies. As well as fewer pupil participants, the timing and on-line

nature of the sessions led to decreased opportunities for discussions with teacher participants.

Some lines of enquiry therefore were potentially under-explored, although the smaller

number of participants enabled those remaining greater time and space to explore and discuss

their ideas in detail.

Additionally, the move to on-line meetings meant that some participants did not have access

to the technology to enable them to participate and even when they did, sometimes the focus

group discussions were hampered by technological logistics and interference. One school

was not able to accommodate the final focus group discussion at all, so there is a sense of not

all lines of enquiry being followed through equally with all participants and which led to

some voices being much more present in the data than others.

Most significantly, the need for on-line focus group discussions meant that the nature and

process of the discussions would not have followed the normal rhythm of face-to-face

conversations. In addition, the issue of reading scrapbooks for participants to develop in

between sessions and then refer to during was not practical. As a result, their use was halted

after the third focus group meeting and their intended use as an additional data source was

never really fulfilled beyond the evidence of reading histories. Nevertheless, the study

yielded valuable and detailed data of participants' lived experience and perceptions and, in

spite of the difficulties, many participants remained engaged and involved throughout.

The study offers areas for further research and investigation. For example, the study begins

to but offers limited detail on how and why particular aspects of reading and analysis of texts

in the secondary school have developed and the extent to which these are promoted by

current policy. There are several interesting and useful lines of enquiry arising which remain as yet unexplored, and which offer possible questions and routes for future research. There is further potential for exploring the affective and aesthetic affordances of reading and for investigating practices that would support the development of this in school-based reading. There is also potential for further field work in developing reading for pleasure in the secondary context. Moreover, although there were hints in the data, this study has not touched on a wider conceptualisation of reading as including modern technologies and multi-modal texts, including the value of audio books and on-line reading.

9.3. Concluding thoughts

This study sought to investigate complex concepts and to answer questions which are broader and more nuanced than can be captured in the scope of this work. Nonetheless, the greatest contribution that this study makes to the existing body of knowledge is that it foregrounds the voices and experiences of adolescent readers. Their perspective and views are often under-represented in literature and research, with implications for their representation in debates and decisions about reading and schooling more broadly. This study prioritises their voices, providing valuable insights into, and also arising from, their experiences and ideas. The participants in this study occupy a powerful presence in the resulting rich and interesting data which affords a privileged glimpse of their reading lives. Their overwhelmingly positive voices present a cohort of interested, avid and enthusiastic readers who are themselves a rich, body of knowledge. The curriculum disproportionately focuses on aspects of reading that do not currently recognise or reward this voice and contribution such that it is seen as something entirely different to and detached from their experience. Curriculum, pedagogy and practice need to develop and align so that these different aspects, rather than disparate

and unrelated, are seen as part of a whole, complex view of reading. The pupils deserve, and we can do, better.

WORDCOUNT – 58, 579 words (including references)

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Appendix 3.1: Found images used in focus group 1 image elicitation exercise
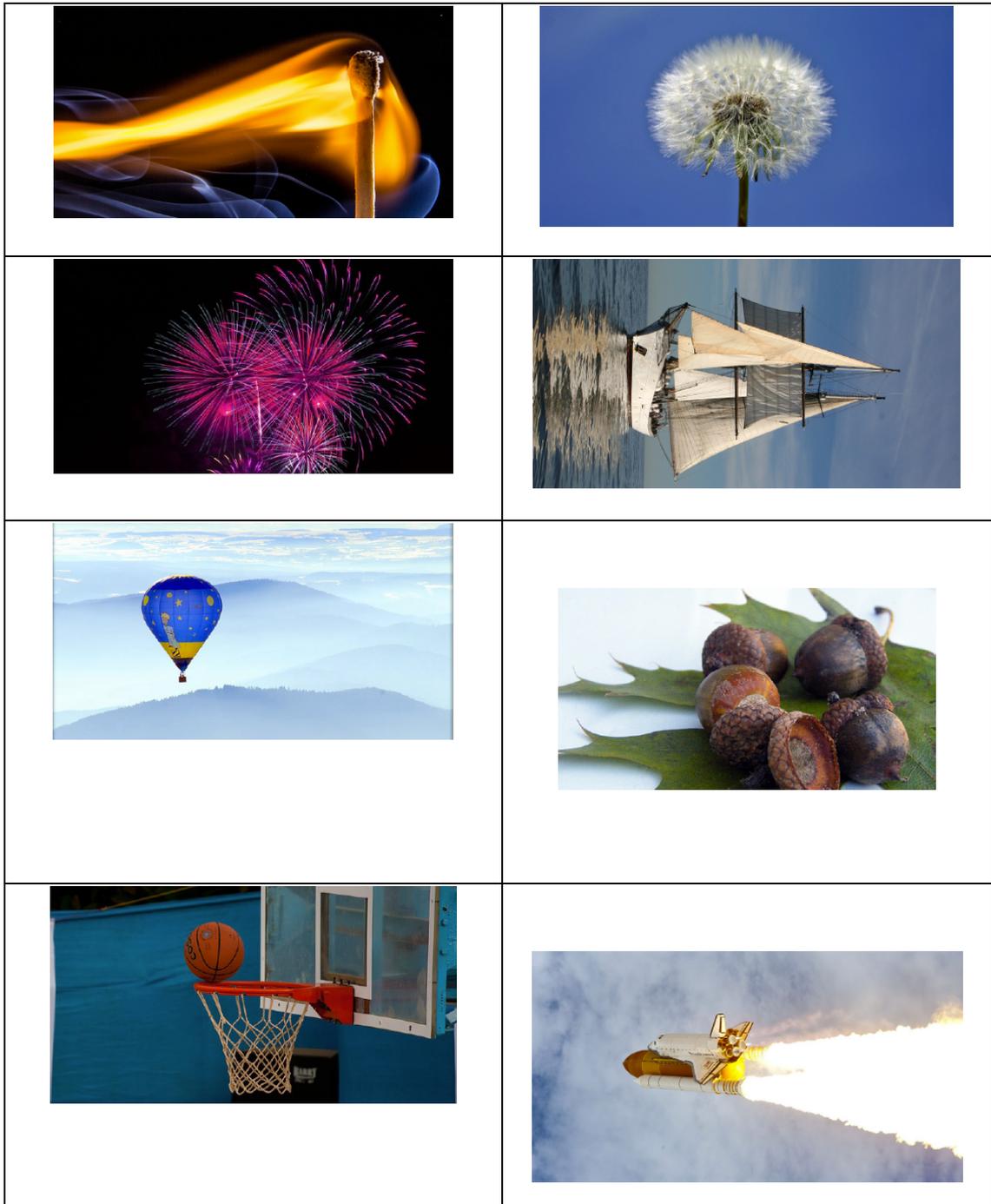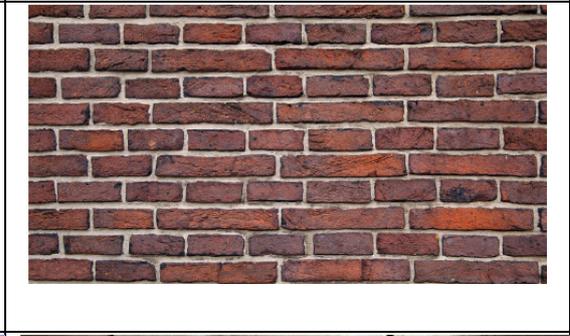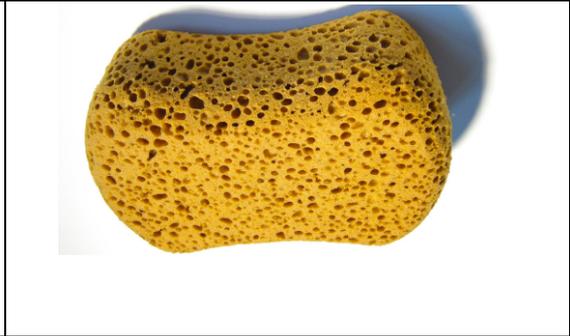
Appendix 3.2: Metaphor elicitation frames used in focus group 1

If reading were a food it would be ………………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were a colour it would be ……………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were a sport it would be ……………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were an animal it would be …………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were a place it would be ……………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were the weather it would be ………………………………………………………………………

because ……

If reading were …………………………………………………. it would be …………………………………

because ……

Appendix 3.3: Timeline of Research in practice

Original Timeline:

ACTIVITY	Autumn 19				Spring 20				Summer 20				Aut 20				Spring 21			
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
Data gathering [4]			FG1		FG2		FG3		FG4		FG5									
On-going/initial data analysis																				
Data analysis/findings																				

Adjusted timeline

ACTIVITY	Spring 20				Summer 20				Aut 20				Spring 21			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
Data gathering [4]	FG1		FG2				FG3			FG4		FG5				
On-going/initial data analysis																
Data analysis/findings																

Appendix 3.4: Written guidance for pupil participants on completion of scrapbooks

Reading Scrapbook

For the next few weeks, please keep a scrapbook about

reading.

You can include anything you like (writing, pictures,

photos) as long as it is about reading (your reading,

thoughts, habits and preferences; what reading means to

Appendix 3.5: Ethical Approval Form

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one:

Staff project: _____   PhD ____   EdD ___✓_

Name of applicant (s): Deborah Hickman

Title of project: Who are the readers? Secondary school perceptions of reading: a constructivist grounded theory study of reader identities, spaces and practices.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Naomi Flynn

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X	

c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	X	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	X	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	X	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants		X
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	X	
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X	
Please answer the following questions		

1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	X		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X	
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	X		
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?			
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	X		
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	X		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent	X		

form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	X		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			X
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		X	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			X
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		X	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			X
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		X	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			X

---

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	✓
Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc. Total participants: 33 Teachers: 4 (including 1 for pilot study) Pupils: 32 (including 8 for pilot study)	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:	

Who and where are the readers? Secondary school perceptions of reading: a constructivist grounded theory case study of reader identities, spaces and practices.

Research questions

- How do pupils identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
  - How do pupils identify as readers?
  - How do pupils conceptualise (their own) reading and reader development?
- How do teachers identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
  - How do teachers identify as readers and as teachers of reading?
  - How do teachers conceptualise reading and reader development?
- Do reading spaces shape or influence reading?
- What do participants' responses reveal about the influence of policy and practice of teaching of reading within English in the secondary school?

The project is a grounded theory case study investigating the perceptions and identities of a range of readers and how these have been impacted by policy and practice in a secondary school context.

Data will be collected from 4 secondary schools (1 pilot, 3 main) from within the school partnership within which the researcher works. Participants of 1 teacher and 6-8 pupils will be selected from each school. Secondary school teacher participants will be recruited, being known to the researcher through their on-going professional relationship and shared involvement in the university of Chichester partnership (researcher as PGCE subject co-ordinator and teacher participants as mentors and subject leaders). As a result of this relationship, the researcher is aware of departmental willingness and capacity to be involved in research projects. Participants have been approached on an informal basis in the

first instance to ascertain enthusiasm for the project. Formal approaches will be made to the headteachers as a result. It will be discussed with potential participants that they should not feel compelled to be involved and that their involvement is not part of the partnership with the university.

 Teachers will recommend and select a range of pupil participants (age and gender) from across their classes (aged 11-16) based on their willingness to engage in and likelihood of completing participation, who will take part in all 5 focus group discussions.   Pupils who have demonstrated significantly negative attitudes towards and barriers in reading will be excluded from selection.

Consent will be sought from: headteacher of the school, pupil participants and their parents/carers and teacher participants.

The pilot study will be conducted in the second half of the school year, from June to November 2019. The full study will last for a calendar year, beginning in January 2020 and ending in December 2020.

Qualitative data will be collected through 5 focus group discussions, each of between 45 and 60 minutes, centred around a variety of elicitation methods, spread across a calendar year. Because of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the remaining focus groups (from July 2020 onwards) will be rescheduled to take place on-line, rather than face to face.

Focus group 1: Image and metaphor elicitation – January/February 2020.
Participants will discuss a range of provided images and the extent to which they

might be seen to represent 'reading' and will also be asked to complete a series of metaphors to describe aspects of reading, in order to further explore perceptions and conceptualisations. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance in order to complete their reading histories (a graphic representation of their reading autobiography), which they will complete as preparation for the next session. Participants will be able to choose the style and form (eg poster, prezi, PowerPoint) and will be free to include as little or as much detail as they feel appropriate.

Focus group 2: Reading histories – April 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their reading histories with their group. They will discuss the areas of interest and significance in order to explore their reading identities. The discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading histories positively. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance in order to complete their scrapbooks.

Focus group 3: Reading timeline – July 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their reading timelines with their group. They will discuss the areas of interest and significance in order to further explore their reading identities and on-going experiences. As before, the discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading identities and experiences positively. At the end of the session participants may be given additional guidance in order to further develop their scrapbooks. The focus group meetings will take place remotely rather than face to face, using the systems and protocols established by the school for safe on-line working and teaching. Pupil participants will be

contacted by their teacher and the meeting set up using the school's ICT framework – the researcher will be invited and attend the meeting on-line, as if attending as a guest at school.

Focus group 4: Reading timeline part 2 – October 2020. Participants will share and discuss further aspects of their scrapbooks with their group. They will discuss the on-going areas of interest and significance in order to further explore their reading identities and on-going experiences. As before, the discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading identities and experiences positively. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance for the final session. They will be asked to reflect on and select some examples of work completed as part of their schooling in which reading was significant, or which they felt had contributed to their development as readers.

Focus group 5: work scrutiny – December 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their work with their group. They will discuss areas of interest and significance in order to explore the impact of schooling on their reader development.

Teacher participants will also be interviewed individually for 15-20 minutes after each focus group (5 interviews in total), in order to explore their perceptions of and responses to the ideas of the pupil participants.

The timings of the focus group meetings will be organised on the basis of convenience for the school and participant. If the school chooses/selects curriculum time, this will be organised so that it is spread across times and days of the week to avoid a potentially adverse impact on a particular curriculum area (for pupil participants) and class (for teacher participants). The focus group discussions have been spread across a calendar year in order to ensure that participation

does not become too burdensome for the participants. It is hoped that participation in the research will be enjoyable for the participants and willingness to engage with the project is a key selection criterion.

Participants will be asked to record their reading activity by keeping a reading scrapbook.

Focus group discussions will be audio recorded and fully transcribed and anonymised before they are analysed. All data will be stored on a password protected device and securely destroyed once the findings have been written up, after five years.

Participant involvement in the project will be by consent and participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw at any point:

Headteacher information and consent (pilot) p7-9

Teacher information and consent form (pilot) p10-12

Parent/carer information and consent form (pilot) p13-15

Pupil information and consent form (pilot) p16-17

Headteacher information and consent p18-20

Teacher information and consent form p21-23

Parent/carer information and consent form p24-26-

Pupil information and consent form p27-28

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project

and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers,

parents, pupils etc.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments

and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.

1. title of project
2. purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. brief description of methods and measurements
4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
7. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm

that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name DEBORAH HICKMAN

DATE 23.01.19

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO

THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now

approved.

Signed: _____   Print Name: Karen Jones
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*
Date 6 July 2020

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks

involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which

students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the

information declared by the applicant.

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014

Select one:

Staff project: ☐   PGR project: ✓☐   MA/UG project: ☐

Name of applicant (s): Debbie Hickman

Title of project: Reading perceptions and experiences in the secondary school.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Naomi Flynn

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	Focus group discussions and interviews undertaken in secondary school premises.

Where will data be collected?	On 4 secondary school sites.

Significant hazards:	None identified. The schools themselves have a duty to maintain a safe area of work within the school. Working on-line with students during national pandemic raises safeguarding issues re safe on-line working practices.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	N/A

Existing control measures:	The rooms fall within the school's Health & Safety responsibilities.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes ✓☐ No ☐	

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have read the Heath and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed: Print Name DEBORAH HICKMAN   Date 19.7.18

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) **OR** BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: _____ Print Name: Karen Jones
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

Date 6 July 2020

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix 3.5a: Pupil information sheet and consent form

Pupil information and consent form

Research project:

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about reading.

What is the study?

The study looks at the experiences and ideas secondary pupils have about reading.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

Your teacher thinks that you would find it interesting and enjoyable to take part.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you. You can take part and then decide to stop, and that's fine.

What will happen if I do take part?

You will be invited to some discussions with a small group of pupils about reading. There will be about 5 meetings across the academic year. These discussions will be recorded to help me. You will be invited to keep a reading scrapbook. You can include anything you like (writing, pictures, photos) as long as it is about reading.

Each meeting will have a slightly different focus, in order to encourage discussions about different aspects of reading and readers.

Why should I do this?

I hope that this will be an interesting opportunity for you to think about and share your thoughts about reading.

What will happen to the information?

All information will be kept safely and only the researcher will see it. The results will be written up in a report, but there will be no names used and no way of linking anything to you. You can have a summary of the research findings if you would like them.

What happens if I am not happy with the research process?

If you have any problems you can contact Dr Naomi Flynn, University of

Reading; Tel: 0118 378 2770, email: n.flynn@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

Email or talk to Ms Hickman.

If you are happy to take part in this research, please complete the attached form and give it back to your English teacher.

This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Research Project: Secondary school pupils' perceptions and experiences of reading

I have read the information sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of child:
………………………………………………………………………………

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to completing the reading actitivies ☐

I consent to being involved in discussion groups, and these sessions being recorded and quotations taken as appropriate ☐

Signed: ……………………………………………………………..

Date:

Appendix 3.6 – Revised Ethical Approval Form

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one:

Staff project: _____ PhD _____ EdD ___✓_

Name of applicant (s): Deborah Hickman

Title of project: Who are the readers? Secondary school perceptions of reading: a constructivist grounded theory study of reader identities, spaces and practices.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Naomi Flynn

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X	

c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	X	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	X	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	X	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants		X
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	X	
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X	
Please answer the following questions		

1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	X	
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	X	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X	
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?		

	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	X		
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	X		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent	X		

Question			
form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[2], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	X		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			X
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		X	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			X
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		X	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			X
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		X	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			X

---

[2] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	✓
Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc. Total participants: 33 Teachers: 4 (including 1 for pilot study) Pupils: 32 (including 8 for pilot study)	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting: **Who and where are the readers? Secondary school perceptions of reading: a constructivist grounded theory case study of reader identities, spaces and practices.** **Research questions** • How do pupils identify and conceptualise readers and reading? o How do pupils identify as readers?	

- How do pupils conceptualise (their own) reading and reader development?
- How do teachers identify and conceptualise readers and reading?
  - How do teachers identify as readers and as teachers of reading?
  - How do teachers conceptualise reading and reader development?
- Do reading spaces shape or influence reading?
- What do participants' responses reveal about the influence of policy and practice of teaching of reading within English in the secondary school?

The project is a grounded theory case study investigating the perceptions and identities of a range of readers and how these have been impacted by policy and practice in a secondary school context.

Data will be collected from 4 secondary schools (1 pilot, 3 main) from within the school partnership within which the researcher works. Participants of 1 teacher and 6-8 pupils will be selected from each school. Secondary school teacher participants will be recruited, being known to the researcher through their on-going professional relationship and shared involvement in the university of Chichester partnership (researcher as PGCE subject co-ordinator and teacher participants as mentors and subject leaders). As a result of this relationship, the researcher is aware of departmental willingness and capacity to be involved in research projects. Participants have been approached on an informal basis in the first instance to ascertain enthusiasm for the project. Formal approaches will be made to the headteachers as a result. It will be discussed with potential participants that they should not feel compelled to be involved and that their involvement is not part of the partnership with the university.

Teachers will recommend and select a range of pupil participants (age and gender) from across their classes (aged 11-16) based on their willingness to engage in and likelihood of completing participation, who will take part in all 5

focus group discussions.   Pupils who have demonstrated significantly negative attitudes towards and barriers in reading will be excluded from selection.

Consent will be sought from: headteacher of the school, pupil participants and their parents/carers and teacher participants.

The pilot study will be conducted in the second half of the school year, from June to November 2019. The full study will last for a calendar year, beginning in January 2020 and ending in December 2020.

Qualitative data will be collected through 5 focus group discussions, each of between 45 and 60 minutes, centred around a variety of elicitation methods, spread across a calendar year. Because of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the remaining focus groups (from July 2020 onwards) will be rescheduled to take place on-line, rather than face to face.

Focus group 1: Image and metaphor elicitation – January/February 2020. Participants will discuss a range of provided images and the extent to which they might be seen to represent 'reading' and will also be asked to complete a series of metaphors to describe aspects of reading, in order to further explore perceptions and conceptualisations. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance in order to complete their reading histories (a graphic representation of their reading autobiography), which they will complete as preparation for the next session. Participants will be able to choose the style and form (eg poster, prezi,

PowerPoint) and will be free to include as little or as much detail as they feel appropriate.

Focus group 2: Reading histories – April 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their reading histories with their group. They will discuss the areas of interest and significance in order to explore their reading identities. The discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading histories positively. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance in order to complete their scrapbooks.

Focus group 3: Reading timeline – July 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their reading timelines with their group. They will discuss the areas of interest and significance in order to further explore their reading identities and on-going experiences. As before, the discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading identities and experiences positively. At the end of the session participants may be given additional guidance in order to further develop their scrapbooks. The focus group meetings will take place remotely rather than face to face, using the systems and protocols established by the school for safe on-line working and teaching. Pupil participants will be contacted by their teacher and the meeting set up using the school's ICT framework – the researcher will be invited and attend the meeting on-line, as if attending as a guest at school.

Focus group 4: Reading timeline part 2 – October 2020. Participants will share and discuss further aspects of their scrapbooks with their group. They will

discuss the on-going areas of interest and significance in order to further explore their reading identities and on-going experiences. As before, the discussion aims to support and encourage participants to view their reading identities and experiences positively. At the end of the session participants will be given some guidance for the final session. They will be asked to reflect on and select some examples of work completed as part of their schooling in which reading was significant, or which they felt had contributed to their development as readers.

Focus group 5: work scrutiny – December 2020. Participants will share and discuss aspects of their work with their group. They will discuss areas of interest and significance in order to explore the impact of schooling on their reader development.

Teacher participants will also be interviewed individually for 15-20 minutes after each focus group (5 interviews in total), in order to explore their perceptions of and responses to the ideas of the pupil participants.

The timings of the focus group meetings will be organised on the basis of convenience for the school and participant. If the school chooses/selects curriculum time, this will be organised so that it is spread across times and days of the week to avoid a potentially adverse impact on a particular curriculum area (for pupil participants) and class (for teacher participants). The focus group discussions have been spread across a calendar year in order to ensure that participation does not become too burdensome for the participants. It is hoped that participation in the research will be enjoyable for the participants and willingness to engage with the project is a key selection criterion.

Participants will be asked to record their reading activity by keeping a reading scrapbook.

Focus group discussions will be audio recorded and fully transcribed and anonymised before they are analysed. All data will be stored on a password protected device and securely destroyed once the findings have been written up, after five years.

Participant involvement in the project will be by consent and participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw at any point:

Headteacher information and consent (pilot) p7-9

Teacher information and consent form (pilot) p10-12

Parent/carer information and consent form (pilot) p13-15

Pupil information and consent form (pilot) p16-17

Headteacher information and consent p18-20

Teacher information and consent form p21-23

Parent/carer information and consent form p24-26-

Pupil information and consent form p27-28

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

> Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.
>
>   8. title of project
>   9. purpose of project and its academic rationale
>   10. brief description of methods and measurements
>   11. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
>   12. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
>   13. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then.
>   14. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name DEBORAH HICKMAN

DATE 23.01.19

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: _____ Print Name: Karen Jones
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

Date 6 July 2020

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Risk Assessment Form for Research Activities February 2014

Select one:

Staff project: ☐   PGR project: ✓☐   MA/UG project: ☐

Name of applicant (s): Debbie Hickman

Title of project: Reading perceptions and experiences in the secondary school.

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Naomi Flynn

A: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	Focus group discussions and interviews undertaken in secondary school premises.

Where will data be collected?	On 4 secondary school sites.

Significant hazards:	None identified. The schools themselves have a duty to maintain a safe area of work within the school. Working on-line with students during national pandemic raises safeguarding issues re safe on-line working practices.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	N/A

Existing control measures:	The rooms fall within the school's Health & Safety responsibilities.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes ✓☐ No ☐

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

B: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have read the Heath and Safety booklet posted on Blackboard, and the guidelines overleaf.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm risks have been adequately assessed and will be minimized as far as possible during the course of the project.

Signed: Print Name DEBORAH HICKMAN   Date 19.7.18

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR (FOR UG AND MA STUDENTS) **OR** BY IOE ETHICS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (FOR PGR AND STAFF RESEARCH).

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: _____ Print Name: Karen Jones
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*
Date 6 July 2020

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix 3.7: Table showing indicative codes, sub-themes and themes during coding

Indicative codes	Sub-themes	Themes
Describing/recalling author	Fiction	Reading by content and material: the kind of reading that I do
Describing/recalling title		
Recalling plot		
Describing characters		
Comparing with film, TV		
Expressing a preference		
Non-fiction	Other	
Media		
Audio-books		
Information Texts		
Internet and social media		
Opening up new worlds	Immersion/engrossed	Reading experience: what it feels like to, and why I, read
Being involved by plot		
Looking forward to reading		
Wanting to keep reading		
Anticipating the ending		
Liking/wanting to be like the character		
Reading without stopping		
Being on the edge of seat		
Unlocking new worlds	Transported	

Opening up new possibilities		
Getting lost		
Being part of the story		
Realising it is not real		
Being connected		
Imagining	Visualising, seeing	
Seeing		
Creating pictures		
Feeling resolved/accomplished	Satisfying	
Described really liking		
Being obsessed		
Remembering memorable	Rereading	
Revisiting		
Wanted to experience again		
Family: Parents		
Family: siblings		
Family: others		
Friends	People	
Peers		Reading influences
Group members		(places and people within)
Teachers		
Others		
Home		
Libraries		
Bookshops	Places	

School		
Research group		
Relationships	Nature of relationships/ Interactions/Community	Socio-cultural factors
Read to/with		
Providing access		
Role modelling		
Agreeing	Talk	
Adding		
Recapping		
Responding		
Clarifying		

Appendix 3.7a: School A FG1 – Transcript 1 (pre focus group discussion)

1   DH: Anything that turns up on the transcript
2   Ms Griffiths: Okay yeah
3   DH: That either of us are unhappy about
4   Ms Griffiths: Okay, yeah
5   DH: Or if there's something that's irrelevant
6   Ms Griffiths: Okay
7   DH: and I think as we as we go through this we'll start learning how to just …
8   Ms Griffiths: Yeah right yeah, yeah
9   DH: Is that alright?
10   Ms Griffiths: Yeah, yeah
11   DH: So, thank for agreeing to do this. The way that it will work is I'll interview you
12   before we see the students …
13   Ms Griffiths: yeah, okay
14   DH: And you'll do the same thing that they're going to do
15   Ms Griffiths: okay
16   DH: but do it before you see and hear what they say
17   Ms Griffiths: yeah, okay
18   DH: so that your responses aren't framed by or informed by what they say
19   Ms Griffiths: okay
20   DH: and, um, then, er, then I'll do exactly the same thing with them and then I'll
21   interview you after they've gone
22   Ms Griffiths: yeah
23   DH … to see what you think about what they said
24   Ms Griffiths: okay
25   DH: Is that okay?
26   Ms Griffiths: Yes, that's fine
27   DH: and then, er, while they're being interviewed it's really important because this is
28   part of understanding a whole host of things … um … I'm really keen for you to hear
29   what they say
30   Ms Griffiths: yeah
31   DH: but to not include yourself in their conversations
32   Ms Griffiths: okay yeah, yeah, so just be a bystander
33   DH: um … and in the past it hasn't been an issue that their class teacher is part of … is
34   There but we'll sort of play it by ear.   Is that alright?
35   Ms Griffiths: yeah, yeah
36   DH: so the first thing the first session, um, is designed to sort of introduce the idea of
37   what is reading
38   Ms Griffiths: okay
39   DH: and trying to get some ideas from them and from you about what you think
40   reading is
41   Ms Griffiths: okay
42   DH: to see what initial conceptions of the idea of reading
43   Ms Griffiths: yes
44   DH: sort of throw up, um, so, um, I'm using two methods one which is about images
45   And another which is about metaphor
46   Ms Griffiths: okay
47   DH: to see if that throws up … er … conceptualizations in a different way
48   Ms Griffiths: okay

49   DH: So I'm going to show you some pictures.
50   Ms Griffiths: yeah
51   DH: What I'd like you to do is to choose if you can see any … a picture that you think
52   for you represents … what you think reading is
53   Ms Griffiths: [long pause] I'm going to choose this one
54   DH:okay. Tell us about that picture and why
55   Ms Griffiths: um, okay, so, I … would choose the, um, the image of the hot-air
56   balloon with the, um,
57   kind of mountainous region in, er, in the distance and the clouds and everything, um,
58   because I feel as though … with reading … um, it takes you to … different places. I, I,
59   er, it's um, jumping to a quotation reading lets you travel without moving your feet …
60   DH: yeah
61   Ms Griffiths: yet this kind of idea of being able to delve into literature that
62   connects you to different places around the world, different cultures, different people,
63   different aspects of the human experience and so that out of everything, sums that idea
64   of reading to me more, more so than anything else
65   DH: lovely um any other pictures that that you were also torn between, you think
66   Actually there's a bit of that or …
67   Ms Griffiths: probably much in the same kind of, um like the same kind of
68   connecting images, you know the image of the open, er, the open window again kind of
69   getting that insight into the human spirit and different kind of emotions and, um,
70   feelings that kind of connects to me, the … the key as well, kind of opening up those,
71   um, those experiences of different, um, of
72   different people. They're probably all kind of linked in in a similar fashion
73   DH: Okay. Lovely. Is there anything that you can see here that it's not?
74   Ms Griffiths : Ooh. Anything that is it not … [long pause] that's a difficult
75   question [long pause]
76   DH: or anything that you sort of don't like
77   Ms Griffiths: anything that's not
78   DH: yeah
79   Ms Griffiths: … Um, I'm not a hundred percent with this one … what …what is
80   this?
81   DH: that's a pile of jellybeans
82   Ms Griffiths: yeah I'm not a hundred percent kind of … making any kind of
83   connections with that one,yeah.
84   DH: okay … but there's nothing you're thinking 'actually, you know, you're not taking
85   a dislike to any of the images? It's more 'I can't make a connection with …'
86   Ms Griffiths: yeah, yeah
87   DH: rather than, actually I don't agree at all that it's this
88   Ms Griffiths: Yeah … no
89   DH: okay
90   Ms Griffiths: yeah
91   DH: okay … lovely … thank you. So linked about then, that's really helpful, the
92   second thing I'm going to ask you to do is to finish the metaphors
93   Ms Griffiths: okay
94   DH: um so I, um, talk me … through rather than write them down but feel free once the
95   children are here and they're involved, if you want to, sort of, complete the sheet
96   properly
97   Ms Griffiths: yeah
98   DH: but there's a series of metaphors there, don't necessarily have to complete all of
99   them
100   Ms Griffiths: okay
101   DH: but in a similar vein to the pictures, er, choose a metaphor that you think works
102   particularly well for reading and finish it off for me
103   Ms Griffiths: anyone in particular, just pick one?

104   DH: yeah
105   Ms Griffiths: Ooh, … [very long pause] so I … would … maybe be more drawn to
106   the, if reading were a place, um, … and just immediately, kind of reading through them
107   … I just had this image of, um, a mountain and this kind of idea of … nature and …
108   noises but also silence and the fact that it's disconnected from everything and that's kind
109   of how I feel whenever I read. It's this kind of space that I can be connected to so many
110   different things but also completely…involved and that everything else gets shut off …
111   as well … so that that's probably out of all of the, the ideas there that's probably the one
112   that's kind of I'm, um, most drawn to and yeah this kind of idea of, uh, of a
113   mountaintop and the natural world
114   DH: brilliant thank you that's beautiful. Um, what about the blank one, if you were
115   free to choose your own metaphor?
116   Ms Griffiths: [long pause] I feel as if … again … I'm kind of … more drawn to 'if
117   reading were an emotion' that's kind of what … but, but, I can't quite I think with, with
118   the the experience of reading it's so difficult to … actually, um, put it into words and
119   actually kind of nail down in an emotion … yeah,
120   DH: absolutely
121   Ms Griffiths: (laughter) so maybe this idea of … you know, … I don't know,
122   maybe, yeah, some
123   kind of element of, um, that one's difficult because I'm confused …but reading doesn't
124   make me feel confused but, but it's difficult to, er, completely isolate reading into one
125   particular emotion, it kind of encompasses every different, every different kind of
126   emotion …
127   DH: Lovely. Okay. Thank you. Shall we get the students in?

Appendix 3.7b School A FG1 Transcript A1.2 (Pupil group discussion)

1   DH: okay hello I'm Debbie. I'm an English teacher and I now work in a
2   university and so I do lots of different jobs for the university, one of which is
3   working with English teachers and another thing that I do for the University is
4   research. So do you know what do you not research is? what does what you think
5   research means?
6   Dawid: It's like searching things up that you need to know.
7   DH: Yeah finding things out. Um, and I'm really interested in finding things out.
8   I'm particularly interested in finding out things about reading and I'm particularly
9   interested in finding out things about reading from young people, from you, from
10   children so I want to start by saying a really big thank you for allowing yourself
11   to be volunteered. The way this project is going to work is we're going to meet
12   five times between now and the end of the academic year and then in between the
13   times that we meet I'm going to ask you to do some things that you'll then bring
14   with you to the meetings and each one of those meetings is going to focus on
15   something slightly different but hopefully you'll really enjoy being part of the, the
16   group and by the end, at the end of it I will ask you a little bit about how it's felt
17   being involved in the, in the research itself and being part of the group but I want
18   to start by saying thank you to all of you from the outset for being involved. I
19   know it's a bit scary being asked to meet someone who you've never met before
20   and to talk to that and I'm hoping that as we meet more regularly you'll warm up a
21   bit and talk to each other and, um, it won't feel quite so nervous and anxious
22   for you. So thank you so much because it's really important the work that you're
23   doing and the answers that you give are going to be more important than you
24   might realise. So thank you for that. Before we start anything else what I'm
25   going to do is give you a sticker. Can you put your name on your sticker and, er,
26   put it somewhere so that I can see you because as you can see I'm recording. And
27   it's not because … this for no reason other than I'm not going to be able to
28   remember everything that you say. So having a recording means that I'll
29   do something called transcribing, so I'll type up what you've said so that I can
30   look at what you've said in much more detail over and over and over again. So
31   … but also so that when listen back to the recording I'll be able to match who said
32   what, because it's really important, for example ▓▓ that over the course of five
33   meetings I know which things you've said rather than which things ▓▓▓▓ has
34   said. Does that make sense to you? So what would be really helpful for me too
35   is, particularly in the beginning, is if you can say 'this is ▓▓▓▓' and then
36   answer, do you see what I mean? So that I know that what comes after is what
37   ▓▓▓▓ said or what ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ said, I can't see, it's my eyesight! Hello!
38   Hi ▓▓▓, come and take a seat. We were just talking about how this is going to
39   work. Pull up a chair.
40   Kanisha: my tutor didn't tell me about it.
41   DH: Okay. Can you stick your name in there for me and just put it, yeah,
42   brilliant. Okay, so … we're just waiting for one more. While we're waiting I'll
43   just get us to have a little warm-up. Let's have a bit of a conversation.   Tell me a
44   little bit about … first of all tell me what year group you're in and then tell me a

45	little bit about what you're reading at the moment. Let's start with ████.
46	Daniel: Um. My name is ████ and I just finished watching Kim, reading
47	'Kidnapping the Caribbean'.
48	DH: Okay. I don't know that so tell me about that.
49	Daniel: So these people. They won like a free cruise to the Caribbean but it was
50	actually like a trap so … they just have to, like, run and stuff.
51	DH: Okay. And did you enjoy it?
52	Daniel: Yeah.
53	DH: What did you enjoy about it?
54	Daniel: I dunno. I just enjoyed like, the thrill of them just running.
55	DH: Okay, brilliant. Was it by an author you've read other stores before? What
56	made you choose it?
57	Daniel: I don't know … it's just interesting, the name.
58	DH: okay great what year are you?
59	Daniel: Nine
60	DH: Okay, thank you ████.
61	Holly: Hi, I'm ████ and I'm reading … I'm almost finished reading this book
62	called 'Alex and Eliza' and it's, um, based on the musical, um, 'Hamilton' and so
63	its like a more in-depth thing about, like, yeah, it's just a bit … and I'm almost
64	finished reading it so ..
65	DH: Okay. And have you seen musical Hamilton?
66	Holly: yeah it's really good.
67	DH: So is that what made you choose the book?
68	Holly: Yeah
69	DH: Okay. And is … is the book … the same story as the play or is it about
70	people who are starring in the play?
71	Holly: It's like, it's the, well, it's the same story. It's about people starring in the
72	play, it's like, it's a little bit more in-depth and like, I don't know how the two
73	people met and stuff, it just like more, so its like one song in the musical but in
74	this it's kind of like the whole book, if you get me.
75	DH: Okay
76	Holly: It's kind of, like, just doing more in depth and stuff.
77	DH: Okay. Sounds interesting. So is it part of a series or is it a one-off.
78	Holly: I think its just a one off. I've only heard about one book of it.
79	DH: Okay, lovely. And … sorry, hello! You are..?
80	Dawid: ████
81	DH: Hi ████ What year group are you in?
82	Dawid: Year 10. Okay so we're just having a little bit of a conversation about
83	things that we're reading at the moment so tell me what you're read … tell us
84	what you're reading.
85	Dawid: to be honest, right now I'm not really reading anything. I was about to
86	start 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time.'
87	DH: Okay tell us about that. That's an interesting choice.
88	Dawid: Well, I've read like a couple of pages of it and like, I'm having a mini-
89	break. Ah, it, well it starts off with this boy and it's like the middle of the night,
90	there's a dog in the neighbour's garden and it's got a pitchfork and it's like dead
91	because it's got pitchfork in it and he, well, the boy's got, like, autism or
92	something and so it describes everything in like a, in, oh I don't know how to
93	describe it, in like a different way and er … it … it's just … yeah
94	DH: It's exactly what you've described it. You've described the book perfectly.
95	As you said, it is, the central character … has anybody else read the Curious
96	Incident of the Dog in the Night-time? So it is, the central character has, um,
97	autism and so it's that his voice is, um, really interesting throughout, the main
98	character's voice throughout and it's specifically told and it's an incident as told
99	by somebody from the perspective of what it feels like to have

100	autism or to be on the autistic spectrum. So it's a really good book. I'd
101	thoroughly recommend it. Yeah, come off your mini break and carry on reading.
102	Would you do me a favour, would you stick your name on your sticker and put
103	it on your jumper so that we can all see, because you don't know each other do
104	you? Or do you? You might? Okay, okay so you sort of, you might have bumped
105	into each other. ▮▮▮ tell us about you and what you're reading at the moment.
106	Cassie: My name's Cassie and I was just reading 'The Maze Runner' series.
107	DH: Oh, okay. What year group are you?
108	Cassie: I'm Year 8
109	DH: Okay so tell us about the Maze Runner. You've read the whole series?
110	Cassie: yeah
111	DH: Okay. What did you make of it?
112	Cassie: Okay. I think it was quite good. I'd read other books like it and then I
113	saw that recommended so I went for it.
114	DH: Okay, So what, what was it about the recommendation that made you think
115	'yeah this is a, this is a series I want to read'?
116	Cassie: Well, I've heard, like, it's quite a popular one … and … I quite like the
117	dystopian film, so, I, yeah
118	DH: So, have you seen the films?
119	Cassie: Yeah
120	DH: Okay so did you see the film's before or after?
121	Cassie: I read them and then I watched them.
122	DH: Okay which is better?
123	Cassie: The books
124	DH: … because …
125	Cassie: I don't know. They just feel better.
126	DH: Okay it that how you normally feel when you have a book/film comparison,
127	perhaps that the books are better?
128	Cassie: [inaudible]
129	DH: Okay, thanks very much. … ▮▮▮
130	Olivia: Yeah, I'm Olivia, I'm in Year 10 and I'm not really reading anything at
131	the moment, if I'm being honest, so …
132	DH: Okay. So can you cast your mind back to when you were …what was the
133	last book that you read or the last thing that you read?
134	Olivia: Er, so I do a lot of reading of, like, scripts but then that's not really, that's
135	because of other things, but I guess, kind of, um, it was quite a long time ago ..
136	DH: Okay stick with the reading of scripts, um, … and … and what you were
137	about to say 'I do a lot of reading of scripts but I don't really think that that's
138	reading' … Tell me, tell me a bit more about that …
139	Olivia: Okay, I guess, I suppose it's because … when you're cast as a character
140	… you kind of have to read … the scripts, so, I don't really … I think of it as just
141	kind of … doing what I'm told, I'm told ..
142	DH: okay
143	Olivia: to learn certain lines …
144	DH; If that's all right? That's really interesting. So what was the last script that
145	you had to learn?
146	Olivia: Er, 'Hairspray' That's a musical. And I've got a new script that's … that
147	I'm getting soon that I need to learn for a new musical that I'm in.
148	DH: Okay, so would you say quite a lot of your time is spent learning?
149	Olivia:. Yeah, I'd say, Yeah.
150	DH: Okay … Lovely. Thank you very much. ▮▮▮! Hello!
151	Tom: Hello, I'm ▮▮▮. I'm in Year 8 and at the moment I'm reading 'The
152	Recruit', part of the Cherub series.
153	DH: Yeah, I know that well.
154	Tom: Yeah, so I've just started reading it because my bother recommended it to

155	me because he's like, 'Oh yeah, it's a really good series' and …
156	DH: Yeah
157	Tom: and I quite like the feel of it because it's, like, your, you feel like you're in
158	the moment well yeah and it's about a boy and his mum dies and basically he
159	gets into a foster home and little does he know, his room mate part of, is ex-
160	recruit of a spy organization, run by, it's not run by children but it's, like, made
161	up of children. Er, so it's basically the idea that children …spy on adults because
162	who's gonna think that, um, a child is gonna spy on an adult, it's normally an
163	adult spying on an adult. So he gets entered into this place and, er,
164	um, I'm halfway through and I'm just up to the part where he's finished his
165	swimming exams because he couldn't swim before, um, and he's, um, he's just
166	about to do his first course, which is quite tough …
167	DH: Great and this … this is … is this likely to lead to you reading more in the
168	series, do you think?
169	Tom: So far, yeah.
170	DH: Okay, lovely thank you. Jacob!
171	Jacob: Hi, I'm Jacob I'm in Year Seven. Er, well I literally, yesterday I finished
172	rereading the Harry Potter series [laughter}
173	DH: Okay.
174	Jacob: Hmm. I really loved the books. I saw the movies after reading the books
175	for the first time. Some movies are better than the books but some books are
176	better than the movies, especially 'Deathly Hallows' ... the book's way better. I
177	think the book was way better than both movies.
178	DH: So you've said 'rereading' how many times have you read the series?
179	Jacob: Um, like, three times!
180	DH: Okay! So what is it about them that makes you want to keep going back to
181	them?
182	Jacob: Um, like, just the whole general magic and .. mystical creatures. It's
183	awesome
184	DH: So, has anybody else read the Harry Potter series? … Everybody but ▮▮▮▮?
185	Okay.
186	[Laughter] Okay. So given your interest in scripts, um, have you read 'The curse
187	of the …'
188	Jacob ' The curse of the [inaudible] child.
189	DH: Yes 'The curse of the
190	Jacob: That's a script
191	DH: Yes, because that's a script. Okay, okay, just don't feel, don't feel ashamed
192	or embarrassed if the answer to some of these questions are no and there's
193	nothing, this is not …, I'm not looking for right answers from you, okay. Um.
194	Thank you ▮▮, that was really helpful. And lastly ▮▮▮▮ tell us about you.
195	Kanisha: I'm ▮▮▮ and I'm also in Year seven and I just finished reading this
196	book called 'A place called perfect'.
197	DH: Okay
198	Kanisha: Um. It's about this, um, like, this girl who loses her family to this town
199	called perfect but, like, everyone acts really strange, like, perfectly and they have
200	to wear these glasses so it's, like, a different world and so she meets this, um, boy
201	who's, like, kind of like part of another world which is, like, so like, there's
202	perfect and then there's a wall and then there's, like, another world where all the
203	not perfect people go. So they're trying to figure out the mystery of why everyone
204	has to wear glasses and why everything's so perfectand, like, people start
205	changing and forgetting things, like … For example when the girl had
206	a mother but then the mother forgot her because, like, she wasn't being … the
207	girl wasn't,like being perfect enough for the town so that I think ..
208	DH: Wow … sounds fascinating. Okay, so have you worked out what, what the
209	secret of being perfect is?

210   Kanisha: Yeah, and I finished the book …
211   DH: okay
212   Kanisha: like, a few days ago
213   DH: okay okay, so don't give the ending away
214   Kanisha: No.
215   DH: I've never heard of that, sounds fascinating. Okay. Thank you for that. I'm
216   hoping that will just give us a chance to, kind of, not be quite so anxious about
217   saying things. Um, over the course of the five times that we meet we are going to
218   explore quite a lot of questions about reading … um … that's … that you've sort
219   of started giving some clues to at the moment. But today I'm really interested in
220   exploring a little bit more what you think reading is. So to help us with that
221   conversation I've got two activities that I'd like you to be involved
222   in.   I'm going to first will show you some pictures … and what I want you to do
223   is to choose a picture that you think best represents what reading is. S o let me
224   just sort of spread them out … so that you can see them all and if you see a
225   picture that you like … just grab it okay. So what do … What is reading? And
226   do any of these pictures, for you, capture what you think reading is? Okay so
227   Daniel's gone … got one, great. Just grab one. [Long pause] If you can't make
228   up your mind … grab two … or if you want to grab –
229   [inaudible chatter]
230   DH: okay well you always share okay. [Long pause] Okay, lovely. So some of
231   you were really decisive straight away your hands went for… then others are a
232   bit more mmm, I'm not sure … So, who wants to go first? Thank You ▮▮▮▮ Go
233   on.
234   Tom: Right, so …at first, I was, like, this doesn't really makes sense.
235   DH: So for the purpose of the tape just explain what it is
236   Tom: er, so it's a caterpillar. Um, er, and it, er, kind of describes reading for me
237   'cos I'm a slow reader and these are quite slow.
238   DH: Yep
239   Tom: it kind of describes how I read, not, like the kind of reading that I read.
240   DH: Oh, okay, interesting. Carry that on a little bit more because I think there's
241   quite a lot about what you're saying there so you're saying you're … you're slow
242   and there's a, kind of,
243   you, … When you say you're slow what do you mean by that?
244   Tom: Ur, I don't; really … I haven't really … I probably haven't really read as
245   many books as the people around me, so …
246   DH: Okay
247   Tom: Cos, I read quite slow, like, I don't want to say how slowly I read but, ur, I
248   read [inaudible]
249   DH: Does that mean because you take your time
250   Tom: I take my time, yeah.
251   DH: Okay so … I don't want to put words into your mouth but I think … there's
252   something in
253   there that … the caterpillar is taking its time.   What's it doing
254   Tom: Um
255   DH: in the picture
256   Tom: er, its crawling along a leaf
257   DH: yeah, and what happens to a caterpillar
258   Tom: oh it's …
259   DH: after its eaten … plenty
260   Tom: okay, yeah, so it turns into a butterfly?
261   DH: Okay, so does that sound like anything to do with reading to you?
262   Tom: yes
263   DH; Go on.
264   Tom: so, a caterpillar starts off slow and after, as it gradually eats more, so as you

316

265   gradually read more, you will get quicker and stuff, and you'll become, like, more
266   knowledgeable with what you're reading.
267   Okay. Lovely. Thank you very much. Go on Holly.
268   Holly: Can I say something about these?
269   DH: Yeah
270   Holly: I was thinking, like, when I finished a book or something it kind of like
271   raises my self-esteem. I don't know … it just makes me feel a bit more smart,
272   makes me feel a bit more, like knowledgeable as well, so I think that's maybe
273   like, like, I dunno, like, how he's like talked about it like that it makes me relate
274   to that one as well. So, I dunno, like, that's why I
275   think, that's why I … like … obviously I like the book and everything, but I
276   honestly do think that's probably one of the big reasons why I do read, to
277   probably, like, I dunno, it just makes me feel like, smart. I dunno, it sounds, like,
278   silly, but I think, like, I think that's a big part of it, so, like …
279   DH: I think you're in the company of readers. I don't, I don't think we should be
280   ashamed of the feelings that we have about reading. I think that's really helpful
281   what you've just said. Um, anybody else, so does that sort of sound the same for
282   some of you, this idea that it does something to you?
283   Daniel: Yeah
284   DH: Okay, who wants to go …
285   Daniel: [inaudible]
286   DH: Okay ▮▮▮▮, go on
287   Daniel: I picked this one. It's, like, all the pictures of the planets and I think its
288   cos, like, books are meant to be mysterious, you're not mean know what's gonna
289   happen.
290   DH: okay it's a bit like exploring … space
291   Daniel: yeah
292   DH: Lovely. [pause] ▮▮▮, go on.
293   Cassie: I relate to this, um a rocket ship. It's almost being transported to another
294   world when you're in a book.
295   DH; Yep
296   Cassie: and I'm quite a fast reader and rockets go quite fast.
297   DH: Um, okay. So completely different to ▮▮▮ and also connected to ▮▮▮▮,
        this idea of a rocket taking you into an unknown space that you're going to
298   explore. Great! ▮▮▮?
299   Jacob: Um, I chose the sponge and a picture of someone throwing a basketball
300   into a hoop. Um, the reasoning for the sponge is cos I feel that when you read
301   you're kind of sponging up the information and the ideas that the author has used.
302   And for the basketball I was thinking about like reading is fun and so … and
303   basketball is fun and so …
304   DH: okay lovely. So, it's a direct comparison, great. Thank you! Um, who else
305   hasn't been? ▮▮▮▮ go on.
306   Olivia: I chose the flame, like the fire thing
307   DH: Yeah
308   Olivia: because I think the good book's like, meant to start off your imagination,
309   um, which sometimes it doesn't for me. I struggle with reading just but a lot
310   books don't, like, make me think or feel anything. So then I think. … but then a
311   good book is meant to spark off something in your brain and meant to make you
312   want to read on
313   DH: Okay, so when you say a good book is meant to … where's that … where do
314   you think that idea's come from, that you have in your head that it's meant to
315   spark your imagination?
316   Olivia: Er, I think a lot from people around me because I have a lot of friends that
317   read a lot
318   DH: Yeah

319   Olivia: and I don't and so, um, my mom as well. Like I have, like my. my mum's
320   a massive reader and she's like, read this this will, you'll really enjoy it but then
321   when I start reading I'm just, like, well this isn't my imagination I can't really
322   imagine and picture what's going on
323   DH: okay. So you're aware that it might be doing something for other people that
324   it doesn't seem to be doing for you.
325   Olivia: Yeah.
326   DH: That's quite interesting. What do you do if you read, if you're reading a
327   book that's not sparking your imagination? Are you someone that persevere and
328   tries to get to the end in spite of that or do you stop reading?
329   Olivia: I stop reading. I'm the type of person to just give up. I don't persevere.
330   DH: Okay. Do you see it as giving up?
331   Olivia: Yeah
332   DH: Okay that's really interesting because I think if I'm not enjoying a book I'm
333   going to stop and find something that I will enjoy. It's not about giving up, it's
334   just, life's too short and there are too many other books. You said, so even
335   though, it's interesting the language that we use isn't it, some people see it as
336   giving up, other people see it as a there's too much of a world to explore, I'm just
337   going to explore in a different direction. Okay. Interesting. Anybody else feel
338   that it's a bit like this flame? Okay and do you … is it a flame that goes out for
339   you or do you think it is a flame that a good book sparks your imagination like a
340   flame?
341   Dawid: Yeah, well a good book definitely it is like, feels way more like, really
342   involved in everything, I feel like if there's a really good book, you're, like,
343   really, like experiencing all the emotions of it
344   DH: Okay, lovely. What was your picture
345   Dawid: Oh, it was, like, fireworks. So I though that, like, sometimes when you
346   start reading a book, it's like, just like a firework, you don't really see anything
347   that's happening but then, like, I don't know, maybe like, when all the action
348   starts, it's like, well, the firework, like, explodes. Er, like, everything just, like,
349   starts, becoming more interesting. 'Cos sometimes, I don't know, like, some
350   books have like a slow start and they might not be the best at the beginning but I
351   feel, like, sometimes, once you get into like, like further into the book it, er, it
352   starts becoming, like, way more interesting … when everything starts happening.
353   DH: Okay, lovely. A bit like you said with your book, there was a moment when
354   you realized what the secret was
355   Kanisha: Yeah
356   DH: like a kind of firework exploding. Lovely. Tell us about your picture █████.
357   Kanisha: um mine was similar like, um, how a good book, you'll be able to
358   imagine and everything you see, and [inaudible] that'll like transport you to that
359   place it so …
360   DH: So, you've chosen the hot-air balloon and … because it's about transporting
361   you somewhere? Okay. Anything else about what's going on in the picture which
362   is like reading for you?
363   Kanisha: um, kind of, like when you're reading you're not really like, in your own
364   world anymore, like, you get, like, you're just distracted by the book.
365   DH: Okay lovely thank you very much. Is that everybody? Has everybody said
366   something about their pictures? Great. Is there a picture here which you think,
367   actually, readings, I can't see how reading has got anything to do with that,
368   There's nothing to do with that at all.   You think the Jelly beans ████? Go on.
369   Tom: see, I was thinking about this because I was looking around the table and I
370   was, like, like, is there an odd one out, and then I realised, like, yeah, there is,
371   'cos reading is like, what does reading have to do with that?   Like, some people,
372   like, it's a bit weird, they might, like, get hungry when they read
373   DH: Okay

374	[laughter]
375	DH: Okay, ███ See, I was thinking, like, that every book is different, like,
376	every colour is different on the jellybeans
377	Tom yeah
378	Jacob: You never know what you are gonna get …
379	DH; Oh, that's interesting, like the Harry Potter beans …
380	Jacob: laughter, yeah
381	DH: you're not quite sure whether it's a gonna be a good flavour or
382	Jacob: Yeah, his every flavour beans
383	DH: Yep, um, can you see that …
384	Tom: Yeah, now I can
385	DH: Okay
386	Jacob: Yeah now, I think I know an odd one out
387	DH: It's a, it's a possibility rather than a definite. Yes ███?
388	Dawid: It's like, um, it's kind of like, is it or is it not, it's kind of in the middle
389	DH; Yeah, lovely. Jacob?
390	Jacob: yeah, sort of the, …, multi tool thing
391	DH: The Stanley … the swiss army, er, knife?
392	Jacob: Swiss army knife – that's the name. But I couldn't think of it. Anyway,
393	um, when you're reading, you're not, its kind of like a multi-tool, well, I mean it,
394	I don't know if reading is a multi … well, I mean it could be. It could help you
395	with different emotions that …
396	DH: Anybody else want to comment on the idea that Swiss Army knife ..? If you
397	can't make a connection you don't have to that's fine.
398	Jacob: maybe like every chapter is something different
399	DH: Yeah, okay
400	Jacob: Like, lots of different tools
401	DH: yeah, yeah [Long pause] I have heard another, another person say that, um,
402	when you read you use lots of, lots of different, reading is lots of different things,
403	you have to use lots of different skills. It's almost like each skill is like a tool, do
404	you know? You have to read the words, you have to use your emotions, you said,
405	and actually you need to carry those tools with you because you read different
406	things in different ways and each one of those tools might be useful to you.
407	Thinking about what you were saying about scripts. If you're trying to learn a
408	script, you have to use a certain set of tools to help you remember. Do you
409	see...? That, that's a possible explanation but if you don't, if that's not what you
410	think, that's fine. What about any of the others?
411	Daniel: I was wondering about the brick wall…
412	Various: yeah, yes
413	DH: Go on.
414	Daniel: well, because with reading, like you're meant to like, kind of, go on, like,
415	the journey, if you know what I mean.
416	DH: Yeah
417	Daniel: with reading, but a brick wall just stops you,
418	DH: So this is the opposite of what you think reading is?
419	Daniel: Yeah
420	DH: Okay, lovely. ███, you …
421	Daniel: It could maybe be like a dilemma, like you're stuck and you don't
422	know what to do?
423	DH: and how would that ...? What …? In a book or … by a book? Tell me what
424	you mean by ..
425	Daniel: … in a book, like, if the main character's got trapped,
426	DH: yeah
427	Daniel: he's just like, in a brick wall, like, he doesn't know what to do
428	DH: Okay so it might represent the point in the book when the character's

429	reached a dilemma. Lovely. Jack? Go on.
430	Jacob: Um, I was thinking maybe the brick walls, like, you're closing everything
431	else off and just having you in your own separate space and the brick wall is the
432	only thing cutting you off from everyone else .
433	DH: Oh, okay, interesting
434	Jacob: so …
435	DH: ████?
436	Tom: Oh, I was kind of, like on the same idea as him, inside the book, 'cos I was
437	reading a book a couple of years ago, er and it was basically everything is going
438	well for this character and then, every thing's been stopped by a metaphorical
439	brick wall.
440	DH: Okay, lovely.
441	Tom: It's like everything goes wrong at one point.
442	DH: Okay, brilliant.
443	Olivia: It could be that some people struggle to read. So it's just like a barrier
444	because not everyone is gonna be able to easily just flick through a page and read
445	really easily and understand every single word that, kind of, is on the page. So it
446	could just, kind of, be a wall that there's, like, there's something that stopping
447	them from actually understanding the story.
448	DH: That's a really interesting idea. Thank you ████. So it's not the book, it's
449	not what's in the book itself that's the brick wall it's the, for the reader themselves
450	Olivia: its … yeah
451	DH: there's some kind of barrier that's stopping them from reading. So you've,
452	you've been somebody that's been quite vocal so far in the group, saying actually
453	I'm surrounded by people who read and love reading and I'm not like that. Does
454	that feel, do you feel that there's a brick wall for you?
455	Olivia: Yes.
456	DH: Okay, what would knock the wall down?
457	Olivia: Um … ooh, maybe taking away my distractions, but then … I guess,
458	yeah, just take away my distractions. And also maybe a book that I relate to,
459	because I think, like, my mum … she gives me a lot books that are, like, a lot
460	older and also books that are kind of, I don't relate to at all. And if I read
461	something that I kind of relate to, I understand where the character's coming
462	from, I'm more gonna be, I've read books in the past where I've more, I
463	was more, where I understood when the characters coming from and that made it
464	easier for me to not, to carry on.
465	DH: Okay lovely. You were nodding at some points there, ████, as though there
466	…
467	Cassie: It's really difficult to read a book with a character that you don't relate to.
468	DH: Okay.
469	Cassie: … where the narrator, if its first person, that person's making decisions
470	that you don't relate to, its very hard to read.
471	DH: Okay. Can you give me an example of a book that you've, or a text that
472	you've been reading recently where that's happened.
473	Cassie: Not really.
474	DH: Okay. Cos that's really interesting and contrast to the idea that a book takes
475	you somewhere different. Do you see, if a book takes you somewhere different
476	that you might imagine that the character, you're not the character in it you're just
477	imagining what's happening to someone else, but you're saying that's only
478	possible if you can relate to the character? Okay, lovely. We've been talking
479	about these pictures for quite a long time thank you. You've given me some
480	really lovely ideas to take away. I want to do something now which is going to
481	sort of build on that a little bit and ████ you gave me a really good opening for
482	that discussion, um, because you said you talked about the brick wall being a
483	metaphor, um, and actually we use metaphors quite a lot in in the world to try and

484 help us to explain things, experiences. And I want to think about what happens,
485 thank you much for that, what happens if we try to use metaphors for reading. So
486 what I've got here is a sheet with some unfinished metaphors, including one at the
487 bottom where you can make up your own metaphor entirely. What I would like
488 you to do, is to have a go at finishing off some of these metaphors. You don't
489 have to work from the top down and in chronological order, in the order that I
490 presented them. Choose our metaphor that you really like the sound of to
491 finish
492 Jacob: What is t … I don't know how to spell the last few words?
493 DH: Don't worry about the spelling, just write, er, in a way that makes it easy for
494 you to read okay. Don't worry about the spelling. [Long pause] A bit like the
495 picture, choose the metaphor that you that that most attracts you rather than, don't
496 start
497 Jacob: With the top one, I don't know how to do the because part.
498 DH: Okay. Don't worry.
499 Jacob: Okay.
500 [Long pause]
501 Holly: Can the metaphors be, like, the same, because I dunno, I feel like a book
502 can be like anything, you know, so, like, so if you were like an animal, or like, a
503 place, or … I just think it can be anything.
504 DH: Do you think the explanation that you're giving for each of the metaphors is
505 the same every time?
506 Holly: Yeah
507 DH: That's fine, that's fine.
508 [Long pause]
509 Jacob: When it says place does it have to be like a country or like a actual…?
510 DH: It's entirely up to you. For some people it might be a country, for others it
511 might be a type of place.[Long apuse]
512 DH: Okay finish off the one that you're on. And then choose the metaphor that
513 you think, is your favourite, the one that you think best captures what reading
514 means to you, that you're happy to share with the group. Okay. Go on then
515 ███████.
516 Daniel: I think if reading could be an animal it would be a monkey because books
517 can jump like from, like, they could just jump all over the place, from like happy
518 to sad.
519 DH: Excellent. That's really interesting idea. Thank You. ███████?
520 Tom: so mine relates to one of the cards as well. If reading, er, were a food, it
521 would be jelly beans because, um, if you don't read the bag, you don't know what
522 you're getting .
523 DH: Oh. So you're talking about the blurb.
524 Tom: Yeah, so the blurb kind of like describes what's in the book and if you read
525 the ingredients on the back then you know what you're getting and it's like a pack
526 of jelly beans.
527 DH: Absolutely. Lovely, excellent. Thank you ███████ ███████?
528 Cassie: If reading were a food it would be ice cream because you can get it in lots
529 of different genres and flavours and you can branch out into different ones that
530 you might like and some you might not like.
531 DH: Okay, excellent, thank you. ███████?
532 Jacob: If reading were the weather it would be rain, 'cos, I, like, you can have
533 different types of rain like soft, really like hail, and, yeah I don't know how to
534 explain …
535 DH: No, no, that's a good explanation. So there are lots of different types of
536 weather in the same as there are lots of different types of reading. Okay, lovely.
537 Holly?
538 Holly: Okay, I put if reading were a food it would be a roast because after you

539	finish a book you feel content and full, so …
540	DH: Excellent. That's a lovely idea, thank you. We'll come back to you █████, I
541	just want to see if any of the others
542	Kanisha: Um, and I mean I think reading what colour would be like, I couldn't
543	really think of one colour so maybe lots of different colours cos it could be like
544	bright and happy, like a happy book or it could be like a dark colour and sad or
545	like red and like dangerous
546	DH: So more like a really big multi pack of pencils, um with lots of different
547	shades and colours. Is that what you're trying to say is █████?
548	Kanisha: Yeah.
549	DH: Okay lovely thank you. Um, █████?
550	Olivia: Um, I put if reading were a sport it would be rugby because you have to
551	tackle different problems within the book.
552	DH: Ah, okay. So when you're talking about problems, do you mean problems as
553	the character or problems as the reader?
554	Olivia: Um, as the character, but also sometimes as the reader.
555	Okay, that's a really interesting idea too, thank you. █████?
556	Dawid: Er, if reading were a place it would be anywhere and everywhere
557	because a book can take you anywhere you like really.
558	DH: Okay so it's more about the place that it's transporting you to than the place
559	that you're in when you read.
560	Dawid: Yeah.
561	DH: Okay, interesting. █████?
562	Tom: Um, so I put, if reading were a colour it would be white because you can
563	make any colours out of it.
564	DH: Ah, okay. So it's about a base.
565	Tom: Well, not any, many.
566	DH: Okay, lovely. Last one, █████?
567	Jacob: Um, this is the one I made up um at the bottom. If reading were a person
568	it would be the main character because they are the structure of the book.
569	DH: Okay
570	Jacob: so you've got the main like
571	DH: okay so it could be anybody but the most important thing is the person, the
572	main character of the book.
573	Jacob: Yes because they, then hold up, like, they're, without that main character,
574	you know, your story doesn't have a person for it to be round so it doesn't look
575	like again I don't know how to explain it.
576	DH: No, no, no, that's what this, that's what this activity is all about because I
577	think reading is really hard to explain isn't it. Um and even though we're all on a
578	group of readers we were all coming up with lots of different ideas about what we
579	think it is, about what it does to us but what happens when we do it um, so that's
580	what I'm trying to understand, that's what I'm interested in researching, is finding
581	out what do we think it is. Before we move on to the last thing has anybody got
582	any ideas on their sheet, that they would really like to share or have we sort of
583	exhausted the options?

Remainder of focus group and transcript related to setting up gap task and next

session, and therefore excluded from coding process.

Appendix 3.7c: School A FG1 – Transcript 1.3 (post- focus group discussion)

1   DH: Okay. Thank you Ms Griffiths. So tell me, what did you make of the focus
2   group? What did you make of the things that they said:
3   Ms Griffiths: I thought it was really interesting. I was really, um, I thought that the
4   range of different, kind of insights into their opinions on reading were really
5   interesting. Um. I liked the fact that we had such a range. When you put … the
6   photographs and things on the table, I liked the fact that there were so many differing
7   kinds of insights into that. Um, and it's nice when you have young people, I think that
8   it's, it's, you know, they're, they were offering perspectives that I hadn't actually
9   initially thought of and
10   it was quite interesting to hear their perspectives on it.
11   DH: Okay. Were there any, were there any particular ideas that they came up with
12   that were a surprise to you, or that the that will, that you're particularly interested in
13   or … excited by or ..?
14   Ms Griffiths: Oh, I find I, I was quite interested in the fact that the majority seemed
15   to have a really positive, um, outlook into reading and what it does for us and, and the
16   insights that you can get and where it takes you. And then I liked the fact that Olivia
17   had that, kind of, different viewpoint. I thought it was nice to have that bit of a
18   contrast, actually between the way that she was discussing how her reading made her
19   feel and her approach to reading and how the rest of the group were, were
20   approaching it. I thought that that was, that was quite an interesting um, that was
21   quite an interesting …
22   DH: She was an interesting young lady to listen to actually. I thought it was really
23   interesting that she can, she doesn't consider her reading of scripts as
24   Ms Griffiths: as being reading, yeah
25   DH: being reading and that she's surrounded by, she described herself as being
26   surrounded by
27   Ms Griffiths: readers, yeah
28   DH: readers which is really interesting about in terms of recognizing her tribe, you
29   know
30   Ms Griffiths: Yeah, yeah
31   DH: and, and herself as being out of that.
32   Ms Griffiths: She seemed, as well, to be very much concerned, she concerned with
33   what other people's opinions were. Not, not concerned by it but it was almost as if
34   her answers were dictated potentially by what she had heard from other people.   She
35   was almost kind of giving us the answers, I think, that she maybe thought we want,
36   wanted to hear.
37   DH: That's interesting, okay, that's interesting.
38   Ms Griffiths: No, not in a, not in a major, I don't think that she was, you know, trying
39   to, kind of, tailor her responses, you know, for example, I think it was, where she was
40   talking about, um, one of the images that she, um, that she had picked, and it was,
41   maybe the flame, I think
42   DH: Yes
43   Ms Griffiths: and she was saying about all kinds of different characters how they can
44   be
45   DH: She talked about that's how it ought to feel
46   Ms Griffiths: Yes

47 DH: and that it doesn't always
48 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, yeah
49 DH: so I see what you mean that she was giving the answer that she thought we were
50 hoping to hear
51 Ms Griffiths: yeah
52 DH: but it was interesting that she didn't present herself falsely
53 Ms Griffiths: Yes, yeah
54 DH: She did say
55 Ms Griffiths: Yeah,
56 DH: she was open about this is not what happens to me
57 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, this is what's supposed to happen but I don't feel like that
58 DH: yeah and I thought that …
59 Ms Griffiths: This is what other people feel about reading, I don't particularly feel like
60 that
61 DH: Yeah, yeah, that's a good point, actually
62 Ms Griffiths: you know.
63 DH: So you said, if I could take you back to your observation that you felt that it was
64 really, it was really interesting and exciting to hear them talking positively about
65 reading and, um, was that a surprise to you?
66 Ms Griffiths: I think it was a surprise in the, the sense that it was, er, being an
67 English teacher, I think we really get that … being an English teacher at secondary,
68 you get that real, you sometimes get a feeling that there is a bit of a barrier and that
69 they get to this point and they always give you the same response 'oh I used to love
70 reading I loved reading at primary and, but I don't really do it very often anymore' or
71 'I don't really like it anymore. I don't like books' and I don't know whether it's the
72 sense that they feel as if, because of their peers they have to speak like that and then
73 actually taking them out of that, out of that environment and putting them into this
74 group where actually it was okay for them to say 'oh, yeah, I really like that. Oh I
75 was reading this book and it was really interesting' and it's actually really, you know,
76 it was really nice for me to actually get that, that insight that actually, oh well we do
77 have some readers here you know.
78 DH: So do you think that this, having been part of that experience, means that you'll
79 look at those students differently?
80 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, I definitely do think it would. I. um, I feel particularly with, um,
81 with BPP7 and when she was talking about the fact that, oh you know, I just never
82 feel as if I can connect with, with books and there's all these people trying to give me,
83 you know, ideas of what to read next and I was thinking, er, I wonder if she would
84 like this book, you know, I know, you know I can really recommend this particular,
85 um, book for her. It made me feel as if I wanted to, you know, give her a nudge in the
86 right direction because I do love reading, because I do it, and so often I felt, you know
87 all of this, I really, you know, I think that it would be really great to actually inspire
88 her to, to love reading and then it kind of gave me a bit of a better idea of who I could
89 talk to about reading in my classes as well, you know.
90 DH: Okay, so … that kind of, that kind of conversation doesn't happen in English
91 lessons at the moment?
92 Ms Griffiths: I think that …it, it does but it's not perhaps as central to what we do in
93 the sense that, you know, we're obviously following a curriculum and we have things
94 to do and what, you know, and we, and I do, I love talking about, I love talking about
95 reading. I love talking about the texts that we study and I love poetry and I love
96 discussing, you know, the ideas that they come up with but I guess on reflection I
97 maybe don't, just naturally say to them 'oh well, you know what do, what do you
98 think about reading?' and 'Do you like reading? What are you reading?' You know
99 it's only if, potentially, something else sparks a conversation or somebody, you know,
100 somebody has a book out on the table or there's something, you know,
101 DH: Yeah

102 Ms Griffiths: that it has to, kind of, be something, that's, yeah, put the, the
103 conversation in, that particular direction rather than, maybe, it being kind of
104 completely at the forefront.
105 DH: Yeah. Okay. I really liked the moment when, um, they had, I thought you're
106 right they had lots and lots of really different ideas, it was really exciting hearing all
107 the different things. It was also really interesting, did you spot the, um, when their
108 ideas were very similar to the ones
109 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, yeah. [Laughter]. I thought I was being really insightful
110 [Laughter].
111 DH: Yeah, see, I really enjoyed that.
112 Ms Griffiths: I really enjoyed that as well.
113 DH: I really enjoyed that moment of thinking there's some parity
114 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, yeah
115 DH: there's a point of connection in, between the way that you're viewing it and the
116 way that they're viewing it and then that was quite comforting
117 Ms Griffiths: yeah, yeah, I know
118 DH: to see that, that sort of reflected. What did you think of the activities themselves,
119   the pictures, the pictures and the metaphors?
120 Ms Griffiths: Yeah. I thought it was really interesting. I think that it's, it's, when you
121 look at things from a metaphorical point of view, I actually think that you get more of
122 those insightful ideas. I think that yeah, it just, you know, because reading is so
123 symbolic, you know, and it's very difficult to pinpoint so actually by bringing those
124 images into it and thinking 'oh well you know if it was a colour', if it was something
125 that you couldn't, you know, you can't quite put your finger on it, I actually think that
126 it allows the conversation to open up a lot more and it just becomes a little bit more,
127 and yeah, the, the dialogue becomes a little more interesting and they all kind of
128 wanted to, even, you know, you could see that when one of them, you know, one of
129 them is offering kind of an interpretation it was like 'oh yeah, yeah, I thought
130 that' or 'oh I, you know, I agree with this' or 'Oh no, I don't think' that
131 DH: Yeah, I'm hoping that as the focus groups, um, develop and they become more
132 comfortable in each other's company that they will naturally do that
133 Ms Griffiths: Yeah
134 DH: so that it will become a discussion and a conversation rather than
135 Ms Griffiths: yeah, putting hands up
136 DH: It did feel a bit stilted at times but you're right they were
137 Ms Griffiths: trying to kind of jump in
138 DH: wanting, and yeah, but they were a really lovely bunch so thank you for setting
139 that up and yeah, I really look forward to seeing what they say in their reading
140 histories.
141 Ms Griffiths: Yeah, great
142 DH: Brilliant.

Appendix 3.7d: School B FG1 – Transcript B1.1 (pre focus group discussion)

1 DH: So. To give you the concept, every time we meet … I'll meet you first … I will
2 do with you, what we then do with the students
3 Ms Curtis: Okay
4 DH: and it's really important that we do … you, that you do it first … rather than do it
5 after … because we want you to … one of the, one of the, er, purposes of the
6 research is to compare …what you say with what they say
7 Ms Curtis: okay
8 DH: so yours is first
9 Ms Curtis: okay, interesting
10 DH: so, the first, er, the first … focus groups are going to focus in particular on
11 perceptions of reading … and how using metaphor and image elicitation can help
12 talking about reading
13 Ms Curtis: okay
14 DH: so there are some pictures in front of you here. Um, do any of these pictures …
15 represent reading for you? If they do, why?
16 Ms Curtis: um, yes they do. I would say … the open windows.   Um, the open
17 windows. I'm not sure which way up they go, um, but … that, um, metaphor of …
18 especially the way they just open out into sky … um … it's that endless possibility …
19 that a story can open up in your imagination, I think. Um [long pause] Funnily enough
20 it actually reminds me of, um, imagery that goes through one of my favorite books
21 Jane Eyre
22 DH: okay
23 Ms Curtis: when she's at a moment in her life where she's off seeing possibilities and
24 considering future opportunities and she makes a big change. She always stands at
25 the window and looks out at the landscape … and I think that that especially the idea
26 of being … the freshness of the air that's out there in this image can kind of like,
27 revive you and rather than the sort of the stuffy air that's …been circulating for a
28 while, the ideas in your mind, you can have a …
29 DH; lovely, thank you, yeah
30 Ms Curtis: you can … new things or new stories
31 DH: yeah
32 Ms Curtis: maybe, also the bee …, on the daisy? Um, I think the idea of … looking
33 for something and finding it in a story and finding that it kind of nourishes you in a
34 way. I don't know the biology of bees … but I think it's something to do with that but
35 the idea that there's something sweet … to be found but also he's quite a fuzzy bee,
36 the way that they sort of the pollen would stick to them as they fly away so the way
37 that a story might stay with you or characters like Jane Eyre.
38 DH: mmm
39 Ms Curtis: Mmm. Maybe the lighting of the match … um … it's an interesting image
40 that you've chosen because … I said it's the lighting of the match … the idea of
41 something sparking and beginning to burn. I suppose the way that stories might … or
42 reading might … turn a light on that wasn't there before, um. Although also a match
43 burns down quite quickly … and I would say that reading … the idea that might, um,
44 form in your mind hopefully would last longer than a match. But that first spark, I
45 suppose, is when it burns the brightest, when you just first start reading something.
46 Um … what else?
47 DH: is there anything that it isn't?

48 Ms Curtis: Um …for me as a reader … I don't feel that it would be a brick wall. I feel
49 like the brick wall … is a bit of a block, a blockage … and for me reading would be
50 like a gate, through the wall … um, a way, to I suppose with, the same as with the
51 window, a way to access … ideas and stories and experiences that maybe had been
52 closed off to me before so I wouldn't … go with the wall. Um, I'm also not sure about
53 the Swiss Army knife. … Mmm … Maybe the way the image that all the different
54 tools are open, maybe there are things that you learn from reading that you never
55 know when it's going to come in handy or when that piece of … that that moment that
56 you empathised with, or that character or the struggle or even just one line that stayed
57 with you, you're not sure when it's going to come in useful maybe? Um, I don't think
58 it's shredded paper (laughter) It makes me sad.
59 DH: okay
60 Ms Curtis: Um … yeah …
61 DH okay
62 Ms Curtis: yeah?
63 DH: Lovely. Thank you
64 Ms Curtis: okay
65 DH: great
66 Ms Curtis: That's alright. My pleasure.
67 DH: the second part was, you mentioned beautifully at the beginning actually,
68 almost as if you knew…
69 Ms Curtis: oh!
70 DH: that, um … metaphor can be quite a helpful way of explaining or describing an
71 abstract concept in order to make it sort of more concrete
72 Ms Curtis: okay (laughter)
73 DH: so there's a series of metaphors there
74 Ms Curtis: Oh, okay
75 DH: would you like to have a go at articulating a reply … to any of those. It doesn't
76 have to be all of them, but any that jump out at you
77 Ms Curtis: okay. If reading were a place … it would be the cozy … well is it a place?
78 So I was going say the coziest armchair on a rainy day … because … if you have …
79 the luxury of some time to read and you don't need to be anywhere else or doing
80 anything else and that is … that is the dream, I think, um, so I think that would be
81 the easiest … if that's the sort of thing that you had in mind … to say if it was a place,
82 I can just imagine … I don't have this chair in my house, one day I will, just a really
83 squashy chair, maybe with a footstool. I'm just … yeah … that luxury of time and
84 … and I suppose the weather as well. I would say a rainy day, not because … it's
85 miserable or kind of … or any of those negative connotations but because it gives you
86 the … chance to stay inside and read and … it's quite comforting I think. Um, I don't
87 know about sports or .. if reading were an animal? There's too many different things.
88 I don't think you could pin it down to an animal. [Long pause]. If reading were a food
89 it would be an entire table of cakes.
90 DH: laughter
91 Ms Curtis: and I think, I mean, maybe just to look at. I don't think if you ate the
92 entire table of case you don't not feeling a bit sick and I don't think you could get sick
93 of reading but the feast for the eyes, I think … just the excitement of knowing there's
94 gonna be, it's gonna be good, that anticipation I think … Yeah, I think those would be
95 the ones that I could maybe say … I don't know what to say about an animal
96 DH: no it's ok. It doesn't have to be .. If it doesn't fit, let's not force it.
97 Ms Curtis: okay
98 DH: I'm gonna stop,
99 Ms Curtis: sure?
100 DH: because I'm conscious that they're waiting

Appendix 3.7e: School B FG1 – Transcript B1.2 (Focus group discussion)

1   DH: Thank you very much. Okay so, just to warm us up a little bit can you tell
2   me, each one of you, and it doesn't matter who goes first, what are you currently
3   reading and why do you like reading it?
4   Jude: I'm reading an Alex Rider book called 'Snakehead'
5   DH: Yep
6   Jude: Er, I , um, I just read it 'cos it, I've been reading the series for a long time.
7   DH: Okay. What's it about?
8   Jude: Er, it's about a boy whose parents have died in a, er, because they work for
9   the CIA so they've been targeted by terrorists.   And he's having to go around the
10   world helping the FIB and the CIA, um, investigate some people called
11   snakehead, who do illegal, um, like, weapons transfer and everything
12   DH: okay. Thanks ▮▮▮. So you said that it's part of a series and you've read
13   most of the series, that you've really enjoyed.
14   Jude: Mmm
15   DH: Okay. Thank you. How about somebody else?
16   Kayla: Um, I've read, I've started reading 'The 100' by Cas Morgan because I got
17   interested with the TV show and then decided to read the book, because, yeah
18   DH: What's that? I don't know it, so what's that about?
19   Kayla: It's a dystopian future thing where there's only so many people left up, er,
20   in space because there was a nuclear war on the earth. And it's been many years
21   and they decide to do a test where they send a hundred, um, they send a hundred
22   kids down and the kids have to try and work out how to get, like how to survive
23   and everything.
24   DH: Okay. And it's a television programme that you watched first?
25   Kayla: Yes
26   DH: Okay, lovely. Thank You. ▮▮▮?
27   Jessica: I'm reading 'The Hunger Games'
28   DH: Are you? So did we, did ▮▮▮ talking about dystopian fiction make you
29   think of the connection between the two or?
30   Jessica: Er, no
31   DH: Okay
32   Jessica: I watched the films and then I read the books.
33   DH: Okay, so this, is this your first time reading it?
34   JESSICA: Yeah
35   DH: And are you enjoying it?
36   Jessica; Um, it's okay.
37   DH: Do you want to tell me a bit more about what you mean by 'it's okay'.
38   Jessica: Well, the first one, the beginning was a little bit boring and I didn't really
39   get into it, but then when they, er, went in the arena and then it was good after
40   that.
41   DH: Okay, thank you very much ▮▮▮. ▮▮▮ you were going to say something
42   and then
43   ▮▮▮ jumped in. What were you going to say?
44   Lauren: Er, I started reading a new book. I haven't, er, read it before. Um, I
45   forgot what it's called. It's by Michael Morpurgo, I think it's called 'Running
46   Wild'. Um, I haven't started it
47   yet.
48   DH: Okay. Do you like Michael Morpurgo?
49   Lauren: Yeah, I've read all of his other books.

50   DH: And what is it you like about Morpurgo in particular?
51   Lauren: U, he normally writes about, like, animals. Like, there's this book, um,
52   about, er a cat that goes missing in like a time of war or something.
53   DH: Okay. Thank you very much. What about you ▇▇▇?
54   Lauren: Um, I'm reading 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen.
55   DH: Are you? That's one of my favourite books, Pride and Prejudice.
56   Emma: I'm reading it because we had to pick one to read for English, like a
57   classic book.
58   DH: Okay.
59   Emma: I haven't really started it yet.
60   DH: Okay. So what made you choose 'Pride and Prejudice'?
61   Emma: Um, because I've heard of it before and I was interested in, like, a book
62   that had been written a long time ago.
63   DH; Thank you very much. What about you ▇▇▇?
64   Lily: um, I'm reading 'The Great Gatsby'. Um. 'Cos I've read it loads of times
65   and I haven't read it for about a year so I thought I'd just read it again.
66   DH: Okay, do you like rereading things that you've already read before?
67   Lily: Yeah, 'cos it's always, like, little bits that you've missed and then … yeah.
68   DH: Thank you very much and last but not least, Sid?
69   Evan: I have been reading the book called, um 'His Dark Materials: Northern
70   Lights'
71   DH: Oh yeah
72   Evan: Yeah. It's the first part of the trilogy which just, which has just started
73   airing on BBC.
74   DH: Yeah and do you like the book? Are you watching this television
75   programme at the same time?
76   Evan: Yeah
77   DH: Okay, so are you, er, are you keeping up with this television programme or
78   are you ahead or behind or …
79   Evan: I'm keeping up
80   DH: Okay and what do you think of it so far?
81   Evan: It's actually really good. Cos I did cry at one bit.
82   DH: Did you?
83   Evan: Yeah
84   DH: Which bit did you cry at?
85   Evan: when like, she found out like, that er Lord Ansfield was her dad.
86   DH: Oh, okay. So did some, I heard some murmuring, are both of you watching
87   it as well?
88   Kayla: Um, I've also read part of the book but for some reason I stopped. I can't
89   remember why.
90   DH: Okay. And are you liking the television series
91   Kayla: Yes
92   DH: Good, lovely.   Okay, so thank you for sharing those me, just to give us an
93   opportunity, I'm hoping that, as we spend more time together and as you spend
94   more time together as a group that you'll start to feel a bit more comfortable in
95   each other's company and it won't feel quite so turn takey and you'll feel that
96   you'll want to interrupt each other and talk to each other, rather than across the
97   table at each other. But for now, thank you very much. That's a really good way
98   to start. What I'm really interested in is to find out from you a little bit more
99   about what you think reading is. Right, so in order to help us in our discussion,
100   I've got a whole series of pictures here. What I'd like you to do, is to see if there's
101   a picture amongst these which you think helps to explain what you think reading
102   is. And if there is, feel free to pick the picture up. So just spend a few minutes
103   having a look at the pictures. Is there a picture that you think is like reading. If
104   you see one that you think is straightaway, pick it up.   Okay so you two have

105   gone for the same picture. Okay so ███ can go first and then ██ if you can't
106   find anything else, then you can have that one. Okay?
107   Lily: I want that one actually. [Long pause].
108   DH: If you can't make up your mind, then take, take two then. That's great.
109   [Long pause].
110   You've found two have you?
111   Kayla: I'd have probably gone for the keys as well.
112   DH: Okay. Now. I can't see your sticker? Lucy you were really clear you saw the
113   pictures and you said 'that's the one I want'. Tell us a little bit about the picture
114   you've chosen and why.
115   Lily: Um, I think the keys represent reading 'cos every time you open a new book
116   It's kind of like, unlocking a new world and also its, and I chose this one 'cos it
117   like, represents exploring it, 'cos as you read books, it's kind of like exploring
118   DH: Lovely
119   Lily: a different world
120   DH: Okay, thank you very much. Um, Is a boat a good picture for explores,
121   exploring? Is it .
122   Lily: Um, it's li,e. cos it's travelling, it's kind of, when I think of boats I think of
123   pirates and they explore and … yeah
124   DH: Okay. Thank you very much. ███, you wanted the keys as well didn't you?
125   Do you want to take the keys from ███ and tell us about why you felt keys were
126   a good, a good picture for reading.
127   Evan: Because it sort of like represents when you, when there's a plot twist then
128   you're discovering the mysteries of the book.
129   DH: Okay, so why is that like keys?
130   Evan: Because it's like, um, unlocking the mysteries behind the door
131   DH: Okay, lovely. Thank you very much. And then you also picked up the
132   window, didn't you. Do you want to tell us about that one?
133   Evan: Yeah because, when you like finish a book it's sort of like opening a
134   window of, like, imagination.
135   DH: Okay, lovely. Thank you very much. ████. You've got … tell us about
136   your picture.
137   Kayla: E, I picked the planets because, um, er, when you're on earth you read a
138   book and it feels as if you could, um, depending on what the books about, you
139   could travel to different,
140   um, I don't know what they're called, um, planets.
141   Evan: Different worlds, different universe
142   Kayla; Yes.
143   DH: Okay, lovely. Thank you very much. ████, tell us about yours.
144   Jessica: Very similar to Kayla's ,it's like the spaceship, it, like, reading can
145   transport you to different, like universes and like visualizing, visualizing stories
146   and everything can, like take you somewhere else.
147   DH: Okay lovely. Thank you.
148   Emma: I picked fireworks because I kind of thought that, like when you start
149   reading a new book a firework goes off in your head, cos you like, start thinking
150   what it could be about and you get really excited about reading it.
151   DH: Okay, thank you very much. I can't see your sticker, remind me of your
152   name.
153   Emma: ████.
154   DH: ████. Thank You ████. So reading a book is like a firework going off
155   in your head.
156   Is that what you said?
157   Emma: It's 'cos you get really excited about what it could be about.
158   DH: Lovely. (whisper) speak up a bit 'cos they're talking really loud and I can't
159   hear you very well. Thank you. Lauren, what about you?

160   Lauren: Er, I chose the basketball on the edge of the hoop, 'cos, like if there's
161   like a .. if there's like, um, if a plot twist happens in the book then it's like you
162   don't know what to expect next, just like on edge waiting for something to
163   happen.
164   DH; Okay, so how's that like a basketball goal?
165   Lauren: 'Cos you don't know if it's going to go off the edge or score.
166   DH: Oh, okay. Lovely. Thank you very much. Jude what about you?
167   Jude: I was thinking the caterpillar eating leaves, it's nibbling away at parts of the
168   story and then its growing, its imagination, it's growing an extent where you can
169   picture it fondly in your head.
170   DH: Nice.   Some really nice ideas. Thank you. Now you're really interested in
171   this egg picture aren't you? [Laughter]. Tell me about that.
172   Evan: It's like, because, like the thing is if you reread books like too much the
173   book could, sort of like crack and, like, you could, like
174   Lauren: It could become boring
175   Evan: as in crack, it could be, like you sort of find out stuff that like you never
176   noticed before.
177   DH: Okay
178   Evan: You can think of like some conspiracy
179   Lauren: Surprise inside the egg, so you crack it, like new stuff
180   DH: Oh okay
181   Evan: Yeah
182   DH: that's interesting. So you're saying it is like an egg,
183   Lauren: Yeah, the book is the egg and then you crack the shell and then there's
184   something nice inside
185   DH: okay
186   Evan: yeah
187   Lauren: yeah
188   DH: Is it always nice inside?
189   [indistinguishable] no no
190   Evan: because like, for example, the book Coraline, like we read it last term
191   [laughter] and like when you look into it, it's really like dark, really
192   Lauren: And morbid
193   DH: Did you like Coraline?
194   Evan: Yeah
195   DH: Even though it had stuff in it that you didn't expect or that wasn't very nice
196   mm-hmm
197   DH: Okay, lovely. So we've seen two people get really excited about a picture of
198   an egg and Ruth I can't look at whether you're trying to make your ideas fit it so
199   you could talk about the egg or whether you genuinely think reading is like an
200   egg
201   Evan: More of a Kinder egg
202   DH: Okay rather than a
203   Ruth: Yeah, because there's a nice surprise inside of a Kinder egg.
204   DH: Okay
205   Ruth: Or you can get a really bad toy.
206   DH: What about the others? Are there any here, that you think, actually I would
207   pick that picture last because it really isn't, reading isn't that for me.
208   Lauren: Brick wall
209   Jude: Brick wall
210   DH: okay that's really interesting. So, so why, why brick wall ██████?
211   Jude: Because brick walls are usually seen as something that's, like, that stops
212   you from going any further where, like, reading doesn't stop you, it, like, it can
213   help you further and it doesn't end and it's not just … I don't know how to word
214   it. It's not like, like a dead end.

215   DH: Okay, lovely. So this looks like a dead end and you're saying reading. ██,
216   what were you, what was your thought about the brick wall?
217   Lauren: Brick walls are like, they're really ugly and boring, so, but books aren't
218   like that that … that's fine.
219   DH: Okay, lovely. And you said 'nuts' ██?
220   Jude: It wouldn't really, I don't think it would really fit anywhere with reading.
221   Um, in the terms of picturing something in your head or er, them being different
222   books, I don't think it would really work.
223   DH: Okay, what about any of the others? Are there any other pictures that you're
224   quite interested in sort of thinking or talking about a bit more?
225   [inaudible] The match
226   [inaudible] yeah, the match
227   Jude: Um, yeah it's like, when you light a new match, when it burns down that's
228   the story, when you're about to end it, it's when it hits the end and, the flame is,
229   er, you picturing it, it's lighting up the image inside your head, of the book
230   DH: Lovely. Really nice.
231   Evan: Um, or the match could signify, like, when you get into a really good part
232   of the book, like, it could spark, like spark a fire in you, like make you want to
233   read on.
234   DH: Okay, lovely. Okay.
235   Evan: Er, the jelly bean
236   DH:Yeah
237   Evan: Because even if the book looks like something, then you actually try it and
238   read it, it might be different to what you expected.
239   DH: Oh, okay, so you're talking about flavours if the jelly bean. It's all the
240   different flavours. Okay, and so you might pick one thinking it's going to taste
241   fruity and it turns out to be something else.
242   Evan: Like, bamboozle beans
243   DH: Sorry
244   Evan: Like the bamboozle beans
245   DH: I don't know what that is.
246   Okay, So they're these jelly beans and they look normal but like it could be, like,
247   [inaudible]
248   Jude: One's a gross flavour and the other one's a normal flavour and they look
249   the exact same.
250   DH: oh, okay. So, er, a bit like the, that must, I bet the person that came up with
251   that came up with that from the Harry Potter books, you know, with the
252   Jude: yeah
253   Evan: yeah Berty Botts every flavour beans
254   DH: Absolutely. Okay. Thank you ever so much for those ideas. Now that's
255   really interesting, some really interesting thoughts here. Now I'm very clear, I'm
256   very conscious that, in coming to you and giving you these pictures, these are the
257   pictures that I found. Whereas actually there might be other ideas that you've got
258   going on in your head about what you think reading is that aren't captured in
259   these pictures. So what I've got for you now is a, a sheet with some sentence
260   openings and what I'd like you to do now, if you take one and pass them on, is, is
261   you can start anywhere on the sheet you don't have to start at the top and work
262   your way through the list, is to have a go at filling in some of the sentence
263   openings with your own thoughts and ideas about, er, what you think reading is.
264   [inaudible]
265   DH: yes of course you can. [Long pause].
266   Is mountain climbing a sport?
267   DH: Yes. [Long pause]. Don't worry too much about filling every one in. If you
268   can't think of anything to go in one of the spaces then just leave it.   If it doesn't
269   fit don't make it fit for the sake of it [Long pause]. Okay finish off the one you're

270   on and then I'm going ask you to
271   choose your favourite one from the ideas that you've completed so far. Okay.
272   Emma, would you like to go first?
273   Emma: Um, I put, if reading were a sport it would be football because you never
274   know, like who the ball's going to go to or whose going to score next.
275   DH: Lovely, okay.
276   Emma: Like, in a book, you never know what's going to happen next.
277   DH: Okay. So it's about … the unknown. Okay. And do you like that about
278   stories, about reading, about not quite knowing what might happen next? What
279   happens if you get, if you get a story then where it's a bit predictable? Do you
280   know I mean by that, where you can work out what's going to happen. Do you
281   keep reading or do you give up?
282   Emma: Er, I keep reading it but I just don't enjoy it as much, and I don't want to
283   read it as often .
284   DH: Okay. So do you ever, do you ever stop reading something because you're
285   not enjoying it? Or do you always go through to the end?
286   Emma: Mmm, I don't like stopping before the end of books.
287   DH: Okay. Why's that?
288   Emma: Cos I, er, even if I's really predictable, I still want to know what happens.
289   DH: Okay. Thank you very much. ███?
290   Lauren: Um, reading [inaudible] I don't know. Er, if reading were a food it
291   would be a lemon, 'cos some people like the taste and others hate it. Some
292   people like enjoy the way a book's written or the plot of it but other people might
293   not like it.
294   DH: Okay. So an interesting choice, a lemon.   Go, why, what made you choose
295   lemon?
296   Lauren: because I like them
297   DH: you like them? Okay.   In the same way that some people, are you, when
298   you're describing reading as a lemon do you mean reading is like a lemon or that
299   books are like lemons?
300   Lauren: I don't know. I would say books, not as much reading.
301   DH: Okay. Evan, what about you? What have you got?
302   Evan: I put if reading were a sport it would be cycling because no matter how
303   tired you get, you read on, wanting to know more.
304   DH: Okay. So do you ever get to a point with reading, like you would on a bike,
305   where if your legs were really tired and you couldn't cycle anymore you would
306   just stop and have a rest.
307   Evan; Yeah
308   DH: and then pick it up later
309   Evan: yeah
310   DH: Okay. So tell me a little more. So, what does it feel like being on a bike
311   when you're riding on a bike?
312   Evan: It feels … I don't know how to explain it really.
313   DH: How's that like reading? Being on a bike?
314   Evan: Because, like, you don't want to stop
315   DH: And what is it, what is it that keeps you going in a, in a book?
316   Evan: It's like wanting to know more.
317   DH: Okay. Thank you. Do you want to go next?
318   Kayla: Er, I put, if reading were a weather it would be snow because some
319   people think reading is cold but when you open a good book you warm up to the
320   idea of reading.
321   DH: Oh, that's a nice thought.   Thank you ███.   So it's the feeling that it
322   creates rather than what's actually inside, that you're trying to describe
323   Kayla: Yeah
324   DH: Lovely. So that's, that's what I was trying to unpick a little bit with you Sid,

325	about whether, whether it's the feeling of being on a bike that's like reading. You
326	know this idea, that you keep going
327	Evan: yeah
328	DH: You know, when you go down a hill really fast, you can't help yourself
329	Evan: I hate that
330	DH: Do you? Okay. I'm thinking, or the other way around, when you're trying to
331	get up a really steep hill feels like plodding through a book that you already know
332	what's gonna happen. It's a lot harder work, isn't it. What about you Jessica?
333	Jessica: If reading were a place it would be at the top of a mountain or a tree,
334	um, because it's difficult to get there but it's very satisfying once you do get to
335	that place.
336	DH: okay
337	Jessica: and like, like it's gonna be difficult to get, like for example, with some
338	books where, when I read Lord of the Rings for the first time it took me six
339	weeks to finish and that was a long time for me but, like, I did get to the end of it
340	so. And like, it was it felt nice to be able to finish the long book like that.
341	DH: Okay, excellent. So what, what was it about it that it took, that took so
342	long?
343	Jessica: I, I think it was more, like the, er, because at the time I was in, like, Year
344	4, so like the vocabulary was probably not what I was used to and things like that.
345	And, but it was an interesting story and so I just carried on
346	DH: So you persevered because the story kept you interested
347	Jessica: Yeah
348	DH: even though it was quite a lot of effort
349	Jessica: to get there
350	DH: to get there. Okay. And what was it like once you, you talked about it being
351	like the top of a mountain or the top of a tree. How's that being like getting to the
352	end of a book?
353	Jessica: Because it's not easy work to get to the top of the tree or the top of the
354	trunk mountain, so yeah, so it's like once you're up there you'll be proud of
355	yourself because it's difficult.
356	DH: Okay, lovely, thank you. ▇▇▇ what about you?
357	Jude: I can't pick between the animal or a place.
358	DH: So tell us both them
359	Jude: Well, if it was an animal I'd say a fish because it swims freely around an
360	ocean of imagination. And a place is space, because it's vast like our
361	imaginations.
362	DH: Okay. So for you then reading is, is about imagination. Both of those
363	things seemed, it seemed to me, oceans and space seem to have lots … Okay
364	lovely. Who hasn't been?
365	Charlotte: If reading were a food it'd be a sandwich because there's so many
366	different combinations and it's like you can customise it by choosing the, like,
367	one to your appeal.
368	DH: Okay, lovely. So what would your appeal be if you were choosing a
369	reading sandwich? What would it have in it?
370	Charlotte: Um, fiction. Probably a fantasy.
371	DH: Okay. You're nodding, You agree?
372	Kayla: Yeah, most of the stuff I've read has mainly been fantasy or dystopias.
373	DH: Lovely. Has anyone got anything else on their sheet that they would really
374	like to share that they think hasn't been mentioned already? ▇▇?
375	Kayla: I said that if reading were a place it would be a tunnel because if you think
376	a book is boring but you carry on reading you'll find light at the end at the end of
377	the tunnel.
378	DH: Lovely, that's a really nice idea isn't it. Evan?
379	Evan: I was just thinking that if reading were an animal it would be a caterpillar

380   because at the beginning it's like, like you don't know much about it but the end
381   you, when you finished it, you know all, like, you know mostly what there is to
382   know.
383   DH: Lovely. What happens to Caterpillar at the end? [Inaudible] Yeah when it's
384   eaten, it turns into a butterfly. So is that what getting to the end of a book is like
385   it's sort of
386   Evan: yeah
387   DH: you're a butterfly because of all the things that you've learnt or imagined or
388   experienced. Right, anybody else got anything else they want to contribute?
389   You have been talking quite a long time I don't if you know, we've been talking
390   for 35 minutes. It doesn't feel like that does it. That's been a long time. You've
391   done very well.   Thank you.

Appendix 3.7f: School B FG1 – Transcript B1.3 (Post-focus group discussion)

1.   DH: Okay, so tell me about what you thought about what you heard.
2.   Ms Curtis: hmm the, the images that they chose I think were really thoughtful.
3.   There was a lot about being taken to other places, being taken out of everyday
4.   life, that idea of space and exploration and also the sea came through as well
5.   when ▮▮▮ was saying that reading is like a fish
6.   DH: Yeah
7.   Ms Curtis : so there was a lot of those sorts of ideas. There was also a lot about
8.   the struggle of reading.
9.   DH: yeah I thought that was really interesting
10.   Ms Curtis: and that the idea that they seem to have read a lot of books that they
11.   have struggled with or that they found to not really engage them so I thought that
12.   was quite interesting. And I wonder if those are books, I want to know more
13.   about which books they were and whether they were books that they were sort of
14.   directed towards reading or read in class or if they're books that somebody got for
15.   them as a gift and so they felt obliged to read
16.   DH: Yeah
17.   OMT: or, someone recommended it and said 'ah, this great, you'll love it' and
18.   they sort of read it thinking 'I'm not so sure about this'. But it was quite
19.   interesting. There was just more about struggle than I was, than I really expected.
20.   Especially because, as a group, these, these are students who do enjoy reading so
21.   to hear even among them talk about the struggle of it, I think about the other
22.   students in my class and the struggle that they must be feeling as well. But yeah,
23.   I think those were the two sort of main things that I noticed as especially different
24.   from my take on things, the idea of is as a sort of an escape to other places, other
25.   worlds
26.   DH: yeah
27.   Ms Curtis: but then I'll say that it's a challenge and to finish a book is a real
28.   achievement. I thought ▮▮▮ was going to say something about the view
29.   DH: yes
30.   Ms Curtis: from the top
31.   DH: Yes I, I wondered that
32.   Ms Curtis: yeah, but it was about, it was definitely about the achievement
33.   DH: Yeah, it was about the journey of getting there
34.   Ms Curtis: Yeah.
35.   DH: than how it made you feel at the other end.
36.   Ms Curtis: Totally. Especially about reading Lord of the Rings. I can totally
37.   empathise with that.
38.   DH: yeah yeah
39.   Ms Curtis: that is a slog, but yeah the, the idea of that space and the view at the
40.   top, um, didn't really factor into her, um, metaphor.
41.   DH: No. I was quite interested in, too, in that she and ▮▮▮
42.   Ms Curtis: ▮▮▮ was here, ▮▮▮ was here
43.   DH: ▮▮▮ yeah. Both said, talked about struggling, but also persevering even
44.   when you are not enjoying it
45.   Ms Curtis: hmm
46.   DH: because that's very different from my own sort of feeling which is life's too
47.   short to be carrying on with something that you don't really enjoy

48. Ms Curtis: That being said when ▮▮▮ said that she wants to keep reading you
49. know to find, to satisfy, yeah if she thinks she knows where it's going to go but
50. she needs the satisfaction. I actually read a book over half term that I actively did
51. not enjoy. I didn't enjoy the characters. I've read many other stories by any many
52. other books by this, by that writer and I felt this is not her best work, the
53. character was just rehashing adult characters but I found myself reading it
54. DH: okay
55. Ms Curtis: even though I was actively, like this is really frustrating but, I don't
56. know, I'm committed now
57. DH: yeah so I'm just I mean I've just finished reading the Testaments and it's a
58. book I've been waiting 30 years for
59. Ms Curtis: right
60. DH: and the more I read it the more I thought, a bit like you've just said, this is
61. not Margaret Atwood's best work and it felt too much as though it was written for
62. the fact that it's now on television but I kept going with it in order to find out
63. what happened just
64. Ms Curtis: I didn't make it to the end of The Testaments
65. DH: oh okay
66. Ms Curtis: I listened to the dramatization on radio four, in little 15-minute
67. segments, and … was really gripped until I suddenly wasn't
68. DH: yes
69. Ms Curtis: and now it's not on iPlayer, on the sounds app anymore so
70. DH: okay
71. Ms Curtis: I, sort of, it lost me somehow
72. DH: yeah
73. Ms Curtis: it wasn't enough to keep me coming back every day to really see it
74. through. I think I was feeling that, and I've had this conversation with a couple of
75. others as well, like you say it's, it's almost … what's the word, it's quite novel to
76. to revisit some of those characters or to get the story so far down the line but it's
77. not enough, it didn't feel like there was …
78. DH: it felt like it was drawing the narrative in the television series to a close
79. Ms Curtis: I haven't seen the television series
80. DH: okay, so but I think
81. Ms Curtis: yeah
82. DH: and what's really interesting about what ▮▮▮ said is that, um, if you, …
83. that drive to complete it, I wonder how many how many other readers are like
84. that will drive to complete something
85. Ms Curtis: Yeah
86. DH: because the, the sensation of having finished it
87. Ms Curtis: yeah
88. DH: means more than the actual journey and enjoying the journey, do you know
89. Ms Curtis: is there a feeling of failure if put a half finished book back on the
90. shelves?
91. DH: maybe, maybe. We should ask them that next time shouldn't we
92. Ms Curtis: hmm
93. DH: and explore in their reading histories if there are any books there that they
94. haven't finished that they wish they'd had
95. Ms Curtis: interesting that ▮▮▮ said just at the end that he, he doesn't finish
96. books. I'd like to know what he means by that, um …
97. DH: So, did the information that they shared and discussed, um, did it chime with
98. what you already know about them as readers or is it a different kind of
99. information too?
100. Ms Curtis: um, so I know some of them better than others
101. DH: yeah
102. Ms Curtis: so … Lily, Jessica and Kayla are also in my tutor group so I've known

103.   them since they were in year 7. Katie's only just joined my English class but
104.   Lucy and Jenny I've been teaching since the start of year nine and then the
105.   others I only started teaching in September so that feels like a long time ago now
106.   but I do feel like I'm still getting to know them as readers
107.   DH: yeah
108.   Ms Curtis: Um, I think Evan is very happy to talk about what he's reading
109.   and he'll tell me what he's reading and we have talked about His Dark Materials.
110.   Um, but I think with the others and Lauren as well, she'll happily talk about when
111.   we've read a book together in class or in a library lesson. It's, I think, she's the
112.   kind of reader who really engages emotionally with the story and will be, um,
113.   vocally frustrated if a character has made a mistake or going the wrong direction.
114.   We read 'A Monster Calls' last term and Lauren was one of the ones wiping tears
115.   at the end. Um, so I think and I know with Kayla as well she has said in the past
116.   about reading being a way to sort of get away from daily
117.   things and just to be somewhere else.   Jessica, I know, is a big fantasy reader so
118.   yeah
119.   DH: So how, where's that knowledge of them as readers come from for you?
120.   Ms Curtis: I think it's the in-between conversations. It's not something that
121.   comes out of lesson time so it will be when they, if they arrive early in the
122.   classroom and they're chatting, Or if we, so in year 7 year 8 if we've got a library
123.   lesson we might have a bit of time stolen to have a conversation. Um, it's,
124.   actually it's making me realize it's not specific lesson time to have those one-to-
125.   one conversations.   There might be times if I say to them turn and talk with, like
126.   the start of term, for example, talk to the person next to you about
127.   what you have been reading but … practically I can't then speak to everybody.
128.   So it is definitely the in-between times.   I've also done a bit of a survey for my
129.   own understanding, just about what they think of reading and things and these
130.   were some of the ones that responded to the survey
131.   DH: Okay. So how important do you think it is to know that kind of information
132.   about them?
133.   Ms Curtis: um … I think hearing the way that they've discussed reading
134.   today, especially as an English teacher, it … I think it is essential. I think if
135.   you're, if, if you want to get the best from your students you need to know them,
136.   and as an English teacher, a big part of what you
137.   need to know about them is they're reading identity and you want them to feel
138.   confident to share that with you as well and I want them to know what mine is
139.   too, um, and I might share so with the year 7 I might talk to them about that at
140.   the start of the year but I don't know how far I then continue
141.   DH: yeah
142.   Ms Curtis: sharing that, … um.   Which of course is, um, if that's me as
143.   somebody who's hyper aware of the importance of teachers being visible readers
144.   DH: yeah
145.   Ms Curtis: then I'm now thinking about everybody else in school, all the other
146.   staff, um, yeah how many … how the weeks just fly past
147.   DH: yes, absolutely
148.   Ms Curtis: that perhaps haven't made the time to have these conversations
149.   DH; Yes, because I'm conscious, as I'm talking to you that I that I know that you
150.   understand quite a lot of the theory on, upon which this study is based so I don't
151.   have to ask you to make those connections, cos you already know that those
152.   connections are there
153.   Ms Curtis: yeah
154.   DH: but it's interesting still hearing you say, in spite of your knowledge of the
155.   theory and your own work,
156.   Ms Curtis: yeah
157.   DH: that it's still about capturing time

158.   Ms Curtis: yeah, it is
159.   DH: in between
160.   Ms Curtis: yeah
161.   DH: Yeah, so that's really interesting I'm also I just want to pick up with you to
162.   the comments that Kayla made about reading Pride and Prejudice
163.   Ms Curtis: oh Emma
164.   DH: Emma yeah using Pride and Prejudice and then she said that because we
165.   have to read a classic or something along those lines. Do you know where that's
166.   come from?
167.   Ms Curtis: That's come from me. It … this is me, trying something new. So, we
168.   do our Star reading assessment in September, January and July and … um, I
169.   usually just jump through that hoop, keep the data to myself and just keep on
170.   doing what I'm doing. And I've been doing that for a long time and I've, I've
171.   wondered if … now I'm talking to you
172.   DH: yeah
173.   Ms Curtis: I wondered, um, what impact that approach was having. And I
174.   thought, okay, so when we do our, um, our data collection in September, I'm
175.   going to set them a target to do independently, I'm not going to nag them, I'm not
176.   going to say 'now it's time to remember your targets' it's just 'Here's the thing I'd
177.   like you to do by Christmas' and so looking at the various kind of stages, …
178.   we're reviewing at the moment Dominic, Dominic and myself are reviewing how
179.   useful that software is and so this is like my last-ditch attempts to try to get
180.   something of value from it because I've always felt at odds with it
181.   DH: okay
182.   Ms Curtis: but it's not within my power to say, 'Let's get rid of it completely.'
183.   DH: So you mention the Star reader you, you get the, you get your data harvest
184.   in September, January
185.   Ms Curtis: and July
186.   DH: and you keep that data to yourself
187.   Ms Curtis: Usually
188.   DH: Tell me a little bit more, for the purposes of the recording, what the nature of
189.   the data is and why …
190.   Ms Curtis: You get, yeah, you get, you get a reading age
191.   DH: For the benefit of the recording, the participant is pulling a face
192.   Ms Curtis: yes reading ages make very uncomfortable and they often come out
193.   quite low. Um, I might just go and stop these guys from jumping around …
194.   [pause in recording]
195.   DH: So, you were talking about Star reader
196.   Ms Curtis; oh yeah yes
197.   DH: and you mentioned reading ages making you uncomfortable
198.   Ms Curtis: Yes. So you mentioned my knowledge of the theory and my own
199.   research and the conclusion that I've been coming to slowly is that in school
200.   there's two different types of reading. There's reading, this is where I'm now
201.   thinking about my whole target scheme, there's reading for pleasure and
202.   enjoyment which is what we've had the luxury of talking about here I think and
203.   there's the reading for purpose which is about them being able to access texts in
204.   all their different subjects and, um, for sort of the, you know, all the different
205.   levels of reading that they need to be quite proficient in, in order to not just
206.   access text in school but to access texts in the world, to watch the news and
207.   understand the implications of what's being said, that kind of thing.
208.   DH: Yes
209.   Ms Curtis: and there's sort of like a purpose in there and, and the reading for
210.   purpose is what I'm thinking we should be using the Star data for because we
211.   need to be able to share that information with teachers so that they can support
212.   their students better. So that is the one way that I think that that data might be

213. useful. But then, where I've used that to give them a target for their own choice
214. of reading I think it's about, um … It's really hard because the, you know, the
215. most idealistic, holistic thing would be if you want to read you read. If you don't
216. want to read I'll just keep putting great books in your path and see if you're
217. interested, um, but I can't force you to do it especially not in school because
218. we've talked about where you … sorry [interruption to discussion]
219. Ms Curtis: Okay
220. DH: so you were talking about using, about the tension between an idealistic
221. view of reading for pleasure, which as your role as a teacher is just putting great
222. books in front of them and hoping that some of them will stick
223. Ms Curtis: yeah
224. DH: um, and the more pragmatic target setting
225. Ms Curtis: yeah. What I've done for most of them, if they … if their reading age
226. is kind of putting up a bit of a flag that they might be struggling to access texts,
227. they might be struggling with their reading, then I've said, okay. I'm treating that
228. as a … as a signal that we need to have a conversation about their reading but
229. what I've said is, um, in a library lesson I'd like you to choose a couple of books.
230. I have said for some of them that they're within a range so that they, they and it's
231. a challenging range as suggested by the computer, but it's their choice and I'd like
232. them to just read two of those books between now and the end of term. So I'm
233. trying to give them the freedom of the choice within a range but also, um, I don't
234. think it's entirely harmful to say 'I would like you to spend more time reading and
235. I'm going to be asking you about it and you're going to be accountable for that
236. time' and I think that for Emma , and I think for Evan as well, because they're
237. because they are keen readers and they are going to be finding things to read and
238. spending that time reading, I thought I'm just going to give you the challenge to
239. choose a classic. And I didn't really specify what that meant, I allowed them to
240. interpret that, so Evan's chosen, he asked me, 'Does His Dark Materials count as
241. a classic?' and I thought yeah there's like a modern children's classic, I think it's
242. up there. And I know it was challenging and I knew, um, it was one of the
243. metaphors … it was caterpillar turning into butterfly, I'm thinking by the time he
244. reaches The Amber Spyglass that story is totally transformed to something that
245. you don't, you don't when you read the opening chapter of Northern Lights, you
246. don't see that it's going to end up on that sort of scale so I'm happy for him to be
247. doing that and I, Emma hadn't told me that she'd chosen Pride and Prejudice so
248. we hadn't had that conversation yet, um. But yeah, I think I just said, like, just
249. choose a classic to read by Christmas and I always remember not to bring you
250. into it but I always remember what you said about when you were 14 a teacher
251. gave you a copy of Anna Karenina, so I do think about that and, in terms of
252. maybe opening a door they didn't realize they had the right to go through yet
253. DH: hmm that's interesting that you remember that
254. Ms Curtis: hmm
255. DH: because obviously it's my history isn't it. But it's interesting that, because
256. the point, the whole point about that moment for me as a 14 year oldest wasn't
257. necessarily the book itself
258. Ms Curtis: yeah
259. DH: but that the teacher thought I was capable.
260. Ms Curtis: yeah
261. DH: so it'll be interesting to see whether Kayla has the same sort of
262. Ms Curtis: yeah Emma
263. DH: yeah same kind of response
264. Ms Curtis: yes
265. DH: interesting to see whether or not she loves it or whether she reads it
266. Ms Curtis: and thinks 'uurgh, what is this?'
267. DH: and feels that she has to persevere

268.   Ms Curtis: yeah, 'cos equally what I tried to, I think it might have been my mum,
269.   gave me a copy of Jane Eyre which I mentioned earlier when I was about 10
270.   DH: hmm
271.   Ms Curtis: and I didn't, I couldn't make it through the first chapter and decided in
272.   my head 'Urgh, don't read that' and then I didn't come back to it till I was maybe
273.   16.
274.   DH: yeah, so it's interesting that you said that. I'm just thinking about that Anna
275.   Karenina comment actually because that came out of reading history. I think
276.   that, I think the comment was made in the context, I think it was my sharing of
277.   my reading history
278.   Ms Curtis: yes, I think it was
279.   DH: so it would be interesting to see what they put ,what they choose to put on
280.   the reading history. So one of the things that I'm, I'm interested to find out is
281.   what they put on it
282.   Ms Curtis: hmm
283.   DH: to move on the discussion about what they think constitutes reading
284.   Ms Curtis: yeah
285.   DH: and what do they remember and what do they not remember, er, because I
286.   think ▓ was the only one who made reference to reading, that included reading
287.   that had taken
288.   place in the classroom.
289.   Ms Curtis: right, yeah, yeah, he mentioned Coraline, didn't he
290.   DH: yes
291.   Ms Curtis: yeah that's true
292.   DH: so it'll be interesting to see … that's part of the, part of the research
293.   question, one of the research questions underpinning the study is to look at the
294.   different spaces in … which is interesting because when you chose your
295.   metaphor the first thing you chose for the metaphor is about place
296.   Ms Curtis: yeah
297.   DH: because places or place, and space, are linked to one of the questions in
298.   the study.
299.   Ms Curtis: Okay
300.   DH: I'm trying to … I don't want to, I don't want to feed you,
301.   Ms Curtis: I understand
302.   DH: to bring you in a certain direction, directing you in a certain way, but, yeah,
303.   be interesting to see what comes out of their reading histories. So do you think
304.   the fact that some of them have already done it, will put them off doing it again?
305.   Ms Curtis: I don't think so because we haven't done it in this sort format.
306.   DH: Okay
307.   Ms Curtis: It's been, so for … actually, everybody does it in different ways in our
308.   English classes in year 7. So for Evan and Emma who are my current year
309.   sevens, um I have asked them to do it as a presentation. So as well as the
310.   exercise of thinking about it, there is the getting over the fear of standing in front
311.   the class, you know talking about themselves for a little bit. And some people
312.   have been more successful than others with it but I haven't put a huge amount of
313.   pressure on it. I know other teachers like ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ have got some
314.   fabulous, visual things that people have created that they're able to pull out the
315.   cupboard in September and say 'So, here's what a great reading river looks like.
316.   How amazing,' which obviously sparks more ideas so I, I don't think that it will
317.   be a, a barrier but I think that they might have already started to think about,
318.   they'll sort of understand the concepts
319.   DH: Yeah. Given that it is quite commonplace in the department for students to
320.   complete reading rivers, how much use do you think is made of the information
321.   that comes out of them? You've talked about the importance, in your in your
322.   view, of knowing as much as you can about the reading history of the students

323. that you teach. How much?
324. Ms Curtis: I think long-term I could be using them better. At the moment I use
325. the timing … it's before we go into a library lesson, so it's it gives me a chance to,
326. we have one or two students talk to us about their reading river before we go over
327. to the library for a reading lesson, so it might be that out of that we might start to
328. make connections. Like 'you read that as well could you make some
329. recommendations?' if they're kind of stuck with that author or there, I might drop
330. down the name of a book although it's a very long time since I actually went and
331. then ordered a copy. Um, but trying to just get that conversation going, because
332. I don't know how often, um, they will have a conversation about what they're
333. reading, especially that conversation among their peers, so I'm, so it's a more of
334. a short-term moment to talk about books rather than a long-term strategy to help
335. me get to know them better because by the time the next two weeks have gone
336. by unfortunately it's somebody else's turn to do a reading river and I've probably
337. not remembered very well, if I'm being totally honest which I think I should be.
338. DH: Well let's see what happens when they come back in January and see what
339. comes out of it. Um, can I just do a very quick round the table just tell me a
340. little bit about each of the students.
341. Ms Curtis: So Jude is year nine yeah he, I'm really pleased with his metaphors
342. actually, he's he's quite a quite a strong writer especially creatively and sort of
343. poetry and any work that we've done on inference and, and that sort of thing
344. he's, he's quite strong. I'd, in terms of, I think I said in my email to you, I don't
345. think he sees himself as a reader
346. DH: right
347. Ms Curtis: but I thought that that might be, he would be a valuable member of
348. the group because I think, I think there might be a reader in there
349. DH: Okay
350. Ms Curtis: If that makes sense
351. DH: Yeah. and I think you're right there is a some kind of reader somewhere in
352. there
353. Ms Curtis: I think he just needs the right kind of book
354. DH: yeah. Evan?
355. Ms Curtis: Evan.   Yes, year 7, reads a lot, super keen, wants to be a writer and I
356. think being in year 7, um, he's still got the enthusiasm that's obviously buoyed
357. him all the way through junior school so I just want to make sure that that
358. continues forever.
359. DH: Lauren?
360. Ms Curtis: Lauren's in year 8. She, I think, yeah, I think she does read a lot and
361. she enjoys, like, she's listened to a couple of my recommendations and enjoyed
362. things that I've suggested to her. She's, she's very good in discussions and I
363. was pleased that she was sort of piping up today and, um, yeah happy to share
364. what she thinks or speak up if she thinks somebody's totally misread a character.
365. Um, Emma is very quiet in English. She's in year 7 and I think she's the sort of
366. person, I was, I was a bit worried that in choosing readers I might be choosing
367. people who had naturally introverted and therefore might not be able to
368. contribute exactly what they want to say to a discussion group. So I think she
369. might fall into that category but she, she's, she did I think just did okay today but
370. I think she's very much the sort to, 'If I read a book then no one will bother me'
371. kind of vibe.
372. DH: There is going to be an opportunity at the end of the project for them to
373. reflect on having been part of the project
374. Ms Curtis: yeah interesting
375. DH: and whether they think it's been a benefit to them or … Be interesting to
376. see what she says in the light of that. Kayla?
377. Ms Curtis: Kayla's in year 9. She's, got, I think 4, or 5 brothers, and so and

378.   being in my tutor group I always feel like she might read in order to get some
379.   peace. Most of them are younger than her, um, so, um but she's, yeah she's, she
380.   works hard and yeah I think she must read a lot at home. Lily and Jessica are both
381.   year 10. Lily's very interested in Gothic stuff and I might need to make some
382.   more recommendations to her actually, because I haven't; spoken to her for a
383.   while about what she's reading and, er, she's happy to, I think she'd once she gets
384.   into something, she's, she'll read everything in the series and be really into it.
385.   Jessica's been talking about what she's been reading since the day she arrived in
386.   year 7, er, in tutor time. She's er, what's the word, when you read a lot? Not
387.   prolific because that's writing, I don't know what it is, she reads a lot and sort of
388.   gobbles things up. Yeah, but she, I think, could be bridging into reading things
389.   for adults now and she's still reading a lot of like, young adult teen fiction, so I
390.   think it might be time to, um, you know, reach a little bit further. She's been,
391.   like, she said she read Lord of the Rings when she was in year 4, so I think she
392.   should be moving on.
393.   DH: Lovely
394.   Ms Curtis: So, yeah, that's what I know about them
395.   DH: okay, great. Thank you

Appendix 4.2A: Table showing fiction texts referenced by participants

Author	Title
Austen, Jane	A Monster Calls
Blackman, Marjorie	A Pinch of Magic
Blume, Judy	A Place called Perfect
Blyton, Enid	Alex and Eliza
Clare, Cassandra	Animal Farm
Carroll, Emma	Boy 87
Dahl, Roald	Brave
Donaldson, Julia	**Casper the Prince of Cats**
Harrison, Michelle	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Horowitz, Antony	Cherub
Jeffers, Oliver	Cookie
Kaur, Rupi	**Diary of a Wimpy Kid**
Kinney, Jeff	**Divergent**
Muchamore, Robert	Each Peach Pear Plum
Rowling, J.K.	Five Minutes Peace
Rundells, Katherine	Flat Stanley
Steinbeck, John	Gangsta Granny
Sugg, Zoe	Geek Girls
Walliams, David	Going on a Bear Hunt
Wilson, Jacqueline	Goodnight Mr Tom
	Granny
	Harry Potter
	His Dark Materials: Northern Lights
	Coraline
	Holes
	How to catch a star
	How to Train your Dragon
	Hunger
	The Hungry Caterpillar
	Inheritance Cycle
	James and the Giant Peach
	Jane Eyre
	Kidnapping the Caribbean
	Little Foxes
	Lost and Found
	Love Simon
	Macbeth
	Marvin Wanted More
	Matilda
	Missing
	Mr Men
	My Mum

	Noughts and Crosses
	Of Mice and Men
	One of US is Lying
	Percy Jackson
	Peter Rabbit
	Pride and Prejudice
	Rapunzel
	Room 12
	Room on the Broom
	Running Wild
	Sharing a shell
	Side
	Skeleton
	Snakehead
	Songs and Rhymes from the Night Garden
	Stick Man
	That's not my fairy
	Terror Kid
	The BFG
	The Boy at the back of the class
	The Cat in the Hat
	The Curious Incident of the dog in the night-time
	The Emperor who hated yellow
	The Eragon
	The Fellowship of the Rings
	The Great Gatsby
	The Gruffalo
	The Highway Rat
	The Hobbit
	The Hunger Games
	The Lord of the Rings
	The Marvels
	The Maze Runner
	The Queen of Glass
	The Recruit
	The Skeleton Key
	The Spiderwick Chronicles
	The Tracy Beaker Girls
	The Two Towers
	There was an old lady who swallowed a fly
	Tom Gates
	Tracy Beaker
	Twilight
	WaterTower
	Wonder

Series	Character
Beast Quest	Alex Rider
Cherub	Biff and Chip
His Dark Materials	**Harry Potter**
Lord of the Rings	**Percy Jackson**
Maze Runner	**Tracy Beaker**
Twilight	Cassandra Clare

Emboldened data are data referred to by more than one participant.

Appendix 4.2B: Reading referenced grouped by category

Focus Group 1

Title

'I'm reading '**The Hunger**',' JESSICA, line 26

'I'm reading '**The Great Gatsby**'. Um. 'Cos I've read it loads of times and I haven't read it for about a year so I thought I'd just read it again,' LILY, lines 59-60

'I have been reading the book called, um '**His Dark Materials: Northern Lights**' … It's the first part of the trilogy which just, which has just started airing on BBC,' EVAN, lines 64-66

'I just finished watching Kim, reading '**Kidnapping the Caribbean**',' DANIEL, lines 41-2

'I'm reading … I'm almost finished reading this book called '**Alex and Eliza**' and it's, um, based on the musical 'Hamilton',' HOLLY lines 56-7

'I was about to start '**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time**',' DAWIDL lines 78-81

'I just finished reading this book called '**A place called perfect**',' KANISHA, 181-182

Title and author

'I've started reading '**The 100' by Cas Morgan**,' KAYLA, line 16

'I started reading a new book. I haven't, er, read it before. Um, I forgot what it's called. It's by **Michael Morpurgo**, I think it's called '**Running Wild**'… I've read all of his other books,' LAUREN lines 41-42

'I'm reading '**Pride and Prejudice** by Jane Austen,' OMP5, line 50

Title and character

'I'm reading an **Alex Rider** book called '**Snakehead**' …, I just read it 'cos it, **I've been reading the series** for a long time. JUDE, line 4-6

Title and series/genre

I was just reading '**The Maze Runner' series** … I'd read other books like it and then I saw that recommended so I went for it,' CASSIE lines 97-103

'At the moment I'm reading '**The Recruit', part of the Cherub series**,' TOM, lines 142-143

Appendix 4.2C Photographs of Jacob's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2D Photographs of Kanisha's scrapbook

Certificate of Recognition

This Certificate Is Awarded To

For Dedication & Excellence

Well done for completing your reading homework, you are clearly a very dedicated reader and very diligent student.

12th November 2019
Date

Mrs Franklin
Awarded by

BPS

THE GRUFFALO
JULIA DONALDSON   AXEL SCHEFFLER

OLIVER JEFFERS
LOST and FOUND

ROALD DAHL
MATILDA
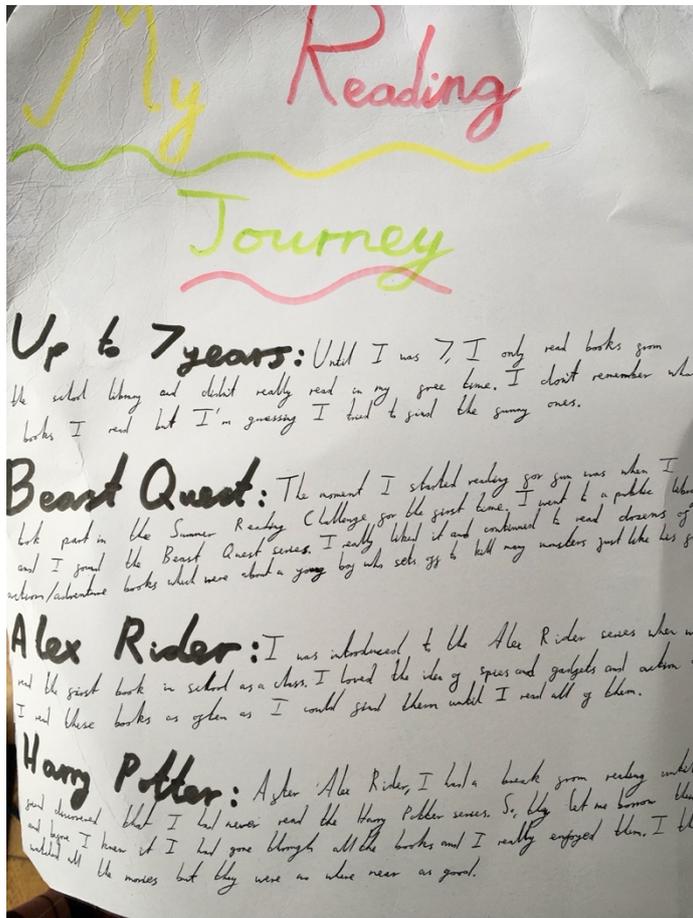Illustrated by Quentin Blake

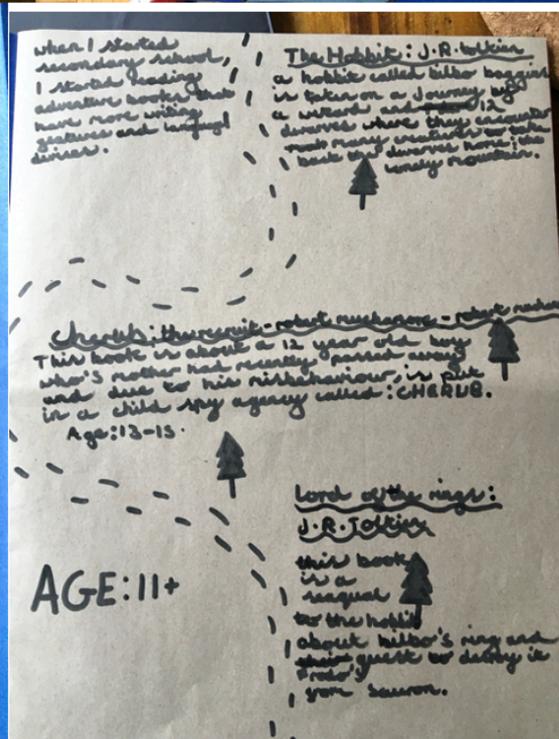TONY DiTERLIZZI & HOLLY BLACK
SPIDERWICK
CHRONICLES
THE FIELD GUIDE

Appendix 4.2E Photographs of Dawid's scrapbook

My Reading Journey

Up to 7 years: Until I was 7, I only read books from the school library and didn't really read in my free time. I don't remember what books I read but I'm guessing I tried to find the funny ones.

Beast Quest: The moment I started reading for fun was when I took part in the Summer Reading Challenge for the first time. I went to a public library and I joined the Beast Quest series. I really liked it and continued to read dozens of action/adventure books which were about a young boy who sets off to kill many monsters just like his father.

Alex Rider: I was introduced to the Alex Rider series when we read the first book in school as a class. I loved the idea of spies and gadgets and action so I read these books as often as I could find them until I read all of them.

Harry Potter: After Alex Rider, I had a break from reading until I discovered that I had never read the Harry Potter series. So, they let me borrow them and before I knew it I had gone through all the books and I really enjoyed them. I then watched all the movies but they were no where near as good.
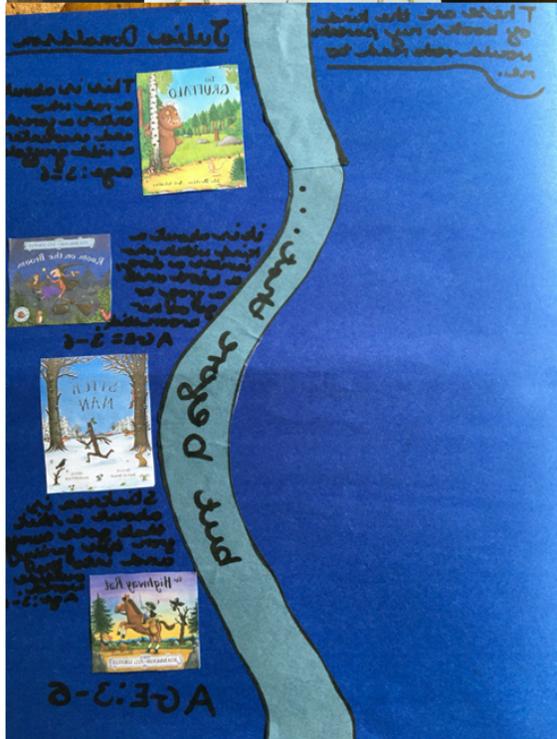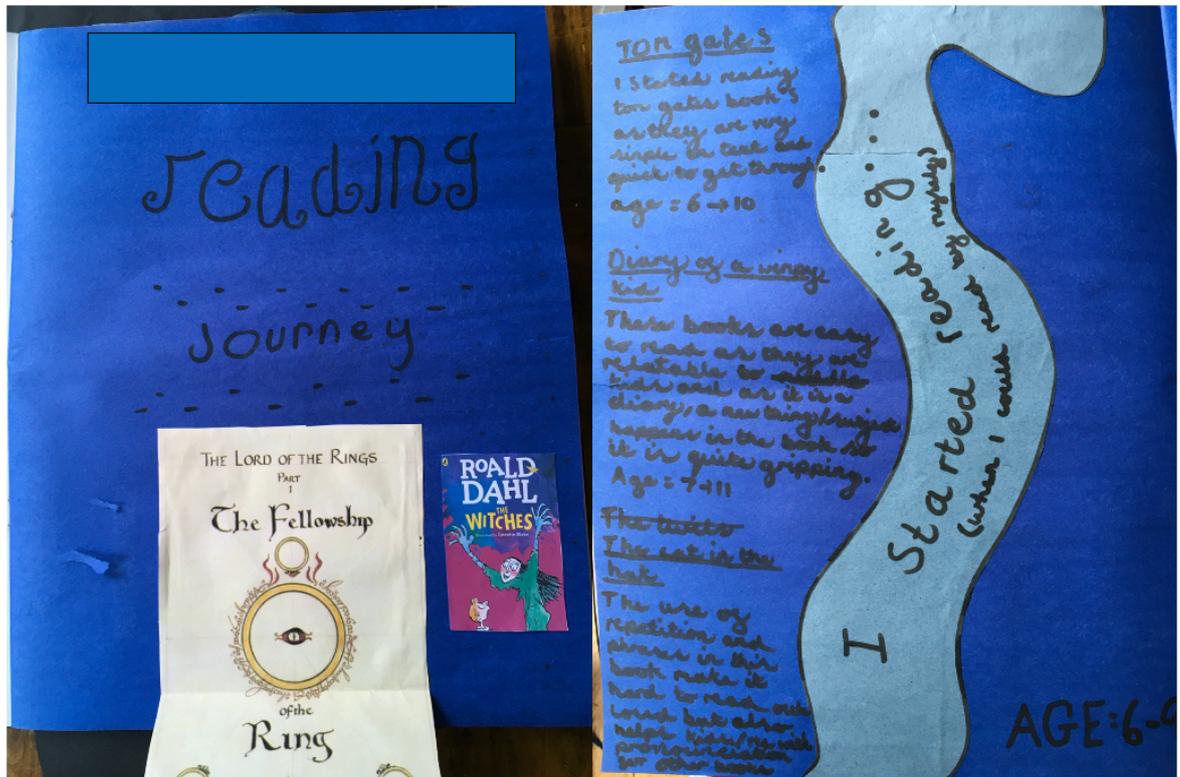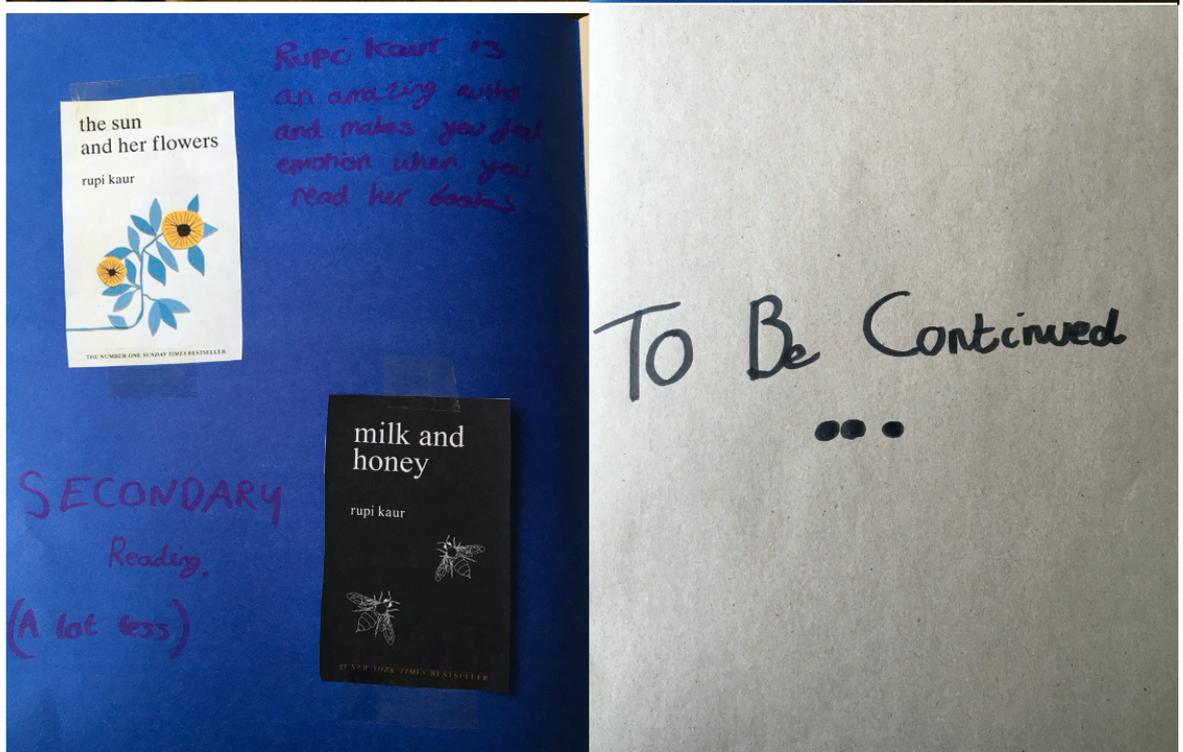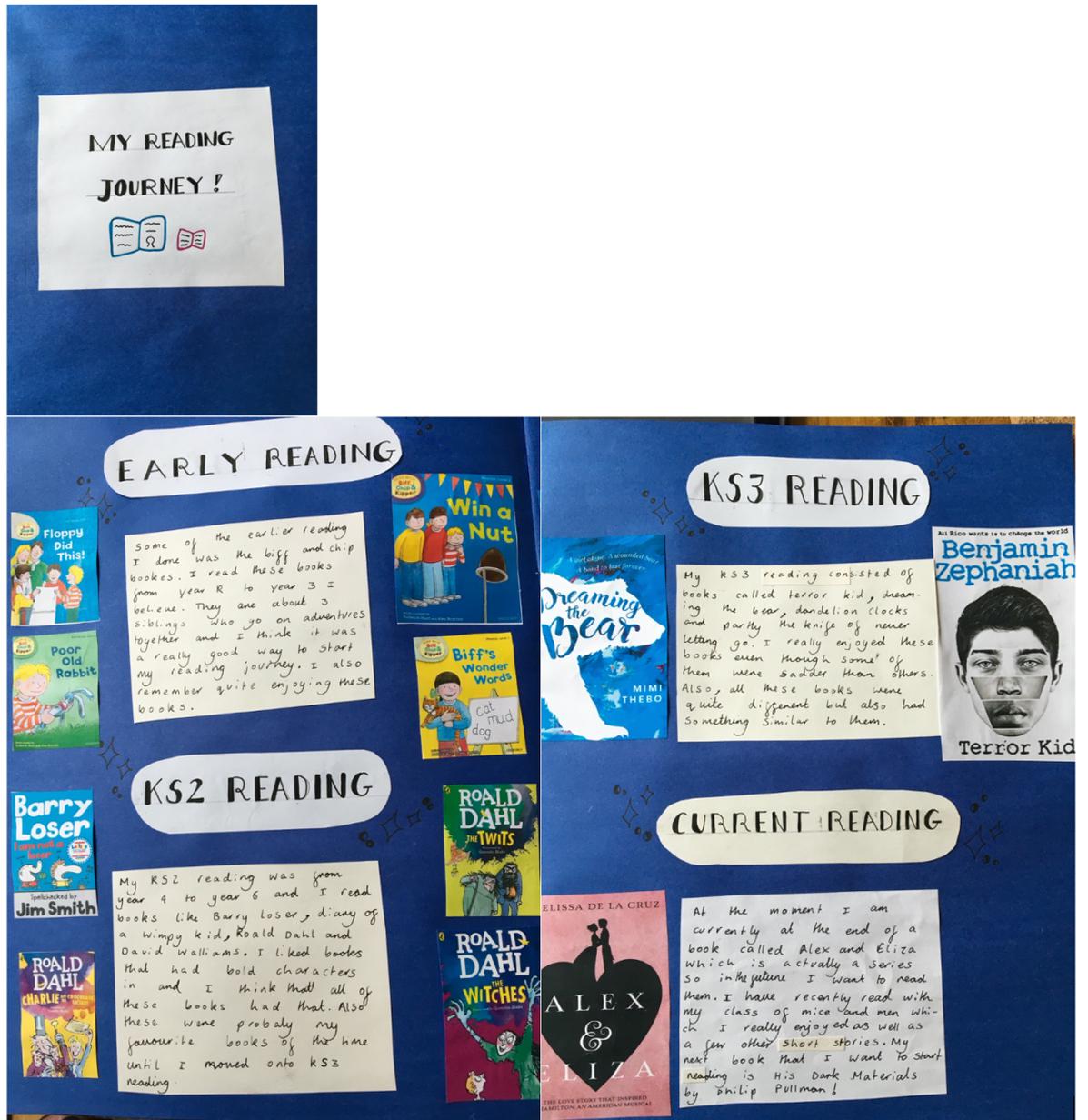
Appendix 4.2F Photographs of Cassie's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2G Photographs of Tom's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2H Photographs of Olivia's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2I Photographs of Holly's scrapbook

MY READING JOURNEY!

EARLY READING

Some of the earlier reading I done was the biff and chip bookes. I read these books from year R to year 3 I believe. They are about 3 siblings who go on adventures together and I think it was a really good way to start my reading journey. I also remember quite enjoying these books.

KS2 READING

My KS2 reading was from year 4 to year 6 and I read books like Barry loser, diary of a wimpy kid, Roald Dahl and David Walliams. I liked books that had bold characters in and I think that all of these books had that. Also these were probaly my favourite books of the time until I moved onto KS3 reading.

KS3 READING

My KS3 reading consisted of books called terror kid, dreaming the bear, dandelion clocks and partly the knife of never letting go. I really enjoyed these books even though some of them were sadder than others. Also, all these books were quite different but also had something similar to them.

CURRENT READING

At the moment I am currently at the end of a book called Alex and Eliza which is actually a series so in the future I want to read them. I have recently read with my class of mice and men which I really enjoyed as well as a few other short stories. My next book that I want to start reading is His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman!
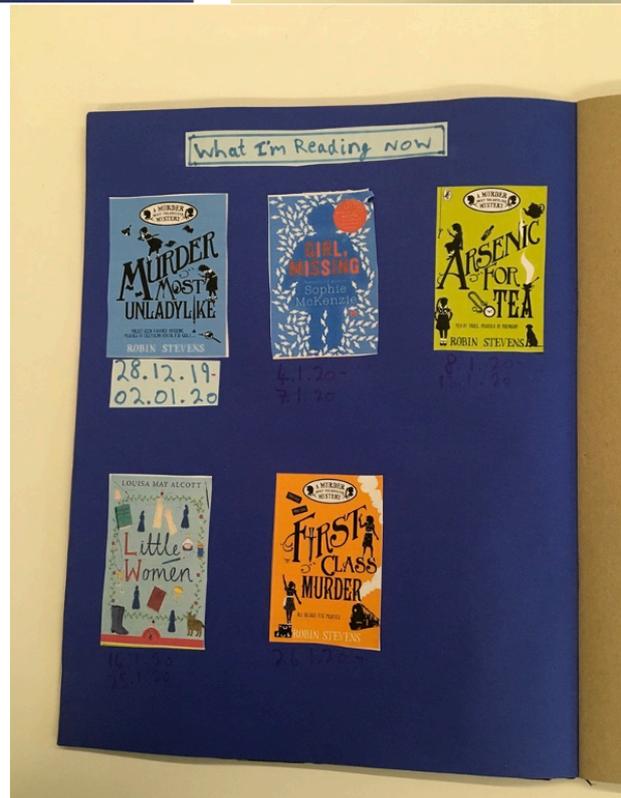
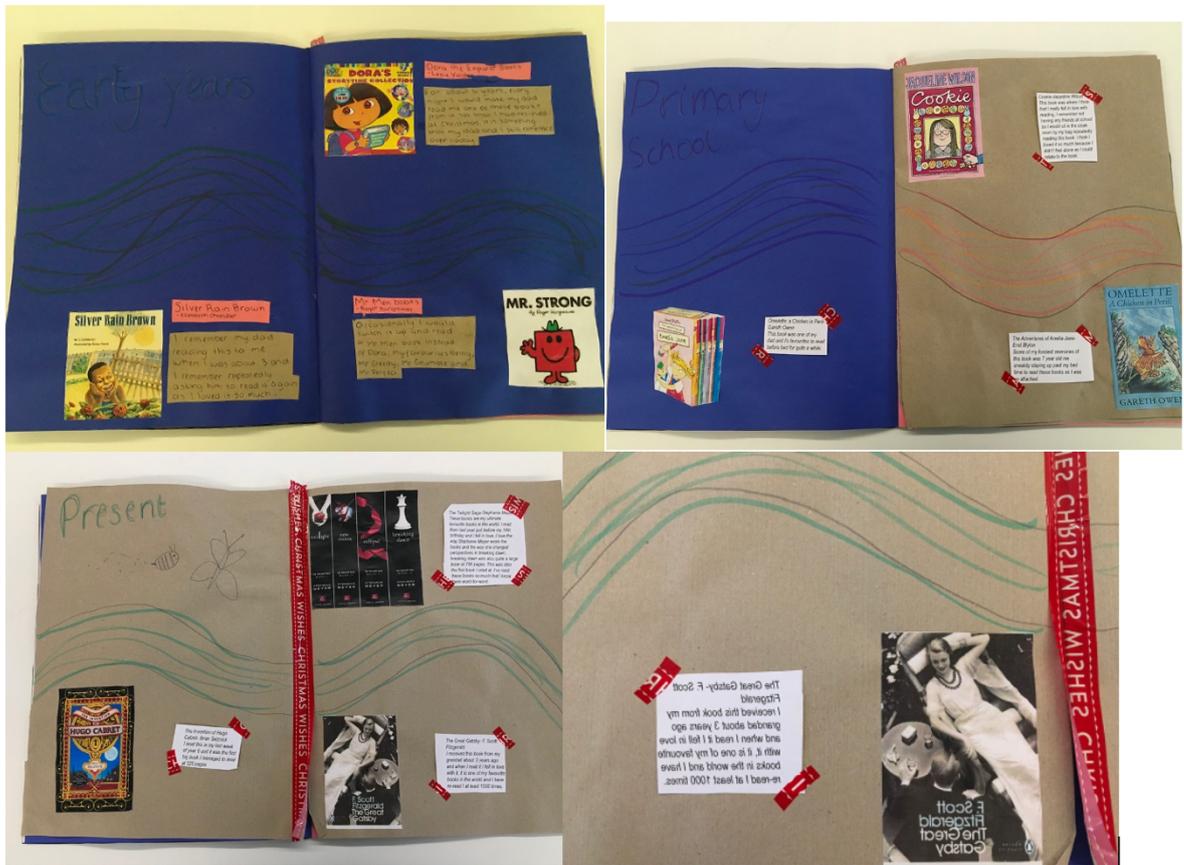# Appendix 4.2J Photographs of Jenny's scrapbook
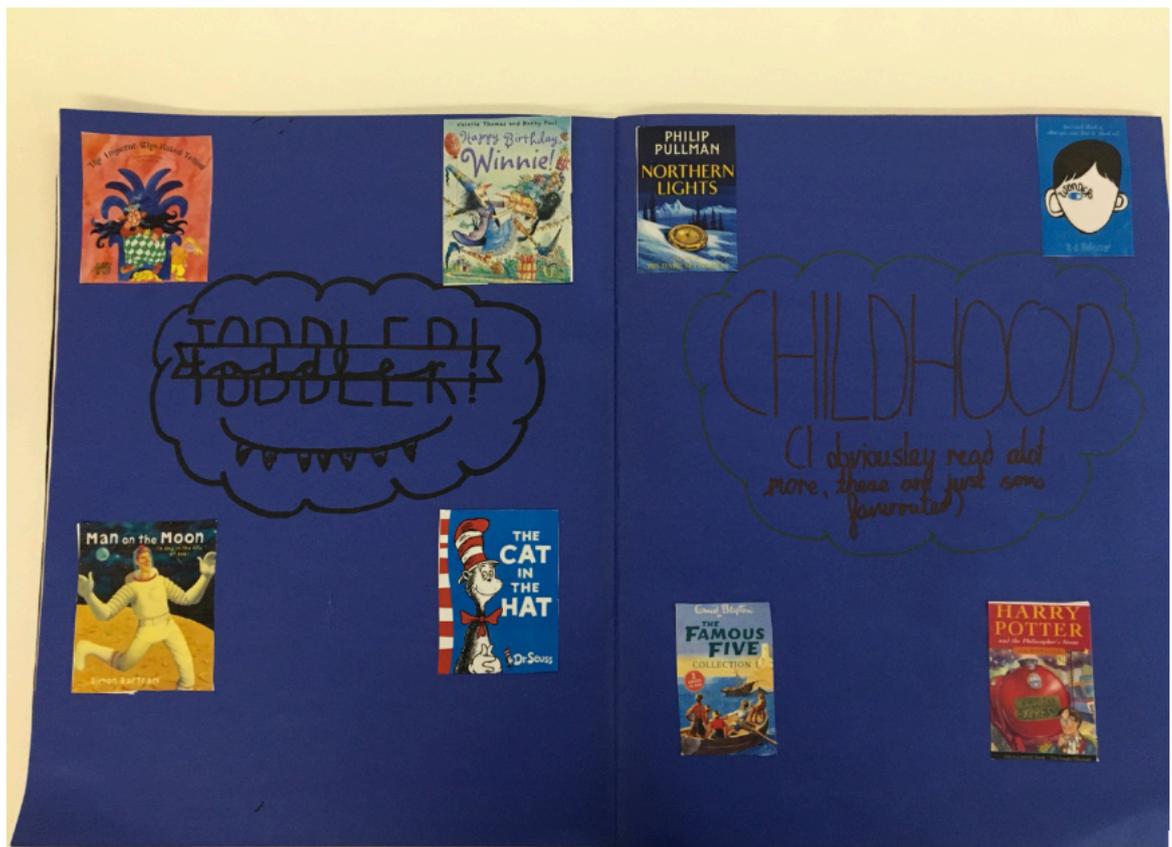
Appendix 4.2K Photographs of Lauren's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2L Photographs of Emma's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2M Photographs of Lily's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2N Photographs of Evan's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2O Photographs of Ms Griffith's scrapbook

Appendix 4.2P Photographs of Ms Curtis' scrapbook