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Literacy Worlds of Jamaican-heritage boys in the English Educational System: Identity and Educational Development

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Abstract

In the UK, there are rising concerns about the underachievement of Caribbean-heritage boys, yet there remains a gap in understanding of their cultural literacy practices. This study explores the literacy landscapes of third-generation Jamaican-heritage boys with the purpose of discovering the extent to which cultural literacy influences both identity and the development of measured, formal literacy. Using qualitative methodology, the thesis explores various factors that constitute cultural literacy based on the participants' perspectives.

Data is gathered from three Jamaican-heritage boys and their parents using interviews, pupil literacy logs and in-school records collected over three terms. The findings reveal three types of family interactions relating to home-based literacy practice, described as 'child-directed', 'integrated' and 'parent-directed'. The thesis also discusses the contribution of community, interrogates a perceived disconnect between in-school and out-of-school literacy among minority groups, and looks at how the conversation about race and racism is simultaneously encouraged and silenced.

A significant difference is revealed between the participants' home literacy practices and how literacy-learning is conducted and regarded at school, profoundly affecting their capability to succeed academically, as well as how they construct their identities. A restructuring of the context and situations in schools is recommended to embrace all cultural experiences and embed them systemically, valuing and legitimising their contribution to a more egalitarian route to success at formal literacy. Further studies are needed to be able to make broad generalisations.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family for their endless love and support.

To my parents, Lloyd, and Valda Clarke, who nurtured me in the framework of their Christian values, taught me the importance of education and supported me in understanding my place in the world. These principles I still hold dear to my heart.

To my daughter, Abigail, who journeyed with me to the library from the beginning to the end of the research. Thank you for understanding when I could not make events.

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Chapter 1: Introduction – The boys, cultural literacy practices and the study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the literacy practices of boys of Jamaican heritage. The aim is to investigate the impact of in-school and out-of-school literacy practices on the boys' formal literacy development. Critical race theory (CRT), Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and their connection with the identity formation of the boys are explored. The study examines the cultural literacy practices of three Jamaican-heritage boys and their parents, using interviews and recordings from the boys' literacy logs. The literacy practices are examined from a sociocultural perspective. In this chapter, I outline my research journey, focusing on my positionality, followed by a discussion of the research context. The aims, research questions and contribution to knowledge are also stated.

The sociocultural perspectives (a collection of related theories that emphasise the social and cultural context in which literacy is practised) comprise multiliteracies and multiple literacies as a social practice (Perry, 2012). Street (1985) conceptualised literacy as something one 'does' instead of something one 'has', hence, it is a ‘practice’ and Barton & Hamilton (2000) regarded literacy as being rooted in cultural practices. Literacy practices are generally considered to be sociocultural practices derived from observable literacy events (Street, 1985; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Ivanic, 2004). Practices are fully understood within social relationships and are not observable. They include values, beliefs, feelings and social and power relations; hence, people, communities and cultural groups are vital to meaning (Purcell-Gates *et al*., 2011). For this research, 'literacy events' refer to the observable literacy activities people engage in daily, whereas ‘literacy practices’ refer to the meanings derived from the literacy events. Literacy practices influence peoples' actions, and social actions within literacy events also constitute literacy practice in different social domains (Barton *et al*., 2000). These concepts are further developed in Chapter 3.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study is significant as school leaders, policymakers and the media give considerable time and attention to the academic achievement of boys of Caribbean heritage in England. Strand (2015) pointed out this concern when he discovered, from his national longitudinal study of young people in England at age 16, among low socioeconomic status (SES) students, that all ethnic groups perform significantly better than Caribbean boys. Rollock (2007) states that 'the continued lower academic attainment of Black (especially Caribbean) pupils is now well established'. She continues by suggesting that the government has not invested sufficiently in strategies to close the national gap between Black and White pupils. These concerns relate directly to young people of Jamaican heritage as Jamaica is one of the largest islands in the Caribbean.

Kostogriz & Tsolidis's (2008) work speaks usefully to the link between the Jamaican population in London and the notion of diaspora. They explored cultural-linguistic politics in the Greek-Australian community through the pedagogies of schooling and of the everyday family behaviours characterised by the understanding of Greek and Australian national politics. They have devoted considerable time to conceptualising transcultural literacy, which is essential for the diasporic community. Central to Kostogriz & Tsolidis's (2008) argument is the location of literacy within context, identity and belonging. Pratt (1998) also discusses the dynamics of identity and belonging in cultural terms. In this thesis, I draw attention to how Jamaican-heritage children in England perceive themselves at home and school, determining their attitude and engagement in literacy practices.

Kostogriz & Tsolidis's work provides excellent insight into a diaspora link and identity. However, the community they research is relatively newly domiciled in the geographical location. Hence, the community is dynamic, with a flow of new arrivals. Conversely, the Jamaican community has been embedded in London for over three generations. The study's participants and their parents are UK citizens by birth, though their grandparents were born in Jamaica. The challenge has been to discover how much these participants are engaging in Jamaican cultural literacy practices and the difference between these young people and previous

generations. In keeping with the tenets of the sociocultural approach, it is essential to examine family literacy practices during literacy events at home and in the wider community. Examining literacy practices outside of school gives a fuller understanding of the participants. How the participants engage and interact with their space is also significant. Moll and his colleagues (1992) point out that by capitalising on cultural resources, teachers and students can continue challenging the *status quo* regarding how students use literacy for inquiry and thinking and reflect on their learning with new topics and questions. The following section focuses on my journey into the research and my position as a researcher.

1.3 My journey into the research

I was born and educated in rural Jamaica; my education was an investment for my future and family. I was the first member of my immediate family to attend university. I am a female primary school teacher with over 30 years of teaching experience in Jamaica and London. I have lived in London for over 22 years. My Jamaican cultural experiences shaped my identity; for example, the education system taught me to work hard and strive for more than material possessions. In my young mind, I had a picture that education was a key that could open any door in life.

My parents' Christian values taught me to love and serve others, respect authority and trust God with my plans. I was motivated and believed that I could achieve anything I set out to achieve. My immersion in these two frameworks fuelled my desire to succeed, not just for myself, but also, for others depending on me, including my parents. I saw my education as an investment in my people and culture; therefore, failure was not an option. I was motivated to succeed in everything and never questioned the principles I lived by. However, my experience in London exposed me to different cultures and people with different beliefs. My first day as a supply teacher ended in despair as I could not find any trace of my experience in Jamaica in this new culture. Respect for authority, hard work, motivation and inspiration were challenging to find in that Year 3 classroom. I soon realised I spoke with an accent, I was Black, and even the systems and structures I developed through eight years of teaching in Jamaica came into question. The first

question I was asked after I uttered my first words was: “Where are you from, Miss?”. Immediately, I became conscious of my location and felt like an outsider. I had never been asked that question in a classroom before. I quickly realised that I had stepped into an unfamiliar culture in which I would have to learn to communicate anew.

My biggest challenges were the apparent lack of motivation amongst the pupils to succeed academically and a distinct lack of respect for authority. Within Jamaican culture, the position of the teacher carries authority, so in my experience, the children would consistently demonstrate respect for the teacher. If they were talking and the teacher entered the classroom, they would automatically be ushered into silence, and the teacher would proceed. In my first London class, when the teacher arrived, the children would continue their conversation without acknowledging the teacher's presence. Eye contact (the 'look') was a common behaviour management strategy within the Jamaican context. The teacher making eye contact with the child would be enough for them to adjust their behaviour to the expected standard. However, in the London context, even when the teacher was shouting, the pupils were slow to respond to any request. Respect for authority was demonstrated differently in London, particularly for supply teachers.

Another challenge I faced was how words were pronounced differently and the difference in the meaning of words. For example, the following words are pronounced differently in a Jamaican classroom.

Table 1.1 Difference between Jamaican and UK English pronunciations of words

Words	UK pronunciation	Jamaican pronunciation
Wall	/wɔːl/	/wɑːl/
Ball	/bɔːl/	/bɑːl/
Dance	/dɑːns/	/dæns/

I also remember telling one boy to “pull up his pants”. He looked at me strangely. I used a hand gesture to point to his trousers. The children roared with laughter. Another child shouted, *“*Miss, you mean trousers, but you said pants!*”.* I realised my mistake. In the Jamaican context, pants and trousers are the same items, whereas in London, they are two different items; I felt humiliated. My identity suddenly came into question, which researchers attribute to cultural adaptation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Hall, 2010). There was a clash between my own culture and the new one, resulting in social difficulty. Cultural identity is a significant source of meaning and experience constructed by, and connected to, the social world (Norton, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Aghaei *et al*., 2015). Cultural identity is linked to literacy and literacy development. As researchers, Moje *et al*. (2004) and Aghaei *et al*. (2015) highlight, cultural identity is increasingly defined by what constitutes literacy and multiliterate practices.

My experience led me to explore the literacy worlds of children of Jamaican heritage in the English educational system. My story of being in the classroom points to the issues surrounding 'transnational flows of culture' (Drzewiecka & Halualani, 2002, p. 340; Hall, 2010); this means that due to migration, people move from one country to another, resulting in cultural adaptation. Meaning is embedded within a cultural context; some aspects of cultural communication are without words; still, the meaning is formed due to common understanding. Migrants will experience social difficulties. Drzewiecka & Halualani (2002) emphasise how intercultural exchanges alter the nature of identity construction among migrant groups.

My experiences, education, socialisation and family history shape my view of reality and the literacy I use in sociocultural contexts. The sociocultural perspective promotes literacy as a social practice where children actively create meaning rather than passively acquire literacy skills. Vygotsky (1978) highlights the sociocultural forces shaping a child's development and learning. He points to the parents, teachers, peers and the community's role in defining interactions between the children and their environment. Vygotsky describes the instruction process as only valid when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or

awakens a whole series of functions in a stage of maturation in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 212).

Vygotsky suggests that the sociocultural context enables the child to be an active learner. The social context contains meaning; hence, the individual cannot be passive but must be fully involved. The child uses the social context or culture to explore, make meaning and relate to others. Spradley (1990) and Spradley and McCurdy (1990) support this by alluding to the idea that among members of a shared culture, social interactions are the source of human interpretation and are understood through modifications and negotiations within experiential contexts. As such, I look at the boys' literacy experiences as negotiated social constructs in their cultural groups and home settings.

Positionality in this research is significant and unique. Due to my multicultural background, I understand Jamaican cultural signs and symbols. As a Jamaican living in London, I immediately bonded with the participating families. The common bond allows me to understand their way of life, thoughts, beliefs and actions. In addition, my experiences in Jamaica and the UK influence how I view literacy in families and how I have interpreted the literacy world of these participants.

My research question – To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third generation Jamaican-heritage boys influence their formal literacy development? – arose from my personal and professional experience as a teacher in London and Jamaica for over 25 years before beginning my doctoral studies. As well as a class teacher, headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, I have been a school literacy leader for an East London local authority and a Primary National Strategies literacy consultant. In these roles, I implemented several policies to address poor performance in literacy and support primary school pupils in attaining specific targets set by the schools, local authorities and government. Governments worldwide are implementing strategies to enhance pupils' progress; therefore, I see the need to explore the link between boys' literacy practices, identity and their formal literacy development.

Having discussed my research journey, positionality and cultural connections to the Jamaican community, I will now explore the research context: the theories

underpinning this research; then, literacy practice in primary and secondary schools in England, its execution and assessment.

1.4 A situated view of literacy

From the 1980s onwards, researchers advocating for the New Literacy Studies (NLS) posit that literacy is a social practice within a context (Street, 1984; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Barton & Hamilton, 2000). This study's assumptions draw on the sociocultural and critical race theoretical perspectives. The investigation into the literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys and the communities in which they interact is situated in the theoretical framework that views literacy as a human activity that mediates people's lives (Vygotsky, 1978). Within this situated view, literacy practices sit within a context – including the social, cultural, historical and political lives of the sociocultural communities in which they are embedded (Street, 1984; Purcell-Gates, 1996).

Home and school literacy practices reflect a sociocultural approach to literacy, and this draws on Vygotsky's (1978) work, a sociocultural theory related to family and community literacy research. The works of Barton & Hamilton (1998), Heath (1983), Street (1984) and Purcell-Gates (1994; 1996; 2010) build on Vygotsky's work, focusing on social institutions, historical settings, values, beliefs and power relations. Street (1995, p. 1), referring to the sociocultural approach, describes the NLS as ‘literacy as a social practice’. This view rejects the dominant view of literacy (neutral, technical skill) for conceptualising literacy as an ideological practice implicated in power relations embedded in cultural meaning and practices. The core element of this research is influenced by the social theory of literacy and the NLS. I have been forced to contend with literature, debates and critiques that challenge my understanding of power and identity in the context of literacy. I have discovered that the social theory of literacy was not limited to a situated context of literacy but was much more significant. This inspired me to probe for theoretical perspectives that provided me with conceptual tools to enhance the social theory on which my research is based.

Critical literacy is one of the theoretical frameworks I examine (Freire, 1972; Luke, 2000). The critical framework bridges the gap between home and school literacy

practices and calls for educators and policymakers to make learning more meaningful to pupils. Therefore, I have chosen to take a critical literacy stance in exploring the cultural literacy practices of third-generation Jamaican-heritage boys. The texts children encounter in their lives, both in and out of school, are situated in cultural contexts. They contribute enormously to how children build their identities, beliefs, values and worldviews (Luke, 2000). Through these encounters, the children seek to interpret their world and determine their place in it (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Hobbs, 2008). Children's interpretation of the text is determined by the text's power, influence and significance. Teaching children to read from a critical literacy stance encourages them to move beyond comprehending the text to understanding the power relations revealed by it. Lewison *et al*. (2002, p. 382) explain that critical literacy has four dimensions: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues and taking action, and promoting social justice. This definition forces pupils to actively engage with the text they are reading and process its impact on them. It also encourages the readers to challenge the text's assumptions and the author's viewpoints.

I have chosen a critical literacy stance as this approach allows readers to question the view of literacy presented and accept or reject it based on evidence. Supporting the critical stance are two other frameworks that embody the sociocultural practice and the situated context in which Jamaican-heritage participants engage, yet the two frameworks are different. Both Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and CRT capture the social and cultural nature of literacy practices and the boys' lived experiences in and out of school, but where Bourdieu speaks to a broad cross-section of social class, CRT focuses on Black minority communities affected by racism.

This section outlines the context in which literacy is viewed in this research. It delineates the significant theories underpinning this research: The combined perspectives of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and CRT form the conceptual framework for this research, which is developed in Chapter 2. The following section outlines literacy in primary schools in England.

1.5 Literacy in primary schools in England

Literacy in primary schools in England is measured. Every year (except 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic), children must take English tests (reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling) and Mathematics. Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) are taken at the end of primary school (Key Stage 2). These tests are established in a competitive environment for schools and local authorities. Key Stage 2 tests form a part of the statutory assessment arrangements in maintained mainstream schools, special schools, academies, other maintained schools and some independent schools for pupils at the end of their primary years. The pupils' results significantly determine their progress and attainment (National Curriculum Assessment, Key Stage 2, 2019). Schools must publish data on pupils' progress on their websites, and schools are judged and graded on the progress by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). School leaders emphasise these tests. Therefore, the primary years emphasise acquiring the knowledge and skills to achieve the age-standardised score. The standard range is 100–109, with children achieving below 100 falling below the standard and above 100 exceeding it. School leaders want to ensure they appear at the top of the league table for their local authority and nationally; therefore, teaching in Year 6 (the final year of primary school) focuses on statistical outcomes. With these assumptions and the annual league table results, some primary school leaders have limited the school literacy curriculum to teaching comprehension, grammar, spelling and writing composition skills.

Despite the national recognition of the importance of literacy, more time is needed to acquire critical literacy skills. There is a discrepancy between the statistical, outcome-based teaching of literacy and the role of literacy in preparing children to be good citizens – giving them a voice and preparing them to take their place in society. The former (statistical outcome) uses a cognitive-psychological approach to literacy, emphasising knowledge and skills acquisition, while the latter focuses on teaching literacy with a critical literacy approach.

As previously mentioned, school children grow up in cultural settings and communities, and learning the values and beliefs of their cultural groups is vital for them to communicate effectively within, and with other, groups. They experience

and participate in literacy practices as a part of their daily routine. They acquire cognitive models and symbols for how and why literacy is practised in and out of school. They experience the difference in both and require different skills or psychological tools (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 212) to interpret and interact within both settings. Scribner and Cole's (1981) work introduced the concept of literacy practices instead of viewing literacy as a set of portable, decontextualised information-processing skills that individuals applied. They reframed literacy as a set of socially organised practices (conceptually parallel to religious practices, child-rearing practices and other everyday practices) that individuals engage in as part of their daily lives. On the other hand, school literacy emphasises acquiring a set of 'neutral', technical literacy skills to demonstrate progress.

Several researchers (Dyson, 2003; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Purcell-Gates, 1995) draw our attention to the disjuncture between socially constructed and school-centred literacy practices. They claim that when children can build on what they know about language, using familiar texts and symbol systems, they appear to move into traditional academic literacy more easily. I, therefore, take a critical literacy perspective with this research.

1.6 Caribbean boys' journey in the English educational system

Jamaica, a former British colony, is the largest English-speaking island in the Caribbean. Migrants from Jamaica came to the UK in response to the British labour request after World War 2. On 23rd of June 1948, 492 Jamaicans arrived in the UK at the British government's invitation. Between 1950 and 1968, the International Organization of Migration (2007) reported that 191,330 Jamaicans arrived and settled in the UK.

The educational achievement of Black Caribbean children has gained publicity over the years. The term "Black" is often used to refer to individuals with African ancestral origins and is commonly used in the UK's social, political, and educational contexts. While the term has significant psychosocial and political implications, some individuals may consider it offensive. It is important to note that the term "Black" encompasses a wide range of cultures among diverse African

populations, and in some cases, it can reinforce racial stereotypes (Agyemang et al., 2014). In this research, the term "Black Caribbean" describes individuals and their offspring who have African ancestral origins and migrated through the Caribbean to the UK.

There is a growing body of evidence from researchers and government statistics that indicates that there is a problem with boys' achievement, and there is a danger of it being addressed in favour of the dominant group (Arnot & Miles, 2005; Warring & Younger, 2006; Cobbett & Younger, 2012). This thesis explores the link between cultural literacy practices, the boys' identity and their formal literacy development. Black Caribbean children's underachievement has been a persistent problem in the English education system. One of the earliest studies (Coard, 1971) explained how teachers' low expectations damaged Black children's motivation and confidence as they were seen as educationally subnormal. He claimed that this doomed the children to a life of underachievement. Preliminary work on West Indian children's underachievement in the UK highlights a problem in the educational system that is ongoing today.

In 1985, the Department of Education and Science (DES) stated that West Indian children were underachieving in the educational system. Jamaicans, as the largest group, were significantly represented in this statement. Other researchers continued to contribute to the growing debate about the underachievement of Caribbean-heritage pupils in the UK and the significant attainment gap; for example, research findings by Scarr *et al*. (1983), Sammons (1995) and Strand (1997; 1999; 2013; 2015). These studies suggest that Jamaican-heritage children leave school with lower educational achievement than their peers of other ethnic groups. Some researchers question the extent to which the education system meets the needs of Black Caribbean children (Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985; Gillborn & Miza, 2000). OFSTED (2002, p. 1) notes describe that:

> *We are now seeing the third and, in some cases, the fourth generation of Black Caribbean pupils in primary schools in England […] It would be natural […] to assume that most Black Caribbean children in schools in England share the higher educational standards attained by the most successful pupils in our schools; however, this is not the case.*

This OFSTED comment contributes significantly to the discourse as it admits that Black Caribbean children are failing in the school system in England. It also offers essential historical insight into the fact that Black Caribbean children have been in England for generations yet still fail to enjoy the academic success of their peers. Strand *et al*. (2015) provide more comprehensive research regarding English as an additional language and educational achievement in England. Their study shows that between 2004 and 2014, Black Caribbean children achieved the lowest percentage in GCSEs (5+GCSE A*–C grades including Maths and English) of all other ethnic groups in the study, with a 40.8% difference in 2004 and a 41% difference in 2014 between the Black Caribbean children's grades and the top-performing ethnic group. This data sends a chilling message that they are consistently the lowest-performing group in the whole country.

One concept that Bourdieu's work highlights is exclusion, which could be relevant to boys of Caribbean heritage in the English education system. He saw suffering as thoroughly rooted in exclusion; Bourdieu posits:

> *They had been rejected; they were in remedial classes and had already been excluded from school! They were already excluded at school, so they had a mindset of exclusion when they left school. Furthermore, they were excluded since they needed the wherewithal to get a job.* (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 210)

The Department of Education (DFE, 2019) statistics show increased period exclusion of Black Caribbean children from school. The same document also shows disparities in the rate of Black Caribbean exclusion in the 2017–2018 academic year, with boys' exclusion rate higher than girls. The Black Caribbean ethnic group has the highest exclusion rate, following travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy Roma (both are mobile groups). Jamaican-heritage boys are likely to form part of the exclusion statistics, making them more likely to be excluded, with the mindset of exclusion. Bourdieu's theory of practice describes the interaction of habitus and capital within the fields. This interaction is reflected in Caribbean-heritage boys' experiences of the English education system as their habitus and capital interact within their fields. Not only are they more likely to be excluded, but the lack of progress and low educational achievement among Black Caribbean

students is well documented, suggesting they are placed in remedial groups in class.

Unlike Bourdieu's theory, CRT views the suffering of Black people and the exclusion of Caribbean-heritage children through the lens of race and racism. Ladson-Billings (2022) posits that CRT is a theoretical tool that attempts to explain racial inequity in education. It is used to explain the racial inequity of achievement in schools. CRT scholars believe that racism is ordinary, not an anomaly — 'normal science' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, pp. 6–7), suggesting that Black children are underachieving in the White dominant society due to the system and structures in the society. Racism includes attitudes, actions and institutions contributing relative disadvantages to racial groups with comparatively less power (Ogbonnaya-Ogburu, 2020).

Reporting on the ethnic achievement gap in secondary education, Strand (2013; 2015) points out the distinctive pattern of results for Black Caribbean students, indicating that their gap could not be accounted for by any of the contextual variables measured (family background, parental attitudes and behaviours, student risk and protective factors, school context, neighbourhoods and deprivation). He argues that the evidence points to a systematic underrepresentation of Black Caribbean students in entries to higher-tier examinations at 14. Further, he states: '[i]t is well established that the odds of the Black Caribbean being permanently excluded from school are twice as high as White British, and the odds for Black Caribbean students being labelled as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) action or Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) is 2.3 times higher than White British student' (Strand & Lindorff, 2021 p.347). Strand also reports that Black Caribbean students' poor progress and low achievement might be partly shaped by teachers' expectations – lower expectations of Black Caribbean students (2013). Both Bourdieu's theory and CRT are relevant when analysing the literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys described above.

Central to this thesis are the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys and their influence on the boys' formal literacy development. This research looks at literacy through the eyes of Caribbean children, whose perspective has been excluded from the debate. The underachievement of Jamaican-heritage pupils and

the under-representation of people from the Jamaican community in leadership positions and responsibilities in various offices in the UK must be addressed. On the other hand, a substantial number of Jamaicans are represented in UK prisons, leaving young people with very few positive role models. By exploring the literacy practices of families and their intergenerational links, this thesis will address some of the questions related to boys' formal literacy development. In the next section, I outline the aims of the research.

1.7 The aims of the research

This research aims to examine the 'literacy worlds' of third generation Jamaican-heritage boys. A central feature of this research is the intergenerational link between boys and their parents and grandparents' literacy practices. The study examines the in-school and out-of-school literacy practices that different generations engage in, and the influence literacy practices have on boys' formal literacy development.

The research seeks to interrogate the following question: To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third generation Jamaican-heritage boys influence their formal literacy development?

This research question is further divided into the following two research sub-questions:

1. What literacy practices do Jamaican-heritage boys engage with daily?

2. To what extent do intergenerational differences in literacy practices influence the boys' formal literacy development?

1.8 Theoretical frameworks

This thesis is greatly concerned with the literacy practices of boys of Jamaican heritage. Bringing together Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 2002; Bourdieu,1992) ideas on cultural capital and the tenets of CRT (de la Garza & Ono, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) gives a sense of how the complex social relationships between the boys' literacy practices, in and out of school, are developed. Fundamentally, this thesis focuses on the boys' literacy practices, the influence of family literacy

practices and the connection with their identity construction and their formal literacy development. The theoretical framework is further developed in Chapter 2. In the next section, the contribution to broader knowledge is discussed.

1.9 Contribution to the knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by exploring the intergenerational influences of literacy practices, examining the participants' identities and how these are shaped by their parents' literacy practices and the perceived practices of their grandparents. The study also engages with broader discourses about the UK education system to discuss and consider Caribbean boys' underachievement and the possible link with literacy practices.

The data contributes to the knowledge base of education. It exposes primary school-aged Jamaican-heritage boys' literacy practices and considers how literacy practices construct and shape their identity. The findings reveal the link between the in-school and out-of-school perspective of literacy, how parental involvement is perceived by the education system and question of whether schools should make a greater effort to include children's cultural practices when teaching technical skills.

Caribbean-heritage boys' literacy experiences in and out of school point to a gap in their formal literacy development and highlight connections and disconnects between their underachievement and literacy practices. The data provides insight into their families' and significant others' influences on, and expectations of, their literacy development. Finally, their stories reveal the role of the different generations in creating and maintaining expectations and the role of school leaders and policy makers in securing the boys' formal literacy development. The following section gives an overview of the methodology used in this research.

1.10 Methodology overview

This research is a small-scale, qualitative study with semi-structured interviews and literacy logs as the primary research tools. It is established within an interpretive paradigm and used to explore the daily literacy practices the boys engage with. The thesis examines literacy practices both in and out of school and the intergenerational influences of those literacy practices. The research investigates

how the perceptions and attitudes of the previous generation connect with the identity and formal educational achievements of third generation Jamaican-heritage boys.

In addition, the research investigates concepts related to social reality, literacy practices and intergenerational influence on boys. This qualitative methodology allows for understanding the cultural literacy practices with which the boys are engaged. The methodological tools are chosen because they explore the participants' narration of their literacy experiences and allow the readers to view or connect with the participants' experiences. This research describes the Jamaican-heritage boys' thoughts and experiences as the participants chose to share. Jamaican heritage is the common denominator of the participant group.

I employ a non-probability sampling technique. The participants had to meet specific criteria; therefore, they were hand-picked because they possess the characteristics being sought (Cohen *et al*., 2011, p. 156). The purposive sampling strategy was undertaken (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) because the cases were selected to illustrate some features of interest (Silverman, 2005, p. 128). This sampling strategy allowed this research to focus on third generation Jamaican boys and collect information about their literacy practices.

1.11 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical framework underpinning the research and the concept of identity. Chapter 3's literature review defines the key concepts in this study and explores the context in which literacy is situated for Jamaican-heritage boys. The literature is examined in two parts: first, a consideration of sociocultural theory concerning literacy and literacy as a social practice. Second, it was necessary to focus on literacy events and literacy practices to understand how the boys interact with their cultural groups and how literacy is involved. The literature explores and scrutinises culture and literacy, drawing on sociocultural theoretical perspectives. A critical account of a few selected theorists regarding their work on literacy as a social practice is provided, giving an overview of how participants engage with literacy both in out-of-school and academic settings and considering the influences that shape them as literate individuals. This chapter highlights the

conflict of an individual interacting in two different scenes daily by examining the link between family and school literacy.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter. This chapter contains both the justification for my chosen methodology and the methodology itself. By adopting the view that literacy is a social and situated practice, the thesis requires a methodological approach that allows an exploration of what children do with literacy and when and where it happens across different generations. The data presented in Chapter 5 relates to the context in which the boys experience literacy, how literacy is experienced in the different families, and the purpose for family members engaging in the literacy practices. Data related to the construction of the boys' identities in in-school and out-of-school contexts is also presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 discusses critical themes drawn from analysing the data in Chapter 5. The focus is on understanding the literacy worlds in which the third generation Jamaican-heritage boys interact. These include the power relations of in-school and out-of-school practices related to literacy, attitudes towards literacy and literacy development. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the study by offering a summary, conclusions, limitations and recommendations. I also examine the broader implications for theory and practice.

1.12 Summary

This chapter presents an overview of the study and briefly discusses the background information, research context and concepts essential to the research. The next chapter explores both the theoretical framework and the concept of identity.

Chapter 2: Critical race theory, cultural capital and identity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores critical race theory (CRT), Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and their connection with the identity formation of the Black boys involved in this study. First, a definition of CRT is provided, followed by a historical overview of race, and then, an outline of the fundamental tenets of CRT and the criticisms levied against it. Thereafter, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is discussed, including the extent to which this theory is appropriate for this study as proposed by CRT scholars, Yosso (2005), Gillborn (2015), Gillborn *et al*. (2012), Carter (2015) and Wallace (2016). Finally, there is a discussion on the identity formation of the boys in this study. This chapter considers how these theories are connected as it examines the historical, national, political, cultural and institutional factors that are part of these boys' identities.

As a tool for analysis, I have chosen Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital as it seeks to explain underachievement in the English education system. Bourdieu suggests that the knowledge of the upper and middle classes is considered valuable in society's hierarchy and that this knowledge is accessible through schooling, even if one is not born into a family whose knowledge is considered to be valuable (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This theory is widely accepted in education and is promoted by OFSTED. Cultural capital is given a judgement by OFSTED under the category of 'Quality of Education' where cultural capital is defined as "the essential knowledge children need to be educated citizens" (Ofsted EY Inspection Handbook 2019, p31). OFSTED suggest that it is the responsibility of schools and early years settings to provide that knowledge to children as many children arrive in education settings with little evidence of it. OFSTED's comment promotes a 'deficit' model for children from a 'disadvantaged' background. I have, therefore, also chosen to use CRT, alongside Bourdieu's cultural capital, to help critique that deficit model (Auerbach,1989), which, I argue, reinforces that minority communities' children are 'impoverished' and disregards the cultural wealth of those communities (Yosso, 2005).

Culturally, I am positioned in the rich heritage of Jamaican culture. I was born and educated to degree level in Jamaica and our cultural heritage is part of the education system – I am proud of my Jamaican heritage. I write with the background of the interconnectedness of my cultural experiences in my education system. I also write as a mother of three children born in England and educated in the English education system, where their cultural heritage was excluded from their educational experiences. I chose CRT as it speaks to, and advocates for, my own race and that of the study participants. With my personal and professional experiences in mind, I have chosen both Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and CRT to analyse the experiences of other children of Jamaican heritage.

2.2 The origin of the concept of race

‘Race’, as a concept, is difficult to define; its meaning is contested but usually considered multi-dimensional and includes notions of self-identity and racial ancestral links. Racism includes attitudes, actions and institutions that disadvantage racial groups with comparatively less power (Ogbonnaya-Ogburu, 2020). Race has been a constitutive element and organisational principle of people that has been accepted in the structure of society (Winant, 2001). Rosendaal & Reitsma (2017) argue that race is a social construct, and its definition seems to differ by location. For example, in the United States, 'Hispanic' is a racial description assigned to Spanish-speaking people with ancestral links to Central and South America, but the Hispanic racial description does not apply to Spanish-speaking people in Spain or across Europe. Rosendaal & Reitsma (2017) point out that when conducting medical research, there is little biological rationale for classification by race, suggesting race has no scientific or genetic basis. However, it is based on physical differences (skin colour and hair texture) between people, which could result from several factors (National Geographic, 2018), such as phenotype, ancestry, social identity and lived experience. In their effort to organise society, humans have constructed social categories based on arbitrary physical differences (skin colour). Race and racism are socially constructed concepts that are products of social thoughts and relations; therefore, races are categories that society creates, exploits or disposes of when convenient (Mills, 1997). The words 'race' and 'racism' are not neutral; due to their historical connection, these words

hold negative connotations and weigh heavily in a discussion about inequalities in society.

A brief historical overview of the origins of the concept of race is necessary here to understand how racial groups were created with inequality at the core. Mills (1997) argues that the concept of race originated with the European colonisation of the Americas. Mills contends that Europeans regarded the indigenous peoples of the 'New World' as morally inferior to justify their imperial brutality and exercise their power. Thus, race was developed as a social structure where 'White' was ontologically opposite to 'non-White' (Mills, 1997). For Mills, colonisation marks the beginning of the White/non-White binary (Mills, 1997). Drawing from Mills (1997) and Bonilla-Silva (1997), it is possible to conclude that the colonial legacy of racial hierarchy still influences society in Europe and America. The thoughts, knowledge and economic and power structures, as they relate to Black people, are the legacy of the colonial past, which dominates much of present-day society. Ladson-Billings & Tate (2005) explain that colonialism constructed White people as 'good' and 'pure' in contrast to Black people who were – and in some cases, still are – seen as 'bad' and 'impure', with the influence of Blackness seen as ‘contaminating’. Omi & Winant (2014) highlight that people of colour continue to be oppressed as they bear the burden put on them by the privileged and oppressor groups in society; hence, race continues to be evidence of difference and race structure inequalities, as seen in UK education statistics.

Bonilla-Silva (1997) posits that in a racialised social system, people take the role of social actors within racial categories, resulting in a hierarchical structure, leading to various implications for those living racialised lives. This racialised social system can be seen in history when Europeans colonised and enslaved Black people in the Caribbean and the United States. Slavery in the Caribbean denied Black people access to education as Black people were perceived as intellectually inferior, unintelligent and incapable of being highly educated (DuBois,1994; Aker, 2016). This perception was supported by European scientific theories of Black people having smaller brains than White people (Eysnck, 1971; Jensen, 1972) and were used to miss-educate Black people (Woodson, 1990). Instead, Woodson suggests that Black people were educated by their colonial masters to ‘know their

place and their educational limits'. The historical origins of race have numerous implications for the lived experience of those living racialised lives. However, racialised experiences are different for individuals as no racial group shares a singular understanding of what it means to be a member of the racialised group (Lewis, 2004).

2.3 What is critical race theory?

CRT aims to be a vehicle for social and political change (de la Garza & Ono, 2016) as it offers a way of interpreting the world based on the tensions between race and the experience of racism by Black people in predominantly White societies. CRT tries both to understand and change social situations, setting out how society organises itself along racial lines, highlighting how all White people benefit from their positioning within a racist system (Gillborn, 2008) and hierarchy, and tries to change it for the better (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Gillborn (2008) cited the work of Delgado & Stefancic (1997) who pointed out the sensitivity of CRT to the differences in power and privilege instead of the misrepresented view of CRT by other researchers, for example, Darder & Torres (2005) and Cole (2007), who claim that it homogenises White people and downplays the significance of poverty among White people. It is essential to discuss CRT as 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' are historically, socially constructed categories (Wright *et al*., 2020) and are connected to participants' interactions. This socially constructed concept of race is one of the basic tenets of CRT, which states that race and racism are products of social thoughts and relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) and are constructed within society. Jamaica was one of the British colonies located in the Caribbean. This research examines the literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys; therefore, race is a significant part of the thesis. As a result, the following section will explore CRT, its roots, basic tenets and the criticisms levied against it as CRT critically analyses and interprets the everyday experiences of Black people.

CRT has its intellectual roots in critical theory (Barrera *et al*., 1972; Blauner, 1972; Bonilla & Girling, 1973; Freire, 1970; 1973) and seeks to understand and remedy the effects of racism. Solorzano (2013) points out that race, ethnic women's studies and Freirean pedagogy have informed the CRT framework in education. As an

analytical framework, Solorzano (2013) posits that CRT has multidisciplinary beginnings as it draws on the strength of the above traditions by connecting them to studying race and racism in education. Delgado & Stefanic (2001) argue that CRT was developed in 1970 (Barrera *et al*., 1972; Blauner, 1972; Bonilla & Girling,1973; Freire, 1970; 1973) from critical legal scholarship and radical feminism. It was first described as a 'movement' by Taylor (1998) with the underlying core premise that racism is endemic, institutional and systemic. De La Garza & Ono (2016) define CRT as an intellectual movement that seeks to understand how White supremacy is reproduced and maintained as a legal, cultural and political condition.

CRT aims to remedy racism, which involves several social processes that relate to injustice and inequalities in society, and always includes language as a form of social practice (Leonardo, 2012). Language plays a significant role in the construction of the world, especially in the classroom. Thus, the study of the Jamaican boys' literacy practices in this research gives an intimate understanding of the language they are engaged in, both in and out of school. In their CRT work, based on critical discourse analysis, Rogers & Mosley (2006) highlight how race is silenced and White supremacy or systemic racism is enforced. They propose that Whiteness is an instructional accomplishment linked to body language, speech, texts and skin colour interaction. The theory emphasises real-life issues by exploring racism as a social phenomenon beyond the intentional racist act. It challenges racist discourses, race and racism and how these affect the bodies, identities and experiences of people of colour (de la Garza & Ono, 2016). It must be understood at social, economic, institutional, political and historical levels.

CRT embodies the social construction and the interest convergence of British racism. It has been argued that the academy of Whiteness benefits the material interests of White elites (Tate, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Capper, 2015). As a result, from CRT's perspective, racial inequalities are embedded in society, and racism resides in social structures and not just in individuals. Some CRT scholars (Valdes *et al*., 2002, pp. 1–5) claim that racism is a regenerative and overarching force maintaining all social constructs. For example, two children can be born of the same mixed-heritage parents; one looks White and the other looks

Black; and even though they have the same genetic makeup, they would be treated differently in society due to the colour of their skin. The child with white skin will have more privilege in society than the child with black skin. This example shows that inequalities are deeply embedded in legal and economic institutions. According to this approach, an explanation for racial inequality is that race is 'baked in' to the way society is organised. It is not 'aberrant' nor 'abnormal' behaviour for people to demonstrate racism (Ladson-Billings, 2022); for example, if a Black man enters a shop in a predominantly White neighbourhood, he is immediately placed under scrutiny. Hence, the theory offers a new way to observe and highlight the cultures, knowledge and power of minority groups and their communities as a remedy to embedded racism and with a view to reducing racist acts.

2.3.1 The fundamental tenets of critical race theory

This section gives an overview of the fundamental beliefs of CRT. Not all CRT scholars subscribe to all its tenets; however, most support the basic ones. First, CRT emphasises the centrality of race and racism in its analysis (Love, 2004). The belief that the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination such as gender, class, immigration status, surname and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1989; Valdes *et al.*, 2002) demonstrates that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and a fundamental part of defining how society functions (Bell, 2002; Russell, 1992). The fundamental beliefs of CRT proposed by American scholars, Bell (2008a), Bonilla-Silva (2009) and Delgado & Stefancic (2012), focus on racism as ordinary, not aberrational, and daily. Due to the ordinariness of racism, they claim, it is difficult to identify and address it because it is unacknowledged (Bonilla & Silva, 2009).

Second, CRT challenges the ideology that serves to entrench the supremacy of Whiteness by refuting the claims that educational institutions make about objectivity, arguing about colour blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity. CRT exposes the deficit in research, which silences, ignores and distorts the epistemologies of Black people (Delgado & Bernal,1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT suggests that behind this claim, there is no genuine interest from the dominant group to eradicate racism. White supremacy serves important purposes

– both psychic and material – for the dominant group, as racism advances the interests of both the White elite (materially) and the White working class (psychically). As a result, large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1998; Tate, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Valdes *et al*., 2002). This feature of racism is also known as 'interest convergence' or 'material determinism', as it becomes entangled with the privilege and psychic interests of the White working class (Bell, 1980; Dudziak, 1988; Bell, 2004).

The third belief is that racism facilitates intersectionality, which is a collective term for the multiple social injustices faced by minority groups (Crenshaw, 1989). Race and racism correspond to no biological or genetic reality; instead, races are categories that society invents, manipulates or retires when convenient (Mill, 1997), giving pre-eminence to the idea of intersectionality. Crenshaw (2011) explains that intersectionality is the lens through which power in society is viewed: power comes, collides, locks and intersects. This ideology acknowledges that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege, and the concept of race is one of the many oppressive social forces. Some CRT scholars insist on intersectional critiques of all power relations, pointing out that the marginalised groups in society are often overlooked (Aleman & Aleman, 2010).

Fundamental to CRT are experiential knowledge, multiple perspectives of history, and racialised hierarchical phenomena as a source of communal empowerment (Valdes *et al*., 2002). This focus has given rise to counter-storytelling, a methodological tool critical race scholars use to reclaim, recover and provide a space for the voices of disenfranchised people (Ladson-Billings, 2000; 2013). This suggests that CRT empowers the marginalised through their stories, which is a powerful tool for minority communities. Society constructs the social world through a series of tacit, mediated agreements and Delgado & Stefancic (2012) claim that many victims of racial discrimination suffer in silence or blame themselves for their plight. Stories can give them a voice and expose that other people have similar experiences. Stories can also name a type of discrimination (for example, 'micro-aggressions', 'unconscious bias', or 'structural racism'); and discrimination can be addressed, once named. Researchers (Crenshaw *et al*., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Valdes *et al.*, 2002) believe that CRT is a socially transformative

theory with practical application for minority groups. Its purpose is to help those at the bottom of the racial hierarchy who encounter racism as their lived experience. White privilege is central to the argument of CRT. Delgado & Stefancic (2012) state that ‘White privilege’ refers to the myriad social advantages, benefits and privileges that come with being a member of the dominant race.

CRT is chosen to contextualise this study because it is about the literacy practices of Black boys who are educated in a society where White is the dominant race. Du Bois (1920; 1924; 1939; 1945) writings on race contribute to the educational discourse about race and the field of critical race studies. He views education as involving three essential things: first, a critical knowledge of the past, that is, an understanding of history; second, an awareness of critical cultural inquiry; and finally, a critical understanding of present and future needs. According to Du Bois, education must be relevant to the learners, including past, present and future, embedded in cultural knowledge.

An understanding of the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys requires a recognition of their past, for their current educational experiences in school, to prepare them for their future. Therefore, CRT is essential in interpreting the everyday experiences of the boys in a White-dominant society. This approach explores and critiques the extent to which their cultural experiences and history are a part of their educational experience. CRT's perspective uses the tool of storytelling as a ‘cure’ for silence. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2012, p. 49), 'stories can give them a voice and reveal that others have similar experiences'. This study aims to share the stories of Jamaican-heritage boys in England, to give them a voice, highlighting their lived experiences. In the following section, I discuss the criticisms levied against CRT, to provide a balanced report of this theory and show how it is viewed from all sides.

2.4 Criticisms of critical race theory

Critics argue that since CRT is committed to campaigning for justice for marginalised people, it focuses on the structural arrangements that inhibit or disadvantage some, more than others, in society – which is fine – however, it appears to ignore other issues that might be equally problematic (Trevino *et al*.,

2008). For example, as pointed out by Cole, (2017) CRT appears to be ultimately lacking in a direction moving humankind forward progressively as for the poor it may merely be considered as academic pursuit alongside postmodernism and transmodernism (Cole, 2017 p.149-150).

Also, critics, Cabrera (2018) and Trevino *et al*. (2008) argue that the tenets of CRT outlined above, insightful as they may be, do not contain the 'intellectual architecture' to substantiate a social theory; adding that CRT does not offer a theory of racism, and CRT scholars ignore the uncontrollable problems of colorism. Trevino and colleagues (2008) refer to colorism as the shades of ‘blackness’ in the African American and other ethnic minority communities. Trevino, Harris & Wallace (2008) explain that though CRT promotes many rigorous concepts and methods, these still require a more coherent integration to give CRT a systemic structure. They consider that CRT does not offer the unified theory necessary for a full-blown social theory; suggesting, instead, that it merely presents a loose and confused mix of analytic tools. They also argue that the basic tenets of CRT are not a fundamental set of beliefs on which all critics agree. Therefore, they disregard CRT as a theory due to the need for a unifying set of fundamental beliefs.

Another criticism levelled against CRT is of not offering a testable hypothesis or any measurable outcomes, while treating narrative as a form of data. Critics, Farber & Sherry (1997) and Kennedy (1989) are most troubled by critical race theorists' apparent lack of concern for objective truth. Farber & Sherry (1997) describe critical race scholars as hiding behind personal stories and narratives to advance their point of view. Delgado & Stefanic (2012, p. 104) responded to their criticism by stating that, like merit, objective truth does not exist for critical race theorists in social science and politics because, in social science, truth is a social construct created to suit the purpose of the dominant group. Researchers, Carspecken & Apple (1992), Creswell (2003) and Babbie (2007) draw attention to the importance of consistency in theory, which, they argue, helps clarify the research's epistemological and ontological assumptions. Cabrera (2018) concedes that CRT scholars might consider that the tenets function as epistemological and ontological premises that inform how CRT scholarship is conducted but argues that the tenets do not provide an overarching framework for how racism operates.

Therefore, CRT cannot be deemed a theory without the measurable outcomes and consistency that would aid in an overarching framework of how racism operates (Cabrera, 2018).

When establishing a theory, it is argued, for it to be interrogated by the research process, it needs a theoretical model. CRT critics claim that a theory helps to create mental models regarding human behaviour and social structures, and these models contextualise data interpretation and allow analysis to challenge the underlying theory. Carspecken & Apple posit:

> *In critical social research, a theoretical model of society (for example, a neo-Marxist model, a theory of patriarchy) is usually used to interpret the field findings (in which specific processes discovered in the field are cited as instances of general processes) and to alter the model itself (in which certain features of the model are refined or reconceptualised).* (Carspecken & Apple, 1992, pp. 541–542).

CRT scholars refer to systematic racism and White supremacy as the cause of inequalities in education, yet Cabrera argues that little is offered regarding the nature of the oppressive social forces within the central tenets. Thus, the research process cannot interrogate or challenge this claim as no mental models exist (2018).

CRT has been critiqued by Marxist scholars, Darder & Torres (2005) and Cole (2009), who argue that the theory erroneously assumes race provides a totalising explanation for persistent social inequalities equal to, or in place of, class; hence the foundation of social inequalities is as a result of race. They believe social inequalities are rooted in capitalism, the political economy and class exploitation. Darder & Torres (2005) explain that material domination and exploitation of populations in the interest of preserving a deeply engrained capitalist system of world domination serve as a motivation for constructing the social formation of inequality. Cole (2009, p. 119) allows that CRT offers important social insights into inequalities but postulates that it cannot provide the kind of comprehensive analysis or programme of political action needed to combat ‘capital’ – CRT cannot do this because it is not situated in class analysis. Instead, according to Cole, it

seeks to offer a project of anti-racism as if race is its totalising system or foundation. CRT is criticised as viewing the world *only* through the lens of race, which undermines the effort to imagine a politics that exceeds *all* fallacious boundaries and moves towards a focus on material politics that brings *all* poor and working-class people together in solidarity to struggle for equity (Dumas, 2013). Marxists (Cole, 2009; Darder & Torres, 2005) argue that CRT's race-based analysis and solutions miss the emphasis on the material.

In response to the Marxist's critiques, CRT scholars, Stovall (2006) and Gillborn (2008) insist that just as capitalism is central to Marxism and is regarded as totalising in the analysis of class relations, equally, White supremacy should be regarded as totalising the sphere of racial analysis and lived experiences.

Despite the criticisms and limitations of CRT (Trevino *et al*., 2008; Cole, 2009; Darder & Torres, 2005; Cabrera, 2018), it persists in education discourse and remains useful and significant for my research. CRT challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices and discourses. In addition, since it is conceived as a social justice project that works towards the liberatory potential of schooling (Hooks,1994; Freire, 1970; 1973), it also acknowledges the contradictory nature of education, wherein schools, more often, oppress and marginalise while they maintain the potential to emancipate and empower. Thus, filtering the experiences of Black boys through the lens of CRT has been genuinely helpful and illuminating, highlighting the boys' experiences, revealing their stories and drawing attention to systemic failures towards the boys within the schools.

This section has outlined the development and tenets of CRT and the criticism levied against it. The following section examines cultural capital according to Bourdieu.

2.5 Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital

This section draws on French cultural sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural capital to explore the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys and the link between their literacy practices and their educational achievements. It is necessary to define the concepts *habitus*, *field* and *capital* (Bourdieu, 2002) as these terms are key to understanding Bourdieu's theory on cultural capital and

significant to Jamaican-heritage boys' interpretation of meaning within their cultural context. With reference to these key terms, Bourdieu proposes that cultural, social and economic capital contribute to discourses on education and culture. The following paragraphs explore these fundamental concepts and their relationship to Jamaican-heritage boys' literacy practices.

Bourdieu regularly draws on Marx; for example, ‘Value does not wear a statement of what it is written on its brow’ (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 205), showing that he embraces and acknowledges being influenced by Marx's work (Marx & Engels, 1845). Bourdieu connects his observations with Marx's words, 'capital breeds capital', where he promotes academic symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 91). Symbolic capital can be defined as the amount of prestige and power one holds; the value legitimises all other forms of capital. Archer *et al*. (2007) explain symbolic capital as the status that peers award for desirable behaviour. Archer *et al.* found that working-class boys and girls drew symbolic capital from their peers and preferred wearing branded clothes over attending university (2007). The Caribbean-heritage boys in this study enter, or interact in, fields (social groups, school and community groups) where they are afforded status and positions based on their symbolic capital. Bourdieu's theory relates to culture, power and politics and the formation of the habitus.

According to Bourdieu, habitus is a learned set of preferences the individual uses to navigate the social world. It is a system of durable, transposable, cognitive, 'schematic or structures of perception, conception and action[s]' (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 27). Bourdieu explains that habitus is embedded in the family and shapes people's position in a stratified society. Therefore, habitus can be defined as an individual's norms, values and disposition; these are formed and directed by the cultural mores that influence the individual's social class. Bourdieu (1977) claims that the family and the educational system are the two dominant forces involved in constructing the habitus; and though the environment and peer groups play a vital part, their roles are not as influential as the family and the education system. The habitus can be likened to the individual's identity, how an individual acts, thinks and behaves. Hence, home practices are instrumental in shaping the habitus.

Bourdieu (1977) posits that the habitus is unique to the individual. However, in his 1990 work, he suggests that habitus can be applied to a community. Individuals from similar backgrounds or locations would have been exposed to a similar environment and interactions, thus increasing the chance of a similar habitus. Bourdieu's notion of habitus attempts to explain how the social structures one is brought up with are affected by everyday practice (Dean, 2016). Therefore, cultural practices influence habitus formation. According to this appropriation of Bourdieu's work, the children of Jamaican heritage can share a similar habitus if they engage in community cultural practices, as communities tend to share similar experiences, beliefs, hopes and aspirations. Since the original Jamaican community migrated and settled in the UK in 1948, those adults who came, with their cultural practices relating to literacy, religious activities and forms of entertainment, developed their habitus before they came to the UK.

Bourdieu (1992) claims that in times of crisis and significant change, the habitus appears to adapt, suggesting that the habitus reacts to the pressures of the environment and becomes flexible or adjusts to suit the difference in the background. Migration from Jamaica to the UK constituted a momentous change for the participants, resulting in an upheaval in their social world. A person's identity is not shaped ‘in opposition to the social world’ but *by* the social world (Lawler, 2008, p. 7); therefore, the social world within which an individual interacts influences their identity and habitus. Erel's (2010) concept of the 'rucksack approach' argues that migration results in new ways of producing and reproducing (mobilising, enacting, validating) cultural capital that builds on, rather than simply mirrors, power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration. The migrants are viewed as bringing cultural resources that may or may not fit within the culture of their country of residence; they must adjust and change to live in their new environment.

According to Bourdieu, habitus and capital are pre-disposed to reproduce themselves (Bourdieu, 1990). He states:

> *Because the habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned*

> *and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning*. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55).

Here, Bourdieu explains that habitus has the capacity and ability to change. The habitus has endless potential to reproduce and transform but can only reproduce what it is exposed to because historical and social experiences limit it. However, if the habitus is given new experiences and training, it will change and surpass the previous limitations that were set. From this, one might infer that with training and exposure to new cultural experiences, the habitus of Jamaican-heritage boys can be altered.

Bourdieu proposes that reality is a social concept and that people exist in a social environment with others. He posits that social reality comprises many fields in which different rules apply (Bourdieu, 1990). The concept of field can be understood as the setting in which habitus and capital interactions are demonstrated (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 27); hence, the field is where people interact with each other according to their experiences, positions and power relations; suggesting that within the field, human behaviours are structured based on the rules that govern the sphere of the field. He further explains that actors must follow these rules to be successful and apply specific capital within the fields. However, he does not define the field's boundaries. Acknowledging the struggle and conflict that is central to the field, Bourdieu & Wacquant posit: '[t]he field is the locus of relations of force – and not only of meaning and of struggles aimed at transforming it, and therefore of endless change' (1992, pp. 103–104). What they suggest is that not everyone in the field follows the rules; some aim to transform the social relations within the field.

Bourdieu further explains that the actors' experiences in the field can be altered based on pedagogic action, suggesting that the individual experiences and interactions within a social group or institution can be adjusted or modified based on education or training. He describes this as a painful process as it is the confrontation of the habitus in an unfamiliar field. For example, even if the boys enter the school setting possessing limited cultural capital to interact within the institution, with teaching and learning, their experiences can be modified. That is,

while interacting with the setting, their habitus makes reasonable adjustments, resulting in change. The boys' habitus then reacts to the pressure of the environment and becomes flexible or adjusts to suit the change in the environment.

Attempting to simplify Bourdieu's definition of the field, Thompson (2008, p. 69) clarifies that the field refers to the formal and informal norms that govern a sphere of activities. It is organised around a specific form of capital or a combination of capitals – both the process and the product of fields. For example, fields include the family, school, higher education, the arts and politics. Fields are relational and are characterised by their respective principles (or logic) of practice. The practice is subject to power struggles among different interests seeking to control the capital within the field (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Hence, within the field, individuals are positioned based on their power or capital and not all the actors in the field are equal. As a result, an individual's position within a field would be determined by the interrelation of their habitus and the capital they can muster in that field. Their practice, or action, would be a consequence of their habitus and cultural capital interacting within the context of the field.

Bourdieu developed the notion of cultural capital as an analogy of financial capital as a source of social division (Hall, 1997). Bourdieu explained that in the same way that access to financial capital gives people economic security and status, cultural capital, that is, knowledge and ‘highbrow’ tastes and preferences, constitute a practical competence that is central to the security of our status and position. It also helps us differentiate ourselves from less well 'culturally endowed' (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu argues that cultural capital refers to an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities possessed and inherited by the privileged in society (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu described capital as the field of possibilities (1984, p. 110). Later, Bourdieu (2004) revised the concept of capital so that it is not just related to the economy but encompasses the social and cultural. He implied that the access one has to capital decides the path not taken or the path taken. Thus, all the possibilities available to the individual reduce the element of chance in one's life. An individual achieves, or does not achieve, based on accessible capital; for example, upper and middle-class children are likely to succeed academically over children from disadvantaged backgrounds due to their access to capital. Bourdieu

explains that cultural capital, social capital and economic capital can be acquired in two ways: from one's family or through formal schooling (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu proposes the idea of cultural capital as a way of thinking about the investment one makes to receive the desired outcome concerning education. Bourdieu (1984) explains that all goods and services within society have an economic value, and social classes (the social groups into which society is divided based on their access to capital) seek to invest academically in their cultural capital. Bourdieu claims that the upper class and the middle class (to an extent) can invest in their cultural capital in the optimum educational setting. Hence, their investment is highly profitable, and education can be viewed as a mechanism for generating social profit; if society invests and values the commodity, it will be profitable. Consequently, if society does not value the commodity, there will be no investment, and therefore, no return.

Capital directs or guides the field of possibility of an individual, making the individual less, or more, likely to explore new horizons, suggesting that the capital one has, be it social, economic or cultural, could limit the individual. On the one hand, it opens the doors of possibilities, especially if the individual is from a higher socioeconomic status; conversely, they need to be exposed to the possibilities to explore this. Thus, the lack of capital of an individual could hinder the individual's progress. Since the home and the community play a significant role in the individual development of the capital, or lack thereof, it highlights the significance of cultural literacy practice in enhancing (or not enhancing) cultural capital. Bourdieu suggests that the powerful have a significant role to play in their society in determining the status of individuals; due to their access to capital, they can position others in the field or change the rules of the field to suit themselves. Owing to their position, they can determine minority individuals' identity and access to capital in society.

This section has outlined Bourdieu's theoretical premises and presented his concepts of habitus, capital and field. The next section explores Black cultural capital, as put forward by CRT scholars.

2.6 Black cultural capital and Bourdieu

In this section, the concept of Black cultural capital is discussed as proposed by some CRT scholars (Carter 2003; 2005; Wallace 2016). Long-established Bordieuan cultural capital theory parallels Oliver & Shapiro's (1995) description of income. Both theories place value on a restricted range of assets and characteristics. White, middle-class values judge a traditional view of cultural capital and are more limited than wealth – one's accumulated assets and resources. Bourdieu's work focuses on social capital (Yosso, 2005) but not the multi-dimensional aspect of social relations. CRT has enlarged this view by focusing the research lens on the experiences of Black people in a critical historical context, revealing accumulated assets and resources in the histories and lives of Black communities. Carter (2003; 2005), Reay *et al*. (2005), Yosso (2005), Rollock (2007) and Wallace (2016) all challenge Bourdieu's theory and concepts as they explore them among Black Caribbean youth. Their findings contribute to the discussion on the cultural literacy practices of children of Jamaican heritage and their formal literacy development.

Bourdieu's theoretical concepts have been used in multiple investigations to interpret the experiences and outcomes of racial, ethnic and class minorities (Carter, 2003; 2005; Reay *et al*., 2005; Rollock, 2007). Carter (2003), employing Bourdieu's conventional interpretation of cultural capital, noted that it ignores non-dominant forms of cultural capital. The theory promotes a deficit perspective in which the poor and working class are seen to 'need more' cultural capital to negotiate inter-group relations – they need more resources to relate effectively with others outside their social group. In her work with low-income African American and Latino youth, Carter (2003) argues that valuable resources do exist among low-income minorities and not just the White middle-class majority. She concedes that a certain kind of cultural capital abounds among some communities but is absent or lacking in others (the deficit perspective) but suggests that low-income or minority groups, which Bourdieu counts among those that are lacking, have *different* expressions of cultural capital. It is, simply, that the cultural capital of minority ethnic groups does not have the same value as the cultural capital of the

dominant group in society. To support the deficit perspective, Fuller (2014, p. 131) asserts that:

> *The greater an individual's social, cultural and economic capital, the greater their ability to accumulate institutional resources, achieve educational success and acquire further capital. Students from poorer families, having less capital, are seriously disadvantaged, attaining less well and having lower educational aspirations than students from more socially advantaged backgrounds. In these terms, cultural, social and economic capital can perpetuate educational inequalities and reproduce social disadvantages.*

Bourdieu's work attempts to provide a structural critique of social and cultural reproduction. His theory of cultural capital has been used to propose that some non-dominant communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor. This interpretation of Bourdieu exposes White, middle-class culture as the standard; therefore, all other forms and expressions of 'culture' are judged compared with this 'norm', suggesting that cultural capital is more than inherited or possessed by the middle class. However, it refers to an accumulation of specific forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that privileged groups value.

Carter (2015) describes Black cultural capital as an appreciation for taste, style and code expressions not considered by Bourdieu's conventional definition of cultural capital. Building on Carter's work, McKenzie (2016) and Morrin (2016) challenged the widely held view of the 'deficit' perspective of cultural capital, which states that working-class people lack cultural capital and/or aspiration. McKenzie posits that working-class people ascribe values to their own cultures across their communities. Wallace (2016) supports Carter's (2005) findings and posits that 'Black' cultural capital has social hierarchies and is dynamic and diverse. Carter also adds that there is no singular 'Black' cultural capital to which all Black ethnic groups subscribe universally. Instead, she claims that each Black ethnic group possesses distinctive cultural capital sets. Her reference suggests multicultural capital within the Black community: Black Caribbean cultural capital, Black British cultural capital, Black American cultural capital and White cultural capital would have distinctive features. However, Carter does not address whether White cultural capital and the boundaries of the cultural capital are sub-divided. For example,

London is highly diverse and has several cultural capitals that are interacting with one another at any given time. Therefore, any school in London could have many cultural capitals but not necessarily any that would allow the ethnic minority pupils to be successful in the dominant culture school setting.

Carter (2005) divides cultural capital into two groups: dominant cultural capital and non-dominant cultural capital. In line with Bourdieu's original definition, Carter defines dominant cultural capital as related to the specialised skills within the privileged classes. In contrast, non-dominant cultural capital refers to cultural resources that the lower-status group uses to convert to capital to manage social status within their community. This definition reinforces the divisions in society and promotes the acceptance of differences; hence, each groups' cultural capitals are judged based on different standards. Black cultural capital would imply a lower status, for example, whereas White cultural capital has a higher social status. Wallace (2016) highlights that African American Black cultural capital differs from Caribbean cultural capital. Caribbean cultural capital does not inspire an oppositional stance to White, middle-class authority and academic achievement. He further explains that with a set of resources, working-class and middle-class Black Caribbean youth are employed to make meaning of Black identity, form a supportive network and counter their marginal status within Britain's racial power relations.

Wallace (2017) has two relevant insights. First, that Caribbean Black cultural capital is a locally determined resource that affects relational and affective bonds among young Black Caribbean young people. He gives an example of a Caribbean youth defining himself as 'in the nation but not a part of it'. He explains that Black identity, real or imagined, is formed in the locality. Hence, it is in their local social setting that Black Caribbean young people find power and status. He offers a compelling reconceptualization of the identity of the Caribbean Black youth as it relates to Caribbean Black cultural capital. He argues that the Black Caribbean uses cultural capital to understand who they are, form networks and create their social status in the locality, which is separated from the status they receive within the nation. As a result, their identity and attitudes will be revealed through their cultural literacy practices. Second, Wallace argues that a level of importance is

attached to the local context in expressing Black cultural capital. Within it, Black Caribbean youth feel accepted and have a privileged position based on their style, musical taste and linguistics. Therefore, the power and value of being Black are reinforced and bound by the social context, which offers status and position in relationships. Hence, Black cultural capital is vital in reinforcing authenticity and consolidating the identity of Black Caribbean youth.

Using a CRT stance, Yosso (2005) advances Bourdieu's ideas by relocating the experiences of Black people in the discourse of what comprises social and cultural capital. In this relocation, Yosso (2005) questions the use of White middle-class communities as the standard by which all others are judged (Yosso, 2005, p. 82) and the way White knowledge, as the foundation of high academic achievement, is used 'to silence, marginalise and render people of color, and their abilities and contributions, invisible' (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). Yosso (2005) delineates CRT as a framework that can theorise, examine and change how race and racism affect social structures, practices and discourses. Yosso (2005) proposes social and cultural capital as 'community cultural wealth'. She posits this as 'an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilised by communities of color who survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression' (Yosso, 2005, p. 77), but which Bourdieu's cultural capital theory 'does not recognise or value'.

Concerning the notion of capital put forward by Bourdieu, Yosso (2005) posits six overlapping capital forms that encompass community resources: aspirational, navigational, social, resistant, familial and linguistic capitals. Aspirational capital is about ambition in the face of considerable barriers. Navigational capital represents the skill to see through complex social institutions – including schools, universities and the judiciary – that systemically disadvantage minorities. Social capital refers to networks of people who can be turned to for support, emotional and instrumental. Resistant capital is the ability to reject negative stereotyping and to assert one's own identity. Strengthened through knowledge of Black resistance, resistant capital is conceived as 'resistance to subordination' (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Familial capital refers to family support. Finally, linguistic capital is the set of communication skills, such as bilingual skills, to communicate with various communities.

This section presents arguments related to Black cultural capital. It explores Carter's view of two cultural capitals: dominant and non-dominant. On the one hand, there is a tendency for Caribbean young people to distance themselves from the dominant conventional definition of Bourdieu's cultural capital and rely on the non-dominant definition that is proposed by Carter (2005) and Wallace (2017). However, the non-dominant cultural capital is considered futile outside the social context of Caribbean young people; for example, the school's measurement of academic success and progress will be defined nationally and not according to a localised context. Edgerton & Roberts (2014) posit that cultural capital must be connected to academics and technical skills or abilities. They cited Bourdieu's words, stating that the dominants always tend to impose the skills they have mastered as necessary and legitimate and to include their definition of excellence. Therefore, academic skills, culture and race are connected to identity. This section also explores Yosso's (2005) overlapping forms of capital in a study that analyses the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys and the multifaceted, nuanced and complex ways in which these boys navigate literacy practices both in and out of school. The next section explores the concept of identity and how the Jamaican-heritage boys' identities are constructed.

2.7 The Caribbean-heritage boys' identities

In this section, I introduce the concept of identity. Here, I discuss how the Caribbean-heritage boys view themselves in and outside the classroom and the broader cultural context in which they live and are educated. The section begins by examining the contested definition of identity before looking at the boys' social identities more closely. I explore the home and the school's contribution to constructing the boys' identities. Finally, the section looks at the UK national political discourse around the identity of boys with Caribbean heritage. Here, I explore the negative narrative used to categorise Black males, statistics related to their exclusion from school and how these have shaped the discourse about their identity formation and the progress that Black males are making in higher education.

Identity is a term used in everyday language with little consideration for its meaning. There is no universally accepted definition of ‘identity’; it is often used interchangeably with ‘personality’. Personality is embedded in psychology, whereas identity is embedded in sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Czerniawski, 2007). Therefore, identity and cultural practices are interrelated, as identity is related to the person and is expressed through cultural practices. Marshall (1998) suggests that the identity we were born with remains the same throughout life, but Davidson (2000) argues that the concept is fluid and is developed within the personal and social narrative; that is, identity can be classified as socially constructed. James (1890) argues that individuals live with different identities that emerge because of changing situations or needs, possibly leading to social conflict and fractured identities. Bradley (1996) emphasises the dynamic nature of identity, which is constantly refining, resulting in social complexity. She asserts that the individual is in a constant state of social conflict and is not settled in one identity, accurately depicting, but not exclusively, the social context of children of Jamaican heritage in the UK. That is, boys can have different identities for each of the groups with which they interact, or their identity at home differs from that at school. Bradley's (1996) works on fractured identities lay a foundation for discussing the identity of Jamaican-heritage boys. The boys (and other minoritized groups) participate in different social contexts and adopt different identities based on the social structure in which they reside. They live in households where Jamaican cultural practices may have the prime influence, while in school, they are influenced by British cultural practices. Wallace (2016) points out that they live in different social groups based on cultural practices, such as 'Black cultural capital'.

The notion that identity is socially constructed is more widely accepted by postmodernist theorists, Anderson (2002), Jackson & Penrose (1993) and Hall (1996). Stryker (2001) is one of the pioneers of identity theory and developed its main framework. Stryker was inspired by the work of Mead (1934) when discussing social identity and wrote ‘society shapes self shapes social behaviour’ (Mead, 1934 p.26). This framework gives prominence to social identity as it focuses on the society in which an individual is nurtured. It is based on the hypothesis that individuals have been engaged in a pre-existing society from birth and cannot

interact outside it. Stryker (2001) claimed that societies are characterised by their social structures, which comprise patterned behaviours and interactions. He divides social structures into two levels. The first level includes the network in which people and their identities are embedded – families, classrooms and workgroups. The second level includes the institutions' and organisations' social structures influencing identities. Mead (1934) understood identity as the relationship between the 'I' and the 'me' and how the former perceives and constructs the social world through the latter's eyes via interaction with significant and generalised others.

Concerning my research, the boys' identities are considered 'social identities' because of their interaction with others in school and home; both contexts are at the first and second levels, as described by Stryker (2001) above. The 'significant others' influence individuals' perception of themselves and the social world, such as parents, friends, teachers and classmates. To be more precise, in my research, 'generalised others' (Mead, 1934) refers to the abstract social groups whose opinions and attitudes are conveyed through the course of ongoing interactions, for example, people in social networks, the school leadership, a community group or any extra-curricular group.

Understanding that social identity explains the relationship between social groups using psychological processes (Harwood, 2020) is essential. Social identity emphasises how others play their role in the formation of identity. Social status within a group can determine whether the individual embraces or rejects the group's identity. In social identity, an individual's sense of self is based on a particular group's actual or perceived membership (Sackmann & Klaus, 2015). Keeping this in view, an individual's association with a particular group becomes significant for constructing social identity.

Moreover, the feelings of being part of an identified group can be negative or positive. For example, the boys' experience of being an integrated part of a group (Ulriksen, 1995), and the groups with which they are associated, would influence their identity. Likewise, children learn through interactions and communications with other members of society (Malderez *et al*., 2007; Santoro, 2009).

Social identity indirectly attributes values and responsibilities to the members of the group. Sackmann & Klaus (2015) define social identity as an individual sense of self based on actual or perceived membership in a social group such as a company or a club; hence, the individual sees himself as belonging to the group. Due to the sense of connection, the person is influenced to uphold the values of the social identity related to others, which enhances self-esteem and strengthens the feelings of belonging and identification with the group. Sackmann & Klaus (2015) also posit that culture is strongly associated with social identity. Experiences and values derived from cultural groups are internalised as part of the individual's self-concept. However, they claim that the individual expects compensation for partially losing their individuality through shared group identity.

Weeks (1988) classifies identity into two groups: personal and social. Personal identity refers to the construction of the self. Jenkins (1996) noted that identity construction is related to how external others categorise people and how individuals categorise them or themselves. Hence, social identity is linked with the perception of others and self. They work together to categorise the individual, suggesting the fluidity of identity. As discussed earlier, Bradley (1996) points out the dynamic nature of identity; in line with this thinking, identity is not fixed and linked to culture, therefore, a culture change may result in complications in forming and developing an identity. Hall (1990) adopts the fluidity perspective of identity; identities are dynamic, continually refined and transformed with individual lives and activities. He examines identity within the cultural context and points out that cultural identities are connected to the future, and, at the same time, connected to the past. He posits this as ‘becoming’ and ‘being’. He argues that cultural identities come from somewhere and have histories. However, like everything historical, they undergo constant transformation (Hall, 1990, p. 225). Therefore, cultural identities involve the future and the past and incorporate dynamic changes. For example, Jamaican-heritage children may see themselves as Jamaican (culturally), particularly in social settings where Jamaicans have a higher social status. At the same time, they may see themselves as Black (racially) because it is a visible characteristic and cannot be changed, or they may reject both the identities of either Jamaican or Black.

This thesis connects the boys' identities and the institutional settings in which these identities are activated. According to Moje & Luke (2009), the identity construction of children is a process that is individualistic but reliant on social interaction in various sociocultural groupings. Zhang *et al*. (2019) elaborate on the conceptualisation of identity in five ways: 1) the perspective of identity is different from the way it is discussed as national, racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities; 2) identity as a sense of self-subjectivity; 3) identity as a mind or consciousness; 4) identity as a narrative; 5) identity as a position. Social identity construction involves the self and others. Jenkins (2008. p 5) posits that 'this involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on', highlighting the multi-dimensional aspect of identity as humans map their place in the world. Identity involves the diverse groups people engage in, and all those groups influence their identity.

The culture of home and school contribute to the formation of the pupils' identity for this study. For example, the common perception of school suggests that there is one right way pupils should behave in school and what their intentions should be while studying. There is a common expectation that in school, pupils will behave in a particular way that may be different from the way they behave outside of school. Education is essential for the pupil and society as it links a child to an official institution, determining their official position in society (Grivins, 2013). As a result, to succeed in school, one needs to adopt the characteristics supported by the school system, thus conforming to a social identity related to the school system. To succeed at school, it is vital to accept the terms and conditions of schooling; however, pupils can accept or reject them.

Drawing from Zhang *et al*. (2019) although identity involves cultural grouping, it is also subjective. The subjectivities are realised through social positioning in everyday conversation. Furthermore, identity also involves stories and consciousness; hence, literacy practices are effective tools for constructing identity. The process of identity formation encompasses pupils, their parents, their schools and the community groups with which they interact. The concept of identity is widely contested, and its meaning varies according to the context in which it is expressed. From the arguments put forth by experts (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 2001;

Harwood, 2020), I conclude that identity is related to the perception (of self and by others) and expression of self within a social context.

2.8 UK political discourse related to Black male identity

This section explores race and identity in the English educational system. First, it explores the negative narrative used to categorise Black males and how statistics related to their exclusion from school have shaped the discourse about their identity formation. Second, the progress that Black males are making in higher education is discussed, and this section concludes with the UK political discourse around the identity of Black boys.

Black males have been negatively categorised in the English educational system and labelled as an 'educational failure' due to the widespread debate and statistics about their educational underperformance (Wright et al., 2020). Arguments related to their underperformance include that Black males are below-average students, possibly with special educational needs, lacking parental support or higher aspirations (Strand & Lindorff, 2018). Other arguments related to the negative stereotype are low teacher expectations and a school curriculum that does not recognise their cultural community wealth (Yosso, 2005) or learning styles, as seen in data related to the proportion of Black male students who are excluded from school (Wright, 1987; Ogbu, 1987; 2003; Archer & Francis, 2007; Rhamie, 2007; Gillborn *et al*., 2016).

According to Hook (2004), the concept of Black intellectual inferiority continues to be influential in the miseducation of Black students, especially boys, even though the notions of Black intellectual inferiority compared with White people have been widely debunked in post-colonial times (Schwarz, 2003; Gilroy, 1993; Warmington, 2014). This inferiority notion has been used to account for the persistent lower attainment of Black students in American (Aker, 2016) and English (Gillborn, 2008) schools and Black people in both countries occupying lower-skilled employment rather than occupations requiring advanced educational knowledge and skills (Horowitz *et al*., 2019).

Annually, there continues to be a disproportionate number of Black males experiencing school exclusion (DfE, 2018b; 2019) compared with students from

White British and other ethnic groups (Demie, 2005; Wright *et al*., 1998; Department for Education (DFE), 2017; 2018b). The British government suggests there is a link between school exclusion and the increase in young Black males carrying knives and knife crime (Perera, 2020; Wright *et al*., 2020). The government set up an ‘All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Knife Crime’ (2019) to break the link between school exclusions and knife crime.

More positively, there is an increased number of Black males participating in higher education, which Wright, Maylor & Pickup (2020, p 62) describe as ‘the turned-around narrative’. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (2020) data shows an increased number of Black students applying to UK universities, especially the Russell Group – the twenty-four leading universities in the UK. These statistics contradict the educational underperformance and inferiority discourse that has dominated the British education system over many decades and has fed into the narrative that describes Black males as 'educational failures’ and lacking aspiration (Wright *et al*., 2020).

Successive UK governments (Scott & Spencer, 2013; Cameron, cited by Ross, 2016; May, 2016) have reinforced the political and educational discourse related to the negative identity of Black males that affirms historical stereotypes and contributes to the construction and formation of the notion that Black people are 'low achievers' and 'lack ambition'. The perception of the government is that young Black men (especially those of Caribbean heritage) are more likely to be in prison and youth offender institutions than successfully achieving in school or higher education (Ministry of Justice, 2016; Cabinet Office, 2017; Lammy, 2017; Millard *et al*., 2018; Stacey, 2018; Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, 2018), leading to an inference that educating Black boys is a waste of time and money. This perspective can also shape how young Black boys view themselves. The recent surge in knife crime involving Black males is seen by the British government as evidence that young Black males are not interested in education (Cabinet Office, 2017; Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, 2018).

This section reveals that Black children have a complex social reality behind the empirical data of Black boys' underachievement in schools that creates a gap between teachers and students, which researchers find difficult to unpick. In

addition, the social identity displayed as they interact with others contributes directly or indirectly to their formal literacy development.

2.9 Summary

This chapter explores the two theoretical frameworks – CRT and Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital – underpinning this research and the complexity surrounding the construction of the identity of Caribbean-heritage boys. The first section defines race and racism, the key ideas associated with CRT and the criticism levied against it. Racism, CRT scholars, Valdes *et al*. (2002, pp. 1–5) suggest, is embedded in the foundations and structures of society but can only be identified through individuals' lived experiences. The basic tenets of CRT help to cement the concept of racism and its effect on people who experience it. The second section examines Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Black cultural capital as put forward by CRT scholars. The last section looks at the identity of Caribbean-heritage boys and the broader UK political discourse related to those boys' identity.

The dynamic aspects of many of the boys' lived experiences are rarely captured, showing their multifaceted experiences both in and outside school. Several arguments have framed the underachievement of Black boys in national examinations and attribute this underachievement to many distinct factors. The Jamaican-heritage boys in this study function in homes influenced by Jamaican cultural traditions and interact and engage in the school system that promotes British cultural values. The Jamaican ethnic group is one of the minority Caribbean ethnic groups in the UK. The media and schools have an ongoing conversation about the underperformance of Caribbean heritage boys in formal examinations in the British system. My concerns as a researcher are the connections between these boys' literacy practices, identity and formal literacy development. That is, this study seeks to discover what literacy practices the boys engage in, and how those practices influence their identity formation and contribute to their formal literacy development. CRT scholars attribute the overall underperformance in this sector to the inequalities embedded in the educational institutions that disadvantage Black children. Gillborn (2008) posits that racism operates throughout the English

educational system, tracing the racist process across the system and foregrounding a dialectical relationship that serves White interest.

Conversely, Bourdieu's theory suggests that it is the family that is responsible for ensuring enough investment in cultural capital for academic success. Underpinning his theory is the suggestion that people live in a divided society that involves conflict and groups who compete for control of schooling use the rhetoric of societal need to hide their self-interest (Hurn, 1993, pp. 57–58). The school benefits from the family's investment; and the community benefits in turn. Bourdieu situates the concept of habitus in relation, primarily, to social class values, beliefs and practices. Arguably, habitus structures how members of different social groups (or classes) interact within different relations to fields. Bourdieu's sociological work reveals the unconscious ways that people's interactions and everyday practices reproduce structural power relations, arguing that habitus is mainly unconscious, compounding his viewpoint that the fields of relations are structured by power.

Conversely, this chapter also presents the counterarguments related to Black cultural capital from CRT scholars, Yosso (2005), Carter (2015) and Wallace (2016) that challenge Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Carter (2015) proposes a division in cultural capital: the dominant cultural capital and the non-dominant cultural capital. She argues that the dominant cultural capital aligns with Bourdieu's original definition of cultural capital as related to the specialised skills within the privileged classes. On the other hand, the non-dominant cultural capital refers to cultural resources that the lower-status group uses to convert to capital to manage social status within their community. This definition acknowledges the societal difference as it relates to different social groups. Yosso (2005) also challenges Bourdieu's writing with her work around cultural community wealth. She points out that when addressing the argument of knowledge in the context of social inequalities, Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) posit that the knowledge of the upper and middle classes is valuable capital in society. Hence, if one is not born within these social classes, it is still possible to acquire this capital through formal schooling. Yosso argues that Bourdieu's theory gives insight into how a hierarchical society reproduces itself and offers a way of understanding why people of colour's academic achievements are significantly lower than the outcomes of White people

(2005). This argument suggests that Black boys lack the social and cultural capital required for social mobility. Therefore, the role of the school is to support Black children to acquire the social and cultural capital needed to succeed while ignoring the cultural capital that the Black children bring to the setting. Yosso (2005) proposed six alternate capitals (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and resistant) found in the Black community, which schools could acknowledge and utilise.

This chapter also explores arguments related to societal influence on forming and developing the Black boys' social identity in the English educational system and how identity helps to connect literacy practices to the students 'social worlds' and formal school literacy development. Literacy practices are significant in the construction of social identity. Mousena (2020) draws attention to literacy practices that contribute to forming identity. Oral discourse is a kind of discourse by which interlocutors construct their social identities and roles, resulting in maintaining or undermining human relations. These discourses, interactions or communications can affect how children, and others, perceive themselves. In addition, oral speech is the fundamental means for expressing, formulating and negotiating opinions, conveying and exchanging emotions involved in everyday communication in literacy practices.

Through exploring CRT, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and identity, I have highlighted the significance of each concept yet the interrelatedness of all three concepts on the lived experiences of the Jamaican-heritage boys. The relationship between CRT, cultural capital and identity is significant, as understanding these plays a crucial role in how an individual defines and presents himself. This chapter reveals the significance of identity as it is how people perceive themselves and how others perceive them. Race, cultural capital and identity are the foundations on which an individual begins to gain a sense of self to explore resources that are accessible or inaccessible. Lacy (2007) and Rollock *et al*. (2015) argue that in Britain, 'race' matters in the negotiation and reproduction or production of cultural capital. Race and racism influence the investment in cultural capital, which impacts identity. Literacy practices out-of-school and in-school are related to the

fundamental concepts discussed in this chapter. In the next chapter, I define literacy from multiple perspectives and discuss cultural literacy practices.

Chapter 3: Cultural literacy practices

3.1 Introduction

The complex social reality of an individual – the meaning they derive from engaging in cultural literacy practices with others in their environment – shapes their identity. Chapter 2 focused on critical race theory (CRT) and the writings of Bourdieu – the two leading theories on which this research is based. The concepts of identity, habitus, cultural capital and race are all relevant when exploring the literacy practices of a minority ethnic group. In this chapter, I explore the concept of cultural literacy practices across three broad areas. In the first part, I outline the significant role that cultural literacy plays in our lives by tracking the definition of literacy through sociocultural, psychological and critical perspectives and sum up a discussion of literacy as a social practice. In the second part, I develop the idea of community literacy practices by discussing the different literacy practices that happen outside of school while contrasting these with those that occur inside the school. Finally, in the third part, I examine the link between out-of-school (home) and in-school literacy practices.

To thoroughly consider cultural literacy practices, it is necessary to define literacy. However, the concept of literacy is widely contested and there is no one agreed definition, but this study, largely, considers literacy from a sociocultural perspective.

Additionally, I explain two key concepts related to my study: literacy practice and literacy events and show that these concepts enable us to understand the situated nature of literacy.

3.2 The cognitive or psychological perspective of literacy

A fundamental component of the cognitive perspective of literacy is that development happens in stages, from novice to expert. Piaget (1964) argues that knowledge development is a spontaneous process linked to embryogenesis, concerned with the development of the whole body, the nervous system and mental functions. He explains that a child and an adult learn differently. Primary, physical and mental prerequisites are required for development, and some of these

are found in either adults or children, but not in both (Piaget, 1964). The development of knowledge only ends in adulthood. Children and adults experience literacy development differently, as children's physical development differs from that of adults. The cognitive perspective posits that learners have little control over their literacy development process as they acquire different cognitive abilities at different stages. Chall (1983) and Ehrin (2005), whose views align with Piaget's, postulate that all individuals, including those with special needs, acquire reading skills through six stages of reading development (see the stages in Table 3.1). The stages illustrated in the table can be used to identify the gaps in children's learning or reading development.

Table 3.2 Chall's stages of reading development

	Stages	Ages	Key characteristics
0	Pre-reading and pseudo- reading	Up to 6	Pretend reading, turning pages. Some letter recognition, especially letters in their name. Often predicting stories and words.
1	Initial reading and decoding	6-7	Reading simple texts containing high-frequency lexis. Can read about 600 words.
2	Confirmation and fluency	7-8	Read more quickly, accurately, paying attention to the meaning of words. They understand approximately 3000 words.
3	Reading for learning	9-14	Read for knowledge as motivation.
4	Multiplicity and complexity	14-17	Respond official to what they read and analysing text.
5	Construction and reconstruction	18+	Read selectively and forming an opinion

Other cognitive researchers, such as Snow *et al*. (1998), Ehri *et al*. (2001), and Davidson (2010) either report on or support the claim that, for reading to take place, the prerequisite of phonological awareness is necessary. To understand phonological awareness, it is essential to understand the nature of the phoneme, which is the smallest element of sound that is significant to the word's meaning (Dombey *et al*., 1998). Phonological awareness is the understanding that sounds in speech have a distinct meaning; therefore, words can be divided into a sequence of phonemes (Hall, 2003). For example, 'sit' has three phonemes, /s/i/t/ and so

does 'chip', /ch/i/p/. It is the understanding that every word spoken can be taught as a string of phonemes (Hall, 2003). Similarly, Blachman (2000) posits that phonological processing is the most productive area of inquiry in advancing the scientific understanding of the reading process. Hall (2003) credits this development to cognitive theory as the cognitive approach to reading promotes the understanding that the reader breaks the reading down into manageable parts that provide a linear path the mind can follow.

Schools in England use a cognitive perspective to teach reading. The assumption is made that literacy skills are neutral and ideology-free. The Rose Independent Review (2006) made two significant recommendations that influenced teaching reading to primary school children in England. These are:

1. High-quality systematic phonics should be taught as the primary approach to reading (decoding and encoding words) and phonics work for most children should begin at about age five.
2. Phonics work should occur within a broad and rich curriculum that takes account of the development of the four interdependent strands of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing (Rose, 2006, p. 70).

Davidson (2010) argues that the stages, as proposed by cognitive researchers, provide a framework to gauge individuals' development and assess instructional methods. As a result, the National Curriculum was amended in 2007 to include the recommendations put forward by Rose to accommodate the systematic teaching of phonics.

Fundamental to the cognitive theorist is the belief that stages of reading and writing are essential to guiding teaching; the stages highlight the competence necessary for the specific purpose (Chall, 1983). Therefore, they believe that literacy skills are acquired in stages and are measurable. Reading assessments, government policies and interventions in the United Kingdom (UK) are based on this approach. Chall (1983), Hall (2003) and Ehrin (2005) favoured the cognitive perspective and emphasised the importance of empirical evidence when measuring literacy. This approach promotes the teaching of phonics in the early years (Nursery, Reception and Year 1) in the belief that phonological awareness leads to a mastery of reading

skills. Children's progress is assessed annually with a national phonics test at the end of Year 1, where they must show their phonics knowledge and competence.

Functional literacy describes measured literacy and provides information regarding functional reading skills and general cognitive competence (Kirsch & Guthrie, 1978). For the learner to be competent with phonic knowledge, there are six phases they must acquire, outlined in Table 3.2. below.

Table 3.3 The six phonics phases (DFES, 2007)

Phase	The teacher should	The children will
1	Support the children with the linking of sounds and letters in the order in which they occur in words	Name and sound the letters of the alphabet
2	Teach the children at least nineteen letters	Blend and segment letters
3	Teach the children 25 graphemes, mainly comprising of two letters	Represent at least forty-two phonemes by graphemes
4	Teach the children remaining graphemes and corresponding phonemes	Read and spell words containing adjacent consonants and polysyllabic words
5	Broaden children's knowledge of graphemes and phonemes for reading and spelling.	Learn new graphemes and alternate pronunciations for the ones they already know
6	Support the children to become fluent readers and increasingly accurate spellers.	Decode words more quickly because their sound and blending techniques are embedded

This model of literacy development, connected to a cognitive ability to encode and decode symbols, is promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Bank, which sponsor literacy programmes worldwide (Wickens & Sandlin, 2007).

Acquiring literacy skills is often related to positive outcomes associated with community self and socioeconomic growth (Graff, 1979). These literacy programmes followed the traditional, skills-orientated approaches toward literacy acquisition (Oxenham *et al*., 2002). Literacy, following the cognitive approach, is, therefore, defined as the set of skills enabling individuals to:

(a) record information of any kind in some code understood by the person making the record and possibly by other persons in some permanent, or less permanent, form and:
(b) decode the recorded information, which is the essence of writing and reading (Oxenham *et al*. p. 8).

To function effectively in society, children must be able to decode; therefore, the ability to decode is related to developing an active role in society. As a result, functional literacy fosters productivity and improves life chances for the individual, according to Oxenham *et al.* (2002). UNESCO's original functional definition of literacy relates to economics and the labour market (Rassool, 1999), as reading and writing prepare one for work. Functional literacy is, therefore, associated with a set of cognitive skills vital for the next stage of an individual's intellectual and economic development. These cognitive skills are acquired in a decontextualised setting without any cultural or social meaning attached to the learning experience or the setting. These skills are mainly taught within a school setting; hence, literacy is confined to school. From this perspective, the acquisition of the alphabet is necessary before the identification of words; and word identification is central to comprehension, in the same way that orthographic information is paramount in understanding semantics and reading comprehension.

Cognitive researchers, Purcell-Gates *et al*. (2004) concern themselves with normative behaviour; for instance, learning to read as a process of what is happening in the reader's mind. Davidson (2010) posits that literacy is taught and learned; thus, the learner must learn a code to read and write, and print is a code that represents phoneme and grapheme correspondence. Vidtheya & Pillai (2020) explain that school literacy is built on the level of expertise a child has already obtained at home and that school does not function separately as an institution that teaches literacy alone. The teaching of literacy without a more comprehensive vision only serves a minimal purpose; it is when literacy integrates with social and cultural contexts that are familiar to the learners that this approach has the potential to support the learning of valuable skills that can only emerge in a social setting. Hall (2003) maintains that the cognitive view is rooted in a natural science approach to the social world, where order and stages are important.

Historically, in the UK, literacy learning has been associated with learning in school (Ouintero, 2006), especially reading and writing, which only occurs in a formal school setting. According to Thomson and Clifton (2013), schooling has often disregarded the cultural assets children bring to school, claiming that children do not come to school with the 'right' understanding or behaviours. This claim suggests that neither parents nor children understand the importance of the rich cultural values they can contribute to improving the literacy learning promoted in school.

One of the advantages of the cognitive view of literacy is in identifying the gaps in children's knowledge relative to national and international standards; however, equally, the cognitive perspective is minimal when defining literacy, as there is more to literacy than acquiring knowledge for decoding graphemes and identifying phonemes. Quintero (2006) further explains that, over the decades, school literacy has failed to connect with the real purpose for which children use literacy practices – to make meaning. Similarly, Schultz and Hull (2002) argue that:

> *Despite the dazzling theoretical advances of how we conceive literacy, despite provocative research on out-of-school literacies in an array of exciting settings, a depressing fact remains: we still have not succeeded in improving the educational experiences and life chances of the vast majority of children, adolescents and adults* (Schultz & Hull, 2002, p. 18).

Korucu *et al*. (2020) identify links between home literacy, children's language development and academic readiness and Senenhal (2006) and Senenhal & LeFevre (2002) show the importance of the home literacy environment in developing academic readiness and phonemic awareness in preschool and toddlers. Conger & Donnellan (2007) demonstrate that the home environment influences children's cognitive development through the psychosocial climate of parent–child interactions and resources at home and Farver *et al*. (2006) support home literacy environments for children's social-emotional competence. They claim cooperation, compliance, knowledge of emotions and effective communication develop while working with adults in the home. However, because the cognitive approach to teaching literacy is still the dominant perspective in England (Hall,

2003; Rose, 2006; New National Curriculum, 2014), the full array of benefits to children of out-of-school literacy practices has not, yet, been explored.

The development of basic literacy is necessary for functional literacy, as seen in several countries. Children's academic achievement is a global concern according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) (2020). All OECD countries' compulsory education comprises primary and lower secondary. The 2020 OECD report states that there is nearly universal coverage of basic education; enrolment between 6–14 years attained or exceeded 95% except in three countries. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Report (2018) is a comprehensive way of capturing children's capability across several countries. It is also a tool used to introduce or amend education policies. In all countries that participate in PISA (2018), girls significantly outperform boys in reading, by 30 score points on average across OECD countries. Therefore, the underachievement of boys between the ages of 6–14 is a global phenomenon.

School achievement data in England has prompted researchers to investigate the disparity between boys' and girls' achievements. Researchers, Yates (1997), White *et al*. (2001), Rowe & Rowe (2002) and Wright (2018) all investigated the portrayals of a crisis in boys' academic achievement, which, in this context, means students' performance in formal examinations at the end of secondary school. Government statistics show that, in England, Black Caribbean boys are currently behind their White counterparts academically (Strand, 2013; Strand, 2015). Gosai's (2009) research reveals that 39% of Black Caribbean students achieved five A–C GCSEs; they were the lowest achievers in school. A decade later, the academic position was the same for Black Caribbean students in England, with 26.9% of students from the Black Caribbean ethnic group getting a 'strong pass' – Grade 5 or above – with boys trailing 9.4 percentage points behind girls (DFE 2019) (Grade 5 and above is the equivalent of A–C in the 2009 report).

My interest is in the academic achievement of Jamaican-heritage boys. The statistics show that in the English educational system, Caribbean-heritage boys (as mentioned in the statistics), with Jamaicans being the largest group represented, perform well below their peers and well below the girls in their cohort. Due to the well-documented evidence of these boys' underachievement, I explore their

cultural literacy practices and whether there are any intergenerational links between generational literacy practices. I also explore the connections between their literacy practices and formal educational development. In the next section, I discuss critical literacy.

3.3 The critical literacy perspective

Reading, writing and numeracy skills remain the domain of literacy in everyday contexts (Serpa & Santos, 2020). As a result, it is necessary to discuss the concept of critical literacy when exploring literacy as a social practice. The fundamental elements of literacy are reading, writing, speaking and listening, all of which are essential aspects of social activity and subject to power relationships. Cook-Gumperz (2006) asserts that literacy is not simply the neutral, technical skill of reading and writing but is also embedded in social relations. It is a social practice and is ideologically bound, linked, interpreted and understood according to a particular ideology, social institutions, structures and power relations in place in each context (Street, 2014).

Critical literacy does not sit in isolation, nor should it be a topic to be covered or a unit to be studied; instead, it should be embedded across the curriculum in the content areas as it addresses the ideological principles on which a text is created. The cultural knowledge of diverse students should be used to build the curriculum (Vasquez, 2017, pp. 8–9); this enables a connection with the learning process and creates meaning for the learner.

Critical literacy focuses on the connection between literacy and power (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993) and does not endorse the notion that reading and writing skills are autonomous, technical, neutral and universal (Searle, 1993). Instead, critical literacy considers literacy as becoming conscious of one's experience, historically constructed within specific power relations. Therefore, it is the ability to dissect a text and find any embedded biases due to the author's presentation of the world (Luke, 2000; Comber & Simpson, 2001; Comber, 2013). This critical dissection of a text is done by analysing its message to identify elements relating to power, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypical views and tensions while considering the author's social and political stance. Critical literacy is an approach to ‘reading’

the world that is embedded in Marxism, where texts are analysed for underlying meanings. As a result, the reader adopts a critical stance and actively examines the text for biases, questioning power structures and inequalities. This approach makes learners more perceptive about their reading and encourages them to question the author's agenda and intentions.

Critical literacy enables the young to read both the word and the world in relation to power, identity and difference, and gives them access to knowledge, skills, tools and resources (Janks, 2013). Critical literacy, from its inception in the work of Paulo Freire (1972), is connected to self-empowerment, politics and ethics. Freire's work was about change, writing and rewriting the world, as he explains:

> *If learning to read and write constitutes an act of knowing, the learner must assume the role of creative subject from the beginning. It is not a matter of memorising and repeating syllabus and phrases, but rather reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing and the profound significance of language* (Freire, 1972, p. 29).

Freire (1972) viewed literacy from a socio-political perspective. He used a problem-posing pedagogy to teach Brazilian and Chilean peasants how to read by introducing them to meaningful vocabulary in their daily lives. Freire engaged them in critical reflection on the oppressive reality of poverty, a pervasive situation around them. Using words as a stimulus, he motivated them to free themselves from oppression by finding ways of transforming their lives and their world. He discovered that the peasants could retain the words in their vocabulary after being encouraged to view their own reality critically. Within this context, reading and writing became tools for social transformation.

Following Freire's model, a critical approach emphasises the importance of language, demonstrating that words are not innocent. Words position us and apprehend our world geographically, environmentally and politically (Janks, 2013). Critical literacy enables an individual to read the world and words through a critical lens, internalise the words alongside their situation and be willing to make a change. To exist as a human is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world, in turn, appears to its name as a problem and requires a new name (Freire,

1972, p. 61). As a result, words are more than vocabulary; they are actions, significant to change. Hence, to be able to attach words or names to situations (political, geographical or environmental) is to be able to change them.

A strategic component of critical literacy is examining the politics behind the creation of texts. Cervetti *et al.* (2001) suggested that this can be explored by identifying the purpose, the assumptions and the factors shaping the writer's viewpoint. Shor (2012) contends that the economic, political and social interest that the writer alleges to uphold is fundamental in examining any written work from a critical viewpoint. Writers have social and political influence; hence, in critical literacy, readers should examine the author's beliefs when writing (Beck, 2005). Alford (2001) identifies that readers may be manipulated to accept these beliefs through language, images, layout and other features contained within the text. Building on Alford's work, Burnett and Merchant (2011) argue that with critical literacy, the dominant patterns of power and authority are exposed, in contrast to passively reading and taking a text at face value.

Critical literacy often tilts teachers towards helping students see and interact with the social world by regarding the text as something that can be deconstructed and explored (Wargo, 2019). Enabling the learners to become active citizens by constructing counter-narratives through reports, podcasts and poems, Vasquez and Felderman (2013) propose that learners become active citizens. Still other researchers (Campano *et al*., 2013; Pandya *et al.,* 2015) encourage learners to use critical social practices to develop their identities as social activists and challenge the *status quo*. Together, these elements of critical literacy enable children to engage in the debate and discover how power shapes identities, practices and the larger sociopolitical systems in which they live (Wargo, 2019).

The critical literacy approach does not only equip children with the skills to decode words on a page, or examine syntax or linguistic structures, to be able to comprehend texts. It also helps the learner engage critically with texts because it empowers readers to encounter many means of expression and to discuss the meaning of texts by looking for biases and being flexible with their thinking. Learners are encouraged to move from the comprehension of texts to understanding the power relationships embedded within them and to question the

basic presumption or ideology upon which the author created the text. Fresch (2007) points out that authors create text from a viewpoint, and the reader can question and analyse the ideas and content from multiple perspectives. Learners can accept or reject the perspective presented when critically examining the text. For Freire, there is a distinction between reading the ‘word’ and reading the ‘world’; however, both skills complement understanding the world and making a change. The critical point is ‘to understand literacy as the relationship of the learners to the world’ (Freire, 2001, p. 173). Freire emphasises the importance of connecting the printed word to the world. He views literacy as meaningful when people use it to reflect on their world and their position therein.

Other theorists (Luke, 2012; Vasquez, 2017; Hearfield & Boughton, 2018; Mosley Wetzel, 2018) use Freire's framework to examine literacy as a commodity or a source of exploring the identity of the reader as well as the identity presented in the text. Brandt and Clinton (2002, p. 337) suggest that literacy is a commodity that individuals and groups may appropriate, misappropriate or even reject. They propose that theories of social literacy have exaggerated the power of local context to determine the meaning and forms that literacy takes. Lachicotte *et al*. (1998) emphasise identity and culture by giving precedence to the concept of identity and the influence of the text on the readers’ identity. The text is saturated with social and cultural structures of race, class and gender and introduces the struggle for power, knowledge and representation. Therefore, identity is embedded within the text, and the text significantly influences the reader.

After discussing the critical literacy perspective and its significance in developing literacy, using the context and meanings associated with the learner, it is essential to explore literacy as viewed from the New Literacy Studies (NLS) perspectives.

3.4 The new literacy studies movement

The current study is located within the field of NLS and is best embodied by the work of Street (1994), Barton & Hamilton (1998) and Gee (2004). The study advocates approaching literacy from a sociocultural perspective and as a social practice (Street, 1985) instead of a purely cognitive process. NLS considers literacy as a process that occurs within society; that is, it develops through cultural,

social, historical and institutional perspectives (Gee, 2010). The body of work located within NLS conceptualises literacy in the real-world context of what people do with reading, writing and text and why they do what they do (Perry, 2012, p. 54). Giving rise to its sociocultural nature, the field of NLS was gradually developed from several disciplines, such as anthropology, with a focus on ethnography and language communities; education-classroom talk and practices; cultural psychology-identity culture and mind, history and linguistics-acquisition of language (Bloome, 1997; Pahl & Roswell, 2005; Gee, 2010). The notion of literacy as a social practice shows the connection of literacy to everyday experiences (Pahl & Roswell, 2005). Therefore, literacy is seen as a practice that involves action but is also connected to, and shaped by, values, attitudes, feelings and social relations (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). The NLS involves social literacy, referring to the approach of literacy not as technical skills acquired and held by a particular individual but as social practices that vary according to contexts (Chakrabarty, 2020).

Social relationships are essential to literacy practice. Literacy exists in relationships between people, within groups and within communities and not as a set of skills individuals hold within their heads (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Additionally, NLS is concerned with 'identifying multiple, multimodal, multilingual literacies, changeable according to the varying space and time and challenged when relating to power' (Chakrabarty, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, literacy must be considered in relation to new modes of communication: for example, computers, mobile technology and social media platforms. Technology and digitalisation are essential to gaining literacy knowledge (Chakrabarty, 2020). Critical literacy offers some interesting insights into the relationship between text and readers. These relations are never neutral and, as discussed by the proponents of the NLS movement, it is possible to ascertain that: a) literacy never occurs in a vacuum; b) it always takes place within space and time; c) it is situated within a defined context from which multiple meanings are derived and d) it is not a type of practice consisting of the manipulating of texts using isolated cognitive skills but involves the whole individual and their relationships within the context, and literacy is never neutral as this depends on the historical and social aspects.

The following section focuses on literacy as a social practice from a sociocultural perspective.

3.5 Literacy as a social practice

NLS and other sociocultural theorists (Harste *et al*., 2008; Heath, 1983) focus on literacy as a social practice, with its definition being situated in social interaction. Central to literacy as a social practice is the interaction between people. Sociocultural theorists, Harste *et al*. (2008) and Heath (1983) posit that literacy develops within a sociocultural context. Because literacy is a social practice based upon social interaction, it includes observable practices (Barton, 2007; Maybin, 2007) where meanings are formed. According to Heath (1983) these observable literacy activities are included in the everyday activities of people's lives. These communities exist in a system with the ultimate purpose of shared learning (Wenger, 2004). Opportunities for developing literacy as a social practice exist in communities or systems as these interactions are embedded with meaningful context.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that the sociocultural context plays a vital role in understanding how individuals experience their world from social and historical perspectives. He theorised that meanings are formed through contextual social processes and, therefore, are linked to cultural tools and communicative symbols expressed through language. Emphasising the contextual focus of NLS, Gee (2008) asserts that the emphasis of NLS is on contextual practices and not just on decontextualised skills.

Street (2001, p. 17) introduces two distinct literacy models – the ‘autonomous’ and the ‘ideological’. He explains that the autonomous model begins with the assumption that literacy influences other social and cognitive practices, and can be presented as neutral and universal, concealing the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it. In contrast, the ideological model of literacy focuses on a more culturally sensitive view of literacy that varies across contexts. This view posits that literacy is a social practice rather than composed of technical and neutral skills. Street (2006) further develops this distinction by stating that the ideological model is about knowledge: ‘How people address reading and writing

are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being' (Street, 2006, p. 2). As a result, literacy is a social practice embedded in socially constructed interactions. Barton *et al*. (2000, p. 1) state that all literacy activity indicates broader social practices, as literacy is situated, and can be located, in a particular time and place. They argue that literacy is positioned in relation to social institutions and the power relations that sustain them, suggesting that literacy is fixed within a frame and time with clearly defined boundaries. Literacy is, therefore, what people do in their everyday lives.

The notion that literacy is alive in any community where people interact with others, directly opposes the traditional view that it is in an exclusive domain of the school. It is argued that literacy is acquired in schools, homes, families and communities. Creese *et al*. (2014) and Roswell and Pahl (2015) find that literacy exists in homes through how people speak and contribute to everyday language activities. That interaction can motivate people to lead change, thus, literacy can be considered as an agent of social justice. It inspires people to push for social, economic and political change. Literacy is far-reaching across all divides: it can be local and international, it can be found in urban and rural settings, and it can be found among the richest and the poorest, illustrating its dynamic nature.

Street (2006) proposes that literacy varies according to time and space but is also contested in relation to power. He also makes the distinction between autonomous and ideological models and develops a distinction between literacy events and literacy practices (Street, 1988). Bloome (1997) and Street (2006) explain that reading and writing have traditionally been viewed as a set of psychological skills or processes employed by readers and writers to recite the text orally or derive meaning from the text. Hence, educators and policymakers emphasise developing and enhancing citizens' cognitive skills to improve their economic prospects. This (autonomous) model is criticised by researchers following the NLS movement, who, in keeping with the ideological stance, suggest that, in practice, literacy varies from one context and one culture to another (Street, 2006). Researchers supporting the ideological model of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 1994; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Street, 2006) assert that the autonomous model is the imposed dominant view of literacy on society, to the disadvantage of marginalised groups.

Further, Gee (1991) and Besnier & Street (1994) explain that it ignores individuals' and community groups' socioeconomic class and culture.

NLS supports literacy from a social and cultural perspective. It represents the ideological model of literacy, as described above. Instead of viewing literacy as a set of technical skills, this model views it as a social practice with roots in social interaction. The emphasis is on how people use reading and writing to construct meaning and reveal their identities (Street, 2003; Pahl & Roswell, 2005, p. 10). Street (1995) argues that literacy is always a social activity from the outset; hence, literacy cannot be a neutral learning process.

This section has highlighted the significance of literacy as a social practice and how literacy is situated and intertwined into the fabric of daily life. In the next section, I define two key concepts related to literacy as a social practice – 'literacy practices' and 'literacy events' – since understanding these terms will bring us closer to the importance of out-of-school literacy.

3.6 Literacy events and literacy practices

The term 'literacy events' was first used by Anderson *et al*. (1980, pp. 59–65), who defined it as an occasion during which a person understands graphic signs. Heath (1982) further develops the concept of 'literacy event' as ‘any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretative processes’ (p. 93). Based on Heath's work, Barton and Hamilton (2003) explore the difference between literacy events and practices. Literacy events are activities where literacy has a role to play. These observable episodes emerge from practice, pointing to the core idea that literacy is situated in time and always in a social context. Pahl and Roswell (2005, p. 12) posit a similar view, stating that literacy events are *observable* events, often most easily spotted in the classroom, highlighting their visibility. These events are regular and related to the practice of reading and writing.

By contrast, ‘literacy practices’ can only be *inferred* because they connect to unobservable beliefs, values, attitudes and power structures (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Street coined the phrase ‘literacy practices’ as a means of focusing upon ‘social practices and conceptions of reading and writing’ (Street, 1984, p. 1). He

later developed the concept to mean a broader cultural conception of ways of thinking about reading and writing in cultural contexts (Street, 2006). Literacy practices relate to out-of-classroom settings and can be observed through regular, iterative events (Pahl & Roswell, 2005). They can be held in one's head from one day to the next. Pahl and Roswell (2005) point out that, though there is an emphasis on action, literacy is more than action; it relates to context, feelings, attitudes, values, relationships and power structures (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Purcell-Gates *et al*., 2011). Barton *et al*. (2000) posit that the social structure in which literacy is embedded is essential because, without the social element, there would be no need for literacy. The practice is fully understood within social relationships; hence, people, communities and cultural groups are vital to the meaning. Discussing what it means in this context is important because ‘practice’ is a key concept within the social-cultural theory.

Barton (1994) posits that literacy practices offer a powerful way to capture the link between reading and writing activities. Barton and Hamilton (2000, p. 8) define literacy practices as cultural ways of utilising literacy; hence, they emphasise the social practices in which literacy has a role and how people use reading and writing in their daily lives. Therefore, literacy sits in a social context; it is useful through social practices and is not just a set of decontextualised skills. Street (1993) advocates that literacy practices are not observable units of behaviour as they involve attitudes, feelings and social relationships. Therefore, literacy practices are what people do with texts. Barton and Hamilton (1998) explain that practices are social processes that connect people who share cognition represented in ideologies and social identities. Central to literacy practices is the notion of people bonding together while their lives are being shaped. Thus, the key elements are people, groups and communities, and not just individuals. Literacy practices are abstract yet are observable through literacy events.

An example of a literacy event is a parent reading an article in a newspaper about crime in a community. This article can be used as a stimulus at the breakfast table to discuss safety and security in the family home. The family may change their locks because of the discussion. However, this article may also result in the family

remembering a past situation, and they may re-live a previous experience with burglary, thereby bringing up associated feelings and emotions.

A literacy event is an activity associated with the text, the ensuing reading and the discussion. The feelings, thoughts and emotions, either positive or negative, that evolve because of reading the text, are intangible. These practices may impact the family and could determine any precautions the family might take. However, as defined by Barton and Hamilton (1998), literacy events are activities where literacy has a role, such as when a family uses instructions to assemble flat-pack furniture or when a parent writes the weekly shopping list. Literacy events allow the reader to engage with a text and are subsequently followed by observable activities directly linked to the text.

To better develop our understanding of the difference between literacy practices and literacy events, these routines may be a part of formal procedures and expectations, such as those found in schools or workplaces. In contrast, the expectations from home and peer groups are more informal. Therefore, literacy can be defined as social practices with observable events related to a central text. It constitutes what people do in their everyday lives because of what they have read or listened to, which embraces every aspect of their daily lives.

To simplify the complex definition of literacy, Barton (1994) explores how literacy is used by people daily. He proposes that the study of literacy differs from how people use it in their everyday lives. He submits that literacy events are interwoven into individuals' practical daily activities. He argues that using everyday events as a starting point provides a distinct view of literacy. Therefore, when applied to context, situations and time, literacy is meaningful to those participating in the activity and can be understood by people in their everyday lives. This kind of literacy emerges from people's viewpoints, everyday experiences and daily interactions. However, Barton *et al*. (2000) disagree with this view, claiming that literacy starts from the educational setting in which it is taught. From a cognitive perspective, the dominant definitions of literacy do not include literacy practices and events. The current educational system in the UK defines literacy focus mainly through reading and writing as they are taught in schools. Barton (2000) contends that such practices are different from what people experience in their daily lives.

Barton proposes that researchers shift their focus from education, individual learning and psychology to a wider view of literacy that relates, and is meaningful, to people's everyday experiences.

In the next section, the concept of cultural literacy practice is discussed.

3.7 Cultural influences on literacy practices

Researchers show that cultural literacy practices play a significant role in the daily lives of individuals (Heath, 1983; Street, 1995; Gee, 1996; Li, 2013). Literacy is part of an individual's culture. Gee (1996) argues that language is one component of literacy (part of an individual's cognition and cultural phenomenon). A person acquires language because of the interaction and the exchange of meaning with others. Vidtheya & Pillai (2020) propose that a supportive home environment, rich in literacy practices, encourages the development of literacy skills. This argument was put forward by other researchers such as Heath (1982), Bloome *et al*. (2004) and Ren & Hu (2011). Equally, other researchers (Dagenais & Toohey, 2006; Teo, 2008) posit that an inclusive school environment considers students' home literacy practice supports and maintains students' literacy development.

Similarly, Cairney (2009) argues that when individuals conduct and construct their lives in the community and society on a social and cultural continuum, they are literate. The value of literacy is highlighted as context-dependent since individuals are enculturated in their sociocultural worlds; therefore, they can function independently in their sociocultural world. The culture within which individuals live influences the literacy habits they develop as cultural literacy lays the foundation for other forms of literacy. On the other hand, school literacy is built on the level a child acquires at home and does not function as a separate entity where teachers only teach literacy (Vidtheya & Pillai, 2020). Moll (1990) argues that cultural influence means that society provides children with goals and structured methods to achieve these goals. Therefore, culture is a set of practices by which people live and culture plays a significant role in society.

Sociocultural theorists, Street (1984), Barton & Hamilton (1998), Barton *et al*. (2000) and Purcell-Gates, 2006) place the responsibility for successful literacy on the practices and habits of the community in which the learner is socialised rather

than on the individual mind. Hence, children learn the importance of reading and writing from school, home or the cultural groups they interact with. These settings are essential for educational purposes as, before a five-year-old is exposed to the generalised intelligence of the West, all they bring into school is the family culture (Hilton, 1996; Hall, 2003). Grieshaber *et al*. (2012) also explored the relationship between children's achievement, early pedagogical experiences and home and agreed that the family is the first culture the child interacts with, which significantly influences them and can, therefore, impact children's perception of literacy.

Some researchers (Coleman,1966; Lucas *et al*., 2008) argue that children's cultural literacy practices influence the quality of literacy children experience. Research based within the deficit model posits that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural minorities tend to underperform by conventional standards. However, Heath (1983) and Wells (1986), who developed and supported the 'mismatch' model as an alternative to the 'deficit' model, claim that schools fail to recognise children's diverse cultural and linguistic resources. Auerbach (1989), commenting on the mismatch model, declared that children from low-income, minority and immigrant families are perceived as 'literacy impoverished'. Auerbach claims that family literacy programmes operate from the "deficit hypothesis" assuming that the children have limited resources and appear to have parents who do not read to them, suggesting that low-income families are not exposed to rich cultural experiences.

For more than three decades, scholars such as Lave & Wenger (1991), Au (1995), Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic (2000) and Purcell-Gates (2006) have been examining the relationship between literacy and culture. They have found that culture is vital for developing literacy skills as this involves language and different systems for their representation. In developing his argument on cultural influences, Moll (1990) points out that language is one of the tools humans use to organise thinking. This tool includes experiences with, and knowledge of, human and cultural conditions whereby culture is seen as the set of practices people live by. Therefore, the study of culture is the study of the dynamic interplay of people's customs and their social behaviour, instead of static traits. Fundamental to cultural literacy is the notion that literacy takes place within a context where people interact.

The following sub-section focuses on out-of-school literacy practices, including digital, transcultural and family literacy practices.

3.7.1 Out-of-school literacy practices

Time plays a part in how literacy practices are experienced in the home and community contexts (Compton-Lilly, 2010). It is difficult for researchers to identify and agree on what constitutes literacy outside of school, as home and community literacies are rooted in social or cultural practices and are connected to multiple locations (Pahl & Burnett, 2013). Hence, literacy is described as multifaceted (Pahl & Burnett, 2013), multilingual (Kenner, 2004) and multimodal (Kress, 1997). Literacy has many aspects and can be used across different sites in different contexts. The situatedness of literacy is vital to cultural literacy practices as literacy is fluid and moves across time and space.

One significant fact about out-of-school literacy is that it is not always restricted to a physical space, as it can occur within the school's boundaries but outside of the formal classroom context. Maybin (2007) highlights the heterogeneous nature of classroom space linked to the formal school setting and outside the classroom, and an informal setting is connected to home literacy. However, literacy practices swap roles and sometimes run parallel with each other. For example, Lenters (2007) shows how literacy practices extend from family at home to peers at school, such as when a child shares a text from home with others at school. Given the flexible nature of literacy, sociocultural researchers, Hull & Schultz (2002), Street (2005) and Purcell-Gate (2006) advocate a close relationship between out-of-school and in-school literacy. As such, McLachlan (2006, p. 33) suggests that some children are at a disadvantage if their early home literacy is not closely matched to school pedagogy.

Out-of-school literacy is sometimes described as everyday literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2007) or vernacular literacy (Maybin, 2007) and is characterised by unregulated formal rules and procedures, undervalued, private, often playful and oppositional, since it is at odds with school literacy, which is learned informally and is embedded in social action in the home and community (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). This form of literacy has a wider field than school literacy. It may include

listening to music, writing in a diary, blogging, surfing the Internet, sending or receiving messages, or any aspect of social media – playing a game console or a game online, watching or listening to something on-screen, reading and writing emails, completing homework and many others.

Similarly, intercultural contact has become a daily activity for many people worldwide through digital technology (Shafirova *et al*., 2020). Consequently, it is much easier for global cultures to develop, and it has become an interest for many researchers. It is quite common to use the prefix 'trans' in literature relating to cultures and national borders. Terms such as translocalities, transnational, translanguaging and transcultural demonstrate the fluidity and blend of localities, languages and cultures across digital platforms (Black, 2008; Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019; Vallejo & Dooly, 2019). In the next sub-section, transcultural literacies will be discussed.

3.7.2 Transcultural literacy practices

Transcultural literacies and diaspora are included within the sociocultural perspective of literacy. Transcultural involves meaning-making practices that frequently, but not exclusively, occur in online spaces (Black, 2006; Thorne, 2008; Sauro, 2017). The practice involves the development of transcultures, cross-border affiliation and informal learning through digital technologies (Black, 2008; Kim, 2016). Kim (2016) suggests that transcultural literacies involve fluid cultural identification across boundaries and states through digital technologies. Black (2006), Kim (2016) and Zaidi & Rowsell (2017) posit that transcultural literacies can lead learners to reconstruct identity affiliations and bring them to reflect on cultural differences, which is in line with Kim's (2016) conclusions that transcultural literacies enable people to communicate across cultural borders. Kostogriz & Tsolidis (2008) took the term outside of the diasporic context to involve the collaboration and participation of young people over the Internet. This collaboration could help the young develop meaning and position themselves concerning different cultural products and communities. Nteloiglou (2017) uses the concept of transcultural literacies in relation to the cosmopolitan classroom, a classroom with various world perspectives.

Kostogriz & Tsolidis's (2008) work on transcultural literacies enables people to operate effectively across cultural borders. They examine the diaspora as a socio-spatial formation that binds local and global literacies. This approach acknowledges people's political and semiotic work across cultural borders while looking into the textual practices of the national dominant literacy. The transcultural approach gives individuals access to their cultural identity at home while interacting simultaneously with local and national cultural literacy outside of it. Kostogriz & Tsolidis (2008) strengthen their argument by focusing on the notion of a contact zone, where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, suggesting that at the point of the meeting, there are elements of cultural overlap where tensions arise. The tension indicates that, after a cross-border move, a period of readjustment may be necessary, which could lead to individuals feeling unsettled, isolated or lonely. Hence, the concept of identity becomes central to the debate.

Transcultural literacies influence the development of identity. Interacting in a globalised society, where people are instantly connected, enables children to participate in multicultural learning through the online reading of texts authored by diverse people in geographically distant places. Transcultural literacy extends the borders of the local area for children as they have access to, and embrace, a variety of literacy practices. Kim (2016) points out that pupils are no longer confined to local interactions and texts; many students today connect online to highly diverse places, and people become relevant to their developing identities through multimodal literacy practices.

In addition, children experience complex cultural identities that are difficult to separate or compartmentalise. The complexity can also be seen in how they interact or organise in groups at school. However, as Kim (2016) posits, an overreliance on groups can miss the complex cultural identities that young people live in and enact through their out-of-school literacy practices. Furthermore, Noguera (2008) explains that most school curricula and policies present race and ethnicity as received and rigid identity constructs; however, transcultural digital literacy practices can refine and develop an alternative perspective that emerges through interaction. Through this process, children can become more flexible in their thinking and their identity develops through negotiation that takes place in

different categories. As a result, individuals in communities negotiate the group in which they interact. In Heath's (2004) review of how the community is conceptualised in the United States, she explains that individuals in the 21st century determine their community affiliations through deliberate choices of languages, norms and goals. This explanation demonstrates that individuals are connected in various ways, and people make deliberate decisions about their connections.

In the next sub-section, I will explore family literacy practices, parental attitude, motives and their involvement in literacy practices.

3.7.3 Family literacy practices

Family literacy can be defined as the different practices in which parents, children and extended family members use language and literacy at home and in their communities. Taylor (1983) defines family literacy as how parents and family members use language to share children's early experiences. Taylor (2020) argues that family literacy builds on ancient ways of being and learning that intersect with all cultures.

Family literacy had a significant place in society before formal compulsory school. As Little (2017) posited, the family was the primary source of 'passing on' skills related to reading and writing. Wasik & Van Horn (2012) postulated the importance of the intergenerational transfer of literacy skills, which intrigued educators, researchers and policymakers and served as a rationale for a family literacy programme. They claimed that children who come into the world without language can learn thousands of languages, depending upon the family in which they are born. To support the normal functioning of the family, family members engage in literacy, for example, through sharing ideas, gestures, notes, text messages, emails, writing letters, reading signs and medications, among others.

Family literacy can contribute to developing literacy skills and extend learning. Hull & Schultz (2002) and Vasquez (2003) highlight how social organisations of learning in and out of school settings can promote language and literacy development as the home may reveal other varieties of literacy practices that are not valued or considered appropriate literacy in schools (Street, 2015). School-based literacy is

valuable to marginalised communities as marginalised families view this type of literacy as having a symbolic value where literacy is seen as the key to educational development, changing status and a way of preventing their children from suffering as their parents did (Creese *et al*., 2014). Therefore, if children's home literacy practices are separated from those at school, this means separating children from their aspirations, thus raising the issue of whether they can reach their potential. Children from various social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds use non-academic social skills to negotiate their entry into school (Dyson, 2003). Following a series of systematic observations of literacy in a community setting, Purcell-Gates (2007) argued that if the school curriculum does not relate to the learners' lives outside of school, their education is meaningless. There is a need to explore the relationship between out-of-school family literacy and in-school literacy to support minority groups' literacy development, especially if these groups do not perform academically as well as other groups.

Exploring the attitudes and motivations of parents in language learning may further advance the understanding of language attainment (Chou, 2005; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Ramos, 2007; Tse, 1998) because parents' and children's perspectives are connected as far as language learning is concerned (Baker, 1992). As a result, parents' positive attitude and high motivation may lay the foundation for better home literacy practices. Therefore, language achievements are enhanced by attitudes and motivations towards language learning (Baker, 1992; Ager, 2001). The success of foreign language learning is influenced by positive attitudes and motivation towards the targeted language (Barjesteh *et al*., 2016). Parents influence their children's attitudes and motivations regarding a target language. Leseman & de Jong (1998) state that home literacy practices are language behaviours experienced in literacy learning environments. Similarly, Purcell-Gates (2006) states that reading occurs inside and outside school and across the lifespan. Therefore, regular daily activities within cultural groups involve some aspects of literacy and are vital for literacy development.

From the arguments above, home and family contribution to literacy is very valuable. Lynch (2010) argues that, from an early age, children's parents and early childhood educators play a crucial role in the child's social, emotional, cognitive

and physical development. Parents' level of involvement in educational development is as important as that of early childhood educators; however, the contribution from the family is undervalued by educational institutions. Stipek & Rayan (1997) claim that children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) families enter school with less academic knowledge than children from higher SES families. Consequently, the school or the educational institution can determine the value placed on children's academic knowledge when they enter the formal place of learning. The home shapes knowledge and experiences; schools can build on or inhibit these diverse experiences (McNaughton, 2001). Valuing children's experiences and knowledge is vital in their learning process. If learning to read is seen mainly as a cognitive process, then the curriculum may focus exclusively on decoding words with minimal opportunities for pupils to bring their lived experience into the meaning-making process. These skills include decoding words and extracting meaning from a group of words; no value will be attached to the experiences and knowledge from home.

In addition, the quality of parents' involvement in literacy events is also paramount. Adams *et al*. (1990), Whitehurst *et al*. (1994) and Anderson *et al*. (2017) found that parents who actively involve their children in stories by questioning the children, encouraging them to predict events and reflect on meanings and words, provide the most significant benefit to their children. Furthermore, Saint-Laurent (2005), Baker *et al*. (2001) and Bergin (2001) emphasise that the affective qualities of interaction, those involving feelings and emotions, positively influence literacy development. These quality interactions enable children in the early years to access books they would not otherwise be able to. With parental involvement, children can be exposed to and engaged with themes and events from other cultures and settings in a non-threatening and supportive environment. Parke, *et al*. (2008) point out that, from a sociocultural point of view, literacy skills are not only in the individual's head but are an interactive process – modified according to the sociocultural environment. Therefore, as parents and children interact, meaning is created and modified, and literacy develops.

On the other hand, McLoyd (1998) points out that poverty and socioeconomic status significantly predict early language, social competence and achievement. It

is arguable whether all parents, including those from lower SES, enhance literacy development. Repeated studies (Feitelson & Goldstein, 1986; Teale, 1986; Stokes, 1984) have shown that children from lower SES are less likely to succeed academically. The limitation of the socioeconomic background is theorised by Bourdieu (1984). These studies often do not point to the quality of the home literacy environment; therefore, they suggest that children from lower SES are not exposed to the rich and varied literature as children from higher SES.

However, these studies fail to identify parental attitudes towards literacy. Instead, the studies focus on household income, parental level of education and minority status (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). Purcell-Gates (1995) supports this argument by stating that children from lower SES families can have high literacy practices at home. She suggests that judging children's literacy practices based on their SES is irresponsible. Furthermore, these studies' references fail to examine teachers' attitudes towards children from lower SES and whether and how the cultural experiences of these children are integrated within the classroom setting. Purcell-Gates (2004) points out that young children learn literacy skills by observing and participating in different print activities considered integral and essential within their communities. Print activities are available, to some extent, in different communities; however, they may differ depending on the SES.

Having discussed family literacy practices, a key component of out-of-school literacy is the relationship between literacy practices and time and space. The context in which literacy takes place is vital to the meaning-making process. In the final sub-section of this section, I consider school literacy practices and their relationship with home and community literacy practices.

3.7.4 School literacy practices

School-based literacy focuses on the technical skills of reading and writing to improve academic performance, an approach that relates to the cognitive perspective of literacy discussed in previous sections. The stages of development of reading and writing are essential for educators as they act as a guide for teaching. These stages highlight reading and writing competencies among students and allow for identifying deficits among learners (Chall, 1983; Ehrin,

2005). As a result, school leaders tend to give precedence to the needs of the curriculum as there is less time and space in the curriculum to cater to individual preferences and learning styles. Tensions may arise in the literacy world in which an individual interacts, especially if there are cultural differences whereby the individual culture differs from society's dominant culture.

In school, ‘literacy’ refers to various terminologies and practices related to developing academic skills. However, in the basic form, it means using symbols to represent language (Freebody *et al*., 2013). Thinking about school literacy also requires consideration to be given to the structure and purpose of the pedagogy – for example, who initiates the topic of discussion (usually the teacher) and how pupils respond to the questions (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). They suggest that when teachers lead the instruction, they initiate the discussion; hence, learning is teacher-directed or unidirectional.

3.8 Partnership between home and school

The partnership between home and school must be considered, as it is vital to explore any connection between home and school that can be fostered to lead to academic success. Educators can develop a connection with home by gaining knowledge of the print that is integral in local settings and using it as a 'springboard' to support the development of literacy skills. Edwards (2003) and Xu & Fuller (2008) highlight that greater parent involvement in their children's education can lead to improved academic achievement and positive attitudes and behaviour towards the school.

Considering the mutual relationships between home-based and school-based literacies, it is now important to consider a sustainable approach to strengthen those links. Critical literacy, as explained earlier, does not seek to equip children with skills alone but also aims at developing an ability to understand texts. Freire (1972) argues that the critical literacy approach equips children with the skills to decode words on a page or examine the syntax or linguistic structure to comprehend a text. Not being able to read words on a page does not hinder the learner from engaging critically with a text. This approach empowers the reader to

read all means of expressions and discuss the meaning of the text by looking for bias and being flexible with their thinking.

Freire (1970) describes the monological nature of the traditional teacher–student relationship where the student is viewed as a container waiting to be filled by teachers who are the sole holders of information. He continues by saying that ‘education becomes the act of depositing; hence, students are depositories, and the teacher is the depositor’ (Freire, 1970, p. 208). This suggests that creativity, personal meaning and problem-solving are far removed from the learning process. Freire claims that, during problem-solving, students are empowered to act and be liberated.

Luke (2012), Vasquez (2017), Hearfield & Boughton (2018) and Hendrix-Soto & Mosley Wetzel (2018) use Freire's framework, or other similar frameworks, to examine literacy as a commodity or a source of exploring the identity of the reader as well as the identity presented in the text. Brandt and Clinton (2002, p. 337) point out how literacy is a commodity that individuals and groups may appropriate, misappropriate or even reject. They propose that theories of social literacy have exaggerated the power of local context to determine the meaning and forms that literacy takes.

3.9 Conclusion

It is transparent from the literary review that the concepts, definitions and boundaries related to cultural literacy practices are established. The literature describes literacy from a sociocultural perspective. Literacy is discussed from the cognitive perspective (in-school literacy), which advocates a linear approach to acquiring reading skills; hence, individuals obtain reading skills through stages. On the other hand, the sociocultural perspective argues that literacy is situated within a context and takes place within a community. The critical perspective shows the contrast between reading the words in a written text and reading the ideologies underpinning what is written in the text.

Vygotsky's view of the sociocultural context plays a vital role in understanding how meaning is derived from the cultural context. Literacy is also discussed from a cognitive perspective to show the contrast between in-school and out-of-school

literacy. Out-of-school literacy was also addressed as a variety of literacy practices occurring in various institutions and social spaces. Out-of-school literacy is situated in the sociocultural perspective of literacy, whereby context and cultural practices are deemed essential as the pupils make independent choices and meaningful connections.

Family literacy is how family members use literacy and is significant in literacy development, according to NLS. Little (2017) points out that it was the primary way of passing on skills related to reading and writing. The literature also discusses literacy practices as they relate to parental motives, attitudes and involvement and highlights that literacy is not only dependent on the individual's intellectual ability or how gifted a child is but also on how the family invests in time and resources, that is, investing in their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) or their cultural community wealth (Yosso, 2005).

The literature has shown a need to address the gap between home and school literacy practices, particularly for children from ethnic minority groups; hence, researchers argue for a connection or a closer link between them. Some researchers claim that the connection between home and school literacy practices is vital for academic success (Thomson & Clifton, 2013; Honan, 2019). Rutherford *et al.* (2018, p. 44) claim that 'long-form reading' and sustained leisure reading should be encouraged 'because […] it is more consistently associated with academic benefit than other textual forms, such as text messages or emails'. Connecting in-school and out-of-school literacy practices may not solve a lack of interest or engagement with school unless those literacy practices value and favour in-school settings change. In addition, it is necessary for the value placed on old ways of reading and writing to be shared with the new and multiple ways in which literacy is practised outside of the classroom (Hannon,1997). The literature has shown that one way to attempt to close the gap between home and school literacy practices, and encourage and motivate learners, is through the critical literacy approach. However, these are not all neat, clearly delineated and perfect boundaries. While such boundaries are clear in theory, they are fuzzy in practice because literacy crosses boundaries. Reality is more nuanced than the one described in textbooks or teacher training manuals.

In the previous chapter, I explored race, cultural capital and identity, while in this chapter, I have explored the various aspects of cultural literacy practices. Lachicotte *et al*. (1998) emphasise identity and culture. They give precedence to the concept of identity and the influence of the text (precisely, on the identities in the text) on the reader. Texts are saturated with social and cultural structures of race, class and gender and introduce the struggle for power, knowledge and representation. Therefore, identity is embedded within the text, and the text significantly influences the reader. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodological approach used to collect the data for this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the conception of the thesis, the sociocultural view of literacy, my chosen methodology and epistemological location, the research design, the sample and access issues, my methods, the data analysis, the limitations of my methodology and ethical issues related to my research. Common and contrasting aspects have been identified to develop themes grounded in the interview data, the boys' literacy logs and the in-school data, which illuminate the ways in which literacy practices are situated and identities are constructed. The participant sample in this study was very limited, therefore, the findings cannot represent the larger population of Jamaican-heritage boys in England. However, it is the illuminating conversations that were generated by this small-scale study, and their potential to influence change at the policy level, that make them pertinent to the wider discussion on the cultural literacy development and practices of Jamaican-heritage boys.

4.2 Conception of the thesis

The main reason for selecting this topic for my doctoral thesis relates to my experience of being a teacher in London and Jamaica and having lived in both countries (Krieger, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Chesney, 2001). My research question – To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third-generation, Jamaican-heritage boys influence their formal literacy development? – arose from my personal and professional experiences in both countries, and which influence how I view literacy in families and the value I place on education. Professionally, I have implemented several policies to address poor performance in literacy and support primary school pupils in attaining specific targets set by the schools, local authorities and government.

Being Jamaican by birth and a teacher in the UK, I have always been interested in the data and discussions related to Caribbean-heritage boys' academic progress. I examined the work of Strand (2013; 2015) among other research surrounding the underachievement of Black Caribbean students, questioning the reason for their

underachievement and wondering how I might help to make a difference. Ford (1993; 2011) attributes the underachievement to psychological factors and peer pressures. Coard (1971) regarded it to be due to a prevalent notion among UK educators that West Indian children were 'educationally subnormal'. Graham (2011), inspired by Coard (1971), argues that even though decades have passed, the failure of African-Caribbean boys continues to be an alarming phenomenon despite all the research into multiculturalism and diversity in the intervening years. Alongside the underachievement issues, there have been debates about the school exclusion rate of Black boys (DFE, 2019) and the overrepresentation of Black, Caribbean-heritage men in UK prisons (Lammy, 2017). I question whether these children would achieve more successfully if they were born in Jamaica. As a parent, I fear for my own children being educated in the UK and am concerned about the extent to which they can achieve within its education systems.

In my roles as a school leader and a teaching and learning consultant, I have created training and resources and written books to support both parents and teachers to help children achieve. I have found out that though some Black children do achieve well and progress to higher education, most Caribbean-heritage children do not go to university. Wallace & Joseph-Salisbury (2021) point out that 2021 marked the 50th anniversary of Bernard Coard's (1971) work (mentioned above), and they highlight contemporary institutional factors that shape the persistent educational disadvantage that Black Caribbean young people continue to experience in England.

My own experience of teaching in Jamaica, and in the East End of London, and my general lived experiences fuelled my decision to undertake this doctoral thesis. My personal history from Jamaica taught me that education is important, especially reading. I remember singing a song in primary school with the lines, 'Reading maketh a full man, so read and read all you can'. I do believe that education opens opportunities to progress up the social ladder, and literacy is very important in education. Hence, I have chosen to explore the participants' literacy world (Malterud, 2001; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Grix, 2019). As a teacher, I want to make a difference in the lives of the children in my school. I was certainly aware of many of the issues facing them. In one of my schools, more than 70% of the

children were from a disadvantaged background and where, in many cases, formal education was often not part of their family heritage.

After teaching in London for four years, I took an MA in Education, for which I focussed on ‘performance versus progress of primary school pupils in Year 6’. I wanted to understand whether the systems and structure of education in primary school were geared towards the performance of schools on a league table or whether the teaching methods favoured the genuine progress of the children. It emerged clearly that teaching in the primary school where I carried out the research was focused on the performance of pupils in the Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) at the end of Year 6, the final year in primary school. I also learned that the Department for Education (DFE) and the, then, National Primary Strategies played a large part in this by implementing strategies to help schools achieve their targets.

I have elected to explore the literacy practices that Jamaican-heritage boys engage in in their everyday lives (both in-school and out-of-school). I also wanted to understand the intergenerational influences of literacy practices on the boys' formal literacy development. Understanding what is happening in their homes and community practices, as well as what is happening in school, is important to me because, culturally, I am connected to Jamaican-heritage children. Hence, my positionality is, ascribed and, to some extent, fixed by race and skin colour (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Rowe (2014) confirms that positionality influences how research is conducted, its outcomes and its results. My own experiences, personally and in teaching, have imbued me with an ever-increasing determination not only to teach students from disadvantaged or minority backgrounds but also to explore how their in-school and out-of-school literacy practices influence their formal literacy development.

This enthusiasm led me to conduct a small-scale qualitative study. The qualitative approach is attractive because it involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions and experiences. This approach enables me to probe into the literacy practices of the participants while they remain in their natural setting. The Jamaican-heritage boys who participated in this study were given the opportunity to add their voices to the debate about their literacy practices.

The qualitative approach has enabled an exploration into the complex social issues related to Jamaican-heritage boys and helped to form an understanding of how they, and their parents, experience literacy practices both in and out of school.

4.3 The sociocultural perspective of literacy

Many researchers agree that home and family contributions to literacy are valuable. From an early age, parents and early childhood educators play a crucial role in the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of the child (Lynch, 2010), suggesting that parent's level of involvement in their children's educational development is as important as an early childhood educator. The reality is whether the contribution from the family (home) is valued by the educational institution as being equally important. Researchers and policymakers, Stipek & Rayan (1997), Lynch (2010) and OFSTED (2019) suggest that children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) families enter school possessing less of academic knowledge that is valued by the school than children from higher SES families. Knowledge and experiences are shaped by the home, and schools can build on, or inhibit, these diverse experiences (McNaughton, 2001; Lynch, 2010); therefore, valuing a child's experiences and knowledge is vital in the child's learning process. If learning to read is seen mainly as a cognitive process, then the emphasis (within the formal academic environment) will be placed on academic skills. These skills include decoding words and extracting meaning from a group of words; no value will be attached to the experiences and knowledge from the home.

To understand to what extent the literacy practices of third-generation, Jamaican-heritage boys influence their formal literacy development, and to explore intergenerational influence, I have examined literacy from a sociocultural perspective, as this captured the perception of literacy from a cultural viewpoint. Hall (2003) and Hiebert & Raphael (1998) believed that the sociocultural perspective is closely related to socioconstructivism, which stresses the symbolic nature of knowledge. This suggests a constructionist epistemology, where human interaction is paramount and meaning emerges from the culture in which the interaction takes place. The constructionist approach is the theoretical base from which the sociocultural perspective is built.

Crotty (2009) explains constructionism as the view of human knowledge with no objective truth waiting to be discovered. Instead, at the heart of this theory is the belief that meaning comes into existence when humans interact and engage with their world. This implies that without human interaction, there is no meaning. Meaning coalesces from the human mind working alongside human involvement. Hall (2003) adds that in the sociocultural perspective, meaning is constructed based on an agreed set of beliefs. Therefore, there is a common understanding among the people who share the culture; hence, there is a common understanding of the meaning that is created. This point is supported by Bruner's cultural psychology theory, which states that culture is about the way meaning is made and the way meaning is assigned to things in different situations. One word can have different meanings according to the culture or the context in which it is used. For example, the word 'difference' means subtraction in Mathematics, but in English, it is an antonym for similarity. Hence, a sociocultural perspective on literacy highlights how the reader makes meaning based on the context in which it happens. Therefore, readers' understanding and meaning depend considerably on their cultural experiences and the culture in which the literacy occurs.

4.4 Choice of methodology and epistemological location

4.4.1 Choice of methodology

In choosing the methodology for my research, I draw on the works of Creswell (2003) and Crotty (1998) to address three central questions: What knowledge claims will I be making – including my theoretical perspective? What strategies of inquiry will inform my procedure? What method of data collection and analysis will I be using? These questions helped to formulate my research design as I began the research with the assumptions of what I might learn (and how) about the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2000). I knew that methodological approaches cover a broad spectrum and as a researcher, I would be learning as I explored. The philosophical questions of what we know (ontology) and how we know what is claimed as knowledge (epistemology) and what kinds of approaches should be adopted to understand a given subject matter (methodology) are all significant and central to the research

design (Creswell, 1994; 2003). My ontological and epistemological position led me to a qualitative methodological approach.

Qualitative research ‘has unique steps in data analysis and draws on diverse strategies of inquiry’ (Creswell, 2003, p. 179). The qualitative approach is not uniform but shows a variety of perspectives, including postmodern thinking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), ideological perspectives (Lather, 1991), philosophical stances (Schwandt, 2000) and systematic procedural guidelines (Creswell, 1998). Denzin & Lincoln (2000, p. 10) posit that the main difference between a qualitative and a quantitative approach is that qualitative researchers can get closer to the actor's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation, whereas quantitative researchers seldom capture the participants' perspectives due to their dependence on remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. Both approaches capture an individual's viewpoint, but one is close while the other is at a distance. Qualitative research focuses on the study of perceptions, meanings and emotions (Silverman, 2005); indeed, Gubrium & Holstein (1997) refer to it as an emotionalist model. The qualitative approach is described as a ‘social construction’ by Denzin & Lincoln (2000) and ‘constructionist’ by Silverman (2005) as it focuses on what individuals are doing without referring to what they are feeling.

According to Silverman (1997, p. 1), qualitative research is a ‘close study of everyday life in diverse social contexts’. Silverman argues that the major objective of qualitative research is to ‘describe and analyse both the processes through which social realities are constructed and the social relationships through which people are connected to each other’ (1997, p. 1). This thesis is concerned with the social reality that surrounds the literacy worlds of the Jamaican-heritage boys, focusing on the context in which the boys experience literacy, both in school and outside it. It is also concerned with how intergenerational differences influence the boys' identity and their formal literacy development.

As a researcher, mother, teacher and a Jamaican, my interest is in close-up and in-depth understanding of the literacy practices the boys experience in their daily lives, rather than attempting to create generalisations associated with a more quantitative methodological approach. I, therefore, believe that the qualitative

approach I have chosen to adopt in this study is the most appropriate for addressing the research questions I have posed:

1. What are the literacy practices with which Jamaican-heritage boys engage in their everyday lives?

2. To what extent do intergenerational differences in literacy practices influence the boys' identity and formal literacy development?

I am interested in the emotions, perceptions and feelings associated with cultural literacy practices of third-generation, Jamaican-heritage boys and how those literacy practices influence their identity and their formal literacy development. Literacy practices are essential to the formation and expression of identity. Phal & Rowsell (2005) posit that we use language to construct an identity for ourselves within the different communities we enter and exit. Therefore, literacy practices are infused with language, which is imperative for promoting and shaping young people's identities. Jamaican-heritage boys' self-perception in specific social contexts is vital to their cultural literacy practices and academic development but I also chose this method because it involves a particular type of relationship between the researcher and the participants. According to Creswell, qualitative research is interpretative research with the inquirer, typically, involved in a sustained and intense experience with the participants (2003, p. 184). Therefore, I must consider my position as a senior teacher within the school, and as a Jamaican, and my own aspirations and passion to see children progress academically (Locke *et al*., 2000). Personally, I am invested in this research, which is reflected in Layder (1993, p. 38):

> *Instead of stressing the role of an objectively 'detached' observer whose task is to describe social behaviour in terms of causal forces external to the individual concerned [it] emphasises the more 'involved' role of the social researcher*.

Creswell (2003) and Layder (1993) identify and recognise the presence of social reality and the tension that exists between the researcher and the actors, but they also recognise the human element of the researcher, which can be illustrated through the interview process. Therefore, the interviews allowed me, as both

teacher and researcher, to collect in-depth, interpretative data from the boys and their parents that could not be collected using observations. From these interviews, I could gain an understanding of how the participants perceive their literacy world. In addition, the boys wrote literacy logs in which they were able to personalise their thoughts and feelings. While I am interested in the reality that surrounds the boys' experiences, I am also concerned with how the boys perceive their social reality. It is the perception of these different realities that shape our understanding and create knowledge.

The principles that underpin or inform knowledge indicate my ontological position since the knowledge that is created must be processed in a systematic manner (Bassey, 2003). This qualitative approach allows for collecting the data to process the knowledge, which is informed by my epistemological and ontological assumptions, which are, in turn, reflected in the research question. Crotty (2009) sums this up in four key points, which he considers to be the basic elements of any research: the method, the methodology, the theoretical perspectives and the epistemology, which should be clearly defined as the key terminologies in research related to these key aspects. Crotty (2009) explains that epistemology informs the theoretical perspective, which, in turn, informs the methodology, and the methodology determines the method employed by the researcher. He describes a theoretical perspective as the philosophical stance informing the methodology that provides the context for grounding the research objectives. The methodology, strategy, plan and action, process, or design underpin the choice of methods and link those to the desired outcome. Therefore, the methods are the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to the research question or hypothesis. The methods I have used to collect the data for my qualitative, interpretive research are the boys' literacy logs, semi-structured interviews with the boys and their parents, and in-school data on literacy progress. These methods, I believe, have yielded the data needed to examine the boys' literacy world.

Florio-Ruane & Mc Vee (2002) posit that studying literacy as a cultural praxis requires interpretive, field-based methods of data collection, analysis and reporting. This suggests that the cultural aspect of literacy is best studied from a qualitative, interpretive perspective. I have collected data on how the boys interacted in school

and how the boys and their parents interacted within the home and community. This approach enabled me to explore and understand the impact of literacy practices on the boys' formal literacy, and these are my reasons for adopting a qualitative, interpretive perspective for my research.

4.4.2 Epistemological location

The epistemological assumptions underpinning this research are drawn from the sociocultural (Street, 1985; 2003; Luke, 2003; 2004; Purcell-Gates, 2007) and critical theoretical perspectives (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Freire, 2001; Hagood, 2002; Moje & Luke, 2009). The theory of learning and development is socially and culturally situated and is credited to Vygotsky (1978), who was influential in developing a sociocultural perspective yet did not focus on the power relations within the social context of learning. Bruner (1996) and Lee & Smagorinsky (2000) build on Vygotsky's ideas and are more explicit regarding power relations. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that all human activity take place in a cultural context and is mediated by language and other symbols that can be understood in the context. My own research is situated within a theoretical framework that views literacy as a human activity that mediates people's lives. Within this situated view, literacy practices reflect the cultural, historical and political lives of the sociocultural communities in which they are embedded (Street, 1984; Purcell-Gates, 2010).

The principles underpinning this methodology focus on providing a description of how cultural literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys influence their formal literacy development. While there are multiple ways to collect and analyse data, semi-structured interviews, the boys' literacy logs and existing in-school records were selected for this study. These methods were chosen because a) the research was conducted in a school where I am a senior leader, which simplified issues of access, and b) I am also a Jamaican and I felt that my cultural understanding of Jamaicans played a significant and unique role in how I interpreted the data. However, I regarded the literacy logs as an opportunity for the boys to express their opinions without being influenced by my positionality.

To elaborate, the significance of the qualitative approach for my research arose from Creswell (2003) who lists that qualitative research takes place in its natural

setting; it uses multiple methods that are interactive and humane; it is emergent, instead of prefigured, and is fundamentally interpretive (Creswell, 2003, pp. 181–182). All these characteristics apply to my research. In addition, qualitative research allows me, as researcher, to have a broad overview of the social phenomena under investigation; instead of micro-analysis, I have a holistic view. This approach enables me to constantly reflect on my positionality and how it may impact on the research. Finally, qualitative research forces me to use complex reasoning, mainly inductive, yet multifaceted, as I am constantly going back and forth, looking at different aspects of the data (Creswell, 2003, pp. 184–185). For this research, I draw on the work of ethnographers, Street (1985), Purcell-Gate (2010) and Wallace (2017), but I also draw on aspects of phenomenology as it is widely used in educational research, and it contains rich, detailed descriptions of the phenomenon investigated. I was interested in how the participants experienced literacy practices.

The phenomenological approach reflects the methodology used, with an understanding that the research activity entails a personal encounter of cultural remembrance regarding what it means to be a child and young person (Langeveld, 1969). Van Manen & Adams (2010) explain that research is a phenomenological and educational endeavour – that is not separate from life but is rather a way of regarding life. Further, Biesta (2011) and Saevi (2011) see phenomenology as the foundational discipline related to education research. Langeveld (1983) highlights the significance of phenomenology, claiming that it can provide philosophical insights relevant to pedagogical contexts. As a result, phenomenology is useful in the educational context not from a philosophical understanding but is subject to educational interests, purposes and moral considerations from which it cannot be separated. Phenomenology is used in the field of literacy, as seen in Burke's (2018) work exploring readers beginning to read English; Bonello (2018), who examines boys and early literacy learning; and McCaffery (2011), who explores literacy among adult Gypsies and Travellers. Phenomenology in education places emphasis on lived experiences. Van Manen (1982) demonstrates how theorising in phenomenological educational research is entwined with necessity in structured

experiential reflection and, therefore, differs from research in which the construction of theoretical concepts is an aim.

Heath (1983), Street (1984) and Purcell-Gates (1996; 2004; 2006; 2010), in the field of literacy practices, tend to use an ethnographic approach to studying cultural literacy practices, because ethnographies focus on ‘real world settings’ and ‘people's real lives’ (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 57). Street & Heath (2008, p. 30) explain that ethnographers are concerned with the quality and integrity of human lives, and these points are central to my research. An ethnographic approach might have enabled an investigation from a social perspective, but the literacy practices of Jamaican boys' lived experiences were analysed from a cultural and critical perspective. I rejected an ethnographic approach after reading Heath & Street (2008, p. 29), who wrote that to undertake ethnographies is to willingly embark upon a messy set of tasks that cover a considerable period. In addition, reviewing the methods used by ethnographers: interviews, analysis of documents and artefacts (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 58) and participants' observations with field notes (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 31) showed that the researcher must build and establish a relationship with the participants to collect meaningful out-of-school field notes. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007, p. 41) highlight the problems of gaining access, especially initial access. Examining out-of-school literacy practices as an ethnographic researcher would require accompanying the participants to a range of buildings, locations, homes, clubs and other settings where they interact. Access to some of these locations was difficult at the time in which the data was collected, and there was not enough time to build productive relationships with the family members and the communities in which the boys interacted.

In this research, I present knowledge embedded in social interactions while examining the literacy practices of a minority group. I occupy multiple roles, and my position as a Jamaican, a senior teacher, a researcher and a colleague (to the class teacher) must be made clear, as this can impact the creation of data. To generate a description within the phenomenological context, I needed to avoid all preconceived histories, beliefs, thoughts and ideas about the phenomena, rejecting the domination of the inquiry by an externally imposed method (Moran, 2002). I attempted to describe the phenomenon appropriately as an experience of

engaging directly with the world as seen, felt or heard by the participants. However, my positionality played a significant role which cannot be ignored. Ultimately, I identified this research as a qualitative study as it draws on aspects of ethnography or phenomenology but did not use either strategy of inquiry in their purest sense.

In this section, I have explained my choice of methodology and the epistemological and philosophical location of my research. In the next section, I discuss the pilot research the sample and the sampling strategy.

4.5 The sample and considerations of access

This section outlines the pilot research, the sample and the sampling strategy. Initially, three boys of Jamaican heritage were chosen to take part in the research. The boys and their parents were interviewed, and the boys were expected to complete a weekly literacy log, recording their thoughts and feelings about in-school literacy over the five days of the school week. The pilot was conducted over 12 weeks; therefore, each child will have logged 60 times, covering more than one subject, making a minimum of 180 separate pieces of evidence of literacy. These literacy logs were in addition to the interviews with each child, each parent and each child's teacher. It was my hope that the literacy logs and the interviews would add to the richness of the data, and I would maintain daily contact with the children to maintain their interest. However, this strategy did not prove successful.

4.5.1 The pilot study

The pilot was carried out over one term across two schools, with three families of similar age. I created questionnaires, and interviewed the three boys, their parents and teachers, and data were also collected from the boys through literacy logs. The aim was to test a) the suitability of the questionnaires and b) the efficacy of the literacy log.

When selecting the participants, I used a purposive sampling strategy (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) and the participants selected were boys with Jamaican heritage parents (Silverman, 2005, p. 128), allowing me to focus on third-generation, Jamaican-heritage boys. A purposive sampling strategy allowed me to collect in-depth information. In addition, the participants were chosen to identify the difference in

the pupils' responses to the questionnaire and their comments on in-school literacy using the literacy log. Clear questions and instructions (Dawson, 2015, p. 98) regarding how to use the literacy logs were vital to generating the data.

The pilot study raised some concerns about the literacy log, one of the methods used to collect the data from the pilot, thus, the literacy log was modified for the research. First, the data received from the pilot group supported my decision to modify the time of day and the location the children used when reflecting and writing in their literacy logs. All the children in the pilot group had difficulties logging literacy practices at school. They were, initially, expected to log the literacy in their own time, which, sometimes, meant missing their break (not conducive to good results), and they struggled to remember what they had done. The pilot showed that the children did not have the time, space or skills to reflect on their learning at school and the quality of the reflections on their feelings about the literacy practices reflected that. I, therefore, modified the data collection strategy by arranging for a teaching assistant to take the children out of class, five minutes before home time, into a quiet space to reflect on their literacy. This was intended to prevent the children from feeling isolated or missing their play, and it captured their reflection before the end of the day. I also modified the number of times the children were expected to log their literacy. I chose one week towards the end of each term, where the children were asked to do a daily log.

Despite the modifications, however, the data from the learning log during the pilot was limited, because though the children could identify literacy events, they did not communicate their feelings and attitudes towards them. Consequently, the literacy logs were modified to include question starters, (see table 4.2) which children could use to begin responses that would help them communicate their feelings about a literacy event.

Regarding the questionnaire, the pilot study prompted me to revise the pupils' interview questions. The questions were changed to reflect 'child speak’ because the children did not easily understand the academic language. For example, the term 'literacy practices', which, though central to my research, was not understandable to the child participants.

The research site and the interview process were other significant changes to the study after the pilot. In the pilot, the research took place with three boys and three teachers across the two schools. The process of travelling from one school to the other proved to be difficult and time-consuming. In the research, all the boys (participants) belonged to one class within one school with one teacher. The procedure for recording the interviews was changed. In the pilot, the interviews were recorded by hand, whereas the ‘live’ research used a computer tablet.

The period given to collect the data was one term. This was modified to one academic year, which gave me time to get to know the participants and build trust. This duration also enabled the data to be collected at different points in the year to capture the pupils' perceptions. For example, the pilot study asked children to record their literacy events in their literacy logs for a week. The literacy logs did not give enough information to capture the in-school literacy events and pupils' perceptions of them. In the study, the time adjustment enabled the children to write in their literacy logs once per term (three times during the academic year). The logs' frequency allowed for coverage of a variety of literacy experiences.

4.5.2 Sampling

The boys were selected from a primary school in London. Originally, six students were anticipated to have met the eligibility criteria; however, after initial screening, it was found that only three students did. They were all in the same class. Permission was sought and received from all three parents. Participants in the study also included a Jamaican-heritage parent (born in the UK) and a Jamaica-born grandparent. The class teacher was originally included as a participant but was later taken out because I was only interested in the boys' and their parents' perspectives.

Table 4.4 The participants' Jamaican heritage

Participants' Family Setting	Year Group At school	Child Place of birth	Parent Place of birth	Grandparent Place of birth
Single parent	Year 6	Boy D UK	Mum UK	Grandmother Jamaica
Both parents	Year 6	Boy B UK	Dad UK	Grandmother Jamaica
Both parents	Year 6	Boy Z UK	Dad UK	Grandmother and Grandfather Jamaica

The study took place in Year 6 classrooms, where several children were of second- or third-generation heritage from different countries, and many families could be described as low-income or middle-class. The community was culturally and socioeconomically diverse and was located 15 miles from the centre of London. Its population is 12,879, with approximately 52% females and 48% males. Approximately 76.5% of the people were born in England, while 1.1% were born in Jamaica; 82% speak English and 55% classify themselves as Christians, which is the largest religious group (Census, 2011) (the census information available at the time of collecting the data).

4.5.3. Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was undertaken (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) to illustrate some features of interest (Silverman, 2005, p. 128). This allowed me to focus on third-generation, Jamaican-heritage boys and enabled me to focus on the participants' literacy practices that suited the criteria for the study. Central to being selected was the ability to inform the research question, their position (third-generation, Jamaican heritage) and their interest in participating. These participants met the criteria and were selected because they possessed the characteristics being sought (Cohen *et al*., 2011, p. 156).

All the potential participants were in Year 6. They were identified and invited to an initial discussion with me. Students were asked about their interest in working with me on this research project in this discussion. Six students were initially selected to participate in the study, considering their interest in the research and the teacher's recommendation. These initial discussions were approximately 15–20 minutes in length. Three of the initial six participants did not participate in the study because

they were of first-generation Jamaican heritage; the other three students continued with the study.

The participants' criteria were to:

1. be a boy in Year 6 (final year of primary school)
2. have one or both parents born in the UK
3. have a grandparent or grandparents who were born in Jamaica and migrated to the UK.

A sample of three was small and statistically insignificant for measuring the significance of two variables; however, as the study focused on the boys' literacy experiences, a group of three boys was considered appropriate to explore the research questions (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). This research focused on the in-school and out-of-school literacy practices of three primary schoolboys, their parents and perceived grandparents' literacy practices; therefore, it made sense to select participants who could afford me an in-depth understanding of the literacy worlds in which they interact. Purposive sampling is used to access ‘knowledge people’ (Cohen *et al*., 2011, p. 157). The literacy practices of the community are the phenomenon being studied so there would be no value in selecting participants using a random sampling technique that embraced a group outside that community (Dawson, 2009, p. 50) as the participants selected using such a technique might be ignorant of the issue being studied. The study focused on the end of primary school boys (Year 6) because this is the year when the pupils are formally assessed, nationally, using the Statutory Assessment Test (SATs), and there is documented evidence of Caribbean-heritage boys underachieving in the formal educational system (Strand, 2015; Corbett & Younger, 2012).

4.5.4 The parent interviews

The boys' parents' interviews focused on their current and historical literacy practices. They also provided insight into their grandparents' literacy practices, as specific questions focused on the literacy practices they engaged in as children and those that their parents engaged in while they were growing up. It was not possible to interview the grandparents because two sets had retired and moved back to Jamaica, and another lived 200 miles outside of London. I prompted the

boys' Jamaican-heritage parents to report all the different types of text that they read or wrote during their daily lives. I asked about their current and historical literacy practices, both in and out of school. For each literacy practice mentioned, I produced information about the purpose and social content of the practice and whether it was an essential or fulfilling part of the participants' lives. I transcribed the interview after the session.

4.5.5 Teacher interview

Throughout the study, I worked closely with the class teacher. I explained the study to her and gained her consent to participate. Her insight into the students' academic progress and their home literacy practices was helpful. She had taught in the year group for two consecutive years, which enabled her to acquire professional knowledge about the pupils and their families. I conducted a formal interview with the teacher, but later, decided to withdraw her data as I wanted the study to focus on the boys' lived experiences from only their perspectives.

4.6 The methods

For the study, I settled on three data collection methods for gathering information: the literacy log, semi-structured interviews and formal, in-school data. Initially, observations and video recordings were included as a method; however, these were removed due to difficulties in conducting observations in school and out of school – gaining access to the boys outside of school was uncomfortable for them. There was the possibility of compromising the validity of the data, as there was the likelihood of the participants modifying their behaviour if they knew they were under observation. The video recordings were removed because the boys collected no data. When questioned, one boy said his dad did not like the idea of him using the camera at home. The other two boys said they did not remember to use the camera outside of school.

4.6.1 Literacy log

The purpose of the literacy log was to collect information from the participants about their in-school literacy practice. This was used as a diary to record participants' actions and experiences and the thoughts and feelings associated

with them. Diaries are more common in medical and historical research and can be used to access those facets of social life feelings that are difficult to articulate through interviews or observations (Alaszewski, 2006). Diaries provide information over a more extended period than temporary recall in other methods, such as surveys (Stoffelsma, 2018).

The literacy logs captured first-hand information for in-school literacy events (over a week or five days) from participants' perspectives and feelings. Meyer *et al*. (2017) used a similar logbook method to collect data on patterns of literacy learning and the influence of home literacy practices. In their study, the logbooks were distributed to all students in the last week of term, to be completed in the first two weeks of the summer holidays. Meyer and others used logbooks to focus on capturing literacy practices at home. The focus of the literacy log was to collect data on in-school literacy practices in their natural environment. Naturalistic research is linked to the inductive, instead of the deductive, approach to research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The literacy logs were given to the boys at three different points during the academic year – at the end of each term. They provided insight into the literacy practices of the school, enabling me to draw out how the school encourages the children to utilise language, build values and contribute to their social identities. At the end of the autumn term, the boys were taken out of the classrooms (five minutes before the end of the school day, by a teaching assistant) and were asked to reflect on their day and complete the literacy log independently. At the end of the spring term, the boys remained in class and the teacher was asked to give them five minutes to complete the literacy log before the end of the day. For the summer term, the teacher was asked to administer the literacy log to the whole class, though only the literacy logs belonging to the participants in the study were analysed. The children were expected to record information in their natural environment. The figure below shows the format for the literacy log. The children were asked to complete the log independently, reflecting on their literacy event at the end of the day.

Table 4.5 Children's literacy log

Children's Literacy log **Name:** **Week beginning:**

Day/Date	Where/ Location	What happened	How do you feel? /Any other comment	Sentence starters
Monday				What I found difficult was.... What I found interesting was... What I enjoyed most was... What I need more help with.... What still puzzles me...? What I was most pleased about... What helped me when something got tricky... What made me think...? Right now, I feel.... I might have learned better if....
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

4.6.2 The interviews

The semi-structured interview approach provides a framework for the conversation between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, I began with the standard set of questions to collect the data while reserving the freedom to ask additional questions or follow a line of inquiry developed in the research (Younger *et al*., 2018). This flexibility allowed me to ask questions that were further discussed or clarified from the interviews, and this is why I chose the semi-structured method of interviewing for collecting data for my thesis – they enabled me to have a conversation with the boys about their literacy experiences. Semi-structured interviews can help to explain literacy practices as they are viewed across three generations, allowing comparison with the information gained from other participants (Dawson, 2015, p. 28). I felt, therefore, that semi-structured interviews would elicit participants' perspectives of in-school and out-of-school literacy focused on the intergenerational links and their influence on child literacy practices. Pupils and parents were asked the same questions in each interview, to help with making comparisons later, but there remained a certain level of flexibility to accommodate unforeseen, yet relevant, responses.

In this research, semi-structured interviews were used as a complementary method to the literacy log and school data. Cohen *et al.* (2011, p. 409) concluded that an interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling the use of multi-sensory

channels. Interviews can deduce information from verbal and non-verbal cues (Purcell-Gate, 2014). The researcher can interpret facial expressions, body language, tones and gestures, enabling them to better understand the interviewee's perspective on the topic under investigation. All the semi-structured interviews were conducted at the school, a neutral ground for all the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents, students and teachers, using an interview protocol focused on exploring the literacy practices with which the boys are engaged in their lives.

For cultural practices of literacy study (CPLS), I used a semi-structured literacy practice interview developed by Purcell-Gates (2007, pp. 217–221). This format divides the interview into sections: current literacy practices, historical literacy and school literacy practices. However, I adapted some questions to suit the Jamaican context. These questions were used as a starting point for semi-structured interviews by over 300 researchers who have participated in case studies of literacy practices in homes and communities (Purcell-Gates, 2013). This method is also used by Perry (2008), Lloyd *et al*. (2013) and Solmaz (2017).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and in an environment where the participant was comfortable. The purpose of the interview was to obtain a complete understanding of literacy and its significance for the participants. One advantage of the semi-structured interview over structured and unstructured interviews is that it gives the interviewee the freedom to discuss their topics of interest. In a structured interview, the researcher asks the same set of predetermined questions for each interview, allowing for comparison. In an unstructured interview, the researcher asks questions based on the interviewee's answers (Drury *et al*., 2011). The semi-structured interview allows the interviewee to shape the discussion, thus entering the interviewee's viewpoint; Tuckman (1972) describes it as ‘providing direct access to what is inside a person's head’. Thus, the interviewer can uncover the person's knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. Another reason for choosing a semi-structured interview is to explore new ideas during the interview. Learning about participants' viewpoints and beliefs (Raworth *et al*., 2012) strengthens the participants' symbolic meaning. The participants' direct clarification of meaning (Mills *et al*., 2015) helped me to gain insight into their experiences, perceptions and

viewpoints. Some probing questions that were asked (Dawson, 2015, p. 75) to provide more details were:

- Can you elaborate a little more?
- Can you clarify that?
- When you say....., what did you mean?

All interviews were approached from the perspective that total objectivity is impossible. The views are both historical and contextually bound; therefore, they cannot be neutral (Fontana & Frey, 2005). From the outset, the differences were addressed through probing. The responses to the questions gave the researcher insight into the literacy activities that the participants engaged in as part of their daily lives. The researcher had the opportunity to ask the adults to clarify or give more information on practices.

4.6.3 In-school data

This third method provides a set of diverse data that allows the Jamaican-heritage boys to be seen alongside their peers. Comparisons can be made about how they are achieving in school in relation to national expectation and their peers. Information about the boys' formal educational achievement (reading and writing) was collected using databases and information provided by the school. This was necessary to show the boys' in-school progress and achievement in reading and writing. The data showed the end of Key Stage achievement (ages 7 and 11 years) and progress from Key Stages 1 to Key Stage 2. It also showed what the age-expected score is: for Key Stage 1, a 15 average point score (APS) is the age-expected score for 7 years, an APS of 13 is below the age expectation and 21 is well above the age expectation. For Key Stage 2, an APS of 100 is the age expectation for 11 years old. Below, a score of 100 is under the expected age, while 110–120 is the above-age expectation.

4.7 Data analysis

To understand the literacy practices experienced by the participants from their perspectives, it was necessary to use an approach that would provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis. The modified Stevick–Colaizzi–Keen methodology developed by Moustakas (1994, pp. 121–122) provided a

phenomenological analytical approach with the depth of analysis I required to generate a meaningful process that described the lived experiences of the Jamaican-heritage boys in my sample.

The phenomenological approach, primarily, aims to understand empirical matters from the perspective of the study participants. This approach acknowledges a narrative portraying the lived experiences of the person, intertwined and reciprocated with the active and passive social and relational factors through 'the transcendental methodological' lens of the phenomenological researcher (van den Berg, 2002, pp. 577–583).

This study employed some aspects of phenomenology as a methodology because fundamental to the phenomenology approach is the question, 'How is it for you?'. This question is answered from the perspective of those who lived the experience, and it creates opportunities to identify other themes that exist within those lived experiences. I aimed to generate and analyse themes within the context and demonstrate the nature of the structure of the lived human experiences and find meaning in the context of a universal description.

I read through the data and reflected on what it meant as a whole. I took each boy as an individual, and a family, and read the in-school and out-of-school data surrounding him. While reading, I made notes on how he was presented at home and school by the adults he interacted with. I looked at how each boy was presented in different contexts and what he was doing with literacy (events) in different settings. Following the individual presentation of the boys, I created a Venn diagram and populated it with the boys' data. I used the Venn diagram to identify similarities and differences across the families (see appendix 10).

To analyse the data, I employed Carspecken's (1992) hierarchical coding for recurring themes in the participants' talk. The first (and highest level) codes were grouped under the main interpretive themes reported: literacy events and literacy practices, which point to why participants are engaged in the literacy event.

Examples of the descriptive code used in this study are in-school literacy events, out-of-school literacy events, attitudes to literacy, intergenerational influence, digital literacy events and shared or independent literacy events.

The initial analysis provided a general overview of the literacy practices of participants. I explored the database to identify a) the social activity domains in which the participant read or wrote and b) the purpose for engaging in the activity. I compiled a list of social activities and categories according to the purpose. For example, attention was focused on domains related to entertainment and spirituality as they appeared to rely upon informal everyday literacy. Following this, my focus was on the purpose of reading and writing for all the participants. Below is a table outlining an example of the domain and purpose in which the themes of literacy were identified.

Table 4.6 Hierarchy of coding

Domain	**Example of purpose**	**Who was involved**
Education	Help children to read	Child and mother
Spirituality	To thank God	Dad
Entertainment	Reading on-screen /play station	Child independently
Personal expression	Reflecting on one's life	Grandparents telling stories
Community participation	Organising community event	Mother and child

The next step was to examine literacy practice data alongside contextual data provided in this research. This approach was used by the CPLS database (Perry & Homan, 2015). I used the boys' and parents' interview transcripts, school literacy practices, the literacy logs, the teacher's overview and other notes related to the participant to compile a narrative for each participant to understand how literacy practices were contextualised. I considered the participant's background and home environment when compiling each narrative. Subsequently, I further analysed the individual narrative, including the contextual data from interviews and literacy logs, and coded them to include emerging themes, such as 'dislike of reading', 'prioritising learning' and 'reading and writing likeness'. Once this final level of coding was completed, I was able to identify patterns across participants and their narratives.

The analysis consisted of an individual analysis of each boy, plus a separate one across all three boys.

The first stage was an in-depth look each boy's family literacy practices and in-school literacy practices. Eisenhardt (1989, p. 540) highlighted the importance of being intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity. Therefore, the goal was to become familiar with each participant to analyse their data effectively. The three boys were selected because they had the potential to inform each research question. The data for each boy was collected and reviewed in isolation. To further analyse each participant, discourse analysis from Gee (2011) and multimodal discourse analysis from Baldry and Thibault (2006) were applied to the data set. The data set of three participants together allowed for an in-depth analysis of the boys' lived experiences. I constructed their narratives from this, which enabled a unique pattern for each participant to emerge before developing a generalised pattern across the cases (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In the second stage, the data were analysed across all three boys. From the data, I identified trends, patterns, similarities and differences between participants related to the research questions. The purpose of analysing the participants was to move beyond the first impression. Eisenhardt (1989, p. 541) posits that such analysis forces investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially if using structural and diverse lenses on the data. This phase of data involved going back and forth and reviewing the themes and patterns within the individual participant's narrative and across all the participants' narratives.

The initial layer of coding did not yield any significant data. I realised that I needed another way of breaking down the data to make sense of it. This was when I applied Gee's (2017) discourse analysis, separating the data into categories and labelling them. The speech-like sentences were grouped into units of four sentences. Then, they were grouped into ‘macro-lines’ (Gee, 2011) – the units and the speech sentences form a macro-line. Groups of macro-lines were organised into ‘stanzas’ (Gee, 2011). Each stanza represented a single significant place or context, a person or a specific character or perspective.

I separated the data into units, macro-lines and stanzas, which enabled me to gain in-depth information in a microscopic and organised way. Through the discourse analysis (Gee, 2011), I was able to see different themes that allowed me to

formulate the participants' identities. I categorised the data to identify themes. The following table highlights the different categories that led to themes.

Table 4.7 Thematic coding categories

Categories	Properties	Examples
Statement of self	a) Emotional statement: A, feeling, liking something, or loving something or disliking something. b) Factual statement about oneself. c) A desire, intention or inner thinking or an internal conversation about a thought, desire, feeling or goal. d) A personal story from the past, retelling a past event.	1) When I am bored, I write stories. 2) I enjoyed writing. 3) I am scared about getting my tonsils [taken] out. 4) I play games and watch videos. 5) I go to the club on Wednesday. 6) I write it down so that I know what is going to happen. 7) I have been on a five-day camp with them, and it really helped me find out who I am.
An imaginary situation	A description of an imagined place, event or situation.	If she saw my letter, I do not think it would make a difference, but if all the Year 6 children wrote to her, she might not think it is a lesson and respond.
A cultural, historical or social statement.	a) Related to cultural history, society or religion, e.g., cultural festivals, facts about Jamaica. b) Cultural jokes or riddles	It is for Black people. They teach us about cultural heritage.
Value statements	a) A statement or story with moral teaching. b) A statement on principle, morals or value systems.	I do believe our teacher cares about people and prepares us for real life.
A general description	A description of a person, place or thing.	My dad gives us wildlife stuff and magazines.

This discourse analysis was applied to the participant's data, which was mainly related to out-of-school literacy: the interview with the participants, their parents,

and the literacy log. Data collected from the school was coded according to the in-school ranking of progress. In Table 4.5, green is equivalent to good progress; amber equals satisfactory progress, and red is no progress.

Table 4.8 Analysis of in-school progress

	Damian	Bryan	Zander
Progress in reading			
Achievement in reading			
Progress in writing			
Achievement in writing			
Attitude to learning			
Characteristic of learner			

4.7.1 Analysing across participants

Analysing the data across all three boys was necessary to examine the data for comparisons, similarities or differences. Therefore, cross-analysis of the data was conducted using Gee's (1999) foundation questions for the different components of what he called a ‘situation network’. That is, I wanted to find out how they used literacy, the intergenerational impact, the creation of their identity and the impact on formal education. I applied Gee's questions for the different literacy components to understand the different ways the participants use literacy intentionally. The research questions were applied to interview data and literacy logs across all three participants and their parents. The questions enabled me to examine further the purpose of literacy in the lives of the boys and across the different generations.

To explore the influence of the boys’ literacy practices on their identity, I applied Gee’s discourse analysis, which states that ‘we build an identity here and now as we speak’ (1999.pp 106), hence identity is what we say and are. Central to discourse analysis is semiotics, that is, the structure of language and language in use, social language and language interactions. The situation network can be analysed through the questions found in Table 4.6.

Table 4.9 Situation network analysis question

Building Task	Questions (Gee, 1999)
Semiotic building	What sign systems are relevant in the situation (e.g., speech, writing, images)? How are they made relevant? What social languages are relevant in the situation?
World building	What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important? What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artefacts and institutions?
Activity building	What is the largest, or main, activity going on in the situation? What actions compose these activities?
Sociocultural-situated identity and relationship building	What relationships and identities (roles, positions) and sociocultural knowledge and beliefs are relevant?
Political building	What social goods (status, power) are relevant?
Connection building	What sorts of connections are evident in the situation?

The components in the data above were considered and applied to the data for cross-participant analysis. I used them to help identify similarities and differences among the data collected from the different participants. The table below represents how the data were compiled to create a narrative profile of each participant in the study. This table demonstrates the link between contextual information and literacy practice.

Table 4.10 How the data was collected in relation to the research questions

Research Questions	Instruments	Literacy events	Literacy Practice	Data Analysis
What are the literacy practices with which the Jamaican boys engage in their everyday lives?	Semi-structured interview protocol. Log of children's school literacy.	The everyday activities that the participants are engaged in are related to literacy, e.g., reading a book or reading the newspaper. Writing a shopping list. Video games. Social media/digital literacy	How is literacy used? What is the purpose of involvement in literacy (social/ political/ economic/ entertainment)? Maintain power-political class.	Qualitative analysis based on an emerging theme. Literacy events and literacy practices emerging from the data. Location of the literacy event. Reason for the literacy event/ feeling associated with literacy events. Link to literacy practice.
To what extent do inter-generational differences in literacy practices affect boys' formal educational development?	Semi-structured interview protocol literacy over a week.	Reading with children. Reading receipt. Digital literacy related to work. Oral storytelling. Religious activities.	Education. Entertainment. Social or personal fulfilment. Spiritual development. Read to complete work, but do not make links. Oral storytelling is based on culture and body language but does not make links. Do as they are told?	Analysing literacy events How do these practices reflect their identities, perceptions and attitudes towards literacy and educational development? Qualitative analysis is based on an emerging theme concerning teachers' and pupils' perceptions. How do literacy practices in the Jamaican culture hinder or support children's literacy development? Who is involved in literacy events? Time of day, location and feeling associated with the literacy events. Literacy practices associated with the literacy events.

4.8 Limitations of my method of research

So far in the chapter, I have explored the advantages of using qualitative research. In this section, I outline the limitations of this methodology. I explore the potential drawbacks of using semi-structured interviews and describe some of the problems I encountered with my sampling techniques.

Cicourel (1964) wrote that the researcher faces certain unavoidable problems with interviews as a research method, and I have faced several. One significant problem was agreeing the time and location to interview the parents. All the parents involved were working and it was difficult to arrange time after school or at the weekend. Several appointments were made and cancelled before the interviews were finally conducted. On the day, however, all the parents gave their full attention and thanked me for the opportunity to stop and reflect on their childhood literacy practices as well as their current ones.

Interviews can be time-consuming. There is a tendency, for example, for interviewees to veer off topic. Though, this made for some interesting conversations; for example, one parent expressed his pride in his own accomplishments, and another told me about the mischief he was involved in as a child. Other participants, however – the boys, in particular – needed more prompts than expected on some of the questions.

There were limitations to using the literacy logs when collecting the in-school data. When collecting the first set of data, it gave the impression that the boys were being excluded when they were taken out of class by a teaching assistant before the end to complete their literacy logs. For the second set, all the children in the class were given the literacy logs and the participants' data were extracted. I am not sure if the place where they sat to write their literacy log – or who was with them when they wrote it – would make any difference to the content of their contributions. My aim was for the boys not to feel as if doing the literacy log was a burden or something extra or that they were missing out on anything back in class.

In addition, the purposive sampling procedure decreases the ability to generalise the general population of Jamaican-heritage boys in the English education system.

4.9 Ethical issues

In this chapter, I have dealt with several ethical issues that centre on the power relationships that exist between the researcher and participants (Mason, 1996). I have also talked about problems that could be related to how I acquired the sample and the sample itself. I aimed to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants and locations involved in this thesis by changing the names in this

report. Furthermore, as a researcher, I kept my identity and place of work private to reduce the possibility of the participants' identities being disclosed. The research involved children; therefore, written consent was required from the Headteacher of the school, the parents of the children and the children themselves so that the participants were not placed at risk and their vulnerability was acknowledged (Creswell, 2003). The research committee reviewed the research plan to ensure that the participants were protected from physical, psychological and social harm (Sieber, 1998). Written consent for all interviews was obtained from the parents and the teacher as they were also involved. The participants were fully informed that they had the right to withdraw at any point in the research process.

Using a sample of pupils from a school where I am a senior leader, while accessible, did create ethical issues that needed recognition in terms of relationships of power between the researcher and the researched. I did not discuss my concern with my sample, but the thoughts were uppermost in my mind as speculations. The dual roles of a researcher and a senior leader in the school could compromise the research's validity. I acknowledge that my position as a senior teacher may have had some impact on the participants' eagerness to participate in the research, but also on the content of their answers. I must consider that, as a senior leader, the participants wanted to please me; and as such, there is the possibility that they ‘gave me what they believed I wanted to hear’. Similarly, the parents may have responded with answers that portray them and their families in a good light due to my position at the school. Although I was a member of staff at the school where the research took place, it was vital for me to consider the power relations between myself and the participants (The British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018). To address these issues, I ensured that the participants were clear that they were under no obligation to take part and could withdraw at any time if they desired. All the interviews were conducted outside of school hours (after school or at the weekends).

I took a child-centred approach to data collection to equalise the power relationship between the researcher and the participants. The participants were both involved and consulted in the research process (Mauthner, 1997; Stein, 2008). Throughout the research project, I maintained an awareness of differences and power

relationships and did everything I could to reduce the impact on the participants. Transparency was paramount throughout the research and non-disclosure was carefully avoided (BERA, 2018); participants were informed at every stage of the process.

I followed the steps outlined by Cohen *et al.* (2015) to gain consent. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of East London Ethical Review Panel in December 2015 (refer to the appendix attached). I wrote a letter to the Headteacher – the gatekeeper of the school – seeking permission to conduct research there. This was accompanied by evidence of ethical approval from the University of East London. Permission was requested to ensure the participants were not placed at risk. A consent form from the Graduate School of the University of East London (see appendix) was given to all the participants to read, followed by an explanation of the research project. An accent form with the same information was given to the children to gain permission. The accent form was written in child-friendly language. Participants were asked to sign the form if they were willing to participate and assured that they could withdraw at any time.

I was cognisant of the instruments used in the research and the necessary ethical considerations. For example, questionnaires can be invasive (Cohen *et al*., 2015, p. 377); consequently, I maintained the participants' privacy by using pseudonyms to protect their identities. I was meticulous about following BERA's ethical guidelines (2018) as it relates to children. Children were granted the right to express their views freely in the literacy logs and interviews. Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), the rights and duties of those with legal responsibility were considered; hence, consent was sought from parents and the school's Headteacher. According to BERA, confidentiality, anonymity and non-identifiable and non-traceable identity were guaranteed (2018). Anonymity was offered to the participants at the point when they gave consent. In due course, institutional confidentiality was given and only the supervisory team and I had access to the data.

Further, the reliability and validity of the data were in danger of ‘transgression’ (Holland *et al., 1998)* because the quotations used in the thesis constituted such small parts of the original transcript of the interviews. It was arguable that the small

section of the transcript may not have reflected everything the interviewees were trying to communicate, resulting in a significant ethical issue concerning the representation of interview data for the thesis. According to Holland *et al*. (1998), 'transgression' is where the ‘original, live, face-to-face conversations disappear in endless transcripts and reappear butchered into fragmented quotes’ (p. 222). I chose to represent what I believed the boys and their parents wished to convey only where it related to the points I was trying to make in my thesis. Yet, despite my aspirations of fidelity, I could only choose a relatively small section of the transcript. Therefore, this thesis can be argued to have done some 'violence' (Coffey & Delamont, 2000) to the thoughts, ideas and positions of my participants' viewpoints, though it was not intended. As a result, I apologised in advance for what might, later, be considered a 'misrepresentation' of their ideas.

While conducting this research, I complied with legal requirements concerning the storage and use of personal data, as stipulated by the Data Protection Act (1998) and any other subsequent acts, including the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018). The participants were told how their data would be stored before giving permission. I ensured that the data was kept securely: hard copies were always in a locked cupboard, while electronic copies were stored on a secure network with password protection.

4.10 Summary

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted in this thesis. The focus of the study is on children's literacy practices, in and outside of school, and the impact of these on their identity and formal literacy development. There were complexities involved in writing up the qualitative research from a large data set, as described by Mason (1996). There were predicaments in deciding what to include, and equally, there were difficult decisions about what not to include. Lofland & Lofland (1995, p. 26) describe the decision to omit data as ‘the agony of omission’. I made the decision to include some data and to leave out other data based on the themes that have emerged from progressive focussing (Glaser, 1992) on the overall key themes that are related to the thesis.

Through personal interactions with participants, I was able to gain insight into the participants' lived experiences. Central to the discussions on literacy practices are the worlds in which the boys interact. The in-school and out-of-school literacies in which they participate relate to the conversations and activities in the classroom, bringing the students' everyday literacy practices into school. The discussions also include the connections the students and teachers make between outside cultural practices and the official curriculum. In this manner, I was able to go some way towards addressing the questions: what are the cultural literacy practices that participants relate to in-school and out-of-school (the home and cultural groups) and how do they interpret and engage with the official literacy curriculum?

In the following chapters, complex themes related to the situatedness of literacy practices, as shared in the boys' lived experiences, are explored.

Chapter 5: Boys and their parents talking about literacy practices

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the intrinsic value of cultural literacy practices within the scope of this research, exploring various literacy practices within the dynamic contexts of in-school and out-of-school, including community settings. These discussions uncover tensions, excitements, uncertainties and identities as the experiences of these boys and their parents mediate what they think, say and do in their literacy events and reveal their literacy practices. The chapter looks first at out-of-school literacy practices, then, in-school literacy practices and finally, the intersection of literacy practices with the boys' identity construction. Data is drawn from a sample of six participants, encompassing three boys and their Jamaican-heritage parents, aiming to explore how cultural literacy practices, both in school and out, influence the boys' identity and formal literacy development.

The data reveals nuanced distinctions and interconnections in home and school literacy practices. Central to this study is the examination of the boys' literacy experiences in both home and school contexts. Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept underscores the significance of inherited lived experiences spanning generations (Bourdieu, 1990) and critical race theory (CRT) highlights the effects of race and racism on Black individuals, challenging the racist discourse and explaining how racism must be understood at every level (see Chapter 2), to address inequalities. The next section presents data on the boys' and their parents' out-of-school literacy practices, including the childhood experiences of the parents.

5.2 Data on out-of-school literacy practices

Clay (1993), Teale (1986) and Dukes & Purcell-Gates (2003) state that although knowledge about print and printed material varies from child to child, nearly all children have exposure to print in their homes and communities that provides a foundation for later literacy. Pahl & Rowsell (2005) assert that descriptions of home literacy often differ from school literacy. Luke & Carrington (2002) observe instances where a child accurately composed an email to a parent but faced

challenges in reading at school. Hinchman *et al*. (2004) document a child engaging in multiple literacy practices outside school, such as listening to music while crafting a scrapbook and reading a book during a car journey. Knobel & Lankshear (2003) categorise children's out-of-school literacy practices into two groups: those mirroring school-related activities like reading and writing for homework and those diverging from conventional school literacies, such as engaging with popular culture, drawing or creating models.

5.2.1 Damion and his mother

5.2.1.1 Damion

Damion is an 11-year-old boy from a single-parent household, primarily residing with his Jamaican-heritage mother and two sisters – one older and one younger. He spends fortnightly weekends with his Jamaican-heritage father. Damion's maternal grandparents migrated from Jamaica to the UK, but his mother was born in the UK.

The interview with Damion reveals a dual engagement in literacy practices within the home – some closely mirroring conventional school literacy practices (Knobel & Lankshear, 2003) and others diverging from them. Notably, the home literacy practices that resemble school activities lack intentional organisation or facilitation by adults at home. There is no evidence of an explicit effort by Damion's parents to involve him in literacy events for academic empowerment or school readiness. Instead, his mother's involvement focuses on practical experiences essential for daily living. Damion's interview statement underscores this:

> *I go shopping with my mum and write and read the shopping list at home. I read the receipt from the shopping to check to make sure we got everything we bought and make sure we were charged the correct amount of money…*

Damion applies skills acquired in school to an out-of-school context, turning writing and reading shopping lists and receipts into purposeful literacy events meeting genuine family needs. This activity not only reinforces his understanding of reading, writing and financial transactions but also contributes positively to family dynamics. Damion's mother actively enriches his cultural community wealth by providing opportunities for practical, real-world literacy experiences. Yosso (2005),

drawing on Orellana's work (2003, p. 6) in linguistic capital, notes that bilingual children often acquire diverse skills through translation for their parents. Similarly, Damion's participation in shopping with his mother demonstrates the acquisition of social tools, vocabulary expansion, real-world literacy skills, mathematical competence and a sense of familial responsibility and social maturity.

Damion's mother indirectly promotes school literacy by involving him in a social activity – cooking. He explains:

> *I sometimes write cooking instructions with my mum. My mum explains how to cook, and I write it down.*

Damion's engagement with literacy at home reflects a fusion of school-related and practical life skills. This activity encompasses elements such as dictation response, spelling practice, sentence construction and the creation of instructional text, all of which constitute essential literacy skills. Damion is not engaged in this cultural literacy practice on his own but with another family member, thus adding family interaction (Gregory, 1998). On a superficial level, this activity might be perceived as ‘just cooking’; however, Damion attributes its primary purpose to gaining essential real-life skills, suggesting that it might not align with the expectations of school literacy practices, where an emphasis is placed on acquiring technical literacy skills. Taylor (1983) underscores the richness inherent in home-based literacy practices, making a distinction between home and school literacy and emphasising the disconnect between these two spheres. Heath (1983) also draws attention to the divergent patterns characterising literacy practices in home and school contexts.

In demonstrating autonomy, Damion takes the lead in making the connection (Holland *et al*., 2001) between home and school literacy. He reports:

> *When I am bored, I write stories; sometimes, I read books. Sometimes, I read to my younger sister and read books at her level. Sometimes, I help her with her work ...*

In this instance, Damion demonstrates a degree of autonomy, showing his proactive approach to addressing boredom. Engaging in activities such as writing stories and reading books, typically associated with school literacy practices,

reflects his deliberate choice to undertake these tasks within the home environment. This use of school literacy at home embodies what Duranti & Ochs (1996) term ‘syncretism’. Syncretism means taking different sociocultural influences and creating new ones. Damion is drawing from his school literacy practices and mixing them with the home context to produce a new text, independent of adult intervention.

Damion's independent reading further underscores his autonomy as he selects reading materials according to his preferences and dictates his reading schedule. This can be perceived as an expansion of his ‘navigational’ capital (Yosso, 2005), signifying the importance of resilience in its development. Resilience can be understood as a reservoir of inner resources, social competencies and cultural strategies, enabling individuals like Damion to draw upon their experiences and enhance subsequent functioning, a concept explored by Stanton-Salazar & Spina (2000, p. 229). Moreover, Damion's self-directed activities extend beyond personal entertainment as he takes on the role of supporting his younger sister. Assuming an adult-like responsibility, Damion assists his sister in reading books at her level, highlighting his willingness to contribute, in the absence of adult guidance. This multifaceted demonstration of independence reveals Damion's use of his social and navigational skills in independently shaping his literacy activities as he actively engages with his sister in developing her literacy skills.

Damion continues to show how he is taking the lead in bridging the gap between home and school (Massey, 2005). The following quotation shows an example of an interaction between home and school space.

> *Sometimes, I do not know how to do things, but when I write them down, I know how to do them properly. For example, I had to go to the hospital to remove my tonsils; I was scared, so I watched videos and wrote down the steps for getting my tonsils out. The fact that I wrote it down makes me feel comfortable and not scared.*

The context and available resources in the environment can significantly shape literacy practices. Comber (2010) highlights the impact of the environment on children's literacy habits. In Damion's case, in-school literacy practices like reading

and writing extend to his home activities when seeking engagement during moments of boredom. Street (1991) notes that literacy skills, at times, lose their ideological nature when focused solely on skill acquisition. The ideological literacy model emphasises cultural sensitivity and recognises the variation in practices across different contexts (Street, 2006). Damion's statement about writing down procedures to enhance understanding aligns with this cultural perspective. His example of watching a procedure on YouTube and documenting the steps before a medical event adds a personal 'accent' to his experiences, bridging the gap between everyday life and official school literacy practices.

In this literacy event, he was responding to medical concerns through video-based information, revealing a purposeful integration of school literacy skills into real-life scenarios. While Damion's writing is part of this engagement, its purpose, driven by personal experiences, is to create a text at home to calm his fears (Kenner, 2000), and responding to the text (Marsh & Thompson, 2001) differentiates it from school-focused literacy practices, as highlighted by Street (1991). The next section reveals Damion's mother, Marline’s literacy experiences.

5.2.1.2 Marline

In this section, Marline, Damion's mother, provides reflective insights into her literacy practices, mainly focusing on her childhood experiences. Marline underscores the significance she attributes to both writing and reading during her childhood. She articulates:

> *As a child, I spent much time practising my handwriting. Then, in my free time, I wrote stories. I had a broad imagination and used to like putting it on paper. I loved when people listened to my stories, and even if they were not listening, I loved reading my writing out.*
>
> *The writing was a way of sharing my imagination. I loved writing play scripts. I was my number one fan. I know and imagine what is going on in my stories.*

In the quotation above, Marline recalls enthusiastically engaging in reading and writing for entertainment, incorporating speaking and listening (oral) activities. She adopts a cognitive perspective on literacy, emphasising handwriting practices and

story creation, aligning with Knobel & Lankshear's (2003) description of home practices resembling school activities. Beyond cognitive skills, Marline infuses significant meaning into her literacy practices, supporting Street's (2003) ideological model of literacy rooted in social practice. Her activities are not merely based on developing technical skills but meaningful to her, fostering imagination and meaningful interactions within her family. Marline describes a social model of literacy, emphasising the social aspects and conceptions of reading and writing (Heath, 1982; Street, 1984; 1988; 2003).

Family involvement serves as a platform for Marline, with her remarks suggesting varied audiences contributing to her individual world transactions (Nelson, 2007; 2010). These contain subjective and experiential components (Nelson, 2007; 2010); therefore, as a child, Marline created 'experienced' meaning using her imagination and knowledge, and family members provided a social and cultural activity in which they participated. She received verbal and non-verbal feedback, which contributed to interactional opportunities and scaffolding used in the process of collaboratively constructing the structures of personal meaning (Nelson, 1996; Tomasello, 2003). This personalised, meaning-making process involved imagination, knowledge and family interactions. Marline recalled consistently sharing the joy of writing and reading her stories with her family, exhibiting intrinsic motivation and her primary pleasure lay in sharing her imaginative creations, using writing to explore diverse ideas, themes and plots.

Damion's mother's experiences underscore the interconnectedness of home and school literacy practices, highlighting the seamless flow of meaning across different contexts. This is exemplified by the significance she places on reading.
She recalls:

> *Reading and writing were a part of my literacy when I was a child. Reading the newspaper was essential. … I loved to read so much when I was a little girl… I read children's books. I loved reading.*

Marline's childhood literary world was intricately linked to her reading and writing practices. Reflecting on her childhood experiences, she expresses a passion for reading, including newspapers, emphasising their perceived importance. Her

positive attitude towards reading is rooted in the pleasure derived from the experience. Engaging with children's books, she demonstrates a connection with characters that enriched her reading encounters. Writing, for Marline as a child, served as a tool to construct an imaginative realm where she found entertainment through books while simultaneously gathering information from the real world through newspapers. Notably, her early engagement in literacy practices was a self-directed choice, underscoring her autonomy and independence in deciding which activities to participate in. Marline seamlessly integrated her school and home literacy, illustrating a natural and self-driven connection.

As a child, Marline seemed involved in community cultural practices, indicating that she was influenced by youth leaders and her peers in the youth group. This implication is evident in her comment:

> *Everyone on the estate and our school attended the youth club. They set it up with our parents…The youth leaders used to write letters to our parents.*

Being part of the community club highlights Marline's access to her cultural community wealth (Yosso, 2005). Like her son today, she was building her social capital, forming a social network she might rely on later. Marline actively participated in her community group, and the involvement of other young people in youth groups suggests shared engagement. Consequently, Marline had cultural literacy experiences beyond the confines of her home. The data indicates that Marline's literacy development occurred in a specific context (out-of-school domain) with a communicative purpose. The following section delves into Marline's reflections on the literacy practices she encountered while growing up with her mother.

Marline observed her mother during her childhood years and recounts literacy practices that might not have aligned with accepted school literacy practices aimed at academic empowerment. She says:

> *When I was a child, my mum spent her spare time reading Teletext to find out what was next on the TV. She enjoyed completing crossword puzzles and doing competitions in the newspaper. My mum used to read a*

magazine called 'Take a Break'. Reading the magazine was a way of getting information about people. Therefore, it was her social thing.

Reading Teletext implies Marline's mother's exploration of television programmes for potential sources of entertainment, a literacy practice often discouraged or unrecognised in formal educational settings. Despite her use of reading to gather information and make decisions about scheduling her time around upcoming television programmes, Teletext and newspaper crosswords may not align with conventional notions of school-approved literacy practices. According to scholars like Hope (2011) and Levy (2011), educational contexts often privilege certain forms of literacy, shedding light on the underlying power dynamics they uphold. *Take a Break* is a British women's magazine established in 1990 and published weekly. It features a blend of reader-submitted 'true life' stories, women's health and lifestyle content, puzzles and competitions. Marline perceives this as her mother's means of socialising beyond the confines of the home. While these literacy experiences may diverge from conventional school practices and lack overt power dynamics, they represent cultural and social practices aimed at providing entertainment and information.

Reading held a crucial role in Damion's grandmother's life, serving to accomplish personal and family goals. The emphasis on reading and writing for specific purposes was a prevalent practice in Damion's grandmother's household, as confirmed by Marline's account of her parents seeking social and political information from newspapers. Marline reflected on these cultural literacy experiences within her family.

My parents read the newspaper daily. In the morning, they get dressed and go to the shop to buy the newspaper. When they got home, they would read the newspaper while all the children sat in silence.

Reading the newspaper was ingrained in Damion's grandparents' daily routine, reflecting their combined commitment and interest. The quiet atmosphere during this activity suggested its meaningful and purposeful nature. This daily ritual served as a way for Damion's grandparents to stay informed about local and international events, requiring silence from the younger family members to connect with the

broader world. Marline observed and inherited her parents' commitment to reading, aligning with the notion of intergenerational transfer of literacy skills highlighted by Little (2017). This familial practice extended to Marline, who earlier, expressed her childhood love for reading, including newspapers, confirming the continuity of intergenerational literacy skills.

Marline suggests that communication through letter writing was significant for her mother. The interview data (See Appendix 10) indicates that her mother employed letter writing as a means of communication, both locally and internationally. Regarding Damion's grandmother, Marline disclosed:

> *Mum wrote letters to companies if she had problems with business transactions or if something needs fixing. She also wrote letters to complain. Mum wrote letters to her relatives back home in Jamaica, and she would receive letters from them.*

Letter writing served as a crucial aspect of their daily lives, embodying literacy as a social practice within the family (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 2015). It functioned as a tool for conducting business transactions and addressing grievances or dissatisfaction with services. Damion’s grandmother used letters to voice her concerns, employing them to communicate difficulties and await resolutions. Marline viewed letter writing not merely as a static activity but as an active process, a pragmatic means to an end. This perspective aligns with the situatedness of literacy (Ivanič, 2000) and the ideological model (Street, 1984; Purcell-Gates, 1996).

In the context of family communication, letters played a pivotal role in staying connected with relatives. These letters carried significant meaning as they conveyed essential information about family events, emotions, experiences, fears and wishes. The use of letters in this manner suggests a tangible representation of Marline's mother's relatives. The act of letter writing facilitated transcultural literacy, enabling communication across borders (Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017) and fostering reflections on identities and relationships central to their lives. Damion's grandparents engaged in cross-cultural communication (Kim, 2016) through letters. Marline's mother was making a conscious choice on how to connect (Heath, 2004).

Damion and his mother share parallel literacy experiences at home, where adults do not systematically structure or initiate literacy situations geared toward academic empowerment. The data from their family indicates that when adults participate in literacy practices with the children, the emphasis lies in equipping them with practical, real-life skills for navigating the everyday world. Both Damion's mother and grandmother involve themselves in social and cultural activities that incorporate literacy. At times, Damion and his mother, during her childhood, illustrated instances of bridging the gap between home and school literacies by integrating school-related literacy activities into their home environment. The following section focuses on Bryan and his father's literacy practices.

5.2.2 Bryan and his father

5.2.2.1 Bryan

Bryan is an 11-year-old boy residing with both parents and two siblings; he has a teenage brother and a 7-year-old sister in Year 3. His paternal grandmother is of Jamaican heritage.

Bryan's home literacy practices present a mix of those resembling and differing from school literacy, as observed by Knobel & Lankshear (2003). However, the predominant focus of adult engagement in his home literacy revolves around imparting social and cultural family values rather than directly influencing academic progress. Bryan's independent literacy activities are primarily for entertainment. In an interview, he disclosed:

> *I read comic books and newspapers regularly (weekly). I like to do the crossword in the newspaper, and my favourite comic is about the Avengers.*

The remarks provided by Bryan shed light on his cultural and social engagement with literacy outside school, which is distinct from the formal literacy skills emphasised in a school setting, as outlined by Street (1995). His routine reading of comic books and newspapers reflects an independent, leisurely literacy practice undertaken for entertainment purposes at home. Bryan's confirmation of a weekly frequency suggests a consistent commitment to his reading for pleasure. While he could opt for the cinematic versions of the *Avengers* series, his preference for weekly comic reading underscores a distinct pleasure derived from the textual

format. These literacy events serve as a valuable avenue for Bryan to hone his reading skills, enjoy crossword puzzles and increase his general knowledge. However, it is crucial to note that these events, though contributing to vocabulary development and general literacy skills, are different from the formal literacy exercises emphasised in school, such as story writing and comprehension. Bloome, Puro & Theodirou (1989) underscore the contrasting focus between the school's emphasis on procedural displays and the undervalued, yet meaningful, literacy practices (like reading comics and solving crosswords) found within the home environment.

Bryan also highlights another aspect of his literacy practices, involving reading and writing for practical, daily functional tasks and networking with others. These literacy activities, while integral to his daily life, are not ascribed the same value within the formal school literacy setting, as they are not oriented towards academic development. Bryan specifies:

> *I read the shopping list and receipt. I write on the back of the shopping list. I check what is needed in the house and write it down for my mum.*
>
> *At football, every Sunday, […] there is a board that will tell you where you have to shoot. You have to go and read the information to know what to do.*

Bryan underscores the significance of reading and writing in practical tasks, illustrating the integration of literacy into a social context (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Ivanic, 2004). Practical activities, like reading shopping lists, play a crucial role in the smooth functioning of the household where Bryan actively contributes to the family. His reading skills indirectly benefit everyone in the house. Engaging in football as a weekly team sport, while enhancing his teamwork skills, also requires effective reading of notices on positions and strategies. This practical aspect situates reading within a meaningful context for Bryan and his team. Bryan emphasises the direct purpose and meaningful impact of literacy in these activities, aligning with Barton & Hamilton (2000). A positive attitude toward literacy is evident in his recognition of immediate benefits and the contextual integration of literacy within his familiar social setting, avoiding decontextualization (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

Bryan’s out-of-school literacy practices support him with personal and spiritual development, evidenced as he states:

> *I have a lot of books at home and read daily with my dad. My mum and dad do Bible study with me. I write about the Bible on a sheet of paper […]. It is important so that you know what to do in life.*

Bryan's interview illuminates that reading activities in his home serve as a means of religious guidance. His parents' shared responsibility for Bible study indicates its significance and the unity of purpose in this undertaking. Bryan's statement on why it is important suggests that his engagement with the Bible provides him with a deeper understanding of life, contributing to his spiritual fulfilment. Reading at home also involves interactive experiences between children and adults, as evidenced by his mention of both parents being actively engaged in the reading process, which underscores the shared commitment of both parents to literacy practices, establishing them as intrinsic family values.

Bryan reveals his perspective on the interconnection between school and home literacy activities when he says:

> *Home literacy supports me with school literacy. Reading is understanding words and sentences. Sometimes, my mum helps me read over my schoolwork and make corrections.*

Bryan's conscious connection with school literacy practices at home is highlighted. According to Hope (2011) and Levy (2011), certain literacies are given privilege, reflecting and perpetuating power dynamics within educational contexts. Bryan's view of literacy aligns with Street’s (1993) autonomous model in which literacy is perceived as a neutral tool adaptable to different contexts, and the teaching of literacy often remains within this framework. Bryan's remarks also suggest that checking his work with his mum helps him prepare for school activities, indicating his mother's involvement in school-related literacy practices at home, albeit in a supporting role. However, these literacy practices at home lack intrinsic meaning, as an adult guides Bryan to meet expected standards without emphasising their contextual relevance. In the next section, Tony, Bryan's father, reflects on his own literacy experiences.

5.2.2.2 Tony

Tony, Bryan's father, reflects on, and provides insights into, his observations and interpretations of literacy practices both from his childhood and as an adult.

First, he comments on bringing his school literacy practices into the home, highlighting adult participation:

> *When I was a child, doing well at school was very important to Mum. After my parents split, my mum had to work hard, but my older sibling ensured that I did my work. They were much older than me, so they acted like a parent when my mum was at work.*

This statement provides a glimpse into the significance Tony's mother attributed to education. Her desire for his academic success prompted the establishment of a systematic and structured approach at home to facilitate school-related literacy activities. Supervision and support were integral components, ensuring the sustained continuation of school-accepted learning within the home environment. Following the transition to single parenthood, the elder sibling assumed an adult-like responsibility to uphold the established standards and expectations on behalf of his mother.

Tony continues to explain the impact of his family network, particularly his mother, on his limited success in school in the face of boredom:

> *At school, I enjoyed certain subjects (English and History), and I only concentrated on those lessons. In the other subjects, I would mess about. I did not take school seriously. The teachers were frustrated with me because, as they put it, I was very bright but was bored in most of the lessons. The headteacher was very supportive and would offer me alternative work. I did my own thing but respected my mum and her hard work, so I did not want to let her down.*

This disclosure unveils Tony’s internal conflict concerning his mother's expectations and his own aspirations. His reluctance toward formal education is apparent as he explains that he was not interested in most in-school learning activities. Despite the frustration of his teachers from Tony's lack of engagement in the face of his apparent potential, his adherence to school expectations was

influenced by the deep respect he held for his mother and the desire to please her. He hints that his success was propelled by his commitment to make his mother proud, rather than the school's influence or his personal, intrinsic interest. Tony's literacy experience confirms Yosso's (2005) work on aspirational capital. Tony's mother had high aspirations for him, and even when she was not around, he wanted to please her.

During Tony's childhood, writing activities within his home varied. He recalls that writing played a substantial role in the discipline structure of his home, forming an integral part of the daily routine:

> *As a child, I remember my mum telling me to write lines at home if I am [sic.] naughty. This was a boring experience as I had to do it in silence and to the best of my ability. My mum would give me one sentence that would fit on a standard lined book. After that, she may request 100 or 500 lines, or as many as she thinks the punishment deserved. The sentence always starts with I must… and relates to the behaviour I have shown. For example, 'I must respect my teacher'. If my mum is not satisfied, I have to do it again. I hated writing lines, but I needed discipline. I would try not to get into trouble with my mum.*

Tony's mother directed the literacy situation, assuming a dual role in dictating when and how literacy was practised, as well as setting the standard for the execution of the literacy event. She used writing as a disciplinary tool for addressing undesirable behaviours in Tony's childhood home, making him write lines, repeating a sentence hundreds of times, if he misbehaved. The imposition of sentences always began with an affirmative phrasing (I must…), articulating the desired behaviour for change. Consequently, Tony had a clear understanding of his parent’s expectations. Following this, Tony’s mum would scrutinise the lines, ensuring correct letter formation and impeccable handwriting. For Tony, this task proved tedious, physically uncomfortable and isolating. Despite its challenges, this literacy event aimed to instil discipline in Tony and cultivate essential social skills driven by his desire to please his mother.

The writing of lines mirrored a school literacy practice and extended to cultural practices at home. Tony engaged in learning about sentences, contextual word usage and the interconnectedness of reading and writing within a social context. This example challenges rigid distinctions between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices, emphasising the need to recognise children's literacies within broader ‘learning ecologies’, as posited by Barron (2006. p196).

During the interview's exploration of his family literacy practices, Tony's reflections focused on his mother's engagement in literacy events for information gathering:

> *My mother could not read, and we had to read for her. My mother mainly asks my older sister and me to read magazines and newspapers so she can hear the news and find out about the health benefits of the magazine. The children would all sit and listen if they were not reading.*

Here, Tony unveils his mother's active involvement in this literacy routine with her children. The final sentence in the quote underscores its status as a family activity, beneficial to all involved. It illustrates family members participating in the social activity of reading newspapers and magazines, with the mother taking charge and guiding the children on what to read – a clear instance of parent-directed literacy within the family. Beyond the active reader, the other children were also participating by listening. This ecological understanding situates literacy within a community context (Neuman & Celano, 2001; 2006; Nicholas *et al*., 2009), and the ethnographic perspective on home literacy practices (Gregory *et al*., 2004) paints a nuanced picture of literacy flowing, at home, out of a school context.

Data from Bryan's home literacy experiences indicates that both Bryan and his father engaged with adults during their literacy practices at home. For Bryan, the degree of adult interaction is determined by the purpose of the task. In the case of Tony, Bryan's dad, his mother took an active role in organising and overseeing the literacy practices, influencing the quality of the engagement. However, these literacy practices were not explicitly designed or organised for academic empowerment. The following section presents data on Zander and his father’s literacy practices.

5.2.3 Zander and his father

5.2.3.1 Zander

Zander is an 11-year-old boy living with both parents and an older teenage brother. Both his parents are professionals and working. His Jamaican heritage is through his father, whose mother was born in Jamaica. Zander takes pride in his membership in the 100 Black Men's Club, reflecting his motivation and commitment to personal learning about his cultural heritage.

Zander's parents play a significant role in orchestrating and guiding his academic development, purposefully empowering him with knowledge. Despite being involved in other types of leisure activities, Zander's main form of entertainment at home is reading, aligning with school literacy practices as outlined by Knobel & Lankshear (2003).

Zander's parents intentionally involve him in literacy practices that closely mirror the activities he undertakes at school. This is evident in how they structure his out-of-school time, aligning it closely with in-school learning. These purposeful efforts indicate that Zander's parents are strategically creating literacy environments to enhance his educational development, demonstrating a significant investment in their child's future. Insights from Zander's interview verify the active role his parents play in coordinating his home literacy activities, particularly in preparing him for grammar school entrance examinations.

Zander reports:

> *My mum and dad are preparing me for the 11-plus, so I spent a year doing extra writing, maths and verbal and non-verbal reasoning. I do not enjoy this because I have to do four hours every day on my own ... I have a PS4 and do not play on it because of extra work.*

This perspective reveals that Zander's parents organise his schedule with an eye toward what they believe will contribute to his future success. Their consideration is more focused on long-term goals than on Zander's immediate desire for entertainment or engagement with modern technology. Despite Zander expressing a preference for playing on his PlayStation (PS4), his parents prioritise his academic achievement, investing significant time in preparing him for the 11-plus

examination. Throughout this preparation, Zander's parents actively create literacy opportunities for him, emphasising the importance of literacy as an investment in his future social mobility, and aligning with Bourdieu's (1984) perspective of investing in cultural capital.

In the interview, Zander reflects on his home literacy practices and describes the impact of his parents on these literacy events. Specifically, he discusses literacy practices used for entertainment, offering insights into the books he engages with at home:

> *I read books like The Diary of a Wimpy Kid and Harry Potter at home. My mum gives me colouring books. I have to colour in real-life things in different locations; it tells you what happens, and you have to read it. My dad gives us wildlife stuff and magazines to read. I read mainly for relaxation and entertainment, but my dad wants me to read for information.*

In this context, it can be deduced that Zander's reading objectives are different from those of his parents. Zander seeks entertainment and relaxation in his reading choices, opting for amusing and adventurous novels specifically crafted for children. Conversely, his parents aim to impart diverse knowledge to him. Although his mother purchases colouring books that may appear solely entertaining, Zander reveals that they serve a dual purpose. Beyond being enjoyable, these books offer information and encourage him to read for the development of geographical skills and knowledge. Additionally, his father contributes to his cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) by ensuring exposure to a broad spectrum of information and insights into wildlife.

In addition to structured learning at home, Zander also participates in activities beyond the home:

> *I play football on Mondays and Wednesdays outside of school. They give us homework so that we understand tackling, positioning and moving the ball toward the goal. We have to read and understand. I attend a karate club after school. My parents pay for me to attend. In the lessons, he only speaks to us in Japanese, so I have to learn Japanese.*

Zander's parents carefully balance academic and sporting activities during his leisure time. However, even the sports activities incorporate literacy, requiring him to research, read, comprehend and apply his learning. Additionally, his involvement in karate introduces a linguistic component as he learns a new language. This shows his parent's commitment to providing him with a variety of experiences that will enrich his growth physically, socially, linguistically and mentally. These skills are perceived to equip him for his future.

Furthermore, Zander shares that his extracurricular activities extend beyond academia to encompass ‘life’ skills and an appreciation for his cultural heritage:

> *Sometimes, my mum wants me to make biscuits; I have to read the instructions. Also, I attend the 100 Black Men Club on Saturdays. […] they teach us about our ethnicity and our cultural heritage. They give us homework to do research. It is important to me because it teaches me where I come from and what happened in the past.*

Learning to bake biscuits is a skill that prepares Zander for his future, emphasising self-sufficiency in food preparation. Assigned the responsibility of reading the recipe, Zander collaborates with his mum, who imparts valuable cooking skills. This task evidences family participation and an application of Zander’s in-school literacy skills.

The 100 Black Men Club is a structured organisation designed to teach young Black men about their culture. It offers a structured programme, which Zander is expected to follow. He sees it as a route to empowerment and connection with his culture, inspired by cultural icons. Zander has little choice in the out-of-school literacy events in which he participates. His parents have organised his time to balance school-related and cultural literacy events, sporting activities and structured entertainment. Zander's involvement in the 100 Black Men Club reflects a structured parental commitment to cultural education. While this approach allows limited autonomy for Zander, it underscores his parents' conscious efforts to provide him with the highest quality literacy experiences and highlights their integral role in shaping his out-of-school learning. The next section highlights Zander's father's literacy practices.

5.2.3.2 George

The interview with George, Zander's father, offers a rich description of George's home literacy practices while growing up. He recalls a diverse range of practices encompassing interactions, emotions and attitudes. George also expounds on his conscious investment in his children's cultural capital, underscoring a determination not to rely solely on school but to provide them with information conducive to future empowerment. George explains his use of literacy within his household, emphasising the presence of a diverse collection of books tailored to different preferences, a literacy practice directly inherited from his father:

> *We encourage them to read and watch wildlife programmes on the BBC to learn about animals, their habitats and how the world works. We give our children extra tuition to do [the] 11-plus so they can better understand maths, further maths and reasoning.*
>
> *There are several books in my house, and you cannot get bored if you like reading. I work with the boys on books such as 'The Hidden Chimp'.*

The use of 'we' in the above statement pertains to both George and his wife. Together, they actively encourage their children to watch wildlife programmes and provide additional tutoring at home. The timeframe in which a family engages with literacy practices holds contextual significance. The parents' level of involvement in their children's literacy practices serves as a crucial indicator of their influence on shaping their children's lives. Street (1984) emphasises the importance of viewing literacy practices as ideological, inherently embedded within power relations and subject to contextual analysis. From the parents' perspective, their active participation is an investment in their children's cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). However, Zander's own viewpoint adds another layer, as he expresses dissatisfaction with the four hours of daily tasks he is required to complete independently. This suggests his concern for missing out on present experiences and a lesser focus on the future compared with his parents. This nuance underscores the intricate connection between literacy, home and community practices, identities and discourses, aligning with Bourdieu's concept of lived experiences transmitted across generations (1990).

George recalls his father, Zander's grandfather, engaging in literacy practices such as reading for relaxation and entertainment:

> *My dad invested hundreds of pounds into books. My dad would spend hours in his bedroom reading on his own; he always says books give him a sense of belonging. He would be totally relaxed. At other times, he would engage others around him in the book he was reading or by sharing out loud what he had discovered or something interesting he had found. My dad reads spiritual and cultural books in his spare time. These books were not for academic learning but just because he loved reading and found pleasure in reading.*

Here, Zander's grandfather is portrayed as using books for entertainment and relaxation and George remembers spending hours reading in the bedroom as a highly valued literacy event that played a significant role in his father's life. He emphasises the importance of this practice through the considerable time and money invested in books. Sharing the information gleaned from books indicates a deliberate effort to impart the value of reading to other family members, intending to inspire the next generation. George clarifies that the purpose of the books was not solely academic but centred on pleasure. This implies that if the focus were on academic learning, it might be perceived as a chore or driven by extrinsic motivation but his father's investment in books stemmed from a genuine love of reading:

> *He* (George's father) *would engage others around him in the book he was reading or by sharing his discoveries or something interesting he had found out loud.*
>
> *At the age of 10–12, I did not read willingly. However, I like some books, for example, 'Judy Bloom' [sic]. She was a White author, writing for teenagers, and I loved her writing. She wrote in a way that captured the 'teenage boy' audience.*

Here, though George's father was engaged in independent reading, he intentionally involved others in his reading experience. When George's dad excitedly shared his discoveries, he likely aimed to draw attention to the value of

his readings. George, initially, lacked interest in reading but his enthusiasm grew as he explored books tailored for a teenage audience. The creation of this literacy situation can be attributed to his parents, mostly his father, who created a collection of books that sparked his interest. Judy Blume's works were particularly meaningful during his teenage years. George's father served as a reading role model at home, and the author's creativity inspired George to embark on his own reading journey. According to Bourdieu (1984), the upper and middle classes possess the means to invest in cultural capital, making their investment highly profitable. Education acts as a mechanism for generating social profit, providing society with values and investing in the commodity of literacy.

Zander's grandparents also engaged in letter writing as a literacy event. George, recalls:

> *My parents wrote letters to their parents in Jamaica. They also wrote to other family members as well. Writing letters was important as Mum and Dad would call us individually, and we would have to write a message for our grandparents, aunties and uncles in Jamaica. I can still remember the blue and white* By Air Mail Par Avion *stamps, as my parents always sent and received letters with them.*

The passion with which George reported this point, and his detailed description, suggest that these letters carried more than messages; they contained special memories and feelings about important events. The emotion and enthusiasm evoked by the letters communicates that though physically, Zander's grandparents were far away, they were closely and emotionally connected to their parents and siblings in Jamaica. George's vivid memory of the stamps demonstrates that the letters were significant for the family, and everyone was involved in the process of letter-writing in the household. Letters were the primary way that the grandparents maintained contact with the broader family network, meaning that letter-writing had a significant purpose. Letters were the only means by which family interactions could take place across the miles. Before the internet, this was how many families expressed their feelings, communicated important family news and relayed information about special occasions. Sending and receiving letters and postcards sent a more profound message of understanding, value, connection and love as

Zander’s grandparents had moved to a new country, separated from their families. The letters gave George’s parents a sense of hope and belonging. Without the letters, Zander’s grandparents would have lost their connection with their homeland.

The evidence suggests that Zander's literacy experiences at home revolve around empowerment for social and academic advancement. Both Zander's grandfather and father actively seek to empower him with the resources necessary for effective participation in school. Their actions demonstrate an understanding of the privilege associated with school literacy, leading them to invest time in empowering their children to engage in school-related literacy at home. In Zander's family, there is a recurring pattern of parents deliberately organising and creating literacy situations for their children over three generations. The next section examines the boys' in-school literacy practices.

5.3 Data on in-school literacy practices

In-school data on the boys' literacy practices were collected from the boys' literacy logs, their interviews, the end of Key Stage (KS)2 reading and writing data, end of KS1 and KS2 progress data and the teacher's notes on how the boys presented as learners in school. Below, Tables 5.1 and 5.2, show the boys' literacy progress in writing and reading as recorded by the school. They also indicate whether they are disadvantaged pupils from poor families and whether they receive free school meals.

In the 2014–2015 academic year (these children were at the end of KS1), an Average Point Score (APS) system was used to measure pupil progress in primary schools in England. At the end of KS1, the age-expected level was 15 points, and by the end of KS2, it was 27 points. The government abolished this system of measuring progress in 2016. The column with the blue heading shows the end of the key stages (ages 7 and 11). For KS1, with 15 as the expected APS for 7-year-olds, 13 is below expectation and 21 is well above. For KS2, 100 is the APS expectation for 11-year-olds and scores under 100 are below, with those between 110 and 120 well above. The green cells show the children's progress from their targets coloured in brown, while the red cells show how they have regressed or

missed their target. In his final year in primary school, Damion's writing average is 104, Bryan's is also 104, and Zander's is 116. The reading average across the year for Damion is 103, Bryan's is 92 and Zander's is 110.

Table 5.11 End of KS1 and KS2 ***writing*** *progress*

Name	Disadvantaged Pupils	KS1	KS2 Target	Autumn	Spring writing	Summer	Progress
Damion	Yes	15	102.65	103	104	107	4.35
Bryan	Yes	13	96.76	103	103	99	6.24
Zander	No	21	110.15	113	115	119	8.85

Table 5.12 End of KS1 and KS2 ***reading*** *progress*

Name	Disadvantaged Pupils	KS1	KS2 Target	Autumn	Spring reading	Summer	Progress
Damion	Yes	17	104	101	100	108	4.0
Bryan	Yes	13	99	87	85	105	6.0
Zander	No	21	112	114	112	106	-6.0

The tables reveal the different formal assessment points for the children at school. Although Bryan ended the academic year writing just below the age-expected standard (as determined by the Department of Education), he consistently progressed in writing and reading throughout the year. His target was below the age-expected score in the two subjects, but he exceeded his target in them both. Damion and Zander also exceeded their targets, except in the summer term for reading, where Zander missed his target by six points. Between KS1 and KS2, Zander could be classified as a higher achiever as he consistently performed at, or above, the age-expected level, while the other two boys performed below. From KS1 to KS2, Bryan's formal literacy performances were below the age-expected scores in reading, but he progressed to the age-expected standard in the summer term of KS2. Bryan's average was below the age expectation at both ends of the key stages while Damion's performance remained at the expected level. The formal school literacy assessment assesses not the boys' perceptual or ideological understanding but their structural understanding of literacy.

The lack of ideological competence in assessing the boys leads to questions about separating the boys' cultural literacy practices and the schools' expectations and experiences. Damion's cultural experiences outside of school are not connected with his in-school literacy, as the data below demonstrates. Critical literacy often

tilts teachers towards helping students see and interact with the social world by seeing the text as it can be read and deconstructed (Wargo, 2019) and how meaning is explored; evidence of this cannot be assessed. This section examines the boys' cultural experiences and how the school values their literacy practice through the system used to measure the boys' progress and outcomes. The writing data for the three boys offers information about their writing progress and highlights how the school values their writing skills.

The tables used to assess writing by the school reinforce that the school evaluates literacy from a structural perspective. The structural perspective involves awareness of conventions and how they produce meaning (Serafini, 2010, p. 89). There is an emphasis on the significance of grammar, syntax and the overall structuring of sentences to produce meaning. The writing skills the boys are expected to develop are listed in the tables, which show that that they were assessed on five writing tasks during the academic year, aimed at achieving eight writing skills. Their 'attitude to learning' (as viewed by their teacher) was also recorded and colour-coded on the table, where green means 'outstanding attitude', amber means 'reliable attitude' and red means 'minimal involvement as graded by the school'.

5.3.1 Zander's in-school writing data

Table 5.13 Zander's in-school writing assessment

End of Key stage 2 Moderation	**Working at expected or greater depth in writing**					
Characteristic of learner: Green — Outstanding = Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner). Amber — Reliable = A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). Red – Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner).	Zander	Date: Autumn 2018–Summer 2019				
	Tasks					Attitude
The pupil can:	1	2	3	4	5	
Writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read as a model.	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Exercise and assure levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately, when necessary, use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (conjunctions, adverbials, pronouns, paragraphs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Use verbs and tenses accurately and correctly throughout writing.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table 5.3 shows that the school judged Zander as working at the age-expected level in writing or above, according to National Curriculum standards. From the five assessment tasks, his writing consistently shows improvement, demonstrating the skills of a secure writer from the third assessment task. Of the individual writing skills listed on the table, he has mastered almost all. His teacher grades his attitude to writing as 'green, with one amber', meaning Zander is an independent learner whose work is outstanding. He is positively and actively engaged in the learning and is well prepared for the learning. The teacher's comments (indicated by the colours as mentioned before) imply that his home literacy practices are

closely related to his school literacy practices, preparing him for school literacy. Rosenberg *et al*. (2013) state that writing is rooted in a system of joint activity, and Tomasello (2003) and Nelson (2007) agree that writing acquisition is dependent not only on the child but also on cultural partners (peers and adults) who provide the learning experiences, tools and activities for participation – therefore, previous experience is essential in children's learning. Yet the school's progress table does not consider Zander's previous experiences, cultural partners or any ideological aspects of literacy.

5.3.2 Damion's in-school writing data

Table 5.14 Damion's in-school writing assessment

End of Key stage 2 Moderation	**Working at expected or greater depth in writing.**					
Characteristic of learner: Green — Outstanding = Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner). Amber — Reliable = A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). Red — Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner).	Damion	Date: Autumn 2018—Summer 2019				
	Tasks					Attitude
The pupil can:	1	2	3	4	5	
Write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Exercise and assure levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	x	✓	✓	x	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately, when necessary, use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	x	✓	✓	✓	x	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	x	x	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (pronouns, paragraphs)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	
Use verbs and tenses accurately throughout writing.	x	✓	x	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	

In Table 5.4, Damion shows gradual improvement in achieving writing skills. On the first task, he achieved two out of eight skills; by Task 3, he achieved five out of eight skills; by Task 5, he achieved six out of eight. His teacher judged his attitude to be amber, meaning he was becoming a more independent learner, and he demonstrated a reasonable level of preparation and engagement during lessons. He mainly organises his own home literacy practices, the environment in which he

acquires the skills is not competitive, and he is not judged or assessed by someone at home.

Li (2007) defines social capital as the network of social relationships in the family, and between the family and other families or institutions in the community. These three forms of family capital, Li claims, reflect the quality of children's home environments and can be transformed into literacy development and school success. Damion’s parents are not shown to actively organise school literacy practices for him at home, nor are his home literacy practices recognised at school. The involvement of his social and cultural experiences should be considered when preparing his learning resources. His learning could be situated in the context of his cultural practices, as the learner's literacy practices are situated in society, as in community relations (Barton & Hamilton, 1998), rather than residing solely in the individual. Barton & Hamilton (2000) argue that literacy practices are historically situated and have dynamic relationships among themselves, power and social institutions. Rogoff (2003) discusses the activity systems in the social and cultural groups that shape children's lives and enable them to access knowledge in a particular way.

5.3.3 Bryan's in-school writing data

Table 5.15 Bryan's in-school writing assessment

End of Key stage 2 Moderation	**Working at expected or greater depth in writing.**					
Characteristic of learner: Green — Outstanding = Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner). Amber – Reliable = A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming a more independent learner). Red – Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner).	Bryan	Date: Autumn 2018—Summer 2019				
	Tasks					Attitude
The pupil can.:	1	2	3	4	5	
Write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read model.	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	x	x	x	✓	✓	
Exercise and assure levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	x	x	x	x	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately, when necessary, use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	x	✓	✓	✓	x	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	x	x	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (conjunctions, paragraphs).	✓	x	✓	x	✓	
Use verbs and tenses accurately and correctly throughout writing.	x	✓	x	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	

In Bryan's writing assessment, recorded in Table 5.5, he demonstrates difficulties achieving the skills on the first task, yet by Task 5, it appeared as though he had acquired most of the skills. However, looking at the skills independently, Bryan is not working at the age-expected standard. For example, once, in all five assessments, he only achieves the third skill, 'exercising formality'. Bryan reports working independently at home when he is reading for entertainment. His literacy experiences are not directly planned by adults focusing on academic success. His

mother checks and corrects his schoolwork, suggesting he is supported at home, yet the involvement of adults is not directly geared towards academic empowerment but mainly towards building his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). They focus on giving him skills that will help him to navigate the real world. However, the expectation of the school is that he should work independently and scrutinise his own work. Burnett & Merchant (2011) argue that, with critical literacy, the dominant patterns of power and authority are exposed, in contrast to passively reading and taking a text at face value. Hence, the data confirms that Bryan's literacy practices are powerful and valuable in the home setting but not empowering in the school setting.

From the data presented, Bryan and Damion’s school literacy is less potent in school than Zander's. Evidence shows that Zander’s home literacy practices are closely related to his school literacy practices; therefore, he is more successful according to the school’s standards, that is, Zander's home literacy practices are more valuable in school than Damion and Bryan's. The evidence also shows that Bryan and Damion's home literacy practices prepare them for daily living and are not geared for academic success, whereas Zander’s home literacy practices prepare him for school and his future. The following section presents data from the boys’ literacy logs.

5.3.4 Literacy logs

This subsection discusses data from the boys’ literacy logs, giving insight into their literacy practice in school, enabling an understanding of continuities and discontinuities the boys experience across the sites.

Table 5.16 The boys' literacy logs

Tasks	The focus of the task	Damion's Comments	Bryans Comments	Zander's Comments
1	*Comprehension and looking at difficult words.*	*It felt a bit hard.*	*I feel smarter because I learn more words*	*It was not hard, but some questions were confusing.*
2	*The class debated Donald Trump's visit to the UK.*	*I have learnt things about Donald Trump that I did not know before.*	*I feel Donald Trump should not be allowed to enter the country*	*I felt angry because I did not like writing about him.*
3	*Writing a diary from a character's viewpoint*	*It was a bit hard because I did not know what he (character) thought at the time.*	*Boring because I did not understand*	*I felt excited because we get to describe the character in a bad way because of how he was seen by the other characters.*
4	*The class prepared for carol singing*	*It was difficult working with someone else.*	*It felt good but it was difficult*	*Excited to learn a new song*
5	*Physical education: cricket and just dance*		*It felt great because I was good at it. Learning feels good.*	*It was annoying because I like playing cricket.*
6	*A storyteller telling us a story.*	*What surprised me, is that he still did not finish the story. I was proud of his work*	*It was funny. I am proud that he was good at what he was doing.*	*I feel scared because it was a scary story*
7	*The class was learning about ratio and word problems*	*I felt good because I got the learning. I am happy learning something new.*	*The math's bit was easy, but the reading part was hard*	*I did not understand some words, so I found it difficult.*
8	*The class was watching try not to laugh videos*			*I found the children getting hurt funny. I enjoyed the funny show. I enjoyed booing the characters.*
9	*The class was learning about World War Two*	*I feel happy because I have learnt a new thing about WW2.*	*I found women interesting because they helped in the war.*	.

Table 5.6 shows all three boys' tasks and comments from the literacy logs. The blank sections mean that the boys made no comment on the task. Table 5.7 shows only Damion's tasks.

Table 5.17 Comments from Damion's literacy log

Tasks	Focus of the task	Damion's Comments
1	Comprehension and -looking at difficult words.	It felt a bit hard.
2	The class debated Donald Trump's visit to the UK.	I have learnt things about Donald Trump that I did not know before.
3	Writing a diary from a character's viewpoint.	It was a bit hard because I did not know what he (character) thought at the time.
4	The class prepared for carol singing.	It was difficult working with someone else.
5	Physical Education Lesson: cricket and just dance.	
6	A storyteller telling a story.	What surprised me, is that he still did not finish the story. I was proud of his work.
7	The class was learning about ratio and word problems.	I felt good because I got the learning. I am happy learning something new.
8	The class was watching 'Try Not To Laugh Videos'.	
9	The class was learning about World War Two.	I feel happy because I have learnt a new thing about WW2.

Damion's comments on Tasks 1 to 3 suggest that he either found them difficult or learned something new. There is no evidence of any emotional connection with the learning activities, suggesting that the likelihood of learning occurring is minimal. In Task 3, he gives a reason for his lack of engagement, which was not knowing the character. His lack of knowledge meant that the learning experience was not meaningful. He had the opportunity to express his understanding of previous learning or his views about a real-life or fictitious character from his reading, but he could not take advantage of the opportunity due to a lack of foreknowledge of the subject. Ladson-Billings (2022) posits that CRT is a theoretical tool used in education to explain the inequity of achievement in education. One of the tenets of CRT is the 'intercentricity' of race – CRT explains inequalities across races and their intersections (Ladson-Billings, 2022). Task 3 represents a lost opportunity for the school to include Damion's race. The decontextualised skills that he needed to learn could have been wrapped into his cultural literacy experiences, perhaps

including a character related to his race, thus making the task more meaningful and increasing the chances of him succeeding.

In Tasks 7 to 9, he chose to work on his own or seek support independently. Damion struggles to engage in group or whole-class tasks, even though literacy is a social practice (Street, 2013). There is limited evidence in the literacy log of Damion being intrinsically motivated by in-school tasks. His positive comments are generally related to the new information he received; however, it seems that the learning experiences that required him to interact or cooperate with his peers were either difficult for him or he did not comment on the task.

When considering the literacy practices Damion engages in at home, and those of his mother and grandmother, there is a pattern of the family members organising and participating in their literacy practices by themselves. The discourse between Damian, his mother and his grandmother reveals evidence of independent engagement as it relates to school literacy practices. Vygotsky (1978) proposes a close relationship between learning and development and the sociocultural nature of both; that is, learning is embedded in the sociocultural interaction in learning environments. There is no evidence of Damion making sociocultural connections or the teacher providing resources to connect with his out-of-school experiences.

Table 5.18 Comments from Bryan's literacy log

Tasks	The focus of the task	Bryan's Comments
1	Comprehension and looking at difficult words.	I feel smarter because I learn more words.
2	The class debated Donald Trump's visit to the UK.	I feel Donald Trump should not be allowed to enter the country.
3	Writing a diary from a character's viewpoint	Boring because I did not understand
4	The class prepared for carol singing.	It felt good but it was difficult.
5	Physical education: cricket and just dance.	It felt great because I was good at it. Learning feels good.
6	A storyteller telling us a story.	It was funny. I am proud that he was good at what he was doing.
7	The class was learning about ratio and word problems.	The math's bit was easy, but the reading part was hard.
8	The class was watching 'Try Not To Laugh Videos'.	
9	The class was learning about World War Two.	I found women interesting because they helped in the war.

Table 5.8 shows Bryan's comments on his literacy task. For Task 1, Bryan is proud as he learns new words, suggesting that he understands the task and has achieved some success. For him, learning new words enables him to feel competent. In Task 2, he displays intense annoyance at the thought of President Donald Trump visiting the UK. He is willing to offer his opinion, showing that he knows who Donald Trump is and has formed an opinion about him. This confirms that Bryan is engaging with the learning task. On the other hand, Bryan finds Task 3 boring, and does not understand it, suggesting that the learning task is not meaningful to him. CRT in education is used as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges how race and racism impact educational structures, practices and discourses. Bryan's lack of understanding and feelings of boredom suggest that this aspect of the curriculum was not designed to meet his needs. Ultimately, he could not engage, resulting in him failing. Hooks (1994) and Freire (1970; 1973) acknowledge the contradictory nature of education, in which schools often oppress and marginalise while maintaining the potential to emancipate and empower. Here, the school fails to deliver on its liberatory potential and does not empower Bryan to succeed where he might have done.

When examining school literacy practices, one pattern that emerges from Bryan's literacy log is that he enjoys practices involving other people when the task does not involve him working independently. For example, he is enthusiastic about music, where he is learning words to prepare for a carol service. In physical education lessons, he uses the words 'great' and 'good', showing he enjoys the interactive subjects even if he experiences difficulties. His comments show that he is fully engaged in the tasks where he was not working independently. Another example is the storytelling session, where his comment evaluates the storyteller's work. His home literacy practices are mainly interactive as he reads with his parents, participates in functional tasks in the home and in a team sport in the community. When a task involves him working independently, he shows less engagement, even with adult support. Therefore, one can conclude that his home literacy practices influence his school practice as he is less likely to work independently at home unless he views it as entertainment.

Table 5.19 Comments from Zander's literacy log

Tasks	Focus of the task (what the children were doing)	Zander's Comments
1	Comprehension and looked at difficult words.	It was not hard, but some questions were confusing.
2	The class debated Donald Trump's visit to the UK.	I felt angry because I did not like writing about him.
3	Writing a diary from a character's viewpoint.	I felt excited because we get to describe the character in a bad way because of how he was seen by the other characters.
4	The class prepared for carol singing.	Excited to learn a new song.
5	Physical Education lesson: cricket and just dance.	It was annoying because I like playing cricket, but the teacher moved the lesson in-doors and changed it to just dance because of the rain.
6	A storyteller telling a story.	I feel scared because it was a scary story.
7	The class learning about ratio and word problems.	I did not understand some words, so I found it difficult.
8	The class was watching 'Try Not To Laugh Videos'.	I found the children getting hurt funny. I enjoyed the funny show. I enjoyed booing the characters.
9	The class was e learning about World War Two.	.

Zander comments on his excitement about learning a new song, suggesting he is engaged in the learning process. He also shares the annoyance he experiences

not participating in a cricket lesson out-doors and his excitement about being involved in the storytelling session. His parents organise sporting activities for him outside of school, so he is accustomed to engaging in physical education on a playing field; consequently, participating in physical education in a classroom was annoying. For the storytelling session, Zander comments on the feelings the story evoked in him instead of the storyteller, showing that he is internalising the information (Vygotsky, 1978).

In the last three tasks, Zander shares his emotions and feelings about ratio-word problems in Maths and watching ‘Try Not to Laugh’ videos. He appears to have been fully engaged in the tasks expected. In Task 7, Zander, presumably, finds it difficult because of unfamiliar words; however, he thinks the videos are funny and shows his involvement by booing the characters. Zander's comments focus on his emotions and reveal that he had to laugh. Zander's response is in line with the idea shared by Wargo (2019) that critical literacy allows students to interact with the social world by seeing the text as it can be read and deconstructed. The next subsection shows data related to school literacy practices from the boys' interviews.

5.3.4.1 Damion on his in-school literacy

When Damion was asked about the literacy he participates in at school, he chose to comment on writing and a reading activity. For the writing activity, he wrote a letter to the Prime Minister. His letter contained issues he cared about, but he was not motivated to write. He reported as follows:

> *At school, we wrote a letter to the Prime Minister about what was happening worldwide. She (Theresa May) will not see the letter, but it is true because there is a lack of police, several people are homeless, and there is much pollution in the world.*

Damion reveals that he does not believe in the authenticity of the school writing task, feeling that his letter would not make a difference because the Prime Minister would not see it. This comment shows a lack of empowerment regarding school literacy (Purcell-Gates, 2010). In writing, he has an opinion and wants to share it; it appears he is not familiar with the experience of others valuing his opinion. Purcell-

Gates (2010) posit that some literacies provide access to power and material well-being, while others are marked as substandard and deficient. It is possible to conclude that Damion's literacy practices at home do not provide access to power, nor are they valued in the school context; instead, they are marked as substandard.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of him being empowered to take on a creative subject or reflect critically on a task to make a difference. According to Freire, if learning to read and write constitutes an act of knowing, the learner must first assume the role of the creative subject (Freire, 1972, p. 29). Damion's comments do not reflect that he had the freedom to be creative in his writing at school. There is little evidence of Damion's cultural literacy practices being integrated with his school literacy practices. Hence, there is a deficiency in his social capital.

Damion exposes his literacy experience in school:

> *I read informational texts, class novels,* A Christmas Carol *and* Stormbreaker. *At the start, I did not get what was happening in the* Stormbreaker, *but after listening to the story, I got it.* Christmas Carol*, I did not get it. It was a bit boring. I feel in the middle of school reading because I like reading books, but it puts me off […] when it is a bit boring.*

Damion mentions reading information books and set novels and talks about his struggles with the novels. He reports that though listening to *Stormbreaker* being read aloud gave him a better understanding of the book, it did not help with *A Christmas Carol*, which he still found inaccessible. The comment signals Damion's struggles with reading books his peers read. *Stormbreaker* is set in England, including London; the book's setting, time and language are relatively familiar to Damion so he can, at least, understand the book when he listens to the story. In addition, the main character is a young teenage boy, presented as a hero, who fearlessly explores adventurous activities so Damion can relate to the gender roles, the character's youthfulness, and the sense of adventure to develop an understanding of the text.

Conversely, Damion struggles with *A Christmas Carol*'s setting, language and plot. The main character in this book is an old White man experiencing feelings of regret

about how he has lived his life, doing good or evil. These themes and plots reflect older adults grappling with issues of generativity versus despair (Erikson, 1964). Possibly, Damion does not feel represented, nor can he make any cultural or social connections with the context of this book. He has difficulties understanding both books when reading independently, submitting that this lack of understanding makes him describe the books as boring. He judges himself as being 'in the middle' of his school literacy; the school's data also describes him as a middle achiever. Damion works with the support staff or his teacher in reading and writing contexts to develop meaning or produce age-appropriate outcomes.

5.3.4.2 Bryan on his in-school literacy

In his interview Bryan comments on reading and writing literacy events. In reading, he talks about participating in reading comprehension text and speed-reading:

> *I did comprehension today, and I got to compare Scrooge in the book to Scrooge in the movie. Sometimes, I needed help a bit. However, I feel good about it.*
>
> *I do not like comprehension because it can be so boring. I like speed reading because it is six questions, and they can be easy. Sometimes, you can know the different meanings of the word.*

Through these comments, Bryan explains some of his reading experiences in school. He knows his areas of strength and where he needs help and implies that he gets in-class support from the class teacher or the support staff. He does not like comprehension and finds it 'boring', implying he participates only because it is required of him. Regarding speed reading (daily reading practice, each child reads for two minutes and answers six questions about the text), he considers this easy because of the number of questions he was required to answer. He also comments on the benefits he receives from speed reading, signalling that he is able to work independently on the speed-read task, whereas he needs support with comprehension.

Bryan explains his writing tasks in school:

> *I write spellings, some worksheets and our concept project. It is a project about me. I like it because I am talking about myself, making me feel good.*

Bryan does not comment on his feelings related to the writing task of spellings and worksheets; however, the concept project is significant to him. He mentions that it was a project about himself, and he liked it, implying that he felt represented in the learning and felt good. Feeling good about himself enabled him to engage in the learning process willingly as he enjoys writing about himself. His approach to the concept project confirms Moll *et al*.'s (1992) point about the three fundamental ways knowledge can be accessed. First, it is through involvement and identification with the social environment; second, it is transmitted and communicated to the child within the context; third, the goals and systems are previously known to the child. This suggests that if the learning is presented in a meaningful way, where the child can interact and engage, they will succeed.

5.3.4.3 Zander on his in-school literacy

Zander's interview revealed:

> *We read books such as* A Christmas Carol*,* Harry Potter*,* Boys in the Girl's Bathroom *and many others. We also check our work, which involves reading.*
>
> *We write letters, stories, book reviews and many other things. Literacy at school is not hard; it is medium. However, the literacy I do at home is much harder.*

Here, he highlights books he has read at school and emphasises that this is not the complete list, demonstrating that he engages in various literacy events where he uses his reading skills for pleasure, which he does not find challenging. He refers to the books by their titles, pointing to the whole book and not just a reading task like 'comprehension' or to a character (for example, Scrooge). This reference signals that he understands the books, their dynamics and the author's messages. Nelson (1996) and Tomasello (2003) suggest that the child's experience is influenced by those who provide verbal and nonverbal interactional opportunities. Zander's home literacy practices show that his parents have created a reading environment at home that supports him to succeed at school. He does not work with adult support when reading at school, nor does he mention needing help.

Instead, Zander refers to using reading skills to check his work, demonstrating his understanding of the different purposes of reading.

Equally, his comment on writing shows the range of writing opportunities he experiences at school. He appears to be very confident with his work at school; he reveals that he can manage the work independently. He describes the whole writing task instead of the smaller tasks that lead to the outcomes. For example, he describes writing letters, stories or book reviews instead of saying ‘sentences’, ‘spelling’ or ‘writing paragraphs’ without meaning. He views his task in terms of the bigger picture, and he knows what the outcome of the writing task should be. This knowledge indicates that Zander is an active learner who takes responsibility for his learning and participates in the writing task to complete the activity. In addition, Zander is familiar with stories and the structures of stories at home. Zander mentions that his home literacy is more challenging than his school literacy.

This section presents data on the literacy practices the boys experience in school. It covers formal in-school data and the boys' views through their literacy logs and interviews. The next section presents data on the relationship between the boys’ literacy practices and their identities.

5.4 Data on the interaction between identity and literacy practices

Here, data related to the boys' identities are presented. The first subsection covers the boys’ identities outside of school and the second explores them inside school. The concept of identity is discussed in Chapter 2 regarding how the boys perceive themselves and how ‘significant others’ perceive them. Cook (2020) posits that our identity is mainly performative because we consciously choose observable behaviours, traits or language that align with our fundamental definition. Phal & Rowsell (2005) consider identity to be the most important ingredient in teaching and learning literacy, and they maintain that we use language to express and construct an identity for ourselves within the different speech communities we enter and exit; therefore, how the boys perceive themselves is expressed in their language.

5.4.1 The boy’s out-of-school identities

This subsection presents data on how the boys perceive themselves at home, within their families and in their wider, out-of-school communities. Following, is a series of figures illustrating the multiple factors that make up each of the boys’ identities. They show the individual at the centre of a ring, which is populated with labels, each representing a statement made in interview or blog that reveals an aspect of the boys' identity.

Bradley (1996) explains that the individual is in a state of social conflict and is not settled in one identity, suggesting the boys have different identities for the different groups in which they interact. Hence, the identity displayed in the out-of-school context may be different from that displayed in school. Cultural practices can determine the social groups in which the individuals live or interact (Wallace, 2016).

5.4.1.1 Damion’s identity out of school

Figure 5.1 represents Damion's out-of-school identity. Damion presents as a leader who is self-sufficient and self-confident and who skilfully connects home and school literacy practices. His positive manner is evident in both home and community settings, shown by constructive interactions with his mother and sisters, as well as in instances where he engages independently. Hall (1990) examines identity within the cultural context and suggests that cultural identities are connected to the future and the past at the same time. He posits this as ‘becoming’ and ‘being’. Damion is living and interacting with the cultural resources, while at the same time, preparing for his future.

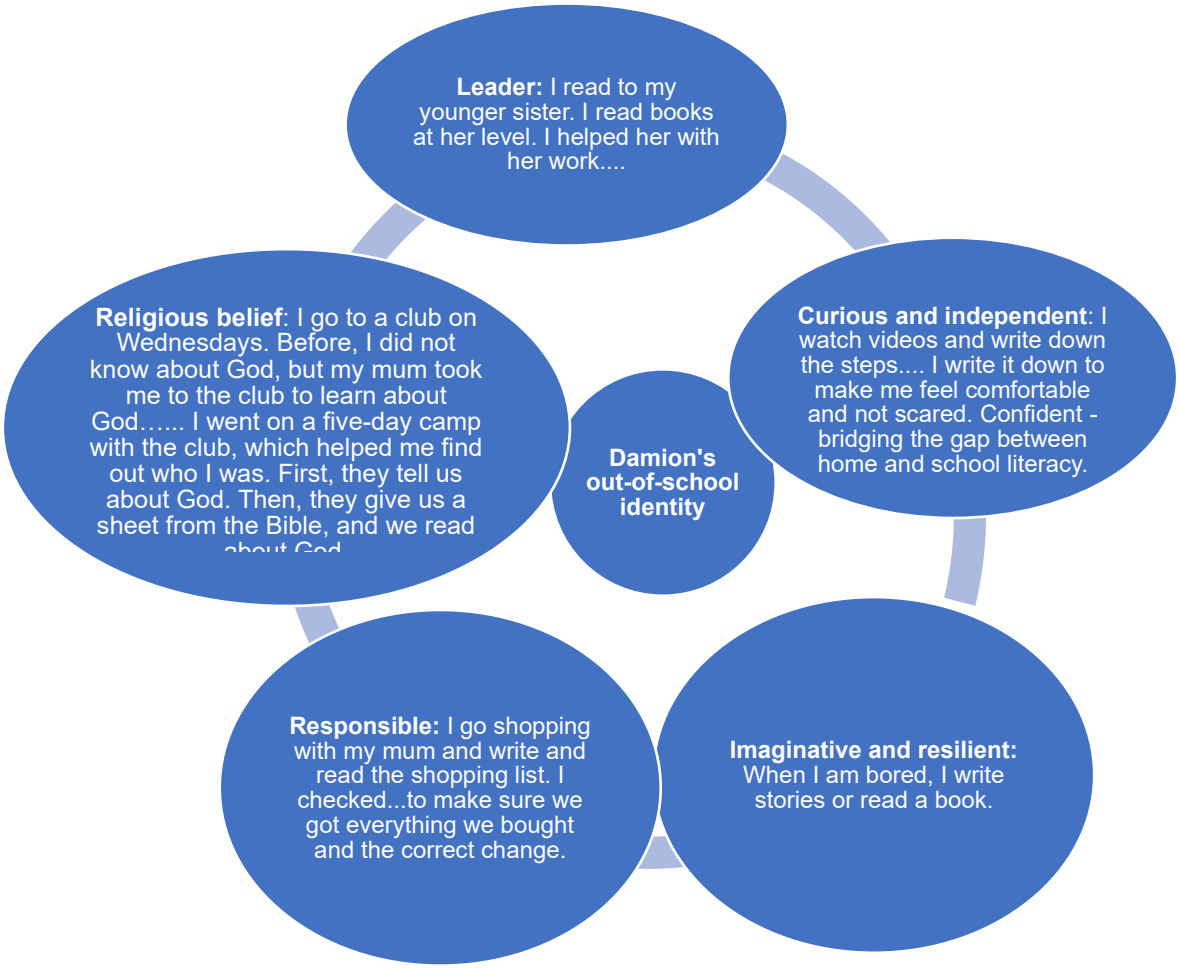

Figure 5.1 Data representing Damion's cultural identity out of school.

Damion hints at aspects of his cultural identity through his interactions with the cultural practices. This links with Stryker's (2001) assertion that societal forces are instrumental in shaping the self and influencing social behaviours. Figure 5.1 portrays Damion as a leader, notably evident when he proactively supports his sister's educational needs, assuming an adult role in the absence of his mother, thereby showcasing maturity and responsibility.

Furthermore, Damion's sense of responsibility extends to active participation in family practices, such as assisting his mother with the shopping, where his checking benefits the entire household. This responsibility is complemented by Damion's curiosity and concerns, demonstrated in his self-directed quest for information on medical procedures. Independently exploring online platforms like You Tube, he not only seeks necessary information but also devises coping

strategies to alleviate his fears; for example, ‘I write the steps down’ (referring to the steps involved in taking his tonsils out). When he did this, he was independently preparing himself for the medical procedure.

Damion's cognitive competence and remarkable resilience shine through his ability to generate personal entertainment during moments of boredom. His imaginative and self-directed literacy practices at home involve the creation of original stories and engagement in reading activities:

> *When I am bored, I write stories or read a book.*

Additionally, he underscores the influence of his religious belief on his identity:

> *I go to a club on Wednesdays. Before, I did not know about God, but my mum took me to the club to learn about God…... I went on a five-day camp with the club, which helped me find out who I was. First, they tell us about God. Then, they give us a sheet from the Bible, and we read about God.*

These comments expose the influence of a religious worldview on his identity, which is directly linked to a social group in which he participates every week. Damion's account gives insight into his out-of-school literacy practices for religious purposes, introduced to him by his mother. He comments on the club's impact on his knowledge about God and discloses the value of this activity for him. His comment about finding out who he was suggests that he was internalising the information that impacted him.

This event may be unrecognised, actively discouraged or simply not appreciated by the school as it relates to the contextual and ideological condition and his response. This merits attention because he connects with the text from an ideological level (Serafini, 2010, p. 89), which produces meaning for him and is linked to his discovering his identity: ‘It helped me to find out who I was’. This illustrates how though Damion responds richly and maturely to a text at an ideological level outside of school, the school – with its focus on the structural level of texts –has, effectively, excluded his cultural identity.

Within the home context, Damion seamlessly connects school literacy practices, evidencing an integration of formal education into his family context. This combination of school literacy practices within the home underscores Damion's

navigation of the intersections between school literacy practices and his lived experiences, revealing his cultural identity.

5.4.1.2 Bryan's identity out of school

Figure 5.2 shows statements that Bryan made about his home literacy practices. These statements give an insight into how he interacts at home and enable a conclusion to be drawn about his identity in the home context. From the statements, one can see that Bryan often interacts with his parents and community group as he engages in social and cultural practices. In some of the cultural practices, he takes part independently, and in others, he is supported. Therefore, Bryan is presented in the home setting as a confident and nurtured boy who utilises his community resources when needed, yet at the same time, is willing to request support if necessary.

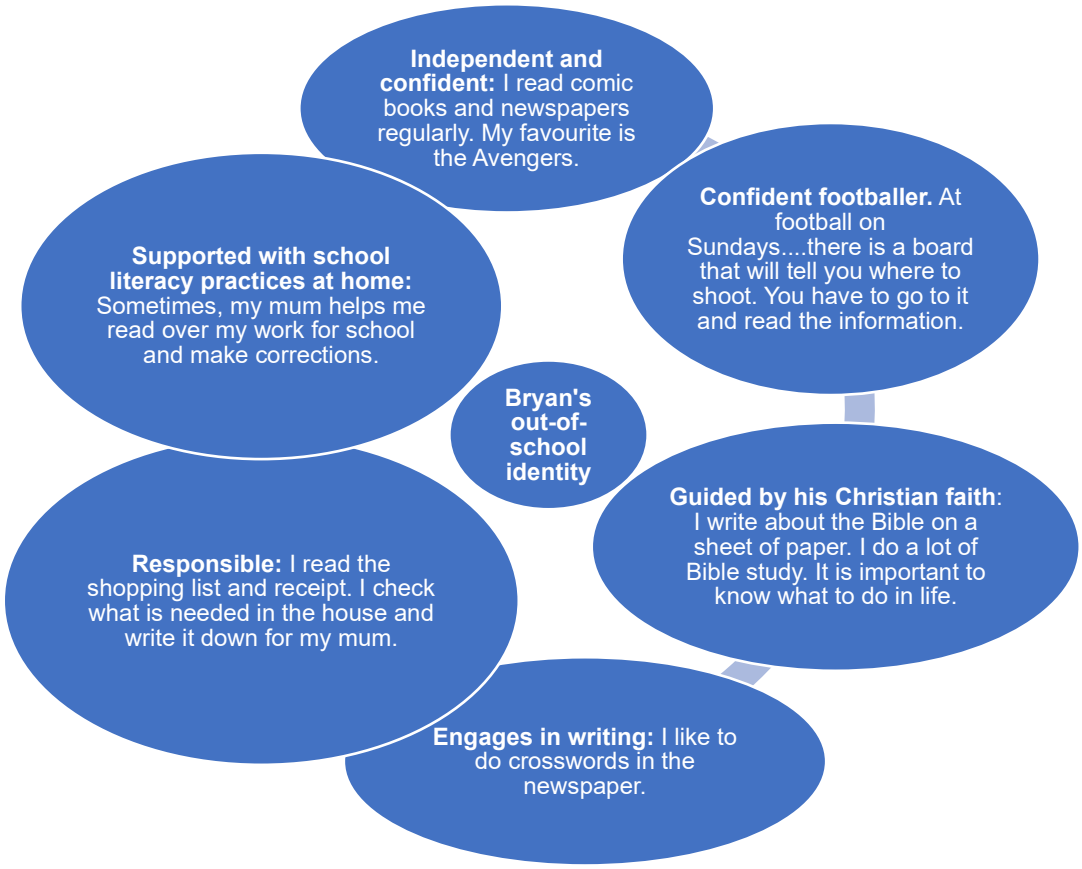

Figure 5.2 Data representing Bryan's cultural identity out of school

Bryan's identity is articulated through his engagement in cultural practices outside of the school context, as reflected in his self-descriptions. He is portrayed as confident and independent yet supported and nurtured.

His confidence is shown in his reading. Here, he is dedicating time each week to enjoy his favourite comic and peruse newspapers; he has chosen these texts and seems to enjoy engaging with them at home, for example, he displays a preference for one genre by stating, ‘My favourite is the Avengers’. Although these reading events are primarily for pleasure, it is key that they are undertaken independently.

Bryan also extends his reading proficiency to practical tasks, such as reviewing shopping receipts and reading recipes for cooking. Demonstrating a sense of responsibility and care for his family, Bryan is actively contributing to household tasks. He states, ‘I read the shopping list and receipt. I check what is needed in the house and write it down for my mum’. His role in writing the shopping list also suggests a level of independence in writing skills. While he occasionally engages

with crosswords and puzzles in newspapers, Bryan's writing activities at home are purpose-driven, demonstrating confidence and a quest for meaning.

In contrast, Bryan exhibits a lack of confidence in school literacy practices at home; he confesses, ‘Sometimes my mum helps me to read over my work for school and make corrections’. Here, he is evidently seeking support for tasks and relying on his mother for assistance and to check his work.

Additionally, he mentions, ‘I do lots of Bible study. It is important to know what to do in life’. This comment reveals his regular reading of the Bible, which underscores his reliance on his faith and the guiding principles that shape his life, constituting a family literacy practice shared with both parents. This shows that his identity is also influenced by biblical principles.

In football, Bryan shines with confidence and competence. He enjoys the game due to his proficiency, but he also confidently reads and understands the club’s notices on positions, contributing to his effectiveness on the field: ‘At football on Sundays....there is a board that will tell you where to shoot. You have to go to it and read the information’. This confidence in reading football positions aligns with his prowess as a skilled footballer, reflecting his comfort and proficiency in this context.

5.4.1.3 Zander’s identity out of school

The following comments by Zander provide a glimpse into facets of his identity within the home environment as he engages with cultural practices. These interactions shed light on the dynamics within his family, offering valuable insights that contribute to the conclusions drawn about the construction of his identity in the home context. These statements offer a window into Zander's typical mode of interaction at home, indicating that he generally operates independently within the familial setting. The literacy events orchestrated by his parents serve as a framework within which Zander is expected to fulfil assigned tasks. Zander actively shares his opinions and feelings regarding these tasks, thereby unveiling key aspects of his identity. Figure 5.3 captures excerpts from Zander's interview, which provides some insight and understanding into the construction of his identity within the home setting.

Figure 5.3 Data representing Zander's cultural identity out of school

Zander presents as self-confident as he displays his reading skills, deriving enjoyment from books and using them for relaxation and entertainment. His confidence is evident when he states what he reads and why he reads them; 'At home, I read the *Diary of the Wimpy Kid, Harry Potter*… I read for relaxation and entertainment'. Even though he is confident, he demonstrates that he is also willing to submit and conform to his parents' requests, showing respect for them: 'My dad wants me to read for information. My dad gives us wildlife magazine stuff'. Despite adhering to his parents' expectations, tension arises due to conflicting desires between Zander and his parents. He states, 'I have a PS4 and do not get to play on it because of the extra work. Home literacy is hard as my parents are strict'. This tension becomes evident when he articulates a preference for playing games

while his parents insist on additional academic work, a situation that creates a strain on Zander as he finds no pleasure in the home academic tasks. Zander articulates challenges in his home literacy experiences, attributing them to the strictness of his parents and expressing a lack of enjoyment in the home literacy practices organised by his parents.

Zander's exposure to diverse reading materials is organised by his parents, reflecting their active role in shaping his literary landscape and, potentially, his identity, though he acknowledges that these choices are parental decisions rather than personal preferences – ‘My mum and dad prepare me for the 11-plus. I do not enjoy this as I spend four hours on my own doing these tasks’. Zander identifies as a sociable individual, emphasising his preference for interactions with others over solitary engagement in tasks organised by his parents. Despite tensions over the decontextualised literacy practices organised by his parents, he actively embraces the cultural heritage practices presented by his parents and enjoys engaging with the 100 Black Men Club: ‘I attend 100 Black Men Club. They teach us about our culture…. It is really important to me’. Zander underscores the significance of acquiring knowledge about Black culture and historical events, demonstrating a personal commitment to understanding and preserving his cultural identity. The following subsection focusses on the boys' identities in school.

5.4.2 The boys’ in-school identities

A negative stereotype of academic achievement for young people with Caribbean heritage is often portrayed in the English educational system, among policymakers and the media, as discussed in Chapter 2. Black students are, generally, not exposed to academic resources in school that are related to their cultural experiences, and they are left to construct their identities from resources and experiences that view Black cultural identity from a deficit perspective (Adam, 2005). CRT scholars (Delgado & Bernal,1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Gillborn *et al*., 2012; Rollock *et al*., 2015) have exposed the deficit in research and data that may be limited by its omission of the voices of Black people. Daily, directly or indirectly, Black students struggle with the negative stereotypes of Black cultural identities, and their personal cultural identities can be overlooked by the school. The following figures illustrate the statements that reveal the boys’ in-school

identities. These statements are taken from the interviews the boys gave about their school experiences.

5.4.2.1 Damion's identity in school

In school, Damion's family falls under the category of 'socioeconomic disadvantage' based on school indicators. Damion is characterised by his friends as kind and quiet, engaging in low-key activities during playtime. Figure 5.4 shows Damion's comments that reveal some aspects of his identity.

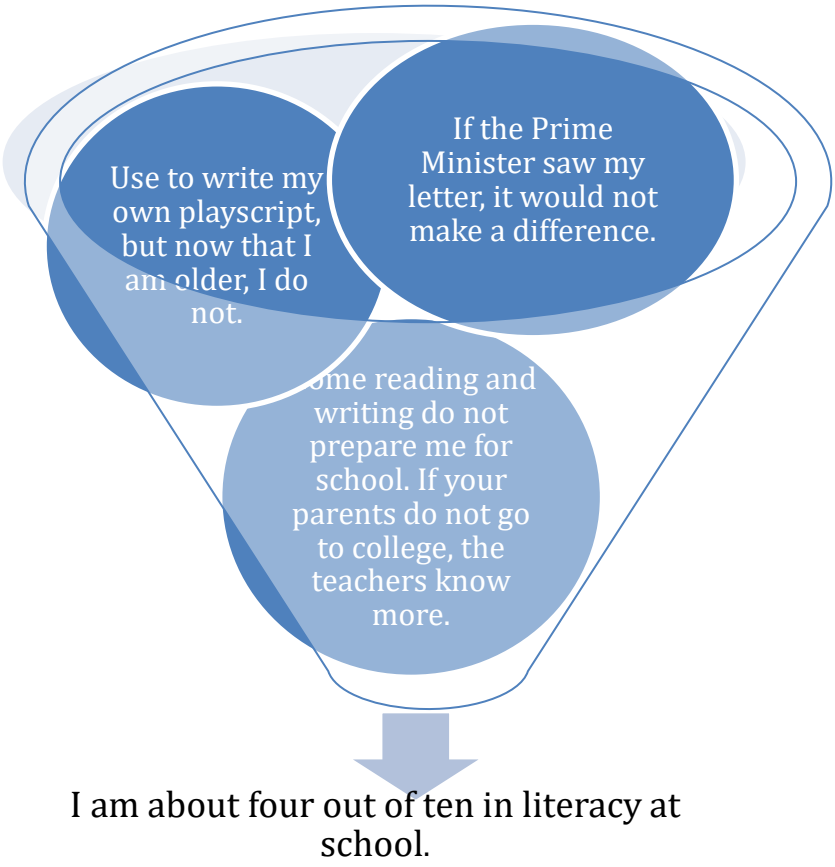

Figure 5.4 Damion's comments related to identity in school

Damion reveals that he would grade himself below average as it relates to school literacy ('I am about four out of ten in literacy at school'). This low self-image is confirmed when he shares his views on the difference between his home and

school literacy practices. He points out that ‘Home reading and writing do not prepare me for school. If your parents do not go to college, the teachers know more.’; affirming that there is no value ascribed to the cultural (home) literacy practices within the school context. In this comment, Damion also demonstrates a greater confidence in his teacher’s ability to support him to succeed in school than his parents. This confidence in his teacher is due to the teacher’s educational qualifications, which says to Damion that the teacher has the skills and the abilities to support him to succeed in school.

Damion highlights other areas where he lacks confidence; for example, he states, ‘If the Prime Minister saw my letter, it would not make a difference’. Writing the letter was intended to give him the opportunity to express his own opinion. This comment shows that he does not believe his opinion is seen as valuable or that what he has to say could make a difference. In addition, where he may have attempted to bring home-based cultural experiences into school when he was younger, this was not received in a way that encouraged him, nor was it promoted in school. This demonstrates a shade of confidence that existed but is no longer there. He states, ‘I used to write my own playscripts, but not now that I am older, I do not’. The confidence in his own ability to write his own playscripts may not have been encouraged, or now that he is getting older, it is no longer accepted among his peers. These comments contribute to the construction of Damion's in-school identity, and school literacy practices play a significant role in social identity.

5.4.2.2 Bryan’s identity in school

Bryan is characterised by his friends as kind, willing to help and energetic. He enjoys playing football during school lunch breaks. He is classified under school indicators as coming from a disadvantaged background. Bryan started Year 6 with a reading and writing lag of at least two years behind age expectations. Figure 5.5 shows Bryan's comments that disclose some aspects of his in-school identity based on his perception.

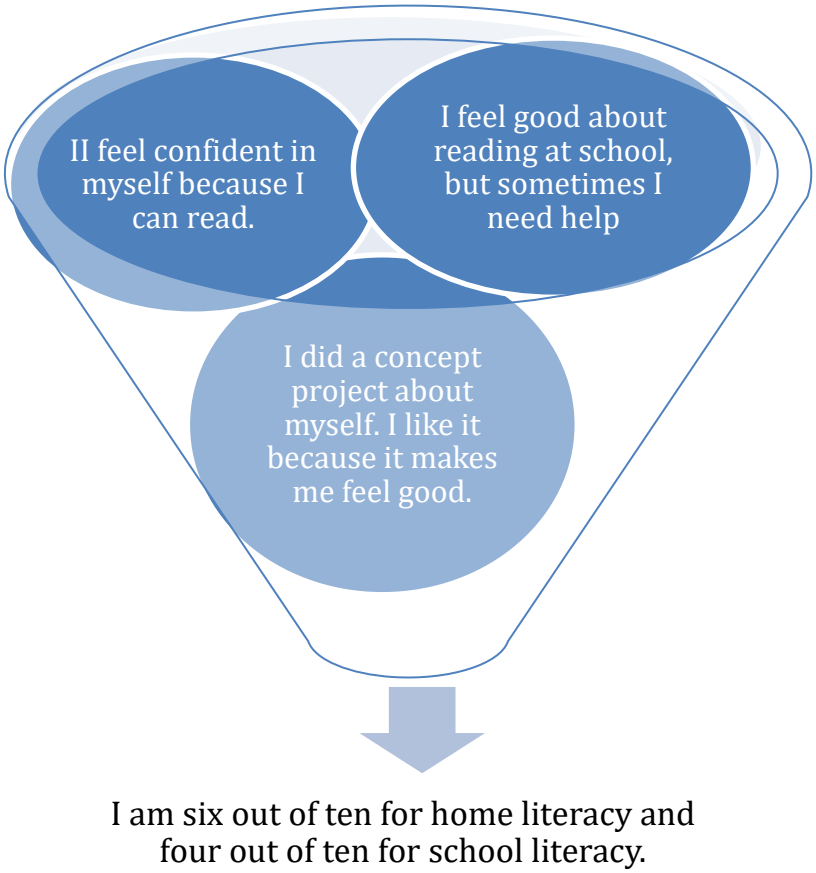

Figure 5.5 Bryan's comments related to identity

Bryan reveals a very positive self-concept as it relates to his in-school identity. However, he also reveals that he considers himself below average when comparing himself with his peers. This self-identity exposes some level of conflict within its constituent parts, or the dynamic nature of identities as described by Bradley (1996). Bryan states, 'I am a six out of ten for home literacy practices and a four out of ten for school literacy practices'. Here, it shows that Bryan is very confident at home but less confident at school. First, he demonstrates confidence as a reader. He states, 'I feel confident in myself because I can read'. Reading gives him confidence, and he is also confident when he is reading at home.

Second, writing about himself allows him to feel connected to school literacy practices. He says, 'I did a concept project about myself. I liked it because it makes

me feel good'. This good feeling stems from the fact that he is writing about himself. One can also infer that he was able to write independently, and he was engaged because the task was about himself, promoting a level of confidence in his work. Sackmann (2015) underscores this by stating that a positive social identity improves self-esteem. This task had meaning for him, and it is what Street (2015) would describe as literacy from an ideological perspective.

Third, Bryan demonstrates his confidence in school literacy practices but, at the same time, his need for support. He mentions, 'I feel good about reading at school, but sometimes I need help'. Here, Bryan is admitting that he struggles with reading at school and needs help. This reader's identity is how the school's data classifies him. He is using social representation to position himself in school to make sense of it. Duveen and Lloyd (1990) posit that social representations are components of social identity as people attach meaning and proximity to an object. Therefore, Bryan has different ways of positioning himself in the symbolic field of culture (school) to help structure his social world to position himself within it.

5.4.2.3 Zander's identity in school

At school, Zander is recognised as a robust and sociable student as he actively participates in sports – particularly football – during lunch breaks and maintains a generally positive manner. His friends view him as academically able and seek support from him with their schoolwork. The school classifies him as working in greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Figure 5.6 shows Zander's comments displaying aspects of his in-school identity based on his views.

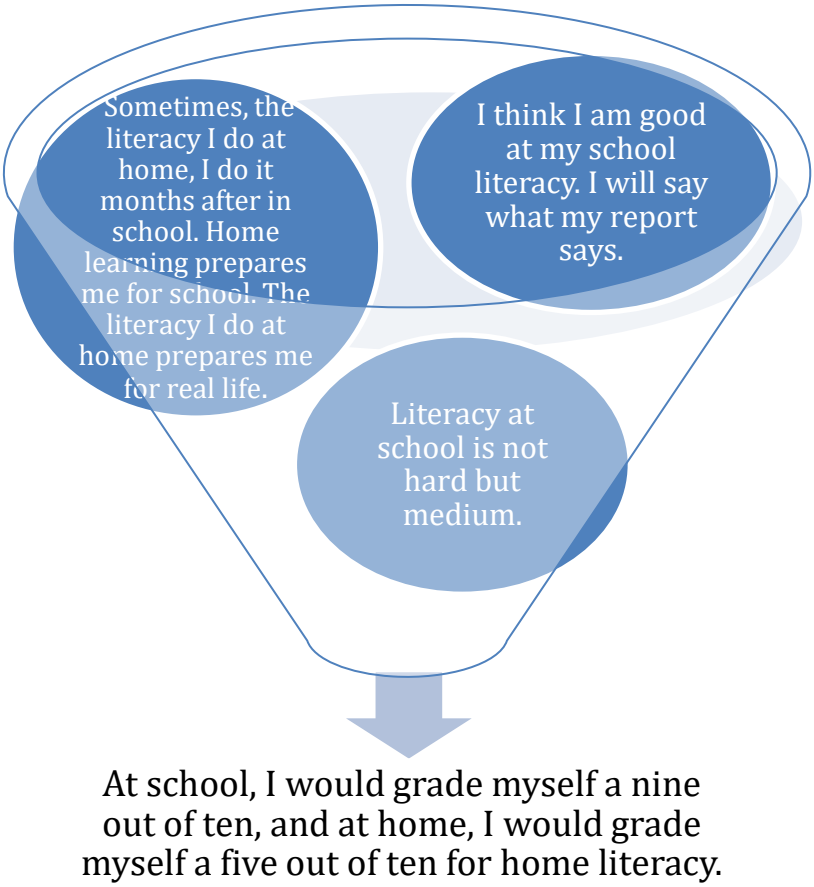

Figure 5.6 Zander's comments related to identity

Zander displays a positive self-image about school literacy practices. The positive self-concept is revealed when he grades himself as a nine out of ten for school literacy and a six out of ten for home literacy. In both contexts, he grades himself as above average, but school is well above average. This comment suggests that the feedback he receives in school is positive, and he perceives himself as doing well. This positive image is in line with the positive image his school's data reflects and his friends' perception of him.

Zander mentions the ease with which he does literacy at school. He finds it at a medium level, indicating no challenge. He states, ‘Literacy at school is not hard but medium’. This comment also suggests that he is comfortable and working below his potential. He contributes, ‘Sometimes the literacy I do at home, I do months

after in school. Home learning prepares me for school'. Here, he is suggesting that his parents are preparing him for real life, and school is not. School is sometimes a repeat of what he has done at home months ago. Despite the lack of challenge in school, Zander is experiencing a positive social identity, which contributes to improving his self-esteem (Sackmann, 2015). Zander confirms the positive social identity that the school helps to develop when he says, 'I think I am good at my school literacy. I will say what my report says'. This reference to his school report points to the influence it has had on his identity.

5.4.2.4 Summing up

Regarding social identity in school literacy practices, the boys were asked to rate their in-school literacy on a numerical scale, with one being the lowest and ten being the highest. Damion and Bryan rate their school literacy as four out of ten, and Zander rates it as nine out of ten. These scores suggest that the boys' identity with school literacy practices varies, even though they are in the same class and have the same teacher. Damion and Bryan rate themselves below average, while Zander rates himself above average. Their ratings regarding how they view their in-school performance, their understanding of the task and the feedback that is given to them by their teacher reinforce their school identity. Based on Sackmann's (2015) argument, Damion and Bryan's experience of negative social identity in school would diminish their self-esteem.

This section focused on identity and literacy practices and how the boys see themselves at school in relation to their literacy practices. As noted by Jenkins (1996), identity construction is related to how external others categorise people and how individuals categorise themselves. Hence, the boys' social identities are linked to the perception of others and the perception of self. The following section concludes the chapter with a focus on the boys' literacy worlds.

5.5 Summary and conclusion

The data presented here provides an insight into the literacy practices of three Jamaican-heritage boys across their literacy worlds. It shows the boys interacting in different cultural settings: in-school and out-of-school. The data are limited and do not cover entirely the personal narratives that developed as the research

progressed. Nevertheless, the development and the scripting of the boys' experiences and reflections show literacy practices moving through spaces and time, as literacy is used for everyday living. Both contexts impact the construction of their identity and their formal literacy development directly or indirectly.

The school describes Zander as a higher achiever from a non-disadvantaged background. The data show that his family actively invests in school literacy at home. As a result, Zander achieves more than his peers. His parents organise his time and create literacy situations at home that help him succeed in school. They ensure that he is learning things not offered by the school curriculum so that he can be on par with, or ahead of, his peers.

Damion experiences some literacy practices at home that are like school literacy practices, but he creates the link himself to bridge the home and school literacy practices. The continuation of his school literacy practices at home is not organised by adults. The data presents him as an average achiever from a disadvantaged background and reveals low self-esteem and a lack of enthusiasm regarding school literacy practices. However, in his home setting, he presents as a confident, secure and independent boy who is willing to take on leadership roles – helping his sister with her schoolwork and responsibilities, helping with the shopping or preparing himself for a medical procedure within his family setting. Damion uses his school literacy at home but does not integrate his home-based cultural experiences within the school setting. He is supported by adults at home when engaging in practical activities that are meaningful for social, cultural and spiritual development, which mostly, if not always, include literacy skills. His school literacy experiences are not linked with his out-of-school cultural practices.

The school categorises Bryan as a lower achiever from a disadvantaged background though the data show that his mother offers some support at home with school literacy practices. He is aware of his literacy level at school and requests help, or he is supported in school to achieve age-expected outcomes. He would be described (by the school) as coming from a family that does not invest in his cultural capital. However, Bryan's parents interact with him daily in religious and social practices at home. His cultural practices are not acknowledged, reinforced or encouraged at school.

The data from all three boys show similarities with their parents' literacy practices. Zander's father, growing up, experienced literacy practices that were organised and created by his parents, as does Zander. Damion's mother engaged in school literacy practices that she created independently of adults, just like Damion. Finally, Bryan's father engaged in a mixture of independent engagement and literacy practices organised and supported by adults focused on religious, social and cultural activities, identical to Bryan's current experience.

There is no evidence in the data from Damion and Bryan related to their race or Black identity. Data from Zander mentions literacy practices connected to his Black identity, which his father and grandfather reinforce. All three boys are Black and of Jamaican heritage, making up 10% of the children in the class, and there is no evidence of their cultural experiences being included in their learning experiences to help them make meaningful connections with their learning.

School has a crucial role in creating children's identity through the language and texts used in the classroom. Rogers & Mosley (2006), in their CRT work based on critical discourse analysis, demonstrate how race is silenced and White supremacy- or systemic racism-enforced. Bourdieu (1977) claims that the family and the educational system are the two dominant forces in the construction of the habitus. Thus, the boys participating in this study gain an understanding and perception of themselves from the school and the home. All the school texts referred to by the boys appear to point to the reinforcement of a system and structure of White supremacy and systemic racism, as the ideological content of the books excludes the boys' cultural experience and cultural history or does not represent them culturally.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, CRT emphasises real-life issues by exploring racism as a social phenomenon beyond intentional racist acts. It challenges racist discourses, race and racism and how these affect the bodies, identity and experiences of people of colour (de la Garza & Ono, 2016). Understanding racism at the social, economic, institutional, political and historical levels is essential. Race is historically, politically, socially and economically constructed and manipulated by dominant White groups (Morrison, 1992, p. 63), perpetuating the structural

oppression of non-Whites. The dominance continues and is reinforced by the lack of continuity between cultures at home and the classroom.

This chapter presents data on the boys' cultural literacy practices at home and school and the influence on their formal in-school literacy development. The next chapter comments on the findings concerning the research questions, limitations and conclusions.

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

6.1 Introduction

In this research, I have shown that there are multiple ways to define literacy. For example, our education system in the UK uses a psychological or cognitive approach to teach reading and writing – a perspective that focuses on actively teaching technical literacy skills. Critical literacy, however, takes a socio-political approach that explores the power base on which texts are created and selected. This perspective acknowledges that literacy is historically constructed within specific power relations, examining and deconstructing texts to reveal the embedded bias and discrimination present in the author's presentation of the world (Luke, 2000; Comber & Simpson, 2001; Comber, 2013). A further definition of literacy regards it as a social practice that is rooted in a context – a specific time and location. The New Literacy Studies (NLS) promote this approach (see Chapter 3). This definition of literacy is used in this research as it conceptualises literacy within the real-world context of what people do with reading, writing and text, and why they do what they do (Perry, 2012, p. 54). The perception of literacy as a social practice shows the relationship between literacy and everyday experiences.

I understand the term 'identity' to be how individuals view themselves and how ‘significant others’ view them. I have shown how pupils' identities are constructed (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, I have demonstrated the complexity surrounding the identity of the Jamaican-heritage boys. I have also examined cultural literacy practices and the context and space in which literacy takes place both in and out of school. The theoretical framework underpinning this research is influenced by Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (1977) and critical race theory (CRT). Bourdieu argues that the family and the educational system are the two dominant forces in constructing the habitus; and though the environment and the peer group play a vital part, their roles are not as influential as the family and the education system. This suggests that habitus is the ‘manner of being’ – how an individual acts, thinks and behaves. Hence, practices in the home and school are instrumental in shaping children's identities. CRT highlights that racism is a part of UK society and is maintained by social structures (see Chapter 2); therefore, racism is a part of the

three participants' everyday experiences, directly or indirectly. The findings of this study suggest that there are connections between the cultural literacy practices of the Jamaican-heritage boys, their identities and the trajectories of their formal literacy development.

This chapter discusses the findings as they relate to the research questions. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the literacy practices with which Jamaican-heritage boys are engaged in their everyday lives (in school and out of school). The study focuses on the overarching question:

> To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third-generation Jamaican boys influence their identity and formal literacy development?

This question is further divided into two sub-questions:

1) What are the literacy practices with which the Jamaican-heritage boys engage?
2) To what extent do intergenerational differences in literacy practices influence the boys' identity and formal educational literacy development?

The next two sections focus on these two sub-questions in turn.

6.2 What are the literacy practices with which the Jamaican-heritage boys engage?

The findings show that the boys engage in multiple and multimodal literacy practices across various contexts, in school and out of school, to address the diversity within families.

Barjesteh *et al.* (2016) posit that the various home literacy practices can be categorised based on purpose, participants and types of interaction. Interaction types include reading, writing, school-related activities like homework, entertainment, reading game rules, religious activities like reading the Bible, domestic chores such as reading and writing shopping lists and paying bills, and communication by reading and writing letters, notes and postcards.

In addition to the literacy events in which the boys are engaged, the situated context, setting and the process of deriving meaning are vital. There are two general settings in which the boys engage in literacy practices: out-of-school and

in-school. Out of school, the boys are engaged in literacy events by themselves, with their parents and in community groups. In school, there are multiple literacy events situated in a variety of contexts. Through all these literacy events, literacy practices are recognised. In the next sub-section, the findings related to the boys' out-of-school literacy]practices are discussed.

6.2.1 Family literacy

Burgess *et al*. (2002, p. 413) classify and describe home literacy environments under three functional styles, headed ‘limiting’, ‘passive’ and ‘active’. ‘Limiting’ refers to the social class resources available, such as parental education and occupation, as well as parental characteristics that include 'intelligence, language and reading ability, and attitudes towards education'. ‘Passive’ home literacy is 'indirect learning from models' such as seeing a parent reading. An ‘active’ home literacy environment is one where parents engage children in activities aimed at developing language and literacy skills, such as shared reading and rhyming games.

Analysed through Burgess *et al.*’s (2002) framework, the home literacy environments of both Damion and Bryan are ‘limited’ as both children are described as being from a disadvantaged background and their parents are not university-educated. Damion’s mother, Marline, describes a ‘passive’ home literacy environment as she learned indirectly from the literacy practices in her childhood home (see Chapter 5). For example, she recalls her parents reading the newspaper while she and her siblings sat in silence. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Marline has recreated that ‘passive’ environment for her son, Damion. Zander, on the other hand, is from a home literacy environment that is ‘active’, as his parents directly engage him in activities aimed at developing language and literacy skills.

Weigel *et al*. (2005), building on Burgess *et al.’s* (2002) functional styles, focuses on parents, categorising home literacy styles as ‘parental demographics’, ‘parental literacy habits’, ‘parental activities’ and ‘parental reading beliefs’, this last being elaborated as the beliefs and attitudes that parents have about children's language and literacy development. Weigel *et al.* posit that ‘parental beliefs about their role in the development of their children are related to children's literacy and language

outcomes' (2005, p. 2009). Van Steensel (2006) asserts that most ethnic minority families have a child-directed home literacy environment, stating that 'a lot of minority children are frequently exposed to school-related literacy activities in their homes' (p. 375).

This research finds that the participant families engage in three main types of interaction regarding literacy events in the home: 'child-directed', 'integrated' and 'parent-directed'.

6.2.1.1 Child-directed interaction

Child-directed engagement is where the child independently designs the literacy event and chooses the time and place for it without his parents' input. Damion's family displays this type of interaction. Damion and his mother engage in tasks that require literacy skills, but their purpose is not to 'do' literacy (school-related literacy) but to focus on other essential life skills that will equip Damion for the real world and empower him to survive socially and financially – that is, not for academic empowerment. However, this type of engagement, despite its apparent intentions, allows children to demonstrate their in-school learning and apply it to a context that is meaningful to them, thus embedding the learning. Neither Damion, nor his mother have experience of school literacy at home that is adult-led. Both Marline (as a child) and Damion write their own stories to entertain themselves and their families, thus, applying school learning to produce new, original work. I regard these as potentially effective vehicles for measuring progress in school and would recommend further investigation into harnessing this type of out-of-school literacy as a device for improved engagement at school.

Lareau's study of childrearing practices among parents of different social classes and ethnicities posits that class is essential in shaping the 'cultural logics of childrearing' and informing the 'rhythms of family life' (2002, p. 772). Lareau separates classes into three broad categories based on occupation, which encompass 'middle class', 'working class' and 'poor' (receiving public assistance or social services support). Lareau elucidates that the childrearing strategies of the working class and poor parents in her study focus on the 'accomplishment of natural growth'. The parents hold the belief that their children will grow and thrive as long as they provide love, food and safety. The parents in her research do not

focus on developing their children's special talents (2002, pp. 748–9). Lareau & Weinberger (2008) suggest that interacting with children in this manner should not be seen as negative as it gives the children opportunities for unsupervised, unstructured play (p. 120).

The child-directed interaction shows that in Damion's family, there is a difference between the role of the school and the role of the family. The school's role, for them, is to educate and empower pupils for academic success, and the parents' role is to equip the pupils with essential life skills. This reflects my own experience, growing up and teaching in Jamaica. There, it is a widely held attitude that the school and the home have two different responsibilities in the pupil's life, and this is continued in Damion's family. My experience is that Jamaican families trust the school to empower the children for academic success and only engage in supporting the school for fun days (sporting activities and exploration of cultures) or, if needed, to support the discipline of the child in school. The school might invite parents to participate in school activities and the parents willingly support them, but the parents' primary role is to provide their children with love, food, security, family values and cultural practices in the home. Growing up in a single-parent family, with his mother, Marline, working long hours at home, Damion takes charge of situating literacy for himself and creating a literacy situation for his younger sister. He is free to participate, or not, in these activities. The literacy situation is child-motivated and child-directed, meaning it is child-centred, providing opportunities for the child to grow and thrive.

6.2.1.2 Integrated interaction

Integrated interaction occurs when both parents and children are directing literacy activities in the home. That is, the parent is sometimes engaged with the child in literacy activities, and at others, the child has chosen and directed an independent activity. Usually, there is a mutual arrangement embedded in family practices and it is central to building family relationships. The family members can elect to participate or not, for example, bedtime stories, religious activities and oral storytelling. Significant family and cultural values are transmitted in these literacy events. Bryan's family fits into this category. Bryan has the opportunity to read the newspaper or his comic books independently, while at the same time, he reads

regularly and does Bible study with his mother and father (as seen in Chapter 5). Space and time are given to the various literacy events, and family members look forward to and enjoy them. Shared literacy situations are usually motivated by mutual interest but are central to family values. Tony (Bryan's father) describes being engaged in literacy events that his own mother also experienced. He relates how she often engaged her children in reading the Bible and other religious books, reading magazines and oral storytelling. This integrated family interaction is a combination of child-directed and parent-directed activities where the children and parents willingly engage in the literacy activity.

Bourdieu (1990) posits that habitus, which incorporates lived experiences, is handed down over generations. Here, Bryan's family create the space to transmit important family values. Pahl's (2008) study of a Turkish child's meaning-making at home demonstrates how his habitus was transformed across generations in the form of texts fashioned by improvisations and cultural adaptation. During these types of interaction, family traditions are shared and passed down through generations, with parents using the experience to shape their children's lives, thus reinforcing their identity. Bartlett & Holland (2001) portray identity as being about improvisation and fluidity and highlight how an insight into narratives and text-making can uncover the transformation of the habitus across generations. It can be inferred from Bryan’s comments in Chapter 5 that there are routines involved in his literacy practices at home, giving greater insight into the context of the family literacy interactions.

Gee (1996), Rogers (2003), Compton-Lilly (2010) and Compton-Lilly & Greene (2011) each underscore the importance of merging out-of-school literacy practices with in-school literacy practices resulting in culturally rich forms of meaning-making. All these studies examine the rich resources within families that are under-used by policymakers who, instead, define them in negative terms.

6.2.1.3 Parent-directed interaction

In parent-directed interaction, the parents usually take control in designing the literacy event, including its time and setting. The parent-directed interaction is usually goal-orientated with a specific outcome. The parents are the ‘active’ participants, while the child is the ‘passive’ participant as the child has no choice in

the decision-making process, and even what appears to be entertainment is influenced by a parent's choice. Literacy events within a parent-directed literacy culture are focused on improvement, whether it is social, academic, cultural or spiritual, from the parents' viewpoint. Lareau (2002, p. 748) identifies the ‘cultural logic of middle-class parents’ as emphasising the ‘concerted cultivation’ of their children. ‘They enrol their children in numerous age-specific, organised activities that dominate family life and create enormous labour, particularly for mothers. The parents view these activities as transmitting life skills to children’.

Zander's family interaction style can be described as a parent-directed, as they behave just as the middle-class family described by Lareau (2002). Zander has little or no choice in organising his literacy events as they are motivated and orchestrated by his parents. Zander relates how his out-of-school literacy practices involve resources that are created and embedded at home yet are also used and valued in the school context. Zander mentions, in Chapter 5, that his parents are preparing him for the 11-plus examination, and his dad wants him to read about wildlife. Chapter 5 also shows the tension between what Zander wants and what his parents expect from him. The findings reveal that he is granted little time for unsupervised play or to explore his interests; instead, he is enrolled in numerous activities after school, and while he is at home, he is expected to engage in four hours of school learning daily. Zander's experiences echo Lareau’s (2002) findings on the organisation of activities in Black, middle-class families. Zander's parents actively and consciously create literacy events for him; some related and linked to their own cultural lives and others connected to school literacy practices. His parents are not always directly involved in the processes and practices of Zander’s literacy experiences, but they create the majority of his literacy opportunities.

Even when Zander is working on his own, the literacy events he is experiencing have been planned and arranged by his parents, who curate his choices of entertainment and reading material. He discloses that his parents create the time, space and context in which literacy happens, and Zander conforms to these.

Vincent *et al.* (2012) outline the challenges that Black middle-class parents face and the strategies they implement to combat them. One of those challenges is the low expectations of Black children that some White teachers continue to exhibit.

This is a manifestation of unconscious and/or institutionalised racism, involving amongst other issues, the stereotyping of Black parents as lacking in knowledge or education. Zander's parents appear to be aware of the challenges that Black pupils face in the English education system as they implement strategies to support him to succeed in the face of them. First, they prepare him for school literacy long before it is done in school. Zander reports that he sometimes encounters texts at home two months before they are introduced at school. Second, his parents ensure that he is educated about his Black cultural heritage, indicating that his parents do not feel they can rely on the school to educate him on this subject.

Zander's family practices and Lareau's findings appear to reflect Bourdieu's interpretation of the importance of studying the family environment, including the material context, as a way to understand children's differing school experiences. Bourdieu (2004) declares that 'Academic capital is, in fact, the guaranteed product of the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school (the efficiency of which depends on the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from the family)' (p. 23). Lareau (2002) critiques this well-known quotation, emphasising that Bourdieu's focus is on class differentiation, and does not recognise differentiation by race. Lareau (2002) is supported by CRT scholars, Yosso (2005) and Rollock (2007) in his argument that Bourdieu's notion of 'inheritance' highlights only class divisions that are embedded in society but ignores the deeply entrenched race division that is experienced by minority groups, as well as the cultural community wealth of these communities.

From the ideological view of literacy promoted by the NLS, literacy has never been neutral but is always rooted in a particular standpoint, in a world where some points of view are dominant and others are marginalised (Street, 2003). Street demonstrates how literacy comes 'loaded with ideological and policy presuppositions' (2013, p. 78). Family literacy practices, he posits, are embedded in their worldviews, situating their literacy practices in a given context that can be recognised through their interactions. Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic (2000) highlight that locally situated interactions in literacy events influence how literacy practices reproduce and transform through people's actions with each other and the

environment. Also, social actions are vital in literacy events as they constitute literacy practices in social domains (Tanner, 2017).

In this sub-section, I have explored the significance of family literacy interactions and examined how children and the family benefit from the different types of interaction. In the next sub-section, I continue to explore out-of-school literacy practices by examining the influence of the community.

6.2.2 Community literacy

Data from all three boys reveal their involvement in community groups outside of the school. Damion attends a Wednesday Club where he learns about the Bible, Bryan participates in a football club and Zander is a member of the 100 Black Men Club. All three boys attribute positive feelings to these clubs and how they are used for their improvement. Damion uses Wednesday Club for spiritual improvement and to develop an understanding of who he is. The football club, for Bryan, is helpful for developing his physical and social skills as well as practising and applying his reading skills (he reads football information). Zander's club teaches him about his culture and other significant values he needs to learn as a Black man.

Community groups are an essential part of the lives of these young people. In these contexts, their literacy practices are part of their lives. Kinloch *et al*. (2016) define community literacies as literacy practices that young people engage in when they are not in the classroom. They claim that community literacies should be defined as literacies that are not in the school curriculum but are used in the classroom. Honan (2019) posits that community literacies can be defined and understood as social practices that create meaning using various modes of expression and mediums. The three boys are engaged in community groups with social practices that are meaningful to them.

Literacy practices, whether classified as home, school or community-based, are always social and create meaning in a particular time, space and context with a specific group of people (Davis, 2006; Carbone & Reynolds, 2013). As a result, by the time children enter the classroom, they can already call upon a bank of literacy events and literacy practices outside the classroom. Honan (2019) declares that

there is no gate at the classroom door that bars entry to students' accumulated literacy experiences whether from home, the playground, the community centre or their digital worlds.

Literacy across generations is a factor in this study. Compton-Lilly (2010) and Compton-Lilly & Greene (2011) explore this and highlight the rich resources within families. Understanding home and community literacies requires a broader definition of literacy practices. According to Kress (1997), children's meaning-making at home draws on the objects and available resources at home. Pahl's (2002) concept of 'ephemeral literacies' embraces the multimodality of literacy – in their research, children are observed creating multimodal ‘texts’ from prayer beads, tissue paper and small pieces of objects within the home. Pahl (2012) finds that household heritage shapes children’s textual productions at home and suggests that schools might begin to incorporate children’s home literacy practices with those in school, regarding them as beneficial and valuable.

Furthermore, meaning is produced from activities within the group that merge with everyday cultural experiences, producing a rich form of meaning-making. CRT scholars view these community experiences as investing in their cultural community wealth. The boys show evidence of engaging in a social network outside of school, enabling them to invest in their social capital. Yosso (2005) describes social capital as networks of people and community resources that provide social and emotional support to help them navigate through society. For example, Zander credits the 100 Black Men's Club as a group that extends his social network and empowers him with cultural knowledge. Damion attributes his understanding of God and of himself to his Wednesday religious community club. Bryan also benefits from his weekly football club socially by interacting with his peers physically and even having an opportunity to develop his reading skills. In the following section, themes emerging from in-school literacy are discussed.

6.2.3 School literacy

The first theme is the significant difference between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices. There is a disconnect between the participants' personal and academic lives. In school, two of the boys appear to be detached, disengaged and

only dutifully working through the learning activities. Damion and Bryan are classified as disadvantaged pupils based on the in-school data; they both grade themselves as 4 out of 10 related to how well they are doing in school. The class teacher also ranks them as working at the lower end of the age expected in the class. The teacher comments that they both work with class support and will continue to need support in the future. There is no evidence of the teacher creating opportunities to support these children to understand the world around them using an ideological approach or making any effort to engage them with their out-of-school literacy practices using community resources.

The school's data and the teacher's report of the children's formal academic progress are consistent. The boys' perceptions of their academic abilities reflect those of the class teacher and the school's formal data. The findings show that Zander views himself as a higher achiever in school, ranking himself 9 out of 10. Equally, the school data regards him as working at a greater depth between Key Stage (KS)1 and KS2, and his class teacher considers him to be a higher achiever. Damion and Bryan both see themselves as working just below average in school literacy, which is in line with their in-school presentation. Neither boys' home literacy practices are actively connected to their school literacy. The teacher is concerned about their readiness for secondary school. However, Zander's family ensure that his home literacy is related to school literacy and the teacher is assured that he is ready for secondary school and will not fail academically.

Furthermore, the findings show that the school curriculum's content, pace and style do not appear to benefit pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. In recent years, the school curriculum has become more prescriptive, and Year 6 teachers face standardised tests and accountability; the content and style of the teacher's teaching are restricted, and teachers are expected to cover specific texts (Cremin *et al*., 2008). All three boys mention Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which is set in 1845, in London. They display no positive feelings or enthusiasm towards the text, suggesting that they are not engaging with it at a meaningful or ideological level. This also indicates that the lessons are planned without considering the children's abilities or cultural backgrounds. The teacher is compelled to teach what is given in a set time and cannot allow herself to be distracted by the boys' interests and

desire to explore something more meaningful. The pleasure and joy that come from reading and writing are frequently surrendered to the school leadership's goals and others who do not know the pupils personally. Generally, the teacher has limited capability to allow more time for pupils who need it – conformity substitutes inquisitiveness. Teaching assistants are there to help the 'disadvantaged' to meet age-expected outcomes, but no real consideration is given to the content of the curriculum and the inequalities within the school that may be contributing to Damion and Bryan achieving below age-expected standards.

The classification of children under the banner of 'disadvantage' does not benefit the Caribbean-heritage boys but further highlights the racial inequalities in schools. Gillborn *et al.* (2016) point out the inequalities that exist at policy level. They evidence their argument with the work of Tomlinson (2008), who reflects on race and education during the early 1990s, concluding that the period saw setbacks for Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and for multicultural approaches in education and social policy. The policymakers shifted away from multicultural approaches suggested in the 1980s by Scarman (1982), Rampton (1981) and Swann (1985), and the period saw the Major government incorporate race equality under generic issues of disadvantage. This led to anti-racist work being considered outside the scope of the National Curriculum, and no provision was offered to the Teacher Training Agency, which was set up in 1994 for teaching and learning in a multicultural society (Tomlinson, 2008). In addition, local government funding to BME community organisations was reduced (Warmington, 2014), leading to Black communities having less to empower themselves.

According to Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), what is essential and distinctive produces a curriculum that benefits the cultural capital of the middle class. Zander thrives in the classroom and school environment. However, the other boys do not, demonstrating that education reproduces the values and dispositions of the privileged, and the disadvantaged pupils who attend school with different literate habitus or cultural capital are left behind as the cultural capital needed for schooling is in the interests of middle-class children.

School literacy is constructed around a set of (disembodied) skills, described as a structural approach, and ideology is rarely seen in the detail of school literacy

practices (Street & Street, 1991). The ideological perspective highlights how literacy relates to practice in school and identities. Bourdieu's concept of habitus relates to lived experience handed down over generations (1990). The timescales of a family's interaction with literacy practices are critical contextually in the children's lived experience. The school's literacy practices are usually decontextualised, with the emphasis on processing technical skills with no meaning attached, whereas family literacy practices have meaning embedded in generations of practices.

Gee (1996) explores the difference between children's out-of-school and in-school literacy practices and finds some stark contrasts. The findings of Rogers (2003), Compton-Lilly (2010) and Compton-Lilly & Greene (2011) concur. Dyson (2003), however, finds that children do use out-of-school literacy practices in school. He calls this concept a 'remix', where children draw on literate practices from outside the school and mix them with in-school practices. Zander’s life encompasses a mixture of school and home literacy, but his parents make a conscious effort to design and create school-related literacy activities at home. He and his teacher attribute his in-school success to his out-of-school literacy practices. Both Damion and Bryan’s parents have a different approach to school literacy at home.

6.3 The relationship between cultural identity and learner identity

This section explores the complexities of young Black boys negotiating their identities in the dominant White school system. The Jamaican-heritage boys in this study function in homes that are influenced by Jamaican cultural traditions and interact and engage in a school system that promotes British cultural values. The boys could be perceived as caught in the web of the British identity crisis. The media and schools have an ongoing conversation about the underperformance of Caribbean-heritage boys in formal examinations in the British system. The social-structural systems (for example, the economic, educational, political and criminal justice system) within society and the institutions that represent these social-structural systems, along with the gross inequalities that these systems and

institutions produce, profoundly affect Black boys' lives and the decisions they make (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000).

Researchers have long grappled with the relationship between cultural identity and learners' identity. The data in this research show a significant difference between the boys' cultural identity and their learner identity. Damion and Bryan are classified by the school as pupils from a disadvantaged background and they are both achieving below age-expected standards. Hinkel (1999), Pierce (1995) and Tseng (2002) all make links between cultural identity and learner identity. Pierce (1995) argues about the subjectivity of identity and point out the multiplicity and contradictory aspects of identity, hence it is difficult for a learner to separate their cultural identity while learning, due to continual dependence on cultural knowledge or cultural identity.

Ellis (2002 pp.42) states that 'Learning is successful when learners are able to summon up or construct an identity that enables them to impose their right to be heard…' Different aspects and dimensions of motivation, such as confidence, intellectual curiosity, attributions of past successes/failures, awards, punishments, materials and atmosphere, have been suggested. Damion is intrinsically motivated at home as he displays confidence and intellectual curiosity when he is supporting his sister or researching for information about his medical procedure; however, at school, he does not display the same level of confidence when he assumes that his voice will not be heard when he writes a letter to the Prime Minister, even though its subject matter is something important (see Chapter 5). Zander, on the other hand, is extrinsically motivated to engage in home literacy practices to appease his parents. Dornyei (1994) posits that learners are motivated or unmotivated extrinsically or intrinsically, with extrinsically motivated behaviours are the ones that the individual performs to receive some reward from and outside source or to avoid punishment, and intrinsically motivated behaviours the rewards are internal (Dornyei, 1994, p. 275), for their personal benefits.

A clear example of the exclusion of cultural identity in school can be seen in Damion's in-school literacy practices. The in-school data, the literacy log and the interview all show that Damion is not intrinsically motivated by in-school literacy. It appears that Damion has to make a psychological shift to focus on his learning.

Comment in his literacy log shows that he is either disconnected from the learning process or cannot make the connection between his cultural knowledge and his in-school learning:

> *It felt a bit hard.*
>
> *I have learnt things about Donald Trump that I did not know before.*
>
> *It was a bit hard because I did not know what the character thought at the time.*
>
> *It was difficult to work with someone else.*
>
> *I felt good because I learnt something new.*
>
> *I felt happy because I learnt something new about World War 2.*

The comments above highlight the isolation he is experiencing as a learner and the lack of meaning or connections within his learning environment. Altugan (2015), when exploring the relationship between cultural identity and learning, points out that there is a connection between motivation and identity formation, which can be seen in the educational system, suggesting that cultural identity affects the motivation of children to learn. The literacy log data reveals that Damion is experiencing a low level of motivation with some of his in-school tasks. However, he demonstrates medium or high levels of motivation when he is learning something new, as seen when he comments on learning about ratios in Mathematics or learning about World War 2. Cruikshank, Bainer & Metcalf (1995, p. 32) state, 'low social-economic status (SES) families usually cannot or do not provide their children with the kind of early stimulation and academic preparation more typically afforded by middle- and upper-class families', highlighting an education system that excludes a particular group or class of children.

Burton, Obeidallah & Allison (1996) argue that Black students are unfairly expected to comply to mainstream educational aspirations, activities monitored by adults and academic procedures. They claim this expectation eventually fosters a negative relationship between students and their teachers. Ferguson (2000) suggests that academic achievement has more to do with the adaptations and mastery to the White middle-class norms, beliefs and cultural practices, instead of the mastery of

the school's curriculum. She indicates that Black boys who acquire a middle-class value system are more likely to succeed academically in their studies. Zander can be described as adopting the middle-class value system as discussed above. If, however, the Black boys do not conform to this, their behaviour is described as coping or resilience, implemented to survive (Gordon & Song, 1994; Ferguson, 2000; Dance, 2002).

In considering identity and formal literacy development, the apparent lack of motivation for some Black children in school may be a coping mechanism in response to oppressive schooling conditions and school experiences (Foley, 1983). Nevertheless, the critical question posed by Payne, Starks & Gibson (2009) is: What sense would it make for street-life-oriented Black boys to be excited about a learning experience that does not recognise their academic contributions as legitimate or intelligent? Foley's work addresses the concept of anti-motivation for children in disadvantaged settings. It suggests that, instead of focusing on pupils' motivation or lack of it, the focus should be on the problems, with motivation as a possible expression of distance and rejection felt by teachers and students from the slum (Foley, 1983). Emulating Payne, Starks & Gibson (2009), I pose a similar question: What sense would it make for Caribbean-heritage boys to be excited about a learning experience that disregards their cultural knowledge and does not include them in a meaningful way? To bridge the gap between cultural identity and learner identity, Cushner, Mc Clelland & Safford (1992) suggest types of multicultural education programmes to show the importance of cultural identity in learning and teaching. One of the programmes suggested is ‘Teaching the culturally different', highlighting that learners' cultural identity should be considered in education. The next section explores intergenerational differences, identity and formal literacy development.

6.4 To what extent do intergenerational differences in literacy practices influence boys’ identity and formal literacy development?

There are significant similarities and differences between intergenerational literacy practices. In this study, the grandparents and parents of the child participants have their literacy practices embedded in the routines and structures of family life.

Interactions, formation of the habitus and the investment in the cultural capital are connected to routines and structures in the family. Reading the newspaper, the Bible and other religious materials, reading books, writing letters, or writing books are literacy practices rooted in the grandparents' lives.

6.4.1 The boys' intergenerational connections

Types of interaction in the family are passed on from one generation to the next. In the first generation (grandparents), the type of interaction is the same as the second generation (parents) and the same as the third generation (boys). In Damion's family, the grandparents participate in literacy practices independently of their children. They read the newspaper, and their children sit quietly and give them space and time to read. They write letters home to relatives in Jamaica, and the children are not a part of the process, but the literacy practice is modelled for the children. Marline, Damion's mother, recalls writing her play scripts and being her 'biggest fan' at the same time, suggesting a child-led interaction. Damion, being the third generation, also creates his own school literacy experiences at home, where he uses and applies the skills learnt in school.

In Bryan's family, the interaction style of the grandparents has also travelled down to the third generation. The grandmother cannot read, so her children read for her, and she interacts with them by listening to the reading and engaging with oral storytelling. This is an integrated family interaction, meaningful to the family. Tony, Bryan's father, uses the same approach with his family; hence, Bryan experiences an integrated interactional approach. Bryan points out in Chapter 5 that his Mum and Dad do Bible study and read with him, suggesting an integrated family interaction.

In Zander's family, his grandfather is instrumental in his children's literacy practices. He takes time out to read, and creates literacy situations for his children, demonstrating a parent-directed family literacy interaction. He invests in household books (like a family encyclopaedia) and creates a library in his house. He expects his children to read for pleasure as well as learning that would lead to improvement. He buys books for them based on his family values and the values expounded in the books, and not based on the children's academic ability. He has

a parent-directed interactional approach, directly or indirectly. George, Zander's father, also uses a parent-directed interaction approach to literacy practices in his home; hence, Zander experiences parent-directed interactions during his home literacy practices.

Though parents' motives for the literacy situations and the child's lived experiences of the literacy practices differ, the multimodal approach's involvement benefits the child. Compton-Lilly, Rogers and Lewis (2013) make a case for society, culture and community to be seen as more fluid and multiple conceptualisations of literacies as multilingual, multiple and multimodal to address the diversity of literacy practices within families (Compton-Lilly *et al*., 2012). Hull & Schultz (2002) trace the spaces children occupy and highlight the 'flows of meaning' that Pahl & Rowsell (2006, p. 2) say occur across sites as literacy practices, events and texts. They argue that the flow of meaning should be considered with context. Scollon (2001) develops the concept of geosemiotics when analysing children's play in Early Years settings. Drawing from her work, Wohlwend (2009) discusses the importance of context, highlighting the 'nexus of practices' flowing around a setting. She shows how home literacies may intersect with literacies associated with educational settings as children employ new literacies in their play. Zander's literacy practices in the home demonstrate how parents make a conscious effort to incorporate school literacy practices in their homes to ensure that their child succeeds in school. Bryan's family choose to focus on family values and share them with the children. For this family, it is important for the adult to be involved alongside the child. For Damion's family, it is important to empower the children to be independent and be equipped with real-life skills. These home literacy practices explain how children's literacies sit within broader learning ecologies (Barron, 2006). Combining an ecological perspective with the study of literacy involves recognising that literacy extends from the text to practice while the text is also embedded (Brandt & Clinton, 2002); these links can be made across home and school contexts. Therefore, a complex picture of literacy emerges across home and school, flowing in and out of context.

Familial capital is also significant in these families, as it is ‘cultural knowledge nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition’ (Yosso, 2006, p. 48). Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and

grandfathers are all engaged in literacy practices, empowering each generation with what benefited them or what they believed was important for the family. These family connections are transmitters of cultural expectations, moral lessons, educational aspirations, spiritual empowerment or just life lessons that contribute to the cultural capital or community wealth of these Caribbean-heritage boys. In the next sub-section, intergenerational literacy practices are discussed.

6.4.2 Intergenerational literacy practices

Children's social identity is shaped by their involvement in out-of-school literacy. Community groups play a significant role in the lives of the parents (second generation) and the children (third generation), but this is not explored with the grandparents (first generation). All the parents comment on their involvement in community groups, Bible study clubs, the 100 Black Men Club, or Sunday school. Equally, all three boys mention their connections with the different clubs and the importance of them. In these community groups, the values and norms of the groups are shared, and these groups are deemed to be essential for spiritual, cultural or social improvement.

Participation and interaction in community groups can be classified as social and cultural practices that involve the use of language. Bourdieu (1991) connects critical literacy and literacy as a social practice with language use, power and politics. The linguistic utterance, he claims, is a sign of both status and authority as it is an economic exchange embedded in a particular relation of power between the producer and the consumer (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 501). Within the field, exchanges are made for profit; hence, every linguistic exchange (written and spoken) demonstrates power relations between the speaker and the intended audience. Linguistic exchanges are made within the community group; and subsequently, the community groups invest for a profit. If recognised and used by the school, this investment can make a significant difference in engaging and empowering the boys. Bourdieu (1991) argues that the social use of language symbolically reproduces power relationships and social differences. The weight of the symbolic power varies based on whether those in power recognise the agent's capital. Therefore, those who lead the community groups play a significant role in shaping the boys' lives, directly by what is taught or indirectly through the interactions,

language utterances and meaning-making processes. Both Damion and Zander share comments on how their community group has impacted them. Zander comments on the importance and significance of the cultural knowledge and historical learning he receives from the 100 Black Men Club, which consolidates his Black identity. Damion comments on the spiritual insight he receives from his Wednesday Club in understanding God and himself.

Both Bourdieu and proponents of CRT examine inequalities in society. Bourdieu's view on the formation of habitus and cultural capital plays a vital role in how meaning is interpreted within the cultural context as it relates to class divisions. His social and cultural reproduction theory can be used as a framework to explain the intergenerational persistence of social inequalities. Intergenerational interactions travel from one generation to the next; likewise, the intergenerational investment, or lack of it, continues in the same way. There is a significant difference between Zander's formal literacy development and the other two boys' (Damion and Bryan). Zander's family makes a deliberate effort to invest in his cultural capital, while Damion and Bryan's do not invest at the same level. In the pursuit of equality, CRT challenges inequalities in society. Yosso (2005) and Carter (2015) argue that Black and minority ethnic groups have their own cultural capitals that are not acknowledged or encapsulated in the education system to measure their success. I suggest that the boys' cultural community wealth and non-dominant cultural capitals enrich them with cultural resources that must be incorporated into the education system as a foundation on which their academic success is built. However, the cultural resources that the boys access every day are ignored due to racism that is embedded in the structure of the education system. CRT emphasises a kind of racism that is not based on individual prejudice but one that is entrenched in the systems and structure of British society, and which results in the oppression of minority groups. As mentioned in Chapter 2, 'racism is endemic, institutional and systemic – a regenerative and overarching force maintaining all social constructs'(Valdés, Culp & Harris, 2002, pp. 1–5). The conversation about race is ongoing; however, there are times in history when something happens to draw the attention of policymakers and those in charge and remind the public that racism is still embedded in society (Ogbonnaya-Ogburu, 2020). For example, the

murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the national and international outcry of ‘Black Lives Matter’ groups after the death of George Floyd in the USA, in 2020; were incidents that caught the eyes of the nation and highlight racism.

Rogers & Mosley (2006) propose that Whiteness is an interactional accomplishment, and they attend to the interplay of meanings evident in body language and talk, texts and interaction around skin colour. Zander is extremely comfortable exploring his race and speaks openly on his learning about his culture and what it means to be Black. His parents and grandparents have educated him about his cultural heritage and his race. They actively seek opportunities to interact about race; hence, he embraces his identity as a Black man. Neither Damion nor Bryan, on the other hand, mention anything related to their race or their Black identity. Their parents and grandparents do not comment on their race, suggesting they are silent on the matter, as there is no evidence of interaction about the subject of race.

6.4.3 Intergenerational differences in formal literacy development

Formal literacy development is related to school literacy. Within its psychological (or cognitive) definition of literacy, children are evaluated according to academic standards and formal tests. As stated in Chapter 3, literacy can be conceptualised in different ways, vital in the learning process. Myrberg & Rosén (2009) posit that literacy should be conceptualised as a social and political practice rather than a set of neutral skills. Bourdieu (1984) explains that all goods and services within society have an economic value, and social classes seek to invest in their cultural capital. Bourdieu claims that the upper and middle classes can invest in their cultural capital in the optimum educational setting. Hence, their investment is exceptionally profitable, and education can be viewed as a mechanism for generating social profit; if society invests and values the commodity (literacy), it will be profitable. Consequently, if society does not value the commodity, there will be no investment, hence no return.

Bourdieu (1984) states that success at school is dependent on the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family; literacy is not dependent on the individual's intellectual ability or how gifted a child is but on how much the family

invests in time and resources. According to Bourdieu's claim, the school benefits from the family's investment; as a result, upward social mobility (academic success) is extremely difficult or impossible for lower SES learners. Therefore, there will always be a class division as it relates to academic success. He suggests that the upper and middle classes can afford to invest in excellent quality education, but no mention is made of the lower class. Hence, this suggests that lower SES people cannot invest in their cultural capital because they have less to invest. Bourdieu does not consider the effects of racism or the systems and structures that reinforce racism.

Bourdieu's theory places a significant responsibility on the family to ensure that there is enough investment in the cultural capital for academic success. This perspective ignores the cultural practices within lower class and minority groups that are ignored or undervalued. Underpinning Bourdieu's theory is a picture of a divided society full of conflict; groups who compete for control of schooling use the rhetoric of societal need to hide their self-interest (Hurn, 1993, pp. 57–58). In policy, schools appear to promote equal opportunities, but embedded within their curriculum and structures are practices that perpetuate the disadvantage of certain groups, including Caribbean-heritage boys. Hurn (1993) questions the grandiloquence of equal opportunity and highlights the school system's role in reproducing inequalities.

6.5 Summary and conclusions

In this final section, I share my concluding thoughts on the discussions surrounding the findings of this research, which is, essentially, about the value of making connections between home and school literacy practices.

This study reveals that there are many different literacies (Street, 1995); and Barton & Hamilton (1998), among others, posit that multiple literacies play an integral part in people's whole lives, with each serving to reinforce and build upon the rest. Thus, given the acknowledged reciprocal nature of all our societal literacies, it, therefore, makes no sense for out-of-school literacy to be isolated from in-school literacy. However, this study brings into focus a school system that is, whether consciously or otherwise, ignoring the literacy needs of minority ethnic

cultural groups. Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests that culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on developing and employing culturally competent teachers to encourage minority students' achievement without compromising on high expectations or ignoring power relations.

The findings from this research reveal that out-of-school literacy practices and literacy events vary, even among families of a single cultural heritage. Heath (1983) finds that literacy practices vary on how children are involved and there is no standardised literacy practice among cultural groups to secure expected educational standards. Haneda (2006) urges that it is vital for out-of-school literacy practices to be linked with in-school literacy practices, indicating that some children live active literacy lives outside of school yet are disenfranchised by school literacy practices where they are set tasks that are, to them, decontextualised and meaningless. Both Bryan and Damion's experiences confirm that they live active literacy lives outside of school, but throughout their schooling, they are mainly classified as working below the expected standard. Luke (2000) argues that school literacy practices need not, and should not, solely focus on decoding basic surface-level comprehension. Instead, schools should allow students to engage in a wide range of literacy practices so that they can become critically literate – not just passively decoding and retrieving the author's intention.

This chapter explores the findings concerning the overarching question: To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third-generation Jamaican boys influence their identity and formal educational literacy development? The Jamaican-heritage boys are exposed to various literacy practices in two broad contexts, in-school and out-of-school. The literacy practices of families are passed on from one generation to the next. There is a significant difference between home literacy practices and school literacy regarding their identity and their formal literacy development. The next chapter contains the main conclusions of this research and its implications for future practice and study.

Chapter 7: Summary and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This study begins by asking ‘To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of third-generation Jamaican-heritage boys influence their identity and formal literacy development?’ Therefore, a description of the social and cultural aspects of the literacy practices of these boys characterises the study’s original contribution.

It is established that literacy means different things according to context, hence the complexity of defining literacy from sociocultural, psychological and critical perspectives and summing up the discussion of literacy as a social practice. What is also acknowledged is the significant role that cultural literacy plays in the lives of everyone. However, for this thesis, the specific literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys are examined through critical race theory (CRT), cultural capital and the formation of identity.

7.2 Contribution to knowledge

This study explores the intergenerational influence of literacy practices, examining the identity of the boys and how this is shaped by their parents' practices and the perceived practices of their grandparents. It uniquely captures the essence of three UK-born, Jamaican-heritage boys' experiences and the meaning and connections between their out-of-school literacy practices and their formal, in-school literacy. This engages with a wider discourse in our education system; in particular, Black boys' underachievement in school and the possible link to literacy practices. Collected data for this study is collated from semi-structured interviews, pupil literacy logs and school records. Analysis of the data reveals the types of literacy practices with which the boys engage, with or without their parents; the literacy practices their parents and grandparents engaged in; and how these literacy practices relate to the boys' formal literacy development and the construction of their self-identity. Chapter 5 presents and interprets the collected data, offering no judgement of families, schools or the boys themselves, but with the intention of understanding the literacy experiences of the boys across both in-school and out-of-school contexts. The findings provide a 'blueprint' that can be used to generate a

discussion and as a foundation from which to launch further research into Jamaican-heritage boys' literacy. Through discussion, this study provides greater insight into the literacy events that families engage in and the reasons and motivations behind them.

This research offers contributions to knowledge in the areas outlined below.

First, at the policy level, there is widespread debate across the nation on the reasons for the continuous underachievement of Caribbean-heritage boys. This study highlights that the simple acts of collecting data and classifying the children as ‘disadvantaged’ have no impact, in themselves, on their progress and achievement in school. This may sound self-evident; however, this study reveals that the participating school had not attempted to use the information from their data gathering and classification exercises to engage the boys in meaningful learning experiences. The boys were fully aware of their positions as learners in their classes, but there was little evidence of enthusiasm or aspirations to change their status as learners. The findings suggest that policymakers might consider holding schools to account for this and ensuring that they evaluate themselves with actions that mitigate, and/or eliminate, those disadvantages by considering and including the learners' perspectives.

Second, the study reveals the difference between the in-school and out-of-school literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys. School literacy practices are structured, planned and timetabled according to the instructions and expectations of the school leadership, frequently without consideration for all the children's social or cultural experiences. From the boys' perspectives, they participate in school literacy, but appear not to engage with it sufficient to generate learning. This research spotlights learner engagement and illuminates the exclusion of learners’ cultural practices from the classroom.

In the next section, I discuss my journey and the impact of the study on me as the researcher.

7.3 Reflecting on my literacy world

My journey to complete this study was arduous but extremely valuable. I was able to analyse rationally and question and reflect upon generational literacy practices in my family: my own literacy practices, both past and present, and the literacy practices of my children. Through conducting this study, I have grown culturally, professionally and socially.

Reflecting on my own experiences, I could see similarities between my family's literacy practices and the participating boys' in that a comparable mixture of child-directed, integrated and parent-directed approaches to literacy practices existed in my childhood home. Like Damion's family, my parents engaged in literacy practices by themselves – for example, by reading magazines (my mother subscribed to one magazine for years; she would read it by herself, and I remember watching her). This led to self-directed practices in me, as after my mum was finished reading her magazines, I would go to the section for pen pals and write to people all over the world. My parents would read and write on their own, and as children, we were enabled to choose our own literacy-based activities.

There were also integrated religious and cultural activities in my family. We experienced storytelling and riddles through my dad. He left school at the age of sixteen, having had poor attendance as a child (because he had to work), yet he taught himself to read as an adult. Both my parents also engaged in letter writing locally, nationally and internationally. Like Bryan's family, we would read the Bible together daily, sing hymns and recite Bible verses. There was an expectation that everyone engaged in these practices, whether they were family members or visitors. These were opportunities to build our faith as well as reinforce family values. In the evening and on special holidays, we would sit down for oral storytelling, listen to fiction on the radio (broadcast in episodes) and to riddles told by the adults. My siblings and I happily and willingly participated in these activities. We enjoyed interacting with the adults and learning about their childhoods.

As a parent, my own children's literacy experiences are like Zander's – parent-directed, in that there are structured activities, with certain expectations, and structured time to be spent on the activities on in-school literacy practices,

completing homework or having tutorial sessions preparing them for in-school literacy practices and buying books as presents. More time in my home is spent creating and preparing my children for in-school literacy practices at the expense of reinforcing the Jamaican cultural norms and values I learned as a child. My parents did not actively plan and create cultural literacy experiences for me, but lived their lives and had fun with their children while they were doing it.

However, unlike the experiences of Caribbean-heritage learners in the UK, the literacy I experienced as a child at school was fully aligned with my every day, home-based experiences. The books I read (main class readers) featured children who looked like me in terms of colour and lifestyle. I was reading content that I could identify with; therefore, I was not approaching the text from a 'cold place'. My teachers understood my culture and spoke in my ‘mother tongue’. I did not find school difficult, and I was eager to learn. My parents could safely expect the school to take responsibility for the academic learning while they taught us real-life skills and family values. Burgess *et al*. (2002) would describe my childhood literacy experiences as ‘passive’, and we had limited in-school literacy resources, as my parents did not consciously empower us for academic success. However, Burgess *et al*. (2002) would describe my own children’s home literacy experiences as ‘active’ as I take responsibility for their academic success and help them to develop the skills they need for academic empowerment.

There are several other differences between my literacy practices while growing up and my children's. My parents were working class and valued education. Equally, they focused (unconsciously) on the 'accomplishment of natural growth' (Lareau & Weinberger, 2008, p.120) instead of on developing my special talents. Their approach offered me the opportunity to flourish independently (writing to pen pals, for example) as well as learn the rich values of my culture. When I view my experiences through the lens of CRT scholars Delgado Bernal (1997; 2001) and Yosso (2005), I can see that they were rich with cultural community wealth. My community, as a child, nurtured at least four of the six forms of cultural capital posited by CRT scholars, that is, ‘aspirational – the value my parents and adults in the community placed on having a good education, even though they did not have one; ‘navigational’ – empowered with the skills and resources to manoeuvre

through social institutions); ‘social’ –networks of people in the church and my neighbours; and ‘familial’ capital – rich cultural knowledge nurtured among family (Delgado Bernal, 1997; 2001; Auerbach, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; and Orellana, 2003). A notable difference, of course, was that I never had to face racism in school.

Now that I am an adult and have migrated to the UK, I have adopted a middle-class, parent-directed approach with my children. While they were in secondary school, I paid huge monthly sums for tutors of different subjects. I actively nurtured their special talents with music tuition and various other extracurricular activities. I was intent on my children getting into university, and I was not going to depend on the school. I joined the various school governing bodies to watch over their learning experiences as I was aware of the racism embedded within the education system and the difficulties that Jamaican-heritage children experience from the White-dominant schools.

7.4 Summary

In this thesis, I have described the literacy experiences of three boys of Jamaican heritage, their parents' and perceived grandparents' literacy practices and how they influence the boys’ identity and formal literacy development. Outside of school, there are three diverse types of interaction that take place within the three families: ‘child-directed’ (the child takes the lead in organising their literacy practices), ‘integrated’ (both parents and children organise the literacy practices) and ‘parent-directed’ (parents taking the lead in organising the literacy activities. This research has allowed me to explore how literacy is practised and experienced by the child. For the boys, their cultural experiences are not included in their school literacy practices. Altugan (2015) highlights a link between cultural identity and learning and the findings of this research show that when the school did not make a conscious effort to create explicit links between home and school literacy practices, two of the boys were working below age-expected standards in their formal, in-school literacy.

7.4.1 Race and cultural capital

This research sought to understand the literacy practices of Jamaican-heritage boys. The methodological approach was to gather and analyse children's literacy experiences to paint a picture of all the practices they engaged in and how these shaped their identity and influenced their formal literacy development. Intergenerational literacy practices were central to this study, as I explored the activities of the boys and their parents as well as memories of the practices of grandparents.

Race, cultural capital and identity were three key concepts significant in this research. The UK-resident participants were of Jamaican heritage, so I explored critical race theory (CRT) when analysing the data. The findings exposed the extent to which the boys engaged in the learning processes of their school. Drawing from Ogbonnaya-Ogburu (2020) and Delgado & Stefancic (2017), racism includes attitudes, actions and institutions that contribute to the relative disadvantages of racial groups with comparatively less power. CRT seeks to unpick these and, thereby, remedy the effects of racism. One of the basic tenets of CRT is that racism is ‘endemic, institutional and systemic’, ‘a regenerative and overarching force maintaining all social constructs’ (Valdes *et al*., 2002, pp.1–5). Thus, CRT views racism as produced from the inequalities embedded in the social structures of society and not, necessarily, by individuals. It touches upon literacy related to racism. Racism involves several social processes and always includes language as a form of social practice (Leonardo, 2012). Consequently, much of the language used in UK (White dominant) schools, directly and indirectly, bears elements of racism. The texts and contexts in schools contribute to the social structures, so they should be scrutinised for racism, and this form of systemic racism must be understood as a valid contributing factor of some children’s lack of engagement.

In addition to the lens of CRT, Bourdieu's explanation of cultural capital and the responsibility he places on the family is crucial when considering family literacy practices as they pass from one generation to the next. Therefore, literacy practices in the home, their structures and interactions, and the extent of adult involvement, are critical influences. The findings show that adult involvement in home literacy practices can influence formal literacy development in school.

There are three interaction strategies presented in this research, which draw on a qualitative research process that considers how the boys engage with literacy practice in school and in their home and community. The strategies take the boys' experiences, the literacy events they participate in and the intergenerational practices as the starting point to interrogate their literacy practices. This study acknowledges literacy as a social practice (Street, 1984; Barton & Hamilton, 2010), promoting the ideology that literacy is situated within a context. Through social practice, reading and writing are embedded in context, intertwined in local ways of life, maintained by talk and varying across time and location (Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, 2006; Barton & Hamilton, 2010).

Out-of-school literacy practices are those connected with the cultural and collaborative work among community groups, teachers and researchers in literacy acquisition (Rosenberg *et al*., 2013). This social interaction may be an education-enhancing factor as it bridges the current gap between in-school and out-of-school (community) practices. Therefore, the restructuring of teaching context and situations to include children's cultural experiences can benefit the school from the social context and the child's community involvement. Undertaking this qualitative research required me to consider the intersections between everyday literacy practices in the home and community and everyday practices in the school and to simultaneously acknowledge the centrality of these literacy practices in the construction of their identity and their formal literacy development.

For this study, I was interested in the boys' direct lived experiences – their literacy practices. The literacy practices in the boys' worlds and their cultural experiences are linked directly back to family literacy practices and cultural experiences. As stated by Pahl & Rowsell (2010), children's literacy practices are built around material cultures. Consequently, if children are exposed to literacy practices at home and they are reinforced at school or the children's school literacy practices are reinforced at home, then home and school are working together to build children's cultural capital. Their interactions with individuals in the context of their literacy practices impact on how they believe the world works, the constructs of the world around them and the kinds of social identities these young boys construct for themselves.

7.4.2 Identity and literacy

Literacy practices are significant in the construction of social identity. Mousena (2020) draws attention to literacy practices that contribute to the formation of identity, illustrating that in literacy practices, the oral discourse is a discourse through which interlocutors construct their social identity and play their social role in each interaction, which results in them maintaining or undermining human relations. These discourses, interactions or communications can affect how children see themselves and how they are perceived by others. Furthermore, in literacy practices, oral speech is the fundamental means for expressing, formulating and negotiating opinions, conveying and exchanging emotions involved in everyday communications.

It is my belief that literacy practices play a significant role in the construction and development of pupils' identities. As discussed earlier, language is instrumental in how the boys are represented and how the boys represent themselves. The family is instrumental in instructing the children about their culture and reinforcing their self-image. Damion and Bryan's family did not consciously teach them about their race and culture. There was no evidence of these boys embracing or accepting a concept of themselves that included their race or cultural heritage. Zander's family, on the other hand, makes a deliberate effort to teach him about his cultural heritage and his race. Zander embraces his cultural heritage and is proud of who he is as a Black man, freely discussing his race and his culture. Zander is presented by the school as a higher achiever and a confident student, whereas the other two boys do not present as confident learners in school.

7.5 Limitations of the study

First, the participants in this study were willing to tell their stories to me, the researcher, but also, a teacher in their school. As I am a senior leader, my position carries authority (and power), and I realised that the boys might feel compelled to respond to my questions with the answers they believed I was expecting to hear. Equally, the parents may have been guarded about what they wanted me to know. In addition, the grandparents' direct views were missing, so I had to rely on the parents recalling their childhood experiences. This may have led to the parents'

withholding experiences that would have provided a deeper understanding of the family.

Second, there were rich cultural experiences from the families that were not mentioned in this thesis due to time constraints and word limits. I had to carefully curate the evidence, making, sometimes, tough decisions about which perspectives to include in the thesis and which to leave out. In this process, I regret that I may have excluded information that would have added another layer of understanding.

Third, I must acknowledge my bias and the lens through which I viewed the data. My Jamaican heritage has, inevitably, contributed to how I have interpreted the data. I came to the research with years of experience as a teacher, so my understanding of how schools operate, and the content of the school curriculum, may, also, have played a role in how I viewed the data.

Fourth, the sample size was extremely small, with only three families, focusing on three boys; therefore, generalisation from the findings is not possible.

7.6 Lessons learned and recommendations

Through this research, I have shown that literacy practices play a vital role in the formal literacy development and formation of identity of Jamaican-heritage boys. The context in which children interact with educators, policymakers, teachers, parents and community groups provides meaning for those children. Teachers follow school leaders to provide learning opportunities for the children, with which they may, or may not, choose (or be able) to engage.

From this journey, I take with me a greater awareness of the importance of location and context in literacy practices. Pupils can have the same literacy experience yet derive different meanings from it because their personal connections and history within the situated context each contribute to those meanings. Although I had read about the situatedness of literacy, talking to the parent participants in my study as they reflected on their experiences as children and as adults brought the concept to life for me. This has led me to conclude that if in-school literacy practices were to genuinely capture the boys' cultural experiences, then learning might be more

meaningful to these pupils, who would, consequently, be empowered to engage in the literacy practice more fully.

A sense of both a discourse and a silence threaded through this study regarding cultural identity. On the one hand, Zander proudly feels his cultural identity as a Black boy and shows how his parents intentionally create literacy situations out of school to positively reinforce it. On the other, Damion and Bryan remain silent about their Black cultural identity. There is no evidence of in-school or out-of-school literacy practices that encourage exploration or investigation of Black identity – for them, race is silent. This led me to reflect, as a parent and as a teacher, on how I might be reinforcing the silence of race or encouraging investigation of Black identity.

A theme that stood out, and which I should like to develop further, is that of power. Power is central to the development of literacy as a social practice. This ideological view argues that literacy is constantly constructed and enacted within social and political contexts; therefore, it is subject to differing power relationships. Bourdieu (1964) proposed that power is not a separate entity but stands at the heart of social life, and successfully exercising power requires legitimation.

Lessons from this study include the unpredictability of research, the subjectivity of literacy practices and the messiness of trying to capture data from real people in the real world. I learned to view data from multiple angles, to reflect and listen and be willing to examine and acknowledge my own biases.

Through this study, I have come to see that there are various literacy practices within one culture. Having a particular cultural heritage does not mean that there is consistency in the family's approach to literacy practices within the homes and the communities. In addition, literacy practices are sometimes passed from one generation to the next, providing rich cultural experiences, and with the conscious intention to invest in, empower, nurture and grow their cultural community wealth. The focus may not be on academic empowerment, but the intention is always to equip and enrich the next generation.

The main point that this study illustrates is that the school’s literacy practices do not use the cultural experiences of the Jamaican-heritage boys when teaching

them to develop skills to be successful and they remain closely related to middle-class values. This has led me to conclude that parents, families and the community should collaborate closely with schools to include children's cultural experiences as a part of school literacy to engage them more fully in their learning.

A response to this finding might be that school leaders acquaint themselves more thoroughly with all the cultures represented in their cohorts and inject a broader array of culturally relevant resources across the curriculum to secure full engagement. Schools also need to revisit the impacts of systemic racism within their organisational structures. Pupils must be encouraged to appreciate and acknowledge their own cultural backgrounds, challenge racial stereotypes in the media and books and disavow racial misconceptions from pupils and staff instead of being silent about race. In other words, schools could encourage learning from a critical perspective and support learners to become critical thinkers.

This research pinpoints a lack of connection between the boys' cultural identity at home and their learner identity at school. School solutions to this might include incorporating parents at a deeper level when discussing the pupils' learning and planning home experience days, where pupils can work with their parents on meaningful tasks in a non-threatening atmosphere so that the school can see the young people displaying their non-dominant cultural capital and cultural community wealth (as discussed in Chapter 2). This would encourage intergenerational experiences, and the families could showcase their rich cultures, helping to inform their teachers and school leaders, who, in turn would understand better how to incorporate more relevant resources and links to the existing knowledge base of all their pupils.

The study highlights avenues for dialogue to support Jamaican-heritage boys in school by including their cultural practices in school literacy practices. This could also include representation of Jamaican-heritage experiences through in-school literacy experiences. The study enjoins school leaders to consider the cultural capitals of the Jamaican boys to utilise home experiences in school.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview

Cultural Literacy Practices: Semi-structured literacy practices interview

Out-of-school literacy (children's home literacy practices and literacy events)

Interview will begin with: 'what does literacy means to you?'

Today I will be asking you about events and literacy practices that you are involved in at home and school.

When I say 'literacy events', I am talking about anything that you do at home that has a strong link to literacy: e.g., writing Christmas cards, writing a shopping list, reading the bus schedule, reading the label on a tin, or discussing a challenging situation in someone's life and trying to find a solution.

Current Literacy Practices

1.What kind of things do **you read** in your life (that are not part of any schoolwork that you might be doing at this time)?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading); social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy event (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

PROMPTS (with each of the following, give example texts but don't ask about any one specifically):

- For daily tasks?
- For personal care/health?
- For political/civic participating/voting?
- With your own children? With your spouse? With your friends? With your co-workers?
- For official purposes like getting a visa or work permit?
- For paying taxes?
- At your job?
- For entertainment?
- For relaxation?
- For information?
- For shopping?
- For worship (or religious purposes)?
- Internet?
- For group/community activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Jaycees, book groups)

2.What kind of texts do you **write** in your life (that is not part of any schoolwork you might be doing at the present time)?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading); social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

PROMPTS (with each of the following, give examples of texts but don't ask about any one specifically):

- For daily tasks?
- For personal care/health?
- For political/civic participating/voting?
- With your own children? With your spouse? With your friends? With your co-workers?
- For official purposes like getting a visa or work permit?
- For paying taxes?
- At your job?
- For entertainment?
- For relaxation?
- For information?
- For shopping?
- For worship (or religious purposes)?
- Internet?
- For group/community activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Jaycees, book groups)

School Literacy Practices

Current school literacy practices (children)

1.What kind of texts do you read in school as a part of the school instruction/homework (textbooks, novels, Internet, short stories, poetry, worksheets, picture books, information books, maths books, etc.)?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading), social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

2.Which of these literacy activities and books did you particularly enjoy? Dislike? Find difficult? Boring? Why? Examples?

3.What kind of texts do you write in school as a part of school instruction/homework (stories, poetry, spelling practice, reports, worksheet, journals/diary, newspaper, class books, etc.)?

Why?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading), social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

4. Which of these literacy practices/texts did you particularly enjoy? Dislike? Find difficult? Boring? Why? Examples

5. Do you think the reading and writing you do at school prepares you for the kind of things that you read and write outside of school? Why, or why not, or in what ways?

6.How do you think the reading/writing you do at school is similar to or different from the reading you do outside of school?

7. How good are you at literacy?

8. How do you feel about literacy at home? What do you like best?

9. How do you feel about literacy at school? What do you like best?

10. Does literacy at home help with literacy at school?

11. What literacy did your parents participate in when they were growing up?

12. How similar or different is your parents' literacy to yours?

13. Do you think the literacy you do at school is related to real life?

Historical Literacy Practices (parents and grandparents)

1.When you were a child, what kind of text (or "things") did people in your family or house **read** regularly (except for those things the adults read for school assignments)?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading), social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

PROMPTS (with each of the following, give example texts but don't ask about any one specifically):

- For daily tasks?
- For personal care/health?
- For political/civic participating/voting?
- With your own children? With your spouse? With your friends? With your co-workers?
- For official purposes like getting a visa or work permit?

- For paying taxes?
- At your job?
- For entertainment?
- For relaxation?
- For information?
- For shopping?
- For worship (or religious purposes)?
- Internet?
- For group/community activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Jaycees, book groups)

2. When you were a child, what kind of texts did your family **write** regularly (except for those things the adults or children wrote for school assignments)?

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading), social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

PROMPTS (with each of the following, give example texts but don't ask about any one specifically):

- For daily tasks?
- For personal care/health?
- For political/civic participating/voting?
- With your own children? With your spouse? With your friends? With your co-workers?
- For official purposes like getting a visa or work permit?
- For paying taxes?
- At your job?
- For entertainment?
- For relaxation?
- For information?
- For shopping?
- For worship (or religious purposes)?
- Internet?
- For group/community activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Jaycees, book groups)

3. What kind of texts did other people in the community read or write when you were a child? (These should be texts that the participant remembers seeing people use, not those he or she "supposed").

For each text or practice mentioned, elicit information about why (purpose of reading), social context (as part of what type of activity, like work, church, committees, shopping for the family, etc.), participant structure, that is, other people involved in the literacy events (like reading to the child, writing to a relative, etc.), how important, enjoyable or fulfilling it is.

PROMPTS (with each of the following, give example texts but don't ask about any one specifically):

- For daily task?
- For personal care/health?
- For political/civic participating/voting?

- With your own children? With your spouse? With your friends? With your co-workers?
- For official purposes like getting visa or work permit?
- For paying taxes?
- At your job?
- For entertainment?
- For relaxation?
- For information?
- For shopping?
- For worship (or religious purposes)?
- Internet?
- For group/community activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Jaycees, book groups)

Demographic information

Date_____
Researcher_____

1. Name: _____

2.Age Range: 8- 12_____ ; 13-18_____; 19-30_____; 31-55_____;

55-70_____; 70+ _____

3. Gender: Male Female

4. Country of birth: _____ 5. Ethnicity_____

6. Language spoken in the home: _____

7.Are you currently a student: Yes No

A) If yes, where do you attend school?
_____

B) What type of school is it? (e.g., secondary school, university)

Collect more information about levels of parents' education

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

The Literacy worlds of Jamaican heritage children living in London: identity and educational development.

Conducted by: Ann Marie Allen

University of East London

Cass School of Education and Communities
Water Lane
Stratford
London E15 4LZ

University Research Ethics Committee

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of this researcher and the nature of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Fieulleteau, Ethics Integrity Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD

(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk).

The Principal Investigator(s)

Dr Wayne Tennent

Telephone: [redacted]
Email: w.tennent@uel.ac.uk

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title

The Literacy worlds of Jamaican heritage children living in London: identity and educational development.

Project Description

The proposed study seeks to explore the cultural literacy practices of Jamaican heritage children living in London, their perceptions and attitudes towards literacy, their identity and the impact these have on their educational development.

Aims of the Research

The research question that is central to this study is:

To what extent do the cultural literacy practices of Jamaicans living in London support literacy development?

To address this central theme the study will focus on the following sub-questions stemming from this main one:

1. What are the literacy practices with which Jamaican heritage children engage in everyday life, at school and home?
2. How do these practices reflect their identities, perceptions and attitudes towards literacy linked to both life in Jamaica and their lives in contemporary London?
3. How do literacy practices in the Jamaican culture hinder or support children's literacy development?

Methodology and Methods

Subject to their agreement to take part in this research, the researcher will make a series of visits (up to six) to each family over a period of time. The aim is to get a series of snapshots of literacy practices. Each child will be observed in school once. The purpose of this is to see the types of literacy practices promoted by the school. The children participating will also be asked to keep a log of literacy practices over a period of a week.

The researcher will begin by observing the participants at home and at school. The researcher will also interview the participants and other adults in the home following the observation. At school, in addition to observation the researcher will interview teachers. These interviews will be recorded on an IPAD.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Names of participants and their location will be allocated pseudonym names and participants' privacy will be respected. The schools in which observations and interviews will take place will be kept confidential and anonymous. The researcher will make every effort to give complete anonymity in the study. However, because of the relatively small size of the sample no guarantee can be given of complete anonymity in this study.

Ethics

This project has been approved by the University of East London Research and Ethics Committee.

Data Protection

Confidentiality of data will be protected, although the confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations. All data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. Data will be stored electronically and password protected with access only to the principal researcher and the researcher.

Limits of confidentiality:

Limitations of confidentiality may apply where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others occurs.

Withdrawal from Project:

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

Dissemination:

It is anticipated that the research findings will be published in the form of a Doctoral Thesis and a copy will be kept by the University of East London.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Please note that the research has passed the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Further Information

If you have any further questions about this research, please do contact Dr Wayne Tennent (Principal Researcher) on [redacted] or w.tennent@uel.ac.uk

Concerns arising during the research:

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the researchers or any other aspect of this research project, please do contact researchethics@uel.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Adult consent

Consent to Participate in observations and interviews involving children of Jamaican heritage living in London.

The Literacy worlds of Jamaican heritage children living in London: identity and educational development.

Principal Investigator: Dr Wayne Tennent , Cass school of Education and Communities, UEL, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ **Telephone**: [redacted] **Email**: w.tennent@uel.ac.uk

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I and my child have been asked to participate and we have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details with my child and the researcher and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me. In particular, I note that:

- Participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time or can withdraw any unprocessed data at any time.
- The consent from will be securely stored away from the data, and data will be stored electronically and password protected.
- The researcher will take particular care in transcription and dissemination to ensure that organisation and participants will remain anonymous and, as far as possible, will not be able to be identified in any way.
- The findings will be disseminated be published as a part of a doctoral thesis.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the observations and interviews have been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Participant's Signature

……..

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

DR WAYNE TENNENT

Investigator's Signature

……

Date: …….

Appendix 4: Child consent

Consent to Participate in observations and interviews.

Project: Literacy I do at home and school

Principal Investigator: Dr Wayne Tennent , Cass school of Education and Communities, UEL, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ **Telephone**: 020 8223 6301 **Email**: w.tennent@uel.ac.uk

Researcher : Ann Marie Allen, Cass school of Education and Communities, UEL, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ **Telephone**: 07985627417 **Email**: annmarie.allen@ymail.com

Please tick (✓)

	Yes	No
I know what this project is about.		
I know I can change my mind if I want to stop the project at any time.		
I know who to ask if I am unsure about anything.		
I know Ann Marie will share what she has found out before writing it up .		
I know who might be looking at the information I give to Ann Marie.		

I know the work I will doing for this project will be safe.  

I know my name nor my school's name will not be used.  

I know Ann Marie will write up what she has found in a book.  

I agree to take part in the project.  

.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
…….

Participant's Signature
……..

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

DR WAYNE TENNENT

Investigator's Signature
……

Date: …….

Appendix 5: Consent to participate: Teacher

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a programme involving the use of human participants.

Title:

The literacy worlds of third-generation Jamaican children living in London: identity and educational development.

Principal Investigator: Dr Wayne Tennent, Cass School of Education and Communities, UEL, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ **Telephone**: [redacted] **Email**: w.tennent@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher: Ann Marie Allen**,** Cass School of Education and Communities, Water Lane, Stratford, London E15 4LZ, U1316064@uel.ac.uk

Please tick as appropriate:

	YES	NO
I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
Pupils will be asked to keep a video diary of home literacy practice. Do you give consent?		
I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. *(Please see below)*		
I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to the following limitations: Names of participants and their location will be allocated pseudonym names and participants' privacy will be respected. The schools in which observations and interviews will take place will be kept confidential and anonymous. The researcher will make every effort to give complete anonymity in the study. However, because of the relatively small size of the sample no guarantee can be given of complete anonymity in this study.		

Limitations of confidentiality may apply where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others occurs.		
Anonymized quotes may be used in publications		
Participant will not be named in publications		
Research will be published in a Thesis form, journal article or information for a group of professionals		
[If applicable, obtain participants' permission to use the data in future research by your team]		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis and that after this point it may not be possible.		
I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.		

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Participant's Signature

……..

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Investigator's Signature

……

Date: …….

Appendix 6: Headteacher consent

Consent form- Headteacher

Consent to Participate in observations and interviews involving children of Jamaican heritage living in London.

The Literacy worlds of Jamaican heritage children living in London: identity and educational development.

Principal Investigator: Dr Wayne Tennent, Cass school of Education and Communities, UEL, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ **Telephone**: 020 8223 6301
Email: g.czerniawski@uel.ac.uk

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which students and staff in my school have been asked to participate and the school has been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details with the pupils, teachers and the researcher and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which the school will be involved have been explained to me. In particular, I note that:

- Participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time, or can withdraw any unprocessed data at any time.
- The consent from will be securely stored away from the data, and data will be stored electronically and password protected.
- The researcher will take particular care in transcription and dissemination to ensure that organisation and participants will remain anonymous and, as far as possible, will not be able to be identified in any way.
- The findings will be disseminated be published as a part of a doctoral thesis, journals articles and professional presentations.

I understand that the school's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the observations, literacy logs and interviews have been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to the school participating in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to the pupils or teachers and without being obliged to give any reason.

Headteacher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
[redacted]

Headteacher's Signature [redacted] .....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

DR WAYNE TENNENT

Investigator's Signature ...Ann Marie Allen... [redacted] .....

Date: ...06/10/17.....

Appendix 7: Family Literacy Practice: Summary of Parent's Literacy Practices

Summary of Damian's mother's home literacy practice

Literacy Event	Literacy Practice/ social context	Feeling/Attitude	Who was involved
Parent reading teletext Reading magazines Completing crosswords and competition Reading schoolbooks	Reading for **entertainment** Finding out about people's lives Reading for **educational information**	Socialising Belonging and a part of a social world (celebrity) Having fun Competitive Informed Connected with world outside the home	Mother Children indirectly- giving mum the time and space to be involved.
Grandparents reading the newspaper.	Daily routine- mindset for information Reading for social information Reading for political information, forming and opinion. Information social interaction. Reading in silence	Demonstrate **commitment**- daily Getting ready to go to the shop - **purposeful** Buying the newspaper- **importance**. **Respect** for the activity and the people doing it Connected with the world outside the home.	Grandparents (two together) Grandchildren sitting in silence. Indirectly participating.
Children reading books	To be entertained	Being **imaginative** **Connecting** with the characters Having **fun**	Child- with the book. Parents indirectly giving the child the space to participate in the literacy event.

Mum writing for college course Gran writing to complain or communicate a problem Gran/ Mum writing letters Child writing stories or scripts for performance before an audience at home.	Demonstrate learning Address a problem Communicate difficulties Socialise or keep in touch with relatives To entertain. To externalise thoughts and feelings.	**Pride** and **accomplishment**. **Listen to** or voice concern **Understanding** and **connection**. **Valued, proud** and having **fun**	Mum and children indirectly Gran and the company she are addressing. Parents/ grandparents at the receiving end of the letters. Child and the whole family.

Summary of Damian's literacy practice

Home literacy			
Literacy Event	**Literacy Practice/ social context**	**Feeling/Attitude**	**Who was involved**
Read the receipt from shopping Use my tablet in the morning to watch videos Play games on tablets	Read for economic information. Watch video for information and entertainment Socialising/ Entertainment	Develop understanding of money. Understanding of medical procedure- alleviating fears/ confident	Damian Mum Damian Damian Damian
Read on my own or read to my younger sister	Support sibling Completing work required by school	Making a positive contribution Happy that the teacher will not tell him off.	Damian Damian and sister
Write cooking instructions Write stories Write information about the procedure of my surgery.	Learning how to prepare food Write to share thoughts and ideas	Good to develop a real-life skill. Free to express personal ideas. Unrestricted	Damian and mum Damian Damian Damian
Weekly community group to find out about God.	Religious practice	Spiritual fulfillment Understanding of God and understanding of self	Damian and community group
School Literacy			

Literacy Events	Context	Feeling/ Attitude	Who was involved
Read information books Read class novels	Developing reading fluency and comprehension Understanding the author's purpose and styles.	Bored Do not understand the context of the text Finding it hard. Working just below peers.	Damian and class teacher Damian and support staff.
Write different things letter to the prime minister Writing a letter to a friend.	Developing sentence structure and grammatical skills Developing writing skills. Sharing personal views and feelings.	Dislike the structure Must write what the teacher asked him to write- lacks freedom and creativity Working just below peers	Damian and class teacher Damian and support staff.

Summary of Bryan's father's home literacy practice

Literacy Event	**Literacy Practice/ Social Context**	**Feeling / Attitude**	**Who was involved**
Reading on phone or iPad Reading newspaper Read directions Read text messages Read information related to the children Read social media post Read biography on holiday	Reading for **entertainment** Finding out about people's lives Finding his way around Read to communicate with family members and friends Socialise and maintain social contact Personal learning from others	Connected to a social world Informed and have a voice on social and political issues Achievement being able to find location Connected with the children's school and can participate Connect with ideas and ideologies that are outside of their immediate locality (home context) Aspirational	Dad Journalist and editor's Work colleagues and clients Family and friends Children and school community. Dad and social media community Dad with people he respects - their achievement
Read the Bible as a child Parents read religious magazine Children reading for parents	Daily religious practices Reading for information and guidance on how to live a good life Reading for social and health information Information social interaction.	Demonstrate **commitment** daily to religious duties Submission to a power and authority outside themselves Buying the magazine r-**importance**.	Family reading the Bible. Family practising religion together Children and parents interacting.

		Connected with the world outside the home even though they cannot read.	
Writing reports for work Writing emails Sending text messages Writing social media post (WhatsApp or Facebook)	Working for economic gains for the family Emails vital part of communicating with work Socialising and being entertained with a group.	Valued and providing for the family Connected with colleagues and clients exchanging information **Belonging to a group** **Approving and refusing ideas**	Child- with the book. Parents indirectly giving the child the space to participate in the literacy event.
As a child writing lines for being naughty Write letters to relatives overseas Sending postcards	Learning boundaries and authority Communicating with relatives and friends overseas (Jamaica) Socialise or keep in touch with relatives Sharing special moments	**Punishment or discipline** Connected and belonged to a wider family network **Understood and loved** **Valued, proud** and having **family.**	Mum and children Mum and the wider family network. Children and wider family network

Summary of Bryan's home literacy practice

Home literacy			
Literacy Event	**Literacy Practice/Social context**	**Feeling / Attitude**	**Who was involved**
Read comic books Read recipes Read shopping list Read the Bible	Read for entertainment Read to prepare a meal Provide resources for the family To receive religious guidance	Happy watching the hero triumph Understanding of cooking- feeling independent Making a valuable contribution At peace with God	Bryan and characters in the book. Bryan and mum Bryan serving the family With the family
Read with my dad Read football information Read over work	Practise reading for school Understand position to play Edit schoolwork	Gaining religious instruction Bonding with dad	Bryan and dad Bryan and football team Bryan and mum

		Gaining a better understanding of the Bible. Being a team player Developing the vital skill of editing.	
Write in the newspaper /crossword Write shopping list	Being entertained and challenged Providing a vital service to the family	Sense of accomplishment completing a challenge Supporting the family	Bryan Bryan and Mum
Write for Bible study	Religious practice	Spiritual fulfillment Understanding of God and understanding of self	Bryan and Dad
School Literacy			
Literacy Events	Context	Feeling/Attitude	Who was involved
Comprehension text Speed read Read class novels Read for Science	Developing reading fluency and comprehension Understanding the author's purpose and styles. Read for information	Bored Do not understand Feeling confident to read fluently Confused or exempt from what is happening in the text. Not interested: some science words are difficult	Bryan and class teacher Bryan and support staff.
Write spelling words Write worksheet Write to use comprehension and punctuations Write description	Develop spelling Understanding of Grammar and sentence structure Developing writing skills.	Dislikes the structure Must write what the teacher asked him to write - lacks freedom and creativity Working just below peers.	Bryan and class teacher Bryan and support staff.

Summary of Zander's father's home literacy practice

Literacy Event	Literacy Practice/Social Context	Feeling/ Attitude	Who was involved
Read biblical text - who is who in the Old Testament Granddad and Dad read text related to cultural context - Haile Selassie autobiography Read social context- How to win friend Read Encyclopedia Britannia	Reading for **entertainment** Finding out about people's lives. Reading for educational information. Read for cultural and historical information. Read for personal development	Supported with religious guidance. Belonging to a cultural group Understanding of culture Interested in historical information Connected with personal history.	Dad and Granddad and great granddad Dad and his cousin.

	Spending thousands of pounds on books.	Knowledgeable Value books	Dad
Read for personal development Read for cultural research Dad reading daily in his room Reading 'The Master Key System'. Has been a part of his life since he was a child. Explore the Rastafarian religion Listen to pop music	Better understanding of the word. Understanding of personal history Reading for political Understanding how to contribute to life Information social interaction. Develop a thirst for cultural knowledge.	Demonstrate **commitment**- daily reading Living a purposeful life. **purposeful**. Feeling empowered by knowledge **Connected** with the world outside the home. Finding oneself Excited and empowered	Grandparents (two together) Grandchildren sitting in silence. Indirectly participating. Dad and cultural icons
As children they were sent to read books Instead of watching TV Dad shares information from books with children Home library as a resource Audition for plays, performances, and TV productions	To be entertained Parent teaching child values Value education as a source of empowerment Interacting with different groups of people Learning new experiences.	Being **imaginative** **Bonding with parents** **Connecting** with the characters Having **fun** Value cultural learning. Empowered and a part of a social group	Child - with the book. Parents indirectly giving the child the space to participate in the literacy event. Parent interacting with children.
Great granddad a published author of 9 books. Write poems Writing letters to family members Write letters to grandparents	Demonstrate and sharing his life's learning experiences. Communicate feeling and difficulties Socialise or keep in touch with relatives.	**Pride** and **accomplishment**. **Listen to** and valued **Understanding** and **connection**. **Sharing important moments and making memories.**	Granddad sharing with relatives Parent sharing his feelings. Parent sharing with relatives Individuals sharing personal feelings.

Summary of Zander's literacy practice

Home literacy			
Literacy Event	**Literacy Practice/Social Context**	**Feeling / Attitude**	**Who was involved**
Read novels Read wildlife books Personal development	Read for entertainment. Develop a wider scientific knowledge Prepare for out of school exam	Have fun with characters	Zander Zander and Dad Zander on his own

Verbal and non-verbal reasoning- preparing for the 11 plus. Share a book with my dad for personal development	Understanding social and cultural things from his dad.	Empowered with a wide range of knowledge. Bored to prepare for exam Spend time and create moments with dad.	Zander and Dad
Read for and research 100 Black men club Read for Karate and other extra-curricular activities Read for historical information Read recipe when making biscuits with my mum	Develop cultural knowledge Economic empowerment Social development Cultural understanding Learning a life skill- cooking	Connected Valued Understanding money and social interaction Contribution Social and cultural connection Excited that I know how to cook	Zander Zander and mentor from the club. Zander and Karate leader and other club members Zander and Mum
White English, verbal reasoning, and non-verbal reasoning for eleven plus exam. Write for football and Karate homework- research given by the coach. The karate coach only spoke in Japanese while they are in training.	Develop literacy skills enable him to compete for a place in the best secondary schools. Find out more about football and karate. Become more effective at playing. Understand the reasons behind some rules.	Confined to a place and task. Little or no interaction with other humans while learning. Bored but committed. Knowledgeable. Developing my understanding Enjoyable.	Zander Zander
Complete courses for the 100 Black men. Research topics Homework while on the course	Cultural practice Become more knowledgeable about the cultural aspects of his life. Understanding and knowledgeable about the important cultural links and cultural heroes.	Empowered and inspired by cultural icons. Sense of purpose with a mission in life. Connection with culture.	Zander with the leaders and mentors of 100 Black men club.
School Literacy			
Literacy Events	Context	Feeling/ Attitude	Who was involved
Read class novels	Develop understanding of historical setting.	The work is manageable.	Zander and class teacher

A Christmas Carol, Harry Potter, Boys in the Girls Bathroom. Check work we have written and information texts.	Develop comprehension Explore different cultures. Find out about mistakes. Work with peers and improve together	Happy I can interact with others while learning. Excited to learn from each other Know how to get better.	Zander and support staff. Zander and classmates Zander and peers
We write letters, stories, book reviews and many others.	Developing sentence structure and grammatical skills Developing writing skills. Sharing personal views and feelings.	Likes the interaction. Comfortable with the pace of learning. Working above peers	Zander and class teacher Zander and peers

Appendix 8: School Formal Writing Profile

Individual Pupil Moderation Record **Key Stage Writing Moderation**

End of Key stage 2 Moderation			**Working at expected or greater depth in writing.**			
Characteristic of learner: ☐ Green- Outstanding= Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner) ☐Amber-Reliable= A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). ☐Red Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner)	Name: Damian			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can..	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read as a model.	X	x	✓	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	X	x	✓	✓	✓	
Exercise and assures levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	X	✓	✓	x	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately when necessary Use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	X	✓	✓	✓	X	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	x	x	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (conjunctions, adverbials, pronouns, paragraphs)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	
Use verbs and tenses accurately and correctly throughout writing.	X	✓	x	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed	X	x	✓	✓	✓	

End of Key stage 2 Moderation			**Working at expected or greater depth in writing.**			
Characteristic of learner: ☐ Green- Outstanding= Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner) ☐Amber-Reliable= A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). ☐Red Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner)	Bryan			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can.:	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read as a model.	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	X	x	x	✓	✓	
Exercise and assures levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	X	x	x	x	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately when necessary Use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	X	✓	✓	✓	X	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	x	x	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (conjunctions, adverbials, pronouns, paragraphs)	✓	x	✓	x	✓	

Use verbs and tenses accurately and correctly throughout writing.	X	✓	x	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed	X	x	✓	✓	✓	

End of Key stage 2 Moderation			**Working at expected or greater depth in writing**			
Characteristic of learner: ☐ Green- Outstanding= Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner) ☐Amber-Reliable= A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). ☐Red Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner)	Zander			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can:	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Writing effectively for a range of audiences and purposes, selecting independent form, and drawing appropriately on what they have read as a model.	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	
Distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choose the appropriate register.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Exercise and assures levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Use a range of punctuation accurately when necessary Use punctuation precisely to enhance meaning.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Integrate dialogue in narrative to convey meaning.	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	
Use a range of devices to build cohesion (conjunctions, adverbials, pronouns, paragraphs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Use verbs and tenses accurately and correctly throughout writing.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Maintain legibility in handwriting when writing at speed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Appendix 9: School Formal Reading Profile

End of Key stage 2 Moderation			Working at expected or greater depth in reading			
Characteristic of learner: □ Green- Outstanding= Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner) □Amber-Reliable= A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). □Red Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner)	Damian			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can.:	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Read a range of text appreciate to their age and demonstrate understanding.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Make comparison within and across texts.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Ask questions to improve understanding.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Draw inference such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives from actions.	✓	✓	x	✓	x	
Predict what might happen from details stated and implied.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Summary the main idea drawn from more than one paragraph identifying key details that supports the main idea.	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Identify how language and structure contribute to meaning	x	✓	x	✓	✓	

Pupil Moderation record **Key stage Reading Moderation**

End of Key stage 2 Moderation			**Working at expected or greater depth reading**			
Characteristic of learner: □ Green- Outstanding= Positive, actively, engaged, reliable and well prepared (An independent learner) □Amber-Reliable= A reasonable level of preparation and engagement (Becoming more independent learner). □Red Minimal level of preparation and little engagement (still a dependent learner)	Bryan			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can:	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Read a range of text appreciate to their age and demonstrate understanding.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Make comparison within and across texts.	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Ask questions to improve understanding.	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
Draw inference such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives from actions.	x	✓	x	✓	X	
Predict what might happen from details stated and implied.	✓	x	x	✓	✓	

Summarise the main idea drawn from more than one paragraph identifying key details that supports the main idea.	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	
Identify how language and structure contribute to meaning	x	✓	x	✓	✓	

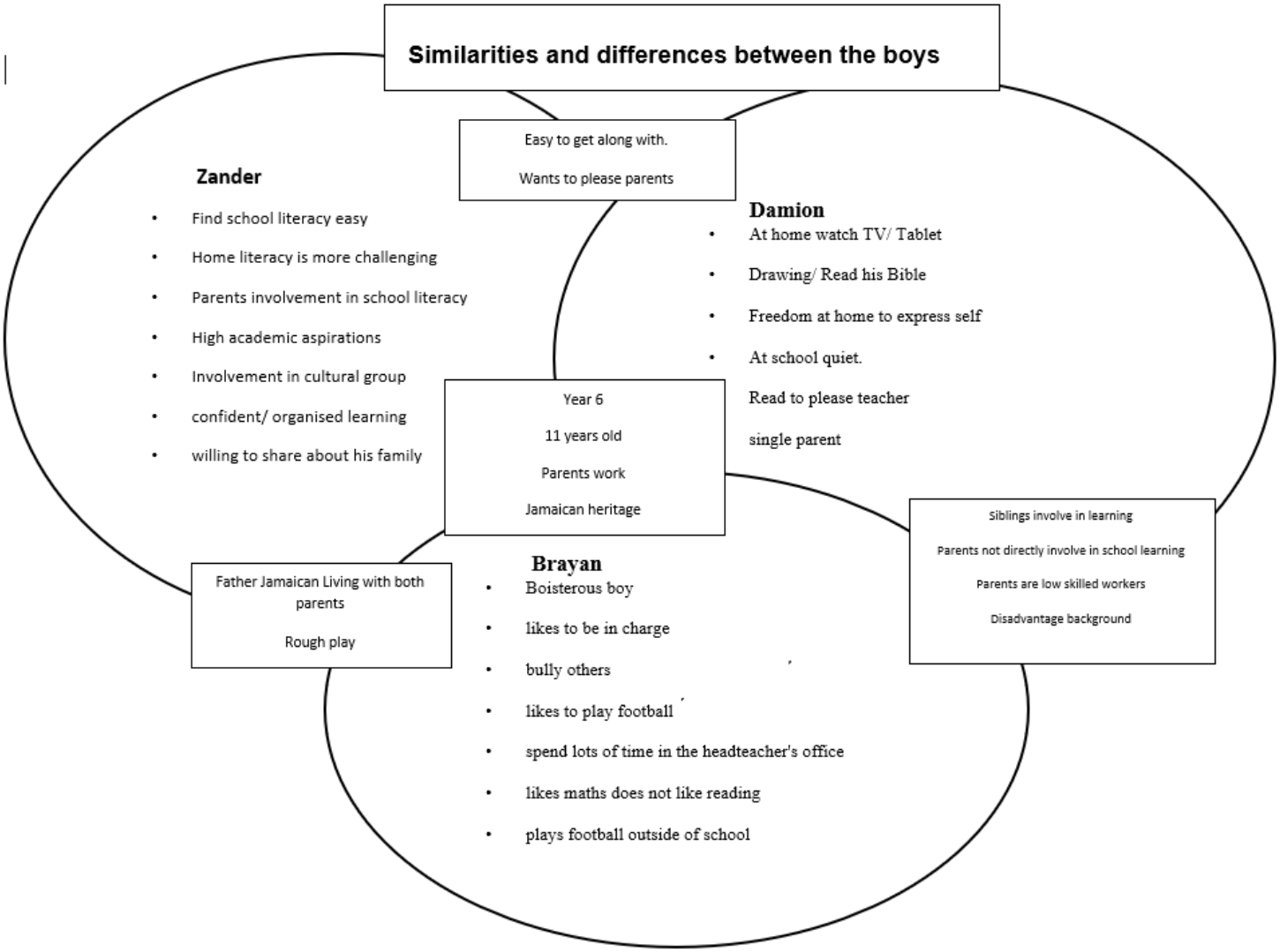
End of Key stage 2 Moderation			**Working at expected or greater depth in reading**			
Name:	Zander			Date: Autumn 2018 - Summer 2019		
The Pupil Can.:	1	2	3	4	5	Attitude to learning
Read a range of text appreciate to their age and demonstrate understanding.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Make comparison within and across texts.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ask questions to improve understanding.	x	✓	✓	x	✓	
Draw inference such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives from actions.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Predict what might happen from details stated and implied.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Summaries the main idea drawn from more than one paragraph identifying key details that supports the main idea.	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	
Identify how language and structure contribute to meaning	x	✓	x	✓	✓	

Appendix 10: Literacy log

The participant's Summer Term literacy log (one week)

Child	Location	Subject	What happened (context)	Feeling	Attitude	Negative or Positive
Damian	Classroom Classroom Classroom Main Hall Library Town Hall In class Shopping mall Classroom	Philosophy English Geography Music Storyteller Singing Math Singing	We debate Donald Trump's visit to the UK We wrote from a character' viewpoint about the main character. We discussed and made posters about gorges and canyons We rehearsed our script for our year 6 production We were told stories by Craig We read from song sheet. Math worksheet I was using song sheet to get the correct lyrics song. I read the work from the board.	I have learnt things about Donald Trump that I did not know before. It was a bit hard because I did not know what he thought at the time. It was difficult working with someone else. What I enjoyed most is that I know more lines from my script. What surprises me is that he still did not finish the book. I felt happy singing. I felt good because I got the work. What I enjoyed most was that we were singing before several people. Right now, I feel happy because I have learnt a new thing.	Learning more Learning is difficult Difficult working with others. Proud of his learning Happy to sing before an audience. Happy to learn something new. I felt good because I got the work correct. Happy about learning something	Positive Negative Negative Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive
Bryan	Classroom Classroom Classroom Classroom Playground Library Classroom Classroom Classroom Classroom	English Philosophy English Geography P.E Story telling Maths Watching a show History French	We learnt comprehension. We looked at difficult words We debated Donald Trump's visit to the UK We were writing about a diary from a character's viewpoint We were doing canyon Was doing cricket and just dance A storyteller was telling a story. Learning about ratio and word problems Watching try not to laugh We were learning about WW2 We were learning about France	I feel smart because I learnt more. I know more words than before. I felt that Donald Trump shouldn't be allowed in the country. Boring because I did not understand it. I felt good but it got difficult. I felt great because I was good at it. Maths bit was easy and the reading part was hard. It was funny. I found the women interesting because in the war they helped. It was interesting learning about France, and I read some words.	proud of learning new words Felt strongly (annoyed) the US president should not enter the country. Bored-did not understand the work Felt good about learning Proud that he was good at what he was doing. Understood the learning. In class activity was funny	Positive Negative Negative Positive Positive Positive Positive Positive
Zander	Classroom Classroom Classroom Classroom Playground Library Main Hall Pantomime	English Philosophy English Geography P. E	Word class and different types of questions Debate -Donald Trump's visit to the UK Writing from a character's viewpoint Writing about gorges and canyons and how they are formed. Had to go inside because it was raining heavily Craig shared oral story with us using actions Singing assembly Watching a movie in class Miss read from the board to us They were narrating from the drama script	It was not hard, but some questions confused me. I felt angry because I don't like writing about him because of what he has done. It was exciting because we got to describe the character in a bad way because of how he is seen by the other characters. It was annoying because I was excited to play cricket. Feeling scared as it was a scary story Learnt the words for a new song. I found the children getting hurt funny. I did not understand some of the words, so I found some parts difficult. Because I did not understand some of the words. I enjoyed booing the character.	Same questions confusing Anger writing about Donald Trump Excited about writing about a character. Annoyed not doing the cricked Scared about a scary story Excited about learning the words of a new song. Enjoyed funny show. Did not understand some words. Enjoy taunting(booing) the character interacting	Negative Negative Positive Negative Negative Positive Positive Negative Positive

Appendix 11: Venn diagram of similarities and differences between the boys' presentation



Appendix 12: Ethical Approval

16th November 2017

Dear Ann Marie,

Project Title:	**Literacy Worlds of Jamaican Children Living in London: identity and educational development**
Principal Investigator:	**Dr Wayne Tennent**
Researcher:	**Ann Marie Allen**
Reference Number:	**UREC 1617 36**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC on **Wednesday 18 January 2017.**

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents: http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-toApproved-Ethics-App-150115.doc

Any adverse events that occur in connection with this research project must be reported immediately to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	**Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator**
London borough	Dr Wayne Tennent

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

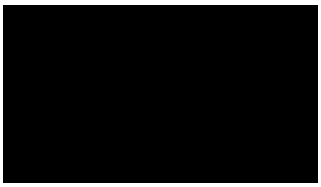
Document	***Version***	***Date***
UREC application form	3.0	2 November 2017
Consent Form – Parents/ Carers	2.0	2 November 2017
Consent Form - Headteacher	2.0	2 November 2017
Consent Form - Teachers	2.0	2 November 2017
Assent Form - Child	2.0	2 November 2017
Risk Assessment	1.0	4 January 2017
School Literacy Log	1.0	4 January 2017
Pupils Interview schedule	1.0	4 January 2017
Adults Interview schedule	1.0	4 January 2017
Teachers' Interview Schedule	1.0	4 January 2017

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Practice in Research is adhered to.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research study is conducted in compliance with the consent given by the ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.



Yours sincerely,

Fernanda Silva
Administrative Officer for Research Governance
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

Appendix 13: Amended Ethical Approval

University of East London

Pioneering Futures Since 1898

Dear Ann Marie,

Application ID: ETH2324-0157

Original application ID: UREC 1617 36

Project title: Literacy Worlds of Jamaican-heritage boys in the English Educational System: Identity and Educational Development

Lead researcher: Mrs Ann Marie Allen

Your application to Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (EISC) was considered on the 5th March 2024.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 4 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the administrator for the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research/consultancy project you must complete 'An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application'.

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics is adhered to.□□

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research/consultancy project should be reported using the University's form for Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Fernanda Da Silva Hendriks

Research Ethics Support Officer

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