

Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: The Learning and Teaching of English Reading to Hong Kong Secondary Students

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A Thesis Submitted to The Education University of Hong Kong in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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**Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities:
The Learning and Teaching of English Reading to Hong Kong
Secondary Students**

by Rey, Kevin Thomas

The Education University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Reading is a multidimensional process that has evolved through history to adapt to accommodate environmental changes. Today, reading continues to evolve to meet the demands of globalization. The study examined the complex connection between curriculum, teachers, and students. To explore and research the relationship between stakeholders in the English reading curriculum, primarily policymakers, teachers, and students. The author selected English reading education for Hong Kong secondary students as a case study. Current and prior literature suggests that English reading to English Second Language Learners (ESL) focuses on the general perceptions and motivations of ESL learning and teaching. However, minimal research focuses on Chinese learners' self-perception of ESL reading, teachers' beliefs and practices, curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent. Therefore, examining, understanding, and identifying the relationship between *Curriculum Intentions and Classroom Realities* is essential.



The objective of the study was threefold (1) to find the relations between learning and teaching and the perceptions of students, (2) to identify teachers' interpretations of the English reading curriculum and how their beliefs and classroom practices could affect the implementation of curriculum, and (3) the alignment of ESL reading lessons prescribed by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong policymakers and the teachers' implementation in class.

There were 250 junior form students participants and 24 English teachers. Questionnaires, semi-formal interviews, lesson observations, and focus group discussions were employed for data collection.

The results highlighted four themes around the area of (i) teachers' efficacy of curriculum interpretation, (ii) challenges affecting beliefs and classroom practice for the implementation of curriculum, (iii) students' understanding of the intent of curriculum, and (iv) the misalignments of curriculum intentions and classroom realities. The points that arose from the discussion indicated a disconnect between policymakers, teachers, and students. The gaps presented in the discussions yielded relevant and attainable methods to bridge the gap between policymakers and teachers, teachers and schools, and teachers and students to achieve convergence in curriculum refinements. The study recognizes that it contributed to the under-researched area of English reading in Junior secondary students and curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent.

Keywords: ESL reading, curriculum refinement, curriculum interpretation, perceptions, beliefs

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The following chapter provides information to introduce the background for this dissertation. It introduces the critical role of reading in acquiring the other three language skills: writing, speaking, and listening. As Yates (2016) states, it shows the closely intertwined relationship between curriculum and instruction. It further explains how the curriculum sets clear objectives and outcomes while teachers determine instruction, affecting students' learning.

The introduction of curriculum change specific to Hong Kong introduces the *'Read to Learn'* initiative and its importance to educational reform. The synergy of curriculum, teachers, and students related to reading in Hong Kong is underscored to develop the research titled *'Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: The Learning and Teaching of English Reading to Secondary Students.'*

The importance of reading Second Language Acquisition (SLA) learners (L2) must acquire; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All four skills must be used to effectively meet an L2 lesson's goals while learning and teaching. While reading as a skill is paramount, as acknowledged by (Day, Bamford, Renandya, Jacobs & Yu, 1998; Day & Bamford 2002; Grabe, 2004), in L2, it also serves as a necessary language input for writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, Wang (2017) and Huang (2014) note that reading is a multidimensional process and the foundation for mastering the other three language skills: writing, listening, and speaking. Carrell (1988) states, "For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language" (p.1). Hence, teaching reading needs particular attention from teachers to meet reading objectives and set the



foundation for writing, listening, and speaking. Meeting the reading objectives, in turn, results in greater productivity in higher education and beyond. Consequently, it has become quite impossible to pursue an education without the skill of reading English. SLA is driven by learners' abilities to embrace the requirements to achieve all four skills to develop near-native English skills.

1.1 Curriculum and instruction

However, curriculum and instruction are critical to effectively developing learners' reading skills. Although curriculum and instruction may have varied meanings resulting from interpretation or purpose, be it societal, political, or educational, according to Flake (2017), "curriculum is what is taught in schools, instruction is how the curriculum is delivered, and learning is what knowledge or skill has been acquired" (p.83). Furthermore, the most commonly understood definition of curriculum is built on the premise of an overt curriculum that supports the intended instructional schema of educational guidelines set by the government or institutions (Wilson, 2005). It can be established that an intimate relationship exists between curriculum and instruction. As known, curricula indicate the objectives and outcomes of education and translate them into content that is taught, and instruction translates the objectives and content of the curricula into the classroom to bring about the desired learning outcomes for the learners. As stated by Anyanwu & Onwuakpa (2016):

The curriculum specifies the subjects and topics to be taught. In contrast, instructional activities determine the objectives of instruction in terms of skills, tasks, and competencies

expected of the learner and the methods, materials, and strategies designed to accomplish them” (p.1).

Curricula, by definition, are predictable. It is the foundation set that aids learners in acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and broadening understanding which can be measured.

Conversely, instruction can be capricious. The teachers’ philosophy and beliefs directly influence the blueprint of instruction. The instruction design is personalized as teachers maintain their opinions, attitudes, philosophies, and practices. Hence, the instruction may depend on the curriculum, but the instructional design may vary. Teachers are human. Therefore, human elements play a critical role in instruction. The human factor directly impacts the interpersonal relationship between teachers and learners. A close relationship between teachers and students dominates the classroom (Liberante, 2012). The instruction to students directly impacts how they learn, what they learn, and their perception of learning.

1.2 Curriculum change in Hong Kong

As stated earlier, reading is critical to language acquisition. Reading promotes writing, listening, and speaking while developing critical thinking skills and preparing for life-long learning. The curriculum in Hong Kong has seen profound changes over the past 20 years, with ‘Key Stages’ as the trigger for modifications, as will be discussed in the significance of this study section.

The handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 brought about change politically, administratively, and equally dramatic curriculum reform. The formal curriculum reform was initiated in 2001 due to the new government’s strategy to meet the global economic pressures, local societal issues, and the quality of education.

A complete educational overhaul was proposed by the Hong Kong government in 2000 as recommended by the Education Commission (EC) Report. A year later, in 2001, it was not until the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) officially launched the educational reform. The change was sweeping, and the curriculum reform was the foundation of the change. The reform was a culmination of redefining education goals, assessment reform, including IT, life-wide and life-long learning, and teacher education in the form of benchmarking (Lam & Wong, 2018). This sweeping reform involved “a paradigm shift of teaching and learning” (Lam & Wong, 2018, p.112). A shift from a traditional subject-based curriculum to an integrated curriculum was selected. The initiatives included “moral and civic education, reading to learn, project learning, and information technology for interactive learning” (CDC, 2001, p.83). The rationale for choosing the four curriculum development initiatives mentioned above was to develop students' learning capabilities to achieve a variety of learning goals and independent learning strategies and be well-equipped in the other eight key learning areas Chinese, English, mathematics, science, technology, humanities, art, and physical education (CDC, 2001).

1.3 Read to learn initiative

A critical change in the Hong Kong curriculum focused on English reading. Accordingly, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) drafted and implemented changes to the reading curriculum. The changes incorporated a new philosophy and approach to reading and the teaching of reading. The focus is to promote a positive reading culture with defined measurements to ensure attainment (CDC, 2017). “Reading to learn is essential to promote a reading culture in school. This helps students develop their competence in and the love for reading, which is essential for life-long learning” (CDC, 2001, p.ii). The importance indicated

shows the paradigm shift from a learn-to-read ideology to a read-to-learn. The read-to-learn initiative is integral in supporting knowledge-based learning and lifelong learning. Read to learn allows students to develop the skills necessary to embark on the journey of education and whole-person development. The objectives are to improve language proficiency, develop critical thinking skills, achieve quality life knowledge through diversified reading, cultivate open-mindedness, enrich knowledge, and broaden horizons to adapt to future growth and development. With this change comes a new way of teaching (instruction), in which teachers have shown mixed emotions (Harfitt, 2020). The CDC's new curriculum thoroughly detailed the objectives and outcomes. It was limited to instructing students, a key factor mentioned by Flake (2017). Teachers' beliefs and practices weigh heavily on the instruction of the curriculum. Though teachers predominantly are not averse to change with the overload of administrative work and the Confucian Heritage towards education, there is no time to implement change (Fox & Henri, 2005). As stated by Fox and Henri (2005), a "community cannot realistically expect major pedagogical change to occur in Hong Kong schools unless a more holistic and systematic approach to facilitate change is adopted" (p.167).

Since 2001, seven curriculum development enhancements have been made, of which read to learn was a focal point. In 2002 the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower issued a strong memo about promoting reading. In 2014, the CDC introduced booklet 3B, *Reading to Learn: To Sustain, Deepen, and Focus on Learning to Learn*, and in 2017 issued booklet 6B, *Reading to Learn: Towards Reading, across the curriculum*.



As the CDC issued edicts on curriculum reform to enhance students learning, teachers were charged with bringing the curriculum intentions to classroom realities. As stated, the curriculum in Hong Kong has seen profound changes over the past 20 years, with ‘Key Stages’ as the trigger for modifications, as will be discussed in detail within the literature review. The cyclical nature of curriculum reform, teachers' understanding of curriculum and refinements, teachers’ beliefs and practices, and students’ perceptions of teaching and learning concerning reading are the foundation of this study and the guiding principle to answer the research questions developed through the literature review.

1.4 Significance of Study

Research in this area, curriculum intention, and classroom realities are paramount due to Hong Kong’s complicated environment, interconnecting culture, economy and politics, and education. Society, government, and education are intertwined, as Harfitt (2020) states, “set against a powerful backdrop of globalization which has acted as the catalyst for much of the educational reform that has taken place in Hong Kong” (p.57). Educational reforms through curriculum development are one of the pillars of this study, which is a response to government and societal needs.

First, the HKSAR understands the need to maintain competitiveness through an improved labor force to accommodate the challenges in a competing global environment. The most prudent way to enhance skills is through education, confirmed by the [Education Commission report \(2017, p.1\)](#), “Our future lies in today’s education. The system, modes, content, and teaching methods of our education system must keep up with the environment and needs of society in the 21st

Century.” It should begin with education reform (curriculum development) by adapting to globalization and maintaining international status. Through the analysis of needs, the government, with the support of society, can achieve the goals of competitiveness.

Furthermore, the society of Hong Kong maintains a long history of a Confucian Heritage Culture. This culture places significant importance on education and student achievement and is exam-driven (Tan, 2018). According to Lee (2021), “many East Asian countries and Chinese communities can be linked to Hong Kong’s success in schooling its youth” (p.4). Many other Asian societies have modeled the Hong Kong education system to upgrade its society. With a solid bond for students’ academic performance and results, society favorably embraces curriculum development to benefit students.

Second, as government and society are one pillar of this study, teaching (instruction) is the second mainstay. While the government and society have recommended and embraced curriculum development, specifically with reading, the teachers must now approach their beliefs and practices to instruct the students. As mentioned, Hong Kong society embraces Confucian Heritage, which is prevalent in the teaching community. With an exam-driven mindset and change, it is difficult for teachers to navigate (Hennebry-Leung, 2020). Moreover, teachers’ beliefs and practices in Hong Kong are clouded by the lack of input into curriculum development (Harfitt, 2020). The lack of input given by teachers and the lack of instructional guidelines presented by the CDC leave the instructional design up to the teacher. Their endeavors of positive instruction can only be seen through classroom practice and the student's results.

Thirdly, this study investigates the student's relationship with the teacher and the curriculum. Society focuses on students' success in Hong Kong through their results. Students, therefore, have a mindset of high achievement. Students take at face value what is instructed by the teacher. They assume what the teacher says is correct and seldom challenge or question what is being taught in a lesson or if it aligns with what they thought they should be learning.

Lastly, this study's significance will expose the cyclical nature of the curriculum, teachers, and students. It will examine teachers' qualifications, experiences, classroom practice, and student outcomes and perceptions related to curriculum and measurements. Hence providing better understanding implications and limitations of '*Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities. A Hong Kong Case Study: The Learning and Teaching of English Reading to Junior Form Secondary Students.*'

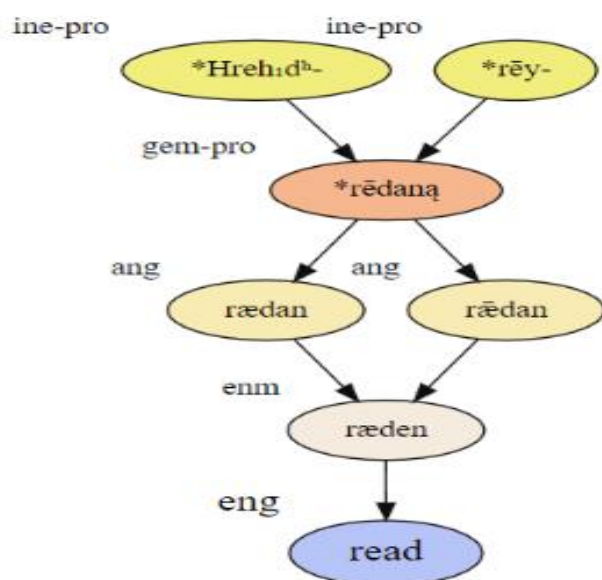


Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The following literature review shows the etymology of the word ‘read’ and the association between various types of reading. It identifies and provides brief overviews of the evolution of reading and how that translates into learning and teaching theories, which act as the foundation for classroom practices. Historically, the relationship between learning and teaching curriculum and instruction shows a need for improvement to cater to global growth. Furthermore, global literacy measurements developed are the basis for understanding if curriculum intentions and classroom realities are aligned. To understand why curriculum reforms and refinements occur in today's world, one needs to understand the history, evolution, and types of reading to see how historical changes in reading were made to adapt to the needs of society at that time—understanding and seeing how the changes were made aided the study in discussing *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities*.

Figure 2.1 *Origin of the word Read*



<https://etymologeeek.com/eng/read> Accessed 4th January 2021

English is one of the few western European languages that does not derive the word read from Latin. Read comes from Proto-Indo-European, 4500 BC, *Hreh₁d^h-, Proto-Indo-European *rēy-, and later Proto-Germanic *rēdaną (to decide, to advise). According to Franklin (2011), Sir James Oliver, a poet, lawyer, and linguist, discovered the Indo-European language through analysis and noted similarities between Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Germanic, and Celtic languages. In the 12th Century, 'read' was derived from the Old English' rāda,' of Germanic descent, which meant to advise, counsel, or guess. It translated to German as 'raten' and in Dutch as 'Raden,' which meant guess or advise. In the late 16th Century, reading was an adjectival form. It was not until the early 19th Century that it became a noun. As these were the primary meanings, the meaning of the English' rede', later to be 'read,' shifted. Today, 'read' is no longer attached to its origins. As the act of reading advanced in education over time, formal meanings arose, and new derivations entered the English language. The word 'reading' was introduced in the 19th Century, which meant data given to be read for a specific purpose or reason.

In the 19th Century, the introduction of the word reading became prevalent, and its purpose was varied, as reading is personal (Lems, Miller, & Soro, 2010; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Subsequently, texts read can be interpreted differently due to the reasons and purposes that differ from reader to reader because of their different opinions, backgrounds, experiences, and schemata (Sadoski, 2004). Accordingly, different types of reading took place at different times to meet socio/political and personal needs.



2.2 Types of reading

Reading has evolved over the centuries. Society reads for a mixture of purposes and reasons. People may read to understand a text and answer comprehension questions, gain knowledge, improve linguistic skills, overcome challenges in language acquisition, attain pleasure and information, gain the know-how to complete tasks, become familiar with a particular place or situation, follow events, local and global, to get ideas. It shows that reading has a definite purpose. According to Doff (1997, p.170), he states, “We usually have a purpose in reading: there is something we want to find out, some information we want to check or clarify, some opinion we want to match against our own.” The purpose and reasons for reading differ from person to person due to a variety of reasons: their opinions, background, experiences, and interest in the particular subject matter. Reading, according to purpose and utility, is basically of two categories. They are academic and non-academic.

2.2.1 Academic reading

During a reader’s academic life, beginning with primary school, it is recognized that reading is an essential component to succeed academically and in lifelong learning (Chapman, Tunmer, & Prochnow, 2000). Understanding a given passage is vital for a student to answer question sets in the examinations because comprehending and understanding written texts means the reader can extract the salient information required to respond to the questions successfully. However, understanding is possible only when a student reads effectively and meaningfully. They must be able to identify the aspects of reading for academic purposes.



If the student reads effectively and makes out a given text's meaning, they can answer all types of questions: gap-filling, multiple-choice, short-answer, and open-ended. However, this does not mean understanding or comprehension. It shows the ability to answer questions with short-term knowledge, which can be recognized for most academic purposes, undoubtedly for students learning a second or foreign language. As English is not their mother tongue, fair and effective reading strategies, and skills are required. Of the four skills in learning, the most critical yet challenging skill in education is reading - reading not for pleasure but for information that has been researched, organized, and documented under the rules of academic discourse. Academic reading is essential because it prepares a reader for future and further reading in her/his individual life. It is the pre-stage of non-academic reading.

2.2.2 Non-academic reading

Grellet (1996) developed, “the purpose and reasons for reading have divided non-academic reading into main areas; reading for information and reading for pleasure” (p.4)).

The only sensible reason to read for pleasure (private reading) is to experience enjoyment or pleasure from reading literature. Readers should engage in materials of interest with anticipation of enjoyment. Though the reader’s intentions of private reading are strictly for pleasure, Cunningham & Stanovich (1998) stated, “reading has cognitive consequences that extend beyond its immediate task of lifting meaning from a particular passage” (p.137). Furthermore, these consequences are reciprocal and exponential. “Accumulated over time – spiraling either upward or downward – they carry profound implications for developing a wide range of cognitive abilities” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, p.68).

Subconsciously private reading develops academic skills in language acquisition unconsciously to the reader. Private reading can be described as aesthetic because it fills the soul's thirst and provides readers with the aesthetic pleasure it needs.

According to Howard (2011), reading for pleasure improves self-construction, self-awareness, and self-identification:

The study confirms that teens, like adults, unconsciously use pleasure reading as a means of everyday life information seeking. The reasons for personal salience identified in the foregoing discussion have a robust developmental theme: in their pleasure reading, teens gain significant insights into mature relationships, personal values, cultural identity, physical safety and security, aesthetic preferences, and understanding of the physical world, all of which aid teen readers in the transition from childhood to adulthood. (p.46)

Pleasure reading, or reading for enjoyment, significantly benefits language acquisition and literacy development. According to Krashen (2004), pleasure reading improves vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and general knowledge.

Krashen (2004) argues that pleasure reading, not just reading instruction, is the primary source of competence and progress in literacy. People acquire new words and grammatical structures naturally and unconsciously when they read for pleasure. They can figure out the pronunciation and meaning of new words through context and absorb the grammar rules by consuming large amounts of written text.

In concert, Day (2015) highlights the nature of extended reading has tremendous benefits for individuals and society. Day, Bamford, Renandya, Jacobs, & Yu (1998) shows how pleasure reading improves reading ability and literacy. When people read more for enjoyment, they get faster and better at reading, and their comprehension and retention improve. Extensive reading builds skills that translate across contexts. Pleasure readers also develop a more extensive vocabulary and a firmer grasp of grammar, syntax, and literary elements.

Pleasure reading enhances knowledge and worldview. Books, articles, blogs, and other texts expose readers to new ideas, places, periods, cultures, and fields of study. Exposure to new knowledge and reading genres promotes empathy, open-mindedness, and a lifelong love of learning. Lifelong learning is one of the tenets of English reading set forth by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong.

Pleasure reading leads to greater fluency and automaticity. As readers engage with more and more texts, their decoding speed improves, and they have to pause less to figure out words or meanings. Fluency develops naturally through extensive pleasure reading practice.

Pleasure reading has significant benefits for L2 (second language) learners. According to several experts, reading for enjoyment improves language proficiency, increases motivation, expands cultural knowledge, and shapes identity development.

Krashen (2004) argues that pleasure reading is the primary source of progress in language learning. When L2 learners read interesting and compelling materials, they naturally acquire new vocabulary and grammatical structures without conscious effort. Pleasure reading leads to greater

fluency, more vital decoding skills, and an expanded lexicon. It takes the focus off form and grammar rules, making learning feel more effortless and enjoyable.

Day (2015) shows how pleasure reading increases motivation and self-confidence as an L2 learner. When reading is a source of pleasure rather than drudgery, learners stay more engaged in the learning process. They set their own reading goals, follow their interests, and develop persistence to improve. The enjoyment of reading boosts motivation to continue reading more, creating an upward spiral of progress.

Extensive reading enhances cultural fluency and promotes tolerance, open-mindedness, and empathy (Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011). Learners develop a feel for cultural nuances, idioms, implied meanings, and unsaid assumptions in the L2. They gain a more realistic and nuanced understanding of the language and culture.

In summary, this literature review highlights several critical benefits of pleasure reading for L2 learners, including enhanced language proficiency, increased motivation and self-confidence, deeper cultural fluency, and opportunities for identity development. When integrated into L2 learning routines, pleasure reading supports progress, engagement, open-mindedness, and a stronger connection to the self as an L2 user. Overall, reading for enjoyment should be promoted as a vital part of learning any second language. Whether reading is done for academic or non-academic purposes, it is essential to understand that the needs of society dictate the evolution of reading through curriculum development and change (Harfitt, 2020). As the study shows that reading methods have evolved, the instruction of the reading methods is called into question. Can



teachers effectively use experience, understanding, and qualification in classroom practice to meet the prescribed outcomes of the curriculum?

2.3 Evolution of reading

Reading dates back thousands of years and has and continues to evolve. The learning and teaching of reading have been a priority for educators and parents for centuries and have been fundamental to success for most cultures. The first written language, archaic cuneiform, is said to be from 3400 BC, and the first scribed story, The Epic of Gilgamesh, is dated back to 2700-2500 BC (Balke & Tsouparopoulou, 2016). Moreover, as time has evolved, so has the requirement for reading. Consider how essential reading is in everyday life – menus, instructions, labels, recipes, and street signs. Educators used what was determined to be the best practice or high-quality reading methods of instruction related to the requirements of society's needs in the specific period. These reading methods evolved and are likened today to reading curricula. Comprehensive research papers published by Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham (2011), Barry (2008), Monaghan (2005), and Dombey (2005) discuss the evolution of reading over the past 300 years. The research consensus indicates that the reading methods introduced below adapted to that time's socio/political environment and to cater to readers' needs.

2.3.1 17th Century reading

Coined was the Alphabet method in the mid-17th Century; this method of teaching reading spanned more than a century. It began with John Eliot, a scholar educated at Cambridge before relocating to what is now known as the state of Massachusetts, requesting that 'Hornbooks' be sent to him from England to introduce the reading sequence of words. The hornbook presented

the alphabet, corresponding syllables, nonsensical words, and the Lord's Prayer. The thought behind the hornbook is that it would aid students in learning to read by spelling out syllables and words orally. Monaghan (2005) states:

The first text in the traditional sequence, the hornbook, was a little paddle of wood measuring less than three inches wide by four inches high. The learning and teaching method utilizing the hornbook would end with reading the Bible. The hornbook took root in the community because of its ethical and spiritual values and teaching method to empower learners to read. The hornbook would be popular not only in the 17th but 18th Century. (p.81)

2.3.2 18th Century reading

However, as the needs of society changed, the 'Primer' was introduced. Still maintaining instructional sequencing, the primer used pictures and Bible verses to help learners understand the letters of the alphabet and the associated sounds. The name later changed to the New England Primer, the first text developed for the new world, current-day America, to aid children in learning to read. For the children, it was their first exposure to formal education. It continued to teach the alphabet and syllables, but it instilled the values of Puritans and Calvinists (Barry, 2008). Following in the New England Primer path, 'The Ordinary Road' created by John Locke was a series of reading texts derived from the New England Primer and prose of the Psalms Psalter, which focused on grammar rules and sentence patterns as developed in the late 1700s.

Still focused on the Alphabet Method as a foundation for teaching reading, a new instrument, Webster's Blue-backed Speller, was developed by Noah Webster. Webster developed this after the revolutionary war, and "it was no longer considered appropriate to use reading materials that

had been printed in England” (Barry, 2008, p.34). Webster’s book, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1783), aimed to promote reading within the framework of sounds and letters relationship. His book, later named the *Blue-backed Speller*, had three parts; a grammar section, a spelling section, and a reading and pronunciation section. Though the instruction preserved the focus of *The Hornbook* (1678) and *The New England Primer* (1777), it was one of the first secular texts to be introduced to colonial schools. Its purposes differed significantly from previous texts utilized in the learning and teaching of reading. The *Speller* was designed to teach only reading. It focused on the method over the content and the relationship between letters and their sounds. Though learners were demographically different, society saw reading evolve through using the *Speller*.

2.3.3 19th Century reading

As the migration to the west began, educators soon realized that the dispersion of society could not be handled by the few who attended school. Understanding the needs of students to be able to read about geography and history, Horace Mann introduced the word-to-letters approach, which eventually became the whole-word approach, meaning less attention to letters and related sounds and more emphasis placed on the whole words and sentence structure (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal, & Pearson 2016). “They began to experiment with introducing whole words with pictures and concrete experiences” (Barry, 2008, p.36). This rationale led William H. McGuffey, a Midwestern professor, to author the first readers for each elementary grade. This book “provided teachers with a format for teaching by phonic method, the word method, or both” (Sadoski, 2004, p.27). First published in 1841, the series consisted of 55 lessons teaching children to read while promoting good reading behaviors (later renamed strategies) and was divided into six

sections covering a range of reading strategies and skills. The first section addressed the alphabet, phonics, syllables, sight words, and comprehension for young readers. While section 2 primarily focused on content, and sections 3-6 were more aligned to topics on the instruction, we see today in the middle and high school reading curricula.

With the importance and stress of meaning and comprehension, a new reading method evolved in the latter part of the 19th Century. The story method educator Charles W. Eliot suggested that current materials had not sparked students' interest in reading due to the lack of helpful content (Sadoski, 2004), hence the need for storytelling. It engaged students, further developed illustrations, and was considered a critical turning point in the learning and teaching of reading (Barry, 2008; Sadoski, 2004). The idea was to use familiar texts to which learners could relate, which sub-conscientiously help learners memorize, visualize, and verbalize thoughts on a passage or story.

2.3.4 20th Century reading

This story method met with the beginning of the 20th Century and war. Historically, most reading methods utilized phonics as the basis for teaching and learning reading. The war effort revealed soldiers' lack of ability to follow printed instructions, and a controversy ensued about the effects of silent reading versus oral reading. From 1900 to 1930, constructivists weighed in on the reading methods employed by schools. The likes of Dewey (1900), Bartlett (1932), and Piaget (1952) determined that reading methods are based on curriculum to spark curiosity which can be identified as 'Inquiry Learning,' 'Schema Theory,' and 'Theory of Cognitive Development' respectively (Tracey & Morrow, 2017 & Sadoski, 2004). By the 1930s, phonics seemed to fade

into the foreground, and new literacy standards gave rise. Providing materials to spark students' thinking through comprehension, sight words, and whole-word reading was applied to English reading and all classes in Reading across Curriculum. Learning to read has become the foundation for the three other English skills; writing, listening, and speaking (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

To adapt to this learning to read through comprehension, sight words, and whole-word reading, Gilbert Ryle adapted the works of McGuffey's readers into sequencing books by grade, which went on to become the sequence of reading skills noted by William Gray (1937). Not satisfied with persisting difficulties students faced in learning to read in a student-centered instructional model, William S. Gray developed basal readers, most notably the Dick and Jane series, and provided instructional manuals for teachers to deliver reading lessons. Gray's basal reader series "Dick and Jane" comprised passages and text with increasingly difficult vocabulary instead of varieties of literature. Basal readers have also been involved in the learning of sight words. Basal reading programs are a series of texts designed to focus on crucial linguistic features, reading skills, and building vocabulary. This series was the model of reading instruction for two decades and remains a foundation for scholastic publishers of reading materials today (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

As the 1950s arrived, it was noted that reading methods had predominately remained unchanged for the past 30 years. According to Shantz and Zimmer (2005), students still lacked reading skills, which became evident when the educational bestseller *Why Johnny Can't Read* by Rudolph Flesh was released in 1955. The book's premise was to discount the idea of whole wording reading and return to the fundamentals of phonics. Researchers Schantz and Zimmer



(2005) noted that educational change was needed during this period. Society faced the cold war, and the space race and the urgency for educational improvement was the only way to succeed.

In contrast, Flesh's book indicated the need to return to phonics because the lack of teaching phonics was the root of poor reading skills. However, Schantz and Zimmer acknowledged that curricula used phonics later in academic life instead of earlier. Schantz and Zimmer (2005) further state, "Why Johnny Can't Read was not just a debate over reading methods; it called into question the integrity of professional educators" (p.2). The debate led to the formation of the International Reading Association in 1956 to define the nature of reading and consider issues and problems faced.

The changes in the 1950s and the formation of the International Reading Association saw a virtually completed standardization of reading (Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham, 2011). The 1960s saw the use of basal readers diminishing, students were encouraged to write more, testing was created, and overall, students seemed better educated. This reading change sparked intense research in the United States, focusing on reading instruction.

Though no significant new reading method was introduced in the 1960s, it gave way to the 1970s and the return of phonics and a paradigm shift of teachers becoming facilitators, not tellers (Tracey & Morrow, 2017; Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham, 2011; Barry, 2008). While student's focus was on reading, reading skills, and testing, "teachers observed what children did, decided what they needed, and arranged conditions to allow the student to discover

those very insights about reading, writing, and learning for themselves” (Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham, 2011, p.29).

In the 1980s and 1990s primary focus was to promote reading and not focus on teaching methodologies. Celebrity advertising entered mainstream America to engage students to read for pleasure. Created by the American Library Association in 1985, the “Read” campaign geared up to encourage society to read more. However, with concerns about the educational system, in the 1980s, within the United States compared to other nations, textbooks, and workbooks were introduced into lessons to improve students’ literacy. The reading method was challenging; third-party publishers and government authorities now developed learning outcomes and adopted a whole language approach (Tracey & Morrow, 2017; Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham, 2011). The 1990s continued with the whole language approach, but researchers had different ideas about how phonics would return. Moore, Moore, Cunningham & Cunningham (2011) alluded to the relationship between symbols and sounds and the spelling of the sound relationship needed to be introduced in early childhood education to be more effective. The controversy of phonics again ensued, becoming more of a political issue than an educational one.

2.3.5 21st Century reading

As phonics again gained control of the reading lesson in the 2000s, students were the receivers of phonemic awareness and phonics while teachers fell back into the role of tellers, not facilitators. The education system was failing, and the government recognized a need for change and introduced the ‘*No Child Left Behind Act.*’ This act aimed to bridge the gap between students and

their reading abilities through a centralized reading method. With a well-intentioned ideology of bridging the gap, the *'No Child Left Behind Act'* identified that many students had been left behind. The lack of reading methods changing to adapt to the needs of a vast body of students was documented through analysis and research findings by the State of Utah. Subsequently, the State of Utah introduced the Common Core Standards in 2010, which is still a benchmark used today. The standards provide a high-quality instructional process for students to master knowledge concepts and skills at each grade level. Reading has now embarked on a new era of teaching, with a focus on positive reading culture.

In summary, the evolution of reading methods has shown that reading instruction dates back to the mid-1600s. The ABC method of instruction, focusing on the letter-to-word approach, remained the center of instruction for almost two centuries. The hornbook supported the ABC method, the New England Primer, the Psalter, and Webster's Blue Backed Speller as the diversity of learners changed Mann's introduction of the words-to-letter approach, a contradiction to the ABC method. They have shaped reading methods from the 1830s to the 1920s. These readers, including history and geography, were read aloud to classroom learners. However, Francis Parker introduced silent reading to develop a greater understanding during this period. At the same time, World War One ensued, and it became evident that soldiers could not read or write, endangering their lives on the battlefields.

John Dewey showed a need for instructional change towards reading and emphasized a child-centered curriculum to meet the needs of individual differences, today coined to cater to learner diversity. In the 1930s, Gray saw a struggle in student-centered learning and introduced a new reading method using basal readers. His Dick and Jane series soon became the exemplar of reading instruction for three decades. With the changes facing America and the integration of



schools, educators noted a lack of literacy among students. The evolution of reading methods reverted to the ABC method using phonics as its foundation. From that point until today, reading methods (instruction) have changed according to the needs of students, educators, textbook publishers, and the government. This further supports the current study of '*Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities*', as the curriculum in Hong Kong has changed several times in less than 20 years to meet the needs of globalization and local society.

The evolution of reading methods (instruction) has been and will be a moving target to meet the needs of society as individuals and as a whole. Understanding the tenets of instruction is paramount to meeting the objectives set out by curriculum design. Curriculum reform “broadly encompasses change in the syllabus, the teaching and assessment methods” (Poon & Wong, 2008, p.54). Whether the curriculum is general or specific, it sets the foundation for instruction, and historically, this study has highlighted the significant changes in instruction (evolution of reading methods). However, has the education of pre-service teachers followed curriculum change, preparing teachers to understand and adopt the curriculum changes? Are teachers equipped to properly put forward the ideas of the curriculum in classroom practices? Do teachers fully understand curriculum and changes?

2.4 Curriculum

As indicated, the evolution of reading methods (instruction) plays a significant role in carrying out the curriculum (Flake, 2017). An effective curriculum and instruction are critical to developing learners' skills successfully. Although curriculum and instruction may have varied meanings resulting from interpretation or purpose, be it societal, political, or educational,



according to Flake (2017), “curriculum is what is taught in schools, instruction is how the curriculum is delivered, and learning is what knowledge or skill has been acquired” (p.83). Furthermore, the most commonly understood definition of curriculum is built on the premise of an overt curriculum that supports the intended instructional schema of educational guidelines set by the government or institutions (Wilson, 2005). It can be established that an intimate relationship exists between curriculum and instruction. As known, curricula indicate the objectives and outcomes of education and translate them into content that is taught, and instruction translates the objectives and content of the curricula into the classroom to bring about the desired learning outcomes for the learners. As stated by Anyanwu & Onwuakpa (2016), “curriculum specifies the subjects and topics to be taught whereas, instructional activities determine the objectives of instruction in terms of skills, tasks, and competencies expected of the learner as well as the methods, materials, and strategies designed to accomplish them” (p.1). Curricula, by definition, are predictable. It is the foundation set that aids learners in acquiring knowledge, developing skills, and broadening understanding which can be measured.

The 1960s and 1970s were the starting point of English teaching reform, driven by the curriculum development movement in most Anglophone countries (Green & Cormack, 2008). The reading method evolution evidence this history of the English reading curriculum and educational reform influence continued through the early twenty-first Century ushering in new thinking and emphasis placed on English learning. As globalization continues, curriculum changes are necessary to stay competitive worldwide (Harfitt, 2020).



2.4.1 Curriculum and Hong Kong

As a result of the sovereign change in 1997 and globalization, Hong Kong has been transforming all socio/political aspects of the territory. Several areas are significantly affected, with the education sector one of the most profoundly affected. In 1999, the Education Commission suggested an unparalleled all-inclusive reform to education. According to Cheng (2005), “Hong Kong is going to start the third wave of educational reform to pursue future effectiveness with an extreme concern for relevance to the future generations and the society in globalization” (p.191). This reform was all-encompassing in concentration and scale (Cheng, 2009; Poon & Wong, 2004; Mok & Chan, 2002), covering all aspects of the education system: teacher training and certification, academic structure, modes of assessment, and medium of instruction.

2.4.1.1 Overview Hong Kong curriculum reform and refinement

Several documents have been issued on curriculum reform by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) since the Education Commission proposed reform was published in 2000. They are *Learning to learn: Life-long learning and whole-person development* (CDC, 2001), *Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3)* (CDC, 2002), *English Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – 6)* (CDC, 2004), *Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6)* (CDC and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007), *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide: The Future is Now: from Vision to Realisation* (CDC, 2009), *Basic Education Curriculum Guide: To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1 - 6)* (CDC, 2014), *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide, Hong Kong* (CDC, 2017).

The curriculum reforms present general guidelines and frameworks for developing learning and teaching materials to help students develop nine skills; ‘collaboration,’ ‘communication,’

‘creativity,’ ‘critical thinking,’ ‘information technology,’ ‘numeracy,’ ‘problem-solving,’ ‘self-management,’ and ‘study skills’ (CDC, 2014). These nine skills will assist students in the eight key learning areas; ‘*Chinese Language Education, English Language Education, Mathematics Education, Personal, Social, and Humanities Education, Science Education, Technology Education, Arts Education, and Physical Education* (CDC, 2014). The CDC reform of 2001 focused on four key areas as the foundation; ‘*Moral and Civic Education, Reading to Learn, Project Learning, and Information Technology for Interactive Learning.*’ There was a significant emphasis on the ‘*Read to Learn*’ area at the primary and secondary levels and predominately in English reading. Accordingly, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) drafted and implemented changes to the reading curriculum, which can be found in the various reforms introduced, *3B: Reading to Learn, Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3)* (CDC, 2002), *3B Reading to Learn, Basic Education Curriculum Guide: To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1 -6)* (CDC, 2014), and *Booklet 6B: Reading to Learn: Towards Reading across Curriculum: Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide, Hong Kong* (CDC, 2017).

The changes incorporated a new philosophy and approach to reading and the teaching of reading. The focus is to promote a positive reading culture with defined measurements to ensure attainment (CDC, 2017). As previously mentioned, this change comes with a new way of teaching (instruction), which teachers have mixed feelings about (Harfitt, 2020). As Harfitt (2020) further eludes, changes in pedagogies “do not always transfer so readily” (p.71), which indicates that teachers may seem enthusiastic about changing their pre-disposed beliefs, and pedagogies may inhibit the acceptance and implementation of change. The CDC’s new

curriculum detailed the objectives and outcomes. The objectives were to equip students with skills to foster growth in future life-long and life-wide learning. The expected outcomes are to go from a 'beginner' to an 'emergent' and finally a 'proficient' reader. The detail of the reading curriculum outcomes is illustrated in figure 2.8, shown below.

Figure 2.2 3B *Read to Learn: Basic Education Curriculum Guide:*

Areas	Beginner Readers	→	Emergent Readers	→	Proficient Readers
Skills and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Go from 'Learning to Read' to 'Reading to Learn' ❖ Move from early attempts to use pictorial and phonic cues for comprehension to the more integrated use of a variety of cues, including visual, contextual and structural ones. ❖ Progress from 'reading the lines' to 'reading between the lines' and eventually to 'reading beyond the lines' ❖ Extend the variety of text-types from rhymes, stories and simple non-fiction to a wider range including both fiction and non-fiction of an increasing length and complexity. Use a variety of reading materials including literary texts, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, newspapers and magazines, signs and technical manuals, etc. ❖ Begin to read with guidance and support from teachers and parents (through Reading Aloud and Reading Along) to eventually reading independently (Reading Alone), and at the same time learning to adapt strategies and pace to tackle the reading text and task. ❖ Express and share students' reading experience in ways that reflect their growth in thinking and understanding. Starting from mainly relaying the content (e.g. re-telling stories, drawing pictures), students may gradually progress to explaining concepts and procedures (e.g. doing a demonstration, giving a summary), evaluating the text (e.g. book reviews, commentaries) and creating ideas (e.g. musical play, drama). 				

Figure 2.2 (continued)

Areas	Beginner Readers → Emergent Readers → Proficient Readers
Attitude, Motivation and Habit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Move from enjoy reading books chosen with / by parents and teachers to reading materials that are self-selected. ❖ Be motivated to read initially with extrinsic rewards to being self-motivated to read, and to gain the skills and experience success in reading. ❖ Participate in reading activities arranged by parents / teachers to participating voluntarily in a wide variety of quality reading activities. ❖ Be engaged in designated reading time to reading at all times. ❖ Read materials available at home and school libraries to using public libraries, Internet resources and other resources available in the community. ❖ Read for a short time span sporadically to sustained reading on a regular basis.

Note: Building on Strengths CDC 2001 Expected Outcomes for Students p.10

https://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/EN/Content_2909/html/chapter03B.html

It was now a curriculum designed to sustain motivation and interest in reading, not just to train students for exam purposes, a key factor mentioned by Flake (2017). Teachers' beliefs and practices weigh heavily on the instruction of this new curriculum. Though teachers predominantly were not averse to change with the overload of administrative work and the Confucian Heritage towards education, there was no time to implement change (Fox & Henri, 2005). Moreover, how are teachers expected to develop, implement, and maintain a new school-based curriculum without definitive and unambiguous guidelines? Broadly, the curriculum reforms have prescribed objectives and outcomes without crucial stakeholder input. How can teachers understand the implication of the curriculum needs and translate them to the classroom?

2.5 Reading: learning and teaching

As a vessel for learning, a curriculum helps learners acquire knowledge, develop skills, and broaden their understanding, and its outcomes are measurable Yates (2016). Moreover, Flake (2017) states, “the relationship between curriculum and instruction is intimate” (p.83).

Furthermore, Yates (2016) explains the intimacy of curriculum and instruction and introduces morphed words, *curstruction*, and *instriculum*, demonstrating the interdependency of each.

Though studies have shown the interdependence of curriculum and instruction (Schober, Rapp, & Britt, 2018; Nation & Castles, 2017; Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2014; Frost, 2012), an intense debate has sparked public interest in how children learn to read (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018). This debate continues, and the theories of teaching and learning reading are the foundation for the instructional challenges to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

2.5.1 Theories

With the evolution of reading over four centuries, three main theories describing learning are still prevalent today. The recommended approaches commonly used and theorized by the likes of Adams (1990), Gough (1972), Clay (2001) are the bottom-up approach and, the top-down approach, and, more recently, the interactive approach. First, there is the Bottom-up approach, alternatively known as the traditional theory; this focuses primarily on the printed form of the text. Second, is the Top-down approach, alternatively known as the cognitive view; this focuses on background knowledge of the text reader is reading. The third is the interactive approach, which focuses on advanced or skilled readers simultaneously incorporating bottom-up and top-down approaches (Ngabut, 2015).

Several factors, such as the text type, size, and reading purpose, can determine the approach chosen during reading instruction. Bright and McGregor (1970) point out some of these strategies. They are:

- (i) How much there is in the passage waiting to be discovered. Not all passages are worth meticulous attention.
- (ii) How much time is available? By no means all the passages worth serious attention can be tackled.
- (iii) How much the class is capable of seeing and how well they respond.
- (iv) How much is essential to a minimum worthwhile response. (p.65)

2.5.1.1 Bottom-up approach

Influenced by the behavioral psychology of the 1950s, the bottom-up approach to reading is based upon “habit formation, brought about by the repeated association of a stimulus with a response.” Language learning is categorized as a “response system that humans acquire through automatic conditioning processes,” where “some patterns of language are reinforced (rewarded), and others are not,” subsequently “only those patterns reinforced by the community of language users will persist” (Hadley 1993, pp.45-46). Bottom-up approach theories focus on how readers extract information from the printed page, asserting that readers systematically focus on letters and words. According to Nuttall (1996), “the reader builds up meaning from the black marks on the page: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure” (p.17). The conversion of letters into sounds is elementary phonics. Phonics requires learners to identify specific sounds associated with specific letters in a defined sequence. The bottom-up approach is the method most closely related to phonics instruction. As evidenced by Kucer & Silva (2012), reading is a

linear process whereby readers decode a text word by word, linking them into phrases and sentences. The bottom-up theory is likened to a jigsaw puzzle, systematically connecting the pieces until a picture is identifiable. In reading, a learner's progress is learning the parts of a language and putting all the parts together to understand the whole sentence.

In '*One Second of Reading*,' Gough (1972) states that reading is a series of mental processes in which the readers begin by translating segments of the words into sounds. Readers then combine those sounds to form words, which come together to get the main idea of the author's message. The bottom-up approach utilizes the sub-skills of readers to develop and maintain proper reading habits.

2.5.1.2 Top-down approach

The 1960s brought in a new paradigm in cognitive sciences. The behavioral approach, which represented how a mind's capacity for learning was based, gave way to the explanatory powers of the human mind and how first language acquisition occurred. The understanding of how the mind adapted to first language acquisition had a tremendous impact on ESL, as psycholinguists stated: "how such internal representations of foreign language development within the learner's mind" (Hadley 1993, p.57). Important distinctions were made between *rote learning* and meaningful learning. Rote learning can be associated with the bottom-up approach, whereby repetition is the key to memorizing isolated words in a new language.

Conversely, meaningful learning utilizes a cognitive structure incorporating what the learner already knows and could incorporate into their existing knowledge, albeit understanding that

meaningful learning will be permanent. As a greater emphasis on meaningful learning is relied upon, it eventually became the foundation for the top-down approach in L2 learning.

Goodman put it forward in 1967. The foundation of this theory is that “the reader comes to the text with a previously formed plan, and perhaps, omits chunks of the text which seem to be irrelevant to the reader’s purpose” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998, p.42). According to Smith (2002), the top-down approach significantly changed the concept of students learning the process related to reading. As the reader brings in their personal views and experiences, the interpretation of the text is mainly affected, and the reader’s expectations play an integral role during the reading process. According to Goodman (1967), the characterization of this approach is viewed as precise sequential identification.

2.5.1.3 Interactive Approach

The Interactive model can explicitly explain reading teaching and learning, as Dechant (2013) illustrated. Reading will start with the top-down approach. However, it will move to the bottom-up approach when readers struggle or challenge. Echoed by Ngabut (2015, p.26), “the nature of reading task changes as the learners’ progress” and “reading, in this case, is not one skill but a large number of interrelated skills.” The findings of Ngabut further indicate that an effective reader should simultaneously utilize top-down and bottom-up approaches through teaching and learning. The interactive model has become a focal point in recent research, theories, and the practice of teaching reading (Ngabut, 2015; Grabe, 2000).

Understanding the theories of teaching and learning reading and the antecedents of reading methods allows stakeholders to determine the current methodology used in teaching and learning. The evolution of reading over four centuries has shown a progression that builds on the theories and thought processes of the previous learning and teaching of reading. As explained,

each period ascertained that the primary focus of reading was based on students' need to gather information and prepare them to participate in society effectively. Moore, Monaghan, & Hartman (1997) indicated that the past is an educator for people, and history can talk to practical situations of what worked and did not work in the teaching and learning of reading. Nowadays, stakeholders need to find a balanced approach to instruction though this is a complex undertaking. According to Cowen (2003), he states:

Practical, balanced instruction requires a very comprehensive, integrated approach, demanding that teachers know a great deal about literacy research related to emergent literacy, assessment-based instruction, phonological and phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, phonics, and word study, selecting appropriate leveled readers, reader response, writing process, and constructivist learning. (p.2)

2.5.1.4 Social Constructivism

The fundamental theories of top-down, bottom-up, and interactive approaches are still widely used as the foundation for lesson development and integration. However, the bottom-up and interactive approach to reading complement social constructivism's critical ideas as demonstrated through various literature (Ngabut, 2015; Kucer & Silva, 2012; Cowen, 2003; Grabe, 2000).

The social constructivist model of reading emphasizes the importance of cognitive and social dimensions in the reading process. According to this model, comprehension is not simply a matter of decoding words and understanding their meanings but also involves a complex interplay between the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, and social context.

One influential theorist in this area is Vygotsky (1978), who argued that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others. In the context of reading, this means that readers construct meaning through their own cognitive processes, dialogue, and collaboration with others. Other researchers have built upon this work to develop more nuanced models of social constructivist reading. For example, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) propose a model incorporating cognitive and motivational factors, arguing that readers must have the necessary skills and knowledge to comprehend text and the motivation and interest to do so. Similarly, Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) emphasize the importance of metacognition in the reading process, suggesting that readers must be aware of their thinking and strategies to monitor and regulate their comprehension effectively.

Overall, the social constructivist model of reading provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex and multifaceted nature of the reading process. Social constructivism can help develop good reading habits by emphasizing the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the reading process. For example, teachers can create opportunities for students to engage in collaborative reading activities, such as book clubs or reading circles, where they can discuss and interpret texts together. By working with others to co-construct meaning, students can better understand the text and how it relates to their experiences and knowledge (Barber & Klauda, 2020; Hebbeker, Förster, & Souvignier, 2019; Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, Humerick, Littles, 2007).

Additionally, social constructivism can help develop good reading habits by emphasizing the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping reading practices. For example, teachers can help students become more aware of the social and historical contexts of the texts they are reading and how these contexts influence the interpretation and meaning of the text. By developing a critical awareness of the cultural and social factors that shape reading practices, students can become more reflective and self-aware readers, capable of engaging with texts in more nuanced and sophisticated ways (Teng, 2018).

Social constructivism provides a practical framework for understanding how reading is a social and cultural practice and how good reading habits are developed through interaction with others and the environment. Social constructivism can help develop more engaged, thoughtful, and skilled readers in their reading practices by emphasizing collaboration, critical reflection, and contextual awareness.

2.5.2 Teaching

Teachers' philosophies and beliefs influence instruction design. As teachers maintain their opinions, attitudes, philosophies, and practices, the instruction may depend on the curriculum but vary in implementation. Since teachers are human, the human element critically impacts instruction and the teacher-student relationship, which dominates the classroom (Liberante, 2012). The role of teachers' beliefs and practices is significant. If teachers view reading primarily as a means to pass tests, their instruction may reflect this limited perspective. Teachers who demonstrate and foster their love of reading, use diverse texts and instructional approaches, and

perceive reading as a broader lifelong skill and pleasure may have students who develop more multifaceted reading abilities and attitudes. How students learn, what they learn, and their perceptions of learning are directly impacted by instruction (Ho, 2011).

Historically, reading instruction exposed students to textbooks, workbooks, and exercises to prepare them for tests and assessments. Standard lessons included choral reading or read-aloud from designated textbooks, followed by vocabulary teaching in L1 and questions. However, reading cannot be taught or forced. Positive reading cultures rely on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009; Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010; Lin, Wong, & McBride-Chang, 2012). Teachers can foster intrinsic motivation by creating opportunities for students to read books they find enjoyable, not just those used for class assignments (Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010). Additionally, they can foster reading communities where students can discuss books and reading, encouraging peer recommendations (Day & Bamford, 2002; Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010).

Moreover, extrinsic motivation can be provided through clear goals, objectives, and feedback, such as setting specific reading targets (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009).

Furthermore, teachers can help students see the relevance or utility of reading to their lives, schoolwork, and interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012).



A mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may be most effective for fostering long-term reading motivation. However, the strategies and balance will depend on student characteristics, instructional context, and reading purposes.

Given reading's complexity requiring interactive processing levels, explicit teaching of reading strategies and skills are necessary for effective, efficient reading (Dreyer & Nel, 2003). Students often select ineffective strategies with little metacognitive control and lack strategic knowledge (Dreyer & Nel, 2003). Improved instruction addresses these issues (Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Guthrie & Cox, 2001). Steering students toward a positive reading culture with a reading strategy and skill repertoire can address detailed instruction.

SLA faces internal and external challenges. Internal factors include perceptions, attitudes, and metacognition. External factors like the environment influence internal factors. Perceptions, attitudes, and metacognition relate to understanding and knowing what one is thinking (Wenden, 1999). Their importance depends on the task. General learning and language learning differ. L2 perceptions and attitudes differ from general learning (Mori, 1999). L2 perceptions and attitudes impact L2 learning abilities (Dörnyei, 2005). Individual viewpoints indicate L2 learning success or failure (Li, 2005). Research on Chinese national L2 perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs is lacking (Li, 2005). The thesis explored how language teachers interpret reading curriculum and pedagogy and how reading schemes influence implementation (Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Guthrie & Cox, 2001).



Reading instruction, theories, and motivation culminate in prescribed curriculum success. Interconnected factors are measurable through standardized testing. Locales may use different measures, but a global measure of understanding globalized reading learners is the fairest. However, do these measures indicate the actual learning and reading of students?

2.6 Literacy Measurements

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has been conducting reading studies since 1983 (IEA, 2021). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) was implemented in 2001 “as a follow-up to IEA’s 1991 Reading Literacy Study.” ‘Conducted every five years, PIRLS assesses the reading achievement of young students in their fourth year of schooling—an important transition point in their development as readers’ (IEA, 2021). The PIRLS is a global standard created for cyclical testing and implemented in 2001. Over 60 participating countries, sub-nationals, and benchmarking entities rely on the examination results. This cyclical testing aims to understand the trends and development of English literacy. IEA (2021) notes on its landing page:

PIRLS provides internationally comparative data on how well children read and offers policy-relevant information to improve learning and teaching. The study is administered at a key transition stage in children’s reading development: the change from learning to read to reading to learn. (p.1)

Moreover, the PIRLS gathers extensive background information about students' learning environments, teacher knowledge, and curriculum development, published with exam results.



The information is gathered through surveys and questionnaires such as TALIS, coded, and analyzed. The results are published with exam score rankings to provide a complete performance overview. The complete overview considers the participants' physical results and perceptions to provide feedback to stakeholders about current and future curriculum development, teacher professional development, and student development.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a global study organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), began in 2000 and now has over 80 participating nations, sub-nations, and benchmarking entities. Unlike the PIRLS, the PISA is administered every three years and provides comparative data on 15-year-olds' reading, mathematics, and science performance. The trend and ranking of Hong Kong students' performance are illustrated in appendix 'A.' A press release issued by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region through analysis compiled by the University of Hong Kong (Tse, Lam, Loh, & Cheung, 2017) states that students' reading attitudes and interests have improved since 2011; there is still room for improvement. This press release discusses the results of Hong Kong students participating in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), administered every five years. It further notes that schools that develop their school-based language and reading curriculum better impact students' motivation. At the same time, the PIRLS 2016 show favorable results; significant deficiencies lead to the failure of expected learning outcomes.

As indicated in the latest PIRLS report, the shortcomings of the learning outcomes are one of the underlying factors that drive this study. The direct implications of the initial initiative, 'Read to Learn,' issued by the Curriculum Development Council in 2001 and subsequently published

reforms, including the adopted ‘Learn to Read,’ are the focus of this study. The importance of teachers and the students collectively in influencing the learning outcomes of reading as prescribed by the curriculum and acquired by students is explored and discussed. Therefore, the study will utilize the results to identify if there is a misalignment between measurable learning outcomes, curriculum, and learning and teaching.

The etymology of ‘read’ dates back centuries and has established the foundation for the types of reading, the evolution of reading, and theories of reading used as the foundation for learning and teaching. Furthermore, as demonstrated, governments and society placed higher importance on the reading method (instruction) than the curriculum and its intended purpose and measurable outcomes. However, Hong Kong’s current curriculum reforms, from 2001 onwards, focus on curriculum and less on the implementations. Therefore, to better understand, the study reviewed facets of Hong Kong curriculum development over the past 20 years, focusing on reading. The forthcoming chapter demonstrates the relationship between curriculum reform, teacher beliefs, practice, experiences, learning of reading, and students’ perceptions. Reading has evolved over the centuries to accommodate the changing world; nowadays, it is evolving faster. So adapting reading to meet the need of the community is ever more pressing.

2.7 Hong Kong English reading

The preceding discussed the historical aspect of types of reading and fundamental reading theories still in use today as a foundation for instruction. It provided insight into how the evolution of reading adapted to societal needs. The evolution was introduced through curriculum reforms and refinements to achieve society's goals. It has shown the importance between



curriculum and instruction, learning and teaching, and students' perceptions. Furthermore, it briefly identified the reforms and refinements of Hong Kong over the past 20 years.

2.8 English emergence and curriculum reform and refinement

The analysis of educational reform directives from the Hong Kong Education Commission (EC), the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMD), the Curriculum Development Council (CDC), and the Education Bureau (EDB) will identify the importance of English teaching with a focus on reading. These reforms directly correlate with how pre-service teachers are qualified to teach and interpret what they have learned, adapt to curricula, and positively impact students. The relationship between curriculum reform and teachers' formed beliefs and practices correlates with how students perceive reading.

Hong Kong became a British colony in 1841; however, the 1898 Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory made it official for the next 99 years. During this colonial period, it became apparent that British government officials needed to communicate with the local Hong Kong community. The Colonial Education Policy was quickly adopted, and key groups throughout the territory were educated in English to mediate between society and government. Kan & Adamson (2010) stated:

Colonialism brought the English language to prominence, being perceived as the key to economic prosperity and driving a wedge between the haves and have-nots. This phenomenon has endured in the post-colonial era, with English as a major language of international trade and other manifestations of globalization. (p.167)

Although English proved integral, it was primarily used in government, education, and business. As discussions were underway for the return of Hong Kong to China, the Hong Kong Education Commission was appointed. The commission's role was "to define overall educational objectives, formulate education policy, and recommend priorities for an implementation having regard to resources available; to coordinate and monitor the planning and development of education at all levels, and to initiate educational research" (ECR 1, 1984, p.1). From 1984 through 1997, the commission issued seven reports, each with a primary focus on educational reforms and opportunities for improvement. Table 2.1, shown below, highlights the critical components of each report:

Table 2.1 *Education Commission Report Summary by Year*

Year	Report No.	Report Summary
1984	1	Appointment of commission Junior Secondary Education Assessment System Language in Education Teacher Preparation and Teaching Service Open Education Educational Research Financing of Education
1986	2	Progress on Report 1 Language in Education Pre-primary Services Development of Sixth-Form Education Teacher Preparation Open Education
1988	3	Structure of Tertiary Education Future of Private Schools



Table 2.2 (continued)

1990	4	Curriculum Development Educational Assessment/Examinations Language in Education Primary Schooling Special Education Student Support Services
1992	5	The Teaching Profession
1996	6	Enhancing Language Proficiency: A Comprehensive Strategy
1997	7	Quality School Education

It was report number 7, coupled with the initiatives of Tung Chee-Wah – the first Chief Executive of the newly formed Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) – that addressed the critical concerns of language proficiency, language in education, and improvements in the quality of teachers (Bodycott, Dowson, Walker & Coniam, 2000). The concerns announced the EMB formation, which replaced the EC.

The return to sovereignty in 1997 saw the initiatives of Tung Chee-Wah – the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) – that addressed the critical concerns of language proficiency, language in education, and improvements in the quality of teachers (Bodycott, Dowson, Walker, & Coniam, 2000). The concerns announced the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) formation, which replaced the Education Commission (EC). A new era in the development of the education system was focused on ensuring the future of a competitive Hong Kong.

2.9 Curriculum reform and refinement

As indicated earlier, for 20 years, since 1997, two key curriculum reforms and five refinements have been implemented, each building on the last. The salient years for key curriculum reform initiatives were 1997 and 2001. Curriculum refinements occurred in 2002, 2009, 2014, 2017, and 2018. The policy changes began with recommendations from the then Education Commission, which in 1997 became The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and, effective in 2001, became the Curriculum Development Council (CDC). The theme of the reform was outlined in the 1997 policy program address of the first Secretary for EMD, Joseph WP Wong, who stated:

The Bureau's objective is to provide Quality Education at all levels so that our young people can become responsible and independent-minded citizens of the HKSAR. We seek to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to fulfill their responsibilities to their families and the community and contribute to Hong Kong's economic development and international competitiveness. (p.2)

Wong's speech explained that many changes must be implemented and adopted to keep Hong Kong competitive.

As indicated, though reforms are required, the motivation is to help Hong Kong grow economically and maintain its international appeal rather than purely educate its citizens.

Maintaining Hong Kong's stature is echoed in a paper published by Tsui, Shum, Wong, Tse, & Ki (1999), which looked into the underpinning of the medium of instruction in Hong Kong.

Moreover, the same year, a speech by Tung Chee-Wah expressly indicated the relationship

between education reform and the English language to the government's strategic positioning of Hong Kong as a 'world-class' city (Harfitt, 2020).

The EMB was responsible for 11 major program areas associated with education and labor services. Regarding primary education, two critical areas of attention were "Enhancing teaching quality and learning effectiveness" (EMD, 1997, p.7) and, additionally, improving "Language proficiency" by extending "The Chinese and English Extensive Reading Scheme over four years" (1997, p.8). Furthermore, the secondary education sector will focus on "Enhancing teaching quality and learning effectiveness, Improving the teaching and learning environment, and Language proficiency" (1997, p.11). The focus on language proficiency will be achieved by extending "The Chinese and English Extensive Reading Scheme over four years" (1997, p.11).

In 2001, the CDC, established at the recommendation of the EC in report 4, reviewed the initiatives of language proficiency reform through the extensive reading scheme. The CDC used this opportunity to develop curriculum guidelines and the desired learning outcomes through its Read to Learn. Learning to Learn; The way forward in Curriculum development. The CDC issued key messages about using Reading to Learn. It is suggested that reading is a skill that should improve students' language proficiency and contribute to other areas of student learning, such as "interest, appreciation, enrichment of knowledge and experience" (CDC, 2001, p.85). The 2001 initiative outlined a strategic method to promote reading built on the recommendation of the EC in 1990 of a whole-school-based approach to reading.

In 2002, the CDC introduced '*3B Reading to Learn. Basic Education Curriculum Guide: Building on Strengths (Primary 1-Secondary 3)*.' Issued on the findings of 2001, this Basic Education Curriculum Guide highlighted to all schools that developing an independent reading habit is one of the seven learning goals of the school curriculum. It outlined the objectives of reading to learn, the whole-school approach, stakeholder input, the facilitation of measures to foster reading to learn, and students' expectations. In 2002, Secretary of EMD, Law Fan Chiu-fun, issued a memo to all schools to stress the importance of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide: Building on Strengths four key tasks. It was written to focus on one of those four key tasks – reading to learn. The memo, though lengthy, focused on the support the schools will receive from the government to ensure that reading promotion is achieved as outlined by the CDC.

In 2009, the CDC was focused on senior secondary reading performance, resulting from a slip in performance of the PISA results 2009. '*Booklet 6; Quality Learning and Teaching Resources Facilitating Effective Learning. Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide: The Future is Now: from Vision to Realisation*' focuses on implementing the reading to learn initiative of 2002. It was the matrix to measure if the Basic Education Curriculum Guide: Building on Strengths (Primary 1-Secondary 3) had been effective. The New Academic Structure meant that Hong Kong moved from a predominantly British education system with two public exams to an education system aligned to China, ironically modeled after the United States. The New Senior Secondary Curriculum (NSS), consisting of six years of secondary education, was split into two 3-year segments of junior and senior secondary education. The new curriculum is completed with the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). This public exam serves as the entrance

examination to enter a university. Changes were also made with the university study length increasing from three to four years.

In 2014, the CDC introduced '*3B Reading to Learn. Basic Education Curriculum Guide: To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1-6).*' This adjustment to curriculum guidelines further enhanced the already successful reading promotion in the Basic Education Curriculum Reform. Progress shows the success in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) results, which ranked primary four students' reading performance from 14th place in 2001 to the top in 2011. Additionally, success was indicated by improving Hong Kong's 15-year-old students' reading ranking to 2nd in the 2012 Program for International Student Assessments (PISA). Accordingly, the CDC recognized that their reforms and subsequent refinements impacted students; however, through External School Reviews, which are conducted through the Education Bureau, it became evident that there was still room for improvement. It identified that rote learning still exists, and reading cultures were absent in English or Chinese reading. The 2014 reform was to further build on the foundation from prior years, which, as demonstrated earlier, had a positive effect.

In 2017, the CDC issued '*Booklet 6B: Reading to Learn; Towards Reading across the Curriculum. Senior Secondary Guide.*' This initiative results from the past ten years of reading improvements made. It was introduced to promote a positive reading culture through reading across the curriculum. The CDC (2017) states:

In light of the promotion of reading in the curriculum reform and the concerted efforts of the government, schools, and parents in the past ten or more years, there has been significant improvement in Hong Kong students' reading performance. Nevertheless, the data has indicated that there is still room for improvement in students' motivation and engagement in reading. (pp.2-3)

The areas of improvement are also evidenced in subsequent findings released from PIRLS and PISA. Effective strategies have to be adopted by schools to increase students' interest in reading. Mindful of this, the CDC suggests ways further to promote a positive reading culture through digital reading and reading across the curriculum.

In 2018, the EDB issued Circular No. 10/2018, further echoing the recommendations of the CDC in 2017, Promotion of Reading in Schools. As mentioned, Reading to Learn has been adopted as one of the Key Tasks since the curriculum reform in 2001. In the updated Secondary Education Curriculum Guide (2017), schools are encouraged to extend “Reading to Learn” to “Reading across Curriculum” and “Language across the Curriculum” to broaden students' knowledge base and connect their learning experiences in different subjects (p.1). The circular says compelling reading relies on teaching and learning, achieved through motivation. Cambria & Guthrie (2010) stated, “motivation is the values, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding reading for an individual” (p.16). Reading motivation increases students' interests, dedication, and confidence, broadening lifelong learning and formal education. Additional discussions by Guthrie, Wigfield, and You (2012) believe motivation is the primary source for society, in general, to accomplish a specific task. Guthrie, Wigfield, & You (2012) discuss that motivation in reading enables the reader to develop interests, set targets, and create positive reading habits.



Hong Kong is a complicated multilingual city, and English has taken on various roles throughout history. The status of the English language in several reforms since 1997 indicates the multifaceted relationship between the collective aspirations of education, economic prosperity, global interaction, political wants, and societal acceptance. As it is related to education and politics, Tang (2015) implies that the HKSAR uses a twofold approach of “economy” and “mandate” to structure its policies concerning language teacher preparation with “the perceived centrality of English for the economy of Hong Kong ... [shaping] the policy of mandatory requirements on [English] language teachers” (p.281).

As the literature indicates, curriculum development has been emphasized concerning four key tasks, and promoting reading has taken the forefront. The results of PIRLS, PISA, External School Reviews, and internal exams show that the multiple reforms of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide have mixed reviews affecting a positive reading culture.

Though Hong Kong’s ranking in PIRLS and PISA has improved and maintained, alarming information “showed declining trends in reading attitudes” (Hooper, 2020, p.2). Students and parents alike acknowledged the global decline in reading attitudes. Similarly, Hong Kong trended downward, as shown in the appendices. Additionally, the OECD indicated a decline in participants’ attitudes toward the PISA between 2009 and 2018 (Hooper, 2020). The dramatic shift in reading habits over the past 30 years shows that people acquire information from various online platforms and outside the classroom. Digital reading is becoming increasingly popular and vital in learning and teaching. The effects of this technological advancement have not provided conclusive data to support or refute a shift in attitudes and habits toward reading (Mangen & Van



Der Weel, 2016). While technology and reading are current topics for research and debate, it is not the focus of this study. However, it does support the relationship between learning and teaching through beliefs, practices, and perceptions. The study finds this invaluable in identifying a gap in research to understand a student's perception of reading. Exam results or rankings cannot solely support outcome measurements. Using exams or rankings to measure results can not identify the entire picture, which is evident in Hooper's (2020) article Troubling trends; An international decline in attitudes toward reading.

2.10 Hong Kong teacher training

According to an Education Commission report on English language teaching, “teachers lack the depth of knowledge in the language or skills in teaching it as a subject or both” (EC, 1996, p.48). This demonstrated that teachers did not require special qualifications to teach English. The requirement was to receive a ‘pass’ in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. The role of the English language over several reforms since 1997 indicates the multifaceted relationship between the collective aspirations of education, economic prosperity, global interaction, political wants, and societal acceptance. The HKSAR strives for English language teachers to be better equipped to realize the curriculum's objectives and goals and develop students' competence in English to further their studies and adapt to global changes as representatives of Hong Kong. It is worth noting that EC report no. 6 claimed that Hong Kong teachers of English during that period “lacked the depth of knowledge in language or skills in teaching it as a subject or both” (EC, 1996, p.48). The dearth of this knowledge drew heavy criticism from teachers, who were not required to possess any special qualifications to teach at

the time. The curriculum for preservice teachers was enhanced in 2012 to improve teachers' abilities. A five-year program is required to gain qualifications from an accredited institution. Section 42 of the Education Ordinance (Education Bureau, 2018) states that a registered or permitted teacher must be considered. The EDB has outlined the criteria to achieve teacher qualification, Bachelor's Degree in English (BA or Bed), Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages(TESOL), Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT) attainment. Non-local trained teachers who want to teach in Hong Kong must submit the necessary documentation to the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and receive a qualifications assessment report.

There are four prominent universities pre-service teachers can choose from; The Education University of Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. As outlined by Harfitt (2020), below are the most common approaches to attaining teacher qualifications and registering as a teacher:

1. Often attainment of double degrees is one of the pathways chosen, which combines a BA degree in English Language and Linguistics taught by the Faculty of Arts and BE degree as the Faculty of Education teaches it. The BABEd is a five-year program that leads to a professional designation and registration with the Education Bureau once completed. The double degree programs were initially intended to prepare teachers for teaching in secondary school. However, as of 2012, the double degree programs prepare pre-service teachers for primary and secondary sectors.
2. Pre-Service teachers focusing on the primary sector enroll for a Bachelor of Education (BEd) (which became a five-year program after the change in academic structure in

2012). Some universities have replaced the BEd program with the BABEd double degree program.

3. Full-time (FT) Postgraduate Diploma in Education for graduates (PGDE) is intended for university graduates who want to teach in Hong Kong from kindergartens to tertiary education. The aim focuses on initial teacher training and education.
4. Part-time (PT) Postgraduate Diploma in Education for graduates (PGDE) is a two-year part-time program taken by in-service teachers already working in schools. The FT and PT programs share the same elements in the course curriculum. The underlying difference is that in the FT program, graduates must complete an immersion course in a Native English-speaking country for formal classroom assessment, whereas PT in-service teachers are observed in their current school for classroom assessment.

While the programs mentioned above offer various ways to become a registered teacher in Hong Kong, the complexity and dynamics of learning to teach are wrought with variables that can leave pre-service teachers with many unanswered questions. Intrinsic factors may include daily determining a teacher's role and responsibility, their interpretations of curricula, how to put what has been learned, and their beliefs into practice. Extrinsic factors affect teaching; school-based approaches, colleagues, parents, and students. These factors, the new competency frameworks, and curriculum reforms create a more complex teaching environment. The dynamics of learning to teach are influenced by policy, leadership, students, environments, and, most importantly, pre-service teachers' thoughts (Hattie, 2012; Opfer, Pedder, & Lavicza, 2011). Furthermore, according to Naylor, Campbell-Evans, and Maloney (2015), "the pre-service teachers' prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs are thought to act as filters, influencing what is taken from

the knowledge, skills, and experiences presented in their coursework” (p.121). Bloomfield (2010) adds, “there is no road to becoming a teacher, nor a single story of learning to teach” (p.221).

2.10.1 Hong Kong teachers’ classroom practice

Teachers are responsible for the instruction of the curriculum (Flake, 2017), indicating that they are the direct link between the curriculum objectives and outcomes and the students. Their education, knowledge, pedagogy, and personal beliefs determine how they approach curriculum instruction. New competency frameworks and curriculum reforms create a more complex teaching environment. The dynamics of teaching are influenced by policy, leadership, students, environments, prior knowledge, and beliefs (Hattie, 2012; Opfer, Pedder, & Lavicza, 2011). All these elements transform how a teacher instructs students during the classroom lesson to achieve the desired learning outcome. Teachers must draw on prior knowledge, reading models, or theories to implement a practical reading lesson.

According to Browne (1998), as cited by Baha (2017), there are three predominant reading models when teaching reading. They are the traditional theory or bottom-up, the cognitive view or top-down, and the interactive model. The bottom-up model approaches reading through the understanding of letters, sounds, words, and sentence formation, according to Browne (1998). This model is effective for young learners to construct words out of the letters they learn and the associated sounds. Conversely, according to Browne (1998), the top-up model takes the reader's experiences that bring the reading to life. Browne indicates that readers can draw on their knowledge to date to identify with the text and draw conclusions and meanings. As Stanovich (1980) described, the interactive model argues that both features of the bottom-up and top-down

are combined, giving more meaning to reading. This model states that the readers can draw upon prior knowledge, personal expectations, and the theme to predict the text being read (Stanovich, 1980).

It is essential to look at the literature to identify commonly used practices that address instruction in reading to understand classroom practice. According to a study conducted in Hong Kong, Lee (2017) indicated the growing trend of research on teaching reading since the late 1980s. He further notes that research trends are looking at the effects of using L1 to assist L2 reading development (Maluch & Sachse, 2020; Garrison-Fletcher, Martohardjono, & Chodorow, 2019; Kraut, 2017). These studies look into L1 reading speeds as an integral part of L2 reading progression, the impact of L1 reading skills on L2 comprehension, and L2 reading skills acquisition.

However, according to Keene & Zimmerman (2007) and Latha (2005), there is an apparent disconnect between these when teaching English reading to L2 students. In a study focusing on learning objectives and vocabulary teaching conducted by Wong (2021), it was noted through lesson observations that during 40-minute reading lessons, an average of 62% of the time was spent on vocabulary and not the actual objective of the reading lesson. As Wong (2021) states, “Of all the different types of lessons, reading lessons were where teachers spent most of the time teaching vocabulary” (p.9). The amount of time spent indicates that a student feels the reading lesson is a vocabulary lesson. Many scholars explained that an adequate vocabulary is necessary for a fluent reader (Lee & Chen, 2018; Allington, 2011). While others stress the importance of basic word knowledge (Ping & Siraj, 2012; Carroll, 2008; Nation, 2001), knowing words does

not imply communicative competence. A study by Li & Wilhelm (2008) exploring pedagogical reasoning concluded through observations and interviews that one of the participant's "classroom decision making reflects what she calls a "traditional" way of learning and teaching English" (p.107). Furthermore, "in regard to reading instruction, in particular, she does not clearly understand the nature of reading. She focuses on her language knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar) without updating her subject knowledge (reading strategy instruction)" (p.107).

The implications of these studies highlight the inadvertent mismatch between curriculum, instruction, and students expected learning. Teachers typically have lesson plans developed to carry out the teaching of reading effectively. However, an assessment should be made to cater to factors that may affect the instruction. Moreover, it is easy to digress from the curriculum to maintain student preparation for examinations in Hong Kong's examination culture. It seems more research should be done to understand this phenomenon. As Friesen & Besley (2013) summarize, research on teacher beliefs and practices is complicated due to the "multidisciplinary nature of the literature and multiple perspectives within teaching and the teacher education field" (p.24). The multiple perspectives and multidisciplinary nature represent the concentration of a teacher's learning, experience, knowledge, and ability to interpret the new curriculum, the focus of the next section.

2.10.2 Hong Kong teachers' understating of the curriculum

As mentioned earlier, (Flake, 2017) reminds us that curriculum is what should be taught; instruction is how it should be taught. One of the research focus of this study is to evaluate and

analyze the impact of curriculum change on teachers and their instruction to students. Well-intentioned reforms, and new curricula, are put forth, yet there are limitations to guidance on classroom implementation. Curriculum development is described as bureaucratic and centralized, with minimal teacher input (Morris & Adamson, 2010). While, Alsubaie (2016) states, “the most important person in the curriculum implementation process is the teacher,” and “with their knowledge, experiences, and competencies, teachers are central to any curriculum development effort” (p.106). Teachers are invaluable in curriculum development because they serve as the bridge between curriculum and students. Therefore, directives of instructions need to be included in curriculum reform; otherwise, teachers are left to their own devices for interpretation, lesson planning, and introduction in the classroom.

As new discourses begin to beset the education system, teachers’ historical Confucian Heritage approach tends to overshadow the adoption of the new curriculum coupled with the lack of direction of instruction of implementation. Relying solely on the curriculum, examinations, and prescribed outcomes, the teacher is primarily responsible for deciphering the objectives’ true essence. Accordingly, the understanding of curriculum on behalf of teachers is met with a superficial view, and any interpretation is at face value, with no depth or breadth (Morris & Adamson, 2010). This superficiality is what teachers rely on at times to combine the new reforms and their current practices, which may cause curriculum intentions to lose importance and not align with the current classroom reality. (Shirell, Hopkins, & Spillane, 2019).

A qualitative case study in Hong Kong on reflective practices of school-based curriculum development looks at inception to delivery. In this study, acceptance to change was reviewed and analyzed. Chan states (2010) states that teachers should “become active professionals by renewing” their “role through the adoption of various government strategies such as guidelines,



recommendations, and the use of school-based curriculum development” (p.96). Nevertheless, without fine-tuned implementation guidelines, teachers and schools rarely deviate from the principles outlined in the new curriculum. They instead hold steadfast in their historical ways to conform to External School Reviews or Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) (Harfitt, 2020, 2017). However, teachers’ concerns in this study are “how to bring the materials to life by tailoring the instructions” (Yuen, Boulton, & Byrom, 2018, p.20).

As many scholars suggest, teachers need to tailor and craft lessons to create a dynamic environment to foster learning while achieving the desired learning outcomes of the lesson (Lutzker, 2012; Fullan, 2008; Eisner, 2005). Unfortunately, this is not the case in the examination-oriented education system of Hong Kong. The CDC will issue new directives to improve students’ performance. However, the matrix for measurement remains unchanged. With this in mind, teachers feel undervalued and overworked, and their expertise is generally disregarded or overlooked (Murray, 2016).

The curriculum development, reform, and implementation cycle without actual change eludes to the ideology of teachers accepting reforms superficially and continuing to teach status quo-rote learning. Hence, the student’s engagement and learning may not be the lesson’s target. The mismatch of curriculum intentions and classroom realities becomes more precise and apparent, and the study asks if teachers understand the curriculum and can put it into practice.

2.11 Hong Kong students learning reading

To complete the focus of this study, the researcher needs to close the cyclical relationship with students learning. Student learning is directly related to teachers, which is considered a primary

factor (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2007). Historically a student's exposure to the learning of reading was through textbooks, workbooks, and exercises created to prepare them to achieve passing grades on regular tests, exams, and assessments (Moorhouse & Wong, 2019). A standard lesson would include choral reading or read-aloud from designated textbooks. The class would then be instructed to answer multiple-choice, open-ended, or guided questions (Moorhouse & Wong, 2019; Cheung & Wong, 2014; Lin, 1999). Answering these questions indicates that the purpose of the reading lesson is to find answers to questions from the text instead of promoting reading for pleasure or developing reading strategies or skills (Lin, 1999).

The lack of promoting reading is echoed in a Knowledge Exchange forum by the University of Hong Kong; Ho (2011) states, "In Hong Kong, the approach to reading is mainly through learning a large number of passages or texts – they do not have a systematic way to teach basic language skills." Students today struggle to understand the learning outcomes of their reading lessons when most of the lesson time is spent on vocabulary or highlighting adjectives in a text (Wong, 2021). While we have seen an improvement in reading from the ranking results of Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), respectively, of Hong Kong students, attitudes and perceptions are trending downwards. These mixed results may be attributed to the paradigm shift in learning and teaching, affecting students and teachers alike.

As Cheng (2009) points out, the CDC reforms are idealistic and deviate considerably from the current reading instruction. In the Basic Education Curriculum Guide, 15 booklets outline the

educational guidelines for students in Hong Kong. The CDC (2002) stated that the primary focus of 'Read to Learn' is "to develop a habit of reading independently" (p.1).

Teachers' knowledge is considered their knowledge at a particular point in time, which determines the approach to classroom teaching (Carter 1990). Literature has correlated that a teacher's subject knowledge directly affects a student's learning outcome and instructional practice (Main, 2014; Piasta, Connor, Fishman, & Morrison, 2009; Snow & Griffin, & Burns, 2007; McCutchen, Harry, Cox, Sidman, Covill, & Cunningham, 2002; Pajares, 1992). In the study done by McCutchen, Harry, Cox, Sidman, Covill, & Cunningham (2002), the investigation was relationships among elementary teachers' reading-related content knowledge (knowledge of literature and phonology), their philosophical orientation toward reading instruction, their classroom practice, and their students' learning." The results concluded a limited connection between content knowledge, classroom, practice, and instructional beliefs.

Another study by Piasta, Connor, Fishman, & Morrison (2009) assessed the relationship between students' reading growth, teachers' instructional practice and English reading-related knowledge. The findings revealed that teachers with higher English reading-related knowledge were taught more than less. The explicit instruction indicated through the findings that students' outcomes, particularly growth in reading, improved. In the research carried out by Main (2014), the researcher's aim was "to evaluate the efficacy of a professional learning program designed to improve teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and practices in reading instruction" (p.iii). The implications of Main's findings were beliefs about teaching, pragmatic and pedagogical, learning environment, and historical methods of teaching reading were the

predominant factors affecting subject knowledge and classroom practice. These studies have indicated the importance of teacher knowledge for student learning.

Evidence is presented through a study by Lau & Ho (2022), which reviewed Hong Kong students' reading performance in the PISA exam. The study identifies the upward trend in students' performance from the initial examination of 2000, with a significant decline in 2003, rebounding in 2006, and slightly decreasing again in 2009 and 2018, respectively (PISA).

According to Lau & Ho (2022), “Hong Kong students showed better reading engagement and perceived a more positive classroom disciplinary climate in their reading lessons, but they used fewer control strategies, had poorer awareness of effective reading strategies, and perceived less teacher stimulation and support” (p.9). The findings of Lau and Ho are identified through data collection and interpretations presented by PISA country-specific overviews.

Additionally, a report issued by Tse & Xiao (2014) at the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading (SSSR) 21st annual conference tried to explain the remarkable improvement in reading among grade four students as measured from the PIRLS examinations from 2001 to 2011. Hong Kong students improved their ranking from the fourteenth in 2001 to the first in 2011. The results indicated that the primary reasons for improvement were associated with student and parent attitudes toward reading, the home literacy environment, and high expectations of attaining positive results (Tse & Xiao).



Though the pedagogy of reading instruction in Hong Kong changed through the directives of the CDC, there was a disconnect between the expected learning outcomes from the CDC and the assessment of the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). Historical results of the Hong Kong Advance Level Examination (HKALE) presented by the HKEAA indicated a decrease in candidates achieving ‘A’ and ‘E’ grades in English. ‘A’ grade definition - as distinction or GCSE/GCE A*, and the ‘E’ grade is defined - as pass or GCSE/GCE C. The results, therefore, led to the assumption that curriculum reform is ineffective or inadequately presented to students.

In light of this, a newly formed committee was established in 2013 to align the assessments and the curriculum. The CDC-HKEAA Committee on the English Language is a specialist group set up under the KLA Committee on English Language Education and the HKEAA Public Examinations Board (PEB) to carry out tasks designated by the CDC and the HKEAA (CDC, 2016). As Hong Kong is results-driven, teachers aim to equip students with the skill set to pass the exam. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, Carter (1990) reminds the knowledge the teachers in Hong Kong have at the time of instruction is what they draw on to teach students.

The literature previously introduced reading methods to teach reading, Browne’s (1998) bottom-up, top-down, and (Stanovich, 1980) interactive model, which can be a foundation. These models are the framework for developing effective instruction for students learning pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities. However, internal and external literacy measurements have shown a different scenario. The dearth of literature related explicitly to Hong Kong students’

reading acquisition in reading lessons is one of the foci of this study. Understanding reading learning will help determine the perceptions students have about reading.

2.12 Students' perceptions of reading

As mentioned, the curriculum is the objective meant to be learned, instruction is the means and way to deliver the objective, and internal and external assessments are the primary ways to measure if the objectives and instruction have positively impacted students (Kulasegaram & Rangachari, 2018). Additionally, another approach to measuring the outcomes of students' learning can be achieved through perception, which is linked to motivation. As perception is an additional means of measurement of learning outcomes, it is essential to note that the Curriculum Development Council (2001) recognizes this by stating, "reading is not just for the improvement of language proficiency, but serves many other important purposes, which add value to the quality of our life" (p.85).

Perception and motivation are intertwined, and studies conducted by Guthrie & Wigfield (2000); McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer (2012); Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni (2013); Neugebauer (2013) have researched how perception and motivation have a direct effect on native English speakers to read in English. However, the literature primarily focuses on the relationship between perception and L1 reading. It can not be construed that perception and motivation are similar in L2 reading. English reading motivation among Chinese learners is limited (Hwang, 2019; Li, 2005). As the literature indicates, further studies have been conducted to establish and understand the relation between motivation and perception in teaching and learning with improved L2 achievements (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Specifically, among Asian students, it was concluded that positive behavioral encouragement and desired learning results are strongly interconnected with learners' perceptions. The interconnections indicate that external stimuli trigger a positive reaction to perception. In an investigation by Dörnyei & Chan (2013), the academic results of varied motivational techniques measured in Hong Kong students learning English and Mandarin showed mixed findings. It determined that low-achievers (students who are weak academically, therefore, do not apply themselves) tended not to respond positively to the motivational techniques.

Furthermore, research by Moskovsky, Racheva, Assulaimani, & Harkins (2016) on ESL students from Saudi Arabia looked at similar criteria, students learning English and Arabic, and the results indicated low-achievers fair less positively, similar to Dörnyei & Chan, 2013. The indicators reveal that students' perceptions of learning a language closely related to their mother tongue varied from their perception of learning English.

While the studies above focus on the general perceptions of L1 and L2 English learning, it does not explicitly address English reading education. English reading is paramount to a student's attainment of English, as indicated by Wang (2017), primarily due to the understanding that reading is the foundation for all three other language skills (Huang, 2014). Many studies have been conducted on English learning, teaching, perception, and motivation for Chinese students studying abroad. However, the limited research on Chinese society and English reading in Hong Kong is concerning, given the importance of English reading by the EDB through the CDC (2002, 2014, 2017) mandate.



Recent studies have explored the current state of English reading instruction in Hong Kong and its effects on students. For example, Wong and Chung (2019) surveyed Hong Kong English teachers and found that most focused on teaching reading comprehension strategies and skills to prepare students for exams, rather than fostering long-term interest in reading. This emphasis on test-taking strategies was also reflected in interviews with students by Lee (2018), who found that students did not perceive recreational reading as valuable or relevant to their lives.

However, some research has identified more positive experiences with English reading instruction in Hong Kong. McNaught and Lam (2017) observed several "reading-to-learn" classrooms where students read on topics of personal interest and teachers took a facilitative approach, concluding that this pedagogy supported students' reading motivation and skills. A study by Liu (2016) also found that students enrolled in an optional reading program, where they selected books of choice and participated in reading communities, developed stronger reading attitudes and habits than comparison students.

A study by Chan (2015) observed English reading lessons in Hong Kong primary schools and found that most instruction focused on answering comprehension questions and acquiring skills to pass exams. The lessons relied heavily on excerpts and passages, rather than entire books, and did not discuss students' personal reactions or interests in reading.

Focus group research by Lau (2014) asked Hong Kong students about their experiences with English reading instruction. The students reported that their classes primarily taught them reading strategies and comprehension practices for the purpose of doing well on tests, rather than enjoyment of reading. They felt this utilitarian approach reduced interest in recreational reading.



Interviews with Hong Kong English teachers by Cheung (2013) also revealed a focus on teaching skills and strategies to prepare students for exams. The teachers felt this emphasis was necessary to cover the required curriculum. However, some teachers expressed a desire to incorporate more diverse texts and nurture students' reading interests, suggesting they felt torn between test preparation and lifelong literacy.

In contrast, a case study by Leung (2011) looked at an English reading program that took an immersive, authentic approach, having students read full books of their choice and participate in book clubs. The study found students in the program developed stronger reading motivation and skills than comparison students. The author argued for more immersive reading instruction to counter the narrow test-preparation focus prevalent in Hong Kong.

Overall, these studies portray English reading instruction in Hong Kong as frequently focused on teaching comprehension skills and strategies to prepare for exams. However, some research points to benefits of alternative approaches that nurture students' reading interests and motivation, not just their test-taking abilities. More studies on the range of existing instruction and effects on diverse students could help determine how to balance skills, strategies, and motivation in English reading pedagogy for Hong Kong.

Additionally, studies have been recently done in Hong Kong, focusing on school reading programs at the primary level. A study by Lee (2017) was carried out to outline the benefits of a reading training scheme for the researcher's school. The study was carried out to examine the learning and teaching of the new school-based curriculum and the learners' performance. The



exploratory qualitative case study was designed specifically for this researcher. Moreover, Moorhouse & Wong (2019) conducted a similar study at the primary level in response to the CDC 2004 initiative focusing on primary-level reading education. The two studies did not consider students' perceptions through the reading lesson. However, they noted that perception could measure students attaining reading achievement.

These mixed findings suggest that English reading instruction in Hong Kong may be varied or even polarized. The curriculum and standardized testing seem to motivate a focus on reading comprehension skills for exam-taking, yet other studies show the benefits of cultivating students' choice, interest, and reading communities. More research is needed to better understand the range of English reading instruction occurring in Hong Kong schools and its differential impacts on students. Exploring teachers' beliefs and the factors influencing pedagogy could help identify how to balance skills-focused and intrinsic approaches to benefit students through Classroom Realities, and achieve Curriculum Intentions.

Additionally, studies have been recently done in Hong Kong, focusing on school reading programs at the primary level. A study by Lee (2017) was carried out to outline the benefits of a reading training scheme for the researcher's school. The study was carried out to examine the learning and teaching of the new school-based curriculum and the learners' performance. The exploratory qualitative case study was designed specifically for this researcher. Moreover, Moorhouse & Wong (2019) conducted a similar study at the primary level in response to the CDC 2004 initiative focusing on primary-level reading education. The two studies did not



consider students' perceptions through the reading lesson. However, they noted that perception could measure students attaining reading achievement.

In conclusion, the literature presents compelling arguments for curriculum reform but still has limitations in identifying how classroom realities align with the curriculum intentions. The literature has indicated the need for reform or refinement, as demonstrated through the various changes in reading learning and teaching over the centuries. Furthermore, the literature revealed how teachers could be misguided in understanding the curriculum, illuminating the relationship between curriculum, teachers, and students. Additionally, studies reviewed identify results that spoke to curriculum importance, the relationship between teachers and students, motivation, and perceptions of students. It identified the Confucian Heritage approach to learning and teaching of Hong Kong students, which has relation to curriculum reform and refinements.

Moreover, the concentration of literature reviewed predominately centered on second language acquisition through a diverse and broad range of areas of learning. This broad range resulted in a dearth of literature for English reading and Hong Kong junior form students.

The literature has shown a gap between curriculum understanding and teachers, teachers' beliefs and classroom practice, and students' perception of the learning and teaching of English reading. Additionally, it expressed the importance of understanding the relationship between policymakers, teachers, and students concerning curriculum reform and refinement flow.

Therefore, the gaps uncovered by this study have promulgated the research questions developed to address the interpretation, implementation, and intent of curriculum refinements in Hong Kong and the various stakeholders. The research questions are:

- 1) How do teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lessons?
- 2) What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?
- 3) How do students perceive reading?
- 4) What are the reasons if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions, teachers' teaching reading, and students' learning how to read?



Chapter 3 Conceptual framework

The literature review has provided insight into the etymology of the word read and the types of reading. The study has shown the evolution of reading, which was considered instruction, indirectly driven by the curriculum to meet the needs of changing environments. The literature has shown the close relationship between curriculum and instruction (Flake, 2017) and provides a historical overview of the curriculum in Hong Kong.

The literature has shown the fundamental theories of reading used in learning and teaching but has shown that motivation is also a key component of learning and teaching. Motivations drive the perception of learners, which is a direct result of teachers. The literature has introduced literacy measurements to monitor and track reading learning and teaching outcomes. The literacy measurements focus on exam results and attitudes toward reading. The literature walks through the current-day curriculum development in Hong Kong since 2001 and the adjustments needed to be made by stakeholders.

A conceptual framework builds upon prior theories and constructs that have expressed a linear relationship within the confines of a study. The literature review has provided foundational support to develop a conceptual framework between curriculum, learning, and teaching. This framework and literature correlate with the CDC's new curriculum guidelines and teachers concerning Hong Kong education.

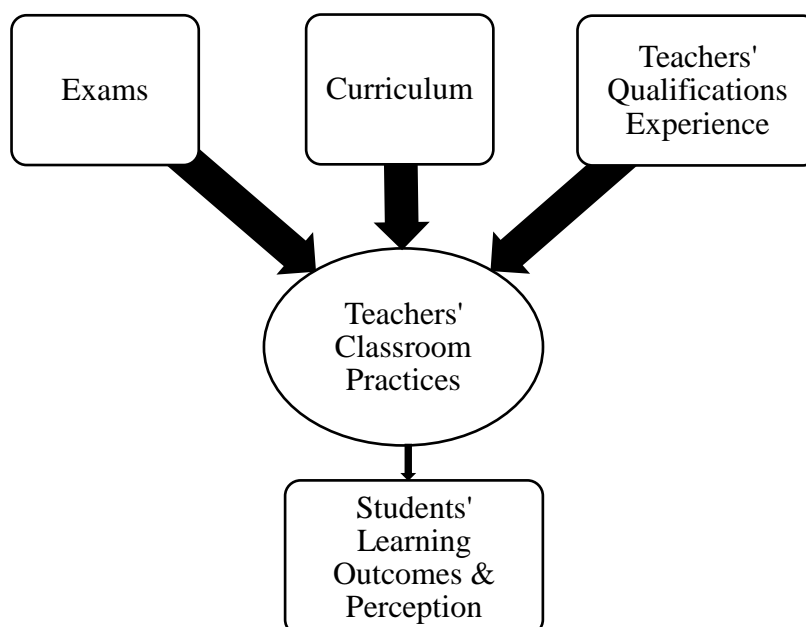
While the literature on Hong Kong curriculum development and change provides insight into reason and purpose, it is limited in focusing on implementation guidelines for teachers. Further

literature examines the teacher's role through their education, beliefs, interpretations, and pedagogy of teaching English reading. It encompasses all facets to develop a rationale for the teacher. With a lack of guidance for implementation, teachers' implementation is discretionary, and the effects on students vary. The literature attempted to identify how students learn to read, which results in their perceptions of reading; the literature was limited to varied approaches.

Figure 3.1, shown below, demonstrates the relationship between curriculum, teachers, and students and is the foundation of the research questions developed through the gaps identified in the literature reviewed.

The extension of exams demonstrated the effectiveness of the curriculum's implementation and students' performance. By examining the relationship between the three, insight is achieved into understanding the effectiveness of curriculum reform and refinement driven by globalization and competitiveness.

Figure 3.1 *Conceptual Framework – relationship among curriculum, teachers, and students*



3.1 Research questions

Examining these three domains will identify if there is a mismatch between the curriculum objectives and outcomes and students' results. The results of this examination in Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: A Hong Kong Case Study: The learning and Teaching of English Reading to Junior Form Secondary Students can be answered through the following research questions:

- 1) How do teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lessons?
- 2) What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?
- 3) How do students perceive reading?
- 4) What are the reasons if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions, teachers' teaching reading, and students' learning how to read?



Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

ESL educational research covers a broad spectrum, e.g., teachers, teaching methods, pedagogy, students, learning strategies, educational policy, and textbooks. Consequently, choosing the appropriate research method is critical for answering its research questions. However, understanding the difference between methodology and method is crucial for research. Methodology refers to “the general logic and theoretical perspective” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.35) of a study, whereby method refers to specific strategies, procedures, and techniques of interpreting and analyzing data (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The three methodologies are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell 2014). Each methodology reveals a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions. The research methodology is essential because it exemplifies philosophical assumptions and drives the selection of research methods. Quantitative research utilizes experiments, statistical analysis, linear regression, and measurement to answer the research questions or test hypotheses. At the same time, qualitative research relies on interpreting individual experiences through various data collection methods.

Since mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative methods, it employs data collection, viewpoints, analysis, and inference techniques for breadth and depth of understanding and correlation. Numerous researchers from qualitative and quantitative cohorts agree that both approaches share attributes and create what has become known as mixed-method research (Todd,

Nerlich, Mckeown, & Clark, 2004). Triangulation is a common approach to combining quantitative and qualitative, introduced by researchers Campbell and Fiske in 1959. The paper introduced the concept of multiple operationalism in quantitative research. Though it was an extension of the theory by Underwood (1957), multiple operationalism (triangulation) shows the critical value of multiple traits and methods employed to test, establish, and show validity. Triangulation is the root of mixed-method research today.

The purpose is simultaneously to employ both methods to investigate the same questions and compare the findings. If qualitative and quantitative methods' outcomes reach similar general results, they fortify and augment each other. However, if the findings deviate, it suggests an interesting new question: Why do they deviate from each other, and how can they be reconciled? Nevertheless, the method a researcher selects, whether mixed-method, quantitative, or qualitative, is driven first by the methodology. The method chosen defines the strategies or instruments for data collection or, in some circumstances, how to analyze the results (Howell, 2013). The methodology section of a research paper answers the question, how was the data collected and analyzed?

Quantitative researchers extract information coded numerically, intending to analyze them statistically. Qualitative researchers elicit comprehensive narratives and descriptions to understand the hypothesis thoroughly. The mixed-method approach combines qualitative and quantitative data collection, yielding a framework of integrating numeric data into the detail and subjective descriptive and numerical measurements from unstructured inquiries. This study's foundation relies on the methodology focused on implementing the mixed method. Though

precise research questions demand specific methods, consideration was given to the researcher's experience and the research questions.

4.2 Research design

This study employed a mixed-method approach to collect, evaluate and analyze data to “build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p.490). This study has reviewed the strengths and limitations of research using qualitative or quantitative methods and has ascertained that employing both methods concurrently to investigate the same research questions and compare the findings has provided methodological triangulation, thereby providing more robust reliability. The mixed-method design afforded rich, comprehensive data to respond to each research question in this study, and the probability of more robust findings through a research design that combines various methods strengthened the quality and scope of this study (Creswell, 2008).

After reviewing other research, it was decided that mixed methods were well-suited for the research, as demonstrated by Qu (2013), who references Dörnyei and the arguments put forward about the significance of incorporating mixed methods. The primary arguments put forward were “increasing strengths while eliminating weakness,” “multi-level analysis of complex issues,” “improve the validity of research,” and “corresponding evidence through multiple methods can also increase generalizability – that is, external validity – of the results” (Dörnyei, 2007, p.45).

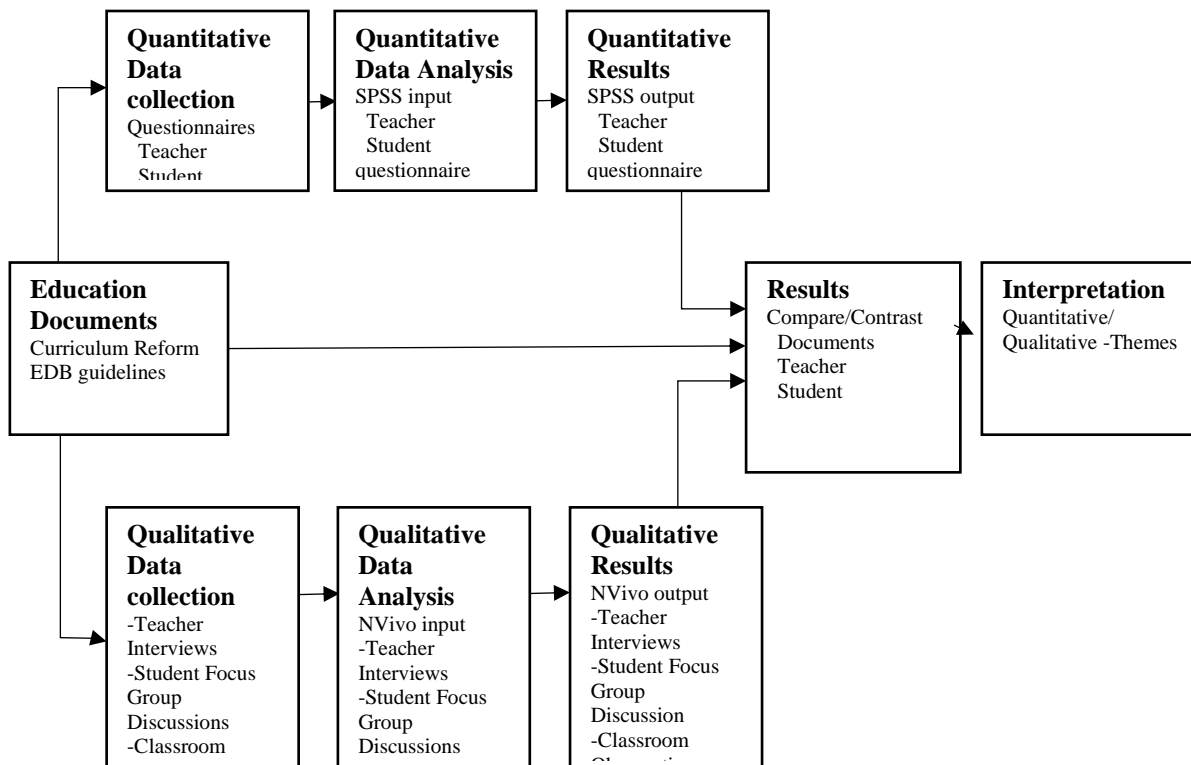
This study believed the research design needed to do its' utmost to eliminate weaknesses, improve validity and provide multi-level analysis.

However, before adopting the mixed-method approach, due diligence was done by the study to determine how the strengths of the qualitative or quantitative methods were utilized to counter the weakness of alternative methods used to develop the findings for the specific research questions of the study.

Though several options were available to employ qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as the Embedded Design, the Explanatory Design, and the Exploratory Design, this study has employed the Triangulation Design. According to Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson (2003), "the most common and well-known approach to mixing methods is the Triangulation Design" (p.62). Though Creswell recommended five main models, the study felt that the '*Convergence Model*' was the most aligned with the research design. The '*Convergence Model*' allowed the study to independently collect and analyze data about the same phenomenon.

During the interpretation of data, the results "converged," which meant the different results were compared and contrasted. The convergence was to "validate, confirm, or corroborate" (p.65). The convergence was instrumental in the research design to develop data, and methodological triangulation was later explained in data analysis. The benefit of triangulation included "increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem" (Thurmond, 2001, p.254).

Figure 4.1 *Triangulation Design: Convergence Model*



Note: Source: Adapted Creswell (2014, 1999)

Guided by Creswell (2014, 1999) and supported by other studies and research to investigate *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: A Hong Kong Case Study: The learning and Teaching of English Reading to Junior Form Secondary Students* (2022), this study affirmed the convergence method as the baseline for the research design.

This study had two groups of participants, teachers and students. The investigation was developed from reviewing the educational documents provided by the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR related to curriculum reform. The study needed to understand the reform through the eyes of the primary stakeholders, teachers, and students. Therefore the study used Likert-scale questionnaires, including open-ended questions, to add validity to the choices made on the Likert-scale segment.

Additionally, the investigation incorporated semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. The questionnaires aimed to create a barometer to measure the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were carried out and provided a deep rich personal perspective, further exploring the results of the questionnaires. The classroom observations are to identify the validity of responses by teachers through real-life examples. The convergence model brought the instruments' results together to discuss the findings and implications of *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: A Hong Kong Case Study: The learning and Teaching of English Reading to Junior Form Secondary Students (2022)*.

4.3 Reliability and validity

Research is predicated on the methods used and the data collection's reliability and validity. Reliability provides assurances on the measurements of what is being studied. Reliability relates to the consistency of measurements in a study, and validity ensures accuracy. Reliability and validity demonstrate and communicate the rigor of research processes and the trustworthiness of research findings. If research is helpful, it should avoid misleading end-users of the research. Relativity is gauged through test-retest reliability, internal consistency, or inter-rater reliability (Jhangiani, Chiang, Cuttler & Leighton, 2020). Validity is demonstrated by identifying the correlation between what the research means to measure and what is being tested. One or more of the four constructs should be recognizable; content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity, or face validity. This study chose '*internal consistency*' and '*construct validity*' to ensure the study's reliability and validity.

This study was teacher-led research, so it was imperative to ensure that reliability and validity were met. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the '*internal consistency*' reliability of the questionnaire, which resulted in .839.

Additionally, as presented by Creswell & Poth (2013), validation was considered to assess the accuracy of the results as presented by the study, the participants, and the readers. This study provided construct validity through comprehensive reports compiled and distributed to interview participants for participant validation and triangulation, thereby increasing the study's credibility.

4.4 Research Questions

This study examined students and teachers collectively to draw conclusions and implications of the correlation between learning and teaching English reading to junior secondary students in Hong Kong. Components of the correlation include curriculum development, reform, teaching qualifications, experience, classroom practice, and students' understanding and perceptions of reading. Research analysis and literature review developed the research questions that arose from gaps in previous research.

4.4.1 Research question one (RQ1)

How do teachers interpret and translate the curriculum to practice in their English reading lessons?

This study employed a mixed-method approach to collect and analyze data. The teacher questionnaire questions in Appendix A were adapted from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2018, 2008). The TALIS was developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), providing worldwide data analysis and evaluation of learning and teaching through the lens of educators. The study omitted questions unrelated to reading, the focus of this study.

The primary focus of the results is identifying trends to improve educational policies and outcomes. Stringent technical standards are developed, and participating countries must adhere to the sampling, data collection, and response rates guidelines. The standards adopted are from the National Center for Educational Statistics in the United States of America. The TALIS provides global insight into teachers' qualifications, beliefs, and practices. The questionnaire was separated into categories: background and qualification, current work; professional development; teaching in general; teaching in the target class; school climate and job satisfaction, and teacher mobility. The questionnaires focused on developing and identifying trends in teachers' understanding of curriculum, interpretation of lesson planning, and classroom practice.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain richer and deeper insight into teachers' understanding of the curriculum and theoretical classroom practice. Interview questions were developed from the preliminary results of the questionnaire and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) (2017). The ASCD is a non-profit organization founded in 1943 to support the global community of educators dedicated to learning and teaching. The support is achieved through forums and the journal Educational Leadership.



The ASCD has previously hosted curriculum development forums and virtual retreats to refresh teachers' understanding of the curriculum professionally. The most current virtual retreat was held in July 2022, titled '*Virtual Retreat: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment with Impact.*'

Classroom observations provided this study with real-time data collection and helped to corroborate the findings through questionnaires and interviews. All research instruments and their development are further discussed in the respective sub-sections.

The data triangulation through analysis of the results from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations provided concise, pertinent data to understand the interpretation of the reading curriculum as related to Hong Kong and the classroom practice.

4.4.2 Research question two (RQ2)

What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?

In concert with research question one, this study used quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed-method approach) to collect and analyze data. The questions in the teacher questionnaire provided insight into teachers' rationale, beliefs, and practices. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations lent to the understanding of teachers' rationale. The three instruments combined provided this study with the data required to understand what drives the teachers to deliver their English reading lessons. All research instruments and their development are further discussed in the respective sub-sections.

4.4.3 Research question three (RQ3)

How do students perceive reading?

This study adapted Horowitz's 1987 Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire for students because it has been and continues to be widely used in educational research. The questions adapted were the questions that incorporated the learning and teaching of reading. The questionnaire was categorized into three sections, students' self-evaluation of reading, students reading abilities, and students' perception of teachers who teach reading. Understanding each category's results developed the discourse line used in focus group discussions.

The focus group discussions were conducted with the guiding discourse developed from the questionnaire results. The study also reviewed the findings published by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 to develop the focus group discussion protocols. The results of the PISA not only reflect reading ability scores and identify attitudes and perceptions of reading, which was integral for this study.

Additionally, classroom observations were carried out to triangulate the results of the questionnaires and focus group discussions. A well-developed questionnaire, focus group discussions, and learning patterns during classroom observations facilitated information-gathering and provided relevant, concise data. An in-depth discussion of instrument adaptation and creation is further elaborated on in the respective sub-section.

4.4.4 Research question four (RQ4)

What are the reasons if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions, teachers' teaching reading, and students' learning how to read?

This study used the adapted Convergence Model (Creswell, 2014, 1999) of triangulation design to address this phenomenon. The data collection and analysis were separated into quantitative and qualitative sections, as indicated in figure 4.1 above. The results were compared and contrasted against each other for interpretation.

This research question required additional in-depth data analysis of Education Bureau (EDB) documents related to curriculum development, reform, and learning objectives and outcomes for English reading. The documents analyzed were seven curriculum reforms issued by the Curriculum Development Council, which focused on English reading. The Education Commission reports on learning and teaching English reading, teacher professional development, and the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) directives on measuring attainment.

The teachers and students were the key stakeholders, which helped the study identify an alignment between learning and teaching. The curriculum identifies the learning objectives and outcomes, and students are expected to meet these outcomes through learning to be promoted. The culmination of the questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observations, and EDB documents were integral in discovering, evaluating, and reporting the synergies and shortcomings of '*Curriculum intention, classroom realities.*'

4.5 Procedures of this study

This study was developed in five stages to address the research questions and achieve the goals of the research based on general scientific methodologies of research; quantitative and qualitative.

4.5.1 Stage 1: literature review

The study's conceptualization was the basis for identifying trends and patterns through prior research in a related context. The extensive literature review indicated the lack of research on learning and teaching English reading in Hong Kong's junior secondary forms. The literature review helped to corroborate the research aim through the gaps identified and the subsequent development of the research questions.

4.5.2 Stage 2: examine and analyze educational documents

The study recognized the importance of understanding educational policy and curriculum in Hong Kong for the study to be impactful. The study read, evaluated, and indexed specific documents related to the research: curriculum reform, educational commission reports on learning and teaching, and assessment guidelines and matrices. Reading through and understanding the educational documents provided a full breadth of the intended objective and outcomes of English reading.

From the conceptualization in stage one and the educational documentation analysis related to curriculum reform and learning and teaching in stage two, the research design was developed to identify data collection methods, participants, and instruments to answer the research questions.

4.5.3 Stage 3: instrument development

This stage involved the development of the five research instruments used.

- Student questionnaire - to evaluate and understand students' beliefs about learning and teaching English reading;
- Student focus group discussions – to obtain students' experiences of learning and teaching reading as accurately as possible.
- Teacher questionnaire – to evaluate a teacher's understanding of curriculum, practice, and beliefs in teaching reading.
- Teacher semi-structured interviews – to collect qualitative data to understand the teaching methods, practices, and beliefs of English reading and the understanding curriculum.
- Classroom observations – to collect qualitative data on students' learning, teaching process, and learning outcomes.

4.5.4 Stage 4: piloting

This stage involved the development of pilot studies. Pilot studies are frequently defined as feasibility studies (Thabane, Ma, Chu, Cheng, Ismaila, Rios, & Goldsmith, 2010; Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001); cited in (Williams-McBean, 2019), though others argue it (Eldridge, Lancaster, Campbell, Thabane, Hopewell, Coleman, & Bond, 2016; Arain, Campbell, Cooper, & Lancaster, 2010, cited in Williams-McBean, 2019). Though this debate is ongoing, there is agreement that pilot studies are a miniature version of studies carried out to allow researchers to improve more extensive studies.

In quantitative research, piloting is considered a necessary step in questionnaires and surveys (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2014); cited in (Williams-McBean, 2019). Literature indicates a lack of research on pilot studies' effectiveness for qualitative or mixed-method approaches to research (Ismail, Kinchin, & Edwards, 2018; Janghorban, Latifnejad Rousardi, & Taghipour, 2014; Secomb & Smith, 2011); however, it is agreed that the use and additional information provided by pilot studies benefit mixed-method and qualitative approaches.

Pilot studies were carried out for each instrument, feedback was gathered, and the necessary modifications were implemented. The details of the pilot studies procedures and modifications are presented within the respective instrument section.

4.5.5 Stage 5: data collection and analysis process

The final stage addressed data collection and analysis to answer the research questions. Data collection followed a structured pattern. First, the government documents were read, as mentioned, and then students and teachers completed the questionnaires. After collecting data for questionnaires, a preliminary analysis was completed, so the study was better equipped to develop focus group discussions and semi-structured interview protocols. The focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews followed. The last step of data collection was classroom observations.

Data analysis was completed through data and methodological triangulation, incorporating a thematic analysis approach. The data collection and analysis sub-section further discusses the holistic triangulation approach.

The brief overview presented above is further explained to provide the necessary details in understanding the data collection process of this study.

4.6 Research setting

The duration of data collection was five months, from January 2022 through May 2022. The primary location was a Band one English Medium of Instruction (EMI) aided secondary all-boys catholic school where the researcher was in the fifth year of employment as the school's Native English teacher. The school is located in Tai Kok Tsui, in the Yau Tsim Mong District, an area of low socioeconomic status. However, the students of this school came from various districts within the territory of Hong Kong and were of diversified socioeconomic backgrounds. The school setting followed the guiding principles of the Marist Brotherhood; intimate, loving, and caring. Moreover, the school implemented small class sizes recommended by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong (EDB). The small class sizes facilitated the quantitative data collection process.

There were five classes in forms one, two, and three, and four in forms four, five, and six. The syllabus was developed based on government curriculum guidelines. Each class attended eight lessons per day, and there were seven days in a cycle. There were two reading lessons each cycle for forms one and two. The researcher conducted one of the lessons. Local English teachers at the school conducted the other reading lesson.

Piloting and questionnaires for students were held on campus during regular school hours. The setting for focus groups was online due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The setting for the teacher participants differed. The data collection period was the same as the students, five months, from January 2022 through May 2022. A predominant number of teacher participants were the researcher's colleagues employed at the same Band one English Medium of Instruction (EMI) aided secondary all-boys catholic school; several other teacher participants were from different schools. Virtual technology was used for all questionnaires and ten semi-structured interviews; one interviewee preferred face-to-face. This interview was held on the school's campus in Tai Kok Tsui in the English Corner. The setting for classroom observation was also held at the school in Tai Kok Tsui.

4.7 Research participants

As the researcher was the Native English teacher for the school in the study, the participants (teachers and students) were sought through convenience and purposeful sampling, which allowed this study to gather information and data expeditiously and efficiently. Two sampling methods allowed the study to gather the most accurate and meaningful answers to the research instruments.

All the pilot and main study student participants were from the same school. However, only fourteen teacher participants were from the same school as the student participants. The other eight teacher participants, as were the three teacher pilot study participants, were from other schools. Using participants from different schools can help to reduce the limitations of all student participants from one specific community. However, the Covid-19 pandemic made recruiting student participants from other schools unfeasible.

There were 24 teacher participants in this study who were sought by purposeful sampling through the researcher's network of colleagues. The participants in the pilot studies were from three different schools.

4.7.1 Students

Two hundred fifty students participated in the study. The participants were the secondary form one and two students from an EMI-aided all-boys catholic school in Tai Kok Tsui. Though from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, the participants all maintained a satisfactory level of English as required for admission. The participants were allocated to classes based on the results of the assessment exams. The more able students were allocated to classes A and B, while the weaker students were in classes C, D, and E. It is worth mentioning that the allocation was based on overall assessment performance, not individual subjects. Though the questionnaires were anonymous, the responses were grouped by class—this assisted the researcher in data analysis, findings, and implications.

Though convenience sampling was used in selecting participants, because of the ease of implementation and cost, the selection of secondary form one and two students was determined by the reading curriculum reform's particular attention to the junior secondary and primary curriculum. These participants were more closely aligned with the characteristics required by the study. Table 4.1, shown below, shows the demographic attributes of student participants.

Table 4.1 *Student Demographic Background*

	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>
Age	<i>Form 1</i>	<i>Form 2</i>
12	110	
13	14	
14	3	99
15		21
16		2
17		1
Total	127	123
School-Based Reading Assessment		
Above average	4	26
Average	67	53
Below average	56	44
Total	127	123

Note: Form 1 results are calculated on Lexile® Grade chart conversion. Form 2 results were calculated on International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS).

4.7.2 Teacher participants

Purposeful sampling was used to invite participants to join the study, as it is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). The study used extreme case purposeful sampling strategy elements, which allowed the researcher to invite several local English teachers (LET) and Native English teachers (NET). Kimmons (2022) states that “extreme case sampling selects subjects from opposite ends or contradictory sides of the phenomenon being studied to understand the topic’s breadth and divergence in experiences, opinions, or characteristics.” All participants were teaching in a Band one EMI School in Hong Kong. Twenty-four teachers accepted the invitation to join the study, of which eighteen were LETs and six were NETs. The participants' relevant

characteristics were their education level, years of experience, understanding of curriculum, beliefs, classroom practices, and actively teaching English reading during the data collection.

Table 4.2, shown below, shows the demographic attributes of student participants.

Table 4.2 *Teacher Demographic Background*

	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Gender	<i>LET</i>	NET
F	14	4
M	4	2
Total	18	6
Education		
Master's Degree	10	3
Bachelor's in English	3	
Bachelor's Science/Arts	7	1
Total	20	4
Years of experience		
1-5	2	1
6-10	6	1
11-15	4	2
16-20	1	1
21+	3	1
Total	18	6

4.8 Development of research instruments

The literature review provided the background, foundation, and gaps that generated the research questions. This mixed-method study allowed flexibility in approaches based on the data collection requirements to meet the needs of two groups of participants. Research questions one and two primary focus was teacher-based and question three's focus was student-based.

Research question four culminated the study's findings through the evaluation, analysis, and results of the questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, observations, and curriculum reforms. The study used data collection and analysis instruments as a thematic approach. Though the questionnaires have been adapted, the study omitted questions that were not instrumental in assisting the study in answering each research question. The instruments were adapted and designed, incorporating the methodology of the research.

4.8.1 Quantitative instruments

Questionnaires are widely used in research, especially in English learning and teaching, according to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011). The design, development, and implementation of the varied instruments used in this study were constructed by collecting, measuring, and analyzing the type of information. For the development of all instruments used, readings were studied to ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments, such as *Research Design - 4th edition* (Creswell, 2014), *Qualitative Research; a Guide to Design and Implementation* (Merriam, 2009), *Qualitative Research Design; An Interactive Approach* (Maxwell, 2013), *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (Kothari, 2004).

A six-point Likert-scale questionnaire was adapted, developed, and separated into three sections. This study used a combination of open-ended and closed questions to gather various responses. Utilizing varied question types provided insight and assisted the study in delving deeper into the respondent's responses. The Likert scale was chosen because it is "one of the most fundamental and frequently used psychometric tools in educational and social sciences" (Joshi, Kale. Chandel, & Pal, 2015, p.397). "Historically, a Likert item comprises five points worded:

Strongly approve, Approve, Undecided, Disapprove, Strongly Disapprove” (Likert, 1932). As research evolved, alternatives such as ‘extremely difficult,’ not difficult,’ never,’ or ‘always’ have been used. Increasing the scale of points based on empirical data allowed the respondents to be prompted to select a response closer to their genuine attitude or opinion. The increased scale created more reliability and validity, resulting in a closer approach to the fundamental distribution.

The benefits and shortcomings of each technique were weighed and analyzed to ensure each instrument used was instrumental in data collection to answer the research questions.

4.8.1.1 Student questionnaire

The design, development, and implementation of this study’s student participant questionnaires were adapted from Horowitz’s (1987) ‘*Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI). To understand students’ beliefs and perspectives, this study adapted and modified questions from BALLI due to its overwhelming use in educational research (Altan, 2012; Russell, 2009; Rieger, 2009; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). In 1985 Horowitz asked twenty-five language teachers their thoughts and beliefs about language learning and what they thought others believed. After combing through the responses and removing the personal opinions, Horowitz was left with 30 definitive opinions, which later became the 34-question BALLI questionnaire released in 1987 (Khodadady, 2009).

However, analyzing and addressing 34 questions from multiple respondents would be impossible psychologically. Horowitz’s had to develop its construct validity to ensure that what was being measured was being asked. BALLI was logically categorized into five critical areas of beliefs,

i.e., 1) difficulty of language learning, 2) foreign language aptitude, 3) the nature of language learning, 4) learning and communication strategies, and 5) motivations and expectations (Horowitz, 1985, 1988, 1999).

While modifying and adapting the BALLI questionnaire to meet the needs of this study, a 6-point Likert scale was adopted instead of the traditional 5-point because increasing the scale of points based on empirical data allowed the respondents to be prompted to select a response closer to their genuine attitude or opinion. Genuine responses created more substantial validity and took a closer approach to the fundamental distribution. The questionnaires also included specific open-end questions to build on responses in the Likert-scale segment. Open-end questions lent themselves to more valuable information, leading to more significant discoveries (Gillham, 2000).

Additionally, these questions genuinely reflected the respondent's subjective nature and honesty due to their responses. Still, open-ended questions required serious attention to detail, interpretation, and administration. Time consumption for researchers and respondents was another deterrent in using multiple open-ended questions, as it was troublesome for respondents to answer using correct word choices.

The Likert-scale segment responses ranged from one to six, including 'never,' 'always,' 'extremely dislike,' 'extremely like,' 'extremely difficult,' and 'extremely easy.' The questionnaire also incorporated ranking questions and the open-ended questions mentioned

earlier. The study was confident that including varied question types significantly improved the overall validity of responses from respondents.

Pilot studies, which details are provided in the next section, were carried out upon finalizing the questionnaires. Pilot studies were crucial to the reliability and design of this study and provided the necessary guidance for effective data collection. While the pilot studies did not ensure successful results, pilot studies increased the likeliness of practical and valuable data collection. Furthermore, this study used Cronbach's alpha to measure the consistency of questions in the questionnaires and surveys and demonstrated internal consistency.

4.8.1.2 Structure of student questionnaire

The student questionnaire consisted of forty questions to identify learning traits, behavior, and perceptions of teaching. Though the construct validity was delineated into five major areas, according to BALLI 1987, the questionnaire was categorized into three parts; the first section was the students' self-evaluation of their reading ability; the second section was the student's descriptive reading abilities; the third section was the students' perception of their teachers' ability to teach reading. The purpose of the three sections was to meet the time constraints of administering the questionnaires during reading lessons. A complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix B in the appendices.

4.8.1.2.1 Questionnaire section 1: students' self-evaluation of English reading abilities

This section of the questionnaire contained 15 questions in total. Salient questions are reflected below from each section.

1. While reading a text, can you guess the meaning of words you do not know with clues from the text?
2. While reading a text, do you highlight, underline or make notes to ask your teacher to explain it?
3. Can you predict what comes next in a text?
4. Can you find the main idea of a text?
5. Can you read quickly to get a general idea of the text?

The construct validity of these questions is associated with the difficulty of language learning and learning and communicating as set by Horowitz (1985, 1988, and 1999). Reliability was measured by internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha presented earlier in the study.

The commonality of the questions in this section assisted in the coding and categorizing of reading challenges faced by students. Moreover, it provided greater validity by measuring the same construct using multiple indicators (convergent validity). Understanding the challenges gave insight into essential learning and teaching during reading lessons.

4.8.1.2.2 Questionnaire section 2: students reading activities

This section of the questionnaire contained ten questions in total. Salient questions are reflected below from each section.

1. How much do you enjoy reading books?
2. How would you rate the level of difficulty when reading books?
3. What do you expect to learn in a reading lesson?
4. What do you do when you encounter one of the following situations?

- a. You do not get the main idea
 - b. You cannot identify specific information
 - c. You encounter unfamiliar words
 - d. You do not understand the author's meaning
 - e. You do not understand the purpose of reading
5. Rank the order of difficulty you face when reading English books (1=least important
9=most important).

The construct validity of these questions is associated with the nature of language learning as set by Horowitz (1985, 1988, and 1999). Reliability was measured by internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha presented earlier in the study. The commonality of the questions in this section indicated trends in reading preferences and habits. It focused on the specifics of language learning through reading. Section two helped address the development of a positive reading culture, a key learning outcome of the curriculum reform mentioned in the literature review. Moreover, the results helped in the findings of teachers' practice related to curriculum understanding.

4.8.1.2.3 Questionnaire section 3: students' perception of teachers teaching reading

This section of the questionnaire contained 15 questions in total. Salient questions are reflected below from each section.

1. Does your teacher divide your reading lesson into three parts pre-reading, during, and post-reading?



2. Does your teacher help you get excited about reading?
3. Does your teacher actively participate in the reading lesson?
4. Does your teacher understand the challenges you face when reading English?
5. Does your teacher use only English during the reading lesson?

The construct validity of these questions is associated with '*motivation and expectation*' as set by Horowitz (1985, 1988, 1999). Reliability was measured by internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha presented earlier in the study. The commonality of questions in section three is determining a student's perception of teachers by understanding the student's response to how a teacher conducts a reading lesson.

4.8.1.3 Pilot study student questionnaire

A pilot study was conducted as the importance of piloting was indicated prior to administering the questionnaire to secondary one and two secondary student participants.

The piloting took place in the reading room in a one-afternoon session between 15:30 and 17:00. Pilot study participants were provided with proper stationery, a hard copy of the questionnaire, and detailed instructions to complete the questionnaire. Participants were instructed to place the completed questionnaires in a sealed box upon completing the questionnaire. The data was compiled, coded, and reviewed. The following table indicates the pilot study results; questions were deleted or modified.

Table 4.3 *Pilot Study modifications- student questionnaire*

Question	Action	Reason
Do you look at the table of content of a book?	Deleted	Piloting results queried how this contributes to understanding the student's challenges while reading.
Can you read and understand graphs, tables, maps, and charts?	Deleted	Piloting results queried how this contributes to understanding the student's challenges while reading.
Can you give a title to a text that has no title?	Deleted	Piloting results queried how this contributes to understanding the student's challenges while reading.
Can you envision a text you are reading as reality?	Modified	Piloting results indicated the complexity of the sentence structure and word usage.
While reading, can you tell the difference between a simple, compound, or complex sentence?	Modified	Piloting results queried what if a student does not know all three, perhaps just one or two?

4.8.1.4 Procedures for conducting student questionnaires

As participants were under 18, parents' e-letters were issued by a school office administrator to avoid any conflict or pressure to participate, advising parents of the study and requesting their child's participation. Upon acceptance, students were given the option to participate. The questionnaires were carried out once mutual consent was received from parents and students.

Questionnaires were separated into three parts and administered over three-cycle days for each class for secondary one and secondary two during the scheduled reading lessons in students' respective classrooms. The researcher and a teaching assistant administered the questionnaire process. Each student received verbal and written instructions about the purpose of the survey and how it would be administered. The students were reminded that they did not need to

participate and could stop at any time and not complete without consequence. Upon completion of instruction, each student received an iPad.

The questionnaire was categorized, and the students were tasked to complete section one, which comprised 15 questions within a thirty-minute time frame. The questionnaire was presented through google forms for ease of data collection. The teaching assistants' primary function was to answer any questions in Cantonese that the students may have that could not be answered in English.

Additionally, if the students had any questions, the teaching assistant noted them and then provided a report to the researcher for review. The researcher tracked the completion rate via google forms to ensure all students had completed it. After completion, students were instructed to sign out and clear the history of the iPad. Clearing history was made for ethical considerations and privacy, as the completion of the questionnaire was anonymous. The same procedures were followed except for the allotted time for section two. The number of questions in section two was limited to ten; hence the time was adjusted to twenty minutes for completion. The third section was completed in the third reading lesson for each class, respectively, and the same protocols from section one were followed, as section three had the same number of questions as section one.

4.8.1.5 Teacher questionnaire

The design, development, and implementation of this study's teacher participant questionnaires were adapted from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2018) and modified

to meet the research question's needs. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) outlined, "TALIS aims to produce rich and reliable information on the whole population of teachers and principals in a given country. Therefore, it quickly collects information from a nationally representative group of teachers and principals."

The study selected to modify and adapt questions from TALIS 2018 because the essence of this international survey is to 'offer the opportunity for teachers and principals to provide input' and insight 'into education analysis and policy development' (OECD, 2018). One of the guiding principles of this study was to understand teachers' understanding of the reading curriculum and its implementation at the classroom level.

Pilot studies, which details are provided in the next section, were carried out upon finalizing the questionnaires.

4.8.1.6 Structure of teacher questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire comprises 45 questions adapted from the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018. It covers teacher background, professional development, teaching beliefs and practices, experiences in and feelings about their schools, working conditions, and curriculum reform. It is important to note that this questionnaire is not an assessment. TALIS is the primary source of questions because one of the key results is to "look at how teachers apply their knowledge and skills in the classroom in teaching practices" (TALIS, 2018).

The questionnaire was categorized into several sections: background, professional development, teacher appraisal and feedback, teaching practices, beliefs, attitudes, teaching a reading class, and curriculum understanding. Salient questions are reflected below from each section. A complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix C in the appendices.

4.8.1.6.1 Questionnaire section 1: background information

1. How did you receive your first teaching qualification?
2. When did you complete the formal education or training that qualified you to teach?
3. How significant were the following for you to become a teacher?
 - a) Teaching offered a steady career path
 - b) Teaching provided a reliable income
 - c) Teaching allowed me to contribute to society
4. How many years of experience do you have?

The commonality of these questions reflected the background of teacher participants and provided data to determine how equipped teachers are to understand curriculum based on education.

4.8.1.6.2 Questionnaire section 2: training and professional development

1. Did you take part in any induction activities?
2. When you began work at your current school, were the following provisions part of your induction?
 - a) Courses/seminars attended in person

- b) Planned meetings with principals and experienced teachers
 - c) General/administrative introduction
 - d) Co-teaching with experienced teachers
3. During the last 12 months, did you participate in any of the following professional development activities?
- a) Formal qualification programs
 - b) Online courses/seminars
 - c) Education conferences
 - d) Literacy programs
 - e) Cater to learner diversity
4. Thinking of all your professional development activities during the last 12 months, did any of these positively impact your teaching?

This section reflected the activities geared to developing teachers' skills, knowledge, and expertise and helped develop a trend in understanding educational reforms.

4.8.1.6.3 Questionnaire section 3: teacher appraisal and feedback

1. Thinking about teachers in your school, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- a) Most teachers strive to develop new ideas for teaching and learning
 - b) Most teachers open to change
 - c) Most teachers support each other in the development of new ideas
2. On average, how often do you do the following in your school?

- a) Co-teach
 - b) Peer classroom observation with feedback
 - c) Develop collaborative lesson materials
 - d) Work with other teachers to ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing student progress
 - e) Engage in discussions about the learning development of specific students
3. In your teaching, to what extent can you do the following?
- a) Get students to believe that they can do well in school
 - b) Help students value learning
 - c) Craft good questions for students
 - d) Motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork
 - e) Provide an alternative explanation, for example, when students are confused

The commonality of the questions in the section sets a baseline of general teaching practices, which was integral for the researchers' data collection and analysis.

4.8.1.6.4 Questionnaire section 4: teaching practices, beliefs, and attitudes

1. How often do you do the following at school?
 - a. Attend staff meeting
 - b. Develop a school curriculum
 - c. Exchange teaching materials with colleagues
 - d. Teach jointly as a team
2. How strongly do you agree with the following statements about yourself as a teacher in

this school?

- a. All in all, I am satisfied with my job
 - b. I am successful with my students in my class
 - c. I usually know how to get through to students
 - d. Teachers in this local community are well respected
3. We want to ask about your personal beliefs on teaching and learning. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree.
- a. Effective/good teachers demonstrate the correct way to solve a problem
 - b. My role as a teacher is to facilitate students' inquiry
 - c. A quiet classroom is generally needed for effective learning
 - d. Thinking and reasoning processes are more critical than specific curriculum content

This section helped this study better understand teaching practices and beliefs related to teachers.

The questions adapted in this section focus on the teaching of English reading.

4.8.1.6.5 Questionnaire section 5: teaching a reading class

1. How many students are enrolled in your English reading class?
2. How strongly do you agree that you have control over the following areas of your planning and teaching in your English reading class?
 - a) Determining course content
 - b) Selecting teaching methods
 - c) Assessing students' learning
 - d) Disciplining students

- e) Determining the amount of homework to be assigned
- 3. What percentage of class time is typically spent on the following activities for this English reading class?
 - a) Administrative tasks (e.g., attendance, handing out school information/forms)
 - b) Keeping order in the classroom (maintaining discipline)
 - c) Actual teaching and learning

This section has addressed teaching understanding and practices specific to reading lessons. This section provided insight into the teacher's implementation of the curriculum.

4.8.1.6.6 Questionnaire section 6: curriculum understanding

1. What are the key concepts addressed in the English reading curriculum?
2. What is the ratio of compliance versus contribution in your classroom?
3. Are there opportunities for student-led lessons, or do curriculum and teacher-led dictate every lesson?
4. How do we teach for transfer?

This final section helped develop a framework to discuss teachers' understanding of the current curriculum.

The culmination of collected and analyzed data provided an all-encompassing position of teachers and their beliefs, practices, and classroom strategies. It prepared a critical foundation for

developing and adapting interview questions for the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, it lent to the development of lesson observation tools.

4.8.1.7 Pilot study teacher questionnaire

The importance of pilot studies was demonstrated earlier in the procedures of this study section. The adapted TALIS questionnaire was first introduced in 2008, with twenty-four countries participating and doubling in size to forty-eight. However, to ensure reliability and validity and account for any inconsistencies in questioning, this study chose to pilot the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were emailed to each participant, and they were asked to complete the questionnaire and give a brief written feedback report to the researcher within one week of receipt.

The study reviewed the responses and written feedback, and no changes were made to the existing questionnaire. The only comment worth noting was that participant two stated, “It was a bit long, but it was a good opportunity to do a self-reflection.” Concerned with the response of participant two, the study reviewed some literature on time requirements for surveys and questionnaires and determined that the optimal time for a respondent to spend on surveys is twenty minutes (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017; Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009).

The study emailed all three participants asking how much time they spent. Participants one and three responded approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes, while participant two indicated almost thirty-two minutes. This study compiled a brief report on respondents’ responses for

validation and presented it to the participants. The report aimed for respondents to validate their responses and provide further credibility to the study findings (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

4.8.1.8 Procedures for conducting teacher questionnaires

Teacher participants of this study completed the necessary ethical requirements, discussed in the ethical issues section, before distributing the questionnaires. The researcher sent out a general email to all participants individually to not disclose other participants' data, outlining the Structure of the questionnaire and the time frame for completion and providing reliable contact information for any queries that may arise.

In late February and early March 2022, participants individually were sent a link to a google form titled *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: A Hong Kong Case Study: The learning and Teaching of English Reading to Junior Form Secondary Students*. A message in the link thanked the participants for participating, reminded them of the pre-determined time frame for submitting responses on the 31st of March 2022, and re-iterated that withdrawal was allowed without consequence.

By the 31st of March, the researcher reviewed the responses and noted that only twenty of the twenty-four participants responded. As the responses were anonymous, the researcher invited four new participants who agreed to participate, and the pertinent details of the study were discussed. The researcher indicated the deadline of the 15th of April, 2022, for completion and submission to the new participants.

4.8.2 Qualitative Instruments

As Maxwell (2013) explains, “qualitative research design, to a much greater extent than quantitative research, is a “do-it-yourself” rather than an “off-the-shelf” process, one that involves “tacking” back and forth between components of the design, assessing their implications for one another” (p.3). This indication implies that qualitative instruments must be flexible and inductive (Robson, 2011).

This study has built upon the responses analyzed from the quantitative instruments to develop a direction in determining the most suited instruments to adapt to meet the needs of the study. As a teacher-led researcher, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and lesson observations were chosen to understand the researcher's relationship with the participants.

4.8.2.1 Student Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) have grown in educational research (Miller, Durrani, Kataeva, & Makhmetova, 2022; Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018; Barbour, 2005). FGDs are commonly used in the qualitative approach to understanding participants’ feelings about a particular issue (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). They are “perceived to be cost-effective and a promising alternative in participatory research” (Morgan 1996, cited in Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018, p.21), providing a stage for a variety of viewpoints (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Orr, 1992). There has been an increasing trend in FGDS in educational research (Hall, 2020; Gundumogula, 2020; Masadeh, 2012; Gizir, 2007). Educational research indicates that focus group discussions benefit students because of their ease, comfort, informality, and ability to gather deeper information from participants.

FGDs were used in this study as they facilitated an open discussion with student participants, expressing opinions clearly and openly. Students felt comfortable and shared their thoughts openly and honestly.

The study developed focus group protocols for the focus group discussions by coding and tabulating the student questionnaires. As a facilitator, guiding the students was the primary objective of maintaining an open, honest dialogue. The focus group protocols helped the participants engage in meaningful conversation. The table below highlights some of the focus group protocol-guided topics for discussion.

Table 4.4 *Focus group protocol-guided topics for discussion*

Topic	Reason
Let us chat about the meaning of reading.	To get a sense of students' awareness.
Let us talk about your reading teacher.	To gain insight into students' perception of English reading teachers.
Describe your English reading lesson.	To determine the student's understanding and purpose of reading. Additionally, how a teacher teaches was identified.
Let us talk about a reading lesson with no homework.	To identify if homework is a driving force in appreciating a subject, particularly reading.

4.8.2.2 Pilot study student focus group discussions

As indicated earlier, piloting various instruments was used to determine the appropriateness of content related to the instrument.

The study conducted two pilot focus group discussions (FGDs) to test the focus group protocols and become familiar with the focus group discussions. The pilot study helped identify how FGDs could stray from the discussion and allowed the researcher to refocus the FGDs. The following are some examples of how the FGDs went array.

Table 4.5 *FGDs off-task dialogue*

Topic	Reason
Describe your standard English reading lesson.	The FGDs began with the teacher coming into class and telling us what we would do. Then after a few minutes, the conversation discussed the teachers' appearances and bad qualities.
Let us discuss a reading lesson with no homework.	The initial response was focused but became much more generalized, and the discussion became about no homework for any subject.

Additionally, the pilot study experienced technical issues, precisely Wi-Fi stability and connection. Ensuring this technical issue would not present a problem during the actual FGDs, a secondary device was connected through a direct line for the actual FGDs.

The piloting of FGDs benefited this study by preparing the researcher for the actual FGDs.

4.8.2.3 Procedures for conducting focus group discussions

Purposive sampling was utilized to select student participants for focus group discussions because of the study's similar characteristics. It is worth mentioning that the study understood that this type of sampling could lead to unintended selection bias. However, this study attempted to mitigate the bias through random selection for all interested participants.

Additionally, bias was reduced by conducting the pilot study to identify flaws in the selection criteria and initial part of FGDs. A randomizing program, Research Randomizer (Urbaniak & Plous, 2013), selected participants for each focus group from the pool of participants who agreed to participate.

After randomly selecting students, an email was sent to the participants and their parents, informing them of their acceptance. The email also included a consent form to be completed to meet the ethical requirements of this study. Participants responded via email and attached the necessary consent forms. Each participant who accepted was notified of their group number, date, location, and time of focus group discussion, along with a reminder of the inability to participate without consequence.

Additionally, they were provided an overview of what was to be discussed. Prior knowledge provided time for participants to organize ideas and provided richer information. Due to social distancing requirements in Hong Kong, which resulted from Covid-19, the focus group discussions were held online via Zoom. Each focus group was assigned a personalized Zoom link the morning of the scheduled group meeting. The researcher was apprehensive about using Zoom, though it was successful in the pilot study. However, it worked to benefit this study as each focus group meeting was recorded, providing transcripts.

A bi-lingual English teaching assistant was present at all focus group discussions to assist as participants may find difficulty expressing thoughts in English. An informal tone and register were used to keep the discourse informal and easy to understand and develop a rich conversation

between students. The average time for each focus group discussion lasted forty-five minutes, and the participants appeared to be candid and straightforward. Upon the completion of the focus group discussion, participants were thanked. No consideration was given to the participants whatsoever.

4.8.2.4 Teacher semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected for teacher participants after questionnaire completion. In qualitative research, interviewing is considered a primary data collection method (Croix, Barrett, & Stenfors, 2018; Stuckey, 2013). Though there are several methods of interviewing, three remain the most commonly used; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This study selected semi-structured interviews because of the alignment of the participants and desired goals of this study. Semi-structured interviews provided guided questions yet allowed the researcher to probe for additional details from interviewees as needed.

The primary benefit of semi-structured interviews was providing richer information that augments the questionnaire results. Interviewers and interviewees tended to feel more relaxed (Boyce & Neale, 2006), providing information that questionnaires might not answer. While digression occurred, the semi-structured interview protocols maintained the primary focus.

The environment of a semi-structured interview, via Zoom for all interviews except three, allowed the interviewer and interviewee a comfortable environment conducive to the one-on-one conversation, which revealed richer, more truthful responses and elaboration of thoughts. The remaining three interviews were held face-to-face and audio recorded.

4.8.2.5 Pilot study teacher semi-structured interviews

This study carried out a pilot study to strengthen the interview protocols and interviewer skills (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Since the researcher lacked experienced, testing the questions and gaining practical experience in interview skills and techniques benefitted the study. The interview questions were adapted from ASCD and developed in concert with the responses from the questionnaire.

The interviews ranged from thirty-six minutes to forty-two minutes, which fell within the suggested time frame of forty-five minutes (Boyce & Neale, 2006). After the completion, the researcher was exposed to the transcription, coding, and indexing process. Piloting was a vital exercise to refine strategies before the main study. The significant benefits of the pilot study were obtaining experience, analysis, and self-reflection for improvement. Two areas for modifications arose. The first was understanding the importance of interview protocols and listening. The second was with interview protocol questions. The table below shows the changes made.

Table 4.6 *Interview protocol modifications - questions*

Additional questions	Purpose
Can you explain why English reading is necessary for ESL learners?	This question gauges the teacher's understanding of the curriculum and students' perceptions.
Can we discuss reading skills and strategies and their importance in developing a reading-for-pleasure habit?	This question indicates a teacher's beliefs and understanding about developing a positive reading culture in school.

This pilot study aimed to identify the relevance of the interview questions concerning this study and research questions. Furthermore, it gave the researcher the tools to gain experience interviewing and following interview protocols.

4.8.2.6 Procedures for conducting semi-structured interviews

After completing the questionnaires, the researcher emailed all twenty-four teacher participants, again thanking them and inviting them to join semi-structured interviews. The researcher outlined the purpose of the interviews and the anticipated duration and indicated that the interview questions would be given to them a few days before the interview. The researcher asked interested teachers to respond via email within five days the email. Eleven teachers favorably responded.

The researcher created a timetable and circulated it to each proposed interviewee individually. Each interviewee informed the researcher of their preferred time slot. When the researcher received the timetable back from each interviewee, it was cross-referenced to ensure no overlapping time slots. At that time, all eleven interviewees were scheduled.

The researcher formally emailed each interviewee, confirming the time and attaching a Zoom link. As in the focus group discussions for students, social distancing required interviews to be done via Zoom. However, Zoom benefited all parties as the environment was personally selected, creating a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

The interviews ranged in time from thirty-six minutes to forty-eight minutes. Except for one, all the interviews were held via Zoom and automatically recorded for transcription and review later.

It is worth noting that participants were not allowed to be recorded, though no participants exercised that option. All the interviews recorded on Zoom were saved and securely maintained in an encrypted password-protected file that only the researcher and principal supervisor could access. The Zoom files and transcripts will be destroyed upon completing and accepting this study. The one interview not held via zoom was conducted face-to-face and was audio recorded only.

Once all the interviews were completed, the data were analyzed using NVivo 12 and compiled thematically into a comprehensible report in a narrative form. The report was then shared with interview participants for participant validation, which this study recognized increased credibility (Birt, Scott, Caver, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Results are shared in the forthcoming chapter. The complete interview protocol can be found in Appendix D of the appendices. The table below shows salient questions posed during interviews.

Table 4.7 *Interview protocol sample questions*

Additional questions	Purpose
Can you explain the purpose of reading?	This question lends to teachers' understanding of the curriculum.
Can we talk about the new curriculum in Hong Kong?	This question indicates a teacher's understanding of curriculum reform in Hong Kong.
Do you believe change is good?	This question lends itself to teachers' acceptance of curriculum reform.
What would it be and why if you could change anything about your English reading lesson?	This question is intended to identify a teacher's beliefs and practices.

4.9 Classroom observations

Classroom observations are one of the most common methods for gathering data and provide more reliable information for analysis than questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions alone (Lavadenz & Armas, 2012; Pianta & Hamre, 2009). Observations can be seen as the bridge between intentions and realities. This study adapted the Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL) (Lavandez & Armas, 2012) to measure and rate lesson observations. OPAL has four constructs, rigorous & relevant curriculum, connections, comprehensibility, and interactions, which use a six-point Likert scale (1-6, low to high).

Figure 4.2 *Observation Protocol Model.*



Note: Source: Lavandez & Armas (2012)

4.9.1 Pilot study classroom observations

Classroom observations were the final instrument of this study, and the study recognized the importance of linking the findings from questionnaires and interviews through real-time observation. The pilot study was used to determine if the lesson observations would be helpful and provide relevant data in answering the research questions.

The study received permission from the school and approached a teacher, not part of the formal study if their reading class could be used for piloting. After all necessary classroom observation

protocols were discussed and followed, the study carefully reviewed and analyzed all three components of classroom observation: pre-lesson, lesson, and post-lesson. Piloting the classroom observation benefitted the study and provided insight into the holistic approach of the data analysis process. Table 4.8, shown below, identifies modifications required for the classroom observation protocols.

Table 4.8 *Classroom observation protocol modifications*

Items	Reason
Observation Checklist	Too much focus on the checklist and insufficient time spent listening to the learning and teaching process.
Audio Recording	Over-reliance on the audio recording of classroom observation limited the researcher's attention during observation.

4.9.2 Procedures for classroom observations

Teacher participants were asked if they would allow their English reading class to be observed. Concurrently they were informed of the observation protocols, purpose, and pre-observation and post-observation procedures. Two teachers agreed to have their English reading lessons observed. The classroom observations were carried out during the scheduled English reading lesson. There was a pre-observation conference, classroom observation, post-observation conference, analysis, and final findings. The pre-observation conference was an informal meeting to get the main idea of the following:

1. What were the general goals of the lesson?
2. What were the expectations of students attaining the learning outcome?

3. What role will the teacher play, and what teaching method will be used?
4. Have your teaching ethics been modified for observation, or is this typical of your class?

On the day of lesson observation, the researcher entered the classroom, was introduced by the teacher, and sat in the back to avoid interrupting the regular class operation. The teacher explained the purpose of the observation and instructed the class to behave normally. In addition to the checklist, the researcher took anecdotal notes to document the teachers' practices, student engagement, overall classroom atmosphere, and learning materials. The lesson lasted for 60 minutes.

After the lesson, the teacher and researcher went to the reading room for a post-lesson observation conference. Preliminary observation notes, self-reflections, and areas for improvement were discussed. The session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The researcher completed the second classroom observation and post-observation conference with the second teacher, who agreed.

Upon completing both classroom lesson observations, the researcher analyzed the data, issued a preliminary report, and presented the finding to each teacher who participated in the classroom observation. The purpose was for participant validation to add further credibility to the study.

The classroom observation results are shared in the following chapter of this study.



4.10 Data analysis

This study's explicit objectives and data-collection comprehension were considered in the research design. Maxwell (2013) indicates that "analysis is often conceptually separated from design" (p.104). Conversely, Maxwell points out that "analysis should be part of the design," as stated by (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.6, cited in Maxwell, 2013, p.104). This study employed a mixed-method approach to data collection and recognized the unique relationship between research questions and various data collection methods. The triangulation of the different methods showed the researcher no mechanical way to convert the studies' research questions into methods (Maxwell, 2013). Conversely, data collection is a means to answer the research questions by appropriately selecting effective data analysis methods. The research questions of this study required different instruments to be used to collect the data, thereby requiring different methods of data analysis.

For RQ1, which asked how teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lessons, the study combined the findings from section 6 of the questionnaire and responses from participants related to curriculum understanding, implementation, and intent gathered during the semi-structured interviews for data analysis.

For RQ2, which asked about the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in English reading lessons, the study focused on responses gathered during semi-structured interviews and incorporated findings from classroom observations and questions from sections 2, 4, and 5.

For RQ3, which asked how students perceive reading, the study used the questionnaire responses and the findings from the focus group discussion for data analysis.

For RQ4, which asked what are the reasons if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions, teachers' teaching reading, and students' learning how to read, the study culminated all the results and findings gathered from RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, as well as, the analysis of government documents related to curriculum reform and refinements. Procedures for Data analysis

Instinctively, this study looked for patterns, connections, and relationships based on participant data collection results. This study used a mixed-method approach to collect the data to achieve the benefits detailed in the insights provided by quantitative data and the contextualized insights of qualitative data. The mixed-method design allowed the study to depict the complexity of *'Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities.'* The quantitative elements measured the realities of learning and teaching from a finite perspective. At the same time, the qualitative elements allowed a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings through dialogue and observation. The deeper understanding allowed the study to develop data and methodological triangulation.

Recognizing there are two common types of quantitative data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics (Bergin, 2018, Creswell, 2018), this study used the descriptive statistical approach for the quantitative analysis. The researcher prepared the data collected from questionnaires, BALLI and TALIS into meaningful and comprehensible data by validating, editing, coding, and analyzing.

This study used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data collected. The descriptive analysis provided the first level of analysis for the study. This study generated the mean, median, mode, frequency, and range to find patterns. Though this study based its quantitative analysis using the descriptive approach, a *t*-test, an inferential approach, was used to compare the secondary two groups' mean. The study recognized the importance of absolute statistics, the quantitative element of this study. However, having selected a mixed method, the second data analysis phase involved qualitative analysis.

The qualitative data analysis phase used the thematic approach in examining and analyzing the collected qualitative data. Unlike quantitative data analysis with data preparation and analysis separated, it happens parallel in data analysis for qualitative analysis (Bergin, 2018, Creswell, 2018).

The study adopted a '*Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism*' (TATM) to form the data and methodological triangulation (Babu, 2014). The TATM was categorized into two areas. The left side of the diagram represents the instruments used to develop the methodological triangulation. The right side of the diagram identifies the data sources and collection methods to develop the data and methodological triangulation. Combining the data and methodological triangulation established themes for the study to analyze further and answer the research questions in a thematic and narrative form. The data collected to answer each research question from students and teachers, which supported the data triangulation of this study, were systematically analyzed using both "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) and NVivo 12. Please see figure 4.3 below.

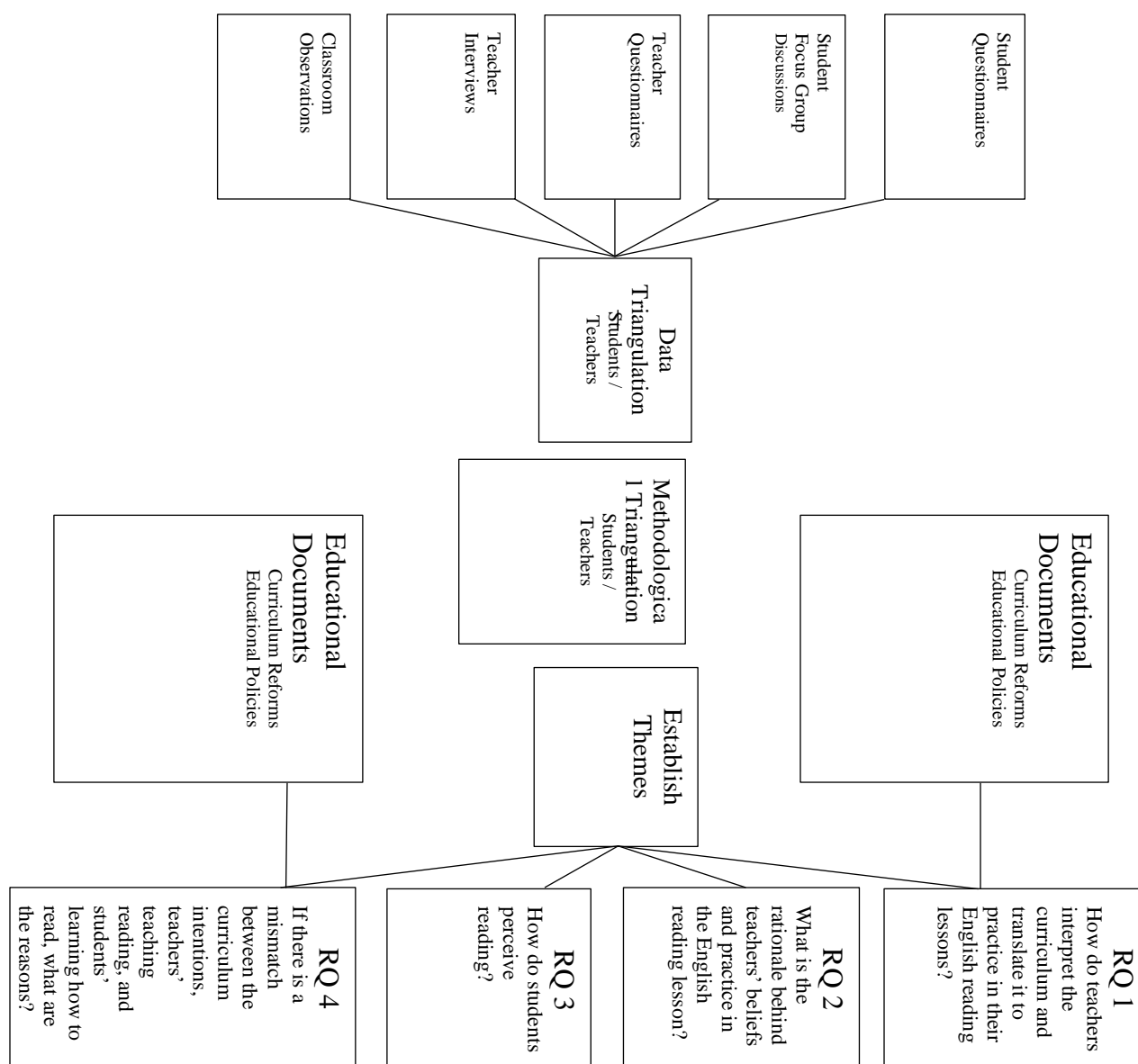
Firstly, the educational documents were read, analyzed, and summarized, which provided the necessary insight for data collection and analysis. The key learning objectives and outcomes were inputted into NVivo 12 to correlate phrases and wordings.

Secondly, descriptive, inferential, and correlation statistics were used in the data analysis.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and demonstrate the characteristics of the student and teacher participants from the feedback obtained, which was explained earlier in the instrument development section. Inferential statistics were used to conclude curriculum intentions and classroom realities through the teacher's lens. Correlation statistics were used to examine the linear relations between students' perceptions of learning reading and teachers' practices of teaching reading.

Thirdly, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations were conducted. The qualitative data analysis was done to gain richer, more profound meaning to feedback provided in the questionnaires. The data were manually analyzed and then input into NVivo 12, which established themes from coding, word frequency, and text searches.

Please see Figure 4.3 below, which demonstrates the data analysis flow.

Figure 4.3 *Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism (TATM).*

Note: source: Adapted Babu (2014)

Finally, the data was compiled, and results were compared and contrasted, leading to the findings' interpretation.

The data analysis process allowed the study to interpret the data to formulate responses to the research questions in the discussion section.

4.11 Ethical Issues

The guidelines and resources for ethical considerations and issues are plentiful (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018; Israel, 2015; Creswell, 2008). Under the guidelines set forth by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Education University of Hong Kong and the recommendation of Iphofen & Tolich, Isreal, and Creswell, this study strictly adhered to ethical policies. Firstly, and most importantly, the anonymity of all participants was taken seriously, and all safeguards were in place throughout the study.

The researcher was a teacher of the student participants and a colleague of the teacher participants. Therefore, the study understood that unintended coercion to participate might have arisen. The researcher understood that parents might have felt obliged to approve their child's participation due to the relationship between the researcher and the student.

Additionally, colleagues may have felt pressure to participate to avoid conflict. The agreement between the researcher and the school mitigated the risk of unintended coercion. The school officially informed and distributed consent forms to parents and colleagues. A select school administrator was assigned to send and collect the consent forms for privacy.

Upon all consent forms submitted, the administrator forwarded them to the researcher, along with a student id number-only name list for students whose parents had consented to participate in the study. All necessary consent forms were issued and obtained for participants and setting. There was no consideration whatsoever made for participation in the study. Participants were informed of the right to withdraw from this study without consequence throughout the data

collection process. As conveyed to all participants, direct references or quotes from data collection were referenced by pseudonyms.

All material data collected was maintained in encrypted files that were only accessible to the researcher and the principal supervisor. After completing this study, all hard and soft files will be appropriately disposed of, ensuring anonymity. The documentation about ethical considerations can be found in Appendix E.

Chapter 5 Results

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this study examined the relationship between curriculum, teachers, and students in the learning and teaching of English reading for junior secondary students in Hong Kong. This study adapted and used Triangulation Design: Convergence Model (Creswell, 2014, 1999) as the baseline for research design. This study adapted the Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism (TATM) outlined in the previous chapter to examine and draw conclusions for the research questions. Descriptive data analysis through central tendencies (Mean and Standard Deviation) and Frequency Count of results are presented, and thematic narrative data analysis is presented in five areas of analysis, two quantitative and three qualitative. The variety allowed the study to measure the degree of sensitivity and fuse measurement with opinion, quantity, and quality (Wong, 2007).

The results are presented by research questions incorporating a narrative format to disseminate the findings. Results are presented systematically using thematic and descriptive narratives, as Table 5.1 indicates.

Table 5.1 *Area of analysis*

	Descriptive	Thematic
Teacher questionnaire	X	
Teacher interviews		X
Classroom observation		X
Student questionnaire	X	
Student focus groups		X

5.2 Results: RQ1

How do teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it to practice in their English reading lessons?

The findings of this research question were borne primarily from the semi-structured interviews. There were 14 interviews ($n=14$) conducted, of which four are the focus of the findings because they had robust, distinctive dialogue and varied responses concerning the other ten interviews. Salient statistical data is presented and is the foundation for developing the questions for the interview. The analysis of the interviews ($n=14$) established several themes.

However, three prevalent themes, curriculum interpretation, goals, and implementation, were distinct in answering the first research question, as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 *Themes generated by interviews*

Themes
Curriculum interpretation (self-efficacy)
Curriculum intent (objectives and outcomes)
Curriculum implementation (practices)

5.2.1 Teacher's lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation

The self-efficacy of curriculum interpretation means the teachers of this study had a general lack of knowledge of the curriculum guidelines issued by the Curriculum Development Council. The findings related to self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation demonstrated that 90% of the teachers indicated no knowledge of the CDC's prescribed curriculum requirements for English reading. The collective response from the teachers, 71 %, who developed the theme of self-

efficacy in curriculum interpretation, may recall reading a few lines from various press releases and mentioning they did not understand much about curriculum policies and reforms.

Moreover, they lamented that time was against them as educators, and their focus was required on more pressing matters. In addition, teachers with less than ten years of experience, 37.5%, collectively indicated their junior status did not warrant them to familiarize themselves with curriculum guidelines or reforms.

They further stated that this should be on senior staff members. However, as shown below and mentioned earlier, four teachers were more vocal and had strong opinions and distinctive comments that are, in fact, representative as all the interviewees conveyed similar meanings in their self-efficacy of curriculum interpretation.

“I am not interested in the curriculum guidelines, so I am not familiar with them and cannot interpret them. My job is to teach students how to pass an examination and who has time to study unimportant documents” (*Teacher 1, interview excerpt line 32-35*).

“...I know it is like, learning to read or ..., but I do not look at it because we are not required to. Secondly, it is because we are so busy with work. We do not really have extra time to, like, you know, search, what is happening in all, so like, if there is something important, the principal will let us know. I think logging in and reading the documents is not required. We know basic things about it but do not need to go through it” (*Teacher 2, interview excerpt line 62-68*).

“How can I understand the curriculum guidelines and reform if I have never read them? It is not part of our job description, so reading or understanding it is unnecessary. I am here to teach students to pass examinations” (*Teacher 3, interview, lines 81-85*).

Table 5.3, shown below, illustrates the results, tabulated from the teachers’ questionnaire responses, of the participant’s knowledge of the four key tasks outlined in the curriculum reform initiative of 2002 and highlighted in subsequent refinements issued. It was important for the study to identify if teachers were well-informed about curriculum reforms and refinements. The findings show that 50% of teachers are unaware of the key tasks, while 16.7% of the teachers knew what the four key tasks indicated in the curriculum reform of 2002 and subsequent refinements were.

Table 5.3 (TQ.43) *What are the Key Tasks announced in the 2002 curriculum reform initiative? (n=24)*

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Moral & Civic Education, Read to Learn, Project Learning	1	4.2	4.2
Moral & Civic Education, Read to Learn, Project Learning, Information Technology for Interactive Learning	4	16.7	20.8
Moral & Civic Education, Self-Directed Learning Read to Learn, Information Technology for Interactive	1	4.2	25.0

Table 5.3 (*continued*)

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Moral & Civic Education, Values Education, Read to Learn, Information Technology for Interactive	2	8.3	33.3
Moral & Civic Education, Values Education, Read to Learn, Project Learning	4	16.7	50.0
Not sure	12	50.0	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

Conversely, one participant felt confident in understanding the curriculum guidelines and reforms, including the number of reforms and last date of release, as well as the key tasks in the 2002 reform.

“I think I am pretty updated, I would say, because actually, the education reform in Hong Kong has been like over two decades, but I, in particular, for reading, I am not an expert in talking about a curriculum, curriculum assessment or pedagogy. I will have a little more knowledge than my colleagues, but I am not an expert in reading” (*Teacher 4, interview excerpt lines 54-57*).

Furthermore, 95% of the teachers revealed no knowledge related to the number of reforms issued by the CDC since 2001. The following responses reflect why so many teachers were unaware of the number of reforms.

“I do not know how many reforms have been issued because that is not my responsibility. My job is to prepare students for exams. If there are reforms, the school should tell the panel, and the panel should adjust the scheme of work” (*teacher 7, interview excerpt line 41-44*).

“I am sorry I cannot tell you how many reforms. I ignore that stuff. I am lucky to have enough time to teach with all the marking. Nothing would get done if I was asked to spend time deciphering curriculums. It should be up to the school to do and tell us” (*Teacher 10, interview excerpt line 59-61*).

“I do not know, and more importantly, I do not think it matters. Hong Kong is an exam-oriented culture; reforms are a dog, and pony show to me. It is a bureaucratic process to ensure I’s are dotted, and T’s are crossed” (*Teacher 12, interview excerpt line 76-80*).

Apart from the above results, data collected from the questionnaires also demonstrated more details about teachers’ lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation.

Table 5.4, shown below, illustrates the results, extrapolated from the questionnaire responses, of the participant’s knowledge of the number of updates made to the reading curriculum since 2001. The frequency counts results indicate that only 4.2% or one participant correctly identified that seven updates had been made since the release of the 2002 curriculum development initiative.

Table 5.4 (TQ.44) *How many updates have been made to the reading curriculum since 2001? (n=24)*

Number of Times Curriculum Refinements Issued	n	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One time	1	4.2	4.2
Three times	1	4.2	8.3
Five times	1	4.2	12.5
Seven times	1	4.2	16.7
Not sure	20	83.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

As previously mentioned, one teacher, teacher IV, did not share the same viewpoints as the other interviewees.

“As I am pretty confident in curriculum interpretation, as I mentioned before, I understand the different reforms published over the past two decades, and my recollection tells me seven. I know this because I believe it is essential to keep up and take a self-inventory once in a while. More importantly, I am getting my master’s in Curriculum Development” (*Teacher 4, interview excerpt line 90-96*).

Further findings reveal that 75% of teachers indicated that recent professional development conducted within the past 12 months was school-based—the following responses elaborated on the consensus of the interviewees in professional development and curriculum interpretation and understanding.

“During our professional development, which is school-based, we discuss the annual plan of the school and how each panel scheme of work should fit in..... The school seems not

to incorporate new reforms because I never hear references to Education Bureau or Curriculum Development Council” (*Teacher 1, interview excerpt line 152-156*).

“We have several required professional development days, and the agenda always mentions curriculum guidance, but there never seems to be any new information disseminated..... The same old comments about the scheme of work and goals to ensure students are well-equipped for examinations” (*Teacher 3, interview excerpt line 205-210*).

Table 5.5, shown below, shows teachers’ self-awareness disclosed in the questionnaire responses related to the need for training on curriculum knowledge. The findings indicate that 4% of teachers feel no need to attend professional development in curriculum knowledge.

Table 5.5 (TQ.18) *Please indicate the extent to which you need professional development in the curriculum knowledge. (n=24)*

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
High level of need	6	25.0	25.0
Low level of need at present	7	29.2	54.2
Moderate level of need	7	29.2	83.3
No need at present	4	16.7	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

Conversely, 25% expressed no discussion or training on curriculum knowledge and interpretation during professional development workshops.

Table 5.6, shown below, illustrates the teachers’ results from the questionnaire, indicating that knowledge of the curriculum was included during the past 12 months of professional

development. The frequency count results show that 50% (n=24) had curriculum knowledge addressed in professional development within the past 12 months.

Table 5.6 (TQ.15) *Was knowledge of curriculum included in your professional development activity during the last 12 months? (n=24)*

	N	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	45.8	45.8
Not applicable	1	4.2	50.0
Yes	12	50.0	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

Apart from the above results, data collected from questionnaires also demonstrated more details about teachers' lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation. The salient result regarding Frequency Count (number of responses) is presented below.

Table 5.7, shown below, illustrates the teachers' (n=24) knowledge of the latest curriculum guideline update issued to English reading by the Curriculum Development Council on behalf of the Education Bureau of Hong Kong. This data aims to understand how well-informed teachers were about curriculum reforms and refinements. The results were tabulated from the questionnaire, and the frequency count demonstrated that 50% emphatically did not know the latest English reading reform, 29% had incorrect educated guesses, and the remaining 21% selected the correct year, 2018.

Table 5.7 (TQ.42) *What year was the latest curriculum reform?*
(*n*=24)

Year	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2017	5	20.8	20.8
2018	5	20.8	41.7
2020	2	8.3	50.0
Not sure	12	50.0	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

The theme of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation findings has shown in quantitative and qualitative data analysis that teachers, as a whole, collectively lack adequate knowledge of curriculum, curriculum guidelines, and reforms related to reading issued by the CDC.

5.2.2 Teacher's understanding of curriculum intent (objectives and outcomes)

The intent of curriculum means the teacher understands what the objectives and outcomes are as seen and determined by the Curriculum Development Council. As mentioned, three themes were developed from the semi-structured interviews and quantitative data. The second theme which emerged was curriculum intent (objectives and outcomes). The findings show that 95% of the teachers were unfamiliar with the curriculum goals issued by the CDC. Overall, the typical response shared by all the teachers was that the lack of knowledge of curriculum goals resulted from the absence of understanding and knowledge of the curriculum reform and guidelines. Two teachers have elaborated their sentiments on this topic, which echoed the other teachers' opinions.

“I am not familiar with the objectives and outcomes of the curriculum reform, but I know the outcomes of our school-based curriculum at my school, which is exam-oriented. Be it

any of the language skills. More importantly, how can we know the learning objectives and outcomes if we are not expected to keep updated on curriculum reform and guideline issuance? We are trying to navigate curriculum to help students pass exams” (*Teacher 14, interview excerpt line 426-433*).

“...who knows, the school might not follow the curriculum reform 100%. They might be following or not. Maybe they have, you know, changed it or something. I am not sure as it is not part of my job. I do not think the school has instructed the English panel about curriculum goals. I need to make sure students pass exams. That is my curriculum goal” (*Teacher 6, interview excerpt line 505-510*).

The findings further indicate that 95% of teachers agreed on understanding curriculum goals. They understand the goals outlined by the English department through the scheme of work. However, they are unsure if the scheme of work aligns with the objectives and outcomes prescribed by the curriculum reform.

5.2.3 Teacher's practices in curriculum implementation

The curriculum implementation describes how the teacher delivers the intent and interpretation of the curriculum. The third theme from semi-structured interviews and lesson observations was curriculum implementation. The findings, through interviews, collectively revealed that 85% of teachers conveyed that the lack of understanding of interpretation and intent were the primary factors in curriculum implementation breakdown. Moreover, 100% of teachers have indicated that curriculum implementation is directly related to the scheme of work. The following excerpts echo the opinions conveyed by 90% of the interviewees.

“Though I do not know the current curriculum issued by the CDC, I can only express my opinion about the curriculum implementation of the English panel. We are given a scheme of work to follow, which follows the school’s annual plan. The result is to prepare students for examinations. We need to make sure all items on the scheme of work are addressed in the correct cycle. How we ensure this is done is classroom based is up to us. Implementing the school-based curriculum is up to us, and lesson planning is integral. Is this a guideline from the Curriculum Develop Council? I am unsure” (*Teacher 9, interview excerpt line 404-412*).

“Well, we get a scheme of work, and in the 20 years I have been teaching, we have never discussed any ways to implement the curriculum. However, as creatures of habit, I know that my job is to make sure the scheme of work is completed and students are prepared for examinations... Completing my duties is always verified through book inspection. The book inspection is the teachers’ report card to ensure implementation of the scheme of work is completed” (*Teacher 13, interview excerpt line 515-523*).

Table 5.8, shown below, which lends to teachers' practices in the classroom to effectively implement curriculum, illustrates the descriptive results of teachers’ ($n=24$) control over determining the course content. The mean of 2.9 demonstrates moderate autonomy in determining course content.

Table 5.8 (TQ.38) *How strongly do you agree or disagree that you have control over determining course content? ($n=24$)*

	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Determining course content	24	1	4	2.92	.881

(Note: Four-point Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree)

Table 5.9, shown below, illustrates the descriptive results of teachers' ($n=24$) control over selecting teaching methods to teach English reading. The mean of 3.5 demonstrates high autonomy in teaching practices to deliver the curriculum.

Table 5.9 (TQ.38) *How strongly do you agree or disagree that you have control over selecting the teaching method? ($n=24$)*

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selecting a teaching method in reading	24	3.46	.509

(Note: Four-point Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree)

Meanwhile, based on lesson observation, teacher one demonstrated the shortcomings of understanding, knowledge, and implementation of curriculum reforms for English reading. The 40-minute lesson spent 25 minutes on vocabulary and high-frequency words. Ten minutes of lesson time were spent on administrative tasks, leaving only five minutes for students to open their books and read. The following is an excerpt of a dialogue between a student and the teacher during the lesson observation.

“Missy, why are we doing all this vocabulary and note-taking? When are we going to read?” (*Student 1, the question posed lesson observation class 1A*)

“We must do vocabulary and high-frequency words first because you have a quiz next week, and that is more important than reading right now?” (*Teacher 1, response to question from student 1 lesson observation class 1A*)

As indicated above, reading time was limited and evident from lesson observation and dialogue between student and teacher. Apart from this, descriptive statistics presented below supplement the findings. Tables 5.10, 5.11, and 5.12 report questionnaire data and indicate the time allocated to class on administrative tasks, classroom management, and actual learning and teaching. These tables show and support the theme of curriculum interpretation that was developed. Identifying the allocation of time in the classroom shows how effective implementation could be.

Table 5.10, shown below, illustrates the descriptive results of teachers' ($n=24$) class time spent on administrative tasks. The mean percentage of 21.7 demonstrates a low time allocated to administrative duties during English reading class. However, the high RSD 17 indicates that the results are widely spread. This result aligns itself with the findings of the lesson observation.

Table 5.10 (TQ.35) *What percentage of class time is typically spent on the following task? ($n=24$)*

	<i>n</i>	Percentage	Std. Deviation
Administrative tasks	24	21.7%	17.045

Table 5.11, shown below, illustrates the descriptive results of teachers' ($n=24$) class time spent on classroom discipline. The mean of 14 demonstrates a low time allocated to classroom discipline, and an SD of 8.5 shows a limited spread from the mean.

Table 5.11 (TQ.36) *What percentage of class time is typically spent on the following task? ($n=24$)*

	<i>n</i>	Percentage	Std. Deviation
Keeping order in the classroom	24	14.6%	8.485

Table 5.12, shown below, illustrates the descriptive results of teachers' ($n=24$) class time spent on actual teaching and learning. The mean of 63.7 demonstrates a high level of time allocated to teaching and learning.

However, the SD of 23 indicates that the results are widely spread, significantly varying teaching and learning time.

Table 5.12 (TQ.37) *What percentage of class time is typically spent on the following task? ($n=24$)*

	<i>n</i>	Percentage	Std. Deviation
Actual teaching and learning	24	63.7%	22.710

Summary of RQ1 results:

In summary, the culmination of statistical data compiled through questionnaires and interview findings has indicated a dearth of teacher understanding, knowledge, and practice related to curriculum interpretation, goals, and implementation. The data has identified areas of misalignment within the prescribed objectives and outcomes of the Curriculum Development Council and the classroom practices.

5.3 RQ2

What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?

The results are drawn on themes generated from the semi-structured interviews and quantitative data. Fourteen interviews ($n=14$) were conducted, and 24 questionnaires ($n=24$) were completed.

At the same time, most interview participants shared the same viewpoints. Three particular

interviewees' responses are highlighted due to their rich, diverse dialogue that added a distinctive value to the findings. As with research question one, several themes emerged through the interviews and questionnaire findings. However, four themes, perception of teachers' role, students' proficiency in English, teachers' understanding and ability, and English reading challenges- learning and teaching were apparent to support the second research question, as shown in Table 5.13

Table 5.13 Themes generated by interviews

Themes
Perception of teachers' role
Students' proficiency in English
Challenges in the English reading classroom
Objectives of the English reading lesson

5.3.1 Perception of teachers' role

When teachers spoke about the logic of their teaching, 85% revealed ideas about the role of teachers that were inconsistent with those contained in the English panel reading curriculum documents. They explained that this was not based on the curriculum reforms issued by the government. 90% of the teachers further revealed that the foundation of their role as English reading teachers was limited due to their pre-service training and subsequent professional development. The perception shortcomings adversely affect their beliefs and practices in the classroom. All the teachers lamented this sentiment. However, three teachers, in particular, shared in-depth viewpoints about the perception of the teachers' role that conveyed a message of understanding in theory of what role should be played. However, in practice, it is generally the opposite of their belief.

“My role, suggested in the syllabus, should be a facilitator for the students, but I do everything in the class. Though the English department documents indicate one ideology to follow, the classroom practice dictates a contrary approach. More importantly, it sets the tone to convey my beliefs and practices in the classroom that I have honed over the years” (*Teacher 1, interview excerpt line 865-868*).

Other teachers have expressed robust dialogue showing that the perception of a teacher’s role is contrary to the guidelines provided by the Curriculum Development Council that teachers should be facilitators and student-centred lessons.

“Teachers in Hong Kong have grown accustomed to the perception of teacher-focused lessons... the focus is always on us. Our role is to ensure students pass exams... our roles are not based on curriculum, documents or panel recommendations in the end” (*Teacher 6, interview excerpt line 905-913*).

“My perception of my role is not just related to English reading. I see across the curriculum that teachers do everything in the classroom. If this is the case, how can we expect our perception to change if students’ behavior is not required to change in other subjects” (*Teacher 7, interview excerpts 1403-1408*).

Conversely, one teacher shared an opposing viewpoint that contradicted other teachers’ collective opinions and viewpoints on the role to be played in the classroom. The excerpt below explains the opposing viewpoint.

“I believe the role of a teacher in reading class is to arouse a students’ interest and pique their curiosity. Once you have read through the centralized documents from the EDB about English reading curricular reform... you can understand your role and effectively teach. Of course, you need to collaborate with other colleagues to ensure there is uniformity in the form. We should have more collaborative exchanges in teaching materials and professional development... In particular, understanding curriculum reforms to ensure we are meeting the needs of the students and the school and further understand our roles” (*Teacher 4, interview excerpt line 260-290*).

Teacher IV’s comments are echoed in Table 5.14 and Table 5.15, which identify the exchange of teaching materials between teachers regarding frequency and ideas.

Through teacher interaction, teachers can identify the challenges they face in the classroom.

Table 5.14 reiterates what was conveyed by teacher IV’s dialogue; 88% indicated some form of teaching material exchange, which was taken from the questionnaire responses. The ability to exchange ideas indicates an ability to discuss the teachers’ perception of their role by understanding the materials they selected and why.

Table 5.14 (TQ.31) *On average, how often do you exchange teaching materials with colleagues in your school? (n=24)*

Times	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 - 3 times a month	6	25.0	25.0
2 - 4 times a year	2	8.3	33.3
5 - 10 times a year	3	12.5	45.8
Never	3	12.5	58.3
Once a week	8	33.3	91.7
Once a year	2	8.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

Table 5.15, which corroborates teacher IV's comments, indicates that sharing for collaborative learning does occur and provides a forum for discussing a teacher's role.

Table 5.15 (TQ.31) *On average, how often do you participate in collaborative professional learning in your school? (n=24)*

Times	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 - 3 times a month	3	12.5	12.5
2 - 4 times a year	9	37.5	50.0
5 - 10 times a year	6	25.0	75.0
Once a week or more	1	4.2	79.2
Once a year or less	5	20.8	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

The findings presented have shown a dichotomy of perceptions related to the role of a teacher in the classroom. It has shown that beliefs versus realities tend to be misaligned.

5.3.2 Students' proficiency in English

Data analysis resulted in 100% of teachers stating that a student's English proficiency directly correlates with classroom practice decisions. All the interviewees agreed that if a student's English proficiency is weak, my lessons are futile. The following excerpts are some examples of what teachers explained during the interviews.

“Our school is an EMI school, and English reading is an integral part of learning, but I have noticed the level of students' English over the years has diminished. If they cannot understand basic instructions in English or have the ability to read 80% of an English text... I ask myself why I waste my time speaking in English” (*Teacher 8, interview excerpt line 345-360*).

“How can I put into practice in my lesson when the obstacle facing my students is their low level of understanding of English? I am not too familiar with curriculum reform and guidelines... I have not had the proper curriculum implementation training, but my common teaching abilities learned throughout my years have taught me that if students cannot follow in English, how can I turn my beliefs and rationale into classroom practices? However, I still teach in English, though it seems I am talking into space.”

(Teacher 1, interview excerpt line 652-665).

“I know that the English reading curriculum should be taught in English. As for the other goals and learning outcomes, I am not sure... The issue is if a student’s ability is less than desirable, how can I effectively teach and get them to read when the lesson is conducted in English only” *(Teacher 3, interview excerpt line 589-601).*

Table 5.16, shown below, echoes the above excerpts and indicates that English proficiency is integral to a teacher’s beliefs and practices. While they struggled to understand the purpose of teaching in English, teachers still showed a high central tendency, 5.08, to maintain English as the medium of instruction. These results pertain to the students’ proficiency level, which is integral to classroom practices.

Table 5.16 (SQ.15) *Medium of instruction (n=24)*

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you use only English during the reading lesson?	24	5.08	1.349

(Note: Six-point Likert scale, 1=never, 6=always)

5.3.3 Challenges in the English reading classroom

Teacher opinions indicated a common theme in challenges faced in the English reading classroom, which impacted their beliefs and practices while teaching English reading. The most common challenge indicated was material. Other challenges, motivation, understanding, and proficiency, stemmed from the materials used. The culmination of the interviewees was best summarized by one teacher, as stated below.

“We received ample pre-service training in all areas of English teaching, and we are given the tools to do our best to share our knowledge with students. Nevertheless, fundamentally, we choose books well-suited for our students based on experience and classroom performance. We then experience a significant lack of understanding in instructions given to students during the pre-reading task, which seems to be increasing yearly, hindering the during-reading and post-reading activities. I find the biggest challenge is not the curriculum reform in English reading, or perhaps my lack of understanding it, the biggest issue here is the students’ dwindling levels of English and motivation in general” (*Teacher 4, interview excerpt line 725-740*).

Moreover, 95% of the teachers interviewed indicated that the lack of reading culture development from a young age created challenges in classroom practices. Students hinder the impact on classroom practice and beliefs from a teacher’s perspective with no interest in reading. All interviewees agreed that developing a reading habit at a young age will undoubtedly create a better learning environment to achieve learning outcomes in reading.

“If students did not develop a proper reading habit at home or when they went to primary school, they were overwhelmed in the first year of secondary school. They have many different subjects and a new learning style and environment. They need to prepare well for the complexities of secondary life. Everything is about, I think, accountability and completing goals step by step, level by level, so there is a lot to absorb. If they have not created a good reading habit by now, it will make an English reading lesson difficult for all students, even though we must cater to learner diversity. Ultimately, our beliefs and practices may be shaped in one direction, but the diversity of reading culture in the classroom may indicate a need to change. I believe this is my biggest challenge” (*Teacher 6, interview excerpt lines 805-818*).

Another challenge was time constraints, which have imploded over the past three years due to Covid-19. All teachers agreed that the suspension of classes, the introduction of online lessons, and blended learning created challenges for all subjects. However, English reading was most affected by the opinions gathered. Moreover, the excerpts below identify the essence of the opinions stated.

“When online lessons began, all teachers used new learning management systems to ensure students are engaged and properly performing. The challenging learning mode proved demanding, especially during the reading lesson. You have 30 students in an online classroom (Zoom), and you are trying to ensure they are reading; this is virtually impossible” (*Teacher 12, interview excerpt lines 652-657*).

“During my online reading lessons, I would ask all the students to show their books to ensure they had the reading materials in front of them. I would attempt to have group reading, but when I called on students, they would write in the chat box, my microphone did not work, my internet was unstable, or I could not hear them. There is a terrible lag. I tried all different ways of engagement, and nothing seemed to ensure that my focus, the learning objective, and the outcome of the reading lesson were achieved. Online lessons and reading do not work for students with a limited reading culture” (*Teacher 7, interview excerpt lines 962-70*).

The final challenge that seemed prevalent amongst teachers and was mentioned earlier was the role of pre-service training and continued professional development. Though 10 of the 14 teachers indicated they felt well-equipped to teach reading through years of experience, the younger teachers indicated the preparedness and readiness to teach reading, and the problems that arose from students who lacked a reading habit or were unmotivated were virtually non-existent. The void of training created challenges and questioned the beliefs of the younger teachers.

“The focus of my pre-service training was limited to the Confusion style of teaching, which is still prevalent in Hong Kong today. Yes, we were guided on learner diversity to identify if a student needs attention, but not what to do” (*Teacher 8, interview excerpt lines 1125-1128*).

“I have been teaching for four years now, and I can say I did not learn anything about teaching reading or dealing with students who encounter difficulties. I was not shown or

given the tools to develop students' reading habits. I was taught pre-reading, during, and post-reading” (*Teacher 11, interview excerpt lines 1011-1016*).

“I have been teaching for almost 25 years, so I do not recollect my pre-service training, but I can say that the years of teaching reading have prepared me for some of the challenges faced in English reading. It is a trial-and-error approach, and each teacher deals with it differently. I can understand how this a challenge for new teachers since they have not yet gained the experience or insight” (*Teacher 5, interview excerpt lines 723-728*).

Table 5.17, shown below, echoes the challenges faced in classroom practice as indicated through interview findings. 29% of teachers said they teach reading but lack formal training. Conversely, 54% have indicated they have received formal training and are teaching reading at school. The remaining 17% have expressed that they have received training but are not teaching reading at their current school.

Table 5.17 (TQ.11) *Was English Reading included in your formal pre-service education or training, and do you teach it during your current employment? (n=24)*

	<i>n</i>	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I teach it at my current school	7	29.2	29.2
Included in my formal education	4	16.7	45.8
Included in my formal education or training, and I teach it at my current school	13	54.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	

5.3.4 Objectives of the English reading lesson

The theme of the English reading objective resulted in 75% of the teachers sharing a common viewpoint professing that the learning objectives and outcomes of an English reading lesson are generic and serve as a vehicle to prepare for Diploma of Secondary Education Paper One (Reading). The findings indicate that eleven teachers strongly believe reading lessons are used for vocabulary building, sentence patterns, and grammar structure. One teacher stated:

“My reading lesson inevitably revolves around language skills. It is not that I do not want them to enjoy what they are reading, but I must be realistic. There is not enough time in the day, and students must be well-prepared for exams. I need to focus on teaching vocabulary, explaining how to answer reading comprehension questions, and showing sentence patterns and structures to improve students’ writing. I have no time to read for pleasure to spark their curiosity” (*Teacher 6, interview excerpt lines 1011-1018*).

“I look at the reading lesson as a skills-based approach. I expect the students to obtain new vocabulary, feature grammar items required from our school-based syllabus, and perhaps some pronunciation. I am confident that if students learn these skills, they will enjoy reading” (*Teacher 13, interview excerpt lines 966-968*).

Meanwhile, the lesson observation aligned with the focus of English reading lessons and the skills-based approach expressed earlier in focus group discussions. Table 5.18, shown below, highlight the teachers’ beliefs and practices of English reading focus and further demonstrate the focus on English reading conveyed by interviewees. Table 5.18 demonstrated that the two

English reading lessons observed focus primarily on vocabulary learning and building. The total time spent on vocabulary-related activities was 40 minutes leaving ten minutes to read.

Table 5.18 (LO) *Teachers' classroom practices (n=2)*

	No. of Words to find	No. of activities and exercises	Time Spent in minutes
Vocabulary focus	20	10	20
Finding adjectives	10	5	8
Finding adverbs	10	5	8
Finding connectors	5	3	4
Total	45	23	40

Conversely, the other 25% of interviewees did not share this sentiment. The results indicated that a reading lesson's focus should be a whole-language approach. It was indicated that students should be challenged to construct meanings in pre-reading activities before reading, focus on inferred meanings of the text, and talk about it.

“I believe students will innately want to read if we make the focus of reading enjoyable.

We should not just have worksheets and activities for them to answer questions. We should let them ask questions and determine what the text is about or trying to say. By having some pre-reading activities guessing what the author is trying to say and what message the particular text is conveying, we will spark an interest in the student. Is this not what we want to do?” (*Teacher 4, interview excerpt lines 1620-1628*).

Summary of RQ2 results:

In summary, through qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the findings show that internal and external factors can affect teacher beliefs and practices. The results have shown that teachers question their role as teachers because of the time spent on other tasks that are non-teacher related. Moreover, their pedagogy is challenged because they have to adapt to students' lack of proficiency, leading them to question the lesson's focus. In summary, their beliefs and practices are misguided, misaligned, or limited due to constraints of perceptions, proficiency of students, challenges, and focus of an English reading lesson.

5.4 RQ3

How do students perceive reading?

As mentioned in the methodology section, the study employed a mixed-method approach to collecting data to present the results to answer research question three. Data collection and analysis to present results to answer '*How do students perceive reading?*' was collected from student participants. The quantitative data was collected through completed questionnaires from form one ($n=127$) and form two ($n=123$) students. The qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions. Six groups of ten randomly selected students participated in the focus group discussions. Each group was homogenous concerning English proficiency. All focus group discussions were presented with the same guiding questions to elicit conversation among participants. The uniformity of guiding questions across the various focus groups was instrumental in developing themes to answer research question three.

The thematic narratives are presented below and supplemented by relevant descriptive statistics.

The mean and SD did not indicate significant variations, and the data analysis themes uncovered

moderately echoed the quantitative findings. However, four specific themes were developed by the data collected from all six focus group discussions ($n=60$). Table 5.19 below outlines the themes developed; reading should not be a subject at school, what is taught during a reading lesson, confusion after the reading lesson, and the importance of English reading.

Table 5.19 Themes generated by focus group discussions ($n=10$)

Themes
Reading: academic subject or skill
Reading lesson focus: vocabulary & grammar
Reading: post-lesson uncertainty
English reading importance

Moreover, three focus group discussions ($n=3$) developed specific themes related to their respective groups that the study deemed essential to present to support further answering research question three. Table 5.20, shown below, indicates the specific focus group number and theme explicitly developed related to that group. Though all groups are homogenous, each group had some varied characteristics supporting the additional themes from the focus group discussion. The themes in Table 5.20 are not enough in-class discussion about the text being read, what traits are most important to becoming a good reader, and that books are difficult to understand.

Table 5.20 Group-specific themes

Group Number	Theme
Group six	Insufficient in-class book discussion
Group two	Proficient reader traits
Group five	Difficult books for students

5.4.1 Focus group discussions

As an introduction, in each focus group discussion, students were asked if they liked to read and state why or why not. Students ($n=60$) were eager to share their viewpoints on this topic. The positive feedback elucidated the student's wherewithal to understand that reading was more than a school requirement. The excerpts below from students' responses have identified the impact of reading plays; lifelong learning, developing a creative mindset, and preparation for the future.

"I like to read, especially story books because I think I can learn much from reading. I can learn life knowledge, and many new English words. Learning can improve my English skills" (*Group 1, student 10*).

"... because it is a form of entertainment and helps me discover new ideas and concepts" (*Group 2, student 9*).

"... because reading is relaxing and could give us much useful knowledge in our lives. For example, learning, traveling to foreign places or even working in the future" (*Group 3, student 8*).

"I like to read because reading can help me de-stress and feel like I am going on an adventure. Moreover, if the book I am reading is a detective story, I can use my brain more to think of a way to solve the crime" (*Group 6, student 2*).

“I like to read because reading is like watching a movie, but the movie is written on paper. It is like a transcript that I can become part of and learn from. This prepares us for life” (*Group 6, student 6*).

“I like reading because it can help me escape the realities of life and be free from all the rules and restrictions and help grow my imagination” (*Group 6, student 7*).

These statements were reiterated by 75% of the students, which indicates a positive view toward reading and the understanding that reading is instrumental in various areas of personal development. On the contrary, 25% of the students expressed their adversity towards reading because of time, boredom, and lack of knowledge. The student excerpts presented below summarize the reasoning.

“I do not like reading because it wastes my time” (*Group 4, student 7*).

“I do not like to read because I am an energetic boy and I love to play sports. I think reading is boring” (*Group 6, student 4*).

“Reading seems to provide no benefit. I read, I answer questions, I forget what I read” (*Group 5, student 8*).

“...not really because books make me feel bored and it wastes my time. I can play computer games with my friends, which is more important” (*Group 3, student 7*).



Table 5.21, shown below, reaffirms the qualitative findings of the enjoyment of reading presented above through descriptive statistics. Table 5.21 shows the central tendency to summarize the data collected for reading enjoyment, which supports students' viewpoint on the importance of reading. The following results of $n = 250$, $M = 4.15$, and $SD = 1.308$. When you look at the mean, it indicates that most students enjoy reading.

Table 5.21 (SQB.2) *Descriptive Statistics (n=250)*

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
How much do you enjoy reading?	250	4.15	1.308
Total	250		

(Note: Six-point Likert scale, 1-extremely dislike, 6-extremely like)

5.4.2 General themes generated by focus group discussions

As indicated earlier, four general themes were developed from the ten focus group discussions. They are (1) reading: academic subject or skill, (2) reading lesson focus: vocabulary or grammar, (3) reading: post-lesson uncertainty, and (4) English reading importance. Additionally, three focus group discussions developed three more themes, which are (1) insufficient in-class book discussion, (2) proficient reader traits, and (3) difficult books for students.

5.4.2.1 Reading: academic subject or skill

The focus group discussed examinations and indicated that reading would be more enjoyable if there were not always a grading system attached. The majority of students, 82% (50), suggested that perhaps reading should be approached as a skill to learn to help us through life and abandon the grading. In general, they implied through conversation with other focus groupmates that

English reading being a required lesson with assessments made reading just another subject to not be interested in. The following excerpts support this finding:

“...reading should not be a subject at school because there are different ways to read; everyone has their way of reading” (*Group 1, student 6*).

“As much as I like reading, I do not think reading should be a subject at school. Reading should be fun, capturing the essence of the words and throwing yourself into the universe the author created. Not everyone likes reading” (*Group 2, student 6*).

“It should not be a subject because reading should be a habit, not a subject. We should want to read by ourselves, not be told to read something we are not interested in” (*Group 3, student 10*).

“...reading should be an interest that brings us enjoyment” (*Group 4, student 8*).

...I think reading should not be a subject at school because reading should be our interest. If we do not like reading, we should not have to read” (*Group 5, student 8*).

Conversely, the other 18% or ten students had a different viewpoint and felt reading was an integral part of learning and should be a subject because reading provides knowledge, helps students to reduce stress, and prepares students for the future. The excerpts from students below support these findings:

“... it should. It is because I think reading can help students at school. It can help their exam results and make them smarter” (*Group 5, student 1*).

“... I think reading should be a subject at school since many students think reading is boring and a waste of time. If reading is a subject, it will encourage students to read more and gain more knowledge” (*Group 6, student 5*).

“... it should be. It is because it gives me time to read in a busy school day. Although I do not like to read, I still want to try reading to learn extra knowledge” (*Group 6, student 10*).

“I think reading should be a subject at school because it is the only chance for us to read. In our spare time, we must revise for our next dictation or even regular test” (*Group 1, student 4*).

“Reading helps me to de-stress and re-energize myself for learning” (*Group 4, student 2*).

5.4.2.2 Reading lesson focus: vocabulary & grammar

The second important theme that arose from data analysis of the focus group discussions was that 56 students (90%) had similar views on the focus of the reading lesson. The common thread identified in what was taught during the reading lesson was a skills-based approach, focusing on vocabulary and grammar items.

“Our lesson is always the same. We are introduced to a text then given a worksheet that asks us to find the words in the text based on the meaning given and the line number in the text” (*Group 3, student 5*).

“That is interesting, student 5, we seem to do the same thing, but we have different teachers. I guess the purpose of the reading lesson is to learn new words, not read” (*Group 3, student 2*).

“When you say the purpose of a reading lesson at school, I simply think of grammar and vocabulary. I do not think of getting lost in the book and escaping reality as I mentioned earlier” (*Group 6, student 7*).

“I agree with you, student 7. I do not see the purpose of reading because we are not reading” (*Group 6, student 5*).

“My English is poor, so understanding the purpose of reading is even more difficult because I do not know what I am reading because I do not know” (*Group 5, student 2*).

These excerpts exemplify the responses from the focus group discussion participants that the perception of what is taught during reading is, in fact, not reading. The lesson is perceived as rote learning of vocabulary, not the enjoyment of reading.

Furthermore, Table 5.22, shown below, augments the findings presented by showing the central tendency of students ($n=250$) to rank the purpose of reading based on predetermined categories. Table 5.22 indicates that students first perceive learning vocabulary with the highest central tendency, 3.61, followed by gaining knowledge at 3.19. Exam preparation was 2.89, improving English at 2.84, and learning writing style at 2.47.

Table 5.22 (SQB.7) *What is the purpose of reading?*

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn vocabulary	250	3.61	1.175
Gain knowledge	250	3.19	1.340
Exam Preparation	250	2.89	1.674
Improve English	250	2.84	1.116
Learn writing style	250	2.47	1.446

(Note: Five-point Likert scale, 1=least important, 5=most important)

The qualitative and quantitative data indicated a tendency of students to equate reading with skills-based approaches to learning English.

5.4.2.3 Reading: post-lesson uncertainty

The focus group discussions continued, and 85% or 51 students continued discussing what was taught during the reading lesson, leading to general confusion about the reading lesson. Prior findings indicated that the students recognized that rote learning of vocabulary was the primary focus of a reading lesson, but it further delved into how they did not recognize what the teacher meant after a lesson because the syllabus did not align with the classroom instruction, and they felt lost. Excerpts from students' discussion notes elaborate on their confusion:

“My reading teacher teaches nothing. He tells us to read quietly. If we do not know a word, he tells us in Chinese the meaning. I am confused about what I should be doing or learning during the reading lesson” (*Group 6, student 3*).

“I get to reading lesson all excited. I take out my book, ready to read and ask questions, and then... the teacher starts talking about homework, late submission of work, and vocabulary. I am like... I ask when we will get to read; the teacher states that it may be the next lesson. After class, I ask my friends if they are as confused as I am about this reading lesson. Why do we even have it?” (*Group 2, student 9*).

“Even my mum seems to be confused. My helicopter mum always enquires about my lessons every day when I get home. It is easy to explain Math, English, Science, and other classes we take. However, it is almost a joke when I get to my reading lesson. I have nothing to say because I have no idea what we were supposed to learn. We did not learn much about the book we were reading. I tell my mum I am unsure why the school provides this reading lesson. (*Group 1, student 4*).

“Speaking, writing, listening...I have no idea what just happened in reading class. Do we have homework? Did the teacher tell us valuable tips for getting the most out of the story? I know I learned some new vocabulary words and some new connectors. The reading class is confusing. Is it reading or English grammar? I am lost. (*Group 5, student 7*).

5.4.2.4 Importance of English reading

The importance of English reading was developed through the discussions, and the findings indicated that 57 students (95%) had positive comments about reading in English. The results revealed that students associated reading with improving listening, speaking, and writing, the

three other language skills. Moreover, 46 students (80.7%) expressed similar thoughts on how reading improved other language skills, supporting the findings.

“I can learn more English vocabulary from the books or some writing skills. These skills will improve my oral speaking and my writing skills” (*Group 6, student 3*).

“I will know more vocabulary for my essay. Also, it will make me more creative so that I will have many ideas for my essay” (*Group 6, student 8*).

“It can help me learn how to write better sentence structure when taking an English composition exam. I can use adjectives to describe the things I want to write and make better sentences using connectives. All this means higher marks” (*Group 3, student 4*).

“It can make me know more words in English, and I can write them down in my notebook. Then I can use them again if I remember” (*Group 5, student 6*).

“English reading helps me to know more about English words and grammar. This helps me to learn how to write a more interesting and better story” (*Group 2, student 10*).

“English reading can help me to improve my writing skills (paper two) and reading skills (paper one). It helps me to learn more vocabulary that we can use in our writing” (*Group 2, student 7*).

“Reading English books can help us a lot. For example, reading some books which are difficult for us can help us learn vocabulary. Also, there are useful phrases in the book to learn. We can use them in our writing assignments” (*Group 1, student 7*).

The excerpts above show that students find reading necessary, and the primary supporting factor is vocabulary learning.

On the contrary, 11 students had different supporting ideologies that helped foster their whole-person development. They indicated that the importance of English reading would prepare them for future endeavors and social interaction with foreigners.

“Everything in middle school and the university are taught in English. If I learn more English now, I will do better when I reach higher forms in secondary school and university. Moreover, if my dream job needs me to learn English skills, I must so I can lead other people” (*Group 5, student 2*).

“It will help me read English easier. It improves my English, and it will make me a better person when I grow up” (*Group 5, student 6*).

“I can learn many life knowledge...life knowledge can help me understand myself and the world more clearly. It will help me speak to foreigners and find a job” (*Group 1, student 10*).

“It helps us in work and other things a lot. It helps me find information when working on a school project. Also, it is more convenient to communicate with foreigners when traveling in their countries” (*Group 3, student 2*).

However, three students of mixed abilities, 5%, shared viewpoints that have shown that they feel there is no need for English because technology can fill the void of not knowing English, and they expressed that no knowledge is learned from reading. Additionally, they expressed that reading is unimportant because we only need to communicate verbally, as with their grandparents.

“It is unimportant because we all use computers, so there is no need to learn something in English when we can google translate” (*Group 2, student 3*).

“I do not know why English reading is important. When I have tried to read in English, I have learned nothing...” (*Group 6, student 9*).

“What is important is talking. We need to be able to communicate in English. We do not need to read. If we want to tell a person something, we do not need to write it down. We just need to say it” (*Group 5, student 5*).

5.5 Group-specific themes generated from focus group discussions

As shown in Table 5.20, three specific groups had themes developed specifically for their group discussion, and the study found it essential to support the discussion in answering research question three.



5.5.1 Insufficient in-class book discussion

Data analysis found that focus group number six revealed that in-class book discussions were non-existent. 100% of the group indicated that the teacher limited the time to discuss what was read in class. The claim was that too much time was spent on skills-based learning. Excerpts from the focus group discussion provide insight into this claim.

“Yes, reading is important, and I love to read. However, I get confused when we have English reading class and sometimes question the purpose. If the teacher used the time wisely, we could have the opportunity to explore the story and discuss what the writer is trying to convey, I think I would have a better perception of English reading, and I would appreciate the learning and teaching” (*Group 6, student 8*).

“I agree with you. I love reading and wish we could talk about what we are reading. We used to have a book club in primary school, which I looked forward to and enjoyed. I do not look forward to our reading lesson because we never discuss the book” (*Group 6, student 4*).

5.5.2 Proficient reader traits

Data analysis found that focus group number two expressed in detail the traits students need to become proficient in reading. 100% of them all agreed that students should like to read.

Secondly, the data indicated that 90% of the students found commonality in becoming a good reader was learning and knowing the vocabulary; it was the most critical quality to becoming a proficient reader.

Moreover, table 5.23, shown below, corroborates the results of group two’s discussion by indicating ranking what makes a good reader from the questionnaire. Table 5.23 identifies that

Vocabulary/Grammar has the highest central tendency, 4.90, of respondents when selecting what makes a good reader. The table echoes the primary findings presented from group two focus group discussion.

Table 5.23 (SQB.9) *What makes a good reader? (n=250)*

	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vocabulary/Grammar	7	4.90	2.250
Read rapidly and accurately	6	4.30	1.576
Set goals	5	4.12	2.10
Identify text structures	4	4.06	1.559
Monitor understanding	3	3.96	2.012
Predict	2	3.35	1.748
Reflect	1	3.32	2.196

(Note: Seven-point Likert scale, 1=least important, 7=most important)

5.5.3 Difficult books for students

Data analysis found that focus group number two expressed concern that English books are too difficult to understand. 90% of the students in this group stated similar opinions about the difficulty encountered in understanding English books. Three students elaborated on the central theme developed, which was that too many unknown words were in the text, which hindered them from understanding the text's central idea. The lack of understanding rendered them unable to answer the questions required. The three excerpts are presented below.

“I do not know what it is, but I have so many problems when I pick up an English book to read. First, there are all the words you do not know, which makes it even harder to try and guess the meanings. Second, I sometimes do not understand what the writer is trying to say or

why we are reading. These problems create slow reading and make me lose interest” (*Group 5, student 9*).

“I open the book and begin reading. Some words I know, some I do not. I ask the teacher she tells me in Chinese. After I finish reading, I must answer questions. I cannot answer because I do not understand the idea of the story, which means I cannot find the specific answer to the questions. It bores me, and I do not want to read” (*Group 5, student 3*).

“I never look forward to our English reading lesson. Although books can bring knowledge, excitement, and relaxation, English reading is impossible. I compare it to reading Chinese books, but it is different. Many unknown variables exist in English reading, such as vocabulary, why we are reading, and what we are learning. I should not compare, but Chinese books are easier to understand than English texts I just get lost” (*Group 5, student 10*).

Other focus group members of group five share these sentiments. Moreover, Table 5.24, shown below, provides statistical data in the form of percentages that determine the course of action students take when they (1) do not understand the main idea, (2) cannot identify specific information, (3) encounter unfamiliar words, (4) do not understand the author’s meaning, or (5) These difficulties are translated into understanding the book or text they are reading.

Additionally, if the book is too difficult for the student, they will be disengaged in reading.

While the findings indicate that students re-read to overcome the difficulty of understanding, it also shows that some students stop reading or skip it. The students who selected this approach echoed the theme from group five.

Table 5.24 (SQB.6) *What do you do when encountering one of the following situations? (n=250)*

Action Taken	I do not understand the main idea	Cannot identify specific information	Encounter unfamiliar words	I do not understand the author's meaning	I do not understand the purpose of reading
Stop reading	2.8	1.6	3.6	3.6	10
Skip it	10.8	14.4	19.2	10.8	13.2
Seek help from a classmate	12	10.8	14.8	10.8	8.4
Seek help from a teacher	6.4	14.4	21.2	16	22
Read it again	68	58.8	21.2	58.8	46.4
Look it up	0	0	20	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Summary of RQ3 results:

In summary, the above results have shown how students perceive reading and the factors that help define their perceptions. Though students acknowledge the importance of reading, it is the lesson's focus, the understanding that reading is an academic subject or a life-long skill, and the uncertainty post-lesson that challenges the importance of reading.

5.6 Summary of results

The following summarizes the results presented for each RQ addressed, and RQ4 is discussed in the following chapter, as no data was collected specifically to answer this research question.

Instead, the results and analysis of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 and the documentation related to curriculum reform and refinements support the discussion of RQ4.

5.6.1 RQ1

How do teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lessons?

The study found that teachers who believed they lacked the knowledge of curriculum interpretation led to a limited understanding of intent and hindered implementation. The excerpts from interviews and the statistical data presented demonstrated that internal and external factors were the components that restricted the curriculum interpretation, intent, and implementation. The discussion section provides details on the impact of the factors that have answered RQ1.

5.6.2 RQ2

What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?

The results indicated how teachers' beliefs are formed through training and professional development. It describes the circumstances and events that may occur during a lesson that challenge those beliefs. In the discussion section, the study details how the challenges impact the lesson and the teachers' beliefs.

5.6.3 RQ3

How do students perceive reading?

The result of RQ3 provided a wide range of thoughts from the students through the questionnaire and the focus group discussions. They have indicated that while students understand and agree

with the importance of reading, they find learning and teaching difficult because of the lesson focus, the uncertainty of understanding, and the ideology of reading being a subject, not a skill.



Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The increased importance of English resulting from globalization demonstrates the need for further research in areas critical to English learning. Understanding English reading and the role curriculum, teachers, and students are engaged in are paramount to students' academic and personal success. The literature review examined the curriculum development reform and refinement of English reading in Hong Kong, teachers' understanding, beliefs, and practices in English Reading lessons, and explored how students' perceptions of reading are identified. The literature review exposed research gaps, which led the study to develop the four research questions.

The data collected to assist in answering the research questions were collected using Triangulation Design: A Convergence Model adapted from Creswell (2014, 1999) and analyzed by a modified Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism (TATM) (Babu, 2014). Implementing the convergence modal to examine curriculum intention classroom realities required the study to approach each research question (RQ) by developing trends from each instrument and how they converged to answer each RQ.

RQ1 asked how teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lesson. It was answered by examining the data related to curriculum understanding from the teachers' perspective, which exposed a specific theme, the dearth of knowledge of curriculum understanding. Several aspects, including internal factors, preservice training,

professional development, and time supported this lack of self-efficacy of teachers toward the curriculum. It was also further supported by external factors of teacher input and workload.

Similarly, RQ2 asked the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson and was answered by looking at how teachers' education helped develop their pedagogy and beliefs, which guided their classroom instruction. Though various aspects did not support one central theme, teachers identified vital areas of concern that had modified their approach and practice to teaching reading. The combination of the teacher's role in the classroom, the lesson objectives, students' proficiency, and reading culture contributed to the understanding and answering RQ2.

Finally, RQ3 asked how students perceive reading and was answered by looking at the students' perspective of reading through the learning and teaching they experienced. Students generally expressed the importance of reading; however, the theme which arose was the lesson intent. Three specific viewpoints illuminated the question of lesson intent: reading should not be taught as an academic subject, what was the focus of a reading lesson, and feeling confused after the lesson about what they had learned and what they needed to prepare for the next lesson.

To answer RQ4, as shown in Figure 4.3, Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism, the study needed to identify answers to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, review pertinent educational documents, and align the study findings correlated to corresponding information found. The correlation demonstrated a divergence between curriculum intentions and classroom realities, supporting the discussion of RQ4.

The present study's overarching framework of research questions 1 to 3 facilitated the discussion on RQ4, which asks, 'If there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions and classroom realities resulting from teachers' teaching reading and students learning how to read, what are the reasons?' Though no detailed data were collected to evidence RQ4, the compilation of the quantitative and qualitative results, the examination and analysis of the curriculum reforms and refinements, and guidelines provided the necessary material to provide discussion and implication of RQ4.

For the study to provide in-depth discussion to show the divergence to support RQ 4, the study examined, reviewed, and analyzed the recent publication issued by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC, 2018), 'Supplement to the English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide,' specifically, chapter three which addresses the learning and teaching of reading. Additionally, the study reviewed and documented all prior reforms issued by the CDC that discussed reading. The study documented pertinent information that formulated the policymaker's perspective toward the curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent. The analysis of educational documents cross-referenced with results indicated that misalignments occurred.

The relationship between the misalignments was RQ-specific. RQ1 and curriculum interpretation, RQ2 and implementation, and RQ3 and intent. The initial theoretical framework, figure 3.1, exemplifies the relationships corroborated in RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Though the study employed a convergence model for data analysis, there appeared to be a divergence between the government curriculum intentions and the classroom realities from a teacher's and student's

perspective. The divergence of curriculum intentions and classroom realities was revealed through misalignments exposed by RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3.

Moreover, the underpinning relationship leads to misalignment and is discussed to bridge the gap, thereby taking the divergence and suggesting a convergence.

The first category emerged from RQ1, which asked how teachers interpret and translate the curriculum into practice in their English reading lessons. It was the curriculum reform interpretation and the relationship between the policymaker's positions on teachers' self-efficacy to interpret the essence of the new curriculum reform. The discussion identifies internal and external factors where misunderstandings may exist between the government and teachers.

The second category developed from the findings of RQ2 asked, which asked about the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson. The curriculum reform link was teachers' implementation and the policymaker's conveyance of implementation strategies. The findings indicated a consistent tone amongst teachers, underpinned by a Confucian-Heritage teaching culture, that their beliefs had been developed during their preservice training and teaching tenure, which develops a classroom pedagogy and practice. However, factors outside their control affected classroom practice. The government-issued guidelines show the relationship between implementation and RQ2. The guidelines address the role of the teacher, how to conduct a reading lesson, and what methods to choose reading materials. The relationship of the misalignment was strengthened as evidenced by teachers' themes, which coincided with specific titles of chapter three of the 'Supplement to the English Language Education Key

Learning Area Curriculum Guide' (CDC, 2018), which are the role of the teacher, conducting a reading task, and choice of reading materials.

Moreover, the relationship between the policymaker's and teachers' perspectives on these issues was integral to the student's perspective, as demonstrated in RQ3. It is worth noting that the government has made no mention in the curriculum guidelines of teachers' beliefs. However, this study incorporated beliefs as it felt integral to understanding teachers' backgrounds and classroom practice. The government has established guidelines and characteristics of the critical elements required to implement the new curriculum effectively. However, the documentation fails to indicate how to measure these guidelines.

The final category materialized from RQ3, which asked how students perceive reading. The study discovered the importance of reading students expressed, though personal, contributed to future personal development. Though students indicated the enjoyment of reading, the category that arose was the intent of the reading lesson. Examining educational documents and students' sharing showed the relationship between the students' and governments' perceptions. Students conveyed that the lessons brought no added value to their critical thinking and did not add substance to future learning. They questioned how English reading assisted them in other subjects. The government has set specific milestones and characteristics that students should attain through reading lessons. Through the findings, the misalignment of the policymaker's expectations and students' perceptions arose in lesson focus, misperception, and measurement of reading attainment through testing.

6.2 Research question 1

How do teachers interpret the curriculum and translate it into practice in their English reading lessons?

According to the results of RQ1, based on multiple data sources in this study, it was found that the teachers had a discouraging viewpoint on their ability to understand the English reading curriculum and translate it into practice. They pointed out that their lack of curriculum interpretation was the precipice that affected the knowledge of curriculum implementation. As the primary theme for RQ1, the lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation was the first gap identified between the policymaker's expectations of teachers' abilities to interpret curriculum, and the limitations that teachers explained hindered their abilities.

That is to say, teachers' lack of efficacy in curriculum understanding was the foundation for implementing the curriculum into the classroom and the expected intent for students to learn. The teachers found that they struggled with internal and external factors that prohibited them from understanding the curriculum. If they could not interpret the curriculum, they certainly had no wherewithal to know or be knowledgeable about the implementation process and intent for students of the English reading curriculum and subsequent refinements.

Internal and external factors are attributed to the dearth of self-efficacy in curriculum understanding. From an internal perspective, preservice education, professional development, and time were the aspects to support curriculum interpretation. At the same time, teacher input and workload were the external aspects identified.



6.2.1 Internal factors: preservice training

First, as previously mentioned, preservice training has evolved to incorporate and keep up with general curriculum reforms (Harfitt, 2020). The focus of teacher education has experienced improvements since 1997 and has required several universities to adapt to stricter guidelines in the certification process. While the pathway to becoming a teacher changed, and the focus on English language learning shifted from pedagogical and linguistic proficiencies to developing English language teachers' "orientation towards language teaching" (Harfitt, 2020).

The paradigm shifts in preservice training still did not incorporate any methodology or practicum for preservice education in the subject area of the curriculum. The evidence from this study supports the claim that teachers had minimal exposure to all facets related to curriculum understanding. The limited exposure indicated by this study's participants was echoed in a study by Cekiso (2017), who pointed out in their research that preservice education in curriculum development and interpretation in Hong Kong was insufficient to prepare teachers for curriculum understanding, refinements, and all the following requirements of intent and implementation.

6.2.2 Internal factors: professional development for teachers

Secondly, notwithstanding preservice training, continued professional development was essential in a teacher's ability to stay abreast of critical refinements and teaching techniques. The Education Bureau of Hong Kong had set guidelines for professional development, but as teachers told the study, attaining the necessary professional development hours is a daunting task with less than desirable results. The study again showed the policymaker's well-intended intentions due to teachers' constraints.

The teachers of this study recognized the importance of professional development, which Main (2014) echoed in the literature, implying that professional learning programs are essential for teachers to understand and deliver current content. Moreover, work-life balance prohibited teachers from participating in professional development courses. At the same time, they were required to maintain professional development hours and spoke about the strain of achieving the professional development hours, which occurred through school-sponsored teacher development days.

According to the Education Bureau of Hong Kong (2020), three days are set aside for teacher development days which count toward professional development hours. The problem remains that teachers indicated the focus of the teacher development days was aligned with the school's primary concerns and not related to any pertinent curriculum refinements received. Further studies, by Harfitt (2020), Alsubaie (2016), and Morris & Adamson (2010), through literature review, have recognized the importance of curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent through preservice education and continued professional development.

6.2.3 Internal factors: time

Finally, in education, teachers' time is an essential resource and a key input for student learning. Teachers' time promotes various outcomes, including student learning, equity, and well-being. The quality of education can be affected by the hours teachers spend in the classroom, preparing lessons, or engaging in professional development. It is noticeable in this study that time is not a resource teachers have, and the area most affected was continued professional development.

Henri (2005) showed us that teachers have no time for new curriculum implementation, even if they understand new curriculum refinements, due to the workload encountered by teachers. Though Henri's study is seventeen years old, the fact that responses gathered in this study still reflect what was discussed by Henri is evidence of the continued barrier teachers face. This barrier is supported by Eroğlu and Kaya's (2021) study, which concluded that teachers' valuable time resource prevents them from continued professional development. The impediments placed on teachers resulting from internal factors of preservice training continued professional development, and time has prohibited them from the ability to successfully implement the objectives and outcomes set out by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong. The policymaker's curriculum refinements indirectly speak to time through its measurables and milestones for students to complete the curriculum. The measurables indicate that teachers' time management in delivering the course load is on schedule.

6.2.4 External factors: teacher input

As Flake (2017) mentioned, the success of curricula is partly done by having the key stakeholders involved in the development process. The input from frontline teachers would be paramount in developing the curriculum.

As stated earlier, two external factors contributed to the lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation. It was a perplexing dichotomy when the Curriculum Development Council's centralized curriculum reforms and refinements were presented to schools with a decentralized message, which means that Curriculum Development Council has outlined the intent.



However, it is up to each school to develop its approach to implementation. This decentralized approach to curriculum interpretation emphasized schools adopting a school-based curriculum. In essence, the interpretation and implementation were the responsibility of each school and adopted to ensure it fell within the school's ethos and mission statement. As the school was the caretaker and held accountable for the implementation, the select team developed the curriculum interpretation and implementation process.

The Education Bureau of Hong Kong publishes the curriculum refinements through various circulars (e.g., CDC, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2017, 2018) and issues them to all schools. It further augments the issuance of circulars through briefings and talks on the curriculum changes made. These briefings are attended by appointed school representatives, who bring the information back and disseminate it as appropriate. School-appointed representatives are sent because the briefings are held during the day when teachers teach. We must understand that teachers are diverse, and their pedagogical approaches to teaching vary, which tells us the interpreters' interpretation espouses the curriculum.

The reliance on a select few, who tend not to be frontline staff, is an external factor that limits curriculum understanding. Teachers' lack of involvement in curriculum understanding is an ineffective means of effective curriculum implementation, as Flake (2017) mentioned and discussed earlier. A recent study also referred to the lack of individual teacher input hindering the intended curriculum refinements and implementation (Lo, Cheng, & Wong, 2017).

6.2.5 External factors: teacher workload

As the results showed, teachers expressed their willingness to elevate their knowledge and understanding, but the workload precluded them from doing so. Teachers' workload was an external factor over which they had no control. Teachers must fulfill teaching responsibilities, assignment grading, parent conferences, student issues, extra-curricular activities, and administrative tasks.

According to the findings, teachers of this study have insufficient time to take on curriculum understanding. Teachers struggle globally with time management, and Hong Kong teachers are no exception. The technological advance achieved over the past decade would reduce teachers' workload, but recent studies have shown the opposite (Wong, Lai, Meng, Lee, & Chan, 2021; Lam & Wong, 2018; Lo, Cheng, & Wong, 2017).

Technological advances have been geared to improve students' learning experience but have added more responsibilities to teachers to learn these new technologies. The added pressure of acquiring the skill set to implement new technology further precludes teachers from the time they need to understand and implement new curriculum refinements.

As discussed, this study expressed self-efficacy as the primary hindrance to effectively interpreting the curriculum to bring to the classroom. Bandura (1995, p.2) stated that self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." The interpretation of Bandura's theory indicates that curriculum interpretation, intentions (objectives and outcomes), and implementation were

paramount for teachers to manipulate and put into practice. Several current studies have shared the same viewpoint in their findings and discussions, implying that the direct relationship between frontline teachers and curriculum interpretation is key to curriculum success (Shirell, Hopkins, & Spillane, 2019; Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016).

The results and discussion showed that English reading curriculum self-efficacy is crucial and determines how teachers accomplish the learning and teaching tasks and help them to be able to reflect and adjust. The implications, limitations, and conclusions are addressed in the forthcoming chapters.

6.2.6 Conclusion on teachers' curriculum interpretation

The discussion of RQ1 demonstrated that teachers were aware of their lack of self-efficacy in curriculum interpretation and the contributing factors. They further said they understand the importance of curriculum refinements to maintain competitiveness. However, the well-intentioned refinements appear to have a different understanding of frontline teachers' abilities.

6.3 Research question 2

What is the rationale behind teachers' beliefs and practice in the English reading lesson?

The results of RQ2, as discussed earlier, did not present a centralized theme. However, it showed the particular study aspects contributing to teachers' beliefs and factors affecting their classroom practice. The practices of frontline teachers directly impact the implementation of curriculum refinements. Therefore, understanding the factors impeding implementation is paramount in this discussion.



The results broadened the scope of the correlation between teachers' beliefs and practices toward English reading. Previous studies about teachers' beliefs and practices have shown a distinct correlation (Borg, 2018; Brown, Harris, & Harnett, 2012; Postholm, 2012). Conversely, other studies opposed these findings and identified that practices and beliefs did not align (Liu & Huang, 2011; Lim & Chai, 2008).

The findings in this study suggested that the latter take on the conceptualized disparity outlined by teachers as “tensions” (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p.380). The overwhelming tension was identified as the challenges presented to teachers, which impacted the correlation between their beliefs and practices.

The challenges exposed in the study were the fundamental role of teachers, students' proficiency in English, the material selected, reading culture, and the objectives of an English reading lesson. These challenges were reflected in the responses gathered through the questionnaires. They were illuminated by the semi-structured interviews and illustrated by classroom observations. The tensions directed the classroom practice regardless of the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical understanding of teaching English reading.

6.3.1 Challenges: role of the teacher

The role of teachers can be broadly defined as making rational and educated decisions about delivering lessons to achieve objectives and outcomes for and with students (Geier, 2021). A teacher's first exposure to this broad definition occurred during their preservice training and practicum and was the foundation for their understanding.



However, this study has found areas that challenged the role of teachers, which has affected their beliefs and practices. During preservice training, teachers are taught about their roles as a teacher. They are exposed to the notion that teachers should be facilitators for students and draw students to find their better selves. They were exposed to what would be expected of them from their potential employers. Teachers fulfill their requirements to enter the teaching profession and reality hits. Teacher's manuals are provided to all teachers outlining their duties and responsibilities. Expectations were identified, and though the guidelines were generic, they may vary from school to school based on each school's mission statement.

Interestingly, according to the Education Bureau of Hong Kong (2018), the role of the teacher in the curriculum refinements of English reading is to:

help students learn better through role modeling, encourage students to read a wide range of reading materials, organize a diversified range of reading activities, develop students' information literacy and critical thinking skills, guide students to connect their reading to prior knowledge, provide timely feedback, and enhance students' capacity for self-regulated learning.” (pp.14-15)

The summary of these tasks underscored the Education Bureaus' position on the role of a teacher during an English reading lesson. However, the quantitative imbalances presented by the study and elaborated on during discussions with the teacher appeared not to embrace the Education Bureaus' position in its entirety. Teachers should maintain an acceptable balance between school tasks and teaching progress in a standard lesson” (Zhao & Xu, 2016).



As teachers advance in their careers, they adapt to the dichotomy of their roles as teachers and adapt to maintain the necessary balances. The understanding and experience had not precluded them from adjusting their beliefs and practices to accommodate effective teaching.

Additionally, newly appointed teachers experience disillusionment soon after they begin teaching, which impacts the beliefs they had constructed during preservice training (Voss & Kunter, 2020). The disenchantment was brought to the forefront during the lesson observations.

Moreover, the ideology that teachers could maintain a primary role as class facilitators were not the reality. When teachers stepped into the classroom, all their beliefs and pedagogical ideologies were tested. The teachers challenged what they were taught because the reality was significantly different. The difference in the teachers' roles was observed during the classroom observations of this study. The observations supported what the study concluded through the quantitative data.

A newly appointed teacher developed a detailed lesson plan with specific milestones to be taught and achieved. However, the teacher's lesson challenges were observed and documented. An acceptable equilibrium was not achieved between school tasks, classroom management, and teaching progress. During the reflection period, the teacher shared their views and explained that they were frustrated because they were not equipped to meet the changes they experienced in class.

Moreover, there were concerns about their anticipated roles and essential roles in class. The reflection period played a role in modifying their beliefs and approach to the lesson in the future.



Though the role of a teacher is outlined by the Education Bureau and through preservice training, they are tested each day and play an integral part in modifying the beliefs and practices of teachers.

6.3.2 Challenges: students' language proficiency

Further elaborating on the challenges that lead to teachers' tensions was students' language proficiency. Many studies have examined students' language proficiency and its effects on motivation and learning (Lou & Noels, 2017). However, limited studies have been done to identify the effects of student language proficiency and the effects on teachers' beliefs and practice.

Faez & Karas (2017) examined the relationship between students' language proficiency and a teacher's pedagogical skill, belief, and practice and showed that students' proficiency level underpinned classroom practice, which could be contrary to the teacher's beliefs. Teachers of this study were affected by the language proficiency challenge, which caused them to alter their classroom practice to accommodate all the students. Altering classroom practice can impact the curriculum's implementation, evidenced by the present study and findings from Faez & Karas.

6.3.3 Challenges: material selection

Though students' proficiency level was a primary factor affecting their beliefs and practice, teachers faced other challenges in the classroom that played a role. Reading has evolved over the decades to accommodate learners' needs, and the materials incorporated are integral to the learning and teaching of reading. Scholars have indicated that reading is integral to beliefs,

attitudes, and general behavior through the literature. Moreover, it guides the actions and thoughts of individuals (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Materials need to be pragmatic and attend to the needs of current-day learners (Hildebrand, 2018). Teachers in Hong Kong feel they are stifled by the required materials expected to be read. While curriculum development and refinements moved forward, the material did not keep pace (Harfitt, 2020). One fundamental tenet of the curriculum reform for English reading was to “provide them with relevant and interesting quality reading (including e-reading) materials” (CDC, 2007, p.14).

Discussions with teachers of English reading indicated that the readers being used had been the same for years. In form 1, it is BFG; in form 2, Matilda; and in form 3, The Speckled-Hen. As stated, the CDC wanted to introduce relevant and exciting materials. Students are evolving as technology evolves, and stories from the past have little relevance to today’s students. Even though teachers attempted to introduce current materials related to today’s students, the students hesitated due to their lack of proficiency in English to make a valuable teaching tool.

6.3.4 Challenges: students’ reading culture

For materials to be effective, even if the proficiency level is less than desirable, students need the desire to read. Reading, by its nature, cannot be taught or forced upon students. It depends on students developing reading pleasure and intrinsic motivation. Students are likelier to become enthusiastic readers if they are part of a community where reading is encouraged, valued, and supported (Day and Bamford, 1998). In addition, a study by Kachak, Budnyk, & Blyznuk (2021) further elaborated that a community that promotes reading activities develops reading independence.

Reading independence creates a reading culture within the reader. Teachers have found several reasons for students' limited reading culture, including socio-economic backgrounds, lack of English proficiency, limited parental guidance, and other technological options available to students.

Similarly, limited reading culture reasoning were also presented in research findings from the International Literacy Association (2020) and further studies (Akubuilu, Okorie, Onwuka, & Uloh-Bethels, 2015, Education and Manpower Bureau, 2001). Teachers' understanding of the lack of reading culture affects their practices to the extent of materials to be utilized. The focus has shifted from actual reading to learning vocabulary, grammar, or other skills because the material may not be suited.

6.3.5 Challenges: lesson objective

Though teachers maintained a level of learning in the classroom, the question arose through discussion and literature on the fundamental objective of the reading lesson. The aim of a reading lesson objective brought together the circle of tensions that show how teachers' beliefs and practices have affected the English reading lesson. Teachers were challenged daily to provide a practical reading lesson, understand the syllabus and effectively deliver a lesson to the best of their abilities, meeting the need of the students at all levels.

Though we indicated earlier that teachers have a low self-efficacy of curriculum understanding, their years of service and school-based curriculum assisted them in understanding the overall

objective of the reading lesson. Those fresh teachers' mentors were there to guide them and help them adjust.

Notwithstanding this understanding, they focus on improving the impediments that have created challenges to their practices. Empirical data collected through lesson observations corroborate that teachers have spent significant time not covering reading. They spent time developing students' vocabulary, explaining the benefits of reading, and how the material introduced in class correlated with their learning needs and interests (Wong, 2021; Ramirez, Fries, Gunderson, Schaeffer, Maloney, Beilock, Levine, 2019). The studies mentioned, and the results discussed underscore the teachers' tension regarding the fundamental objective of the reading lesson.

6.3.6 Conclusion on teachers' implementation of curriculum

Overall, teachers' beliefs and practices of an English reading lesson are challenged by factors that are not in their control. The beliefs of teachers guided them to develop practical and effective reading lessons. However, as discussed, the impediments have altered their practices which may not have aligned with their beliefs.

6.4 Research question 3

How do students perceive reading?

The final aspect represents the data collected, and findings presented for RQ3, exposing the central theme of intent. Studies researched students' perceptions of readings and presented findings indicating that students' understanding of reading was primarily to learn vocabulary and prepare for examinations (Elliott, 2019; Durrani, 2016).

Though this study's findings corroborated previous studies' findings, one central theme emerged from the study: students' overall understanding of the reading lesson. Four sub-themes that supported this overall question are (1) reading: academic subject or skill, (2) reading lesson focus: vocabulary and grammar, (3) reading: post-lesson, and (4) the importance of reading. Recently a study conducted by Lestari & Novita (2022) found that students' lack of reading comprehension stemmed from "not understanding the meaning" (p.10) or the purpose of the reading comprehension lesson.

6.4.1 Reading: academic subject or skill

The present study discovered that students would be more engaged in the reading lesson and reading overall if the focus and emphasis of the lesson were on reading and not on answering comprehension questions, grammar structure, or sentence patterns.

Many studies have concluded that most students' interest level in reading for non-academic purposes is high (Loh, Gan, & Mounsey, 2022; Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan, 2019). Conversely, studies have shown that when reading is for academic purposes, students' interest level decreases. Students are tasked with various activities to acquire knowledge in many disciplines of study, and a significant portion of knowledge acquisition is through reading. Students are assessed to measure their understanding when they have completed the reading. The mindset of the student equated reading with examinations or assessments. The association between reading and examinations has become common among students and is evidenced by a recent study (Ameyaw & Anto, 2018). The study revealed that over 58.65% of students who participated in the survey recognized reading as preparation for examinations. The correlation developed



between a reading lesson and examinations solidified what the study findings have conveyed. Students would face reading more positively and proactively develop positive reading habits.

Interestingly, students' sentiments echo one of the guiding principles issued by the Curriculum Developments Council reform on reading, which says schools should create a positive reading culture amongst students by developing a reading habit through non-academic means (CDC, 2009). However, as mentioned, reading can not be taught or forced upon, and all stakeholders must cater to students' attitudes and perceptions of a reading lesson. Though students feel reading should not be treated as an academic subject, they still expressed their lack of understanding of the focus of the reading lesson.

6.4.2 Reading lesson focus: vocabulary and grammar

The present study found that students correlated the reading lesson with learning grammar, vocabulary, and examination practice. They indicated that the focus of a reading lesson should be reading for engagement, not a skill-based approach to learning English. The fundamental goal of teaching and learning reading is to empower readers to comprehend what they have read. Teachers are vital, and they need to understand the objectives of the reading lesson to arouse students' interest in reading (Chen, Maarof, & Yunus, 2016; Maasum & Maarof, 2012).

Though teachers are well-intentioned, studies have shown that the focus of the reading lesson digresses from original learning objectives and outcomes (Wong, 2021; Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). Students need to have vocabulary growth in order to excel at reading. Empirical evidence shows that “for older children and adults, much learning of new words occurs through exposure

to written texts” (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Sternberg, 1987, as cited in Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). The study further states that explicit vocabulary building and training differed from exposure to new words.

Students in the study had expressed that the primary reason they did not know the focus of the reading lesson was the amount of time spent around vocabulary. The inordinate amount of time spent on vocabulary was evident in the class observations for this study. The teacher had a specific lesson plan with pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities. The teacher introduced the text and asked the students to skim for unfamiliar words. The teacher then elicited the words from students, and a pattern developed. The following 20 minutes were spent on vocabulary learning.

The time spent on tasks other than actual reading was echoed in another lesson observation, whereas the focus of the reading was a descriptive writing piece. The lesson was geared to examine what message the author was conveying and their viewpoint. However, most students questioned the lesson’s objectives because they felt an inordinate amount of time was spent learning adjectives of appearance and emotion.

The phenomenon of a reading lesson becoming a skills-based approach to learning grammar and vocabulary leads to students’ confusion. The study demonstrated that students could not understand the focus of the reading lesson, which perplexed them about what knowledge they had gained, homework tasks, and what to prepare for the next lesson. Through this discussion, the study has identified a mismatch between students’ perception and the policymaker’s



guidelines which say the focus of the reading lesson should be to develop thinking skills, enrich knowledge, enhance language proficiency, and broaden life experience.

6.4.3 Reading: post-lesson uncertainty

The present study found that students participated in discussions after lessons to confirm what was taught during the lesson. The informal chats signaled the student's puzzlement of the lesson and wanted clarification. In teaching and learning, confusion is common, but little research has been conducted to properly define or understand the confusion in educational literature (Silva, 2010, as cited in Lodge, Kennedy, Lockyer, Arguel & Pachman, 2018).

However, studies have indicated that misperception is related to a “cognitive impasse” (Lodge, Kennedy, Lockyer, Arguel & Pachman, 2018) while learning new knowledge. Though it has been indicated that cognitive impasses could be beneficial for students learning growth (D’Mello & Graesser, 2014), misperception or confusion is associated with a negative connotation.

When students feel confused, they tend to become unmotivated and stop the learning process.

Asian students, particularly in Hong Kong, experience a Confucian Heritage learning and teaching styles. Thereby, clarity, focus, and understanding are paramount to students and teachers. Clarity, focus, and understanding are achieved through the detailed explanation of the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester.

As mentioned, students were perplexed by the lesson's focus, leading to further misperceptions. Students receive descriptions of class learning objectives, outcomes, and structure (Calhoon, 2008). They are given multiple sheets outlining dates and times for what will be taught.

Additionally, the paradigm shifts towards self-directed learning played a role in student understanding. Students are expected to complete goal-setting for each subject, indicating they have understood the course objectives and outcomes. Throughout the term, students are required to refer to goals and syllabus and track their progress.

The dynamics between lesson focus and lesson misperceptions result from the relationship between curriculum, teachers, and students (Kumar, Purohit, Hiranwal, & Prasad, 2021, as cited in Samani & Goyal, 2021; Akiba, Murata, Howard, & Wilkinson, 2019; Plaut, 2006) which is the foundation of stakeholders in this study.

The misperception stems from different learning activities, individually-based knowledge, support, and focus. Students have a confident expectation of the lesson based on the course outline, and deviations from the outline will disrupt their learning and revision.

Students in this study explained that most reading lessons did not engage in reading. The focus of the lessons tended to be vocabulary building, grammar learning through writing, and speaking skills such as eye contact and hand gestures through reading their writings. The lesson's focus challenged their preconceived ideas of the reading lesson based on the syllabus. Students expressed that they had learned something but were confused because it was unrelated to

reading. They explained they expected to do some pre-reading tasks, read, and then some-post reading tasks. The task and the actual reading were to get them to think and leave class with a positive attitude toward what they have read.

Moreover, it was supposed to encourage them to research the topic further. However, as the lesson's focus changed, students became more confused and lamented after class about the lesson. According to Arguel, Pachman, & Lockyer (2019), students become lost when the teacher spends significant time on tasks unrelated to reading. It can be argued that vocabulary building, writing, and grammar development are all critical components of creating a better reader (Wright, Cervetti, Wise, & McClung, 2022; Kim, Relyea, Burkhauser, Scherer, & Rich, 2021; Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). However, if the lesson focus changes resulting from the teacher's instruction to cater to learner diversity and the focus confuses the students, students and teachers might reach a cognitive impasse negatively.

6.4.4 Importance of English reading

The present study concluded that students overwhelmingly understand the importance of reading and its role in future personal growth. The evolution of reading evidenced how reading played an integral role in the development of students. From the Alphabet method introduced by John Eliot in the 17th century to the *No Child Left Behind Act* of the 2000s in America to the present-day *Programme for International Student Assessment*, educators have recognized the importance of English reading and the foundation it represents to the other learning skills of writing, listening, and speaking (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018; Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan, 2016; World Literacy Foundation, 2015).

Many surveys and studies have shown that students genuinely understand and embrace the importance of reading. Students have associated the importance with a wide range of factors, which can be categorized into two broad types of reading, academic and non-academic (Gray, 1937).

Notwithstanding the two types of reading and students' positive acceptance of the importance of reading, reading still faces challenges in the classroom. Repeatedly, in various literature, students have shared that reading is essential because they can learn new knowledge and words to strengthen their vocabulary base. Moreover, reading is a tool to prepare for life endeavors and helps them relieve study pressure and stress. Students recognize the difference between reading for academic and non-academic purposes.

However, what shapes students' perspective of the importance of reading is developed from how it is presented to them. Students conveyed through different means that local teachers in Hong Kong focus on exam-oriented skills. They do not develop or carry out reading lessons that implicitly or explicitly indicate the importance of reading for life-wide learning. The importance of a Hong Kong reading lesson is learning vocabulary, grammar items, sentence structures, and the ability to find answers to reading comprehension questions. However, the participants of this study shared viewpoints about their beliefs in the importance of reading, and examination preparation was not one of them.

On the contrary, while they indicated some L2 lexical items and grammar features are inevitable, they felt the importance of reading was to prepare for the future and be well-equipped to be



successful in society. Interestingly, one of the tenets of the Curriculum Development Council reform on English reading was preparation for life-wide learning and future endeavors. Other studies shared these findings (van Moort, Koornneef, Wilderjans, & van den Broek, 2022; Amin, 2019; Kurnia & Erawati, 2018).

6.4.5 Conclusion on student perceptions

In conclusion, discussions arose that triangulate the themes discussed. Students shared that the materials tend to be too tricky or dated, and even when they finished reading, there was little discussion about the author's message or what was conveyed. There was no discussion on the strategies or skills that could be employed to help understand the reading. The lack of discussion directly impacted the understanding and objective of the reading lesson. This lack resulted in misaligning the *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities*.

6.5 Divergence: government, teachers, students

The final discussion focuses on RQ4, which asked if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions and classroom realities resulting from teachers' teaching reading and students' learning how to read; what are the reasons?

As stated earlier, the study put forth salient discussions for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, which were the driving factors for answering RQ4. The previous discussion categorized the curriculum intentions and classroom realities by three stakeholders: 1) government, 2) teachers, and 3) students.



6.5.1 Government

The curriculum is the foundation of learning and teaching, with the primary stakeholders at the forefront of its success. The identifiable misalignment of interpretation found in this study resulted from the relationship between the government and the teachers.

In 2002, the Education Bureau of Hong Kong, through the Curriculum Development Council, began the implementation of an elaborate and well-orchestrated ten-year educational reform package. The reform plan was the result of studies, work, and recommendations by, at that time, the Education Commission. Since the return to sovereignty in 1997, the ability to maintain global competitiveness has weighed on governments and policymakers, and Hong Kong SAR was no exception.

The emergence of international assessments to measure global competitiveness, such as The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) fueled governments to evaluate the current positions and adjust curriculum accordingly to maintain competitiveness. Furthermore, these international measurement assessments have been the foundation for studies conducted on policy reforms and implementation (Oates, 2017; Rand, 2015).

Hong Kong government, as demonstrated in the literature, understood the importance of this competitiveness globally and directed the Education Bureau to ensure the students of Hong Kong were given all the tools necessary to meet the challenges and changes of the education sector



globally. Additionally, the Education Bureau needed to implement measurables, or key performance indicators (KPI), to ensure the mandated reforms were appropriately interpreted, the intent was understood, and learning outcomes were achieved.

Hence, reforms were implemented several times from 2002 through 2018. To monitor the reforms through the KPIs, the Education Bureau set up a task force to conduct External School Reviews (ESRs). The objectives of the ESR were to ensure curriculum interpretation, intent, implementation, and outcomes were achieved. The results of the ESRs were instrumental in subsequent curriculum reforms, coupled with the trends and findings of the international assessments.

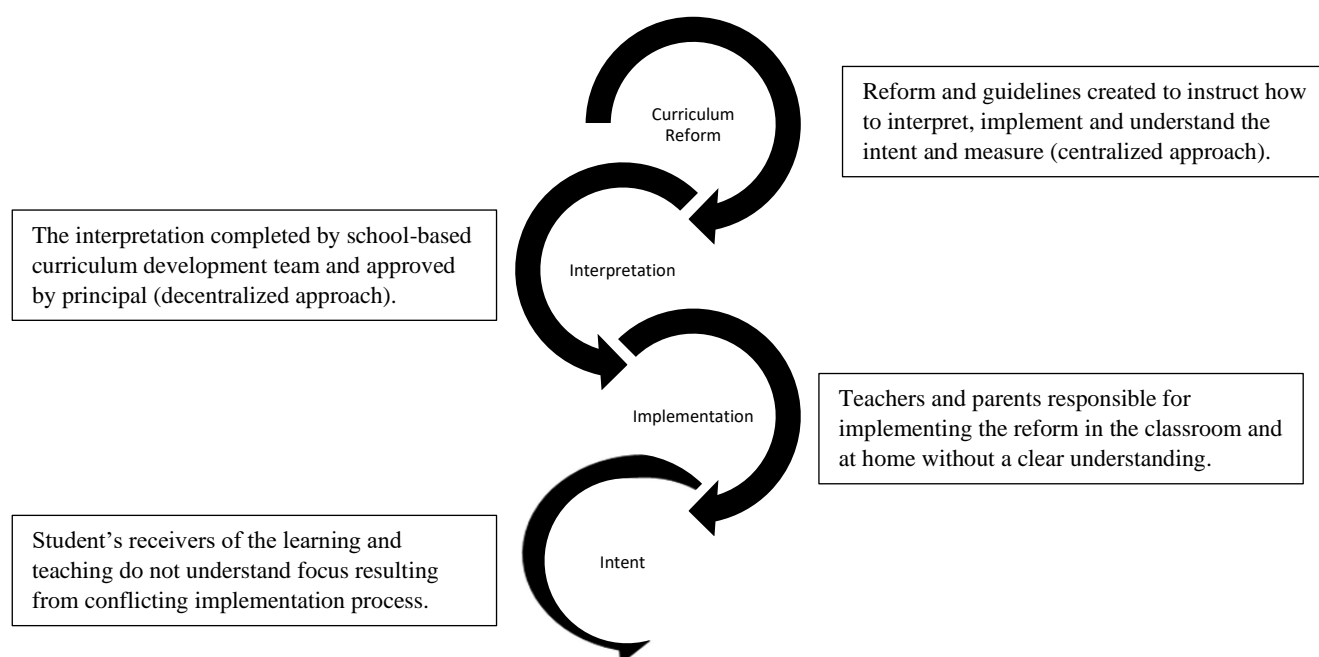
Though reforms resulted from a combination of ESRs and standings in international assessments, the foundation of reforms was grounded by the initial four fundamental tenets set out by the Education Commission before implementing the Curriculum Development Council. The tenets of moral and civic education (MCE), reading to learn (RTL), project-based learning (PBL), and the use of information technology for interactive learning (ICT) were considered the standard to expand upon for future reforms and refinements. The foundations for reform and refinement further incorporated promoting professional development for educators to keep teachers up-to-date with current reforms and refinements.

Additionally, reforms addressed how students should approach learning and teaching, which encompassed nurturing students with the following qualities, good ability in languages and mathematics; a broadened knowledge base; self-directed learning, interpersonal skills; well-

rounded in physical and aesthetic areas, moral and civic understanding, lifelong learning skills, and most recently national identity. The framework for curriculum reform and refinement interpretation, intent, and implementation was developed with the above foundations.

Based on this current study, the conveyance of curriculum reform by the Curriculum Development Council, as mentioned earlier, takes a centralized, decentralized approach. The centralization is the CDC developing the framework, guidelines, and intent of curriculum reform to follow. Decentralization is the school's autonomy in the selected implementation, manner, and materials. The study believes this approach has led to the misalignment between curriculum intentions and classroom realities through the various stages of interpretation, implementation, and intent by different stakeholders. As shown below in Figure 6.1, the Curriculum Flow outlines how the misalignments occurred at each stage and demonstrate the steps of interpretation, implementation, and intention.

Figure 6.1 *Curriculum Reform / Refinement Flow*



The above summary of Figure 6.1 outlines the study's interpretation of flow from the Secondary Education Curriculum Guide 2017, Booklet 6B: Reading to Learn: Towards Reading across the Curriculum. As the study has discussed through RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, misalignments between curriculum intentions and classroom realities resulted from the ambiguity of the centralized-decentralized approach to curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent with the practicalities of teachers' teaching and students' learning.

The curriculum flow indicates that the government is the primary author of the reform and associated guidelines for interpretation, implementation, and intent. Interestingly, it flows to the suggested curriculum team for interpretation and approval from principals. The curriculum flow indicates that subject panel heads, librarians, teachers, and parents are given interpretation. The frontline teachers are charged with implementation in the classroom to benefit the students. However, as shown in the literature, the lack of primary stakeholder involvement has shown that successful curriculum reforms and all the associated attributes without input and involvement of direct stakeholders provide clear interpretation, intent, and implementation are generally not achieved (Flake, 2017, Alsubaie, 2016; Green & Cormack, 2008).

It was further evidenced by a report compiled from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 2018 (Hong Kong Section) that critical input from teachers and students was vital in developing effective learning and teaching of a reformed curriculum. The reports indicated that the lack of teacher input into curriculum reforms challenges teachers' interpretation and implementation (Marôco, 2021).

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2018), sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), provided more evidence supporting the discussion of curriculum interaction. The teachers of this study had expressed their concerns about the Curriculum Development Councils' attempts to meet the need to stay competitive in the global arena but may be shortsighted in the complexities of learning and teaching from a frontline teacher and student perspective.

Furthermore, the teachers expressed that perhaps Curriculum Development Council lacks the depth of understanding of classroom practice and the challenges presented to cater to learner diversity when they develop curriculum reform.

The final recipient of curriculum interpretation and implementation are the students. It is from the learning and teaching that the intent of the curriculum reform is measured.

The measurements, through assessment, indicate if a student has absorbed the information during learning and teaching. Moreover, the intended measurement of intent may reflect the teachers' ability to interpret and implement according to the prescribed guidelines set out.

As outlined and discussed in RQ3, learners need to understand the purpose of the curriculum being taught to achieve its intent, and this requires students to adjust their learning mode for learning and teaching to achieve the goals. Understanding the curriculum was shown through results from the Progress in International Reading Study report of 2018.

Hong Kong students have achieved the number three ranking worldwide regarding reading literacy scores. However, only 34% acknowledged engagement during a reading lesson or understanding the focus of reading lessons. The low percentage reflected is far below the international mean of 60%. It underpins the importance of curriculum interpretation and implementation, which told the study that the Confucian-Heritage way of teaching and learning and the rote practice of exam taking is still predominant in Hong Kong, a result discussed in RQ3. As the government indicates, it does not achieve the intent of a positive reading culture fostering critical thinking and preparation for future learning and life challenges.

The misalignments presented indicate opportunities for positive change through the curriculum flow and findings of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. It shows that curriculum reform can become a technical process removing the human element, in this case, the frontline teachers and students, which may prohibit effective implementation and therefore achieving intent (Chiu, 2007).

Curriculums are the foundation of learning (Flake, 2017), but curriculum reform may become futile without proper interpretation and implementation. Global studies, surveys, and reports have shown that frontline staff should be involved at some level of curriculum reform development for a positive implementation. The findings of this study echo these sentiments and identify them as one of the misalignments in Curriculum Intention, Classroom Realities.

6.5.2 Teachers

The teachers of this study have expressed that while teaching reading, as with other subjects, they encounter challenges that are out of their control, and adaptation to their lessons is essential. Though challenges arise every day, they generally do not affect the beliefs instilled in teachers,

and it tends to affect desired learning outcomes, focus, and the purpose of lessons (Miller & Wu, 2022; Ansor & Nafi, 2018).

This study has revealed how teachers could be affected by internal and external factors influencing their teaching and classroom practices but limiting a profound change to their beliefs. Based on the current study, these factors are preservice training, professional development for teachers, time, teacher input, and teacher workload, as presented in chapter 7 and discussed in RQ1.

Furthermore, RQ2 discussed the teachers' beliefs and their effects on classroom practice earlier. The present study identified and discussed aspects that had affected the teachers' classroom practice but did not necessarily alter their beliefs. Beliefs are multidimensional and broadly encompass attitudes, opinions, values, perceptions, perspectives, theories, and conceptions (Qiu, Xie, Xiong, & Zhou, 2021).

Teachers' beliefs are integral in their pedagogical decisions, classroom approaches, and curriculum delivery. Many previous studies have focused on preservice teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (Qiu, Xie, Xiong, & Zhou, 2021; Wach & Monroy, 2019; Thompson & Woodman, 2018). Their findings show that preservice teachers' ideologies and consistent classroom approaches are developed while learning. Their shared beliefs held a standard view of how they approached the classroom during their practicum. It was discovered through other studies that in-service teachers tended to show a disparity in their beliefs and classroom practice.

A study by Mowlaie and Rahimi (2010) explained the disparity of beliefs and practices of 100 EFL teachers who supported Communicative Language Teaching as their primary approach to teaching. Though when observed, they adopted a combination of approaches to carry out the lesson. Another study by Lee (2009) analyzed teachers' beliefs versus written washback through a questionnaire.

This present study has echoed the salient points of these studies mentioned, and the teachers of this study have expressed similarities to a preconceived notion of beliefs and classroom practice during preservice. They also indicated that through experience, there is a change in beliefs and practices. These studies and this present study shed insight into the relationship between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice and how beliefs are affected by internal or external factors.

Moreover, as this study has indicated, teachers identified factors contributing to the mismatch between the curriculum intentions and classroom realities. The factors teachers of this study identified were not to say that the teachers indicated a definitive change in their beliefs. The findings indicated that beliefs could be affected by internal and external factors affecting classroom practices.

The dynamic context in which teachers have formed their beliefs and factors that arose to cause a change in beliefs is integral to understanding the relationship between teachers and curriculum and teachers and students. As suggested by the government with the centralized-decentralized approach, the implementation process appears not to factor in the challenges presented in

classroom practice that may hinder implementation. The hindrances, in turn, will affect the intent, measured by students' perceptions of learning and teaching through results.

6.5.3 Students

The intent of curriculum reform is borne from research and findings by the government to make enhancements to the curriculum, which is for the primary benefit of students. The intent needs to identify ways to engage students effectively. Student engagement is the basis of learning and teaching and represents the developed perceptions (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2014).

Through RQ3, the study showed the theme of intent developed by students. The intent theme created the substance for the mismatch, as indicated in RQ3. The theme of intent was supported by reading taught as an academic subject, the focus of a lesson, and the subsequent misconception.

However, the mismatch occurs through learning and teaching, which is critical in students formulating their perceptions. While RQ3 looked at students' perceptions through learning and teaching, it does not preclude that motivation plays a role in developing perceptions (Hwang, 2019; Kulasegarami & Rangachari, 2018; Lee, 2017), though this was not the focus of this study.

Most students in this study expressed a fondness for reading and recognized the importance of reading in lifelong learning. The themes from the data analysis purported that students possessed a challenging viewpoint of the English reading lesson, which shed light on students' learning

styles. The way students learn plays a substantial role in their everyday life, and the learning strategy they embrace is guided by their perceptions of learning and teaching (Awla, 2014).

A teacher's role is critical to the external factors that affect a student's perception of learning and teaching. The relationship between teachers and students from a student's perspective has shown that knowledge and skill in teaching are not the only components required to help students develop the necessary skill set to develop positive learning (Longobardi, Settanni, Shanyan, & Fabris, 2021; Renuga & Kanchana Mala, 2016). Though the studies have indicated that approachability, fairness, and caring attitudes help students form their perspectives, the themes developed from this study play to the teachers' knowledge and skills.

The misalignment from a student's position is developing a positive internal reading habit, critical thinking skills, and lifelong learning skills. All of which described in the literature review as critical components of the English reading curriculum reform. Recent research indicates that students' perceptions of the aims and outcomes of English reading curriculum reform in Hong Kong diverge from key objectives articulated in CDC policy documents. Specifically, whereas the CDC curriculum emphasizes developing positive reading habits, critical thinking skills, and skills for lifelong learning (CDC, 2017), students identify more closely with instrumental motivations for reading like academic achievement and career preparation (Harfitt, 2020; Zheng, Liang, Li, & Tsai, 2018).

For example, Harfitt (2020) found that secondary students valued English reading primarily as a means to higher test scores and gain a competitive advantage for university admission and job

opportunities. While acknowledging the importance of functional English skills, students did not identify the cultivation of intrinsic reading motivation or critical thinking as a significant outcome.

Similarly, Zheng, Liang, Li, & Tsai (2018) elaborated that students were largely unmoved by the aim to foster lifelong reading habits through the English curriculum. Students saw leisure reading in English as unimportant given their demands and pressure to achieve.

These findings indicate a misalignment between the student perspective and CDC curriculum policy. Whereas policy documents highlight the formative power of reading to shape minds and learning capacities, students remain focused on the instrumental value of reading for credentials and competitiveness. This tension signals a need to better incorporate and address student motivations in designing and implementing the English reading curriculum (Lam & Wong, 2018; Tse & Lee, 2016).

Lam & Wong (2018) argued that student learning begins and ends with the students. Thus, misaligning student and government values or expectations will undermine policy effectiveness. Tse and Lee (2016) similarly contend that educational reforms must resonate with all stakeholders' values, needs, and voices, especially those most directly affected. The findings of Harfitt (2020), Zheng, Liang, Li, & Tsai (2018), and others suggest that current English reading curriculum reform has yet to fully achieve this resonance with student perceptions or address the issues arising from interpretation and implementation.

Greater congruence between government and student aim is needed to foster the positive reading habits and lifelong learning that CDC policy aspires to develop. Through participatory research and policy processes that center student motivations, values, and voices, English curriculum reform in Hong Kong may better cultivate the intrinsic rewards of reading (Lam & Wong, 2018) and a spirit of reflective thinking beyond competitiveness. Recent studies point to a lack of student perspective as a continued obstacle that may be overcome through more participatory and student-focused processes for developing reading policy and practice.

The themes developed by students show that the Curriculum Development Council displayed an elementary understanding of students' needs during the reform development. For example, students placed high importance on reading, as did the CDC. Conversely, the CDC reform indicated the focus of the reading lesson, yet the students presented a theme of not truly understanding the focus.

Though the CDC outlined the focus, purpose, and measurable outcomes of English reading in Hong Kong, recent studies suggest that students' perceptions may misalign with these goals due to a lack of input from key stakeholders beyond government administrators.

Harfitt (2020) found that secondary students in Hong Kong held perceptions about the purpose and value of English that differed from the government's articulated focus on functional and communicative competence. Students valued English more for instrumental

purposes like academic achievement and job prospects. This mismatch of perceptions points to the lack of teachers' voices in shaping the English language curriculum and policy.

Similarly, research by Lam and Wong (2018) and Evans and Morrison (2017) found that English language teachers in Hong Kong held significantly different beliefs about effective teaching and learning strategies than those articulated in government curriculum documents. The exclusion of teacher input and expertise in policy development may undermine the successful implementation of English language education policies.

Tse and Lee (2016) have argued that alignment of stakeholder perceptions and values is critical to successful curriculum reform. However, English language curriculum development in Hong Kong has utilized a centralized, decentralized process that has not adequately considered the ramifications of this process. More importantly, the lack of consultation from key stakeholders like frontline teachers, schools, parents, and teachers has indicated the misalignment exposed through this study. The mismatch between government intentions and stakeholder beliefs in this research calls for more participatory processes incorporating all key stakeholders.

In summary, though the CDC established a clear set of goals for English language education, recent evidence suggests a misalignment between government policy and those of teachers and students. For successful reform, participatory policy development processes and the inclusion of diverse stakeholder input are needed to cultivate shared understandings and ensure positive outcomes. This analysis, supported by studies, points to a lack of stakeholder consultation as the underlying issue that has yielded unintended perceptions and learning and teaching challenges.

6.5.4 Divergence: summary

The literature identified gaps in teaching English reading to Hong Kong junior secondary form. These identified gaps assisted in developing research questions relating to teacher curriculum understanding and interpretation, teachers' beliefs and classroom practice, and students' perceptions of reading.

The culmination of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 discussed highlighted the key areas which developed the divergence. The interpretation was affected by teachers' efficacy, implementation was affected by hindrances in the classroom, and students' understanding overshadowed the intent. As shown in figure 6.1 earlier, these divergences created the divergence of curriculum intentions and classroom realities for this study. The misalignment discussed in RQ4 was the relationship between the government, teachers, and students and curriculum reform's interpretation, implementation, and intent. The present study has uncovered shortcomings that directly affected *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: The learning and Teaching of English Reading to Secondary Students*.

6.6 Conclusion

The framework of this study was developed by adapting the Convergence Model (Creswell, 2014, 2009) and the modified Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism (Babu, 2014), as the intention of this framework was to exemplify the convergence of data collected. Instead, it highlighted the divergences. It is the contrary. The data divergence reflected in the results of RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 underpinned the discussion for RQ4. The curriculum intentions and classroom realities have exposed misalignments at various levels. The curriculum intention,

encompassing interpretation, implementation, and intent, embodies findings from previous Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measured, analyzed, and reported, coupled with other international literary assessment agencies' findings. All this while they are trying to ensure global competitiveness. The classroom practices embody a teacher's pedagogical beliefs, training, and experience to deliver a lesson effectively. However, the challenges presented may affect the expected implementation process measured by the intent. Stakeholders at each level have a vested interest in curriculum reform. The study has identified through the discussion areas for improvement, which will bring convergence.



Chapter 7 Implications

7.1 Introduction

This study explored and examined the relationship between curriculum, teachers, and students through *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities*. The study reviewed and analyzed the curriculum documents and guidelines for interpretation, implementation, and intent of curriculum refinements.

It explored how teachers receive, interpret, and implement curricula related to English reading. The study further reviewed teachers' beliefs and classroom practices associated with the curriculum. Finally, the study queried students on their perception of English reading through the learning and teaching process. All these elements were analyzed in tandem, triangulated, and thematically addressed. This comprehensive data analysis's culmination implied a divergence or misalignment in this concentric relationship. The divergent misalignment implications are addressed between policymakers and teachers, schools and teachers, and students and teachers. The implication aimed to narrow the gap between Curriculum intentions, Classroom Realities.

7.2 Curriculum interpretation: policymakers and teachers

Policymakers have attempted to implement new curricula based on a holistic educational approach formulated on new progressive pedagogical values (CDC, 2017). The ideology of well-rounded and total personal development is the basis of the four tenets of the new curriculum and guidelines. As mentioned in chapter 4, curriculum refinements have been implemented several times from 2001-2018. Teachers should be versed in decoding and delivering curriculum updates



for effective implementation. However, the study presented results and discussed a gap between policymakers and teachers in interpreting the documents.

The study discussed the internal and external factors presented by the respondents and finds it particularly interesting that the concerns of pre-service training, continued professional development, time, input, and workload are echoed in a report published by the International Literacy Association in 2020. The report stated that only a minority of respondents have the “skills they need for effective early reading instruction” (ILA, 2020, p.26). The reports further elaborated that the respondents indicated that time, workload, and school support were among the factors hindering literacy advancements in the classroom.

While internal and external factors are teacher-specific, the discussions drew distinct implications. The study has highlighted the misalignment between policymakers’ and teachers’ understanding of teachers’ efficacy in interpreting the curriculum refinements and associated guidelines. The misalignment included lacking pre-service training, limited professional development, workload, and time. With these misalignments, the current study suggests several measures to narrow the gap.

Firstly, the study suggests that policymakers proactively examine the current pre-service training criteria to ensure it incorporates the essential elements of curricula interpretation. Teachers’ beliefs and practices are formed during their pre-service training, and ensuring they had proper education on curriculum interpretation would also benefit the implementation in the classroom. The examination and response are similar to an exercise carried out in 2012 by policymakers to

review the current standard of education for pre-service training, which led to the change of the Bachelor of Education degree to a five-year program (Harfitt, 2020).

Secondly, policymakers should strengthen professional development by offering short courses or workshops related to specific curriculum refinements for teachers. The policymakers introduced the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) in 2013 to monitor and implement professional development for teachers. COTAP should further develop specific courses to align with curriculum refinements to equip the teacher with the wherewithal to interpret from a centralized perspective and implement from the decentralized approach.

Finally, the discussions mentioned teachers' workload and lack of time resources to allow teachers the opportunity to enhance their pedagogical skills and curriculum refinement interpretation. There are several ways to reduce teachers' workload and time resources. They can be addressed by introducing Small Class Teaching (SCT), transferring administrative and clerical duties to non-teaching staff, effectively using Information Technology, and building a supportive teacher culture.

Policymakers should further their initiatives of Small Class Teaching (SCT) introduced in 2008. In 2010, a study was completed to report the results of the implementation of SCT. Highlights of the findings showed teachers had more resources of time and less workload and could effectively engage the class by varied teaching methods. If policymakers extended this to secondary schools based on the results presented from primary school implementation, the teachers would have reduced workload, providing them with time and resources to devote to other initiatives to assist

in curriculum refinement interpretation. Transferring administrative and clerical tasks to non-teaching staff teachers and using IT teachers would reduce workloads and increase time resources. These two areas are the key hindrances to participating in effective and specialized professional development. Providing teachers with a support mechanism is a proactive approach to embracing challenges before they occur.

In conclusion, as Flake (2017) and Alsubaie (2016) mentioned, including teachers in the curriculum is paramount, and teachers' knowledge, experiences, and competencies are essential to assist in successful curriculum refinements. Since teachers are responsible for introducing new curricula to students, their involvement is essential at the onset of curriculum refinements.

Bringing together policymakers and teachers can effectively achieve curriculum refinements at all levels, interpretation, implementation, and intent. The suggestions are an extension of policies previously employed by broader macro reforms, the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers (COTAP), Small Class Teaching (SCT), and Bachelor of Education (Bed). The study suggests that policymakers modify macro policies for reforms to micro policies for refinements. First, COTAP was launched in 2013 to strengthen and enhance teachers' professional development. It is an extension of the continuing education initiative for principals in 2002 to coincide with curriculum reforms issued in the same year.

Establishing the continuing education initiative for principals in tandem with the curriculum reform was instrumental in the measurement and accountability for practical reform

interpretation and implementation. The same methodology could be used today for curriculum refinements that are issued.

Secondly, as mentioned, early SCT was introduced in primary schools in 2008, and the key performance indicators were measured and reported on in 2010 with favorable results. The policymakers could make this mandatory in secondary schools to yield the same benefits realized at the primary level.

Finally, in 2012, the government introduced new teacher training program requirements and increased the program time to five years. The increase in program time was primarily implemented to coincide with the new academic structure in 2012.

The combined efforts of policymakers and teachers will bridge the gap in curriculum refinement interpretation, directly impacting implementation and intent. The study suggests a review of the effective macro policies and the abilities to adapt them to the micro policies to meet the need for curriculum refinement interpretation. Reviewing and aligning the internal and external factors affecting curriculum understanding could bridge the disparities and effectively achieve curriculum interpretation, intent, and implementation.

7.3 Curriculum implementation: schools and teachers

The implications of bridging the gap between policymakers and teachers in curriculum interpretation are the initial point of the first phase of the curriculum refinement process. The success of curricula implementation is attributed to its proper interpretation and understanding.

As mentioned, the policymakers' position on curriculum guidelines takes the centralized-decentralized approach. Though the schools did not participate in this study, the inference by teachers of the study demonstrated the roles they play in practical curriculum refinement interpretation, implementation, and intent. The study suggested ways to lessen the disparity between policymakers and teachers.

However, to achieve this, schools must accept ownership of some factors that lend themselves to the divergences presented. For the gap bridge between teachers and policymakers, a school should become more flexible in providing teachers with the necessary tools to enhance their understanding of curriculum refinements for better implementation.

The school, as far as possible, fully supports and encourages teachers to enroll in professional development programs to enhance curriculum refinement. However, there are circumstances when professional development may not be accessible to teachers due to human resources constraints. The policymakers should make provisions for the school to employ qualified supply teachers to provide necessary coverage during the professional development course or workshops.

Furthermore, schools should direct panel chairpersons to take the lead to ensure panel members understand the curriculum documents. Additionally, teacher participants should share what they learned with their colleagues after taking professional development courses.

The study suggests that the additional support mechanisms of supply teachers, accountability by panel chairpersons, and small group sharing after professional development can be achieved through a concerted effort by policymakers, teachers, and schools, thereby narrowing the gap of interpretation and developing the foundation for implementation.

7.4 Curriculum: teachers and students

Understanding the components of curriculum reform/refinement and its intent is essential for teachers to implement effectively. As inferred by the discussions, the progressive pedagogical approach policymakers have taken for curriculum refinements may be overshadowed by the traditional pedagogy of examinations in Hong Kong (Lian, Tsang, Wong, & Li, 2022), which is an underlying factor in classroom approaches to implementation of curriculum refinements which affect students' perception. Therefore, teachers are suggested to do the following.

Firstly, seasoned or new teachers must be open-minded toward classroom practices and the students. The open-mindedness of teachers presents the ability to adapt to the factors expressed in the study that prohibit the effective implementation of curriculum and develop a misconception by students on an English reading lesson.

Secondly, teachers should understand, and students should be taught the balance between the public examination requirements (traditional pedagogy) and reading for pleasure (progressive pedagogy). The understanding and purpose would impact the implementation and classroom dynamic by allowing teachers and students to find the correct balance. The study's findings

imply that if this balance were struck, it would mitigate certain student misconceptions expressed with lesson focus, confusion, and teachers' concerns about lesson focus.

Additionally, a learning and teaching balance achieved would assist in implementing the curriculum and add to the outcomes required. As discussed, historical theories of reading (Adams, 1990; Gough, 1972; Clay, 2001) are the foundation for reading skills to be used in learning and teaching. However, social constructivism has been widely researched and explains the importance of social interaction and cultural context in knowledge development. Vygotsky (1978), identified that his social development theory asserts that a child's cognitive development and learning ability can be guided and mediated by their social interactions. His sociocultural theory states that learning is a crucially social process instead of an independent journey of discovery.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was the precipice for social constructivism today and prior researchers' findings expressed by Lantolf, & Poehner, (2023), Halliday (1978), and Norton and D'Ambrosio (2008), to name a few. Lantolf & Poehner extensively studied the role of sociocultural theory in second language learning which has emphasized the significance of collaborative dialogue, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to assist students in building upon their existing knowledge. Halliday's system functional linguistics approach focused on the social and functional aspects of language learning. Norton & D'Ambrosio's contribution to social constructivism illuminates how social factors and cultural context shape learners' experiences and outcomes.



While these findings illuminate the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to learning and teaching, recent findings by Lantolf & Poehner (2023) discuss the implications of convergence and divergence of sociocultural theory and second language learning in East Asian classrooms. The research identified the integral components of social constructivism in the effective implementation of learning and teaching specifically related to East Asian cultures.

Moreover, Grabe & Stoller (2018), whose research focuses on reading in a second language, share common themes with the social constructivist perspective. Specifically, they emphasize the significance of context, collaboration, and authentic tasks in developing reading strategies and skills. A recent publication by Grabe and Stoller (2018) discusses the role of developing an effective reading curriculum and its guiding principles. They identify how teachers embracing a social constructivist approach minimizes hindrances in implementing new curricula and promotes positive student engagement.

In summary, social constructivism and the associated multi-dimensional concepts in English reading learning and teaching can be an appropriate tool to further assist teachers in implementing curriculum reform/refinement. The impact of reading through a multi-dimensional process, encompassing cognitive skills, better stimulate learning and teaching. Incorporating reading for pleasure and examination preparation could co-exist, creating a conducive environment for positive learning and teaching.

Finally, to narrow the gap between students and teachers, policymakers can portray what reading brings to society through education, workshops, and social media outlets. A comprehensive

understanding of refinements and the associated intents transcends into a positive classroom. A thorough understanding of the reading process from a teacher's perspective can translate into their practice. The understanding will result in positive energy in the classroom, prompting students to look at their agency when it relates to reading.

When students assess their agency and critical thinking, positive reading will develop, and learning outcomes will be achieved.

7.5 Summary

The implications, borne from the discussion of results, illuminated the relationships between policymakers, teachers, schools, and students and addressed the need to be bridged to narrow the divergence gap in curriculum interpretation, implementation, and intent. Figure 6.1 shows that the curriculum refinement flow also identifies overlapping areas where simultaneous actions can be implemented to bridge the gaps exposed. When collaborative work and understanding between policymakers and teachers, teachers and schools, and teachers and students are completed, the curriculum refinements can be recognized and applauded.

The implications suggest that reading objectives be publicized to indicate literacy is much more than reading for exams. Policymakers, teachers, schools, and students should be able to interpret, implement, and identify the purpose of gaining what reading has to offer.

The convergence of Curriculum Intentions and Classroom Realities will bring reading to life and benefit policymakers, teachers, schools, students, and Hong Kong.

Chapter 8 Limitations

Through the Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Method, this study has shown findings highlighting the disparities between Curriculum Intentions and Classroom Realities. It has exposed the opportunities to enhance the curriculum reform interpretation, intent, and implementation. It has further highlighted teachers' beliefs and practices, impacting the students' perception of learning and teaching reading. However, limitations to this study existed.

The first limitation was the homogeneity of the student participants. The 250 participants were all male, and no female participants were included. Including male and female participants in a study on English reading is important for several reasons. Firstly, it helps to ensure that the study results are more representative of the general population, which includes people of both genders. Secondly, it can reveal potential gender differences in reading ability or preferences, which may have important implications for education and literacy programs. Finally, including both male and female participants helps to avoid gender bias in the study design and interpretation of results.

Even though the study took many precautions to ensure the validity of the results, additional research should be carried out using heterogeneous participants. This research was conducted at an all-boys catholic school where the medium of instruction is English. The academic level of the students does not vary drastically. The importance of the findings of this study should be corroborated or refuted by other participants because the curriculum intention is mandated for the entire education sector of Hong Kong.



Additionally, the sample size of this homogenous group was relatively small for a quantitative study and may limit the validity of the results. Though for the qualitative portion, it is worth noting that it has been suggested that a sample size of 12 would provide a study data saturation (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The study notes that the key disadvantage in the convenience sampling of the homogeneous group is the narrow generalizability, resulting in a more circumscribed population.

The second limitation the study encountered was the pandemic of Covid-19 in 2021 and 2022. The social distancing requirements implemented by the government during these two years have impeded the efficiency of the study. The study's initial intention was to have 500 heterogeneous participants from different districts of Hong Kong.

However, in light of the pandemic, the study could only sample a homogeneous group of participants. The study was aware of the underrepresentation of participants and did its utmost to ensure that sampling bias did not occur.

The final limitation the study identified was the inability of the study to perform experimental design. The study's objective was to examine curriculum intentions and classroom realities, and the participants observed provided detailed insight to identify if a misalignment occurred. The study recognized that an effective strategy to strengthen the implications further would have been implementing an experimental design after the first round of data collection and preliminary analysis. Implementing an experimental and control group to test curriculum

intentions effectively and classroom realities based on preliminary data results would underscore the implications.



Chapter 9 Conclusion

This study examined the curriculum intentions and classroom realities of learning and teaching English reading to junior secondary school students in Hong Kong. In today's global environment, coupled with technological advancements, Education Sectors are challenged to develop innovative ways to educate students. With English being the lingua franca and English one of the national languages of Hong Kong, the emphasis on English learning is essential.

The study set out to reveal the beliefs and practices of teachers related to specific curriculum reforms toward English reading, along with the student's perspective of learning and teaching. It became evident through the framework-developed convergence model adopted that there were misalignments between the primary stakeholders of curriculum refinement, the Curriculum Development Council, teachers, and students.

The study employed a mixed-method approach to collecting data supported by the conceptual framework diagram in Chapter 5, which identifies the relationship among curriculum, teachers, and students. The study used questionnaires as the initial focus of the study to gain insight into developing meaningful informal teacher interviews and student-focus group discussions. Each research question presented the findings and discussions of the study.

RQ1 exposed the teachers' lack of efficacy in curriculum interpretation supported by factors of preservice training, continued professional development, time constraints, and workload.

RQ2 identified through teachers' beliefs and practices that the challenges of understanding their role as a teacher, the English proficiency of students, and the lesson objective all contributed to the limitations of implementing the curriculum refinements required.

RQ3 revealed that students had a favorable opinion of reading and understood the importance, highlighted in the results sections.

However, it brought to the study's attention the students' misconceptions about their reading lesson. They acknowledged that reading should not be treated as another academic subject and that they could understand the focus of the reading during the reading lesson. Moreover, when the lesson finished, they were bewildered by what was expected of them for the next reading lesson.

The findings for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 were enlightening and provided a foundation to engage in conversations about the perspectives of teachers and students in relationship to English reading learning and teaching. However, the results and discussions of these three research questions were the foundation for answering RQ4. RQ4 was what are the reasons if there is a mismatch between the curriculum intentions, teachers' teaching reading, and students' learning how to read? The discussion presented evidence that suggested the misalignment between the *Curriculum Intentions, Classroom realities*.

The study reviewed all pertinent curriculum documentation issued by the relevant bodies in the education sector of Hong Kong and recognized that misalignments were presenting themselves

concerning each of the research questions. This divergence was illuminated through the findings presented by the participants and the curriculum documentation, which held a different view.

The documentation review found that policymakers had preconceived perceptions of teachers, schools, and students' wherewithal of curriculum refinement interpretation, implementation, and intent. The study presented the misalignment through the relationship between policymakers, teachers, schools, and students and suggested ways to converge the divergence of curriculum intentions and classroom realities.

The study implied convergence between all parties through various methods tailored to address the identified misalignments. The study suggested teacher inclusion and collaboration on refinements. Additionally, policymakers should review and enhance preservice training and professional development methods to address the interpretation of curriculum refinement. Furthermore, the study proposed that schools provide more flexibility so teachers can fully benefit from professional development. Moreover, policymakers provide the support schools need to cater to flexibility requirements. The flexibility will allow teachers the ability to implement curriculum refinement with confidence.

Additionally, policymakers and teachers must put students at the forefront of curriculum reform and refinement. It is implied that while students understand reading importance, they cannot grasp the intent of the reading lesson because the interpretations and implementation by teachers are lacking. Furthermore, the study implied that students and teachers could align by understanding the intent of a reading lesson.



Finally, the study concludes that the interpretation and implementation overshadow the government's intent. The study has spoken to the curriculum's intent to be reading for pleasure. However, the primary focus of policymakers, teachers, schools, and students is the relationship between interpretation and implementation. Throughout the review of curriculum reform/refinement documentation, the study has identified improvements on previously drafted and executed reform/refinements. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that a fundamental tenet of reform/refinement from the initial reform in 2001 to the most recent refinement in 2017 had not changed 'Reading for Pleasure.'

In language learning, pleasure reading, or extensive reading, has been widely recognized as an efficient and enjoyable way to improve proficiency and comprehension. Integrating pleasure reading into the reading curriculum can significantly contribute to the overall success of language learners, as evidenced by the works of Nation & Waring (2019) and Leather & Uden (2021).

Extensive reading involves learners reading large amounts of material in the target language primarily for enjoyment (Nation & Waring, 2019). This approach differs from intensive reading, which focuses on closely analyzing short texts for specific learning outcomes. Extensive reading encourages students to choose texts that interest them and read at their own pace, fostering a sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Leather & Uden, 2021).

One of the major benefits of pleasure reading is that it exposes learners to a wide variety of vocabulary and language structures in context. Nation & Waring (2019) noted that this exposure helps learners develop their vocabulary knowledge and improve their reading fluency. Learners

can better understand and retain this information by encountering new words and expressions in various contexts.

Moreover, pleasure reading has been shown to enhance overall comprehension skills. As learners encounter diverse texts, they must use their existing language knowledge and cognitive skills to make sense of the material. This process often involves making inferences, predicting outcomes, and summarizing key points (Leather & Uden, 2021). Over time, learners' comprehension abilities improve as they become more adept at navigating different types of texts.

Another significant benefit of extensive reading is its impact on learners' motivation. Leather & Uden (2021) emphasize that the role of motivation in language learning cannot be overstated. When students can choose what they read and engage with texts that interest them, they are likelier to develop a positive attitude towards reading and language learning. This intrinsic motivation, in turn, can lead to more consistent and productive engagement with the target language.

In conclusion, integrating pleasure reading into the reading curriculum can benefit language learners, including improved vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency, and comprehension skills. Moreover, the autonomy and enjoyment associated with extensive reading can foster greater motivation and engagement in the language-learning process. If educators consider incorporating pleasure reading as a key component of their language instruction, as supported by the works of Nation & Waring (2019) and Leather & Uden (2021), then the burden of implementation can be eased and the interpretation better understood.

The curriculum refinements presented over the past 20 years were the basis of this study and were the study's initial focus in determining the direction of the study. Through the review of the curriculum documents and extensive literature review, the study embarked on Curriculum Intention, Classroom Realities.

The study provided salient information for discussions and implications related to the interpretation, implementation, and intent through its adopted Convergence Model (Creswell 2014, 1999) and the Thematic Analysis and Triangulation Mechanism (TATM), which has led the educational sector to become cautious about curriculum refinements. Furthermore, from the results, it can be concluded that policymakers, teachers, and students should equally shoulder curriculum refinement at interpretation, implementation, and intent.

The study has recognized in examining *Curriculum Intention, Classroom Realities: The Learning and Teaching Hong Kong Secondary Students* that it has only scratched the surface of this understudied topic. While the results and discussions of this study were expressive, it is hoped that the implications drawn can provide on further studies.

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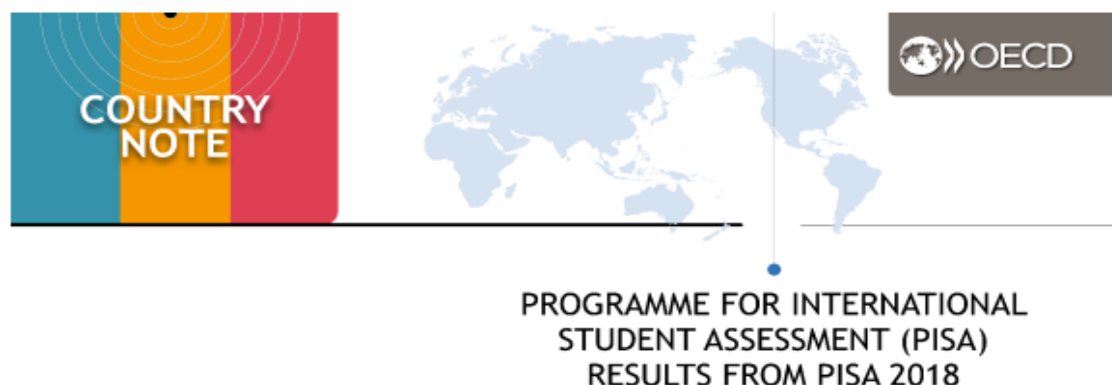
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Appendix A: Programme for International Student Assessment Results

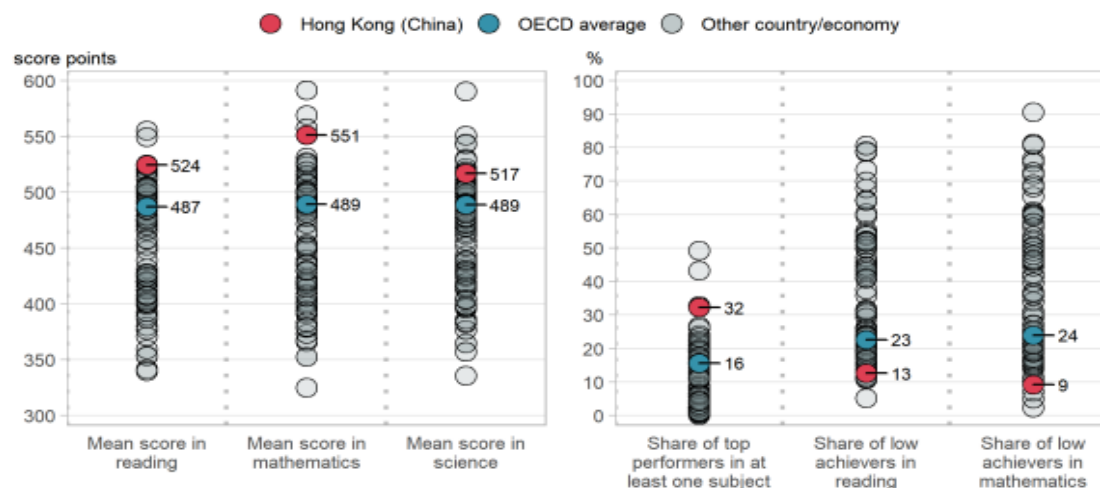


The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey of 15-year-old students that assesses the extent to which they have acquired the key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. The assessment focuses on proficiency in reading, mathematics, science and an innovative domain (in 2018, the innovative domain was global competence), and on students' well-being.

Hong Kong (China)

What 15-year-old students in Hong Kong (China) know and can do

Figure 1. Snapshot of performance in reading, mathematics and science



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown.
Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Tables I.1 and I.10.1.

- Students in Hong Kong (China) scored higher than the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science.

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire – part A

Students' Questionnaire Survey

This questionnaire will be used as documentation for an EdD thesis. Your accurate and true responses will be greatly appreciated. The answers and information provided will be strictly confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. This is an anonymous survey and at no time will your name be disclosed.

* Required

1. Please select the form and class you are in. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1A
☐ 1B
☐ 1C
☐ 1D
☐ 1E
☐ 2A
☐ 2B
☐ 2C
☐ 2D
☐ 2E

Part A

Student's self-evaluation of reading abilities



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2. Can you find specific information from a text quickly? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



3. While reading a text, can you guess the meaning of words you don't know with clues from the text? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



4. While reading a text, do you highlight, underline or make notes to ask your teacher *
to explain it?

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



5. Can you understand the real feelings or meanings from what an author writes? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



6. Can you predict what comes next in a text? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



7. Can you read in detail to understand a text? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



8. Can you read quickly to get the general idea of the text? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



9. Can you find the answer to specific questions in a text you are reading? *

Mark *only one* oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



10. Are you able to relate a text you are reading to your own personal life? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



11. While reading, can you identify a simple sentence structure? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



12. While reading, can you identify a complex sentence? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



13. While reading, can you identify a compound sentence? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



14. Are you comfortable to have a group discussion in English about a text you have read? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



15. Can you find the main idea of a text? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

6

☐

Always

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Appendix B: Students' questionnaire – part B

Students' Questionnaire Survey

This questionnaire will be used as documentation for an EdD thesis. Your accurate and true responses will be greatly appreciated. The answers and information provided will be strictly confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. This is an anonymous survey and at no time will your name be disclosed.

* Required

1. Please select the form and class you are in. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1A
- ☐ 1B
- ☐ 1C
- ☐ 1D
- ☐ 1E
- ☐ 2A
- ☐ 2B
- ☐ 2C
- ☐ 2D
- ☐ 2E

Part B

Students' descriptive reading abilities



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2. How much do you enjoy reading books? *

Mark only one oval.

Extremely Dislike

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Extremely Like



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3. How would you rate the level of difficulty when reading books? *

Mark only one oval.

Extremely Difficult

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Extremely Easy

4. What is your favorite material to read? *



5. How long does it take you to read a single-spaced A4 page of one of the following? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Approximately 30 minutes	Approximately 20 minutes	Approximately 15 minutes	Approximately 10 minutes	Approximately 5 minutes
Books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspapers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text book	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

◀
▶



6. What do you do when you encounter one of the following situations? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Stop reading it	Skip it	Seek help from classmate	Seek help from teacher	Read it again	Look it up
You do not get the main idea	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You can not identify specific information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You encounter unfamiliar words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You do not understand the author's meaning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You do not understand the purpose of reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. What is the purpose of reading? (rank 1=least important 5=most important.) *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
Exam preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gain knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn writing style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



8. Rank the order of difficulty you face when reading English books (1=least important 9=most important). *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Finding enough time and energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining concentration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying main points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding interesting material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting what to focus on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading different text types	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Length of material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speed/Accuracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



9. What makes a good reader(rank from 1 to 7, 1=least important 7=most important)? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vocabulary/Grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Set goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read rapidly and accurately	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identify text structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Predict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitor understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. What do you expect to learn in a reading lesson? Keep response limited to 50 words. *

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Appendix B: Students' questionnaire – part C

Students' Questionnaire Survey

This questionnaire will be used as documentation for an EdD thesis. Your accurate and true responses will be greatly appreciated. The answers and information provided will be strictly confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. This is an anonymous survey and at no time will your name be disclosed.

* Required

1. Please select the form and class you are in. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1A
☐ 1B
☐ 1C
☐ 1D
☐ 1E
☐ 2A
☐ 2B
☐ 2C
☐ 2D
☐ 2E

Part C

Students' perception and evaluation of teacher



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2. Does your teacher divide your reading lesson into three parts pre-reading, reading, * and post-reading?

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



3. Does your teacher encourage you to read by yourself? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



4. Does your teacher read the text aloud first then explain it to the class? *

Mark *only one* oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



5. Does your teacher ask you to read the text alone then explain it? *

Mark *only one* oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



6. When you find a word you do not know does your teacher tell you the meaning? *

Mark *only one* oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



7. Does your teacher encourage you to use a dictionary while reading? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



8. Does your teacher encourage you to use clues from the text you are reading to find * the meaning of unfamiliar words?

Mark only one oval.

Never

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

6

☐

Always



9. Does your teacher understand the challenges you face while reading English? *

Mark *only one* oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



10. Does your teacher ask comprehension questions after you have completed a reading task? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



11. Does your teacher teach you how to 'scan' a text to find specific information? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



12. Does your teacher teach you how to 'skim' a text to get a general idea? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



13. Does your teacher focus on language features of a text (i.e. grammar, sentence pattern)? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



14. Does your teacher help you get excited about reading? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always



15. Does your teacher use only English during the reading lesson? *

Mark only one oval.

Never

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

Always

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Appendix C: Teachers' questionnaire

Curriculum Intentions, Classroom Realities: An Investigation of the learning and teaching of English Reading in Hong Kong

All information that is collected in this study will be treated confidentially.

While results will be made available, you are guaranteed that you will not be identified in any report of the study results. Participation in this survey is voluntary and any individual may withdraw at any time.

* Required

Teaching Background, Qualifications, & Professional Development

1. Are you a local English teacher (LET)? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Are you a native English teacher (NET)? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. How many years have you been teaching? *



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4. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Bachelors' degree
- ☐ Bachelors' degree in English
- ☐ Masters' degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree



5. Were the following elements included in your formal pre-service education or training ? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Content of the subject(s) I teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pedagogy of the subject(s) I teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom practice in the subject(s) I teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching in a mixed ability setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching in a multilingual or multicultural setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g. creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, high order thinking)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management and student behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring students' development and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



6. How important were the following for you to become a teacher? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not important at all	Of low importance	Of moderate importance	Of high importance
Teaching offered a steady career path.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching provided a reliable income.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching was a secure job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teaching schedule (e.g. hours, holidays, part-time positions) fit with responsibilities in my personal life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching allowed me to influence the development of children and young people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching allowed me to contribute to society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Was teaching your first choice as a career? (A 'career' is having a paid job that you ^{*} regarded as likely to form your life's work).

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. What is your current employment status as a teacher? ^{*}

Mark only one oval.

☐ Permanent employment (an on-going contract with no fixed end-point before the age of retirement)

☐ Fixed-term contract

☐ Retired

9. How many years of work experience do you have at your current school? ^{*}

10. How many years of work experience in teaching do you have in total? ^{*}



11. Were the following subject categories included in your formal pre-service education or training, and do you teach them during your current employment? (**Check only the boxes that apply**)

Check all that apply.

	Included in my formal education or training	I teach it at my current school
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical and vocational skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign languages (different from language of instruction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion and/or ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



12. Did you take part in any induction activities at your current school? (If you answer 'No' please skip to question number 14) *

'Induction activities' are designed to support new teachers' introduction into the teaching profession and to support experienced teachers who are new to a school.

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No



13. When you began work at your current school, were the following provisions part of your induction?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Courses/seminars attended in person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online courses/seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planned meetings with principal and/or experienced teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervision by principal and/or experienced teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking/collaboration with other new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Co-teaching with experienced teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduced teaching load	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
General/administrative introduction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



14. During the last 12 months, did you participate in any of the following professional development? *

Please note 'professional development' is defined as activities that aim to develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. Please only consider professional development you have undertaken after your initial education or training.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Courses/seminars attended in person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online courses/seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education conferences where teachers and/or researchers present their research or discuss educational issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal qualification programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observation visits to other schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer and/or self-observation and coaching as part of a formal school arrangement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading professional literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Were any of the topics listed below included in your professional development activities during the last 12 months? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge of curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student assessment practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ICT skills for teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student behaviour and classroom management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School management and administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering for learner diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching cross curricular skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analysis and use of student assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher-parent/guardian co-operation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



16. Thinking of all your professional development activities during the last 12 months, *
did any of these have a positive impact on your teaching practice? **(If you
answer 'No' please skip to question number 18)**

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No



17. Thinking of the professional development activity that had the greatest positive impact on your teaching during the last 12 months, did it have any of the following characteristics?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
It built on my prior knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It adapted to my personal development needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It had a coherent structure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It appropriately focused on content needed to teach my subjects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provided opportunities for active learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provided opportunities for collaborative learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provided opportunities to practice/apply new ideas and knowledge in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It took place at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It involved most colleagues from my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It took place over an extended period of time (e.g. several weeks or longer).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**It focused on
innovation in my
teaching.**

☐☐☐

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18. For each of the areas listed below, please indicate the extent to which you currently need professional development? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	No need at present	Low level of need at present	Moderate level of need	High level of need
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge of curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student assessment practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ICT skills for teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student behaviour and classroom management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering for learner diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching cross curricular skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analysis and use of student assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Teacher-
parent/guardian
co-operation

19. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following presented barriers to your participation in professional development? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I do not have the pre-requisites (e.g. qualifications, experience, seniority).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development is too expensive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a lack of employer support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development conflicts with my work schedule.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not have time because of family responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is no relevant professional development offered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are no incentives for participating in professional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

General Teaching Practices



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Approximately how many hours do you spend on the following tasks during a typical calendar school week?

Questions
20-29

20. Individual planning or preparation of lessons either at school or out of school *

21. Team work and dialogue with colleagues within school *

22. Actual teaching *

23. Marking/correcting of student work *

24. Counselling students (including student supervision, mentoring, virtual counselling, career guidance and behaviour guidance) *

25. Participation in school management *

26. General administrative work (including communication, paperwork and other clerical duties) *



27. Professional development activities *

28. Communication and co-operation with parents or guardians *

29. Engaging in extracurricular activities (e.g. sports, clubs, cultural activities after school) *

30. Thinking about the teachers in your school, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Most teachers in my school strive to develop new ideas for teaching and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most teachers in my school are open to change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most teachers in my school search new ways to solve problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most teachers in my school provide practical support to each other for application of new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. On average, how often do you do the following in your school? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never	Once a year or less	2 - 4 times a year	5 - 10 times a year	1- 3 times a month	Once a week or more
Co-teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observe other teachers' classes and provide feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in joint activities across different classes and age groups (e.g. projects)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exchange teaching materials with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in discussions about the learning development of specific students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work with other teachers in your school to ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**student
progress**

**Attend team
conferences
(e.g. teacher
development)**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Take part in
collaborative
professional
learning**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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32. In your teaching, to what extent can you do the following? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all	To some extent	Quite a bit	A lot
Get students to believe they can do well in school work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help students value learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Craft good questions for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Control disruptive behaviour in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motivate students who show low interest in school work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make my expectations about student behaviour clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help students critically think	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get students to follow classroom rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calm a student who is disruptive or noisy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use a variety of assessment strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide alternative explanation, for example when students are confused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Vary instructional
strategies in my
classroom

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Support student
learning through use
of digital technology

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teaching
in the
Target
Class

In the following, the study wants to get into more detail about your teaching practices. Within this questionnaire, it cannot cover the whole scope of your teaching. Therefore, it uses an exemplary approach and focus on the teaching of one class.
The following questions ask you about a particular class that you teach. The class that we would like you to respond to is related to English reading that you teach. The questions below will be referred English reading as the target class.

33. We would like to understand the composition of the target class. Please estimate ^{*} the broad percentage of students who have the following characteristics.

Mark only one oval per row.

	None	1% to 10%	11% to 30%	31% to 60%	More than 60%
Students whose first language is different from the language of instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low academic achievers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students with special needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grass root students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students with behavioural problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. How many students are currently enrolled in this target class? *

For this target class, what percentage of class time is typically spent on each of the following activities.

Please note the total of question 35,36,37 should equal 100%.

35. Administrative tasks (e.g. recording attendance, collecting assignments, returning * assignments, following up on missing assignments)

36. Keeping order in the classroom *

37. Actual teaching and learning *



38. How strongly do you agree or disagree that you have control over the following areas of your planning and teaching in this target class? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Determining course content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting teaching methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing students' learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disciplining students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining the amount of homework to be assigned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



39. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this target class? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
When the lesson begins, I have to wait quite a long time for students to quieten down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students in this class take care to create a pleasant learning atmosphere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I lose quite a lot of time because of students interrupting the lesson..	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is much disruptive noise in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining the amount of homework to be assigned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After the lesson you take time to reflect on lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



40. Thinking about your teaching in the target class, how often do you do the following? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never	Almost never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
I present a summary of recently learned content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I set goals at the beginning of instruction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I explain what I expect the students to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I explain how old and new topics are related.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I present tasks for which there is no obvious solution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give tasks that require students to critically think.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have students work in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I ask students to decide on their own procedures for solving complex tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell students to follow classroom rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I tell students to listen to what I say.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I calm students who are disruptive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I refer to a problem from everyday life or work to demonstrate why new knowledge is useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use students mother tongue to teach English reading.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. How often do you use the following methods of assessing student learning in the target class? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never	Almost never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
I administer my own assessment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide written feedback on student work in addition to a mark.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I let students evaluate their own progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I observe students when working on particular tasks and provide immediate feedback.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Curriculum Understanding



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42. Please select which year the latest curriculum guideline update was issued by the Curriculum Development Council on behalf of the Education Bureau of Hong Kong.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 2020
☐ 2018
☐ 2017
☐ 2014
☐ Not sure

43. What are the Four Key Tasks announced in 2002 curriculum reform initiative? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Moral & Civic Education
☐ Values Education
☐ Self Directed Learning
☐ Reading to Learn
☐ Project Learning
☐ Information Technology for Interactive Learning
☐ Not sure

44. How many updates have been made to the reading curriculum since 2001? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ One
☐ Three
☐ Five
☐ Six
☐ Seven
☐ Not sure



45. From your perspective, what is the focus of a Reading lesson? *

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Google Forms



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Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Record Sheet and Questions

Date: ____/____/____ Interviewer: ____ File reference #: SSIT____

Face to face: Y/N Zoom: Y/N Start time: _____ End time: _____

Background questions

1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. How many years have you been teaching?
3. How many English reading lessons do you currently teach?
4. Is English reading properly promoted in your current school? Why or why not? Probe participants based on individual responses (agree or disagree with approach, objectives, outcomes)

Interpretation of curriculum

1. What is your understanding of the Curriculum Development Council guidelines for English reading? Probe participants based on individual responses (year, purpose, objectives, outcomes)
2. What is your school-based English reading curriculum? Probe participants based on individual responses (purpose, implementation, outcomes)
3. Are you keen on keeping updated with curriculum development changes? Why or why not?

Rationale and Beliefs in Learning and teaching reading

1. What should the focus of the reading lesson be? Probe participants based on individual responses (reasons, objectives)
2. Can you explain why it is necessary for ESL learners to learn English reading? Probe participants based on individual responses (reasons)

3. Can a positive reading culture be instilled in students with or without a developed reading habit? Probe participants based on individual responses (reasons)
4. What is the most important part of learning and teaching reading? Probe participants based on individual responses (reasons)
5. What are the qualities a reading teacher needs to be successful? Probe participants based on individual responses (reasons)



Appendix E: Student Focus Group Discussion Record Sheet and Prompts

Date: ____/____/____ Interviewer: ____ File reference #: FGD____

Face to face: Y/N Zoom: Y/N Start time: _____ End time: _____

Ice-breaking

1. Do you like English? Why or why not?
2. Tell each other about the last book you read. Prompt participants to ask questions to each other.
3. Do you like book sharing?
4. Do you like to read? Why or why not?

Group discussion prompts

1. Let us talk about what reading means to you. Prompt participants to interact with other
2. Let us talk about your reading teacher. Prompt students not to describe physically but how they teach.
3. Describe your reading lesson. Probe group based on conversation (purpose, implementation, outcomes)
4. Should reading be a subject at school? Why or why not? Prompt students to elaborate and interact with what others say.
5. Is reading for fun or passing exams? Probe participants based on conversation (reasons)
6. How will English reading help you now and in the future? Probe participants based on conversation (reasons)
7. What is the most important part of learning reading? Probe participants based on conversation (reasons)



Appendix F: Ethical Considerations

Consent Form and Information Sheet for SCHOOLS

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
English Language Department

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**An Evaluation of the Teaching of English Reading to Junior Secondary Students in Hong Kong:
Current Curriculum and Pedagogy**

My school hereby consents to participate in the captioned project supervised by Dr. Wong Mong Har Ruth and conducted by Kevin Thomas Rey, who are staff / students of English Language Department in The Education University of Hong Kong.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and may be published. However, our right to privacy will be retained, i.e., the personal details of my students'/teachers' will not be revealed.

The procedure as set out in the attached information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefits and risks involved. My students'/teachers' participation in the project are voluntary.

I acknowledge that we have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Signature:

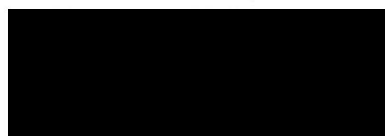
Name of Principal/Delegate*:

Post:

Name of School:

Date:

(* please delete as appropriate)



Mr. Leung Man Fai Mario

Principal

St. Francis Xavier's College

15-10-2021



INFORMATION SHEET

An Evaluation of the Teaching of English Reading to Junior Secondary Students in Hong Kong: Current Curriculum and Pedagogy

Your school is invited to participate in a project supervised by Dr. Wong Ming Har and conducted by Kevin Thomas Rey who are staff / students of English Language Education in The Education University of Hong Kong.

The introduction of the research

A) What does the research involve?

Research in this area is paramount because the standard of education in Hong Kong directly relates to reading proficiency. According to the Education Bureau of Hong Kong, the prominent key strategy is making better use of literary or imaginative texts to develop critical thinking and encourage free expression and creativity. It suggests this key strategy will help promote the positive reading culture, the desired outcome. Understanding the critical strategy and its implementation will identify the instructional practices, pedagogy, and understanding of teachers teaching ESL/EFL reading lessons.

B) Why were you chosen for this research?

The school was chosen for this research as the principal researcher is the NET of this school. This provides convenience sampling.

The methodology of the research

A) Describe how many participants you will include in this study

The sample size will be all form 1 students, approximately 120, and 20 English Teachers, 12 of which from your school.

B) Procedure of the research

Questionnaires will be provided to participants during their scheduled reading lessons in their respective classrooms. The researcher and a teaching assistant will administer the questionnaire process. Each student will be given verbal and written instructions about the purpose of the survey and how it will be administered. Each student will be allowed not to participate. Upon completion of instruction, each student will receive an iPad. The questionnaire will be categorized, and the students will be tasked to complete section A, including 24 questions related to (SELF) within a thirty-minute time frame. The questionnaire will be presented through google forms for ease of data collection. The teaching assistant will be present to answer any questions the students may have. If students have any questions, the teaching assistant will note them and provide them to the researcher. After completion, students will be directed to sign out and clear the history of the iPad for ethical reasoning and privacy, as the questionnaires will be anonymous. In subsequent reading lessons, the same procedures will be followed to complete sections 'B,' which includes 16 questions related to (SDRA), and 'C,' which includes 28 questions about (SPOT). Students who wish not to

participate will read their reader while waiting for the other students to complete. The entire survey should take approximately 30 minutes and the period of participation is just those 30 minutes.

C) Potential benefits (including compensation for participation)

The findings of this thesis will expose perceptions and challenges of students, instructional practices and beliefs of teachers, and opportunities to effectuate change in the current reading curricula.

Moreover, the data will provide expert suggestions which should create awareness amongst all stakeholders in the education sector of Hong Kong. This study will provide insight into problems, solutions, and suggestions to improve and revise the 'Reading to Learn' and 'Learn to Read' initiatives developed by the CDC. Above all else, it will help teachers develop the future society of Hong Kong into a positive reading culture.

Additionally, it will help develop productive interactive reading lessons, showing students their voices matter.

There is no compensation to participate.

The potential risks of the research (State explicitly if none)

There is explicitly no risk to any participant in this study in anyway whatsoever. As there is no risk there is no mitigation necessary to solve any risk.

Please understand that your students'/teachers' participation are voluntary. They have every right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All information related to your students'/teachers' will remain confidential, and will be identifiable by codes known only to the researcher.

How results will be potentially disseminated

The results of the data collected will be published in the researcher's thesis which will be submitted as a requirement for completion of his EdD. No personal information will be shared, as no personal information will be collected at any time.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Rey Kevin Thomas at telephone number [REDACTED] or their supervisor Dr. Wong Ming Har Ruth at telephone number 2948 8341.

If you or your child have/ has any concerns about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee by email at hrec@eduhk.hk or by mail to Research and Development Office, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Rey Kevin Thomas