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**TEACHERS' READING THEORIES AND PREFERRED
PRACTICES WITH VARIED PUPIL ABILITIES**

BY

R. Errington, B.Ed. (Hons).

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of**

Master of Education

at the Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University.

Date of Submission: 24.2.94

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine issues related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. A questionnaire was completed by 140 primary teachers in 10 schools. Teachers were asked to rate 6 bottom-up strategies and 5 top-down strategies according to how helpful they were for good, poor and very poor readers. They were also asked to order 6 components of the reading process so that their theoretical orientations to reading could be determined. In addition, teachers provided information about the demographic variables, grade taught, experience, and additional training. Eight teachers also completed follow-up interviews about the use of reading strategies in their classrooms.

Questionnaire results in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading revealed that 75 could be classified as Bottom-up teachers, 51 could be classified as Interactive teachers, and 14 could be classified as Top-down teachers. There were significant differences between teachers, in that Top-down and Interactive teachers preferred top-down strategies more than Bottom-up teachers. However, only Interactive teachers were completely consistent in their theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies as all groups tended to prefer combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. There was no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables, grade taught, experience, and additional training.

Questionnaire results in relation to teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers showed that they preferred the top-down strategies of shared book, reading to pupils, and language experience for all readers, and

significantly preferred top-down strategies more for good readers than for poor readers. Again there was a tendency to prefer a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies.

There was no significant relationship between either grade taught by teachers or teachers' experience and the strategies they preferred for good readers. However, teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were more inclined than teachers with 21 or more years experience to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. Similarly, when the variable "additional training" was examined, teachers in the "reading course" group were more inclined than teachers in the "no reading" group to prefer top-down strategies for all readers.

Interviews supported most of these findings and gave further insight into the reasons for teachers' strategy choices. In addition, they suggested some differences between the strategies teachers said they preferred and the strategies teachers said they used. Sometimes influences within the school resulted in teachers being unable to implement their preferred strategies.

Results of the present study are discussed in relation to the literature on which the study was based, and implications for education practice and future research are outlined.

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Signature

Date...24th...February...1994.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

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Introduction

The teaching of reading is vitally important, for in the teaching of reading, primary teachers face the challenging task of producing readers who are able to function effectively as members of a literate society. However, the teaching of reading is also a contentious issue. Debate surrounds the effectiveness of the reading strategies that teachers select. Moreover, it is claimed by Cambourne (1992) that use of certain strategies does not merely fail to promote pupils' literacy development, but actively mitigates against pupils' reading progress. Therefore, primary teachers are charged with a challenging task which is both contentious and vitally important to society.

An important consideration in teachers' choice of strategy, is the theoretical basis which underpins their reading practice. DeFord (1979) refers to this reading base as "teachers' theoretical orientations to reading". Although most studies indicate that teachers' theoretical orientations to reading tend to be consistent with their choice of preferred practices, reports on the strength of this relationship vary. In addition, when the relationship between theory and practice is considered, it seems that few studies have included pupil ability as a variable in their research design. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate issues related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers.

The operational definitions which apply to the demographic variables, theories and models, strategies, and pupil ability in this study are now outlined.

Demographic variables

Lower primary teachers: teachers in Victoria who teach any grade, or combination of grades, from Prep to Grade 2.

Upper primary teachers: teachers in Victoria who teach any grade, or combination of grades, from Grades 3 to 6.

Grade taught: the main class which the teacher was teaching during the year in which research data was collected.

Length of teaching experience: the number of years taught after initial qualification as a primary teacher.

Additional training: training in the teaching of reading undertaken as a qualified teacher.

Theories and models

Reading process: the relationship between the components of the reading process which results in understanding by the reader of what has been read.

Reading component: an identifiable part of the reading process.

Reading theory: an assumption about how the reading process operates.

Reading model: a representation of reading theory which attempts to show how specific component parts of the reading process relate to each other.

Bottom-up models of reading: models of reading which are text-based and emphasise a sequenced hierarchy.

Top-down models of reading: models of reading which are reader-based and emphasise pupils' prior knowledge, language acquisition and meaning.

Interactive models of reading: models of reading which emphasise the interaction between the text and the reader to produce meaning.

Teachers' theoretical orientations to reading: models of the reading process which most aptly fit the teachers' own views of the reading process.

Bottom-up teacher: a teacher who has a bottom-up orientation to reading.

Top-down teacher: a teacher who has a top-down orientation to reading.

Interactive teacher: a teacher who has an interactive orientation to reading.

Strategies

Reading strategies: methods which a teacher selects to teach reading to a class, group, or individual pupil.

Bottom-up strategies: teachers' strategies which emphasise oral reading by the child. There may be an emphasis on the accurate decoding of text and developing skills in an hierarchical manner.

Top-down strategies: teachers' strategies which emphasise the use of complete texts, modelling the reading process and meaning.

Interactive strategies: teachers' strategies which combine bottom-up and top-down reading strategies.

Pupil ability

Good readers: pupils who experience few reading difficulties or pupils whose reading age is the same or higher than their chronological age.

Poor readers: pupils who are experiencing some difficulties in reading or pupils whose reading age is at least one year below their chronological age.

Very poor readers: pupils who have severe reading problems, or pupils whose reading age is at least three years below their chronological age.

The present study will investigate issues related to teachers' preferred strategies. First, teachers' successful strategies will be identified. Since teachers choose their strategies within a classroom context which is likely to include pupils of different abilities, the question arises as to which strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers. Moreover, whether the strategies teachers prefer are the same for all readers, or different for readers of different abilities also will be investigated. In addition, the relationship between teachers' successful strategies and demographic variables will be examined, in particular the variables grade taught, length of teaching experience and additional training in the teaching of reading.

The present study also will investigate issues related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. Teachers will be identified in accordance with their theoretical orientations to reading. Many previous studies have identified teachers who have bottom-up or top-down orientations, but the present study will identify teachers who have bottom-up, top-down or interactive orientations to reading. Further, previous research suggests a relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. However, there is a difference amongst previous studies in results concerning the strength of this relationship and few studies have included pupil ability as a variable in their research design. Therefore, the present study will examine the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. Finally, demographic variables will be examined in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as well as in relation to teachers' preferred strategies.

Chapter 2 contains an examination of the literature. This includes: bottom-up, top-down and interactive models of reading and related strategies; teachers' theoretical orientations to reading; pupil ability and strategies for good, poor and very poor readers; possible causes of reading failure; and demographic variables related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. Issues arising from this literature are then discussed in relation to the study and six research questions are presented.

Chapter 3 presents the study's research methodology and procedures. Survey methodology is adopted and subsequently construction of the questionnaire and interview schedule are described. The questionnaire includes demographic variables, successful strategies for good, poor and very poor readers, and six components of the reading process which teachers are asked to order sequentially. In the interview schedule, questions relating to the reading strategies teachers use in the classroom are included. Then the piloting of the questionnaire and interview schedule are discussed. Finally, the procedures used to administer the questionnaire and interviews are presented.

In Chapter 4, findings from the questionnaire and interviews in relation to teachers' strategies are presented. Each finding addresses a specific research question which is then discussed in relation to the literature. First, teachers' positive responses to individual strategies are presented in order to determine teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. This finding is then supplemented with discussion from selected interviews about the strategies teachers say they use in their classrooms. Second, the results of a one-way analysis of variance with repeated measures is analysed and discussed in

order to determine if teachers significantly change their strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. This also is supplemented with discussion from selected interviews with teachers. Finally, correlational analyses and one-way analyses of variance are presented in order to determine the relationship between teachers' preferred strategies and the demographic variables. These are supplemented by discussions from interviews with teachers who belong to the different demographic groupings.

Chapter 5 presents questionnaire, and some interview results, in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. Again, findings address specific research questions which are then discussed in relation to the literature. First, the most popular ordering of the reading components and distribution of teachers in accordance with their theoretical orientations to reading is described. Second, findings from one-way analyses of variance are presented to indicate any significant differences between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. Third, results from a one-way analysis of variance and the two Chi squares are presented to determine any significant differences between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables. Again, this is supplemented with discussions of interviews from teachers grouped by grade, experience and additional training.

Finally, in Chapter 6 the findings of the present study are summarised and discussed in relation to issues which arose in Chapters 4 and 5. Limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations for teaching, inservice courses and future research presented.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews the literature in relation to areas investigated by the present study. These include teachers' theoretical orientations to reading, as well as teachers' reading strategies for pupils who differ according to their reading ability. In addition, demographic variables are also examined in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and reading strategy choices.

2.1 Theories and Models of the Reading Process

According to Kamil and Pearson (1979) and Sloan and Whitehead (1986) theories, on which teachers' theoretical orientations to reading are based, are speculative assumptions which attempt to explain an "occurrence" or "set of phenomena". Further, they state that often theories are represented by models which show the interrelationship between the influences and component parts of the theory in order to indicate how the system operates. However, most theories of reading seem to be quite complex so that the models which attempt to explain theory only tend to include the most important influences and components. As a consequence, several models have been produced to depict different aspects of the same theory.

Various reading models have been proposed in order to show how the reading process might operate in practice. According to Frank Smith (1971) the main components of models are visual and non-visual information. He claims that visual information is text-based and includes the print upon the page, while non-visual information is reader-based and includes the reader's "prior knowledge"

about meaning (semantic knowledge), language structure (syntactic knowledge) and letter sequence information (grapho-phonetic knowledge). Models of the reading process have been grouped in accordance with the direction in which visual and non-visual information flows during the reading process. Three of the most important models are labelled 'bottom-up', 'top-down' and 'interactive' (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). They are described and discussed in the following section.

2.1.1 Models of the Reading Process

Bottom-up models

According to Bryant and Bradley (1985), the reading process in bottom-up models "starts at the 'bottom' with the cues offered by the word which filter through to the brain which is the 'top'" (p.77). Bottom-up models of the reading process are proposed in the work of Gough (1972) and LaBerge and Samuels (1974). Gough claims that the reader looks at the print upon the page, identifies the marks of print as letters of the alphabet and then matches these letters with their correct pronunciation from stored memory. Thus in this model, the reader first deciphers parts of words and then puts them together to make meaning.

Similarly, the model by LaBerge and Samuels begins the reading process with the print upon the page. However, in this model the reader may identify print directly as individual letters, as clusters of letters which form spelling patterns, or as words. Therefore, in LaBerge and Samuels' model the sequence can be altered slightly with the option of word recognition without recourse to decoding. This type of model has been labelled as a dual-route model of lexical access and is described in detail by Crowder and Wagner (1992).

Kamil and Pearson (1979), Bryant and Bradley (1985) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) claim that bottom-up models emphasise reading as mainly a visual process in which the reader successfully translates the text. They state that bottom-up models also reflect a sequenced hierarchy in which the reading process is composed of small language units (letters, graphemes and phonemes), which combine to create larger language units (words or phrases), which in turn produce sentences and paragraphs.

Adams (1982) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) have criticised bottom-up models of reading. Adams suggests that bottom-up models of reading are limited because there is an over reliance on information provided by the text (visual) at the expense of information provided by the reader's prior knowledge (non-visual information). Furthermore, she claims that although bottom-up models of reading explain the reading process for beginning and poor readers, they do not adequately explain the reading process for good readers. Moreover, Lipson and Wixson add that bottom-up models of reading unduly emphasise the decoding of text, give the reader a relatively passive role, and apparently postpone meaning until larger language units are assembled. These perceived limitations have led to the development of alternative "top-down" models of reading. Writers, who support top-down models, include Smith (1971), Goodman (1986), Latham and Sloan (1987), and Cambourne (1988).

Top-down models

According to Jorm (1985), the reading process begins in top-down models at the 'top', in the mind of the reader, before proceeding to the cues offered by the print on the page at the 'bottom'. Therefore, top-down models emphasise reading as a mainly non-visual process as "the reader uses his knowledge of the

world, his knowledge of language, his knowledge of print to anticipate what information lies on the page being read" (p.23). It seems that only after readers' prior knowledge has been accessed is print then sampled to confirm the readers' assumptions about the author's intended meaning. Thus, Frank Smith (1971) argues that fluent readers exploit the meaning (semantic) and language structure (syntactic) constraints of text as much as possible, while relying on the letter sequence information (graphemic information) in text as little as possible.

Top-down models are based on the work of psycholinguists such as Frank Smith (1971, 1975) and Ken Goodman (1965). Goodman conducted a study which compared the accuracy with which pupils of average reading ability, in Grades 1, 2 and 3, read words in context and in isolation. Goodman's analysis of their oral reading showed that when they read words in context rather than in isolation, word accuracy improved by 60% to 80%. He attributed the improvement to pupils using their knowledge of spoken language to anticipate correctly the content of the text. Subsequently, Goodman based his models of the reading process on the assumption that written and oral language are parallel language systems.

The results of studies by Kolars (1969) and Clay and Imlach (1971) also suggest that context is important in the reading process. Kolars' bilingual subjects were able to understand the sentences they read alternately in English and French, but were unable to recall which language addressed particular points. Thus, Kolars concluded that readers are concerned mainly with the transfer of information rather than with the print details which give that information. Similarly, Clay and Imlach, in a study of the relationship between reading ability and the use of

pauses during text readings, concluded that the context of a sentence or story is important in fluent reading.

However, Nicholson & Hill (1985) and Nicholson (1986) are critical of Goodman's (1965) study. Their criticisms have focused on apparent flaws in the original research design such as the "practice effect" of reading the same words twice, and Goodman's choice of "reading materials". Nicholson and Hill (1985) replicated Goodman's study, but modified the content and presentation of reading materials in order to control for the original design flaws. They failed to confirm Goodman's results as the children in their study "were able to recognize the target words no better in normal story context than in isolation" (p.187). They further modified the study by selecting a sample of good and poor readers rather than average readers. Yet again, they reported that there was no improvement in word accuracy. As they were unable to replicate Goodman's findings they conclude that his results were erroneous due to flaws in the original research design.

Andrews (1992) also is critical of top-down models. She claims that assumptions that the reading process is the same for good and beginning readers, and that spoken and written language develop in similar ways, contribute to the top-down models' "operational inadequacies". She contends that top-down models explain the reading process for good readers, but are inadequate at explaining the process for beginning and poor readers. Moreover, she maintains that fundamental differences exist between spoken and written language to the extent that written language is dependent on decoding. Such criticisms have prompted Adams (1990) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) to support "interactive" reading models.

Interactive models

Interactive models of reading derive from work by writers such as Rosenblatt (1978, 1985), Shanklin (1982) and Rumelhart (1985). These models combine aspects of both bottom-up and top-down reading models in order to give a more comprehensive explanation of how the reading process operates.

The central feature of Rumelhart's model is the "pattern synthesizer" where the reader processes visual and non-visual information. The model works by the reader processing "critical features" of letter sequence information in the pattern synthesizer where all available information about language structure (syntactic knowledge) and meaning (semantic knowledge) are stored. Rumelhart then claims that, "all the various sources of knowledge, both sensory [visual] and non sensory [non-visual], come together at one place and the reading process is the product of the simultaneous joint application of all the knowledge sources" (p.735).

To explain more fully how interactive models of reading operate, Kamil and Pearson (1979) make a useful analogy in which reading is compared to a committee meeting. In this analogy, each committee member has a specific job and negotiates with other members to produce an effective solution. The times when individual committee members are active or passive depend on factors such as reader familiarity with content of text, language structure and letter sequence information. For instance, problems with letter sequence information may stimulate a committee member in the visual information department to negotiate in order to decode this information, whereas problems with meaning may stimulate a committee member in the non-visual department to negotiate in order to understand the text.

Interactive models differ from bottom-up and top-down models of reading in relation to the direction in which reading information is assumed to flow. In bottom-up models the reading process begins with the text; in top-down models the reading process begins with the reader; and in interactive models the reading process begins with the text and reader together as reading is the product of simultaneous interaction, in which "all relevant processes are simultaneously active and interactive" (Adams & Bruck, 1993, p.115). Gove (1983) and Sloan and Whitehead (1986) also describe the flow of information in interactive models as a parallel process.

Lipson and Wixson (1991) suggest that interactive models have several characteristics. The first is that reading is a cognitive process in which visual and non-visual input require the reader to constantly revise decisions about the text. Second, meaning is not simply in the text or in the reader, but results from the reader's interpretation of the text in accordance with prior knowledge. Third, reading proceeds from whole to part and from part to whole, in that reading may begin with assumptions about text meaning, which are confirmed by sampling cues from text, which in turn may lead to a reappraisal of the author's intent. Fourth, the reading task varies in accordance with the difficulty of the text and the ability of the reader.

Gove (1983) and Sloan and Whitehead (1986) state that interactive and top-down models of reading both emphasise meaning and the reader's active participation in the reading process. Moreover, Sloan and Whitehead state that interactive models reflect a "perspective within the top-down view" (p.7). Furthermore, such writers maintain that models of reading can be organised into two main groups which are text-based (bottom-up) or reader-based (top-down and

interactive). However, Adams (1990) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) suggest that interactive and top-down models belong to separate groups, in that the interactive models may be distinguished from others in that interactive models are the only ones which give equal weight to visual and non-visual components in the reading process. Therefore, although similarities between interactive and top-down models are acknowledged, it seems that interactive and top-down models belong to separate groups.

Summary

Three models of the reading process have been examined. Bottom-up models emphasise visual information, assume that meaning is contained mainly in the text, and explain the reading process for beginning readers. In contrast, top-down models emphasise non-visual information, assume that meaning resides mainly within the reader, and explain the reading process for good readers. Further, interactive models combine characteristics of bottom-up and top-down models so that the emphasis on visual or non-visual information depends on the difficulty of the reading task and the ability of the pupils. The place of these models in teachers' theoretical orientations to reading are described in the following section.

2.1.2 Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

The term "teachers' theoretical orientations to reading" involves teachers' beliefs about the reading process which reflect their choice of reading model (DeFord, 1979). The literature indicates several ways in which teachers' bottom-up, top-down or interactive orientation to reading may be determined.

The most popular way of determining teachers' theoretical orientations to reading has been to infer theoretical orientations from the reading strategies teachers indicate they prefer or use. The questionnaires Propositions About Reading Inventory (PARI) by Duffy and Metheny (1979) and Theoretical Orientations to Reading Profile (TORP) by DeFord (1979) are based on teachers' top-down and bottom-up beliefs about instructional practices. Further, these questionnaires have been used frequently in studies which have investigated teachers' theoretical orientations to reading (Bawden, Buike & Duffy, 1979; Gove, 1981; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Rupley & Logan, 1986; Richards, Gipe & Thompson, 1987).

Assumptions inherent in PARI and TORP, that theoretical orientations to reading may be inferred from practice, are supported by the literature. Kamil and Pearson (1979), Gove (1983) and Mosenthal (1984) claim that teachers' classroom practices tend to be consistent with their theoretical orientations to reading. Thus, teachers who prefer reading strategies which focus on letter sequence information are likely to have a bottom-up orientation to reading; teachers who prefer strategies which focus on using pupils' prior knowledge are likely to have a top-down orientation to reading; while teachers who prefer strategies which focus on both letter sequence information and pupils' prior knowledge are likely to have an interactive orientation to reading. Cambourne (1988) has stated that this is held to be true even if teachers are unaware of their beliefs about the theory of the reading process. When this happens, teachers are said to maintain implicit theoretical orientations to reading even though they may find it difficult to articulate these beliefs (Tovey, 1983).

There also are claims that the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and instructional practices may be more tenuous than

initially supposed by some writers. As Tripp (1987) states, differences often exist between the theories teachers espouse and the practices teachers use daily in classrooms. This contention is supported by Duffy and Anderson (1984) who report that the relationship between teachers' theory and practice is not strong. They found that some teachers acted according to impulse and intuition, reacting more to contextual factors such as pupil behaviour, pupil ability, organisational problems and school policy than to their theoretical orientations to reading.

Another way of determining teachers' theoretical orientations to reading is based on statements of the reading process. A study by Kinzer and Carrick (1986) presented teachers with three sets of statements designed to explain "how reading happens" from either a top-down, bottom-up or interactive orientation to reading. Teachers were asked to select the statements which most closely explained their view of the reading process. Subsequently, teachers were grouped in accordance with the selections they made as having either a top-down, bottom-up or interactive orientation to reading. However, it was difficult for the teachers to distinguish between Kinzer and Carrick's examples of top-down and interactive statements of the reading process and it is possible that the lack of clear examples may have confused some teachers.

A third way of determining teachers' theoretical orientations to reading could be based on the order in which component parts of the reading process are sequenced. Carroll (1978), Jorm (1985) and Duffy and Roehler (1986) have described different orientations to reading by differential ordering of component parts of the reading process. For Duffy and Roehler the reading process begins with prior knowledge as the first component followed by letter knowledge, word recognition, meaning and revision of prediction. The ordered sequences by

Carroll and Jorm aim to identify bottom-up models of reading and so begin the reading process with a bottom-up reading component. For instance, Jorm begins with the print on the page, followed by word recognition, decoding and then recourse to memory before the whole process is repeated. This method of identifying theoretical orientations to reading would support Kamil and Pearson's (1979) view that different types of reading models can be distinguished from each other by the ways in which the reading process is initiated.

It seems that teachers' theoretical orientations to reading can be determined in various ways. They can be inferred from questions about practice, but this relies on relationships between theory and practice being consistently strong enough to warrant the validity of this assumption. They can be determined by asking teachers to select explanations of how reading happens, but there have been difficulties in defining top-down and interactive explanations of reading which effectively distinguish between them. Finally, teachers' theoretical orientations to reading may also be determined by listing the component parts of the reading process in a particular sequential order. Such a sequential ordering of reading components does not seem to have been used, as yet, in order to determine teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

Few studies have reported on teacher distribution in accordance with their theoretical orientations to reading. Kinzer and Carrick (1986), report that of the 27 lower primary teachers who returned their postal questionnaires, there were no teachers with a bottom-up orientation to reading, 16 teachers with a top-down orientation to reading, and 11 teachers with an interactive orientation to reading.

Gove (1983) also stated that she found few Interactive teachers, but gave no further details of teacher distribution.

Sloan and Whitehead (1986), Cambourne (1988) and Cairney (1990) promote the view that most Australian teachers tend to have a bottom-up orientation to reading. The popularity of the bottom-up orientation may be attributed to its logical appeal (Goodman, 1986) and common sense view (Wray, 1988), in that reading seems to be what happens when it is viewed from the surface (Sloan & Whitehead, 1986). Moreover, Johnson and Quorn (1981) have noted that bottom-up models are popular because they tend to confirm teachers' intuitive notions of the reading process. However, only anecdotal evidence seems to support the view that Australian teachers tend to have a bottom-up orientation to reading.

Summary

The literature indicates that teachers' theoretical orientations to reading may be determined in several ways. As has been discussed, there seem to be limitations to methods which infer teachers' theoretical orientations to reading from preferred strategies and to methods which ask teachers to select statements about the reading process. Alternatively, determining teachers' theoretical orientations to reading from an ordered list of components in the reading process seems to have merit as it is based on the direction in which information flows during the reading process. As such this might be an appropriate method to determine teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

The literature also indicates that few studies seem to have reported on the distribution of teachers in accordance with their theoretical orientations to

reading. Such knowledge appears to be important in order to understand the extent to which different orientations have the potential to influence groups of teachers. Moreover, in the studies which have been reviewed here, only Gove (1983) and Kinzer and Carrick (1986) in the US, categorise teachers according to their top-down, bottom-up, and interactive orientations to reading. Therefore, there appears to be a need to investigate the distribution of Australian teachers according to top-down, bottom-up and interactive orientations to reading.

2.2 Models of the Reading Process and Teachers' Reading Strategies

It has been seen that Kamil and Pearson (1979) have stated that bottom-up, top-down and interactive models of the reading process have implications for educational practice, in particular for reading strategies. Thus, bottom-up reading strategies tend to focus on providing pupils with the means to decipher text, particularly in the early stages, while top-down reading strategies tend to focus on using pupils' prior knowledge of language, and interactive reading strategies tend to focus on both the text and pupils' prior knowledge. Some of these reading strategies are described and discussed in the following section.

2.2.1 Reading Strategies

Bottom-up reading strategies

Lipson and Wixson (1991) state that much traditional bottom-up instruction is based on the assumption that the reading process can be separated into its component parts. These parts are then sequenced from easy to difficult, with the "easy" more frequent pieces of reading information being taught before the more "difficult" less frequent pieces of information (Mosenthal, 1984). Thus, according to Cambourne (1988), pieces of reading information tend to be taught

in isolation and consequently, suitable strategies incorporate repetition and rote learning techniques in order to help pupils memorise and recall facts.

Bottom-up strategies which incorporate techniques of repetition and rote learning include phonics, word study and flash cards. Phonics strategies, (sometimes referred to as "cracking the code"), explicitly teach pupils the relationship between the sound units and the visual units of written language (Banton-Smith, 1971). Related to this strategy, word study promotes the analysis of word parts in more detail beyond the letter-sound relationships and enables pupils quickly and accurately to match their responses to letter groupings within words. In contrast, the strategy of flash cards is not concerned with letter parts, but with the accurate recall of words on sight, out of context. Moreover, flash cards are used to increase the reader's access to phonically irregular words which cannot be blended e.g. 'said', 'one'. Collectively, the strategies of phonics, word study and flash cards are sometimes referred to as 'skills' based strategies because it is claimed that they promote the basic abilities needed to decipher text (Bloomfield, 1942; Moore, 1963; Leigh, 1980).

Another group of bottom-up strategies are used to monitor pupils' oral reading progress (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson; 1985). One common oral reading practice involves pupils reading assigned pieces of text to the teacher on a one-to-one basis (Cunningham, 1985). Another oral reading practice, described by Hill (1983) and Anderson et al. (1985), is the strategy of group oral reading or "round robin" reading. Group oral reading is used widely and involves pupils taking turns to read orally from the same text (Duffy, 1983). Kamil and Pearson (1979) claim that these are bottom-up strategies because they emphasise pronunciation and the accurate reproduction of text.

A further bottom-up strategy is that of direct instruction. This strategy does not exclusively focus on word parts, but instead focuses on the way in which reading is taught. Duffy and Roehler (1986) describe this strategy as the teacher conveying information to pupils in a direct, purposeful manner to ensure that pupils successfully interpret the information as intended by the teacher. Also, direct instruction packages described in DISTAR programmes incorporate the teaching of skills as part of an hierarchical sequence (Engelmann & Bruner, 1974).

Top-down reading strategies

Top-down reading strategies are based on the assumption that reading is a language process with meaning located in the reader (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Oral and written language are seen as parallel forms which develop under similar conditions, such as language filled environments where language experiences occur in meaningful contexts among adults who accept the attempts of the novice to use language (Goodman, 1986; Cairney, 1990; Smith & Alcock, 1990).

Goodman suggests that written language differs from oral language in the use of the alphabetic code to understand text successfully. However, he claims that if language occurs in contexts which are meaningful because they are "whole" then learners can infer the rules of language from their experiences in using language. Practices reflecting this top-down view often are termed "whole language" and promote the use of whole texts (storybooks), pupils' self-directed exploration of print, and the teacher demonstrating or modelling the reading process.

One popular strategy adopted for top-down use consists of reading texts aloud to pupils (New Zealand Education Department, 1985; Goodman, 1986; Sloan &

Latham, 1989). This strategy uses whole texts, defined as "connected discourse in the context of some speech or literary event" in the form of storybooks (Goodman, 1986, p.28). This complies with the top-down view that language is more meaningful when learned from whole to part rather than from part to whole.

Shared book is a top-down reading strategy which evolved from practices consistent with top-down reading models (Holdaway, 1979; New Zealand Education Department, 1985). This strategy often incorporates Big Books which Rhodes and Shannon (1982) note are enlarged versions of well known stories either commercially bought or written by the teacher and pupils. Holdaway explains that in the strategy of shared book, teacher and pupil, or pupils together, orally share the book and discuss the text.

Strategies which incorporate silent reading emphasise fluent reading for meaning and thus may be seen as top-down strategies. According to Sloan and Latham (1989), silent reading usually involves pupils silently scanning the text before they reread and search for meaning. Sloan and Latham outlined two strategies which incorporate silent reading; these are directed silent reading and individualised reading. In the strategy of individualised reading pupils silently read texts they have selected for later discussion, while in the strategy of directed silent reading pupils silently scan text chosen by the teacher to answer questions posed by the teacher.

Another strategy adopted for top-down use, because it focuses on meaning as the natural mode of language learning, is language experience (Goodman, 1986; Lipson & Wixson, 1991; Andrews, 1992). In this strategy, Goodman states that

the pupils' own language is written down by either the teacher or pupil before it is then reread as text. Thus, this strategy does not separate language into discrete parts, but integrates the four language modes of reading, writing, listening and speaking as the teacher and pupil work together (Mosenthal, 1984).

Interactive reading strategies

According to Itzkoff (1986) and Lipson and Wixson (1991), interactive models of the reading process have produced few interactive reading strategies. Instead, it is suggested that advocates of interactive instruction use combinations of bottom-up and top-down strategies. Moreover, Lipson and Wixson suggest that appropriate combinations may include strategies such as sustained silent reading, dialogue journals, dictated stories, repeated readings, reciprocal teaching and K-W-L (p.471). These strategies are termed "high utility" and are flexible enough to adapt to changes in the reading situation and in pupils' requirements and abilities. This view is supported in a study by Kinzer and Carrick (1986) where interactive instructional practices were characterised by "differential acquisition", that is teachers changing instruction for pupils of different abilities.

Lipson and Wixson further suggest that the composition of strategies for interactive instruction should reflect a balance which includes "rich literary contexts, as well as good explicit instruction regarding the reading process" (p.613). Such a balance is suggested in recommended reading programmes which include the strategies of phonics, shared book and language experience with a literature-based view of reading (Adams, 1990; Clay, 1991). It can be seen that this particular combination, and the list of "high utility" strategies by Lipson and Wixson, contain more top-down than bottom-up strategies. This

seems to support Gove's (1983) claim that interactive reading programmes are likely to include many top-down strategies.

Summary

In this section bottom-up, top-down and interactive reading strategies have been identified. The bottom-up strategies of phonics, word study, flash cards, hearing pupils read, group oral reading and direct instruction focus on the identification of whole words or word parts, the monitoring of oral reading, and structured instruction. The top-down strategies of reading to pupils, language experience, shared book, individualised reading and directed silent reading focus on reading for meaning, modelling the reading process and using pupils' prior knowledge. There appear to be few "purely" interactive strategies, since strategies consistent with interactive orientations to reading tend to be a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategies.

2.2.2 Teachers' Reading Strategies and Theoretical Orientations to Reading

It is claimed that knowledge of reading models is important for any practising teacher (Kamil & Pearson, 1979; Parker, 1985; Lipson & Wixson, 1991). This claim is based on the assumption that teachers have theoretical orientations to reading which, whether implicit or explicit, are likely to influence reading strategy choices. Moreover, it is suggested that informed teachers who are aware of their own theoretical orientation to reading are likely to be effective when they are able to "recognise consistencies and inconsistencies between their goals for reading instruction and the means they use to achieve those goals" (Kamil & Pearson, 1979, p.10).

Teachers such as McLaughlin (1981) and Waterland (1985) contend that models of reading are important because such knowledge informs their instructional practices. Alternatively, Ridley (1990) reports that while primary teachers tended to accept the practices in a whole-language approach, they lacked interest in the theory which underpinned the practice. Watson and Badenhop (1992) explain this disregard for theory by claiming that teachers are "people of action" and so have little time to reflect on theory. In addition, the few studies which have investigated the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies or instructional practices present inconsistent findings.

The Conceptions of Reading Project was one of the first studies to investigate the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their instructional practices (Duffy & Metheny, 1979). In this study, the questionnaire, Propositions About Reading Inventory, (PARI), identified teachers according to their theoretical orientations to reading. Subsequently, 23 primary teachers with strong top-down or bottom-up theoretical orientations to reading were selected, interviewed and observed as they were teaching.

Another report of this study showed that 19 of these 23 teachers maintained instructional practices consistent with their theoretical orientations to reading (Bawden et al., 1979). That is, teachers with top-down orientations to reading used and promoted top-down practices, while teachers with bottom-up orientations to reading used and promoted bottom-up practices. However, they also reported that 15 of the 23 teachers made statements which included "non-reading" beliefs. Commenting on this study, Duffy and Anderson (1984) noted that these statements related to the context of teaching and included classroom

management, routine, teacher-pupil relationships and pupil behaviour. Moreover, 7 of the 15 teachers interviewed stated that they were influenced more by their non-reading beliefs than by their theoretical orientations to reading. Therefore, it seems that the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and instructional practices is to some extent influenced by factors other than reading theory.

Other studies also have reported a relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their preferred practices. Gove (1981) used DeFord's (1979) questionnaire, TORP, to select 20 lower primary teachers according to their theoretical orientations to reading. Results of TORP and interviews supported previous findings, in that teachers with bottom-up orientations to reading emphasised bottom-up strategies, while teachers with top-down orientations to reading emphasised top-down strategies. Similar results also were reported by Rupley and Logan (1985) who administered PARI and a multiple choice test to 100 primary teachers.

Other studies have not been as conclusive in their findings. Hoffman and Kugle (1982) found no relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the strategy of hearing pupils read. Moreover, a study by Richards, Gipe and Thompson (1987) which used TORP and other measures found a relationship between one type of bottom-up orientation to reading and phonic bottom-up strategies, but no relationships between other bottom-up and top-down orientations to reading and instructional practices.

Kinzer and Carrick (1986) were critical of studies which used PARI or TORP and claimed that the items in these questionnaires related to practice more than to

theories of the reading process. Therefore, as previously stated, they asked lower primary teachers to select either top-down, bottom-up or interactive statements intended to explain the reading process (how reading takes place). Similarly, they asked teachers to select statements about preferred reading practice (how reading develops) and to select lesson plans designed to teach either vocabulary, syllabification or comprehension (how reading should be taught).

As no teacher in the sample selected a bottom-up explanation of the reading process, it was apparent that only teachers with top-down or interactive orientations to reading were included in the study. It was found that teachers who chose top-down explanations of the reading process were likely to choose top-down explanations of reading practice and top-down lesson plans. On the other hand, teachers who chose interactive explanations of the reading process did not choose lesson plans consistent with this explanation. Therefore, teachers with top-down orientations to reading were consistent in their beliefs about practice and choice of lessons, while teachers with interactive orientations to reading were not consistent either in their beliefs about practice or in choice of lesson plans. It may be that teachers with interactive orientations to reading appeared inconsistent because they were eclectic and chose strategies without recourse to theory.

Summary

The studies by Rupley and Logan (1985), Kinzer and Carrick (1986) and Richards et al. (1987) incorporated paper and pencil tests to measure teachers' preferred strategies. Alternatively, studies such as The Conceptions of Reading Project and Hoffman and Kugle's (1982) study, observed the teaching of

lessons and thus measured the strategies teachers' actually used. In addition, Gove (1981) used both a questionnaire and interviews and was in a position to compare teachers' reactions to the strategies suggested by the questionnaire with the strategies teachers said they used in their classrooms. It seems that such differences are important when measures for inclusion in such studies are considered.

Few studies seem to have investigated the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their preferred strategies. Findings among these few studies have been inconsistent, in that some studies found a relationship between teachers' theory and practice (Bawden et al., 1979; Gove, 1981; Rupley & Logan, 1985), while other studies have reported no relationship (Hoffman & Kugle; 1982) or a relationship in which only one group of teachers was found to be consistent in beliefs and practice (Kinzer & Carrick, 1986; Richards et al., 1987). Moreover, few studies examined the relationship between teachers with interactive orientations to reading and their preferred strategies. Although there are differences in these findings, such studies are important in order to ascertain if teachers make decisions about the teaching of reading in accordance with their theoretical orientations to reading. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the degree of consistency between teachers with top-down, bottom-up or interactive orientations to reading and their preferred strategies. Furthermore, the studies reviewed have not included the variable of pupil ability. Yet the success of a strategy can only be measured against pupils' requirements. There is, therefore, a need to investigate further teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies in relation to pupils of different abilities.

2.3 Teachers' Reading Strategies and Pupil Ability

2.3.1 Pupil Ability

Primary teachers are required to provide suitable reading strategies for all pupils in their grades (Curriculum Branch of Western Australia, 1985; Victorian Education Department, 1988). The range of reading ability in a class is likely to include pupils proficient in reading as well as pupils who are less proficient. Sometimes pupils are given the labels of "successful" or "unsuccessful" reader (Lowe & Walters, 1991), "experienced" or "inexperienced" reader (Martin, 1990; Smith & Alcock, 1990), and "good" or "poor" reader (Cracker & Richardson, 1981; Waierland, 1985).

According to Poplin (1981), Jorm (1985) and Forness (1988) the literature on the whole tends not to distinguish between subgroups of poor readers. Many studies therefore tend to compare only good and poor readers. The results of many of these studies suggest that the most important distinguishing feature between the two groups is the ability to decode text (Badenhop, 1992; Dallas, 1992). Stanovich (1980, 1986) found that good and poor readers differed significantly in their ability to recognise nonsense words in isolation, while another comparative study by Foreman and Liberman (1988) found that good readers in Grade 1 were superior to poor readers in decoding text.

On the other hand, some studies have distinguished between good and poor readers in terms of comprehension. For instance, in a study by Guthrie (1973) younger "normal" readers (7-year-olds) and older poor readers (10-year-olds) were matched according to word recognition ability, and then were given comprehension tests. Results showed that the older poor readers scored significantly lower than the younger normal readers. This may indicate that poor

readers suffer from a comprehension deficit. Similarly, a study by Rousch and Cambourne (1979) found that good readers tended to make semantically acceptable errors, while poor readers tended to make semantically unacceptable errors. Therefore, they concluded that while good readers were driven by a search for meaning, poor readers seemed willing to tolerate semantic "gibberish".

Although much of the literature does not distinguish between subgroups of poor readers, a few writers do make distinctions. Seidenberg, Bruck, Fornarolo & Backman, (1986) and Stanovich (1988) are in agreement that reading ability is part of a continuum which includes good, poor and very poor readers. Poor readers may be distinguished from very poor readers by the severity of their problems. For instance, Frith (1972) reported that although poor and very poor readers had difficulty reading nonsense words, poor readers made attempts to read the nonsense words, while very poor readers did not even try to pronounce many of the words.

When the classroom behaviours of good, poor and very poor readers are compared, again the literature tends to distinguish more between good and poor readers than between poor and very poor readers. Clay (1991), Lipson and Wixson (1991) and Henderson (1993) reported that good readers tended to be independent, needed little teacher assistance, were versatile and well motivated and effectively used a wide range of strategies. On the other hand, poor readers seemed "instruction dependent" in that they tended to do exactly what they were told, had low self-confidence, behaviour problems, poor motivation, were inattentive and needed a great deal of teacher assistance and time. Very poor

readers shared similarities with poor readers and therefore exhibited similar classroom behaviours (Stanovich, 1988).

Summary

The literature appears to have focused on good and poor readers, with little differentiation of poor and very poor readers. Good and poor readers seem to differ in their ability to decode text; their awareness that reading should make sense; and their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Poor and very poor readers share similar problems, but the problems of very poor readers are comparatively more severe. It seems that any comparative investigation of pupil ability should include the full ability range of good, poor and very poor readers. However, before comparisons are made, it is necessary to review the literature about successful reading strategies for pupils of different abilities.

2.3.2 Reading Strategies for Pupils of Different Abilities

Lipson and Wixson (1991) suggest that the number of instructional ideas available to teachers for the teaching of reading is almost endless. However, teachers, as capable professionals, select appropriate reading strategies from this pool of instructional ideas in accordance with their personal perceptions of successful reading strategies (Otto, Wolf & Eldridge, 1984; Richards, et al., 1987). Some of these reading strategies and the claims made for their success with good, poor and very poor readers in the primary school are now outlined.

Strategies for good readers

In the literature, the success of a reading strategy is not always discussed specifically in terms of suitability for good readers, but in terms of its being a successful strategy per se. It seems that there is therefore, an implication that

these "successful" strategies are suitable for "successful" readers, i.e. good readers.

The bottom-up strategies previously mentioned in this chapter are promoted in the literature as being successful strategies. The strategies of phonics and word study are claimed to be successful because they provide pupils with effective means to interpret text (Anderson et al., 1985). Moreover, the strategy of flash cards enables pupils to increase their sight word vocabulary effectively (Banton-Smith, 1971; Thompson & Frazer, 1984), while direct instruction provides structure and oral reading enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress effectively (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1984; Cazden, 1985; Whiting, 1992).

Many reports and studies support the view that bottom-up strategies are successful. Reports on the teaching of reading in the United States (Anderson et al., 1985), in the United Kingdom (Hofkins, 1990) and in Australia (Skilton & Bull, 1986) have found phonics to be a popular and effective strategy. Moreover, Fisher (1990) reported that for some teachers, phonics and the teaching of reading are synonymous. Further, a study by Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975) found that fluent and accurate word recognition (which some claim flash cards promotes) is crucial to successful reading, as the main difference between good and poor readers was their sight word vocabulary. In addition, Barr (1984) cited a study which found the strategy of direct instruction was popular with many lower primary teachers.

The top-down strategies previously mentioned in this chapter also are promoted in the literature as successful strategies. Strategies such as reading to pupils and shared book are claimed to be successful because they promote positive attitudes

to literature, as well as providing teachers with opportunities to model the reading process which demonstrates to pupils the relationship between print and oral language (Cambourne, 1988; Watson & Badenhop, 1992). The strategy of language experience uses pupils' own language and experiences and therefore is claimed to be successful because it motivates pupils (New Zealand Education Department, 1985). In addition, strategies such as directed silent reading and individualised reading promote independent pupil practices with little direct teacher intervention and are likely to suit the ability and behaviour of good readers (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Sloan & Latham, 1989). Furthermore, most of these strategies tend to incorporate the use of storybooks which promote pupils' positive attitudes towards literature (Cambourne, 1988; Cairney, 1990).

Reports and studies also affirm that top-down strategies are popular and effective. In the report Becoming a Nation of Readers, Anderson et al., (1985) claim that reading aloud to pupils is "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading" (p.23). A study by Hemming and Clifford (1988) showed that the strategy of shared book increased pupils' enjoyment of reading storybooks as well as their ability to concentrate. Further, Duffy and Roehler (1986) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) state that the strategy of language experience may be one of the best approaches to the teaching of reading.

Although, some writers promote bottom-up strategies, while others promote top-down strategies, Lipson and Wixson note that most teachers tend to use a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies. However, whether these strategy combinations reflect the balance used to define strategy combinations as interactive or are simply eclectic non-theoretical combinations seems open to

dispute. Nevertheless, Durkin commends eclectic combinations of strategies based on "trial and error" because they indicate that teachers have an "open mind" and the sense "to try something else if it doesn't work" (Aaron, Chall, Durkin, Goodman & Strickland, 1990b, p.374).

A few writers dispute the success of some of these strategies. Goodman (1986) and Smith and Alcock (1990) claim that bottom-up strategies make reading difficult, as isolating language into different parts detracts from meaning and produces readers who either do not enjoy reading or who experience reading difficulties. Similarly, Estes and Johnstone (1977), Duffy (1983) and Lynch (1988) specifically criticise the strategy of group oral reading as this emphasises oral reading at the expense of meaning. Conversely, a study by Bagford (1985) reported that the top-down strategy of individualised reading in schools has displaced 'skills' strategies for all pupils. In addition to this criticism of bottom-up strategies, Goodman also criticises top-down and bottom-up strategy combinations because he believes they are probably based on arbitrary and ad hoc practices (Aaron, Chall, Durkin, Goodman & Strickland, 1990a).

Overall, the literature seems to focus on successful strategies per se rather than successful strategies for good readers. Bottom-up strategies are claimed to be successful because they provide pupils with the means to interpret text; top-down strategies are claimed to be successful because they promote modelling and positive attitudes to literature. Nevertheless, it is claimed that the strategies which teachers use most are combinations of top-down and bottom-up strategies. The success of some of these strategies has been questioned, but most criticism has addressed the use of bottom-up strategies.

Strategies for poor readers

Duffy and Roehler (1986) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) indicate that teachers have extensively used bottom-up strategies with poor readers. In particular, 'skills' strategies such as phonics, word study and flash cards are reported to be used frequently (Osborn, Wilson & Anderson, 1985; Phinney, 1988; Maggart & Zintz, 1990).

It seems that teachers may find bottom-up strategies appropriate for poor readers because they are readily amenable to a step-by-step, sequential approach when dealing with pupils' difficulties in areas of word recognition or decoding. Jorm (1985) explains that phonic strategies in particular are popular for poor readers because if "the rules of print-to-sound conversion" are learned then new words can be identified independently with little help from others. If these rules are not learned then pupils have little recourse but to rely on parents, teachers and other children to help them learn new words. Phonic strategies, therefore, are claimed to help poor readers become more independent.

Oral reading and direct instruction are also popular bottom-up strategies for poor readers (Fields, 1984; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Maggart & Zintz, 1990). Maggart and Zintz suggest that the strategy of hearing reading is pertinent for poor readers as this strategy allows teachers to monitor pupils' progress, diagnose weaknesses and plan compensatory practices. In relation to the strategy of direct instruction, Stebbins et al (1978) found that direct instruction, as part of project Follow Through, achieved the best reading improvement of pupils from disadvantaged areas. Moreover, Becker and Gersten's (1982) follow-up study of these pupils reported that their improvement in reading had been maintained. More recently, Baylis (1988) reported that pupils who did not

succeed in a whole language reading programme in a primary school in the United Kingdom were taught successfully by using direct instruction.

Top-down strategies are not the strategies which teachers traditionally use with poor readers. Moreover, Wedman and Robinson (1989) reported that teacher training institutions rarely incorporated top-down strategies into courses on remedial reading. Nevertheless, Henderson (1993) and Purcell-Gates (1991) propose that such strategies be used more widely with poor readers because they provide opportunities for them to act like good readers. Thus the strategies of language experience and silent reading encourage poor readers to take risks and make errors which pupils themselves are encouraged to correct (Clay, 1979; McNaughton, 1988). The strategies of reading to pupils and shared book further allow poor readers to observe competent models of reading at the same time as they participate in reading at their own level (Purcell-Gates 1991; Weaver, 1991).

Stice and Bertrand (1990) conducted one of the few studies centred on the use of top-down strategies with poor readers. They compared whole language and traditional approaches to reading with poor readers in Grades 1 and 2 and found that the poor readers in the whole language group made greater gains on all measures. Goodman also claims that whole language is successful with poor readers from the indigenous American population because an approach which emphasises meaning is compatible with the culture of indigenous American Indians (Aaron et al., 1990a). However, it seems that few studies have examined the extent to which teachers use top-down strategies with poor readers in all grades of the primary school. Therefore, there is a need to investigate this issue further.

Maggart and Zintz (1990) found that most teachers in the United States tended to use a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies with poor readers. Similar claims were made in New Zealand (New Zealand Department of Education, 1985) and in the United Kingdom where Her Majesty's Inspectors found that teachers used a variety of approaches (Hofkins, 1990). Popular strategy combinations have included language experience with individualised reading (Aaron & Poots, 1982; Duffy & Roehler, 1986) and oral reading with silent reading, word recognition and comprehension (Maggart & Zintz, 1990).

Maggart and Zintz suggest that teachers tended to use combined top-down and bottom-up strategies for poor readers in order to increase poor readers' opportunities to become literate. Heymsfeld (1989), as a classroom teacher, wrote about her use of combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. She stated that "written language is like a safe-deposit box: more than one key is required to unlock it, and children need all the keys we can give them" (p.65). In this analogy, the missing keys denote systematic phonic instruction and more formal reading comprehension skills. From her perspective, a combined approach to reading better equipped pupils to succeed as readers.

It seems that writers tend to be more critical of the strategies teachers use with poor readers than with any other ability group. The use of bottom-up strategies for poor readers seems to create four main areas of concern. First, these strategies separate the comprehension process from the reading act and consequently confuse poor readers (Latham & Sloan, 1987; Cambourne, 1990). Secondly, the time poor readers spend in bottom-up instruction detracts from that which should be profitably spent reading texts (Milligan, 1986). Thirdly, reports have shown that bottom-up strategies only create short term gains and in

the long term fail to produce literate societies in the western world (Kozol, 1985; Neisser, 1986; Dallas, 1992). Fourthly, case study research suggests that bottom-up strategies may actually cause reading failure (Martin, 1988; 1990; Cambourne, 1990; 1992). For instance, Cambourne (1990) cited a case study in which the strategy of direct instruction in a DISTAR programme compounded a pupil's reading difficulties.

Conversely, top-down strategies for poor readers also were criticised. Burroughs (1985) reported that the top-down strategy of individualised reading failed to improve the performance of poor readers, while Hill (1983) found that silent reading was more effective for good than for poor readers. In addition, Stahl (1990) has criticised the exclusive use of literature-based programmes with poor readers. He explains that, "although the literate environment approach of whole language allows advantaged children to build on their thousands of hours of print exposure, for children who do not have those hours, a more efficient approach is required" (p.145). Adams (1990) suggests that a reading programme which includes systematic phonics is a more efficient approach in that this strategy gives poor readers the 'tools' to decipher the text.

Just as Goodman in Aaron et al. (1990a) has challenged the view that combined top-down and bottom-up strategies are successful strategies per se, he has also criticised the use of these combined strategies for poor readers. In reply to Heymsfeld's (1989) article, Goodman (1989) stated that it was philosophically incompatible to include bottom-up practices in a whole language approach for pupils with reading difficulties. Further, he suggested that Heymsfeld herself was probably unaware of this mismatch as her training and classroom practices were based on bottom-up orientations to reading which made it difficult to

abandon previous practices. Goodman in his views is supported by Cambourne (1988) who finds bottom-up strategies incompatible with a whole language approach because these strategies stem from opposing theoretical orientations.

In turn such criticisms are viewed as uncompromising and extremist by Stahl (1990) and Aaron, Durkin and Strickland cited in Aaron et al. (1990a; 1990b). Strickland in particular empathises with teachers confronted by such "mono dimensional" views as expressed by Goodman (1989). She is concerned that teachers are given prescriptive advice about the ways in which they should teach reading by writers who fail to consider the teachers' experiences and requirements.

Overall, while several writers claim that top-down strategies are successful with poor readers, it seems that bottom-up strategies and combined top-down and bottom-up strategies are the ones which teachers tend to use most often. With poor readers bottom-up strategies seem to be used because they address problems they encounter with text, while combined top-down and bottom-up strategies seem to be used in order to increase pupils' opportunities to acquire literacy.

It is notable that there appear to be more critics of all strategies for poor readers than for any other ability group. Bottom-up strategies are criticised because they seem to distract poor readers from understanding text. Top-down strategies are criticised because they seem to deprive poor readers of the basic phonic skills necessary for independent readers. Combined top-down and bottom-up strategies are criticised because such combinations appear to be based on arbitrary, ad hoc practices.

Strategies for very poor readers

Maggart and Zintz (1990) and Miles and Miles (1990) distinguish between strategies for poor and very poor readers. They indicate that bottom-up strategies are popular for very poor readers. Miles and Miles explain that bottom-up reading strategies are appropriate as they remedy "the phonological weaknesses of children ... by the systematic building up of associations between speech sounds and their representations in writing" (p.89). Clearly, bottom-up strategies, such as the Orton-Gillingham method which emphasise alphabetic and phonic principles are useful strategies to deal with the main perceived weakness of very poor readers (John, 1989). Similarly, Hornsby (1980), Harris (1981) and Culyer (1988) also advocate the use of flash cards as a bottom-up strategy for very poor readers to deal with word recognition problems, another great weakness of very poor readers. In addition, Stallings, Cory, Fairweather and Needles (1978) report that many teachers find the bottom-up strategy of direct instruction is successful with very poor readers because it promotes the necessary structure which these readers require.

Maggart and Zintz also promote the use of top-down strategies such as language experience and shared book for very poor readers. However, these strategies are only part of the strategy combinations they promote which also include the bottom-up strategies of phonics, word study and flash cards. Use of these combinations accords with their view that for very poor readers "any teaching of phonic or structural skills as a word analysis process must be subordinated to a reading experience that is important to students" (p.481).

The view that the requirements of very poor readers may go beyond the use of certain bottom-up strategies is reflected in the literature. Chall (1983) indicates

that there are cases where some phonic strategies appear to be more successful for poor readers than for very poor readers. Kuder (1990) reports that the strategy of direct instruction does not produce significant gains in reading for children with severe reading difficulties. Therefore, it seems that using more bottom-up strategies with very poor readers may not necessarily improve their reading ability.

Overall, it seems that bottom-up strategies or combinations of bottom-up and top-down strategies dominate the literature concerned with very poor readers. Bottom-up strategies seem to be popular as difficulties in decoding text and word recognition are perceived to be problems for very poor readers. However, as reading is more difficult for these readers than for other groups, strategies which promote pupils' interests are recommended. Top-down strategies combined with bottom-up strategies seem to be popular.

Summary

The literature indicates that certain strategies are available for teachers to use with good, poor and very poor readers. Furthermore, the literature seems to indicate that most of these strategies are successful with good readers. It may be that good readers can benefit from most strategies as they have the ability to adopt a variety of reading approaches. However, there is some dispute about the benefit of bottom-up strategies for good readers.

The literature also seems to indicate that bottom-up strategies and combinations of top-down and bottom-up strategies are used frequently to address the problems of poor readers. Often these problems are perceived to include the acquisition of sight word vocabulary and the ability to decode text effectively.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that top-down strategies should be used more with poor readers to help them behave like good readers. However, few studies have investigated whether teachers select top-down strategies for poor readers. Moreover, all strategies receive some criticism when they are selected for use with poor readers. Therefore, there is a need to ascertain the strategies teachers believe are successful with poor readers.

Much of the literature tends not to distinguish between poor and very poor readers in the primary classroom. The literature which does make a distinction tends to suggest that bottom-up strategies are popular for very poor readers. This popularity is attributed to the severity of their reading problems. Top-down strategies also are recommended, but only within the context of strategy combinations. It seems that few studies have investigated teachers' selection of strategies for very poor readers. Therefore, there is a need to ascertain the strategies teachers believe are successful for very poor readers.

2.3.3 Reading Failure and Teachers' Reading Strategies

Some studies have investigated the causes of reading failure by matching older poor readers and younger good readers, or older very poor readers and younger poor readers (Stanovich, 1988). When differences have been found between the matched groups, then the poorest readers have been identified as being "cognitively" different. This has been attributed to a reader "deficit" resulting from physical, emotional, intellectual, or motivational differences (Tansley & Panckhurst, 1981; Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Alternatively, when no differences have been found between the matched groups, then the difficulties of the poorest readers are presumed to be qualitative. These have been attributed to "developmental lag" which suggests that matched readers learn in the same way,

but for the poorer readers the process is slower and takes more time (Cairney, 1990; Cambourne, 1990; Martin, 1990; Watson, 1992).

Different strategies for pupils of different abilities

Smith-Burke, Deegan & Jagger (1991) claim that teachers who assume that poor readers' difficulties are due to cognitive deficits tend to plan different strategies for good and poor readers. The assumption underpinning such practices seems to be that "the child's neurological and cognitive system makes learning incompatible with the methods used to teach normal children" (p.59). This reasoning has traditionally dominated the teaching of poor readers and is still popular among teachers today (Anderson et al., 1985; Allington & Steutzel, 1986; Andrews, 1992; Henderson, 1993).

Studies by Bawden et al. (1979) and Gove (1981) found that teachers preferred top-down strategies for good readers and bottom-up strategies for poor readers. In particular, Bawden et al. found that teachers implied that bottom-up practices were appropriate for poor readers because they provided the structure and content which poor readers required. In addition, teachers implied that they "saved" top-down practices until pupils were able to read independently.

The deficit view of reading failure also promotes different reading strategies for poor and very poor readers. A study by Stallings et al (1978) compared the strategies teachers used with poor and very poor readers in a secondary school and reported that poor readers had less oral reading, more silent reading and written assignments, while very poor readers had more oral reading, less silent reading and direct instruction. These teachers tended to use more top-down

strategies than bottom-up strategies with poor readers, and more bottom-up strategies than top-down strategies with very poor readers.

Notably, studies comparing teachers' strategies for good and poor readers tended to be located in primary schools, while studies comparing teachers' strategies for poor and very poor readers tended to be located in secondary schools. This may imply that teachers either have few very poor readers in primary schools, or that the subgroup of very poor readers is more noticeable in secondary schools. Also it may be that very poor readers in secondary schools have been exposed to reading instruction for longer than readers in primary schools and thus have had more opportunities for reading failure.

The same strategies for all readers

Weaver (1991) claims that when a developmental lag is assumed to cause poor readers' difficulties, teachers tend to plan the same strategies for all readers because they believe all readers learn in the same way. Moreover, Smith-Burke et al. (1991) state that such learners are not labelled, but welcomed in accordance with "the individuality each student brings to the learning situation whether or not they are remedial readers, learning disabled, or severely impaired" (p.67). This implies that the strategies such teachers use with good and poor readers are likely to be the same strategies teachers use with very poor readers.

Deschamp and Markey (1983) surveyed teachers in 7 primary schools in Western Australia and found that teachers tended to use the same strategies with all their pupils. However, there was little evidence to support the view that the teachers thought that all pupils learned in the same way or required the same strategies. Rather, these teachers based much of their reading instruction on

basal texts and were unsure about appropriate strategies for poor readers. It may be that many teachers in this study used the same teaching strategies with all readers more by default than by intent.

Summary

The survey of literature indicates that when reading failure is attributed to cognitive deficits then pupils receive differential treatment in accordance with their perceived ability. Thus, when good and poor readers were compared, top-down strategies were used more with good readers and bottom-up strategies were used more with poor readers. However, when poor and very poor readers were compared, top-down strategies were used more with poor readers and bottom-up strategies were used more with very poor readers.

If failure is attributed to developmental lag then it seems that all readers receive the same strategies. However, some studies suggested that certain teachers chose the same strategies for all readers because they were unsure about appropriate practices. Therefore, there is a need to investigate further whether teachers use different strategies for pupils of different abilities or whether they use the same strategies for all readers.

2.4

Demographic Variables

The demographic variables grade taught, length of teaching experience, and additional training in the teaching of reading have been included in some of the studies mentioned in this review of literature. Bawden, et al. (1979) and Rupley and Logan (1985) found that lower primary teachers tended to have bottom-up orientations to reading and preferred bottom-up strategies, while upper primary teachers tended to have top-down orientations to reading and preferred top-down

strategies. However, Stahl (1990) and Wille and Fiala (1992) have cited studies which suggest that top-down strategies are effective for beginning readers.

Studies by Bawden et al. (1979), Lennon et al. (1985) and Rupley and Logan (1985) included the variable length of teaching experience. Bawden, et al. and Lennon et al. found that experienced teachers tended to have bottom-up orientations to reading and preferred bottom-up strategies, while inexperienced teachers tended to have top-down orientations to reading and preferred top-down strategies. In classifying teachers in accordance with their experience, Rupley and Logan gave the fullest information, but found no significant difference between experience and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies.

When additional training in the teaching of reading was considered, Rupley and Logan (1985) and Skilton and Bull (1986) reported no significant differences. Similarly, Bawden et al. (1979) and Bondy (1985) reported that teachers were influenced least by models of the reading process. However, studies by Bean (1982) and Bruisma (1985) reported that inservice courses influenced teachers to adopt top-down beliefs and strategies. In particular, Sorensen (1987) reported that major changes occurred in classroom literacy programmes in Western Australia as a result of the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC). In addition, Stansell, Moss and Robeck (1982) found that teachers who did not attend a course which promoted top-down beliefs and strategies retained their bottom-up beliefs and practices.

Summary

Some of the studies reviewed here have indicated a relationship between the demographic variables of grade taught, experience and additional training, and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. Thus, experienced lower primary teachers tended to have bottom-up orientations to reading and preferred bottom-up strategies, while less experienced upper primary teachers tended to have top-down orientations to reading and preferred top-down strategies. Moreover, additional training from inservice courses seemed to influence teachers to adopt top-down strategies. However, these findings were inconclusive and did not tend to include pupil ability. Therefore, further investigation of the relationships between the demographic variables and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies seems to be required.

2.5

The Present Study

The present study is an investigation of the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. The need for such a study is justified by the issues discussed in the literature review. These issues include those related to teachers' reading strategies and those related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

The literature seems to indicate that teachers' reading strategy choices are important as they help pupils to become successful readers. The literature also seems to indicate that groups of strategies may be related to pupil failure in reading. Thus, it seems that the choices teachers make in their selection of strategies are important but open to dispute. As a consequence, the issue of which strategies teachers prefer is one which needs to be addressed. Moreover,

this issue needs to be addressed in the reading contexts which teachers commonly experience, that is the teaching of a range of pupil abilities.

Findings from the literature which address strategies to deal with reading failure suggest that some teachers use the same strategies for all readers, while some use different strategies for pupils of different abilities. Although the traditional practice of using different strategies for different pupils seems to retain its popularity in the United States, a study in Western Australia has noted that it is common for teachers to use the same strategies for all readers. Whether Australian teachers use the same strategies for all readers or different strategies for pupils of different abilities is an issue which needs further investigation.

The literature also seems to indicate that there could be a relationship between teachers' preferred strategies and the demographic variables of grade taught, length of teaching experience and additional training in the teaching of reading. Since most studies did not include pupil ability, it seems that the relationship between demographic variables and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers is an issue which warrants further investigation.

Teachers' theoretical orientations to reading is important as this provides the basis for teachers' planning of reading programmes. However, most studies appear to be limited in that teachers' theoretical orientations to reading are inferred from their responses to questions about practice. It may be that a more appropriate research design might require teachers to order components of the reading process sequentially. The ordering of these component parts is an important factor which differentiates between reading models.

Studies which have investigated teachers' theoretical orientations to reading seem to have some limitations. Most studies have investigated teachers' bottom-up and top-down orientations to reading and have tended not to allow for those teachers who have interactive orientations to reading. It also seems that few studies have been conducted with Australian teachers. Therefore, in order to overcome these limitations, there is a need for a study which includes Australian teachers with bottom-up, top-down or interactive orientations to reading.

Few studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and teachers' preferred strategies. Some of these few studies have revealed that teachers tended to be consistent, in that teachers with bottom-up orientations to reading preferred bottom-up strategies and teachers with top-down orientations to reading preferred top-down strategies. However, overall findings were inconclusive and the ability of pupils was generally not considered. Therefore, there is a need to investigate teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies in relation to pupils of different abilities.

Finally, the literature indicates a relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables of grade taught, length of teaching experience, and additional training in the teaching of reading. It seems that experienced lower primary teachers have tended to have bottom-up orientations to reading, while less experienced upper primary teachers have tended to have top-down orientations to reading. In addition, additional training from inservice courses seemed to influence teachers to adopt top-down orientations to reading. However, as such findings are inconclusive, it seems

that the relationship between these particular demographic variables and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading is an issue warranting further investigation.

These issues raised by the literature review have formed the foundation for the following six research questions of the present study, which are:

1. What are teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers ?
2. Is there a significant difference in the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?
4. What are teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process?
5. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and their preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
6. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Procedures

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology and Procedures

This chapter examines the methodology and procedures used in the present study. Standard survey methodology, as described by Cohen and Manion (1986), was adopted as this method has the potential to gather knowledge and information, as well as indicate values, preferences, attitudes and beliefs. Consequently, questionnaires and interviews, which are measures commonly used in survey research, were constructed for this study and administered to a sample of practising primary teachers.

The adoption of survey methodology for the present study is consistent with methods used in similar studies. Studies by Bawden et al. (1979), Gove (1981), Hoffman and Kugle (1982), Rupley and Logan (1985), Kinzer and Carrick (1986) and Richards et al. (1987) used questionnaires for practising teachers. In addition, the studies by Bawden et al., Gove, and Hoffman and Kugle also supplemented questionnaires with follow-up interviews. These interviews were justified in terms of gaining insight into the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their instructional practices, as well as eliciting from teachers the rationale for their practices.

This chapter is divided into four sections which include: construction of the questionnaire; construction of the interview schedule; procedures undertaken to administer the questionnaire; and procedures undertaken to administer the interview schedule. A copy of the questionnaire which was used in the present

study may be found in Appendix A - 1, a copy of the preliminary questionnaire in Appendix A - 2, and a copy of the interview schedule in Appendix C - 1.

3.1 Construction of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire constructed for the present study consisted of three sections which included: demographic variables (page 1); teachers' preferred reading strategies for good readers (page 2), for poor readers (page 3) and for very poor readers (page 4); and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process (page 5), (see Appendix A - 1). The questionnaire was designed to address the present study's six research questions, and to identify specific teachers for follow-up interviews. Questionnaire construction was based on similar studies in which questionnaires had been constructed (Bawden et al., 1979; Rupley & Logan, 1985; Kinzer & Carrick, 1986) or adopted from previous research (Gove, 1981; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Richards et al., 1987).

3.1.1 Demographic Variables

The first section of the questionnaire included the demographic variables: teacher's name (optional); present teaching grade; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading. These demographic variables were selected to address the two following research questions:

- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching

experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

The first page of the questionnaire gave teachers the opportunity to provide their name. Writers such as Gay (1987) and Jaeger (1988) do not promote this practice, stating that anonymity was more likely to encourage honesty. Therefore, in keeping with this policy, the respondent's name was optional rather than mandatory. However, a name indicates identity and ownership so this option was available for those who chose to provide their name. On occasion, it also helped to identify teachers who had omitted responses or were later selected for interview.

The first page also included three demographic variables based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. These were: present teaching grade (Bawden et al., 1979; Rupley & Logan, 1985); length of teaching experience (Bawden et al., 1979; Lennon et al., 1985; Skilton & Bull, 1986); and additional training in the teaching of reading (Bean, 1982; Bruisma, 1985; Sorensen, 1987).

In addition two notes were inserted into this first page. The first note introduced the questionnaire and assured teachers that findings would be anonymous, while the second note was placed at the bottom of the page to alert teachers to the repeated strategy measure on pages 2, 3, and 4.

Thus the variables presented on the first page included name (optional) (1a), grade taught (1b), length of teaching experience (1c), and additional training in reading (1d). After teachers had written their name, if they wished to do so, they were then asked to identify their present grade. Adopting a format similar to that of Rupley and Logan (1985), grade was categorised from Prep to Grade 6 with

additional space provided for alternative duties, such as specialisms in Physical Education, Art, or administration. The next item asked teachers to indicate the length of their teaching experience in a range set from 1 to 21 or more years, subdivided into blocks of 5 year spans. This format was similar to one adopted by Kinzer and Carrick (1986). The final item asked teachers to indicate the type of additional training undertaken in the teaching of reading after achieving status as qualified teachers. Teachers were asked to choose from the items 'None', 'ELIC', 'B.Ed.', and 'Masters'. If these items were not applicable teachers were asked to specify other forms of training. The inclusion of a 'training' variable was similar to studies by Rupley and Logan (1985) and Skilton and Bull (1986).

The first page of the questionnaire was designed to be attractive and easy to follow. After 'volunteering' their name, teachers were directed to circle the appropriate answer to speed response rate and facilitate data analysis. All demographic variables were displayed in bold, typed script and where teachers wished to add alternative responses, space and clear instructions were provided. In addition, demographic variables were marked with lower case letters 'a' to 'd', rather than 1 to 4, as this grouped questions together in a manner which accorded with views expressed by Cohen and Manion (1986).

3.1.2 Teachers' Preferred Strategies

The second section of the questionnaire included teachers' preferred reading strategies for pupils of different abilities, i.e. good readers, poor readers and very poor readers. This section of the questionnaire aimed to address the four following research questions:

- What are teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?

- Is there a significant difference in the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor, and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor, and very poor readers?

This section of the questionnaire was designed with close reference to the two published measures: Propositions About Reading Instruction (PARI) (Duffy & Metheny, 1979) and Theoretical Orientations Towards Reading Practices (TORP) devised by DeFord (1979). These measures incorporated statements asking teachers to indicate, on a Likert-type scale, the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with assertions made.

The present study did not, however, adopt the statement format advocated by these questionnaires as it seems that statements are seldom value free and are likely to be set within a context which subsequently influences responses. For instance, statement 15 in TORP asserts that "when coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on" (see Appendix B - 1). Some teachers may believe that the response required for this statement must be the one advocated by journals and inservice courses such as ELIC, even though this response may not reflect their own current reading practices or intent. Therefore, to mitigate against any bias, an alternative format

was devised for this study. Teachers were asked to respond to a selected list of strategies accompanied by a working definition to facilitate uniformity of interpretation among all subjects.

Strategies in the questionnaire were obtained from the research measures cited and literature reviewed in Chapter 2. From TORP the strategies of hearing pupils read, group oral reading and reading to pupils were adopted, while the strategies of phonics, flashcards, direct instruction and language experience were adopted from PARI (see Appendix B - 2). This last measure also contained 'skills' among the instructional practices, but this was not adopted for the present study as 'skills' is a collective term rather than an individual strategy. Instead, the strategy of word study was included, after discussions with teachers, as this strategy indicated a development of phonic analysis beyond the beginning reader stages. The literature sources provided the remaining top-down strategies of shared book, directed silent reading and individualised reading (Holdaway, 1979; Sloan & Latham, 1989; Wray, 1989). Finally, school policy statements were examined to ensure that teachers were familiar with the chosen strategies and to aid the construction of individual strategy definitions.

The final list of 11 strategies included five top-down strategies and six bottom-up strategies. The top-down strategies were language experience, shared book, reading to pupils, directed silent reading and individualised reading, while the bottom-up strategies were phonics, flashcards, word study, hearing pupils read, group oral reading and direct instruction. The literature review indicated that these strategies also were promoted for pupils of different reading abilities. These 11 strategies were then randomly mixed, in accord with a study by Kinzer

and Carrick (1986), in an attempt to mitigate against any bottom-up or top-down response bias imposed by the questionnaire format.

As was shown in the literature review, the teaching of reading can be a contentious issue. Thus, in an attempt to move the focus away from judgements arising from teachers' personal practices, the questionnaire focused on their beliefs about successful reading strategies in accordance with a study by Richards et al. (1987) who had investigated "good reading instruction". In the present study, teachers were not asked to select the strategies they employed, but the strategies they believed could "achieve success in reading".

Teachers were requested to consider the viability of these 11 reading strategies with pupils who displayed different degrees of reading ability. In accordance with issues discussed in Chapter 2, the range of ability included good, poor and very poor readers. Firstly, teachers were asked to consider these strategies with good readers who were performing at or above their reading age level (page 2). Secondly, teachers were asked to consider these same strategies with poor readers experiencing some difficulty, that is pupils whose reading age was approximately 12 months below their chronological age (page 3). Prep teachers were asked to consider pupils who were struggling slightly. Finally, teachers were asked to consider these same strategies with very poor readers, that is pupils experiencing severe reading difficulties whose reading age was 36 months or more below their chronological age (page 4). Teachers of younger pupils were asked to consider those pupils with the greatest reading difficulties. These working definitions of pupils' ability levels were developed from discussions and consultations with groups of primary teachers. The focus with all three

reading ability groups was the degree to which the strategies helped pupils maintain or achieve success in reading.

Teachers were directed to respond to the viability of each strategy for each group of readers "by **circling** the appropriate number" (page 2, page 3, page 4). Even though Cohen and Manion (1986) stated that they preferred subjects to tick rather than circle chosen items, the latter format was finally adopted as instructions to circle items were common to related research measures (see Appendix B - 1 and 2). In addition, circling responses ensured that all instructions were consistent throughout the questionnaire.

A Likert-type scale was incorporated to rate teachers' responses. This five point scale ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' with 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. This format, which conforms with the numerical values adopted by TORP (see Appendix B - 1), was chosen in preference to the 'A' to 'E' format.

Format considerations were incorporated into this section of the questionnaire. To guard against a set response pattern to the repeated measure the strategies were ordered differently on each page. Terms were defined for good, poor, and very poor readers and all 11 selected teaching strategies. In addition, two kinds of typed script were employed to distinguish readily between the reading strategy and its definition. Furthermore, the code to indicate teacher agreement and the corresponding numerical value were restated on each page in bold script where the Likert-type scale was used (See Appendix A - 1, pages 2, 3, 4). In this way, teachers did not have to rely on memory or flick back the pages to read previous instructions which might have increased the chances for error.

3.1.3 Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

The third section of the questionnaire addressed teachers' theoretical orientations to reading (see Appendix A - 1, page 5). This section of the questionnaire aimed to address the three following research questions:

- What are teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process ?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, several writers maintained that the reading process consists of identifiable skills, which can be sequentially ordered according to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. Jorm (1985) proposed one such possible sequential list from a bottom-up view-point, as follows:

1. The reader moves his eye to the first portion of the printed page.
2. The visual system analyses the first word of the page letter by letter.
3. Each letter is converted into sound, so that the reader ends up (sic) working out the pronunciation of the word.
4. The pronunciation of the word gives access to its meaning which is stored in the reader's memory.
5. Subsequent words are similarly analysed until a whole phrase has been completed and the meaning of this phrase can be worked out. (p.22)

The ordering of items in this list maintained a bottom-up perspective because decoding the visual input was predominant and meaning was postponed until the end of the reading act.

The list which Jorm (1985) proposed could not be used in the present study as there was an imbalance between bottom-up and top-down reading components. Thus bottom-up and top-down components of the reading process were selected from the literature (Mitchell, 1982). The selected list of reading components was then modified from ten to six by a group of practising teachers. The six components were three bottom-up text-based reading components and three top-down reader-based reading components. The bottom-up components were: the reader recognizes words instantly at sight; the reader moves eyes systematically from left to right across the page; and the reader decodes text using phonic cues. The top-down components were: the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge; the reader uses context to predict meaning; and the reader reconstructs the author's meaning. These six reading components were then randomly ordered.

Teachers were asked to order each component of the reading process in accordance with their view of how reading takes place. Thus, teachers were asked to place the component they believed began the reading process first, the next component second, and so on until the component which they believed ended the reading process was placed last.

The questionnaire concluded with a note to teachers which thanked them for their cooperation and asked them to check that they had circled all responses. The

note was also positioned at the bottom of the page, in bold typed script, to catch the teacher's attention.

3.2 Construction of the Interview Schedule

One function of the questionnaire was to identify teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers (see Appendix A - 1, pages 2 to 4). However, the questionnaire did not ascertain if the strategies teachers said they preferred were the same strategies teachers said they used. Moreover, the questionnaire did not indicate the rationale behind teachers' strategy selection. Therefore, follow-up interviews were conducted to validate aspects of the questionnaire (Kerlinger, 1973), and to go "deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do" (Cohen & Manion, 1986, p.293).

Interview methodology was chosen as similar studies had indicated that this measure had the potential to reveal insights into life in classrooms (Bawden, et al., 1979; Gove, 1981; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982). Interviews arising from these studies focused on teachers' instructional reading practices and factors influencing practice. Moreover, Hoffman and Kugle used interviews to address aspects of beliefs and actions which were beyond the parameters of questionnaire design. These aspects included behaviours not evident from the questionnaire in which the teacher's situation and the varied contexts of instruction were important.

3.2.1 The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule contained six questions (see Appendix C - 1). These questions were concerned with: the number of children in the class (question

one); the number of children who were poor readers in the class (question two); reading plans and methods used for poor readers in the class (question three); influences on teachers' current reading practices for poor readers (question four); problems experienced in teaching poor readers (question five); and recommendations for an inexperienced colleague teaching a poor reader (question six).

The interview questions were designed to confirm questionnaire findings and inform issues related to the following research questions:

- What strategies do teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a difference in the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by the sequential ordering of the reading process and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training?

The interview questions were probes designed to elicit information to support aspects of the questionnaire and to give further insight into reasons for teachers' practices. Although the questions initially addressed poor readers, prompts were also included which addressed the needs of other readers. Questions initially addressed poor readers for two reasons. Firstly, teachers had said that it was difficult to generalise as their plans often depended on individual pupils' needs. In view of this, the interview schedule initially asked teachers about their plans for poor readers so that individual pupils, rather than groups, could be discussed

if teachers so wished. Secondly, as questionnaires and interviews perform different functions, it was important that the interviews did not repeat the format outlined by the questionnaire. Therefore, the initial focus of the interviews on poor readers contrasted well with the initial focus of the questionnaire on good readers.

The interview schedule was designed to conform to the semi-structured interview format, as described by Bell, Bush, Fox, Goodey and Goulding (1987). Carefully worded questions were followed by prompts. Some of these prompts arose during the course of the interview in order to clarify comments, ask for more detailed explanations, or redirect the course of the session. Other prompts were preplanned to answer queries arising from a teacher's responses to the questionnaire. For instance, a teacher's questionnaire response might indicate that the strategy of flash cards was only popular for poor readers. This would require an appropriate prompt in the interview schedule in order to ascertain the teacher's possible reasons for this choice.

The first two interview questions asked the teacher for factual information about the present grade. These questions were intended to focus the teacher on the pupils in the present grade and to identify poor readers. If teachers identified very poor readers within this category, this would be apparent in teachers' responses to other interview questions. These questions were intended to encourage the interviewee to focus on current practices when subsequent questions about pupils of varying abilities were raised.

The third question asked teachers about their teaching plans and methods for poor readers. This question was based on a similar question in Gove's (1983)

interview schedule related to classroom instructions. In the present study, this question addressed teachers' recent practices unlike the questionnaire which asked teachers about their preferred strategies. Therefore, responses to this question established whether the strategies which teachers said they preferred and the strategies which teachers said they used differed or remained the same. Prompts within this question also asked teachers whether the strategies they used with poor readers were the same or different from the strategies they used with the rest of the class. Other prompts were concerned with school organisation related to teaching reading such as the use of reading specialists and school help in hearing pupils read.

Question four asked teachers to identify the influences which affected their teaching of poor readers. Possible influences gathered from discussions with teachers and literature included: the pupils; teaching experiences; colleagues; inservice courses and education; literature and journals. Influences are included in the schedule as they have the potential to aid or restrict teachers in modifying and implementing their reading plans.

Question five asked teachers to identify their greatest problem in teaching poor readers. This question allowed teachers to identify any areas of weakness in their teaching of reading which had the potential to influence practice. This may be based within the reader, the school or the home and may in turn reveal attitudes towards the teaching of reading.

Question six placed teachers in a hypothetical situation where a colleague, inexperienced in teaching poor readers, required advice. The focus was not upon the teachers and their present performance, but on a fellow teacher

requiring professional assistance. In this position, it was likely that the teacher's increased confidence (as expert) might help reveal his or her own personal reading philosophy and bias. The resultant advice might be based on other teachers' experiences, perceived deficits within the reader, the focus of literature and research or the results of professional training.

3.3 Questionnaire Research Procedures

3.3.1 Preliminary Questionnaire Trials

The preliminary questionnaire was piloted by 31 practising teachers in three separate primary schools. They included a Catholic school (W.A.), an independent school (Victoria) and a state school (Victoria). A copy of the preliminary questionnaire may be found in Appendix A - 2.

Arising from the results of the preliminary questionnaire the demographic variable age was omitted, and modifications were made to the variable additional training (Appendix A - 2, page 1). The variable age of teacher was omitted after several experienced teachers expressed reluctance to provide this information. As age had been included to verify details of teaching experience, it was found that the variable age could be omitted as long as the variable, length of teaching experience, was retained in the final questionnaire. On the other hand, teachers' responses to the variable additional training ranged from none at all, to inservice and degree courses. Therefore, these additional training categories were included in this section of the final questionnaire.

Results of the preliminary questionnaire also indicated that many teachers in the Victorian state school had more than 16 to 20 years experience. This school was in a popular scenic location, and consequently teacher movement in or out of the

area was limited. In addition, Victorian Education Department staffing policies limited teaching opportunities for newly trained teachers so there tended to be older teachers in the schools. In an attempt to obtain a sample of teachers with more varied length of teaching experience, schools in and around the nearest industrial town were approached for the administration of the final questionnaire.

The preliminary questionnaire did not include definitions for each strategy and consequently teachers related strategies to their own practice and produced various interpretations of meaning (Appendix A - 2, pages 2 - 4). For instance, the strategy of reading to pupils was interpreted to include pupils reading to other pupils, as well as the teacher reading aloud to pupils, while the strategy of hearing pupils read encompassed shared reading, parents hearing a child read, cross-age tutoring, in fact any activity which involved two people reading. This finding revealed the need for a tight, well-defined definition of chosen strategies so that all teachers shared the same concept for each strategy.

The list of selected reading strategies had been repeated three times with reference to good (page 2), poor (page 3), and very poor readers (page 4). In addition, each list had been randomly re-ordered so that the format did not encourage a set response. However, the preliminary questionnaire listed the strategies of language experience and phonics as the first two items for both good and poor readers (page 2, page 3). This led one teacher to assume that the list order for poor readers was an exact repeat of the previous list order for good readers and resulted in inaccurate responses concerning strategy choices for poor readers. To avoid misunderstandings the order was radically altered so that, from the outset, teachers were aware that strategies on each list were not in identical order.

There was also another problem concerning the repeated list of strategies (see Appendix A - 2, pages 2 to 4). Teachers reported feeling confused by the repeated format and often stated that they then returned to the previous page to recheck their responses. It was apparent that teachers needed to anticipate the questionnaire format so they could consciously answer with comparative responses. Therefore, in the final questionnaire, reference to the comparative intent of items dealing with selected reading strategies was inserted after the demographic variables at the bottom of the first page.

The final page of the preliminary questionnaire introduced a rank ordering measure into a format which already contained a Likert-type scale. Using the Likert-type scale and the rank ordering procedure abrogated the advice of writers such as Jaeger (1988) who recommended the use of only one type of scale throughout a questionnaire. However, the inclusion of both measures was necessary. To interrupt the response format as little as possible, the rank ordering section had to be positioned either before or after the measures containing the Likert-type scale. Trials revealed that when the rank ordering section was positioned at the end of the questionnaire, teachers sometimes overlooked this section and it was not completed. On the other hand, when the rank ordering section was positioned before the Likert-type scale, some teachers were confused about the type of response format to adopt for the questions which followed. As a consequence, the rank ordering was placed at the end of the questionnaire (page 5). If teachers accidentally omitted this page, the researcher was able to ensure that it was completed immediately, as all responses were checked before the researcher left the staff meeting where the questionnaires were administered.

Overall, difficulties encountered during the administration of the pilot studies were similar to difficulties reported in postal surveys by Jaeger (1988). These included pages left incomplete, social pressures from colleagues to respond in specific ways, and low returns. Therefore, when conducting research with the main sample, the questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the whole school teaching population during staff meetings. In this way high sample cooperation and maximum questionnaire completion rates were achieved.

3.3.2 The Revised Questionnaire

The preliminary questionnaire was revised after piloting. Changes to page 1 included: the omission of the variable age; the inclusion of additional training categories 'None', 'ELIC', 'B.Ed', 'Masters', and 'Other'; and the insertion of an instructional note to alert teachers to the fact that the strategy list would be repeated on the following pages. Changes to pages 2, 3, and 4 included: reading strategy definitions for all 33 strategies (3 x 11 strategies); rewording of the strategy "Reading to Pupils" to "Teacher Reads to Pupils"; and a reordering of the strategy lists on pages 2 and 3. The strategy definitions were devised from consultations with teachers, reference to school language policies, and from the writings of Duffy and Roehler (1986) and Sloan and Latham (1989). The revised questionnaire was tested on a small sample of five practising teachers to ensure feasibility of the new format.

3.3.3 Procedures in Selecting the Main Sample

The research sample consisted of 140 practising primary school teachers drawn from 10 intact state school populations. State schools were selected in preference to a mixed selection from state and independent schools to overcome any selection bias which may be apparent in the independent sector. School staff

meetings were chosen to administer the questionnaire as all the teachers in the school would be in one location at a designated time.

The sample of 10 schools was chosen from the education department's list of 77 schools in the South Barwon Region of Victoria. Schools were not randomly selected due to limitations imposed by time, finance, and distance. However, in an attempt to obtain as varied a teaching population as possible, selection was made according to fixed criteria. Schools chosen varied in the size of pupil population from 'A' to 'D' where 'A' denoted schools with the largest pupil populations and 'D' schools with next to the smallest pupil population. Category 'E', the smallest schools, were excluded from the present study because they were too remote to visit. In addition, schools chosen also varied in location (urban and rural), and socio-economic status of pupils' parents (middle-class and working class).

Written permission to conduct the research was obtained from the regional manager of the South Barwon District. Selected schools were then contacted by telephone. If Principals agreed to participate in the research a meeting was arranged at the school. During this meeting, research issues were clarified, questionnaire format discussed, a copy of the school reading/language policy obtained, and arrangements made to administer the questionnaire during a 30 minute time period either at the beginning or end of the next staff meeting. Shortly after this meeting, letters were sent to the Principals to confirm the date and time when the questionnaire would be administered.

Contacted schools varied in the degree to which they were able to participate. Thus, of the 14 schools contacted only 10 were able to participate in the present

study. One school declined to participate as their staff had already been the focus of several other studies within the same year, while three other schools were willing to participate, but could not be included as their staff meetings occurred on the same day and time as meetings already booked with participating schools. Many of the schools which participated stated that they were interested in the study due to the focus on reading issues. This included three schools who were revising their reading/language policies.

3.3.4 Administering the Questionnaire

Principals decided to allocate the time for questionnaire completion at the beginning or end of a staff meeting. Administration of the questionnaire followed a uniform pattern. The Principal briefly introduced the researcher to the assembled staff who then read out verbatim an address which discussed instructions for completing the questionnaire (Appendix D). Before teachers began to complete the questionnaires, they were asked if they required clarification on any issue or item. If difficulties arose during the process of questionnaire completion the researcher was present to deal with any issues. Difficulties in responding to particular items were discussed. After all questionnaires were completed the Principal and staff were thanked for their cooperation before the researcher left the school premises. All returned questionnaires were checked immediately before leaving the school to ascertain that all items were completed and if incomplete items were found these were brought to the teacher's attention.

After questionnaires were completed the researcher again wrote to all school Principals concerned. These letters thanked both the Principal and staff for their

involvement and cooperation. The letters also stated that schools would be sent a copy of the main findings when the research was completed.

3.4 Interview Research Procedures

3.4.1 Piloting the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was piloted with three practising teachers. Responses were favourable and therefore little correction to the original was required. The range of responses gathered from the pilot of the interviews provided a list of possible prompts for teachers during the interviews experienced any difficulty in responding initially to questions.

3.4.2 Procedures in Selection of Interview Sub-sample

In a manner similar to that used in studies by Gove (1981) and Hoffman and Kugle (1982) a sub-sample of teachers was chosen for interview on the basis of their questionnaire responses. The criteria used to select the sub-sample of eight teachers, labelled 'A' to 'H' in accordance with Gove's study, included grade taught, years of teaching experience, additional training in the teaching of reading, theoretical orientation to reading, and preferred strategies for pupils of different abilities.

Table 1

Characteristics of Interviewed Sub-sample Determined From Their Responses to the Questionnaire

Teacher Characteristics					
Teacher	<u>Demographic Variables</u>			<u>Theory and Practice</u>	
	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Orientations</u>	<u>Strategies</u>
A	Lower	16 - 20 yrs.	None	Top-down	Same
B	Lower	16 - 20 yrs.	Course	Top-down	Change
C	Lower	11 - 15 yrs.	Course	Bottom-up	Same
D	Lower	21+ yrs.	Degree	Bottom-up	Change
E	Upper	16 - 20 yrs.	None	Interactive	Same
F	Upper	21+ yrs.	Degree	Interactive	Change
G	Upper	11 - 15 yrs.	Degree	Bottom-up	Same
H	Upper	21+ yrs.	None	Bottom-up	Change

Note.

Lower = lower primary

Upper = upper primary

Same = teachers preferred the same strategies for all pupils

Change = teachers preferred to change some strategies for pupils of different abilities

Characteristics of the sub-sample, set out in Table 1, reveal that teachers were equally distributed according to grade taught, preferred strategies for pupils of different abilities, but not equally distributed according to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading, length of teaching experience and additional training.

This reflected the distribution of these variables among the 140 teachers who completed the questionnaire in that, there were more teachers with a bottom-up theoretical orientation to reading than any other group ($\underline{n} = 75$), the majority of teachers had more than 16 years teaching experience ($\underline{n} = 83$), and many teachers had no additional training ($\underline{n} = 53$). A more detailed account of the sub-sample's characteristics is located in Appendix C - 2.

Teachers in the sub-sample were equally distributed between teachers who preferred the same strategies for all readers, and teachers who preferred to change some strategies for pupils of different abilities. This is not typical of the main sample who significantly preferred to change some of their strategies for poor readers (see Chapter 4). However, such a criterion was used as it is important to know why teachers use the same strategies for all readers in order to understand more fully why they might change their strategies for pupils of different abilities.

3.4.3 Administering the Interview Schedule

All follow-up interviews were conducted on school premises at a time convenient to the teachers. This practice was consistent with similar procedures adopted by Gove (1981) who interviewed her sub-sample either in the school or at their home. In the present study, interviews were conducted privately in the teacher's classroom, or spare room, either during the lunch hour, after school, or during teaching time when the school Principal relieved the teacher of duties. Most interviews therefore had a specific time limit of 20 to 30 minutes as interviews were often followed by teaching commitments. Where possible, teachers were encouraged to answer fully and given time to reflect upon named issues.

On meeting the teacher, the researcher outlined the purpose of the interview. This was to gain further insight into their plans and practices when teaching reading. Teachers were shown the interview format with itemised questions and told that the interview would be audio taped to ensure authenticity. In similar studies, the use of a cassette tape to record interviews was common practice (Gove, 1981; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982).

The recorded interviews were transcribed within a few days of the meeting (see Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts). A copy was sent to each interviewee at his or her school together with a personal letter. The letter asked the teacher to read through the transcript for accuracy. If any additions or amendments were required then teachers were encouraged to contact the researcher. Finally, the letter thanked the teacher for his or her assistance with the present study.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the construction of the questionnaire and interview schedule and has described the procedures used to implement the research. The questionnaire addressed the research questions of the study and asked teachers for information about: demographic variables; their perception of selected strategies' effectiveness for good, poor, and very poor readers; and their theoretical orientations to reading. The interview schedule was designed to explore issues raised by the questionnaire and included six questions concerned with teachers' instructional practices and their teaching rationale. The questionnaire was piloted, revised, and then administered to a sample of 140 practising primary teachers from 10 intact school populations. Subsequently, a sub-sample of eight teachers was selected and interviewed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion Related to Teachers' Strategies

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion Related to Teachers' Strategies

In this chapter the results and discussion of the questionnaire and selected interviews are presented in relation to teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. The chapter is divided into three sections each of which addresses the results of one of the following three research questions:

- What are teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant difference in the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

4.1 Teachers' Preferred Strategies

4.1.1 Questionnaire Results

This section of the chapter addresses the research question which examines the issue of which strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers. To answer this question, the number of teachers who gave positive scores on page 2 of the questionnaire for the 11 strategies for good readers was calculated. This was achieved by combining teachers' positive responses (strongly agree, agree) and then calculating a percentage score for each strategy. The percentage scores for each of the 11 strategies were then compared. Thus, strategies which received the highest percentage of positive responses were designated the strategies most preferred for good readers, while strategies which received the

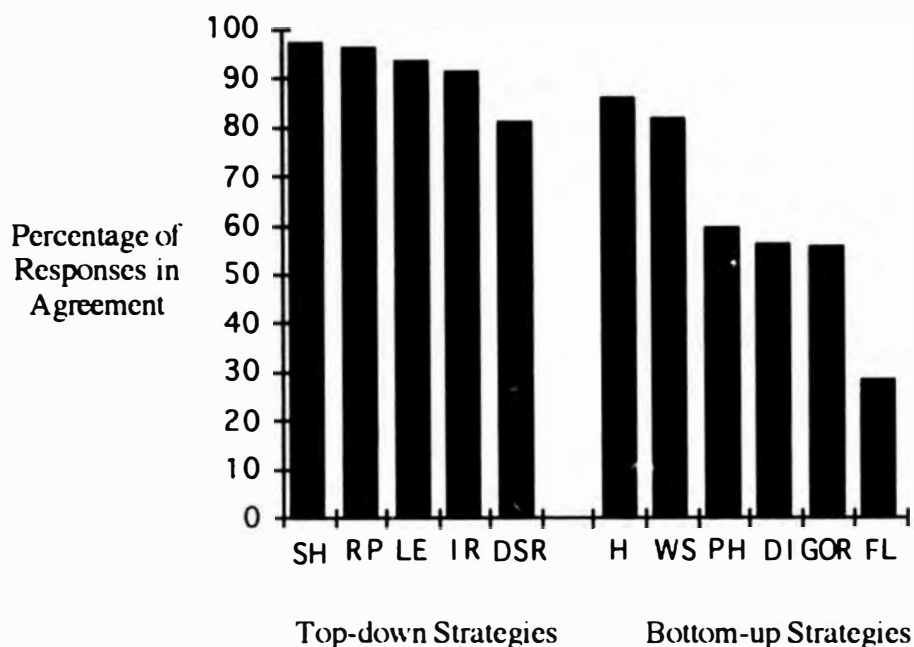
lowest percentage of positive responses were designated the strategies least preferred for good readers. The same procedure was then repeated for strategies preferred for poor and very poor readers (see Appendix A - 1, pages 3 and 4).

Good readers

Most strategies received high scores for good readers (see Figure 1). Positive responses for strategies ranged between 97.1% and 28.3%. More top-down strategies received higher scores than bottom-up strategies: positive responses to top-down strategies ranged from 97.1% to 80.7%, whereas positive responses to bottom-up strategies ranged from 85.7% to a low of 28.3%. The strategies most teachers preferred for good readers were shared book (97.1%), reading to pupils (96.3%) and language experience (93.6%). The strategy fewest teachers preferred was flash cards which received only 28.3% positive responses.

Poor readers

All strategies received fairly high scores for poor readers, with the range of positive responses extending from 98.6% to 47.9% (see Figure 2). Positive scores for top-down strategies ranged between 98.6% and 58.6%, while positive scores for bottom-up strategies ranged between 91.5% and 47.9%. There was considerable overlap between the positive scores of top-down and bottom-up strategies for poor readers. The strategies most teachers preferred were still shared book (98.6%), reading to pupils (95.7%) and language experience (93.5%), while the strategy fewest teachers preferred was again flash cards (47.9%).



Note Strategies are ordered from the highest percentage of positive responses to the lowest percentage of positive responses.

Top-down Strategies

SH = shared book

RP = reading to pupils

LE = language experience

IR = individualised reading

DSR = directed silent reading

Bottom-up Strategies

H = hearing pupils read

WS = word study

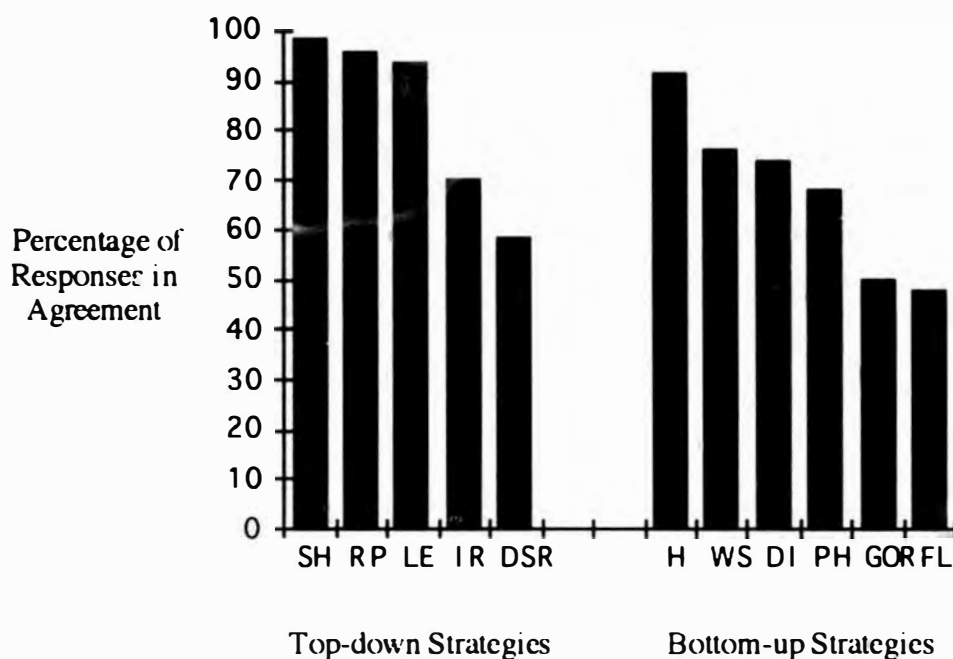
PH = phonics

DI = direct instruction

GOR = group oral reading

FL = flash cards

Figure 1. Strategies preferred by teachers for good readers



Note Strategies are ordered from the highest percentage of positive responses to the lowest percentage of positive responses.

Top-down Strategies

SH = shared book

RP = reading to pupils

LE = language experience

IR = individualised reading

DSR = directed silent reading

Bottom-up Strategies

H = hearing pupils read

WS = word study

DI = direct instruction

PH = phonics

GOR = group oral reading

FL = flash cards

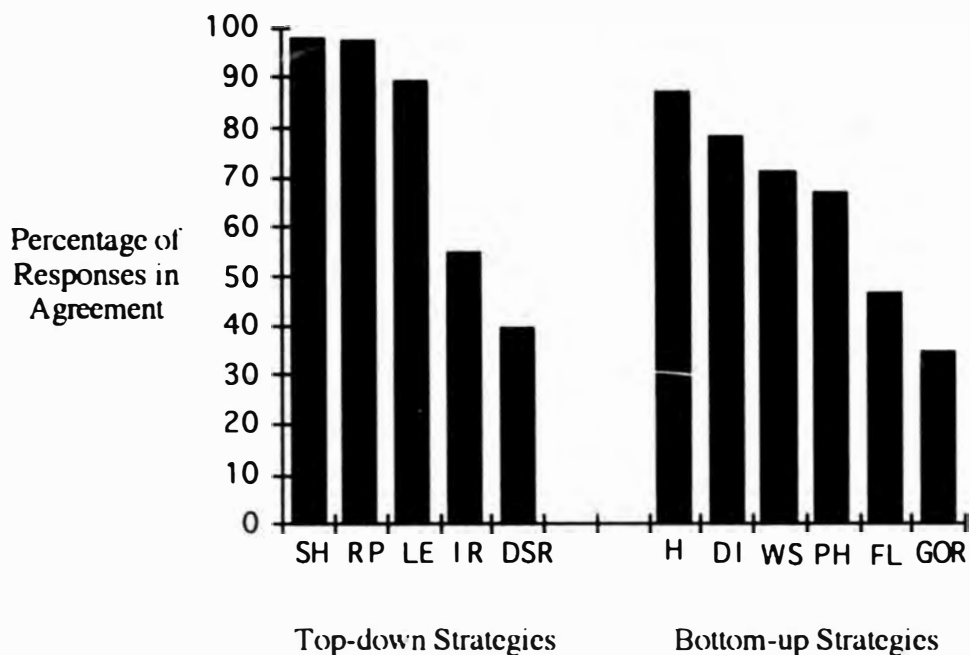
Figure 2. Strategies preferred by teachers for poor readers

Very poor readers

Many strategies received fairly high positive scores for very poor readers (see Figure 3). Strategies for very poor readers received positive scores ranging from 97.9% to 34.3%. Teachers' positive scores for top-down strategies ranged between 97.9% and 39.3%, while teachers' positive scores for bottom-up strategies ranged between 87.1% and 34.3%. So when bottom-up and top-down strategies for very poor readers were compared, there was little difference in the range of scores. The strategies most teachers preferred for very poor readers were again the top-down strategies of shared book (97.9%), reading to pupils (97.2%) and language experience (89.3%). The strategies fewest teachers preferred were the top-down strategy of directed silent reading (39.3%) and the bottom-up strategy of group oral reading (34.3%).

Summary

Overall, teachers were positive towards most strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. The strategies most teachers preferred for pupils of all abilities were the top-down strategies of shared book, reading to pupils and language experience. However, the strategies preferred by the fewest teachers were not exactly the same for all groups. The strategy fewest teachers preferred for good and poor readers was flash cards, whilst the strategies fewest teachers preferred for very poor readers were directed silent reading and group oral reading.



Note Strategies are ordered from the highest percentage of positive responses to the lowest percentage of positive responses.

Top-down Strategies

SH = shared book

RP = reading to pupils

LE = language experience

IR = individualised reading

DSR = directed silent reading

Bottom-up Strategies

H = hearing pupils read

DI = direct instruction

WS = word study

PH = phonics

FL = flash cards

GOR = group oral reading

Figure 3. Strategies preferred by teachers for very poor readers

4.1.2 Interview Findings

The responses of the eight selected teachers to strategy items on the questionnaire were examined (see Appendix C - 2, Teacher Characteristics). All eight teachers gave positive responses to the strategies of shared book, reading to pupils, and language experience for all readers. One teacher gave positive responses to all strategies for all readers, while the remaining 7 teachers gave a range of negative responses to other strategies for all readers. This included 5 negative responses for group oral reading, 3 for flash cards and direct instruction, 2 for phonics and 1 for directed silent reading. In addition, 4 teachers did not change their strategy responses for all readers, while the remaining 4 teachers did change some of their strategy responses for pupils of different abilities (see in this chapter section 4.2.2).

To an extent, these teachers were representative of the questionnaire sample. They, like the main sample, gave positive responses in the questionnaire towards the strategies of shared book, reading to pupils and language experience for all readers and gave negative responses to the strategies of flash cards, group oral reading and directed silent reading. However, as explained in Chapter 3, the sub-sample was chosen for diversity of strategy response. Therefore, some teachers' particular choices of strategy in the questionnaire were not typical.

Interviews revealed that these teachers were positive towards several strategies, and thus supported the idea that most strategies could benefit pupils (see Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts). Most teachers mentioned the strategies of shared book or a literature program, reading to pupils, hearing pupils read and silent reading for all readers. In addition, 4 teachers said they used language experience, 2 teachers said they used group oral reading, while only 1 teacher

said she used directed silent reading. In addition, some teachers said they used the strategies of language experience, phonics, flash cards and direct instruction for poor or very poor readers.

Teachers said that they used the strategies of reading to pupils and shared book because such strategies encouraged recreational reading, motivated pupils, helped test memory recall and introduced pupils to word analysis. Similarly, teachers said that they used the strategy of hearing pupils read in order to monitor pupils' progress since practice in reading out loud seemed to be directly related to pupils' oral reading performance. In addition, 1 teacher said he used the strategy of group oral reading because the taking of turns encouraged pupils to take responsibility for following the chosen text.

When other strategies were considered, 2 teachers said that strategies which involved silent reading were used more with good readers than with poor readers as poor readers tended to be disruptive and lacked reading skill, concentration and motivation. Three lower primary teachers said they used language experience with all readers, while an upper primary teacher said she used this strategy with very poor readers. In addition, 2 teachers said that the strategy of flash cards was inappropriate for good readers because these readers already had a good sight vocabulary, but appropriate for poor readers whose sight word vocabulary was limited. However, these teachers said that they did not use flash cards for poor readers due to school policy and beliefs about language learning. Nevertheless, a third teacher said that she did use the strategy of flash cards with very poor readers.

When poor readers were considered, several teachers promoted a combined approach to include top-down and bottom-up strategies. Recommendations for teaching poor readers included comments such as "try every approach", "a mixture of approaches", "try a combination of things", and "as much variety as possible". Reasons given for this open, eclectic position included the belief that method was unimportant, that there was no one way to teach reading, and above all that teachers had to match the method to the reader. In addition, these teachers maintained positive attitudes towards most strategies because to do otherwise might disadvantage their pupils, especially poor and very poor readers, and thus restrict their opportunities for learning.

Interviews indicated that the strategies teachers said they used were not exclusively top-down or bottom-up strategies. Thus: 3 teachers said they used more top-down strategies than bottom-up strategies; 1 teacher said he used more bottom-up strategies than top-down strategies; and 3 teachers said they combined strategies by using both top-down and bottom-up strategies with no clear strategy bias. Therefore, when the 8 teachers were categorised according to their stated strategy use, 2 were mainly top-down, 1 mainly bottom-up and the remaining 5 combined top-down and bottom-up strategies.

Summary

On the whole, it was found that responses to the interview agreed with responses to the questionnaire. Exceptions to this included: 1 lower primary teacher restricted by school policy from using her preferred strategies; another lower primary teacher who said she did not use her preferred strategy of flash cards with poor readers due to conflict of beliefs; 2 upper primary teachers who in the questionnaire preferred to change strategies for poor and very poor readers, but

when interviewed did not change strategies for the very poor readers due to organisational constraints; and all 8 teachers who in the questionnaire said they preferred the strategy of language experience for all readers, but when interviewed only 4 of whom mentioned that they used this strategy.

4.1.3 Discussion

The questionnaire findings revealed that the teachers in the sample were positive towards most strategies for all pupils. This view was supported by follow-up interviews where teachers reported that most strategies had the potential to improve reading ability. This liberal teacher attitude towards reading strategies may be explained by Maggart and Zintz (1990) and Lipson and Wixson (1991). They stated that when teachers increase their repertoire of strategies they believe, in turn, that they increase the effectiveness of their teaching.

Questionnaire and interview results indicated that the strategies of shared book and reading to pupils were popular for all readers. These findings are in accordance with the report, Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson et al., 1985) which noted that teachers reading to pupils was one of the most important requirements for pupils' success in reading. In addition, this finding also supports the views of Cambourne (1988) and Watson and Badenhop (1992) that reading to pupils and shared book are successful strategies.

It may be that teachers were favourably disposed towards the top-down strategies of reading to pupils and shared book because they allow demonstrations of the reading process to be modelled. Cambourne (1988) has stated that modelling gives pupils the opportunity to understand the relationship between oral language and print and promote positive pupil attitudes towards

literature, an attribute noted in the interviews. Moreover, these strategies may receive popular approval from teachers because they are the strategies promoted by inservice courses, booksellers and some school Principals. In addition, interviews indicated that teachers favoured these strategies because their pupils seemed to enjoy them, they helped develop pupils' memory, and provided opportunities for word analysis.

Questionnaire results also found language experience to be very popular for all abilities, with positive response ratings of 93.6 % (good readers), 93.5 % (poor readers) and 89.3 % (very poor readers). This confirmed the views of writers such as Duffy and Roehler (1986) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) who maintained language experience to be a successful strategy. Similarly, questionnaire responses of teachers selected for interview also indicated the popularity of language experience. However, only 4 of those interviewed mentioned that they actually used the strategy of language experience and 3 of these teachers were lower primary teachers. This suggests that some of the strategies generally promoted by teachers may not necessarily be the strategies they use.

The difference in findings between the questionnaire and interview responses towards the strategy of language experience, may be directly related to the difference between the strategies teachers said they preferred (questionnaire) and the strategies teachers said they used (interviews). It may well be that even though all teachers perceived language experience to be a viable strategy, lower primary teachers more than upper primary teachers may have found it a more appropriate strategy for most readers. A further reason for the difference in

findings also may be related to the small sub-sample of teachers in the follow-up interviews who are too few to wholly represent the main sample.

Questionnaire results revealed that flash cards, as a possible strategy for good readers, received only 28.3% of positive responses from teachers. This implies that many teachers believed flash cards to be an inappropriate strategy for good readers. Some of the teachers interviewed confirmed this view, adding that the strategy of flash cards was inappropriate because good readers have developed the ability to recognise words easily. This in turn concurs with findings by Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975) who established that one of the main differences between good readers and poor readers was their large sight word vocabulary.

The strategy of flash cards was also the least preferred for poor readers. However, this strategy still received a sizeable approval rating of 47.9%. Therefore, although teachers apparently believed that all other strategies would be more successful with poor readers than flash cards, it was still perceived to be a viable strategy. The view that flash cards were appropriate for readers who had difficulty recalling sight vocabulary was confirmed by Culyer (1988) who promoted flash cards as a remedial reading strategy. Interviews supported this view, but only for very poor readers.

Another questionnaire finding indicated that directed silent reading was the second least popular strategy for very poor readers (39.3%). Some interviews confirmed this finding for very poor readers and also included poor readers as well. Interviews with 2 teachers indicated that strategies involving silent reading, such as directed silent reading, were unpopular for poor and very poor readers because these readers were perceived to lack motivation, perseverance

and concentration. It was also suggested that strategies involving silent reading produced disruptive behaviour with poor and very poor readers. A similar finding was reported by Hill (1983). Although Hill (1983) did not distinguish between poor and very poor readers, silent reading was reported to be more effective for good readers than for poor readers.

Questionnaire results also indicated that group oral reading was the strategy fewest teachers preferred for very poor readers (34.3%). It is interesting to note that Estes and Johnstone (1977), Duffy (1983) and Lynch (1988) have stated that group oral reading was an ineffective comprehension strategy for all readers, whereas in the present study this strategy was least popular only for very poor readers. It may be that some teachers perceive this strategy to be ineffective for pupils who have difficulty following text due to their severe reading problems. Moreover, use of this strategy with very poor readers also may produce an adverse effect on good readers who may become bored listening to the very slow oral reader and consequently create problems for the teacher. In contrast one interviewee was very positive towards group oral reading for all readers. However, he may well represent a minority view as he was one of only two teachers interviewed to promote this strategy.

Summary

Overall, the questionnaire and interview data confirmed several findings. These were: that teachers were positively disposed towards most strategies; that the strategies of shared book and reading to pupils were preferred by most teachers for all readers; that the strategy of flash cards was preferred by the fewest teachers for good and poor readers; and that directed silent reading and group oral reading were the strategies preferred by the fewest teachers for very poor

readers. Nevertheless, the questionnaire finding that language experience was a highly popular strategy was qualified by the interviews, in that not all teachers used this strategy. The interviews revealed further information on teachers' practices which were not indicated by the questionnaire.

4.2 Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Good, Poor and Very Poor Readers

4.2.1 Questionnaire Results

This section of the chapter addresses the research question which asks if there is a significant difference in teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. To answer this question, all data related to bottom-up strategies in the questionnaire (located in Appendix A - 1: page 2, items a, c, f, g, h, k; page 3, items b, c, d, e, g, i; and page 4, items a, c, d, f, g, j) were recoded and reversed. Responses to the five top-down strategies retained their original value of 1 to 5, while responses to the six bottom-up strategies had a new value of 5 to 1. All responses to preferred strategies for good readers were then totalled to give an overall score in a range between the maximum score possible of 55 and the minimum score possible of 11. The same procedure was carried out with preferred strategy responses for poor and very poor readers.

Teachers who "strongly agreed" that all top-down strategies were successful, and "strongly disagreed" that all bottom-up strategies were successful would have obtained a perfect top-down score of 11 (11×1). Teachers who "strongly agreed" that all bottom-up strategies were successful, and "strongly disagreed" that all top-down strategies were successful would have obtained a perfect bottom-up score of 55 (11×5). Those teachers who were "unsure" about the success of all strategies would have obtained the mid-point score of 33 (11×3). However, teachers who preferred a combination of top-down and bottom-up

strategies would also have obtained a score near the mid-point of the range. Thus, a low score indicates that the responses were more top-down than bottom-up; a high score indicates that the responses were more bottom-up than top-down; and a score near the mid-point indicates that teachers either were unsure about their strategy preferences or tended to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies.

A one-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was then carried out on the resultant total scores for good, poor and very poor readers. The independent variable was pupils' reading ability and the dependent variable was teachers' preferred strategies.

This analysis indicated a significant difference between these three groups, $F(2, 278) = 41.01, p < .0001$. Further analysis revealed a significant difference between teachers' preferred strategies for good readers ($M = 29.3$) and teachers' preferred strategies for poor readers ($M = 31.3$), $F(1, 139) = 60.98, p < .0001$. However, results also revealed no significant difference between teachers' preferred strategies for poor ($M = 31.3$) and for very poor readers ($M = 31.8$), $F(1, 139) = 3.09, p > .05$. Thus, it follows that teachers were more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. It is noted, however, that although there were significant differences the mean scores were quite close (see Table 2). It is also noted that all mean scores were near to, but below the mid-point of 33.

Table 2

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Good, Poor and Very Poor Readers

<u>Pupil Ability</u>	<u>Preferred Strategy Scores</u>	
	M	SD
Good readers	29.3	4.2
Poor readers	31.3	4.5
Very poor readers	31.8	5.0

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Summary

The results indicate that while teachers significantly changed their preferences when considering strategy choices for good and poor readers, they did not significantly change their preferences between poor and very poor readers. Thus, teachers were more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. Nevertheless, the mean scores were quite close and near the mid-point of 33.

4.2.2 Interview Findings

Eight teachers were selected for interview in accordance with their responses to the questionnaire (see Appendix C - 1). Four of the interviewed teachers did not change their preferred strategies, while the remaining 4 changed some of their preferred strategies for pupils of different abilities. Among the 4 teachers who changed their strategies, the strategies preferred for good readers included word

study ($\underline{n} = 3$), individualised reading ($\underline{n} = 3$) and directed silent reading ($\underline{n} = 2$). The strategies they preferred for good and poor readers included word study ($\underline{n} = 1$), individualised reading ($\underline{n} = 1$) and flash cards ($\underline{n} = 2$); the strategies they preferred for poor and very poor readers included phonics ($\underline{n} = 1$) and hearing pupils read ($\underline{n} = 1$); and the strategy preferred for very poor readers was flash cards ($\underline{n} = 1$).

The interviews confirmed that teachers who did not change their preferred strategies for pupils of different abilities, generally attempted to use the same strategies with all pupils in their present grade. Reasons for this decision included: adherence to school policy; a desire to improve poorer readers' academic performance; regard for pupils' self-esteem; and the development of pupils' interests. Two teachers remarked that often poor readers were integrated into the class or given individual attention which required direct instruction. The results of this, according to one lower-primary teacher meant that "it [the work] takes them [the poor readers] longer and it takes more direction from me" (Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts, Teacher C). In addition, 4 teachers said that a specialist teacher withdrew pupils with reading difficulties from the class at specified times.

Although interviews confirmed that these selected teachers tended to use the same strategies with all pupils, 2 lower-primary teachers in this group indicated that their choice of strategy might change under certain conditions. As has been mentioned already, 1 of these teachers was limited by school policy, but wanted to use the strategies of flash cards and phonics with poorer readers. Similarly, the other teacher indicated that if she had very poor readers in her grade, she

would use any available strategy or reading scheme, in the hope that "something, somewhere will stick" (Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts, Teacher C).

On the other hand, interviews with teachers who preferred to change some of their strategies for pupils of different abilities confirmed the assumption that, on the whole, some strategies were more appropriate for specific ability groups. The 2 lower-primary teachers in this group said that strategies such as word study and directed silent reading, were only suitable for good readers; while 1 of the upper primary teachers said that strategies, such as flash cards and language experience, were only suitable for very poor readers.

Several reasons were given for the adoption of specific strategies. Strategies such as word study and directed silent reading were said to be suitable for good readers because they stimulated pupils' curiosity and extended their knowledge. Conversely, these same strategies were said to be unsuitable for other readers due to pupils' limitations which included lack of academic ability, perseverance, concentration, staying power and discipline. Strategies said to be suitable for very poor readers were individualised programmes which emphasised repetition and reinforcement and catered for these pupils' specific problems.

Inconsistencies were noted between the strategies some teachers in this group said they preferred and the strategies they said they used. One lower primary teacher who in the questionnaire said that she preferred the strategy of flash cards for poor readers, said in the interview that she did not use this strategy with her present class. One possible reason for this apparent inconsistency appears to be conflict between her beliefs about learning, namely "learning to read by reading", and the knowledge that her poor readers required an effective strategy to increase

their sight word recognition skills. Similarly, 2 upper primary teachers said in the questionnaire that they preferred to change some strategies for poor and very poor readers, but when interviewed said that only some of the strategies for very poor readers were actually used. This apparent inconsistency between preferred and actual strategies used may be due in part to organisational constraints such as team teaching and mixed ability groups, which may inhibit teachers' ability to actually use their preferred strategies.

Summary

On the whole, teachers' strategy responses to the questionnaire tended to be consistent with the interviews. Factors which seemed to influence teachers' decisions to use the same strategies with all pupils included: school policies; school organisation; beliefs about learning; and concern for pupils' interests, self-esteem and academic performance. On the other hand, factors which seemed to influence teachers' decisions to change some strategies included: perceived severity of reading problems; perception of pupils' limitations; and the perception that good readers required strategies for enrichment, while poor readers required strategies for repetition and reinforcement.

4.2.3 Discussion

Questionnaire results indicated that teachers were significantly more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. This finding provides some support for the literature which maintained that teachers changed their strategies for pupils of different ability (Anderson et al., 1985; Allington & Steutzel, 1986; Andrews, 1992). Similarly, results of studies by Bawden et al. (1979) and Gove (1981) seem to be in accordance with the present study's findings, in that teachers preferred top-down strategies for good readers. This

was also suggested in interviews with some teachers who said that they used some top-down strategies more with good readers than with poor readers.

It may be that teachers tended to prefer top-down strategies for good readers because good readers were perceived to benefit more from these strategies than were poor readers. Duffy and Roehler (1986) have stated that good readers are suited to strategies which include independent practice and require little teacher intervention. Good readers are more likely to benefit from these conditions as they are able to read fairly independently and work with little supervision, whereas poor readers are less likely to be independent and probably require more teacher intervention (Clay, 1991; Lipson & Wixson, 1991; Henderson, 1993).

Top-down strategies may be relatively less popular with teachers of poor readers for several reasons. One of these reasons may be the fact that bottom-up rather than top-down strategies are the traditional strategies used with poor readers (Phinney, 1988; Maggart & Zintz, 1990; Lipson & Wixson, 1991). This tradition may have been reinforced by the practices of teacher training institutions which, according to Wedman and Robinson (1989), rarely have incorporated top-down strategies into courses in remedial reading. A further reason, suggested by the interviews, may be that teachers perceive pupil failure to be attributable to a learning deficit which can be rectified by suitable bottom-up strategies which emphasise reinforcement and repetition.

Although there was a significant difference between the strategies teachers preferred for pupils of different abilities the mean scores were quite close. The mean scores were also near the mid-point of the scale and tending slightly towards the top-down range. Thus teachers either rated most strategies at the

neutral "unsure" point of the Likert-type scale, or preferred a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies for all pupils. Further inspection of the raw data revealed that while no teacher rated most of the strategies at the neutral point, several teachers gave positive responses to all strategies. Therefore, these findings seem to indicate that teachers preferred to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies.

4.3 Teachers' Preferred Strategies and Demographic Variables

4.3.1 Questionnaire Results

This section of the chapter addresses the research question which asks if there is a significant relationship between the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers and 3 demographic variables. These are: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading. These demographic variables are subsequently referred to here as "grade", "experience" and "training".

4.3.2 Grade Taught

Grade ranged from Prep to Grade 6 and included two further grades which were composite lower primary classes and composite upper primary classes. Pearson's correlational analyses between "grade" and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers are shown in Table 3. Results indicated no significant relationship between grade taught and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers ($p > .10$).

Table 3

Pearsons' Correlation of Grade with Teachers' Preferred Strategies

<u>Pupil ability</u>	<u>r</u>
Good readers	-.02
Poor readers	.02
Very poor readers	-.02

4.3.3 Experience

Teachers were originally divided into five groups according to length of teaching experience. These five groups were reduced to four when questionnaire results revealed that two groups contained a very small number of teachers. Thus, groups denoting teachers with 1 to 5 years experience and 6 to 10 years experience were combined to form a new group of teachers with 1 to 10 years experience ($\underline{n} = 22$). The remaining "experience" groups included teachers with 11 to 15 years experience ($\underline{n} = 35$), 16 to 20 years experience ($\underline{n} = 35$) and 21 or more years experience ($\underline{n} = 48$). Three one-way analyses of variance were carried out with the independent variable "experience" and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers as the dependent variables.

Good readers

The first one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for good readers as the dependent variable. Results, presented in Table 4, revealed no significant difference in the strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for good readers, $\underline{F} (3, 136) = 1.82, p > .05$.

Table 4

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Good Readers Based on Years of Teaching Experience

<u>Experience (yrs.)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
1 to 10	22	29.3	3.8
11 to 15	35	28.3	4.2
16 to 20	35	28.9	4.2
21 +	48	30.4	4.4

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Poor readers

The second one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for poor readers, $F(3, 136) = 3.19, p < .05$. Scheffé tests compared group mean scores and revealed that teachers with 11 to 15 years experience ($M = 30.0$) were significantly more inclined than teachers with 21 or more years experience ($M = 32.8$) to prefer top-down strategies for poor readers ($p < .05$). Although significant, the mean scores are quite close and somewhat below the mid-point of 33, apart from teachers with 21 or more years experience whose mean scores are closer to the mid-point. No significant differences were found among the remaining "experience" groups (see Table 5).

Table 5

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Poor Readers Based on Years of Teaching Experience

<u>Experience (yrs)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
1 to 10	22	31.5	4.2
11 to 15	35	30.0	4.7
16 to 20	35	30.5	3.6
21 +	48	32.8	4.6

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Very poor readers

A third one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for very poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for very poor readers, $F(3, 136) = 3.50$, $p < .05$. Scheffé tests revealed that teachers with 11 to 15 years experience ($M = 30.1$) were significantly more inclined than teachers with 21 or more years experience ($M = 33.5$) to prefer top-down strategies for very poor readers ($p < .05$). Although significant, the mean scores are again quite close and below the mid-point of 33, apart from teachers with 21 or more years experience whose mean scores are slightly above the mid-point. Again, no significant differences were found among the remaining "experience" groups (see Table 6).

Table 6

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Very Poor Readers Based on Years of Teaching Experience

<u>Experience (yrs)</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
1 to 10	22	31.8	5.0
11 to 15	35	30.1	5.0
16 to 20	35	31.2	4.6
21 +	48	33.5	5.1

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

4.3.4 Training

There were three "training" groups. These included teachers who had no further training in reading beyond initial training ($\underline{n} = 53$), subsequently referred to here as the "no training" group; teachers who attended short reading courses ($\underline{n} = 51$), referred to here as the "reading course" group; and teachers who had a degree which involved an aspect of reading ($\underline{n} = 36$), referred to here as the "degree" group. Three one-way analyses of variance were carried out with "training" as the independent variable and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers as the dependent variables.

Good readers

The first one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for good readers as the dependent variable. Results indicated a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of training, for good readers, $F(2, 137) = 3.20, p < .05$. Scheffé tests revealed that the "reading course" group ($M = 28.2$) were significantly more inclined than the "no training" group ($M = 30.3$) to prefer top-down strategies for good readers ($p < .05$). Although significant, the mean scores are quite close and somewhat below the mid-point of 33. No significant differences were found among the remaining "training" groups (see Table 7).

Table 7

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Good Readers Based on Type of Additional Training

<u>Training</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
No training	53	30.3	3.8
Reading course	51	28.2	4.4
Degree	36	29.4	4.4

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Poor readers

A second one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different

amounts of training, for poor readers, $F(2, 137) = 3.48$ $p < .05$. Scheffé tests revealed that the "reading course" group ($M = 30.1$) were significantly more inclined than the "no training" group ($M = 32.4$) to prefer top-down strategies for poor readers ($p < .05$). The mean scores are still quite close and very slightly below the mid-point of 33. Again no significant differences were found among the remaining "training" groups (see Table 8).

Table 8

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Poor Readers Based on Type of Additional Training

<u>Training</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
No training	53	32.4	4.8
Reading course	51	30.1	4.1
Degree	36	31.5	4.1

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Very poor readers

A third one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for very poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of training, for very poor readers, $F(2, 137) = 4.85$ $p < .01$. Scheffé tests revealed that the "reading course" group ($M = 30.1$) were significantly more inclined than the "no training" group ($M = 32.9$) to prefer top-down strategies for very poor readers ($p < .05$). The mean scores are still quite close and slightly

below the mid-point of 33, except for the "no training" group which is very close to the mid-point. Again no significant differences were found among the remaining "training" groups (see Table 9).

Table 9

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Very Poor Readers Based on Type of Additional Training

<u>Training</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
No training	53	32.9	5.4
Reading course	51	30.1	5.0
Degree	36	32.7	4.0

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Summary

Demographic variables were analysed in relation to teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. No significant relationship existed between the grade taught and the strategies preferred by teachers for good, poor and very poor readers. In addition, no significant differences existed between the length of teaching experience and the strategies preferred by teachers for good readers.

There was a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for poor and for very poor readers. Teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were more inclined than teachers with

21 or more years experience to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. Analysis of variance indicated a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers who had different types of training for good, poor and very poor readers. Thus, the "reading course" group were more inclined than the "no training" group to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. However, in all findings which were significant, the means were quite close to each other and near the mid-point of the range, except for teachers with 21 or more years experience and teachers in the "no training" group. The mean scores for these groups of teachers were only very slightly below or above the mid-point of 33.

4.3.5 Interview Findings

Grade taught

As was shown in Chapter 3, the sample of teachers included 4 lower primary teachers and 4 upper primary teachers (see Appendix C - 1). The interview findings revealed that: 3 lower primary teachers said they used mainly top-down strategies with all readers; 1 lower primary teacher said she combined top-down and bottom-up strategies; 3 upper primary teachers said they combined top-down and bottom-up strategies; and 1 upper primary teacher said he used mainly bottom-up strategies. Thus, findings suggest that for the 8 teachers interviewed, lower primary teachers may be more likely to use top-down strategies, while upper primary teachers may be more likely to use combined top-down and bottom-up strategies with all pupils.

Experience

Teachers were also identified for interview in accordance with their length of teaching experience as follows: 2 teachers with 11 to 15 years experience; 3

teachers with 16 to 20 years experience; and 3 teachers with 21 or more years experience.

Interview responses were examined in relation to the strategies the teachers said they used. Of the 2 teachers with 11 to 15 years experience, 1 said she used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies, while the other said he used mainly bottom-up strategies. Of the 3 teachers with 16 to 20 years experience, 2 said they used mainly top-down strategies while the remaining teacher said he used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. Of the 3 teachers with 21 or more years experience, 2 said they used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies, while the remaining teacher said she used mainly top-down strategies. These findings seem to reveal little about the relationship between the "experience" groups and the strategies these teachers said they used.

Training

Teachers were identified for interview according to their additional training in the teaching of reading as follows: 3 teachers had no additional training; 2 teachers had completed reading courses; and 3 teachers had completed a degree which included the teaching of reading.

Interview responses were examined in relation to the strategies teachers said they used. Of the 3 teachers with no additional training, 2 said they used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies and the remaining teacher said she used mainly top-down strategies. Of the 2 teachers who completed reading courses, 1 said she used mainly top-down strategies, while the other said she used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. Finally, when the 3 teachers who

had a degree were compared, they were divided equally between using mainly top-down, bottom-up, or combined top-down and bottom-up strategies.

These findings seem to reveal little about the relationship between training and the strategies teachers said they used. It seems few teachers who received additional training said they used top-down strategies. Of note is the fact that there were teachers in each training group who said that they used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. Overall, it appears that from the small sub-sample of teachers interviewed, there is little relationship between additional training and the strategies teachers said they used.

Summary

Overall, interviews of the small sub-sample indicated the following: that lower primary teachers said they tended to use mainly top-down strategies, while upper primary teachers said they tended to use combined top-down and bottom-up strategies; there was no apparent relationship between length of teaching experience and the strategies teachers said they used; and no apparent relationship between additional training and the strategies teachers said they used.

4.3.6 Discussion

Grade taught

Questionnaire results indicated no significant relationship between grade taught and teachers' strategy preferences for good, poor and very poor readers. Interviews in the present study seem to support questionnaire results in that lower primary and upper primary teachers held similar views about the suitability of individual strategies such as hearing pupils read, shared book and silent

reading. However, these follow-up interviews also suggested a relationship between grade taught and the strategies teachers said they used: that is, some lower primary teachers said they used mainly top-down strategies; some upper primary teachers said they used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies.

Differences in findings might be explained by differences between the questionnaire and interviews. These differences include: a focus on preferred strategies (questionnaire) as opposed to the strategies teachers said they used (interviews); a focus on strategies for pupils of different abilities (questionnaire) as opposed to general strategies for all readers (interviews); and, the use of two strategy groups in the questionnaire (top-down, bottom-up) as opposed to three strategy groups in the interviews (top-down, bottom-up, combined). In particular, the interview format gave selected teachers the opportunity to reveal that they combined top-down and bottom-up strategies in order to create a "balanced" approach to the teaching of reading, while the design of the questionnaire only allowed teachers to state their preferences for top-down and bottom-up strategies. Thus, the questionnaire and interviews tended to produce slightly different findings as they were designed to measure slightly different aspects of the teaching of reading.

Although the questionnaire results revealed no significant relationship between grade taught and preferred strategies, the interview findings and similar studies did show a relationship. Studies by Bawden et al. (1979) and Rupley and Logan (1985) found that lower primary teachers tended to prefer bottom-up strategies, while upper primary teachers tended to prefer top-down strategies. In contrast, the interviews in the present study revealed that lower primary teachers on the whole said they used mainly top-down strategies, while upper primary teachers

said they combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. The differences between these findings might be attributable to the positive input from relatively recent Early Literacy Inservice Courses (ELIC) and school language policies which encourage the inclusion of top-down strategies, particularly with beginning readers.

Differences in findings between the questionnaire used in the present study and studies by Bawden et al. (1979) and Rupley and Logan (1985) may be explained by differences in the teacher samples. These studies had an even distribution of teachers, whereas the present study had a large number of very experienced teachers and few teachers with less than 10 years experience. It is likely that many of the teachers in the present study had at some time taught most of the grades within the primary school. Therefore, their strategy responses were likely to be guided by their experiences with all grades rather than just their experiences and beliefs with the present grade.

Experience

Questionnaire results indicated no significant relationship between length of teaching experience and teachers' preferred strategies for good readers. Although Rupley and Logan (1985) did not include the variable of pupil ability, they found no significant relationship between experience and teachers' preferred strategies. Reasons for this result for good readers may be explained by the belief among teachers, that good readers benefit more from a wider variety of strategies than poorer readers. This was supported by the interviews in the present study. Lipson and Wixson (1991) also confirm this view, for they found that good readers were more able than poor readers to use more strategies effectively.

Nevertheless, questionnaire results indicated a significant difference between length of teaching experience and teachers' preferred strategies for poor and very poor readers. It was found that teachers with 11 to 15 years experience more than teachers with 21 or more years experience tended to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. This finding seems to lend some support to studies by Bawden et al. (1979), Lennon et al. (1985) and Skilton and Bull (1986) that less experienced teachers tended to prefer top-down strategies more than experienced teachers. However, these studies differed from the present study in that pupil ability was not considered, the range of experience among the teaching groups was more homogeneous and findings concerning the "experience" groups were polarised between the youngest, most inexperienced teachers and the oldest, most experienced teachers. In the present study, no significant differences were noted between the other "experience" groups, so that in the present sample, the tendency towards preferring more top-down or bottom-up strategies for poor and very poor readers did not seem to increase with length of experience per se.

As noted, questionnaire results indicated that teachers with 11 to 15 years experience more than teachers with 21 or more years experience tended to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. Interviews with 2 teachers in this 11 to 15 "experience" group did not confirm these findings as 1 teacher said he used mainly bottom-up strategies, while the other teacher said she combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. However, the 2 teachers selected said they preferred the same strategies for all readers, and more may have been gained from selecting teachers in this "experience" group who preferred to

change some of their strategies for poor and very poor readers. In addition, a sample of only 2 teachers is too small from which to generalise.

Questionnaire results also indicated that teachers with 21 or more years experience were less inclined than those with 11 to 15 years experience to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. Goodman (1989) has argued that bottom-up strategies probably constituted the bulk of experienced teachers' initial training and subsequent classroom practices. Therefore, when asked to choose their preferred strategies for poor and very poor readers, these teachers were possibly less inclined to choose top-down strategies because these strategies were not part of their initial training and subsequent classroom practices. However, interviews with 3 teachers in this "experience" group tended not to confirm these findings as 1 teacher said she used mainly top-down strategies while the remaining 2 teachers said they combined top-down and bottom-up strategies for all readers. These particular teachers seemed very confident about their abilities, and having mastered bottom-up strategies were eager to consider "the latest trends" and "newest ideas" (see Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts, Teachers D and H).

The findings in relation to strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of experience, for poor and very poor readers need to be examined in relation to the mean scores. The mean scores of teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were near the mid-point of the scale for poor ($\bar{M} = 30.0$) and for very poor readers ($\bar{M} = 30.1$), but tending slightly towards the top-down. The mean scores of teachers with more than 21 years experience were very slightly below the mid-point of the scale for poor readers ($\bar{M} = 32.8$) and very slightly above the mid-point of the scale for very poor readers ($\bar{M} = 33.5$). The range of these

mean scores seems to indicate that both groups of teachers combined top-down and bottom-up strategies for poor and very poor readers.

Training

Questionnaire results indicated that on the whole the teachers in the "reading course" group were more inclined than teachers in the "no training" group to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. Courses in reading, such as the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC), tended to emphasise the practical application of top-down reading models and to promote top-down strategies for all levels of reading ability. Interviews with lower primary teachers suggested that they were influenced by these courses. Consequently, one teacher adopted mainly top-down strategies for all her pupils. The other teacher modified her repertoire of reading strategies and thus introduced top-down strategies such as language experience, while retaining more traditional strategies to teach spelling. Similar outcomes have been confirmed in studies by Bean (1982), Bruisma (1985) and Sorensen (1987) who found that inservice reading courses influenced teachers' use of top-down strategies.

Questionnaire results also indicated that teachers in the "no training" group were less inclined than the "reading course" group to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. It seems likely that a lack of input from training would restrict teachers' repertoire of strategies. This view was confirmed in a study by Stansell, Moss and Robeck (1982) who found that preservice teachers not attending reading inservice courses tended to maintain bottom-up reading beliefs and practices. It is possible that the older, experienced teachers, who in the present study constituted a large proportion of this sample, would also be less likely than the

younger teachers to use top-down strategies because these strategies were not associated with their initial training and early teaching experiences.

Teachers interviewed in the "no training group" tended not to support this questionnaire finding as all 3 teachers said they tended to use top-down strategies as part of their teaching repertoire. One of the lower primary teachers said she used mainly top-down strategies to comply with school policy. Although dissatisfied with this policy, she gained her information about top-down strategies from school policy documents. One of the upper primary teachers said she used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. It seems that even though she had no additional training, she gained input concerning top-down strategies from literature and other inservice courses and used these along with older, traditional strategies. Another upper primary teacher also said he combined top-down and bottom-up strategies in order to be flexible and use pupils' interests. This teacher used bottom-up strategies, but was combining them with top-down strategies which he had acquired from information gained from colleagues as well as other sources associated with his search for a child-centred approach.

Interviews indicated that there seemed to be a tendency among teachers to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies. This seems to be verified by the closeness of the questionnaire means to the mid-point in the findings. For instance, the mean score of teachers in the "no training" group for very poor readers was only slightly less than the mid-point of the scale at 32.9.

Overall, questionnaire results indicated a significant difference in preferred strategies between teachers in the "no training" group and teachers in the

"reading course" group, but no significant difference in preferred strategies between teachers in the "degree" group and the other groups. Individual interviews revealed that other avenues beyond training were available for teachers to receive input concerning top-down strategies.

Summary

The results of the questionnaire included the following: teachers with 11 to 15 years experience more than teachers with 21 or more years experience tended to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers; and teachers in the "reading course" group more than the "no training" group tended to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. It was notable that the mean scores were close and near to the mid-point of the range which seems to indicate that these teachers combined top-down and bottom-up strategies, with a slight tendency towards the top-down. This view was supported by several interviewed teachers who stated that they tended to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies.

No relationship was found between strategies preferred by teachers who taught different grades for all readers; and no relationship was found between strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for good readers. On the whole, the interviews did not confirm these findings, but this may have been due to the small sample of interviewees who were not typical in that half of the teachers were chosen because they changed their strategies for pupils of different abilities.

This chapter has answered the three research questions concerned with teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers. The findings from the questionnaire were as follows:

- The strategies preferred by most teachers for all readers were the top-down strategies of shared book, reading to pupils and language experience; the strategy preferred by the fewest teachers for good and poor readers was the bottom-up strategy of flash cards; and the strategies preferred by the fewest teachers for very poor readers were the top-down strategy of directed silent reading and the bottom-up strategy of group oral reading.
- Teachers were significantly more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. No significant difference was found between the strategies teachers preferred for very poor readers and other ability groups. However, the mean scores were close and near to the mid-point which seems to indicate a tendency to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies.
- There was no significant relationship between the grade taught and teachers' preferred strategies for any ability group. Neither was there any significant difference between length of teaching experience and teachers' preferred strategies for good readers. However, teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were more inclined than were teachers with 21 years or more years experience to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers.
- Similarly, teachers in the "reading course" group tended to prefer top-down strategies for all readers more than teachers in the "no training" group. Again the means were close and near to the mid-point which seems to indicate a tendency to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies.

Interviews supported some of these questionnaire findings. These included the strategies teachers preferred to use with good, poor and very poor readers, and the strategies teachers preferred for pupils of different abilities. Interviews also supported the view, indicated by the closeness of the mean scores to the mid-point of the scale, that teachers preferred to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies. However, interviews did not, on the whole, support questionnaire findings concerning the relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training. Nevertheless, it is possible that the small sample size and the criteria which were used to identify these teachers could account for the discrepancies.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results and Discussion Related to Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

CHAPTER FIVE

Results and Discussion Related to Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

This chapter presents results and discussion of the questionnaire and, where pertinent, selected interviews in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. Consequently, the three following research questions are addressed:

- What are teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and their preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

5.1 Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

5.1.1 Questionnaire Results

Teachers' most popular orientation to reading

To determine the most popular orientation to reading, the order in which teachers placed each of the six reading components in the questionnaire was examined. These six components, located on page 5 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A - 1), consisted of three top-down items and three bottom-up items. The top-down items were: "the reader uses context to predict meaning"; "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"; and "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning". The bottom-up items were: "the reader moves eyes

systematically left to right across the page"; "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"; and "the reader decodes text using phonic rules".

The percentage of teachers who placed each of the components in first position was recorded. This process was then repeated for the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth positions. The results are shown in six graphs which may be found in Appendix E.

These graphs indicate that these teachers' most common sequential ordering of the reading process was as follows:

1. "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"
2. "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"
3. "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"
4. "the reader uses context to predict meaning"
5. "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"
6. "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning"

(see Appendix E , Figures 4 to 9).

This sequential ordering of the reading process contained bottom-up reading components in the first three positions and top-down reading components in the last three positions. Therefore, the teachers' most popular view of the reading process apparently began with the reader accessing the print upon the page and ended with the reader trying to understand the author's intent.

Teacher distribution according to their theoretical orientations to reading

The distribution of teachers according to their theoretical orientations to reading was ascertained from individual teachers' sequential ordering of the reading

components. The reading components were coded 'B' (bottom-up) or 'T' (top-down). Thus, each teacher's set of responses contained three components coded 'B' and three components coded 'T'. Teachers' theoretical orientations to reading were then determined from an analysis of their first four responses in the sequence.

Bottom-up teachers were identified as those with three reading components coded B in the first four items (BBBTTT, BBTBTT, BTBBTT, TBBBTT). Top-down teachers were identified as those with three reading components coded T in the first four items (TTTBBB, TBTTBB, TTBTBB, BTTTBB). Interactive teachers were identified as those with two reading components coded B and two reading components coded T in the first four items (BTTBBT, BTTBTB, TBBTBT, TBTBTB, TBTBBT, TTBBBT, BBTTBT). Thus, all teachers were categorised according to their theoretical orientations to reading as being either Top-down, Bottom-up or Interactive. On this basis, 75 teachers were identified as Bottom-up, 51 as Interactive, and 14 as Top-down.

5.1.2 Discussion

The most popular sequential ordering of the reading process in this study was similar to the bottom-up model proposed by Jorm (1985). His sequential order and that of teachers in the present sample began with the reader engaging the print on the page. He then slightly differed from the teachers in the present sample by ordering items from the smallest unit of language, the letter, to larger units which eventually incorporated phrases, thus starting the decoding process at an earlier stage than in the present study. However, both Jorm and these teachers in the present study delayed items related to meaning to the latter part of the sequence. Taken as a whole group, these teachers' sequential orderings of

the reading process demonstrated a bottom-up perspective in which the reader deals with information from the text before activating processes concerned with gaining meaning.

When distribution of teachers according to their theoretical orientations to reading were examined, it was found that Bottom-up teachers were the largest group in the sample ($n = 75$). This suggests that a theoretical orientation to reading which emphasised reading as initially a text-bound process, was popular with many of the teachers surveyed. This provides some evidence to support assumptions made by Sloan and Whitehead (1986), Cambourne (1988) and Cairney (1990) that most Australian teachers tended to have a bottom-up orientation to reading. Nevertheless, the present study is able to make claims about the theoretical orientations to reading of teachers in only one small area of Victoria and findings consequently can not be generalised to the whole of Australia.

It may be that the bottom-up model of reading was popular because teachers tended to find this text-based model relatively easy to understand. This view is supported by Sloan and Whitehead (1986) who have stated that the popularity of the bottom-up model was due to its simplicity, in that reading seems to be what happens when it is viewed from the surface. Moreover, an advantage in adopting this model is that it can be translated into practice by the implementation of a series of hierarchical skills (Lipson & Wixson, 1991).

Another explanation for the popularity of the bottom-up model, and subsequent prevalence of Bottom-up teachers in the present study, may be related to the length of their teaching experience. It was found that 83 teachers reported 16 or more years teaching experience, while only 22 teachers reported 10 years or less

experience. Therefore, as most teachers in the study were very experienced, it is likely that their initial training in reading was based on traditional bottom-up models. Furthermore, it is also possible that when most of these teachers were pupils, their own experiences of learning to read were based on their teachers' bottom-up premise that the reading process was primarily concerned with decoding the text upon the page. Thus, many teachers in the present study may have been influenced by bottom-up orientations to reading, first as pupils and then later as teachers in training.

After Bottom-up teachers, Interactive teachers were the second largest group according to their sequential ordering of components in the reading process ($n = 51$). This implies that a theoretical orientation to reading which is not solely text-based nor reader-based, but an interaction between these two sources of information, was popular with over a third of the teachers in the present study. This orientation to reading may be popular because, as Adams (1990) and Lipson and Wixson (1991) have noted, this view reconciles differences between top-down and bottom-up models of reading. Further, this may reflect a tendency among teachers to modify theories over time, rather than radically change their previous theoretical orientations to reading.

The large number of Interactive teachers in this sample may also be due to the coding system. As has been shown, Bottom-up and Top-down teachers were identified from four different combinations of 'B' (bottom-up) and 'T' (top-down) reading components, whereas Interactive teachers were identified from eight combinations. Thus, the possibility of identifying more Interactive teachers than Bottom-up or Top-down teachers is increased. However, Interactive

teachers were not in the majority so the coding system may only partially account for the relative popularity of this orientation to reading.

In contrast, Top-down teachers were in a minority among the teachers in the present study ($n = 14$). According to their sequential ordering of components in the reading process these teachers apparently believed meaning preceded recognition of the text upon the page, that is, that the text confirmed rather than preceded the readers' hypotheses. This perception of the reading process may have been supported by few teachers in the sample for several reasons. One reason may be the large number of experienced teachers in this study who possibly were not influenced greatly as pupils or as teachers in training by top-down models of reading. Another reason may be that many teachers found the top-down model of reading seemed to contradict what Johnson and Quorn (1981) term, "their intuitive notions of the reading process" (p.46), in which reading is defined in terms of that which can be externally observed. Furthermore, it is likely that many teachers in the present study were satisfied with their present theoretical orientation to reading and therefore saw no reason to adopt an alternative model.

The small number of Top-down teachers in the present study shows that teachers were unevenly distributed according to their sequential ordering of components in the reading process. Similar studies, which included three theoretical orientations to reading, also reported uneven distribution of teachers. Just as the present study found few Top-down teachers, Gove (1983) in her studies found few Interactive teachers, and Kinzer and Carrick (1986) in their study reported the presence of no Bottom-up teachers. Variations in sample size and grade

taught might also explain the differences in findings between the present study and studies cited.

Summary

Most teachers sequenced the components of the reading process in a bottom-up order, which was similar to that proposed by Jorm (1985). When teachers were distributed according to their theoretical orientations to reading, most teachers were classified as Bottom-up which supports assumptions made by writers about the theoretical orientation of Australian primary teachers. More than a third of teachers were classified as Interactive, while a minority of teachers were classified as Top-down. It was argued that factors such as an experienced teaching population and the simplicity of the bottom-up model of reading promoted the adoption of the bottom-up orientation to reading at the expense of the top-down orientation. On the other hand, the interactive orientation to reading may have been popular because such an orientation reconciled differences between the top-down and bottom-up models of reading.

5.2 Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading and Preferred Strategies

5.2.1 Questionnaire Results

This section of the chapter focuses on the research question which addresses the issue of which strategies Top-down, Interactive and Bottom-up teachers preferred for good, poor and very poor readers. Three one-way analyses of variance were carried out with teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as the independent variable, and teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers as the dependent variables. For each analysis of variance, Scheffé tests were used to compare group mean scores.

Good readers

The first one-way analysis of variance was carried out with strategies for good readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in the strategies preferred by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, for good readers, $F(2, 137) = 10.85, p < .001$.

Scheffé tests indicated a significant difference between Interactive teachers and Bottom-up teachers ($p < .05$) and between Top-down teachers and Bottom-up teachers ($p < .05$). Interactive teachers ($M = 28.0$) were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers ($M = 30.7$) to prefer top-down strategies for good readers. Similarly, Top-down teachers ($M = 26.6$) were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers ($M = 30.7$) to prefer top-down strategies for good readers. No significant difference was found in strategies preferred by Interactive and Top-down teachers for good readers (Table 10). It will be seen that all mean scores are below the mid-point of 33.

Table 10

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Good Readers Based on Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

<u>Theoretical orientation</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Bottom-up	75	30.7	3.6
Interactive	51	28.0	4.6
Top-down	14	26.6	3.4

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Poor readers

A second one-way analysis of variance was conducted with teachers' preferred strategies for poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in strategies preferred by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, for poor readers, $F(2, 137) = 8.63, p < .001$.

Scheffé tests again revealed a significant difference between Interactive teachers and Bottom-up teachers ($p < .05$) and a significant difference between Top-down teachers and Bottom-up teachers ($p < .05$). Interactive teachers ($M = 30.0$) were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers ($M = 32.7$) to prefer top-down strategies for poor readers. Similarly, Top-down teachers ($M = 29.0$) were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers ($M = 32.7$) to prefer top-down strategies for poor readers. Again, no significant difference was found in strategies preferred by Interactive and Top-down teachers for poor readers (Table 11). All mean scores are at or near the mid-point: Bottom-up teachers are very slightly below the mid-point of 33, while Interactive and Top-down teachers are near the mid-point of the range.

Table 11

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Poor Readers Based on Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

<u>Theoretical orientation</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Bottom-up	75	32.7	3.6
Interactive	51	30.0	5.0
Top-down	14	29.0	5.6

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Very poor readers

A third one-way analysis of variance was carried out with teachers' preferred strategies for very poor readers as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference in the strategies preferred by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, for very poor readers, $F(2, 137) = 8.16$, $p < .001$.

Scheffé tests indicated a significant difference between Interactive teachers and Bottom-up teachers in their preferred strategies for very poor readers ($p < .05$). Interactive teachers ($M = 30.1$) were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers ($M = 33.3$) to prefer top-down strategies for very poor readers (Table 12). No significant difference was found in strategies preferred by Top-down teachers and Bottom-up teachers for very poor readers.

Scheffé tests also showed no significant difference in strategies preferred by Top-down and Interactive teachers for very poor readers. Inspection of the means (Table 12) would suggest that Top-down teachers ($\underline{M} = 29.9$) and Interactive teachers ($\underline{M} = 30.1$) are more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for very poor readers than are Bottom-up teachers ($\underline{M} = 33.3$). However, the difference between Bottom-up and Top-down teachers' preferred strategies for very poor readers did not reach statistical significance, and most likely may be explained by the small number of teachers in the Top-down group ($\underline{n} = 14$). Again, it will be noted that all the mean scores are at or near the mid-point: Interactive and Top-down teachers are slightly below the mid-point, while Bottom-up teachers are very slightly above the mid-point of the range.

Table 12

Mean Scores of Teachers' Preferred Strategies for Very Poor Readers Based on Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading

<u>Theoretical orientation</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Bottom-up	75	33.3	4.3
Interactive	51	30.1	5.2
Top-down	14	29.9	5.6

Note. The lower the mean score the more top-down the response, the higher the mean score the more bottom-up the response.

Summary

There was no significant difference in the strategies Top-down and Interactive teachers preferred for good, poor and very poor readers. Interactive teachers

were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers to prefer top-down strategies for all ability levels. Top-down teachers were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers to prefer top-down strategies for good and poor readers. In the case of very poor readers, the difference between the teaching strategies of Top-down and Bottom-up teachers did not reach statistical significance. An examination of the mean scores indicated that all teachers were near the mid-point of the scale.

5.2.2 Interview Findings

Eight teachers were selected for interview according to their theoretical orientations to reading (see Appendix C - 1). These teachers included 2 Top-down teachers, 2 Interactive teachers and 4 Bottom-up teachers.

The responses of the teachers were then compared in relation to the strategies they said they used. As expected the 2 Top-down teachers said they used mainly top-down strategies, and the 2 Interactive teachers said they used combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. However, when the strategies which the 4 Bottom-up teachers said they used were examined only 1 teacher said he used mainly bottom-up strategies. Of the remaining 3 teachers, 1 said she used mainly top-down strategies and 2 teachers said they combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. These results indicated that 5 of the 8 teachers said they used strategies which were consistent with their theoretical orientations to reading, while the remaining 3 teachers said they used strategies which were not consistent with their theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of components in the reading process.

The Bottom-up teacher who said he used strategies consistent with his theoretical orientation to reading said he was "set" in his views. He also said he was wary of some approaches and the strategies he used tended to support the discipline, routine and order he established in his classroom. Furthermore, he said he used the same strategies with all pupils in order to encourage maximum effort from poorer readers as well as good readers. In addition, he said his strategy choices were influenced by colleagues and teaching experiences.

The Bottom-up teacher who said she used mainly top-down strategies showed inconsistency between her theory and practice. She appeared to be a very, experienced confident teacher influenced by "the latest trends" and "newest ideas" from journals and inservice courses which promoted new teaching materials to motivate pupils. In this she shared the same influences as the 2 Top-down teachers who showed consistency between their theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. However, this Bottom-up teacher did report that she used the top-down strategy of directed silent reading only with her good readers.

Although the 2 Top-down teachers showed consistency between stated theory and practice, they indicated that they had difficulties with their present instructional practices. As stated before, 1 teacher said she was consistent because she complied with school policy, while the other teacher said she was unsure about the use of the bottom-up strategy flash cards, which conflicted with her beliefs about learning. These beliefs about learning included the view that reading was the same process for all readers.

5.2.3 Discussion

Questionnaire results indicated that Interactive teachers were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. Moreover, there were no significant differences between Interactive and Top-down teachers in their choice of top-down and bottom-up strategies. These findings would appear to support Gove (1983) who stated that Interactive and Top-down teachers shared similar beliefs about the reading process, and therefore were likely to choose similar instructional practices.

The mean scores of the Interactive teachers, which ranged from 28.0 for good readers, to 30.0 for poor readers, and 30.1 for very poor readers, were fairly near the mid-point of 33. This suggests that Interactive teachers preferred a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies, with a slight tendency towards top-down strategies. Examination of the interview schedules supported this view as Interactive teachers said they used a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies (Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts, Teachers E & F). In addition, this finding would concur with Lipson and Wixson (1991) who suggest that Interactive teachers incorporate "high utility" top-down and bottom-up strategies into their teaching repertoire.

It should be noted that the use of combined top-down and bottom-up strategies is acknowledged as the most popular approach to the teaching of reading (Maggart & Zintz, 1990; Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Therefore, use of such strategy combinations may not necessarily indicate consistency between an interactive orientation to reading and stated practices. It may be that some teachers who combine top-down and bottom-up strategies do not make this selection in

accordance with an interactive orientation to reading, but in accordance with the need to use any available strategy to achieve literacy.

The questionnaire finding that Top-down teachers were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers to choose top-down strategies for good and poor readers would appear to imply that Top-down teachers tended to prefer strategies which were consistent with their theoretical orientations to reading for good and poor readers. This supports results of other studies which found that Top-down teachers tended to choose top-down instructional practices (Bawden et al., 1979; Gove, 1981; Rupley & Logan, 1985; Kinzer & Carrick, 1986). In addition, interviews also support this result as Top-down teachers said they mainly used top-down strategies (see Appendix C - 3, Interview Transcripts, Teachers A & B). In particular, 1 Top-down teacher showed consistency between her theory and practice by not using the bottom-up strategy of flash cards with poor readers. She said such a practice would not be consistent with her view that all readers learn in the same way. This in turn would be sanctioned by Goodman (1989) who claims that Top-down teachers should not compromise their instructional practices by adopting bottom-up strategies for pupils with reading difficulties.

Nevertheless, these findings are qualified by the fact that the mean scores show that the Top-down teachers were not completely consistent in their choice of strategies. Their mean scores, which ranged from 26.6 for good readers, to 29.0 for poor readers, and 29.9 for very poor readers, are much nearer to the mid-point of 33 than to the perfect top-down score of 11. This suggests that although there was a tendency to prefer top-down strategies, especially for good readers, as a group, the Top-down teachers also preferred bottom-up strategies.

Thus their theoretical orientation to reading and strategy choices were not completely consistent.

Questionnaire results also indicated that Bottom-up teachers were significantly less inclined than Interactive teachers to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. Bottom-up teachers more than Top-down teachers were also significantly less inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good and poor readers. Nevertheless, inspection of the means shows that, as a group, they did not only prefer bottom-up strategies. Their mean scores of 30.0 for good readers, 32.7 for poor readers, and 33.3 for very poor readers, are much nearer to the mid-point of 33 than to the perfect bottom-up score of 55. This again suggests that their theoretical orientation to reading and strategy choices were not completely consistent.

Interviews seem to support this finding as 3 of the 4 Bottom-up teachers revealed a lack of consistency between their theoretical orientation to reading and their preferred strategies. Two Bottom-up teachers said they used a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies because all their available strategies should be used to achieve literacy, while the third teacher said she used top-down strategies to motivate herself and her pupils. Such findings support studies by Anderson and Duffy (1984) and Richards et al. (1987) who found that teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and their preferred strategies were not always consistent because "non-reading" beliefs sometimes had more influence on their practices than their "beliefs about reading".

Examination of the mean scores showed that all were at or below the mid-point of 33. Thus the mean scores ranged from 26.6 for strategies preferred by Top-

down teachers for good readers to 33.5 for strategies preferred by Bottom-up teachers for very poor readers. This suggests that teachers of all theoretical orientations preferred combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. Therefore, it seems that Interactive teachers, who were expected to prefer a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies, were the only group whose theoretical orientation to reading and strategy choices were apparently completely consistent.

5.3 Teachers' Theoretical Orientations to Reading and Demographic Variables

5.3.1 Questionnaire Results

This section of the chapter focuses on the research question which addresses the issue of the relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and the demographic variables grade taught ("grade"), length of teaching experience ("experience"), and additional training in the teaching of reading ("training").

Grade taught

Grade ranged from Preps to Grade 6. A one-way analysis of variance was carried out with "grade" as the dependent variable and teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as the independent variable. Results revealed no significant difference in the grades taught by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, $F(2, 96) = 0.85, p > .05$.

Experience

Teachers were divided into four groups according to length of teaching experience. This included teachers with 1 to 10 years experience ($n = 22$), 11 to 15 years experience ($n = 35$), 16 to 20 years experience ($n = 35$) and 21 or more

years experience ($\underline{n} = 48$). A Chi square revealed no significant difference in the length of teaching experience of teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, Chi square = 7.47, $df = 6$, $p > .05$ ($\underline{N} = 140$).

Training

Teachers were divided into three groups according to the type of additional training in reading they had received. These included the "no training" group ($\underline{n} = 53$); the "reading course" group ($\underline{n} = 51$); and the "degree" group ($\underline{n} = 36$). A Chi square revealed no significant difference in the additional training received by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading, Chi square = 3.43, $df = 4$, $p > .05$ ($\underline{N} = 140$).

Summary

No significant differences existed between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables. Thus the grade taught, length of teaching experience and additional training in the teaching of reading were not significantly related to the theoretical orientations of Top-down, Interactive and Bottom-up teachers.

5.3.2 Discussion

Grade taught

Results revealed no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the grade taught. It may be that "grade" does not significantly relate to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading because many of the teachers in the sample were very experienced. They may have drawn their perceptions of the reading process from their reading experiences with several

grades rather than just their present grade and thus their theoretical orientations to reading were not constrained by a particular grade.

Experience

There was no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and length of teaching experience. This appears to disagree with studies by Bawden et al. (1979) and Duffy and Anderson (1984) which found that experienced teachers had bottom-up beliefs, while less experienced teachers had top-down beliefs. However, a later study by Rupley and Logan (1985) agreed with the finding of the present study in that years of teaching experience made no significant contribution to any reading outcomes. This lack of relationship may result from access to information about the reading process, such as in-service courses which have the potential to change teachers' theoretical orientations to reading, being made readily available to most teachers regardless of the number of years they have taught.

Training

There was no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and additional training in the teaching of reading. This fails to support findings by Richards et al. (1987) that additional training influences teachers' theoretical orientations to reading. However, this finding is consistent with that of Bawden et al (1979) and Bondy (1985) that teachers are influenced only slightly by models of the reading process.

It may appear incongruous that there was a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies and additional training in the teaching of reading, while there was no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical

orientations to reading and additional training. This apparent incongruity may be explained by examining the ways in which teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies are influenced by additional training.

Training courses such as ELIC have the potential to influence theoretical orientations to reading as well as instructional practices. However, it may well be that the practical aspects of a reading course are dominant because these practical aspects interest teachers the most. Further, it is possible that many inservice courses for teachers, such as ELIC, focus on practice rather than theory. Thus, it is possible for teachers to adopt practical aspects of a reading course while ignoring or discarding the theoretical models which underlie the practice. This supports Ridley (1990) who reported that teachers tended to be more interested in adopting whole-language strategies than in understanding the underlying theories of the reading process. This suggests that for some teachers, their theoretical orientations to reading might be the last aspect of the teaching of reading which is open to change. It may also be related to some inconsistencies between Top-down and Bottom-up teachers' theoretical orientations and their preferred strategies

Overall, the questionnaire findings indicated no significant relationships between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; additional training in the teaching of reading. Thus, it seems that for these teachers, grade, experience and training, are not significantly related to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading.

This chapter has answered three research questions concerned with teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process. The findings from the questionnaire and interviews were as follows:

- The most popular sequential ordering of the reading process conformed with a bottom-up order similar to that proposed by Jorm (1985). Further, Bottom-up teachers were the largest group in the sample ($n = 75$), with Interactive teachers being the second largest group ($n = 51$) and Top-down teachers the smallest group ($n = 14$).
- When groups of teachers were compared, Interactive teachers more than Bottom-up teachers chose top-down strategies for all readers, and Top-down teachers more than Bottom-up teachers chose top-down strategies for good and poor readers. However, only the Interactive teachers were apparently completely consistent in their theoretical orientations and preferred strategies. Although Top-down teachers had a slight preference for top-down strategies, they also chose bottom-up strategies. Similarly, Bottom-up teachers chose a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies.
- On the whole, teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process were not significantly related to the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

In this chapter results of the study are summarised. These results are then discussed in relation to issues raised in Chapters 4 and 5. Finally, limitations of the present study are discussed and implications for future research presented.

6.1 Summary of Findings

In the study 140 primary teachers were surveyed in order to ascertain their preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers; their theoretical orientations to reading; and their teaching grade, length of teaching experience and additional training in the teaching of reading. In addition, eight selected teachers were interviewed and asked about their use of reading strategies. This information was then used to address the six research questions of the present study. The first three research questions in relation to teachers' preferred strategies were:

1. What are teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?
2. Is there a significant difference in the strategies teachers prefer for good, poor and very poor readers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

With regard to the first research question, results of the questionnaire indicated that most teachers preferred the top-down strategies of shared book, reading to pupils and language experience for all readers. The strategies fewest teachers preferred were the bottom-up strategy of flash cards for good and poor readers, and the top-down strategy of directed silent reading and bottom-up strategy of group oral reading for very poor readers. Data from the interviews tended to support most of these findings, but indicated that the strategy of language experience may have been used by fewer teachers than indicated by the questionnaire.

In regard to the second research question there was a significant difference between teachers' preferred strategies for good and poor readers, indicating that teachers were significantly more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. This was qualified by all the mean scores being slightly below the mid-point of the scale which seems to indicate a preference to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies, with a slight tendency towards the top-down. Such a view was supported by interviews with some teachers who said that while they used a mixture of strategies for all readers, certain top-down strategies were appropriate for good readers because these strategies stimulated and extended pupils' knowledge.

Questionnaire results in relation to the third research question revealed no significant relationship in the strategies preferred by teachers who taught different grades. There was also no significant difference in the strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for good readers. However, there was a significant difference in the strategies preferred by teachers who had different amounts of teaching experience, for poor

and very poor readers. It was found that teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were significantly more inclined than were teachers with 21 or more years experience to prefer top-down strategies for poor and very poor readers. The mean scores of teachers with 11 to 15 years experience were below the mid-point of 33 for poor and very poor readers, while the mean scores of teachers with 21 or more years experience were very slightly below the mid-point of 33 for poor readers and very slightly above the mid-point of 33 for very poor readers. This again seems to indicate a preference for combined top-down and bottom-up strategies. Nevertheless, interview findings with teachers in these "experience" categories were inconclusive as teachers represented all three strategy combinations (top-down, bottom-up, combined).

Further results revealed significant differences in the strategies preferred by teachers who had different types of training. Thus, teachers in the "reading course" group were significantly more inclined than were the "no training" group to prefer top-down strategies for all readers. Again the mean scores were near or at the mid-point of the scale, thus indicating that teachers combined strategies, with a slight tendency towards the top-down. Interviews with selected teachers confirmed that there was a tendency to combine strategies. However, there seemed to be little relationship between additional training and the strategies some teachers said they used.

The present study also addressed three further research questions in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading, namely:

4. What are teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process?
5. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical

orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and their preferred strategies for good, poor and very poor readers?

6. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading as determined by their sequential ordering of the reading process and the demographic variables: grade taught; length of teaching experience; and additional training in the teaching of reading?

With regard to the fourth research question, teachers' responses to their sequential ordering of the reading process were coded and teachers were grouped subsequently as either Bottom-up, Top-down or Interactive. Results revealed 75 teachers who could be classified as Bottom-up, 51 teachers who could be classified as Interactive, and 14 teachers who could be classified as Top-down.

Further with regard to the fifth research question, results revealed a significant difference in the strategies preferred by Bottom-up, Interactive and Top-down teachers for all readers. Analysis of the questionnaire findings indicated that Interactive teachers were significantly more inclined than were Bottom-up teachers to prefer top-down strategies for all readers, and that Top-down teachers were significantly more inclined than Bottom-up teachers to prefer top-down strategies for good and poor readers. Interviews supported these findings as Top-down teachers stated that they used top-down strategies with all readers and Interactive teachers stated they used a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies with all readers. However, examination of the mean scores of all teachers indicated that only Interactive teachers were apparently consistent in their theoretical orientations and preferred strategies.

Questionnaire results in relation to the final research question revealed no significant difference in the grades taught by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading. Similarly, there were no significant differences in the length of teaching experience or type of additional training by teachers with different theoretical orientations to reading.

6.2

General Discussion

Findings of the present study revealed that teachers tended to give positive responses to most top-down strategies. In particular, the top-down strategies of shared book, reading to pupils and language experience were popular for all pupil abilities and so have been shown by these teachers to be "high utility" strategies (Lipson & Wixson, 1991). Thus, it seems that these teachers perceive strategies which promote positive attitudes to literature to be important for all readers.

It was noted in the literature review that strategies such as phonics and direct instruction seem to produce the most debate for and against the use of top-down or bottom-up strategies. However, questionnaire findings indicated that these strategies were neither the most nor least preferred strategies for all readers. Most teachers preferred the strategy of flash cards the least for good and poor readers (although not for very poor readers). Some of the interviews reflected this view. However, rejection of flash cards as a viable strategy was a problem for some teachers who recognised the need for pupils to acquire a large sight word vocabulary in order to become good readers, but perceived flash cards to be an inappropriate strategy for this purpose.

The present study also showed that teachers were significantly more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. Interviews indicated that the main reason for teachers using different strategies with pupils of different abilities seems to be teachers' perceptions that poor and very poor readers had limitations which required reinforcement, while good readers had potential which required extension and enrichment. Conversely, one of the reasons for teachers using the same strategies with all readers may be that poor and very poor readers were withdrawn from the class for special attention. It may be that this special attention included different strategies which then allowed class teachers to use the same strategies with all readers.

Findings also suggest that the relationship between pupil ability and teachers' preferred strategies is not completely consistent across the ability range. Sometimes teachers responded in the same way towards all readers by selecting the same strategies such as shared book. However, at other times teachers' preferences were directed at only two out of three ability groups: for example, the majority of teachers preferred flash cards the least for good and poor readers. Teachers seemed to distinguish between ability groups less frequently: for instance, group oral reading was the least popular strategy only for very poor readers. This may be due to teachers' perception that specific ability groups only occasionally require individualised attention and that, most of the time, the commonalities among ability groups is greater than their differences.

Significant findings indicated that teachers had an overall preference for top-down strategies. Nevertheless, these finding were qualified by the closeness of the mean scores to the mid-point of 33 which indicated that teachers preferred a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies, with a slight tendency

towards the top-down. Such a view is supported by the questionnaire findings that teachers gave positive responses towards most strategies for all readers. Interview findings also supported the view that teachers did not exclusively use top-down or bottom-up strategies; some teachers tended to use one strategy group more than the other.

It is interesting, given the large number of Bottom-up ($n = 75$) and Interactive teachers ($n = 51$) and the small number of Top-down teachers ($n = 14$), that findings indicated a significant preference for top-down strategies. This has been qualified by inspection of the mean scores to indicate that groups of teachers preferred a combination of strategies, with a slight preference towards the top-down. Nevertheless, top-down strategies still appear to be an important part of most teachers' preferred practice regardless of theoretical orientation. This may indicate that for most teachers top-down strategies are not as contentious as the literature seemed to suggest. Thus, it is possible that some of the literature does not reflect contemporary practice in Australian classrooms.

Conversely, as most Top-down teachers preferred to combine strategies these teachers must have preferred some bottom-up as well as top-down strategies. This is apparent from the means which ranged from 26.6 for good readers, to 29.0 for poor readers, and 29.9 for very poor readers. Such a range of scores near the mid-point of 33 seems to indicate that Top-down teachers perceive some bottom-up strategies to be successful, especially for poor and very poor readers. However, interviews with Top-down teachers suggested that contention still existed in relation to bottom-up strategies such as flash cards.

Only Interactive teachers were apparently consistent in their theoretical orientation and preferred strategies. Therefore, the apparent lack of consistency among Top-down and Bottom-up teachers may indicate that teachers of opposing orientations are more flexible in their strategy selection than the literature review seems to suggest. This in turn supports the view held by Duffy and Anderson (1984) that when teachers select their strategies factors other than theoretical orientation, such as classroom organisation and pupils' requirements, influence their decisions. However, according to Goodman (1989) a lack of consistency between theoretical orientation and preferred strategies may also indicate that teachers are limited in their awareness of the reading process and accordingly less effective in their teaching.

Results indicated no significant relationship between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the demographic variables grade, experience and training. Although these findings do not support some of the studies previously reported in the literature review, such findings tend to indicate that teachers in the present study may be fairly diverse in their theoretical orientations to reading. For instance, these findings indicate that colleagues may have shared similar orientations to reading regardless of grade, experience and training; that lower primary teachers and upper primary teachers are not polarised in their orientations to reading; and that experienced teachers may not necessarily be restricted to bottom-up orientations to reading.

In the present study, follow-up interviews supplemented the questionnaire in order to give further insight into issues concerned with teachers' strategy choices. Interviews supported questionnaire findings in that both found that strategies such as shared book and reading to pupils were popular for all readers.

Moreover, information from interviews provided some of the reasons for teachers' strategy choices. For instance, some teachers said that they preferred top-down strategies for good readers because these stimulated pupils' curiosity and extended their knowledge. However, at times information provided by the interviews differed from teachers' questionnaire responses.

Differences between questionnaire responses and interview transcripts indicated some differences between the strategies teachers said they preferred and the strategies teachers said they used. For instance, questionnaire and interview findings differed about the popularity of language experience as a strategy. Questionnaire responses indicated that whilst teachers said they preferred language experience for all readers, interview data revealed that only 4 out of 8 teachers said they used this strategy. Although most teachers said they preferred language experience for all readers, lower primary teachers were generally more likely to say they used this strategy with all readers, while upper primary teachers were more likely to say that this strategy was only used as a remedial measure.

During interviews, teachers often gave explanations regarding the apparent differences between the strategies they said they preferred and the strategies they claimed to use. Some of these reasons included self-imposed restrictions on practice from personal beliefs about reading, organisational constraints from team teaching and the use of mixed ability groups, and also the limitations imposed by school policy. For instance, one teacher expressed both personal and professional dissatisfaction when her school mandated that top-down strategies should be used with all pupils, regardless of their abilities. Such information could not have been obtained from the questionnaire and thus

supports the need for interview data to supplement the findings of questionnaires.

6.3 Some Limitations of the Present Study

One limitation of the present study was the sample of teachers who were given the questionnaire. It seems that the sample was biased due to the presence of a large number of experienced teachers. This happened even though selected schools varied in terms of size of pupil intake and geographical location. This over representation of experienced teachers in the sample is apparently due to state educational policies which determine the distribution of teacher populations. As such, this sample of teachers does seem typical of the schools in the region where the study was conducted.

It also appears that the small interview sample of 8 teachers was biased as a result of one of the three criteria applied in the selection procedure. Four teachers were chosen from the main sample because they said they preferred to use the same strategies for all readers, while another 4 teachers were chosen because they said they preferred to change some of their strategies for pupils of different abilities. This criterion produced a biased sample of interviewed teachers as questionnaire findings indicated that teachers were more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for good readers than for poor readers. That is, more teachers changed their strategies for pupils of different abilities. Although the interview sample was too small from which to generalise, it was used mainly to gain further insight into teachers' reasons for their strategy choices.

The present study was one of few which have investigated teachers' bottom-up, interactive and top-down orientations to reading. In this study, teachers were

required to order sequentially the components of the reading process. This did not allow for the view that the components of the reading process may be activated simultaneously. Moreover, there may be other components of the reading process which were not represented in this study. Further, as already discussed, the coding system used to group teachers in accordance with their theoretical orientations to reading may have led to a large number of teachers being categorised as Interactive.

6.4 Recommendations for Teaching and Further Research

As has been explained, there was a large number of experienced teachers in the schools used for this study. Therefore, there is a need to know if teachers with relatively less experience differ significantly from teachers with a great deal of experience in terms of their theoretical orientations to reading and preferred strategies. Such issues are important when targeting inservice reading courses and preservice courses for specific groups of teachers.

It has been noted that findings differed in relation to the range of pupil ability. In addition, results were not always the same for poor and very poor readers. This may indicate that there are times when primary teachers as a whole, or in groups, perceive that poor and very poor readers have different needs. Such findings are important in relation to the ways in which teachers are able to cater for both poor and very poor readers. Therefore, research should be undertaken to examine further the different needs of poor and very poor readers in primary schools.

Results in relation to teachers' theoretical orientations to reading revealed a large group of Interactive teachers. This result may have been influenced by the coding procedures adopted in the present study. There is therefore a need for

research which identifies different ways of ascertaining teachers' theoretical orientations to reading, perhaps by using more open-ended questions.

As all teachers tended to prefer combined top-down and bottom-up strategies, only Interactive teachers were found to be completely consistent in their strategy choices. This apparent lack of fit between theory and practice may indicate that teachers either are flexible in their strategy choices or limited in their understanding of the reading process. As such an understanding of the reading process is likely to influence teacher effectiveness, there is a need to undertake ethnographic research to examine teachers' perception of their own theoretical orientations and their reasons for strategy selection.

Results related to additional training produced diverse findings. On the one hand, teachers in the "reading course" group were significantly more inclined to prefer top-down strategies for all readers than teachers in the "no training" group. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between teachers' theoretical orientations to reading and the variable "training". Therefore, it seems that teachers attending inservice courses, such as ELIC, while likely to use top-down strategies more than bottom-up strategies, may not be inclined towards any particular theoretical orientation. Consequently, there appears to be a need for inservice courses to emphasise the theoretical basis which informs reading practice. If theoretical orientations are included already in inservice courses, they need to be presented as an integral part of practice. In this way, teachers may perceive the value of theoretical knowledge in their own teaching.

Finally, the questionnaire and interview findings revealed the strategies teachers said they preferred and the strategies teachers said they used. An extension of the present study could involve the observation of teachers as they teach reading in their classrooms. This would provide additional information about the strategies teachers actually use. Taken together, these three sources of information could then be compared to reveal those factors which either inhibit or promote the implementation of teachers' intended practices. Such research would be particularly pertinent to schools involved in changing their school language policy.

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APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This study perceives your experience, based on daily practice, as a valuable research resource. To this end, this questionnaire attempts to survey your reading beliefs and classroom practices.

This questionnaire is confidential and anonymity is assured.

1a. **Name** (optional) _____

Please **circle** the appropriate category on this page.

b. **Present teaching grade:**

P 1 2 3 4 5 6

Other (please specify) _____

c. **Number of years teaching experience, including this year:**

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21+

d. **Post training attended which included the teaching of reading?**

E.L.I.C. B.Ed. Masters None

Other (please specify) _____

The next three questions (2, 3 & 4) focus on successful reading practices with pupils who differ in ability i.e. average or above average (2), slightly below average (3), and greatly below average (4).

2. Below are several reading strategies (methods). To what extent do you believe these strategies help **good readers** (those **performing at or above** their age level), **sustain their success** in reading? Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by **circling** the appropriate number.

- 1 = **strongly agree**
 2 = **agree**
 3 = **unsure**
 4 = **disagree**
 5 = **strongly disagree**

<u>Method</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Choice</u>
a. Group Oral Reading	<i>Pupils in turn orally read extracts from the same text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
b. Language Experience	<i>Pupils' own language/writing used as text for reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
c. Phonics	<i>Single sounds, consonant blends taught as a prerequisite to reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
d. Individualised Reading	<i>Pupils silently read self-selected text and conferencel/instruct individuals.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
e. Shared Book	<i>Teacher/pupils orally share and discuss text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
f. Directed Silent Reading	<i>Teacher directed text read silently by pupils for specific purposes.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
g. Flash Cards	<i>Rapid exposure to specific words out of context.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
h. Word Study	<i>Analysis of word parts, e.g. word families, syllabification.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
i. Listening to Pupils Read	<i>Teacher/parent hears pupil reading specific text orally.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
j. Teacher Reads to Pupils	<i>Pupils listen to stories they do not necessarily read.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
k. Direct Instruction	<i>High degree of teacher instruction/ direction within a structured framework of specific skill sequence.</i>	1 2 3 4 5

3. Now consider those experiencing **some difficulties**, i.e. those pupils whose reading age is approximately **12 months** (1 year) below their chronological age. (Prep teachers consider pupils who are struggling slightly). To what extent do you believe these strategies help such children **achieve success** in reading? Please indicate by circling the appropriate number.

- 1 = strongly agree
 2 = agree
 3 = unsure
 4 = disagree
 5 = strongly disagree

<u>Method</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Choice</u>
a. Shared Book	<i>Teacher/pupils orally share and discuss text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
b. Flash Cards	<i>Rapid exposure to specific words out of context.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
c. Listening to Pupils Read	<i>Teacher/parent hears pupil reading specific text orally.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
d. Phonics	<i>Single sounds, consonant blends taught as a prerequisite to reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
e. Group Oral Reading	<i>Pupils in turn orally read extracts from the same text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
f. Teacher Reads to Pupils	<i>Pupils listen to stories they do not necessarily read.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
g. Direct Instruction	<i>High degree of teacher instruction/ direction within a structured framework of specific skill sequence.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
h. Individualised Reading	<i>Pupils silently read self-selected text and conference/instruct individuals.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
i. Word Study	<i>Analysis of word parts, e.g. word families, syllabification.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
j. Language Experience	<i>Pupils' own language/writing used as text for reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
k. Directed Silent Reading	<i>Teacher directed text read silently by pupils for specific purposes.</i>	1 2 3 4 5

4. Again, consider successful reading strategies, but this time with pupils experiencing **severe reading difficulties**, i.e. pupils whose reading age is approximately **36 months (3 years)** or more below their chronological age. (Teachers of Grades Prep, 1 or 2 consider those pupils with the greatest reading difficulties). To what extent do you believe these strategies help such children achieve success in reading? Please indicate by circling the appropriate number.

1 = strongly agree
 2 = agree
 3 = unsure
 4 = disagree
 5 = strongly disagree

<u>Method</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Choice</u>
a. Phonics	<i>Single sounds, consonant blends taught as a prerequisite to reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
b. Individualised Reading	<i>Pupils silently read self-selected text and conferencel/instruct individuals.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
c. Flash Cards	<i>Rapid exposure to specific words out of context.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
d. Direct Instruction	<i>High degree of teacher instruction/ direction within a structured framework of specific skill sequence.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
e. Shared Book	<i>Teacher/pupils orally share and discuss text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
f. Word Study	<i>Analysis of word parts, e.g. word families, syllabification.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
g. Group Oral Reading	<i>Pupils in turn orally read extracts from the same text.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
h. Language Experience	<i>Pupils' own language/writing used as text for reading.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
i. Directed Silent Reading	<i>Teacher directed text read silently by pupils for specific purposes.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
j. Listening to Pupils Read	<i>Teacher/parent hears pupil reading specific text orally.</i>	1 2 3 4 5
k. Teacher Reads to Pupils	<i>Pupils listen to stories they do not necessarily read.</i>	1 2 3 4 5

5 . The items below list aspects of the **reading process. Please **rank order** these items, from 1 to 6, in accordance with your own view of the reading process.**

Put (1) for the first item which you believe begins the reading process, (2) for the next, and so on. The last number (6) will be the item you believe occurs at the end of the reading process.

The reader....

- a. recognizes words instantly at sight. _____
- b. combines new textual information with prior knowledge. _____
- c. moves eyes systematically left to right across the page. _____
- d. uses context to predict meaning. _____
- e. decodes text using phonic rules. _____
- f. reconstructs the author's meaning. _____

Thank you for completing this final section. Please check that you have circled a response to all items on the questionnaire. Your participation has been much appreciated.

THE PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

This study perceives your experience, based on daily practice, as a valuable research resource. To this end, this questionnaire attempts to survey your reading beliefs and classroom practices.

This questionnaire is confidential and anonymity is assured.

1a. Name (optional) _____

Please circle the appropriate category on this page.

b. Your present age:

20-25 26-30 36-40 41-45 46+

c. Present teaching grade:

P 1 2 3 4 5 6

Other (please specify) _____

d. Number of years teaching experience, including this year:

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21+

e. Have you attended any training courses involving the teaching of reading?

If yes, please specify _____

A - 2

2. Below are several reading strategies (methods). To what extent do you believe these strategies help **good readers** (those **performing at** or **above** their age level), **sustain** their **success** in reading? Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by **circling** the appropriate number.

- 1 = strongly agree**
2 = agree
3 = unsure
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

<u>Method</u>	<u>Choice</u>				
a. Language Experience	1	2	3	4	5
b. Phonics	1	2	3	4	5
c. Shared Book	1	2	3	4	5
d. Group Oral Reading	1	2	3	4	5
e. Directed Silent Reading	1	2	3	4	5
f. Individualised Reading	1	2	3	4	5
g. Flash Cards	1	2	3	4	5
h. Word Study	1	2	3	4	5
i. Listening to Pupils Read	1	2	3	4	5
j. Reading to Pupils	1	2	3	4	5
k. Direct Instruction	1	2	3	4	5

3 . Now consider those experiencing **some difficulties**, i.e. those pupils whose reading age is approximately **12 months** (1 year) below their chronological age. (Prep teachers consider pupils who are struggling slightly). To what extent do you believe these strategies help such children **achieve success** in reading? Please indicate by circling the appropriate number.

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = unsure

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

<u>Method</u>	<u>Choice</u>				
a. Language Experience	1	2	3	4	5
b. Phonics	1	2	3	4	5
c. Flash Cards	1	2	3	4	5
d. Directed Silent Reading	1	2	3	4	5
e. Shared Book	1	2	3	4	5
f. Listening to Pupils Read	1	2	3	4	5
g. Group Oral Reading	1	2	3	4	5
h. Direct Instruction	1	2	3	4	5
i. Individualised Reading	1	2	3	4	5
j. Word Study	1	2	3	4	5
k. Reading to Pupils	1	2	3	4	5

4. Again, consider successful reading strategies, but this time with pupils experiencing severe reading difficulties, i.e. pupils whose reading age is approximately 36 months (3 years) or more below their chronological age. (Teachers of Grades Prep, 1 or 2 consider those pupils with the greatest reading difficulties). To what extent do you believe these strategies help such children achieve success in reading? Please indicate by circling the appropriate number.

- 1 = strongly agree
 2 = agree
 3 = unsure
 4 = disagree
 5 = strongly disagree

<u>Method</u>	<u>Choice</u>				
a. Phonics	1	2	3	4	5
b. Shared Book	1	2	3	4	5
c. Flash cards	1	2	3	4	5
d. Direct Instruction	1	2	3	4	5
e. Individualised Reading	1	2	3	4	5
f. Word Study	1	2	3	4	5
g. Directed Silent Reading	1	2	3	4	5
h. Reading to Pupils	1	2	3	4	5
i. Language Experience	1	2	3	4	5
j. Group Oral Reading	1	2	3	4	5
k. Listening to Pupils Read	1	2	3	4	5

5 . The items below list aspects of the reading process. Please rank order these items, from 1 to 6, in accordance with your own view of the reading process.

Put (1) for the first item which you believe begins the reading process, (2) for the next, and so on. The last number (6) will be the item you believe occurs at the end of the reading process.

The reader....

- a. recognizes words instantly at sight. _____
- b. combines new textual information with prior knowledge. _____
- c. moves eyes systematically left to right across the page. _____
- d. uses context to predict meaning. _____
- e. decodes text using phonic rules. _____
- f. reconstructs the author's meaning. _____

Thank you for completing this final section. Please check that you have circled a response to all items on the questionnaire. Your participation has been much appreciated.

APPENDIX B

Theoretical Orientations to Reading Profile (TORP) DeFord (1979)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----|----|
| 1. | A child needs to be able to verbalise the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 2. | An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 3. | Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 4. | Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension . | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 5. | Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences . | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 6. | When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 7. | It is good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 8. | The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words . | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 9. | Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems for the teaching of reading. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 10. | It is good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral mistake is made. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 11. | It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become part of sight vocabulary. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 12. | Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 13. | It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 14. | Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns etc.) is useful in proficient reading. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 15. | When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 16. | Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest). | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |
| 17. | It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | SA | SD |

B - 1

- | | |
|---|---|
| 18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 19. Ability to use accent patterns in multi syllable words (<i>pho'</i> to graph, <i>pho to'</i> gra phy, and <i>pho to gra'</i> phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat) is a means by which children can best learn to read. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home", the response should be left uncorrected. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |
| 28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jump <u>ed</u>). | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"> 12345 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> SASD </div> |

Propositions About Reading Instruction (PARI)

Duffy & Metheny (1979)

Directions: For each of the following 45 items, please indicate your level of agreement (or disagreement) by circling one of the five letters. In all cases, A means strongly agree, C neutral or undecided, D disagree and E strongly disagree. IMPORTANT: If you cannot decide upon a response to a particular item after 30 seconds, you should circle C for undecided and go to the next item.

I	I	I	I	I
A	B	C	D	E
strongly	agree	neutral or	disagree	strongly
agree		undecided		disagree

- I believe that pupil success in reading should be determined primarily by noting progress from easier basal readers to harder basal readers.
A B C D E
- I believe that teachers should directly teach the basic skills of reading to those pupils who need them.
A B C D E
- I believe that the best reading materials are those which help children solve problems of importance to them.
A B C D E
- I believe that an important indicator of reading growth is how often a pupil voluntarily uses reading in his daily life.
A B C D E
- I believe that contextual clues are the most important word recognition aids and should receive more instructional emphasis than sight words or phonics.
A B C D E
- I believe that basal textbook materials are an important part of good instructional programs in reading.
A B C D E
- I believe that primary grade reading should emphasize decoding skills more than comprehension.
A B C D E
- I believe that reading success should be measured primarily by noting how well the pupil uses his reading ability for other classroom activities.
A B C D E
- I believe that the teacher's role is to help children learn to love reading by allowing frequent free reading and by conducting individual book conferences.
A B C D E

10. I believe that reading instruction should focus heavily on comprehension, even at the beginning stages of reading.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
11. I believe that an important criteria for grouping pupils is the level of basal textbook each is able to read.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
12. I believe that all children should be systematically taught to use phonic skills.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
13. I believe that the goal of developing comprehension is best achieved by giving pupils realistic reading problems which they see as meaningful in their lives.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
14. I believe that instruction should emphasize the higher-level comprehension processes typically found in good children's literature.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
15. I believe that a very important measure of reading success is the degree to which pupils use reading as a communication process.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
16. I believe that considerable instructional time should be devoted to conducting guided reading lessons using selections such as those found in basal textbooks.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
17. I believe that a carefully structured skills guide should be used when teaching reading to insure that each separate skill is mastered.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
18. I believe that reading groups should be formed as the need for them arises - and should be disbanded when the need has been met.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
19. I believe that we should spend less time teaching pupils how to read and more time in getting them interested in reading.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
20. I believe that reading materials should help children learn to read in a natural manner similar to the way they learned to speak.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
21. I believe that children who have similar skill deficiencies should be grouped together for instruction.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---
22. I believe that reading groups should be based on the children's interests.

A	B	C	D	E
---	---	---	---	---

23. I believe that teachers should spend more instructional reading time on helping children use language as a communication process.

A B C D E

24. I believe that word recognition should emphasize the new vocabulary words associated with each basal text story.

A B C D E

25. I believe that a significant part of a teacher's time should be spent in teaching basic reading skills.

A B C D E

26. I believe that word recognition instruction should not become more important than involving pupils in real-life reading tasks.

A B C D E

27. I believe that comprehension should be taught by asking questions about the basal text story being read.

A B C D E

28. I believe that one effective way to determine pupil reading success is to note how many skills he has learned.

A B C D E

29. I believe that a significant amount of the instructional time in reading should be spent on purposeful, real-life projects and activities which call for the use of reading.

A B C D E

30. I believe that word recognition instruction is not as important in reading as providing children with stimulating, interesting materials to read.

A B C D E

31. I believe that if grouping is used, pupil assignment to groups should reflect more emphasis on meaning cues in reading.

A B C D E

32. I believe that the teacher's role in reading is to assign pupils to appropriate basal materials and direct them as they complete the material.

A B C D E

33. I believe that fewer children would have difficulty learning to read if we stopped teaching reading during self-contained reading periods, and, instead, taught it as a part of all subjects.

A B C D E

34. I believe that children should be allowed to choose the stories and books they want to read during the regular reading period.

A B C D E

35. I believe that the teacher's role is to emphasize the communication aspects of reading more than skills.

A B C D E

36. I believe that a basal text should be used to teach reading.

A B C D E

37. I believe that reading is a difficult process which must usually be taught in a step-by-step sequence if we are to develop good readers.

A B C D E

38. I believe that the teacher's role is to involve pupils in realistic reading tasks which illustrate the functional utility of reading.

A B C D E

39. I believe that reading is not difficult for most children to learn if they are provided with stimulating and lively materials to read.

A B C D E

40. I believe that reading instruction should focus more on the use of meaning cues and less on skill instruction.

A B C D E

41. I believe that I should spend equal amounts of time with the low, middle, and high basal text groups.

A B C D E

42. I believe that reading is composed of a series of hierarchical skills which must be taught sequentially and then used in combination if one is to read successfully.

A B C D E

43. I believe that reading instruction should be taught so that pupils can use reading successfully in all curricular areas.

A B C D E

44. I believe that reading would not be such a problem today if we made greater efforts to interest children in the reading of good children's literature.

A B C D E

45. I believe that too much emphasis is being placed on skills (especially decoding skills) in reading programs today.

A B C D E

APPENDIX C

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Class size: ____ M: ____ F: ____
2. Poor readers: ____ M: ____ F: ____
3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?
4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?
5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?
6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

Questionnaire Responses of Teachers A to H

Teacher A

Teacher A was a lower primary teacher in charge of a composite Grade 1 and 2 class. She had 16 to 20 years experience and no additional training in the teaching of reading. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as a Top-down teacher. She preferred the same strategies for all readers and gave negative responses towards the bottom-up strategies of group oral reading and phonics for all readers.

Teacher B

Teacher B was a lower primary teacher in charge of a Prep class. She had 16 to 20 years experience and had attended an ELIC inservice course. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as a Top-down teacher. She gave negative responses for the strategies of group oral reading, direct instruction, and directed silent reading for all readers. However, she preferred to change some of her strategies for pupils of different abilities. Thus she preferred the strategy of word study for good readers rather than for poor and very poor readers, and preferred the strategy of flash cards for poor readers rather than for good and very poor readers.

Teacher C

Teacher C was a lower primary teacher in charge of a Grade 2 class. She had 11 to 15 years experience and had attended an ELIC inservice course. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as a Bottom-up teacher. She preferred the same strategies for all readers and

gave negative responses towards the bottom-up strategies of flash cards, group oral reading and direct instruction for all readers.

Teacher D

Teacher D was a lower primary teacher in charge of a Grade 2 class. She had 21 or more years experience and had attended an ELIC inservice course and gained a B.Ed degree. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as a Bottom-up teacher. She gave negative responses for the strategies of flash cards and direct instruction for all readers. However, she preferred to change some of her strategies for pupils of different abilities. Thus she preferred the strategies of word study, individualised reading, and directed silent reading for good readers rather than for poor and very poor readers.

Teacher E

Teacher E was an upper primary teacher in charge of a Grade 5 class. He had 16 to 20 years experience and no additional training in the teaching of reading. From his sequential ordering of the components in the reading process he was classified as an Interactive teacher. He preferred the same strategies for all readers and gave a negative response towards the strategy of flash cards for all readers.

Teacher F

Teacher F was an upper primary teacher in charge of a Grade 5 class. She had 21 or more years experience and had attended a CLIP inservice course and gained a B. Ed degree. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as an Interactive teacher. She gave negative

responses for the strategies of group oral reading and phonics for all readers. However, she preferred to change some of her strategies for pupils of different abilities. Thus she preferred the strategies of word study and individualised reading for good and poor readers rather than for very poor readers; and preferred the strategy of flash cards for very poor readers rather than for good and poor readers.

Teacher G

Teacher G was an upper primary teacher in charge of a composite Grade 5 and 6 class. He had 11 to 15 years experience and had attended a CLIP inservice course and gained a B.Ed degree. From his sequential ordering of the components in the reading process he was classified as a Bottom-up teacher. He preferred the same strategies for all readers and gave no negative responses to any strategy.

Teacher H

Teacher H was an upper primary Grade 5 teacher. She had 21 or more years experience and no additional training in the teaching of reading. From her sequential ordering of the components in the reading process she was classified as a Bottom-up teacher. She gave negative responses for the strategy of group oral reading for all readers. However, she preferred to change some of her strategies for pupils of different abilities. Thus she preferred the strategies of flash cards and individualised reading for good and poor readers rather than for very poor readers; the strategy of directed silent reading for good readers rather than for poor and very poor readers; and the strategy of phonics for poor and very poor readers rather than for good readers.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Teacher A

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Class size: 21 | M: 15 | F: 6 |
| 2. Poor readers: 5 | M: 5 | F: 0 |

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Well, this is where it becomes quite difficult really. In the past, I would have always used flash cards, but this year I really haven't - mainly because the trend in this school is not to use reading schemes - to kind of do, you know, learn to read by reading. Flash cards don't really work and the children who really have had the most difficulty this year have done a lot of work, individual work with the Principal. I'm just giving them books that I think are really easy for them that they can cope with to build their confidence.

(prompt - flash cards incompatible with school)

Yes, I'm not really happy with that.

(prompt - left specific teaching to the Principal)

Yes, I would say I have with those children - I kind of feel ... I mean, its been great to have his support and that's been really, really wonderful, but I really don't feel happy with that kind of teaching. I still kind of basically want to go back to my old tried and true methods ... and teaching the words in the book of the reading scheme thoroughly.

(prompt - attitude towards 'real book' philosophy)

I think that teaching reading that way is fine for the brighter children. They can pick it up really easily, but I don't think its so good for the slower children. Yes, I think they need more basic practice, a lot of repetition which they don't really get with 'real books'.

I use Bookshelf so I do a lot of the activities from the teacher's book for that.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Well, probably school policy, I guess.

(prompt - different effects since last year)

That's true actually because I really feel as if ... I mean in theory I agree with this idea of the children learning to read by reading, but in practice I don't know that it works that way. As I say, its fine for brighter children.

(prompt - influence of past experience and practice)

Oh dear, I don't know. I think it's probably making me feel quite dissatisfied actually as far as teaching is concerned at the moment. The fact that I'm not

using it [my experience] and I don't feel as if what I'm doing is being successful.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

In the classroom situation, I think it's being able to concentrate on perhaps one or two children while the other children are all in the room at the same time because there are so many distractions for them and for me.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

I don't know. Not much of an answer, is it? I don't know what I'd say. I feel at the moment I'm not in a position to offer advice. I feel as though it's the other way round. I need advice.

Teacher B

1. Class size: 26

M: 10

F: 16

2. Poor readers: 9

M: 6

F: 3

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Well, I do extra prediction and 'what do you think is going to happen next?', and, 'how would you feel?' - relating a story to themselves and get them to think what might happen next or how a story could go.

(prompt - methods a continuation of work done with good readers)

That's right, but concentrating on it with those kids. Model reading and model writing is another strategy I use for them. These strategies I use in the grade all the time, but for kids who are having problems, extra, more of the same - lots more.

(prompt - ability level)

All mixed up, mixed ability also gives the slower reader the model at a peer level.

(prompt - is reading based on Big Books, shared books and reading schemes)

Basically, I base it [reading] on a theme and then bring in lots of other literature from the library. We have dozens of stories every day. The kids have got lots to choose from and lots go back too.

(prompt - do you have SSR)

We do, not regularly. We have three sessions a week - we have silent reading.

(prompt - do you demonstrate reading for pleasure)

And experience type activities, even little things about 'show and tell'. Kids enjoy those because they are real things to them and I do find that when they do Sustained Silent Reading, they go for the experience books, books that are

written in the grade during the year. There's sentence cards and things like that they know we've done throughout the year and they can cut them up and match them.

(prompt - teacher's questionnaire response to word study)

Well, in my grade, I teach word study in that I've introduced each of the single sounds and it's been on a theme basis, so every week we've done a new sound, and we've talked about the things that start with that and we might make it 'P', so we had 'a pink and purple party' that week. So, it involves the sound in every other activity we do. When we're reading Big Books, we are always looking at word formation. We do a lot of word study incidentally, but the brighter kids are the only ones that I actually introduce ... you know, formal word study; it's because they enjoy it. They like to understand how words are made and how we use the words that we make. I suppose it's a form of spelling. The brighter kids are wanting to know how to spell words correctly and so I allow... I introduce it there for that reason.

(prompt - within a context or as part of a formal lesson)

Well, most often it's come from story writing or something and it may be introduced as a formal lesson the next day, but most of the time it's come from their writing. It's been something that one of those kids has wanted to be able to spell correctly and then go onto a word family about it is usually the way I work it.

(prompt - about process writing)

And that's where the word study comes from. The brighter kids soon... I mean half way through Prep they're realising that the word that they are writing for the is not the word that they read for the and sometimes they'll go to the books and find the correct spelling and that's when they want to know. They flatly refuse to write something that they know is wrong.

I believe that most kids need the same sort of activities whether they're good standard or poor standard. The poor kids probably need lots more of it ... a certain amount of extension for those brighter kids.

The poor kids having seen words or a particular word many times, they still don't know that word. They have limited sight vocab. I don't teach sight vocab. so that's the gray area as far as I'm concerned. I don't believe in teaching sight vocab., but then the brighter kids manage to pick one up of their own accord and internalise some words.

That's one of the enigmas of it. That it's very hard to teach kids who don't teach themselves I suppose - does that make sense? The brighter ones with the use of story books and Big Books and sharing reading activities, they pick up so much and that carries on where the others who haven't had those experiences at home... some of those kids (the brighter ones) come to school practically reading so the slower ones are the ones who miss out at home and then it's so much more difficult at school.

particularly. Besides that, I don't think they're far enough below the others to be ... there's no big gap.

We might just sort of redo the story or remind them [of events]. I'll go over it again, if we've done a story or writing answers or doing a picture or whatever. 'Now, who can tell me this and that?' - reminding them of details; so in a way, I'm helping them go on that little bit more. I do a bit of brainstorming where I can make sure that I've got a brighter child amongst the others, one that can sort of direct.

(prompt - main thrust of language teaching)

Language experience and story reading. A couple of the other Grade 2 teachers and I did ELIC earlier this year. We tried to incorporate as many of those ideas that fit into our sort of philosophy and needs at this stage. It left us all sort of a little bit floundering at first. I think, after talking to the other teachers who've also had years of experience as well, there's a lot of things we've hung on to - such as our word bank, spelling bank, that sort of thing. Yes, I would say that my teaching style is changing on account of that. At least, I'm considering doing things in the light of suggestions made.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Well, ELIC though they left us all with more questions than answers.

I really believe that it doesn't matter what methods are used. With so many of the children it wouldn't matter what method, even if you went right back to 'John and Betty'. I mean, let's face it, we were taught in a very, very different style and yet most of us can read. I think most children are going to get by whatever method you use if it's done thoroughly. The effectiveness may vary ... I love the idea of the literature side of it. But with poor readers, I think you've just got to try every approach.

I had occasion in Grade 3 to have a boy who was a complete non-reader. I got him in his fourth year in school and by that time he could vocalise to a certain extent. It was difficult to understand what he was saying. I tried various approaches and dug up 'Oscar and Samantha' and he just took off like that. But of course the thing was he was ready, it was a readiness thing even though he was much, much older than other children. I really think that methods are all there and the schemes are all there and it's a case with poor readers that we have to find which one matches up with them because sure there is something somewhere that will click.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

Patience. I suppose the fact that it's [reading progress] variable. They go along quite happily and then they sort of stop. I think that is the greatest frustration more than anything. I would like to see them progressing daily in tiny bits.

Yes, well when they've been a long way behind the others and there hasn't been any specific help, finding the time to set programs has been a problem. The program's [devised] so that they don't feel isolated from the other children. I mean, I'm always conscious of their self-esteem as well. The other children know who can't read, but it makes it more obvious if you're putting baby work in front of those [poor readers]. So I suppose that's the difficulty, finding the time and doing it [presenting work] in a subtle way.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

Well, obviously you go to somebody who has been teaching for years and that you admire because obviously they've been through it all. Unless the child is in a Prep Grade, you can always go to the previous teacher. Certainly, I would go to Personnel first.

Also reading, there's so much you could read. Yes, well a bit of modern reading, you know, that's great if there is somebody to interpret it into your situation. You could waste an awful lot of time reading the wrong things. Just because something has been recently published, it doesn't mean it's necessarily going to be worthwhile. I suppose I would suggest, read about it, but keep an open mind.

Begin to get an overall picture. The profile would help, the previous teacher's [view], you'd get a family picture of other family members, you get a bit of the family history of their traumas, moving house frequently, this sort of thing. I think that you would end up with a picture of that child. Now having got that picture, how you deal with it comes back to the experienced teachers and trying, at least temporarily, trying out what we think might help. Then you might have to seek expert guidance after that. We don't all fit into the mould, do we?

Teacher D

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Class size: 25 | M: 14 | F: 11 |
| 2. Poor readers: 6 | M: 5 | F: 1 |

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Practice, lots of oral practice. Lots of cloze exercises where they've got to find the missing word, not necessarily the one that's in the book, to give them practice and give them experience in finding other words that also make sense in the context. And then going back and reading the passage again with the word that was already in it and discussing that it's O.K. to have [different] words ... that lots of words mean the same. That's one method that I think I use with those children. I use it with all children, but those children need a lot of repetition.

They also need to have a book that has an interest level [interesting for a particular child]. So they're small short stories, with interesting illustrations. A lot of discussion about the book too - I also do that with the other children, it's not necessarily the poor readers.

(prompt - differentiate at all between good and poor readers)

Yes, I suppose with the good readers and even middling group, they have a lot of silent reading where I will let them read a passage or a chapter, whatever the size of the book is, and they attempt some kind of comprehension exercise or some skill that they have to do from just silent reading. Also, to test their ability in being able to see what the story ... getting the meaning, basically. It's getting

the meaning of the story. So the poorer children in that group, they really can't have much silent reading because they lack the staying power, they lack the concentration, their interest span or their concentration span is much shorter.

The poorer readers lack word attack and have very poor skill in going about finding out what the word means. For instance, if they come to a word that they don't know they may know the initial sound, but they haven't got the capability of going back to the beginning of the sentence, reading it again and going on to get meaning. So there's no risk taking - lack of taking a risk.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Training, experience, colleagues, latest trends, newest ideas - we'll give them a go. Inservices - you always must keep an eye up with the newest things when you're a teacher.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

To get their interest I think and develop their memory. Now that's very hard to do that, but basically with children who are poor ... they have poor short term memory, a lot of them have that and so you can tell them time and time again, over and over again, words and phrases and parts of a book and they'll forget it next time. And so that all comes with a lack of interest. Very often children who are poor readers are also restless. They're very often behaviour problems and they're very often boys. I've had 30 years experience and they're very often boys who are poor readers. Of course, there are always the girls too, but it seems to me that whatever the psychological or physiological reason behind it, boys often have reading problems

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

I think that first of all you must expose children to a wide range of books. You must read a lot to the children. The use of Big Book is marvellous. That is one of the best things that has been introduced in recent times - the publication of the large print and the large book for group reading. Children get quite excited about the big pictures and the discussion. You cue the reading using methods where they've got to fill in the missing word and predict. You get their interest. I think that would be very good to start off with - to get an inexperienced teacher to do that particularly. I'm talking about the younger children, but this can work quite well with the upper school too if they're having problems; they like the Big Books.

A literature based program, or as it's now called 'the whole language approach' works well. You surround the children with words in the room - interest words, words attached to every area of the curriculum that you're working on. They've got it [print] all around them, they can see ... and give them lots of writing, creative writing. So there's three things - Big Books, lots of literature, and writing their own stories.

Teacher E

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Class size: 27 | M: 12 | F: 15 |
| 2. Poor readers: 4 | M: 3 | F: 1 |

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Well, we work with supplementary material and we've had an extra teacher involved with taking those kids out of the group and working with them individually.

(prompt - focus of this work)

The teacher works with similar materials at a lower level. He works through the materials, works through the questions and so on discussing what the questions may be asking, what the child sort of thinks the story is all about and then discusses the many possible answers and how to choose a correct answer and all of those sort of strategies. Try to develop in the child probably an ability to look at the options and choose the best options and be able to understand what questions are really asking by picking up clues from questions and picking out key words or phrases to answer them.

(prompt - degree of structure)

No, I would say that it's a 50:50 sort of balance. That a lot of it, say 50% is fairly structured and the other 50% is fairly unstructured in that we may choose to follow any interesting options that come along and try and make the most of what's happening at the spur of the moment.

(prompt - review information so far, schemes the basis)

That is the core - certainly it's supplemented with whatever materials are applicable at the time. We also have a school literature program which is based around a series of novels which relate to various themes and so on and they involve question sheets that children do assignments on and so forth.

(prompt - hearing reading)

We read through stories and so on, in the room, especially with the comprehension activities. The kids take turns in reading - group oral reading; sometimes it's the whole class, sometimes it's individuals.

(prompt - oral/ silent reading)

I think they both have their place and often what I do is to combine both by first of all getting the children to read the story silently, a short story especially, and then we'll read it together orally, take it in turns. That way both areas [types of reading] have been used and the child is a lot more familiar with the text we're using. Quite often we'll look at the questions before hand so that they're prepared and looking for those clues that will help them.

I've found that the methods I use really need to be interest based. There's no way that I can see you achieving success with any reading program if it's not made interesting for the children, and if the children don't find it interesting.

They have a number of novels that they may select from and what I try and do is, if possible, follow themes that are working in the class or something that's come up in the news item that really has captured their interest. If I can follow a theme through the materials that are available in one of the programs, then I'll do that, if not, I'll select. Then of course there are supplementary materials where kids might be working individually and then they'll choose what they want to work on and so on. Probably, the majority of the time I'm directing what they read, but I do take their interests into account.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Successes and failures of the past I think. I think as we gain more experience through our careers, we find strategies that work and those that don't, and we see things in other teachers that are valuable strategies and others that perhaps we don't choose to think are so valuable. Those things combine to form your approach.

(prompt - successes)

Well, the thing I mentioned, which is looking at questions before reading material, discussing questions. I find that a lot of class discussion is very helpful so that the kids are sharing ideas, sharing answers before they actually formulate their own. So that where they may have say a narrow view of possibly one answer to a question, after a discussion and shared ideas, their answers become far more expanded.

(prompt - based on experience or colleagues)

It's a culmination of experience, observation and so on. Certainly part of it has come from colleagues that I've worked with and my own experiences.

(prompt - failures)

Well, I think sometimes, if the activities become too teacher based and are again very structured, they can really lose a sense of importance to the child or a sense of belonging to the class and the children will become very disinterested. I think that it needs to be a shared experience.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

The greatest problem would probably be the availability of interest based resources because poor readers, it's really difficult sometimes to ... after recognising their interests, find material that's directly suited to those interests.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

What advice would I give? Be patient. Be prepared to try new approaches. Be prepared to share your successes with those of other colleagues and really try a combination of things, and always try to centre material around the children's interests, and strive to make the experiences as interesting and pertinent as possible.

Teacher F

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Class size: 26 | M: 14 | F: 12 |
| 2. Poor readers: 6 | M: 4 | F: 2 |

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Well, one's an integration student whose significantly below grade level. [He] has extra teaching during the week at Nelson Park [special centre]. He has to be on a totally individualised program, mainly oral reading for him, that's the way he responds best. His comprehension skills are no good really he gets a lot of enjoyment from reading out aloud and you can have discussions with him, oral discussions while things are happening, but his retention's not good enough to have a delay on that.

Another boy has to have a corrective type language development because he reads so badly. I use cues and strategies to encourage him to work so that he's reading exactly what he's seeing because he cues in from consonants at the beginning and the rest of the word's not right. He doesn't even really have a sight vocabulary, he certainly doesn't have a phonic [strategy]. He can't decode - not really well, so he has to be cued in a lot; a lot of oral reading to him, he copes quite well with that, he is able to respond back, he has a knowledge of retaining.

Then I have another boy who has significant speech problems. He didn't speak until he was quite old. He decodes quite well orally, but he has no retention, he can barely do things literally. Both of these boys are poor at following instructions.

And then there's another boy who has very low self-esteem. He copes remarkably well with whole group input, doesn't cope as well individually, feels there's a lot of pressure. Actually, he's shown quite a bit of improvement over these twelve months.

The two girls read quite well - silently and also orally, but they don't have a very wide experience in reading and their output from what they've read is barely literal. They can't go beyond the print they're looking at really, they can't infer very adequately, they find it hard to bring their own opinions to text.

Well, I basically can't treat them as a group because their problems are so unrelated. Probably the two girls and one of the boys can work together quite well. The other three have such different problems that it's got to be very individual with them.

We have 'An Adventure Reading Scheme' where they have a simple novel - trying to wean them off picture story books really because they were dependent a lot on non-fiction type books. What they do, is they read the book over a fortnight, plus time [in school], and home time [time at home]. They have to come together for a fairly informal type of group discussion. They [poor readers] contribute reasonably well with sequential information, the other three don't cope with the program at all, not effectively.

(prompt - differentiate in practice between good and poor readers)

Those three I have to [the poorest readers] the others I can pull in [to the mainstream] - not all of the time, but a good amount of time.

I actually do team teaching with the class next door and we group them around about ability levels and we exchange groups half way through the year so that we really don't have contact with her grade and with my grade overall. A little bit of flexibility with grouping when we've found difficulties either one way or the other, those who've improved dramatically or those who've been found to be wanting. We review that every term.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Probably time to find out what their difficulty actually is - then I'm tied by numbers. I try to give an individual approach, if a group approach isn't working. Probably I do things that way because of my own experiences really.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

Having the time to give them that individual attention which they really, desperately need because their varying problems require it. Yes, I think that's really the main thing.

It's no good having children barking at the print, you've got to gain a lot more from it. Those three [the poorest readers] particularly find it really difficult to pick up on contextual type information because it's [oral reading] so stilted. They can't 'chunk' so a lot of oral discussion has to go on with them for that reason, then they're O.K.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

Well, I think first of all you've got to determine what their [the pupils'] main problem is and endeavour to provide a program that gives support to that difficulty, and certainly build on their strengths too, what they're reasonably good at - develop that.

Now some kids are quite good at vocabulary type/ flash card type things and they can give good meaning to them. Put it all together and they can't [make meaning]. Well, you might start doing separate sentences and getting them to put them together. Or you might take a whole sentence and chop it up and get them to reassemble it, so that they're starting to get a whole thought - it just depends really.

I think they [the teachers] have got to do it from two points of view. One from their [the pupils'] problem area, and from what they're reasonably better at. Yes, try not to labour one too much, particularly in the one lesson really. When they've reached their frustration point with what you're trying to get across, switch to something they can cope well with, otherwise you might just as well forget about it really. I think that's all.

General discussion on practice

Things alter from time to time because how I taught in the 1960's is quite different to what I know now, and probably that's come through doing extra qualifications. This year I've done a whole language approach so I've modified my ideas, hasn't totally changed it but I've modified some things to link into

those ideas and next year I'll probably want to practise it a bit more because you can't **take** on something until you **feel** comfortable with the ideas behind them.

(prompt - reject innovation if it doesn't work)

Oh no, I'll have another go at it, particularly if I think there's something good about it.

(prompt - theory before practice)

Oh, I have to see the practical side first. I like to see it presented in a practical way and probably the more recent way of teachers being inserviced is to do it in that manner, with the CLIP programs and ELIC. When I did B.Ed., I did four units of reading more from a theoretical base, that probably changed my thinking a lot at that stage too.

I do [teach] what I have a gut feeling about and I suppose that's just my experience over the years really. How I taught last year won't be how I'll teach this lot this year because all groups are different. So I try to take a feel from where they're at. It really does have an amazing effect on how you can present things to them, a lot depends on their own growth, their own learning patterns. So, although I might have a Grade 5 for four years at this school, none of them would have been taught in the same way basically, because they've all been very different groupings.

I never look at last year's work programmes. When I've done it, I've done it - that's last year. I think it keeps you fresh and you're working towards another goal because they're different kids. Even the materials I present them with can be quite different from year to year. Some [children] respond well, but if I don't like the response, I'll change my tack. Some children will grow with structure, others don't.

(prompt - high or low structure in the same class)

Yes, I'll set them some contracts, I'll do that. If they're enthusiastic and respond well to what you're doing then you know you're on the right track because they work well when they can. If they're not doing that then change your tack or try something a little different.

Sometimes, just reading new materials that come into school - that's a good idea, I like to have a go at that. I've done a lot of 'read and retell' this year and I did that purely because it came from the CLIP program. I would never have attempted that in a strong sense before, in a developmental sense. I've taken a lot of their ideas, but I'm keen to try more next year. I was organised into particular school structures I had to maintain this year, but next year I will be able to try out their ideas. But I don't take on board everything they say, it just depends - depends on how self-motivating kids are sometimes, depends how much input they require from you.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

Basically, emotional problems, right, then I look at what I call eye-sight problems, what I call left/right brain dominance or whatever.

There are some children who are always weak at reading, quite frankly, I don't think some children will ever really make it. They are great with their hands and they may be great at maths or science, but reading they just seem to be average at all the time, no matter what you do.

(prompt - colleagues)

Yes, you learn from each other. You're always open to new suggestions, but I'm a little bit wary at times of some different approaches. I've seen a lot of new approaches come in. If a teacher is fully committed to that approach they can make it work, but it might not necessarily suit me or I might not necessarily use that method myself. I'm quite set in my views, but I'm still open to anything new.

So, I don't believe there's one approach. There's no such thing as one approach, it's a multi approach because what works for one child will not work for another child and you need the total approach, a mixture of everything, overall to get well rounded, mature children who can read overall - no one scheme does everything, or one method.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

Time - time, expertise, resources.

I had a child who was having trouble a year or so ago and I referred them to ANSUA in Melbourne, right, and they gave some hand exercises and eye exercises and I could actually see the improvement in the child with their reading. Whereas with me, I would have not picked that up, I would not have come to those same results.

So, I feel there's a real lack of knowledge of teachers overall, that's why we're always open to new methods. But at the moment, I also think lots of teachers are either getting fed up or confused with methods that don't work, right. I'd like something concrete. A specialist comes in and says, "look, this is the problem, this child needs this, this, and this" and then you can work on it and say, "well, that does work" - actually, ANSUA in Melbourne, does do this.

Yes, we [teachers] miss out somewhere. It's a real problem, we just don't have the expertise, none of us. We are all prepared to learn or put in extra hours after school, whatever it would take. I sometimes wonder if the knowledge is there, if there are experts to call on, I mean, I've seen a lot of experts now and there's only actually a few whose methods I really follow.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

The main thing is the old nurturance. Once you've established your guidelines and your discipline in the classroom, well then start to nurture the child.

Hear them read, set up a reading program at home, start different reading skills, from phonics right through. High interest readers, very interesting reading schemes like 'Eureka', process writing - it's a whole mixture of approaches. Get them to talk about their reading and writing, get them to write about it and go through it with them, point out word patterns and so on, lots of cloze activities and anticipating reading - what's coming next [in the text], a whole gamut, it's a total approach to everything - you just cannot pin down one method.

If necessary, even make them read for half an hour every night, I know this may sound funny, with their parents, but very high interest stuff, what they [readers] are interested in and what they talk about. Be flexible, if the child doesn't want to read that night the parent will take about the book, or talk about what's worrying the child. Build up a relationship, a rapport, and then all the reading seems to flow from that, and that's the least amount for the teacher too because you're using the parents as well.

Teacher H

Initial Preamble by Teacher H

Can I tell you my experience as a teacher - it might make me a little different from perhaps the normal classroom teacher. My first year teaching was at a migrant camp, where I had Grade 2. I only had non-English speaking children in the class, and I had no other language except up to fifth form French, but that was of very little use. I had some years off, then emergency teaching. Then I came back teaching part-time as a Migrant English teacher. All of a sudden, instead of having a class of 32 non-English kids, which was expected of me - with a D.I. coming in expecting me to have done this and this, now I just had Migrant English withdrawal groups of half a dozen or more - wow! Then the Migrant Hostel closed down so basically I was doing remediation full time as a remedial teacher. I could teach a Migrant child of any language the sound system of English within six months - they could stand up and read orally.

Then when I came here, another guy and I introduced streaming into the school. We had composite classes of [Grade] 4/5/6 with a stream of mathematics and reading in each grade level - and this is where I think I use different strategies than I use in the classroom nowadays, but I think they worked among a number of the children. In fact, there are lots of my kids that I've taught in the remedial reading stream and they have completed H.S.C.

Nowadays, a lot of people say that this [remedial streaming] labels children and some don't like it. But also within that remedial stream there was the top of it. These kids achieved and they felt quite pleased about it because they were the top of that group. Maybe it didn't alter the kids at all who were in Grade 6 who were only at Grade 2 level, but if they were in Grade 6 and they were at about a Grade 4 reading level and they were the best ones in that stream, they had a real sense of achievement.

Beginning of Main Interview**1. Class size:** 24

M: 13

F: 11

2. Poor readers: 6

M: 5

F: 1

3. What are your teaching plans/methods with poor readers?

Well, I sometimes have whole class stories. I introduce the vocabulary first - old fashioned, we put vocabulary into sentences first before we have the story. It adds a lot of meaning to the story. I'm really finding that the short stuff [stories] is loved [Mt. Gravatt reading Series]. I use as many different strategies as I can really.

Look, all of the ones who are having difficulty with reading, all of them, it's just that they don't read. I've had various encouragement schemes for reading in Term 2 and 3. I've talked about this earlier in the year, that Terms 2 and 3 were to be our reading terms - we talked about it because of the longer nights, and its cold outside. I've backed off now in Term 4.

So term 2 they had a list and they had to read 10 books for the term. Then they had a line [in their book] and below that [line] they had another five lists, i.e. minimum, very good, good, excellent. And they had to do a talk once a month about their book. At the end of the term they had to write a report to their parents - they [pupils] had to write it, they [parents] had to sign it, about their achievement. They had to write a prediction about Term 3 - what would happen with their own individualised reading.

Term 3 we had a thing up on the board - it wasn't just their own private list. We had a big sheet up on the board and once again everybody could see where they were up to. We had stars and if it [the book] was a three star it was good, and if they recommended it they'd put a silver star; if it was a fabulous book, they'd put a gold star on it. So if people didn't know what to choose to read, they could go up and ask somebody about that book. We finished up with a few pet [favourite] books. Paul Jennings' 'Round the Twist' and so on had been booked up, and some of the Robin Klein books - everyone raved about it. Even I read chapters of it about the cabbage patch people.

They are reading on their own - silent reading. We also have set books. They are reading in groups, they are reading to me, they are reading to their mother, they are reading in pairs, they are reading to do things - giving instructions. Then we have card stories as well. We do 'Wards Cards' - the old three minute reading for comprehension and speed reading, they love it, they just adore it.

One thing I like is that I read a story and I write statements on the board. Some of them [the statements] are absolute nonsense and they love that - true or false, I do the writing and they do the ticking.

I don't isolate them [the poor readers] now. They are not isolated, they're working with the other kids and they know that they're poor readers in comparison with the other kids. Whereas, one advantage of the remedial group was that they knew they were better than 'John'. If they'd been in a remedial group, they'd think, "I'm better than these kids, I'm doing well." I never thought they had a stigma or a label if they were in the bottom reading group. Everyone moved so you didn't have to worry about where you went.

I did stream at one stage - only in that group of six. They used to read regularly every week to Mrs. F. in term one, to have more practice. Not now - now they're into three groups - mixed ability now.

(prompt - the boy who lacked skills)

I did give him the Schonell list to identify the sounds - he didn't even know some of his initial sounds. I went through that, but I didn't stick to it. I made it a whole language approach and now and then I'd look at certain sound groups, and making individual stories. I didn't have much time to give him individual work, heard him read as much as possible to the other kids. When the other kids had silent reading, I would get him to read to me 'cos he'd only muck around in silent reading - he got no meaning from it, not interested - been turned off books - really, he had no interest in learning.

4. What influences the way you teach poor readers?

I think the successes I've had in the past, the experiences I've had with migrant children.

(prompt - inservices, journals)

Inservices influence my teaching more than colleagues - yes, papers and publications, I like to read things like that. In 'Primary Education' there was a new word study. I read it and said that sounds wonderful, I must try it, I was really rapt. For two terms we did it through dictation, we had a dictation piece every Monday. We got it, and read it, and analysed it, and hashed it, and read stories about it. If they [pupils] got three 50's in a row, wow - letters home to mum.

5. What are your greatest problems in teaching poor readers?

Their [children's] lack of interest, their lack of motivation.

There really aren't any that have problems with the skills of reading, it's really a lack of knowledge of the language. They see a word and they haven't got the contextual clues even to know what the word is.

6. What advice would you give to a fellow teacher inexperienced in teaching poor readers?

I don't know. I think I'd tell them to look for short, interesting stories. Try and get them to motivate the kids, bribe the kids, get the parents involved. Do five minutes with them every single night, or a quarter of an hour on such and such a night, let's see how they'll improve. A virtual non-reader, write stories about them and get them to read. Get a story and block out the name [of the main character] and change it to the kid's name. Listening tapes - just vary it, give as much variety as possible, and be enthusiastic. Make photograph books - anything about themselves they love. Also give them rewards to build their self-confidence and self-esteem.

APPENDIX D

Introductory Talk to Teachers

First, I would like to thank (name of Principal) for allowing me to visit your school, and secondly I would like to thank you for giving me your time. I'll briefly introduce this questionnaire and then ask you to fill it in. (At this point questionnaires were distributed to staff).

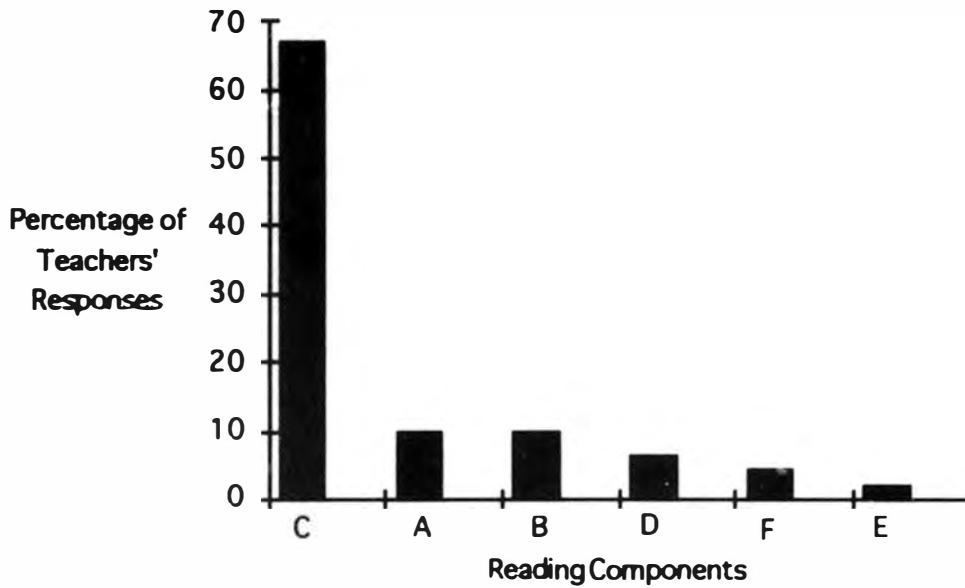
This questionnaire asks you for your attitudes towards the teaching of reading and the strategies you use with different pupils, that is good readers, poor readers, and very poor readers. This questionnaire also asks for your practical view of the reading process.

If you look at the questionnaire, the response format is fairly straight forward. All responses are circled except the last page which asks you to number, in rank order from one to six, aspects of the reading process. Please note that pages two, three, and four repeat the same list of reading strategies, but for different pupil abilities. On page two, the response numbers 1 to 5 indicate a response from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) and (3) indicates that you are unsure in your response.

I would like you all to complete this questionnaire now and hand it back to me when you've finished. Any questions?

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. The school will receive a copy of the results when they are collated.

APPENDIX E



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

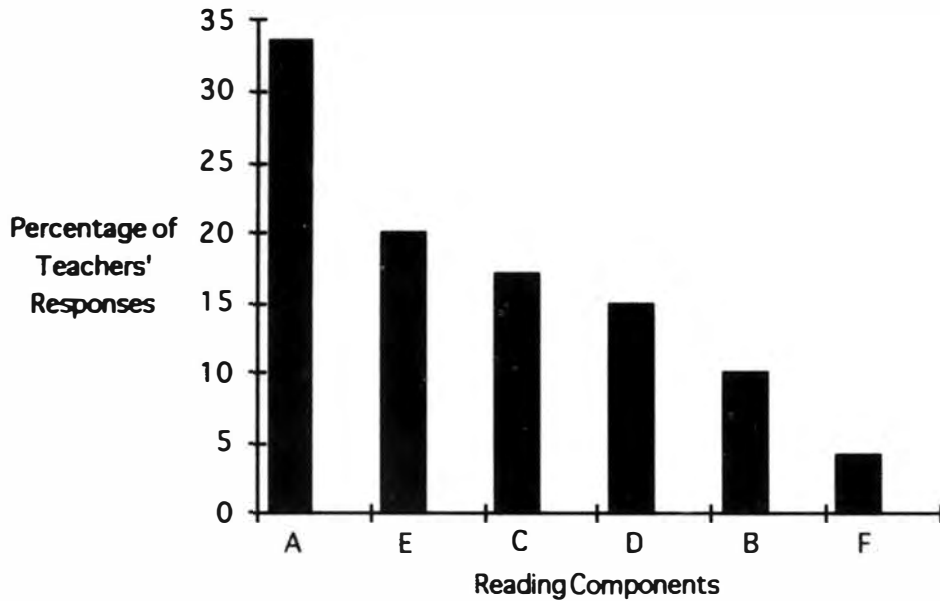
Top-down Reading Components

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

Figure 4 Reading components rated first in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

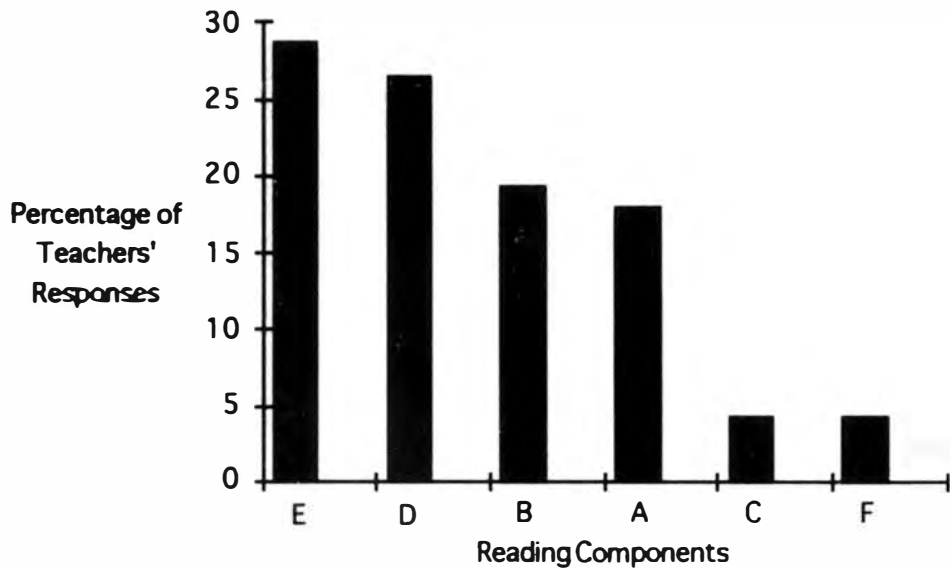
Top-down Reading Components

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

Figure 5 Reading components rated second in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

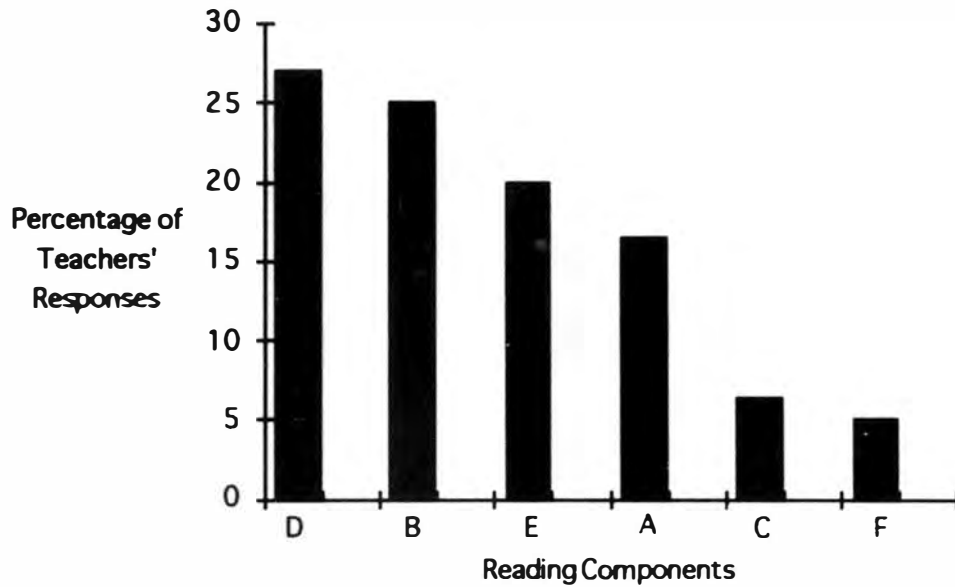
Top-down Reading Components

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

Figure 6 Reading components rated third in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

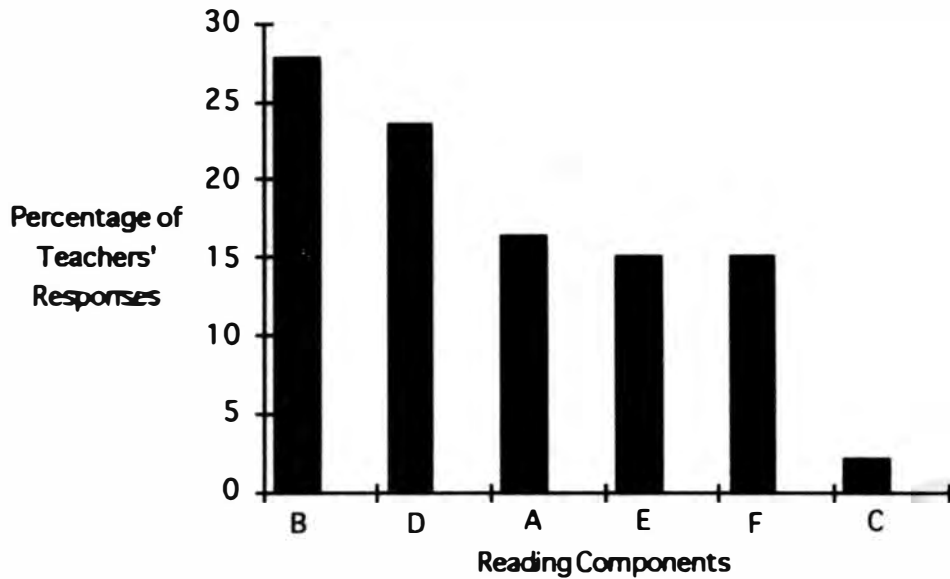
Top-down Reading Components

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

Figure 7 Reading components rated fourth in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

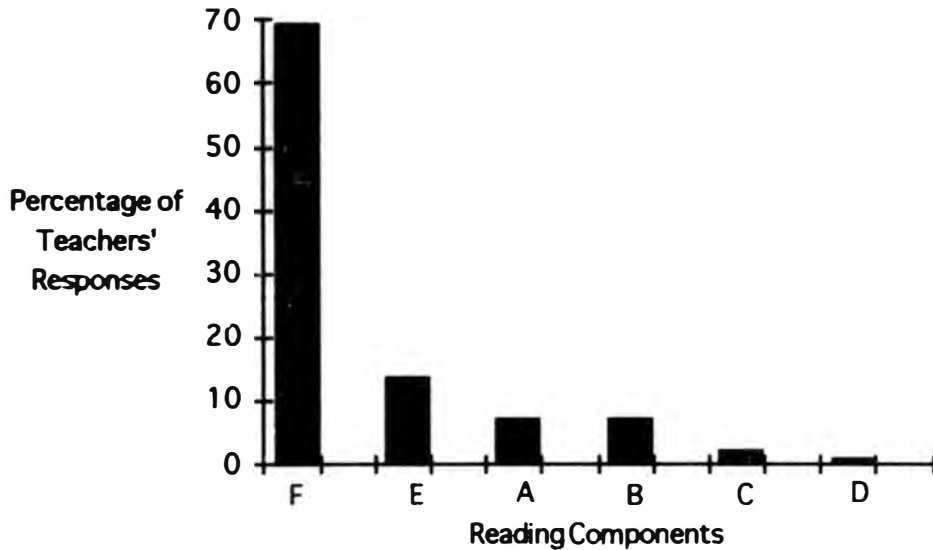
Top-down Reading Components

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

Figure 8. Reading components rated fifth in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.



Note Reading components are ordered from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses in the sequential ordering of the reading process.

Bottom-up Reading Components

E = "the reader decodes text using phonic cues"

A = "the reader recognizes words instantly at sight"

C = "the reader moves eyes systematically left to right across the page"

Top-down Reading Components

F = "the reader reconstructs the author's meaning".

B = "the reader combines new textual information with prior knowledge"

D = "the reader uses context to predict meaning"

Figure 9. Reading components rated sixth in teachers' sequential ordering of the reading process.