THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S PROCESSING SYSTEMS FOR READING: THE INFLUENCE OF GUIDED READING IN THE FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL

Judy Aitken

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ABSTRACT

In New Zealand, teachers in the first year of school have an important role in ensuring 5-year-old children get underway in reading so that they become confident, proficient and independent readers. Guided Reading is a fundamental, early literacy instructional approach that leads to their independence and yet there is little evidence of the influence of this important practice on the development of children as early readers.

This small qualitative case study, informed by Marie Clay's complex literacy processing theory, undertook to examine Guided Reading in the first year of school. Three teachers in three schools were interviewed about their implementation of Guided Reading and each were observed teaching three lessons. Following the lessons, the oral reading of the 14 child participants was recorded by the researcher using Running Records of continuous text.

Issues with the implementation of Guided Reading emerged. The teachers introduced children to Guided Reading in their first week at school. This contradicted published recommendations but reflected the teachers voiced sense of urgency in having children meet a national standard in reading after one year. This early initiation of children to the most intensive form of reading instruction led to implications for teaching that compromised children's development of processing systems for reading.

The Ministry of Education recently announced revisions to *Ready to Read,* the instructional series distributed to all schools. The revisions are designed to have impact on Guided Reading instruction in the first year of school. The findings suggest that in view of its potential to shape successful trajectories of progress for children there is some urgency in ensuring that schools align their implementation of Guided Reading against the revisions.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **II**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **III**

CONTENTS ..... **IV**

1 INTRODUCTION **1**

2 LITERATURE REVIEW **5**

2.1 Part One **5**

Teachers' knowledge and understandings. 5

Principles of learning. 6

2.2 Part Two **7**

Background to one theory of learning to read. 7

Development of a complex view of reading. 7

A complex view of reading in the school system. 8

An alternative view of reading. 9

A simple view of reading in the school system. 9

2.3 Part Three **10**

Foundational learning for literacy processing. 10

Building a processing system for reading. 11

2.4 Part Four **12**

Texts designed to support the development of processing. 12

Revisions to the Ready to Read series. 13

Changes to Ready to Read texts at Magenta and Red. 14

2.5 Part Five **15**

Implementing Guided Reading. 15

A framework for Guided Reading. 16

Research on Guided Reading. 19

2.6 Conclusion **20**

3 METHODOLOGY **22**

3.1 Part One **22**

Research Approach. 22
Measures used for data collection. 24
Narratives, composite illustrations and vignettes. 27
Procedures for data collection. 28
Teachers. 29
Children. 31
3.2 Part Two: Analysis of Data 32
Teachers. 32
Guided reading observations. 35
Introducing the story – teacher moves. 37
Inter-observer reliability. 40
Facilitating attention to print knowledge. 40
Children. 40
Ethical considerations related to researcher identity. 41
3.3 Summary of Chapter Three 42
4 RESULTS 43
4.1 Part One: Settings and Participants. 43
Julia. 44
Katy. 45
Anna. 46
4.2 Part Two: Teacher Interviews 47
Developing professional knowledge and experience. 48
Teaching service. 48
Professional learning. 48
Introducing early literacy instruction. 49
Transitioning children to school. 49
Providing a range of early literacy learning activities. 50
Introducing Guided Reading. 51
Guided Reading instruction. 51
Fostering meaning. 52

Attending to print. 53
Teaching for processing. 54
Making decisions about texts. 55
Selecting texts for Guided Reading. 55
Moving children from Magenta to Red. 56
4.3 Part Three: Guided Reading Observations 57
Decisions about texts and text levels. 58
Moving children from Magenta to Red. 59
A. Facilitating Guided Reading Lessons 63
Julia. 63
Katy. 67
Anna. 70
B. Introducing the Story 74
Teacher moves. 74
Categories of teacher moves. 74
Subcategories of moves. 77
Julia. 78
Katy. 80
Anna. 82
Summary of teacher moves. 84
C. Drawing Attention to Print 85
Moves designed to activate children's prior knowledge of print. 85
Moves designed to introduce new features of print. 86
Summary. 86
4.4 Part Four: Running Records of Children Reading Continuous Text. 87
Julia's group. 87
Katy's group. 89
Anna's group. 91
4.5 Summary of Chapter Four. 93
5 FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS 94

5.1 Findings and Implications for Learning and Teaching. **95**

FINDING ONE **95**

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching 97

FINDING TWO **98**

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching. 101

FINDING THREE **101**

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching 104

Print knowledge. 1064

Complex combinations of print knowledge. 1064

FINDING FOUR **105**

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching. 108

5.2 Final Conclusion. **108**

5.3 Limitations of This Study. **109**

5.4 Recommendations for Practice. **110**

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research. **110**

APPENDIX ONE **111**

APPENDIX TWO **114**

APPENDIX THREE **116**

REFERENCES **118**

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this case study is to investigate New Zealand (NZ) teachers' implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school. Little evidence of the influence of this important instructional approach on the development of children as early readers is available despite Guided Reading being a core, early literacy practice.

Guided Reading has a central role in leading NZ children to independent, successful reading (Holdaway,1979; Ministry of Education [MoE], 2002, 2003a, 2009b, 2014a). Through participation in effective Guided Reading 5-year-old children in their first year of school learn how to process text by finding and using the information in the print to gain a message. Over time, as they read increasingly challenging texts, they construct complex processing systems for reading that become self-extending. By the end of Year Three, there is an expectation that children will have become confident, proficient and enthusiastic readers with a crucial set of learning established to underpin their educational progress (MoE, 2003a, 2009b, 2013). It is widely recognised that teachers' effective facilitation of Guided Reading in the first year of school has a fundamental role in influencing this outcome (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2012).

Educators are keenly aware that failure to get underway with reading can have serious consequences for children's ability to build strong foundations for a lifetime of learning (Clay, 1991, 2001, 2014; MoE, 2009b). While it is acknowledged that some children even with quality teaching will fall behind (Clay, 2014), the challenge for teachers is to provide effective Guided Reading instruction in the first year of school so that the gap between faster learners and those who take longer to get underway, does not widen. In NZ the MoE has recently highlighted concerns about achievement outcomes for children who have failed to get underway in reading (MoE, 2003b, 2013b). Annual national data on children's achievement in reading (MoE, n. d.) indicates that since 2012, these data have shown a decline in the proportion of children meeting the expected standard in reading after one year at school. For example, in 2014, the percentage of children reaching the standard had reduced from 66.9% in 2012 to 64.6%. Of most concern however, is that Maori and Pasifika learners (recognised by the MoE as *priority learners* in the NZ education system) are over-represented in results of children not achieving well in reading. In a recent presentation to Reading Recovery Tutors, Darren Grey, MoE Senior Manager: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning/Student Achievement, advised that of the 22% of children in Years One to Eight reading below and well below the expected standard in reading, 31% were Maori and 35% were Pasifika children. Grey expressed discontent and repeated the MoE's call for teachers to improve achievement, not only during the first year but across all year groups.

In view of this information it is important for educators to know what is actually happening in the context of Guided Reading in the first year of school. Are teachers creating learning opportunities that enhance or inhibit children's development of self-extending processing systems for reading?

Lift Education is the current developer of the instructional series of *Ready to Read* texts used in Guided Reading for the MoE, as part of the Ministry's enduring resource programme for NZ schools.

The MoE recently contracted Lift Education to conduct a review of *Ready to Read*. The review was initiated by a reappraisal of the research-based knowledge set out in teacher support resources including NZ Curriculum documents (MoE, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), and Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 (MoE, 2003a). Hancock (2015b), a literacy consultant to Lift Education, stated that the reappraisal led to a clear articulation of literacy processing theory as the point of reference against which the review would be aligned. The review then proceeded with a close examination of the levelling and design of texts in the series. Findings from this process resulted in a number of revisions. New levelling processes and design features were devised to ensure a clearer gradient of difficulty across the Ready to Read series and Guided Reading instructional practices that best support children to develop self-extending processing systems for reading were clarified.

On behalf of the MoE, Lift Education distributed these revisions broadly via a range of teacher support tools such as NZ Curriculum Updates (MoE, 2014b), *Ready to Read* on-line newsletters and webinars (MoE, 2014b, 2014c), and flyers and brochures. In early 2014, 16 texts reflecting the new design and levelling criteria were disseminated to schools. During that year Lift Education began the process of updating guidance and advice on the *Ready to Read* online teacher resource site to reflect the revisions. Clarifications to Guided Reading practice are clearly evident in the teacher support material, effectively known as TSM, written to accompany new texts.

The revisions will have significant influence on Guided Reading practice in the first year of school. This raises questions about how effectively Guided Reading has been implemented in the past.

A search of the literature for information about Guided Reading instruction in the first years of school revealed concerns. In NZ, the Education Review Office (Education Review Office [ERO], 2009) produced a national report on reading and writing in the first two years in 212 schools. Researchers collected evidence through observation of teacher practice, interviews and artefacts. They found that 31% of schools provided only an adequate to limited quality of reading teaching. Researchers described a diverse rather than convergent range of knowledge and understanding contributing to teaching decisions during Guided Reading.

In a study of early literacy learning in 12 low decile schools McNaughton, Phillips and MacDonald (2003) tracked the literacy learning progressions of 346 5 to 6 year olds. They examined the rates and levels of children's learning of particular components of reading and writing, and used classroom observations, and teacher interviews and questionnaires to substantiate their results. The researchers found that to enhance children's understanding of texts, early and focussed literacy instruction was necessary for culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Phillips, McNaughton and MacDonald (2004) demonstrate in an intervention study that teachers can change the trajectory of progress in reading for priority learners in the first year of school but they need to make significant changes to their instructional practice to achieve this. Smith (2005), and Hedin and Gaffney (2013) found in observations of teachers tutoring readers that *pre-emptive* interruptions during instruction provided less than facilitative conditions for students to develop processing systems

for reading. Pre-emptive prompting in which teachers anticipated potential reading challenges, reduced children's opportunities to engage in productive problem-solving, thus stalling their growth of independence.

A case study undertaken by Boocock (2012) into the Guided Reading practices of five teachers in Years One and Two classrooms, found particular issues with the effectiveness of instruction when teachers used non-fiction texts. She also found that while teachers could articulate understandings of literacy processing theory their delivery of Guided Reading did not always reflect those understandings.

Rogers (2011) discovered a similar outcome when she conducted a study of teacher decision-making in Guided Reading with two teachers of Year Four and Six children. She used lesson observations and questionnaires to determine the effectiveness of their Guided Reading practice. Rogers discovered that what teachers articulated about their practice was not necessarily evident in their practice. For example, teachers shared that they focussed on building comprehension during lessons but did so in very generalised ways.

Scanlon's (2014) exploratory mixed method study in which 29 teachers of Year One children were surveyed raises issues regarding teacher decision making around appropriate choices of text levels for Guided Reading.

In a study of three beginning junior school teachers Buckley-Foster (2005) discovered that despite their pre-service literacy courses advocating adherence to delivering Guided Reading as designed, all three implemented *round robin reading* (an approach where children take turns reading aloud) as a teaching strategy. Round robin reading is not a recommended instructional technique (MoE, 2003a).

From an international perspective, a large national survey of 1500 U.S. teachers was conducted by Ford and Opitz (2008) to ascertain teachers' understandings and practices related to Guided Reading. The analysis of teachers' responses showed considerable confusion around the purposes of grouping for Guided Reading, choice and levelling of texts and use of reading assessments.

One empirical study documented an intensive description of Guided Reading in the first year of school. McKay (2004) used a mixed method approach to investigate Guided Reading with beginning readers in the UK. Using a questionnaire and lesson observations McKay discovered that there were not only variations in two teachers' Guided Reading practices but differing interpretations of its nature and purpose. McKay expressed concern for these outcomes and suggested that the effectiveness of Guided Reading may be compromised.

Although significant concerns have been expressed, few studies provided rich descriptions of Guided Reading (Boocock, 2011; Buckley-Foster, 2005; Hardy, 2012; Perrin, 2008; Rogers, 2011) and fewer in relation to developing children's processing systems for reading in the first year of school (Boocock, 2012, McKay, 2004).

The critical nature of the first year of school for early reading development within which young children learn or fail or learn, combined with increased expectations for high levels of teaching expertise for priority learners, makes this an important area for in-depth research. From this perspective, the proposed study to take a closer look at Guided Reading in the first year of school, was warranted.

A descriptive case study design was proposed to address two central questions that formed the focus of this research. This design provided an opportunity to gain insight into teachers' implementation of Guided Reading to better understand how their instruction influenced children's early processing and development towards self-extending systems for reading by the end of the third year of school.

In this study, child participants are close to school entry in the first year of school and are identified as New Entrants (NE).

For reasons of brevity the term *processing systems for reading* is reduced intermittently to *processing systems* or simply *processing.*

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Two central questions guide this review.

- *What knowledge and understandings about processing systems for reading contribute towards the effective implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school?*
- *How does Guided Reading influence children in the first year of school to build processing systems for reading?*

The review is presented in five parts. Part One addresses the literature related to teacher's knowledge and understanding of literacy learning and teaching. Part Two addresses particular theories of learning to read. The prevailing theory of learning to read in New Zealand (NZ) primary schools is discussed in more detail in Part Three while a discussion around texts used to support learning to read is presented in Part Four. This chapter concludes with an examination of Guided Reading and empirical research in Part Five.

2.1 Part One

Teachers' knowledge and understandings.

Guided Reading is solidly grounded in theory and research. A compelling and consistent theme in the literature around the implementation of Guided Reading is the importance of teachers having a thorough knowledge and understanding of underpinning theoretical ideas (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; MoE, 2002, 2007, 2010). Researchers agree in general that a teacher's level of understanding of widely recognised theories of learning is critical to informing their teaching practice (Allington, 2002; Clay, 2001; Johnston & Allington, 1991; McNaughton, 2014; McNaughton, Phillips & MacDonald, 2000; Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2004; Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998).

The Education Review Office (ERO, 2009), states that teachers' knowledge and understanding of theory is the most influential point of leverage on children's literacy learning outcomes. This perspective is relevant to the NZ MoE's thrust to reduce the disparity gap for priority learners (MoE, 2013b). Teachers who are aware of how children learn are more likely to tune into individual differences and adapt their teaching for children with different learning needs (McNaughton, 2000, 2004; Phillips et al., 2004). Guided Reading is an approach designed to provide significant opportunities for learning. Effective implementation of Guided Reading, therefore has the potential to reduce the number of children at risk of reading failure (McDowall, Boyd, Hodgen & van Vliet, 2005; Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2002).

Interestingly, some scholars acknowledge that teachers might believe they are teaching in ways consistent with underlying theory and yet when their practice is analysed closely their instruction may even contradict the theory underpinning the instruction (Boocock, 2012; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald & Ziechner, 2005; Parr & Timperley, 2008; Rogers, 2011).

Researchers in instructional change advocate using student achievement data and work samples as the starting point for shifting thinking around the area of teacher knowledge and understanding. (Bryk, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders & Goldenberg, 2009; Peurach & Glaser, 2016; Timperley, 2011). In NZ, Timperley has drawn on her own and the research of other academics to help schools build collaborative inquiry around student achievement data, teaching practice and research and other sources that guide instruction. This approach invites teachers to develop self-awareness about their effectiveness and take an agentive stance toward improving their instructional expertise (Johnston & Goatley, 2014; McNaughton, 2014). While Timperley cautions that adaptations to teaching practice must remain true to the original underlying theoretical ideas about learning and teaching, the research on collaborative inquiry encourages schools to achieve more refined and responsive teaching practices among teachers who might otherwise arrive at very different conclusions.

The implications of the research on instructional change appear critical for the effective implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school. To cope with an increasing number of theoretical positions about learning and teaching competing for their attention (e.g. as evidenced in MoE TKI, Literacy Online Community Mailing lists) and increasingly diverse cultural and language students, teachers need to align their practice and theories and weigh up evidence of their effectiveness against children's achievement in learning (Phillips et al., 2004; Timperley 2011).

Principles of learning.

Underlying Guided Reading practice in NZ primary schools is a prevailing theory of learning to read called *literacy processing theory* (Clay, 2001) which will be discussed in more detail later in this review. Also prevalent is a theoretical base that consists of more general principles of learning. These principles are considered essential for teachers to grasp because understanding leads to teachers being more informed and confident about their literacy teaching practice (MoE, 2003). They include: (a) learning to become literate takes a developmental pathway (Bissex, 1980; Clay, 1975, 1991; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Holdaway, 1979; McNaughton 1995; Snow et al.,1998; Whitmore, Martens, Goodman & Owocki, 2005), (b) literacy practices within a social context shape children's learning (Au, 1998; Bissex, 1980; Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Kuhl, 2011; McNaughton, 1995; 1999, 2002; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962; cited in Baker, 2001) and (c) children take individual and multiple pathways in their literacy development (Clay 1991, 2001; MoE, 2003a, 2007, 2010). Principles of learning are responsive to children's language, culture and context and place children's engagement in learning as a significant priority. They overlap with literacy processing theory and each influences the other (Johnston & Goatley, 2014). Principles of learning will be referenced in this thesis. In addition to literacy processing theory, teachers need to enact these principles to implement Guided Reading effectively for all children in order to offer a wide range of access points to literacy for priority learners and those with diverse and special needs.

2.2 Part Two

Background to one theory of learning to read.

As previously stated, one theory of learning to read is literacy processing theory. A review of the literature on Guided Reading shows that this theory of learning to read has influenced literacy instruction in NZ primary classrooms for many years. Literacy processing theory finds its heritage in the NZ infant classrooms of the 1960's where teaching programmes emphasised reading for meaning. The Department of Education, supported by significant literacy educators of that time, promoted this emphasis through the distribution of comprehensive teacher support material (Simpson, 1949, 1962; Auckland Education Board, 1963). Amidst the practical suggestions for teachers, the writers described "meaning-making" as "a complex process", a "mental process" and a "thinking process" implying that notions existed of reading involving complex processes in the brain (Auckland Education Board, 1963, p.7).

A series of little story books, latterly described in academic literature as continuous texts (Clay, 1991), provided real stories using language that children were likely to hear and use and were designed to "stimulate those associations that help a child to find meaning in the printed page" (Simpson, 1962). Developed by the Department of Education (1964), the *Ready to Read* series was organised on a gradient of difficulty and used in classrooms nationwide. An expectation that young children would learn to read texts of increasing difficulty indicated that some notion of change over time in learning to read contributed to general understandings at that time.

Development of a complex view of reading.

Within this setting Marie Clay (1966) conducted a major ground breaking study of five-year old children's reading and writing behaviours and how these changed over time. Her close observation of children not only added rich substance to the existing framework of understandings about reading and writing promulgated by NZ educators of the era but profoundly influenced early literacy instruction (Johnston & Goatley, 2014; McNaughton, 2014). Clay's research led her to discover extraordinary implications for the role of writing in early reading with far-reaching consequences for learning and teaching of literacy worldwide. For the purposes of this study, however, the primary focus is directed at reading.

Using close observation as an innovative methodology, Clay described "the variety, complexity, and change observed in reading behaviour" during the first year of instruction in literacy, with meaning taking a central role (Clay, 1966; cited in Watson & Askew, Eds., 2009, p. 101). Drawing on her detailed descriptions of 100 individual learners, Clay formulated an hypothesis that during the process of learning to read text, in-the-head neural responses are being organised into complex networks of activity. Tentative ideas about how the brain processes text leading to some kind of inner control, encouraged Clay to search for explanations from other theorists and researchers. Over a 40-year

period, she added valuable conceptualisations to her own emerging theory (Clay, 2001) from Rumelhart's theory of interactive processing using multiple knowledge sources and from Singer's theory of assembling working systems (Singer, 1994; cited in Clay, 2001).

Clay's theorising led her to describe how children assemble cognitive working systems for operating on print that pull together information from their current knowledge and understandings, oral language capabilities and knowledge of print features. Connections between the different kinds of information develop and interact in flexible ways. As children actively and flexibly search for connections they are involved in confirming and rejecting, self-monitoring and self-correcting with the goal of making everything make sense (Clay, 2001).These acts of processing occur in simple ways at first but change over time to more complex activities that work with speed and efficiency as texts of increasing difficulty are read (Clay, 2001).

Clay called her complex theory of learning to read, *literacy processing theory*. She used the term 'literacy' because her observational research on children's behaviour in writing indicated that children were constructing complex cognitive processing systems in writing similar in ways to reading (Clay 2005c). In a succinct definition she encapsulated reading as a message-getting problem-solving activity, and writing as a message-sending problem-solving activity, both of which she claims, increase in power and flexibility the more they are practised. At each successful encounter with slightly more difficult texts, the processing systems improve, and through an increasing sense of agency, a child begins to "take over the expansion of his own competencies" (Askew, 2009, p. 113). In this way, he continues to learn more about reading by reading and writing, and more about writing by writing and reading, independent of instruction. A child, at this point, is described as having a 'self-extending system' for literacy learning (Clay, 2001).

A complex view of reading in the school system.

Literacy processing systems constructed during the first year of school are "massively influenced" (Clay, 2005a, p. 3) by the opportunities provided by the school's curriculum and instructional practices. Clay claimed that it is the school's responsibility to help children develop a self-extending system for reading (Clay, 1991), and clearly the role of the teacher in the first year is central in getting that underway. As previously discussed in this chapter the way in which Guided Reading is implemented can be either more or less facilitative of developing children's processing. The *Ready to Read* revisions have indicated that there may be issues with the implementation of Guided Reading in NZ primary schools

As with oral language learning, academics acknowledge the challenge of providing a clear account of a multifaceted complex view of reading that defies linear description. An influential New Zealand educator (Holdaway,1979) cautioned about the difficulties in communicating about a complex theory of reading in ways that are helpful to teachers. Holdaway (1979) claimed that in seeking a clear definition it is easy to separate a complex whole into parts and lose sight of how they operate together and that "if our language is dominated by talk about words and word recognition . . . we imply unfortunate

models of functioning and impose them on our teaching" (p. 19). Clay (1988) noted that despite our exceptional ability in dealing with complexity we are amazingly poor at talking and thinking about it. She claimed that teachers tend to be reductionist in their instruction in order to cope with the issue, however, while a sequential and cumulative model of reading reduces complexity, instruction decreases the range of opportunities that accommodate learners in a context of social, cultural and linguistic diversity (McNaughton et al., 2000). Teachers may adopt assessment practices that are reductionist as well, because simplifying reading to a set of skills makes it easier to measure. Academics also carry out research on the assumption that reading, the most complex form of learning, can be reduced to component parts where one thing can be dealt with at a time.

An alternative view of reading.

Theories of learning to read have been debated for decades without reaching common ground. Two main views compete for attention. One view, previously discussed, is predicated on the assumption that reading is a complex process (Clay 1991). Proponents of this view (Clay, 1996; Holdaway,1976 Smith & Elley, 1997) argue that early readers construct the beginnings of a complex processing system for reading while engaging in simple problem-solving activity on their first encounters with text. They cite similarities in the processes of oral language learning as an example of the brain's capacity for dealing early on with complexity.

A complex view of reading can be contrasted with a different group of theories that view the development of early reading in a more simplistic light. While researchers in general agree about the complex nature of proficient reading, one group of authorities, argue for a simple view of reading (Gough, 1996; Adams, 1990; Moats, 1998). In their view children need to develop efficient word identification strategies in order to progress in reading. They claim these are necessary for the rapid recognition of words which, in turn, frees up attention for comprehension (Tunmer & Chapman, 2002). To achieve rapid word identification researchers report that small parts or sub-skills such as sounds, letters and words are the first significant aspects early readers need to grasp (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Nicholson, 2006). In brief, the mastery of sounds and letter-sound relationships is considered essential for learning to read words, and fluency in word identification essential for reading for meaning (Adams, 1990; Moats, 1998). This theoretical view promotes a linear conceptualisation of learning in which reading is the product of children's word recognition and reading comprehension skills.

A simple view of reading in the school system.

In school systems where a simple view of reading permeates the gradual accumulation of items of knowledge about print is a key focus of early instruction and a precursor to reading text for comprehension. Indeed, a review of international studies on early reading instruction, predominantly from the USA and United Kingdom (UK), reveal an impressive quantity of research on phonological awareness. Studies generally involve a skill and drill instructional approach with prolonged and explicit

phonological or phonemic awareness instruction (learning to hear and identify sounds in oral language) in the absence of meaningful continuous text (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Byrne & Feilding-Barnsley, 1991; Lundberg, Frost & Petersen, 1988; Noe, Spencer, Kruse & Goldstein, 2014). The influence of this research has encouraged instructional mandates, scripted materials and a focus on isolated readings skills within a context devoid of meaning. While critical of a simple view, New Zealand researchers (Clay, 1991; McNaughton, 2000) acknowledge that young readers can and do achieve common outcomes through different theoretically informed instructional routes. They signal attention, however, to the serious implications for priority learners of simplified accounts of what we actually need to do in order to be able to read.

A simple view of reading does not reflect the principles of learning recommended for literacy teaching practices in the first year of school. New Zealand researchers sustained arguments are that "teaching things in a prescribed sequence does not allow for different starting points and different outcomes" (Clay, 2010, p. 29), inflexible and prescriptive teaching is driven by an implicit assumption that all children take similar paths to learning (Clay, 2014; Johnston, 2002), and research evidence shows that young children's ability to engage effectively with complexity, is overlooked. An even more discouraging argument, however, is that prescriptive instructional approaches tend to inhibit both teachers and children, taking up agentive roles in learning (Johnston & Goatley, 2014), which places children's engagement and therefore progress in literacy learning at risk. Engagement is important for all learners, however, it is a significant priority for those with literacy challenges (MoE, 2003a).

Among numerous studies underpinned by a simple view of reading are a few that point to more optimistic outcomes from research conducted in the USA and UK. One study examined the teaching of phonological awareness within a context of continuous text. Morris, Bloodgood, Lomax, & Perney (2003) observed phonemic awareness developing as children learned to point to words in simple beginning texts. The researchers described, with some incredulity, how children were learning to attend to two complex processes at once while reading. They suggested that despite hundreds of studies examining phonemic awareness, this outcome may have been overlooked by past researchers because they had not had opportunities to observe young children in settings where real reading occurred. Other studies have involved comparing explicit teaching of phonemic awareness with implicit teaching within meaningful reading and writing activities. They discovered that while explicit teaching gained significant results in phonemic awareness children made more progress in reading through implicit instruction (Cunningham, 1990; Dahl, Scharer, Lawson & Grogan, 2002; Hurry and Sylva (2009).

2.3 Part Three

Foundational learning for literacy processing.

Children in the first year of school start to build processing systems for reading when they read the first simple texts in Guided Reading however children need to prepare for Guided Reading first by laying a foundation for effective processing (Auckland Education Board,1963; Doyle, 2015; Holdaway,

1979). Clay describes children's *foundational learning* as "discovering concepts about print, knowledge of the written code and seeing the symbols [letters] and patterns of symbols in print and looking at print according to the directional rules of our written language" (2010, p. 38). It is an important accomplishment when the child applies the appropriate movement patterns with accuracy, little effort and minimal conscious attention to reading stories (Doyle, 2015). This important foundational learning establishes the earliest working systems for reading and is paramount to a successful beginning in a child's reading development. Bearing in mind the diversity among learners, foundational learning develops for most children once they begin formal instruction and should precede their introduction to Guided Reading.

Typically, in NZ classrooms, formal instruction in literacy begins for each child on entry to school. A variety of instructional approaches based on continuous text are used through which foundational learning is facilitated. They are Shared Reading, Language Experience, listening to appealing stories read aloud, and Writing. The teacher provides explicit instruction embedded within the lively and meaningful reading and writing experiences enjoyed by the children (Holdaway, 1979; Smith & Elley, 1997). Concepts about print such as left-to-right reading and one to one matching are demonstrated, and letters, sounds and words discussed within the context of reading and writing. Children's familiarity with book language increases, and their word knowledge and phonological awareness develops when the teacher draws their attention to text features such as rhyme and alliteration. In these well-supported settings and as a result of consistent, repeated actions, or practice, children direct attention according to established rules or patterns and learn to give increased attention to print (Smith & Elley, 1997).

Once children develop directional movement patterns and can scan letters and lines of print, they have in place a foundation for building a processing system for reading. At this time, teachers can engage children in the more intensive Guided Reading instruction using continuous texts (MoE, 2002, 2003a). Clay (2010) cautioned that unless children's foundational learning is established the teacher's instructional interactions around these early texts will confuse them.

Building a processing system for reading.

Early acts of processing begin as the early reader starts to work with several different types of information to arrive at a decision that matches the author's message. S/he becomes aware of and attends to the information in print when the eyes move appropriately across lines of continuous text (McGee, Kim, Nelson & Fried, 2015). The different types of information an early reader must learn to use are:

- the meanings of the story
- the sentence structures and
- the visual information including layout, words, letters and symbols (Clay, 2005, p. 14)

In the beginning, awareness of each type of information is limited. Gradually they build an understanding of what to notice, and in what sequence, and begin to develop systems for effectively using different kinds of information with greater efficiency (McGee et al., 2015). Over time, the early reader learns how to pull all the different kinds of information together and work on them simultaneously at great speed (Rumelhart, 1994). During this process, they accumulate knowledge of words, letters and sounds as a by-product (Clay, 1991). Little stories, well matched to the reader's own interests and prior knowledge provide information-rich texts that support this complex learning.

Close observation by the teacher is essential. Fifth birthday entry allows teachers the flexibility to focus attention on the individual child and make careful observations of their early interactions with print. Children with access to rich experiences are likely to find it easier to learn to read and write than children with minimal literacy experiences. Close observation allows teachers to tune in to individual differences and adjust their teaching (MoE, 2003a), providing extra make-up opportunities with continuous text activities for those not engaging as expected. Teachers are encouraged to become alert to children building *"cognitive competencies"* that drive their literacy learning forward and to those needing extra support because they have developed *"cognitive confusion"* (Clay, 1991, p. 22). The risk of reading difficulties is likely to be increased if confusion remains undetected and slows the pace of learning. Working with what children already know and control as diverse literacy learners is critical for effective literacy instruction in the first year of school.

2.4 Part Four

Texts designed to support the development of processing.

Children who have established foundational learning important for a successful beginning in a child's literacy learning are gradually introduced to simple story books so that they can begin to build processing systems for reading. For 53 years, the MoE has adopted a unique approach in distributing a core instructional series of texts called *Ready to Read* to all primary schools (Department of Education, 1984). Described as a 'national treasure' (Hancock, 2015b), the series is designed to support early readers to develop processing by gradually introducing new challenges within a carefully structured and supportive gradient of text difficulty. Colour segments around a wheel provide an indication of the level of texts (See Figure 1). Schools supplement the *Ready to Read* series with other series such as Price-Milburn (PM). The publisher of PM material also uses the colour wheel colours to indicate text levels.

Figure 1: Ready to Read Colour Wheel

The very beginning texts for early reading are levelled at Magenta. While reading texts at Magenta, children are expected to *gain further control* over concepts about print, one to one matching of a finger to print, make their reading make sense and sound right, and continue to build a reading vocabulary of simple, frequently occurring words. After Magenta, Red, Yellow, Blue and Green follow providing texts of increasing difficulty with each level divided into three sub-levels. While accepting that multiple pathways and individual rates of progress are to be expected it is generally anticipated that children will read texts independently at the Green level by the end of the first year (McNaughton, 2000; MoE, 2003a, 2009b).

Revisions to the Ready to Read series.

In December 2013, the MoE announced significant revisions to *Ready to Read* following a robust review to clarify the role of the series within the classroom. The review was described as part of an ongoing evaluation to ensure that the series remained current and continued to meet the needs of children from 2014 onwards (Hancock 2015b; MoE, 2014c). Subsequent to the review a reappraisal of the research-based knowledge set out in teacher support resources including NZ Curriculum documents (MoE, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), and Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 (MoE, 2003a) was undertaken. Hancock (2015b) stated that as a result of the review literacy processing theory was clearly articulated as the point of reference against which revisions would be aligned.

The audit of *Ready to Read* has seen the series develop in a new direction which suggests there were issues with the gradient of difficulty. New levelling criteria have been developed and processes involved in the design of reading material have altered to clarify and refine the gradient to align texts with expected changes in children's processing (MoE, 2010). Sixteen new story books reflecting the new levelling criteria and design were commissioned and distributed to schools in 2014. Six of the new titles were levelled between Magenta and Red.

Changes to Ready to Read texts at Magenta and Red.

New texts at the Magenta and Red levels have undergone significant changes in content, style and structure. Hancock (2015a) reported that a pattern had developed at Magenta and Red of quite short texts with a high level of repetition in the sentence structures. Clay suggests that texts with these features provide few opportunities for children to develop a effective processing because "if the text hardly varies from page to page you almost know what it is going to say before you look at it" (Clay, 1991, p. 183). The issue with this outcome is that once the repetitive structure becomes familiar, children have no need to attend to the text. Clay (1991) asserts however that processing in reading can only develop once the child has his eyes on the print.

Newly published texts at Magenta and Red are described as information rich. They are carefully written for children to want to read them by themselves, draw on children's oral language knowledge and have enough variation in sentence structure to require children to engage in processing (Hancock, 2015a). The MoE alerted that texts from other series, labelled Magenta and Red, may not have comparable characteristics and therefore may not support the early development of processing. This reference has major implications for the PM series and other series published primarily for the first year of school.

In addition to these developments, *Ready to Read* significantly reduced the number of available titles at Magenta (currently just 4 titles). In a presentation on the review, Hancock (2015b), a literacy consultant to *Ready to Read,* shared that this change was due to concerns about a plethora of repetitive texts at this level. Hancock claimed that the large quantity of texts distracts teachers from the idea that children's foundational learning can be facilitated through many other literacy experiences prior to their introduction to Guided Reading. Consistent with this view is the MoE's (2014b) claim that the reduction in titles at Magenta was designed so that children can refine their already developing foundational knowledge on just a few very simple texts before moving quickly to longer narrative texts at the Red level. Red level texts are deemed more supportive of developing children's processing. In a *Ready to Read* on-line webinar alarm was expressed at reports of children still reading at Magenta after one year of school (MoE, 2014c). Although these reports were anecdotal, the implications of this outcome for early readers, particularly priority learners, is concerning. Interestingly, Clay (2010) hypothesises that a slow pace of progress in the first year of school may be the result of children becoming puzzled and confused by a peremptory introduction through Guided Reading to the complexities of the written code.

The implications of the changes in the *Ready to Read* books and changes in their use are significant to this investigation in terms of teachers' understanding of *Ready to Read* in Guided Reading.

2.5 Part Five

Implementing Guided Reading.

As well as changes to the *Ready to Read* series of texts the MoE announced a significant clarification about when teachers should begin to use instructional texts in Guided Reading. Although the majority of literature advises a gradual introduction to Guided Reading (Department of Education, 1985; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; MoE, 2002, 2003a) an unfortunate statement in one MoE curriculum document (2010) incorrectly advises teachers that "as soon as students start school they begin reading texts at Magenta" (p. 10). This statement has been recently repudiated (MoE, 2014b) to cohere with the revisons to the *Ready to Read* series. The inclusion of this statement in a key curriculum document (MoE, 2010), however, is problematic. Early studies carried out on teacher-child interactions in NZ New Entrant (NE) classrooms confirm that a gradual introduction to Guided Reading has been accepted practice for decades (Clay, 1966, 1982a) and teacher support material indicates similarly (Department of Education, 1985, 2002, 2003a). The following diagram shows a pictorial representation of that reoccurring message in a teacher support manual published in 1985 (Department of Education, 1985). (See Figure 2). It shows that at school entry, children are exposed to a range of literacy activities that assist in their growth towards independence, but not Guided Reading. Note that children now begin writing on entry to school.

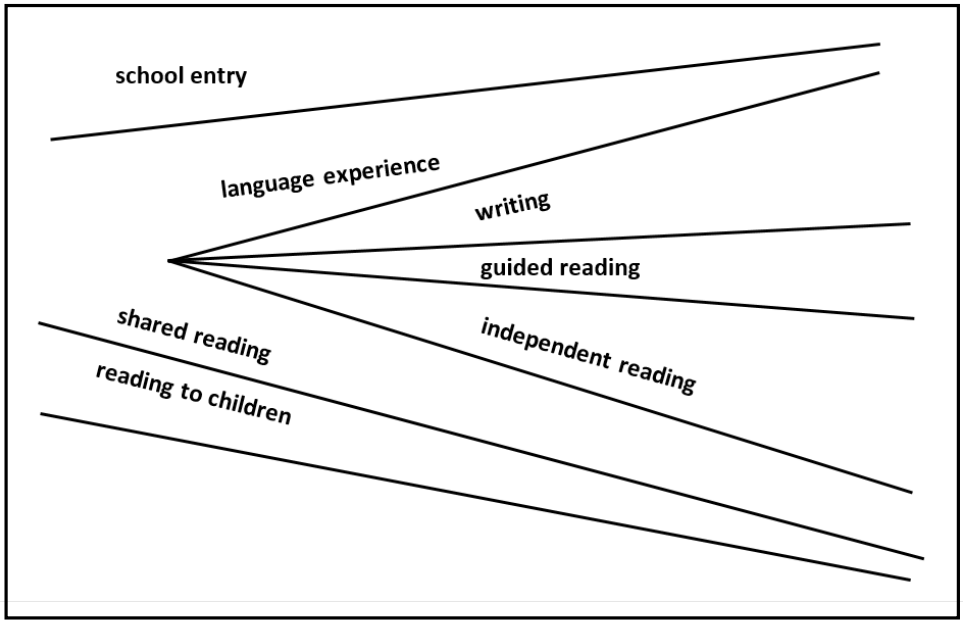


Figure 2: A diagram showing the gradual introduction to Guided Reading in the first year of school.

The MoE's recent clarification about the gradual introduction of Guided Reading may mean that teachers are exercising a precipitous initiation of the approach. Of significance, however, are alternative findings that suggest there is a "compelling need to rapidly develop facility with text-based literacy practices of schools" for priority learners (Phillips et al., 2004). Phillips et al. argue that there should be no delay in supporting children from different cultural and linguistic groups whose disparate needs are

evident at school entry. The researchers' view is that children are in need of the most facilitative teaching that quickly advances their understanding of how to engage effectively within the unfamiliar nuanced social practices of literacy learning within the classroom.

Teachers typically group a small number of children with similar needs together during Guided Reading (Wilkinson & Townsend, 2000). Although Guided Reading can be conducted with individuals the focus of this study is on ability grouping for instruction because it appears to be one of the most common and enduring practices advocated in the NZ literature (Auckland Education Board, 1963; Department of Education, 1985; MoE,1985, 1996, 2002, 2003a; Rubie-Davies, 2015; Wilkinson & Townsend, 2000). A feature of the Guided Reading context is that it is consistent with the principle that learning and understanding develops collaboratively within social settings underpinned by oral language. A primary focus of Guided Reading instruction is on the learning needs of individuals that teachers are able to identify and target in manageable ways (MoE, 2002, 2003a), which takes account of the principle of multiple learning pathways. An alternative form of grouping is one that is varied and dynamic in size, and mix of ability. Teachers group children in this way in the first year of school for other literacy instruction but not for Guided Reading.

Useful for deliberation is Rubie-Davies (2015) conjecture of a link between grouping and achievement. She pointed out that NZ's high rate of in-class ability grouping and significantly high achievement disparity, compared unfavourably with policies of heterogeneous grouping in other jurisdictions with significantly lower disparity gaps between high and low achievers. Since one of the most intensive forms of grouping close to the onset of formal instruction is beginning Guided Reading, we cannot discount that impact of grouping for teachers, and for children even at this very early stage of reading instruction.

A framework for Guided Reading.

Further clarifications resulting from the *Ready to Read* revisions alerted teachers to how instructional texts should best be used to facilitate children's processing in the first year of school. Clarifications to Guided Reading practice are clearly evident in TSM, available on the Ready to Read website and written to accompany the newly distributed texts.

A framework for delivering Guided Reading has been recommended in teacher support material for many years. Current key texts such as Effective Literacy Practice: Yrs 1 to 4 (MoE, 2003a), Guided Reading: Years 1 – 4 (MoE, 2002), and *Ready to Read* TSM provide descriptions of the framework which comprises four generally accepted elements. An additional outcome of the *Ready to Read* review is that TSM accompanying new texts for Guided Reading were revised to align the framework more effectually with literacy processing theory, providing more clarity for teachers (MoE, 2015b). Revised elements in the framework are: (a) introducing the story, (b) monitoring the reading, (c) discussing the story and (d) after reading: practice and reinforcement. By sequencing the elements, and following advice and guidance about the purpose of each element, teaching builds coherence and momentum

across the lesson. *Ready to Read* advises that aligning lessons against the framework is more likely to facilitate teaching for processing in reading.

These significant clarifications around the Guided Reading framework and the ways the elements are used are likely to influence the implementation of Guided Reading and how teachers support children in developing effective processing. One clarification stresses the importance of teachers providing a rich introduction to the new story. This clarification was supported by anecdotal reports that over time variations in Guided Reading had appeared that seemed to be reducing opportunities for children to process text for themselves. Variations included: (a) high levels of teacher intervention, (b) teachers closely directing the lessons, (c) having children read only a couple of pages at a time and in unison, and (d) stopping and discussing each page in order to set up the reading for the next section of the text (MoE, 2014c).

The revised emphasis on introducing the story is consistent with Clay (1991) and other scholars who recommend that for early readers' teachers should provide a richly supportive introduction (Clay, 1988; MoE, 2002, 2003a, Phillips et al., 2004). Ultimately, Clay describes a 'good' introduction, as one that makes a new text more 'accessible' and thus more likely to be read with success on the first attempt. Greater emphasis is now placed on the meaning intended by the author and activating children's prior knowledge to support their understanding before reading (Hancock, 2015b; MoE, 2013b, 2014b). Newly published texts at Magenta now have a story-line that better facilitates this approach. New and interesting vocabulary and language structures with which children are unlikely to be familiar can be introduced by integrating them into the general discussion. This practice was confirmed by Clay who expressed that "the overview of the story is like a conversational exchange, and the attention to detail should not dismember the flow of the story" (1991, p. 175).

Another important clarification is signalled in the second element of the lesson framework. This element, previously described as 'Reading the text,' is now referred to as 'Monitoring the reading.' After introducing the story teachers are encouraged to watch and listen while each child reads quietly by themselves intervening only if necessary. This shift is intended to facilitate maximum opportunities for children to independently process the text on the first reading (MoE, 2014b, 2014c; Schwartz, 2005; Smith 2005). Previous TSM guidance, including that demonstrated in a video-recorded lesson on Guided Reading distributed to all schools (MoE, 2002), encouraged teachers to pause children (the group) intermittently during the first reading for focussed discussion. Advice in a key MoE document even suggests that this is particularly helpful for beginning readers (MoE, 2002). The assumption is that children's reading is managed, rather than monitored by teachers with few opportunities for individuals to develop processing systems as they read independently.

One final important clarification relates to discussing the story after the first reading. Teachers are now encouraged to facilitate talk about the story to improve children's comprehension or to explore aspects of the text that might have been new or challenging, after the first reading rather than interrupting children during the first reading.

In a MoE On-Line webinar, during which aspects of the *Ready to Read* review were shared, presenters explained that revisions were prompted by shifts or drifts in Guided Reading over the years that were minimising the effectiveness of the approach. For example, reports of children spending up to a year reading texts at Magenta. This does not seem surprising since *Ready to Read's* own advice as well as other teacher support material, has been unclear with mixed messages about the best ways to facilitate early reading.

Given the recent dissemination of the revisions around the *Ready to Read* series, the status of teachers' familiarity with this information is unknown. The following table presents key clarifications emerging from the *Ready to Read* review that will influence Guided Reading instruction in the first year of school.

Table 1: Key clarifications to Guided Reading practice as a result of the Ready to Read revisions

Changes to elements of a Guided Reading Lesson		
Previous	**Revision**	**Outcome**
Introducing the text	Introducing the story	– More emphasis on the authors message and reading for a purpose – Carefully crafted so that children can read the new text independently
Reading the text	Monitoring the reading	– Each child reads the text for themselves – Child has maximum opportunities to problem-solve the text independently – The teacher intervenes to support only if necessary
Discussing the text during the first reading	Discussing the text after the first reading	– Children are not interrupted during the first reading for group discussion around the text or story. – Children may reread the story and the teacher may intervene this time to support comprehension.

Although Hancock declared in a bold and encouraging statement "I firmly believe that the changes (recommended in the review of) *Ready to Read* . . . could have a significant impact on the tail of underachievement" (Private communication, December, 2015), no research underpinning revisions to the implementation of Guided Reading was referenced in materials broadly distributed to schools.

Research on Guided Reading.

A search for information using beginning Guided Reading, Guided Reading, literacy processing theory and early reading behaviour as search variables produced a rich collection of advice and guidance on Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; MoE, 2002, 2003a; Richardson, 2009; Smith & Elley, 1997) as well as articles that described the influence of Guided Reading (Blaiklock, 2001; Elley, 2004; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012) and how children develop processing systems for reading (Askew, 2008; Clay, 2014; Doyle, 2015; McGee et al., 2015; Rodgers, 2004; Schwartz, 2005; Wilkinson & Townsend, 2000;). While most of the information gathered from these sources validate the content of the *Ready to Read* revisions, none provide rationales for why the revisions are necessary.

A few early empirical studies presented findings of research into children's development of early reading behaviours. As described previously in this review, Clay's (1966) influential work on NZ children's reading behaviour in the first year of school detailed the complexities involved in learning to read. Watson's (1980) observational study of beginning reading in NZ classrooms shed some light on unity and clarity in teachers' understandings of how to facilitate processing of information in the print at that time. In a later study Watson, (1993) described how teachers' practice placed value on providing opportunities for New Entrant children to develop independent learning. Neither Clay, nor Watson's research, however, included detailed evidence of how teachers implemented the framework of Guided Reading or what they were saying and doing to build children's processing systems for reading.

More recent studies were identified and reviewed. In an examination of children's early reading in low decile schools, (a decile indicates the extent to which the school draws its existing students from low socio-economic communities), researchers expressed concern for the low progress in text reading (McNaughton et al., 2003). From an analysis of children's patterns of progress and levels of achievement researchers questioned the quality of Guided Reading teaching, in particular the selection of appropriate texts, how well the teacher's introduction supported the first reading and how effective the teachers' teaching interactions were in ensuring children were not confused. The researchers suggested measures for improving children's progress but no descriptions of the teachers Guided Reading practice were provided to substantiate their arguments. The researchers indicated insufficient knowledge of the instructional practices within the schools to determine the accuracy of their assumptions. Phillips et al. (2004) conducted research in a similar setting where a successful intervention rapidly shifted the achievement levels of priority learners. Modifications to reading instruction supported this outcome and will be used to inform this study however there were no descriptions of Guided Reading lessons.

Smith (2005) provided a detailed examination of four teachers' responses to early readers' error behaviour while reading continuous text and discovered patterns of teacher interference that caused confusion for the children. Frequent interventions to point out error reduced children's opportunities to learn to independently process the texts. Hedin and Gaffney (2013) discovered similar outcomes in their study of teachers' attempts to provide contingent support for struggling sixth grade readers. The researchers discovered that teachers tended to interrupt readers problem-solving with 'pre-emptive

prompts' that forestalled students' opportunities to process text by first noticing error for themselves. Both Smith's, and Hedin and Gaffney's findings on teacher interruptions as children are reading is revealing and of interest to this current study.

In a large scale (212 schools) evaluative report on the quality literacy teaching in the first two years of school, ERO (2009) researchers collected evidence through observation of teacher practice, interviews and artefacts. The researchers found that 31% of schools provided only an adequate to limited quality of reading teaching. The researchers expressed concerns that teacher understandings about how children learned to read were limiting rather than fostering opportunities to develop reading. Issues identified were children not reading at suitable levels of text difficulty, minimal amounts of time discussing and understanding text, children's choral reading and reading material not linked to children's interests. While ERO's report provided interesting evaluative summaries of findings across a broad spectrum of literacy teaching practice, detailed descriptions of teachers' implementation of Guided Reading were not included in the research.

The most recent study providing a detailed description of Guided Reading practice within a literacy processing framework was undertaken by Boocock (2012) in the first two years of school. While Boocock's study was not focussed on Guided Reading with NEs she did find that aspects of teachers' practice were inconsistent with general guidelines in the literature. Teachers fostered children's choral reading and finger pointing on a range of text levels. Both activities are likely to reduce rather than maximise opportunities for meaning making and, therefore, the development of processing systems for reading (Clay, 2005a).

Only one empirical study documented an intensive description of Guided Reading in the first year of school. McKay (2004) used a mixed method approach to investigate Guided Reading with beginning readers in the UK. Using a questionnaire and lesson observations McKay discovered that there were not only variations in two teachers' Guided Reading practices but differing interpretations of its nature and purpose. McKay expressed concern for these outcomes and suggested that the effectiveness of Guided Reading may be compromised. While McKay's research appears to have some relevance to the *Ready to Read* recommendations the different educational context and contradictions in the articulated theory of learning to read place limitations on the significance of the results for the NZ setting.

2.6 Conclusion

A major contribution of the available literature appears to be that in the last few decades NZ researchers have increasingly pointed to a lack of clarity around the effective implementation of Guided Reading. There is a call for better understandings that ensure quality Guided Reading instruction and more effective teaching decisions that lead to improved outcomes, especially for priority learners. Similar concerns for Guided Reading were raised in reports from overseas research (Allington, 2002;

Ford & Opitz, 2008). Changes and clarifications stemming from the MoE's review of *Ready to Read*, could be a reaction to the challenges and issues exposed in this set of empirical studies.

Given the limited studies available that have provided information about Guided Reading in the NZ setting and the lack of research with a focus on beginning Guided Reading in the first year, undertaking a detailed investigation in this setting is worthwhile and overdue.

The following questions therefore guide this study.

- *What knowledge and understandings about processing systems for reading are reflected in teachers' implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school?*
- *How does Guided Reading influence children in the first year of school to build processing systems for reading?*

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the research approach and procedures for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with a consideration of ethical issues.

3.1 Part One

Research Approach.

This qualitative study was conducted using descriptive case study design (Stake, 1995). The selection of multiple qualitative data collection and analysis methods was shaped by the complex context of a New Entrant (NE) classroom, the phenomenon of Guided Reading and the development of children's processing systems for reading, which formed the unit of analysis.

In a powerfully simple definition Stake, (2010) described qualitative research as "studying how things work" (p. 2). This definition places emphasis on studying to understand "the actual, ongoing ways that persons or organisations go about their work" (p. 2) and the meanings they have constructed to make sense of the world (Merriam, 1998). Leedy and Ormond, (2005) agree that "to answer some research questions we must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying" (p. 133) before searching for causes and treating problems. That is what this research undertook to do in the context of three NE classrooms where Guided Reading occurred within the normal daily routine of literacy activities. NE classrooms were selected because 5-year-old children could be observed constructing processing systems for reading as they began to initially engage in formal literacy instruction and early reading. Large schools were identified because they were more likely to provide sufficient numbers of children beginning school at or around the same time, who met the profile of a typical NE. The selection of schools with high percentages of children achieving at or above expected standards after one year of teaching was based on the view that a researcher, wanting to discover, understand, and gain insight, must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Bryk, 2014; Schmidt & Whitmore, 2010). The assumption is that where there are high levels of achievement the teaching practice must be effective. In all three schools Māori and Pacific students were identified as achieving at similarly high levels to other groups. (Details about school settings and participants are provided in the chapter headed 'Results', pages 43 – 47).

Data collection began in March 2015 and concluded in September 2015. Data gathering measures included, semi-structured interviews, video-recorded observations of Guided Reading lessons, stimulated-recall interviews, and Running Records (RR). Stake asserts that it is important for qualitative researchers to "look and listen from more than one vantage point," (2010, p. 123). The application and combination of several or more data collecting methods facilitates the cross checking or triangulation of the data leading to evidence that is more credible, is more likely to eliminate bias, and reflects "multiple ways of establishing truth" (Golafshani, 2003). Safeguards to ensure triangulation

and thus, the credibility of the data were integral to this research. Explained in the following table are steps undertaken to enable triangulation.

Table 2: Steps taken to triangulate data.

Method	Explanation	Action
Mix of methods	Different data collection methods highlighted complementary or divergent aspects of the same phenomena	– Qualitative methods were used primarily however one quantitative method was included.
Multiple measures	Multiple and different methods of gathering data were used for cross verification	– Guided Reading lessons were video-recorded – Semi-structured interview with teachers were recorded – Interviews aimed at reviewing pivotal video clips inviting teacher reflection, were recorded – Running Records of children reading continuous text were administered and analysed – Open-ended field notes were documented in the classroom – Interview and lesson observation recordings were transcribed – Email correspondence with teachers requested elaboration on aspects of their data – Case story-telling techniques provided alternative forms of accumulating data
Member checking	Data and conclusions were authenticated by participants	– Case story narratives were checked and verified for accuracy by teachers
Reviewing	Alternative explanations and interpretations were sought	– University faculty members were consulted to provide a cross-check on the interpretation of results and offer challenging and/or alternative perspectives
Progressive refocusing	Consistent repeated interaction between theory and data gradually lead to a more refined focus	– Documentation of the ongoing development of the analysis and interpretation of the data showed design change in the focus of the research

Measures used for data collection.

The following qualitative measures were used to collect data from teachers.

Semi-structured interviews.

A semi-structured interview was undertaken with teachers around pre-planned open-ended and closed questions prepared ahead of time (Bannister, 2012; Scanlon, 2014). The purpose of the interviews was to have teachers share their views and perspectives on literacy learning and teaching, and Guided Reading in particular. The way teachers' conceptualise the nature of learning and the purpose of teaching reading results in teaching practices that can expand or contract learning opportunities for early readers. Parr & Timperley (2008) claimed that "teachers with higher levels of knowledge about reading or writing and how to teach it to their students had students who made more progress." Of particular interest to this study was whether teachers' views and perspectives reflected knowledge of processing systems and how to teach for processing in reading. Teachers' articulations offered a source of data that contributed to the researcher getting the meanings straight and being more confident that the evidence was good (Stake, 2010).

Lesson observations.

Observations were undertaken of each teacher implementing beginning Guided Reading in the classroom with a group of children. The researcher's role within this context was as a non-participant observer (Bell, 2010) with no involvement in the lessons. This role is designed to enable the gathering of more authentic data which may not be the case if the researcher is submerged within the lesson being observed. The purpose of lesson observation was to examine each teacher's implementation of Guided Reading for evidence of knowledge and understandings about building processing systems for reading. Observing teachers' Guided Reading in the natural setting of the classroom and their ways of thinking, manifested in their talk, expressions, body posture and so on can be a valuable outcome of observation. Video-recording was used to document and conserve observations of their instruction, including non-verbal communications, and was a primary source of information (Boocock, 2012; Hardy, 2012; McKay, 2004; Rodgers, 2004). Repeated viewings of videoed lessons shed increasing light on the nuances in the teachers' body language and instructional interactions with children. The ability to replay the lessons proved invaluable for the synthesis of data and the interpretations and reinterpretations (Stake, 2010) of the evidence.

Video recordings were downloaded, labelled, and filed for easy access in individual teacher's folders organised on the researcher's laptop. Copies were made and stored securely on a separate password protected device.

Stimulated-recall interviews.

Video clips of the lessons with particular relevance to the research questions were replayed to each teacher during an interview conducted soon after each Guided Reading lesson. The aim of this procedure was to stimulate teachers' reflection on the experience viewed and to record their responses (Rodgers, 2004; Ruppar, Gaffney & Dymond, 2015; Schmidt & Whitmore, 2010). Teacher contemplation and explanation was invited through open-ended questions such as "Tell me about . . ." The purpose of gathering information in this way was to find explanation for how and why teachers make particular decisions while in the midst of instruction. What pedagogical knowledge does this teacher have at her disposal and for what reasons does she make instructional choices (Schoenfeld, 2013) were questions underpinning the use of this measure. This measure provided an alternative lens through which other data could be cross verified ensuring that the process of "additional checking" recommended by Stake, contributed to increased confidence in the evidence (2010).

Audio recordings.

An iPad or the recording function on a mobile phone was used to document and conserve the verbal responses teachers gave while being interviewed. Audio recordings provided the opportunity to transcribe and review the teachers' words verbatim and to hear and acknowledge the subtleties in their mannerisms which provided additional clues to their meanings. Audio-recordings for each teacher were accumulated and filed under appropriate headings in each teacher's digital folder, for ease of access. Copies of audio files were downloaded and stored securely on another device.

Transcription.

Videoed lessons and audio-recordings of interviews were fully transcribed. Despite being a lengthy process transcription provided an opportunity for constant review as recordings were listened to and/or watched repeatedly. Features initially taken for granted began to take on new meanings with the emergence of more detail. Themes and categories were progressively coded from the transcription of interviews and observations.

Various formats were trialled before satisfaction with a final template for presenting and analysing transcriptions was achieved. Transcripts of interviews were recorded in one long column with episodes of similar content placed in sections and numbered. Systematic logging and re-logging of memos, noticings and emerging themes occurred simultaneously and ongoing in adjacent columns. Time sequences were aligned against relevant data for access and coding purposes. A particular form of presentation that allowed the researcher to access, verify and evaluate an increasing quantity of information in a well-organised manner became essential. Samples of transcription including evidence of ongoing analysis were intermittently shared with supervisors for review. Stake claims that "multiple

eyes is one of the most important triangulations" (2010, p. 127). Alternative interpretations that confirmed or challenged the researcher's perceptions were added to the existing data collection and highlighted. Transcriptions of teacher talk during lesson observations received similar treatment. All transcriptions were carefully labelled and stored in teachers' individual folders. Identifying names were anonymised to protect the identity of participants.

Field notes.

The researcher's intention was to record hand-written field notes while in the research setting to achieve a more thorough and thicker record of occurrences relevant to the research. This activity, however, proved to be a more difficult exercise than anticipated. During the interview process pausing to record notes appeared to reflect some discourtesy towards teachers, therefore, the audio-recordings became the main source of data. Field notes were written before, during and after lesson observations with more success, and while the completed writings reflected less perception and interpretation than that originally intended they were sufficient to aid recall of events. Field notes were reprinted and added to the teachers' digital files providing additional data for triangulation. Brief field notes were also written during the administration of RRs. Due to the slower pace of children's reading, moments of interest could be recorded on the run.

Email correspondence was entered into with teachers regarding either their lesson observations or interview responses if further elaboration or interpretation was deemed necessary by the researcher. Correspondence was copied and filed along with other field notes, in folders assigned to each teacher.

The following measure was used to collect data from children's reading.

Running Records of continuous text reading.

Running Records provided an assessment of text difficulty and text reading and delivered insights about children's processing of text (Boocock, 2012; Kaye, 2002; McGee et al., 2015; Rodgers, 2004; Rogers, 2011). Clay acknowledged that RRs "can be taken on the child's earliest attempts to read little books" to enrich observations (2005a, p. 80). They are an important data gathering source providing evidence of children's earliest reading behaviour and are recognised to be a highly reliable tool with "both face and content validity" (Clay, 2005a, p. 11). Their administration and analysis enabled triangulation with other data sources and improved conditions for establishing credibility for this research.

Training is recommended to administer a RR to achieve a high standard of observing, recording and interpreting. The researcher had 30 years of experience administering RRs and for this study,

observed, recorded and analysed records taken with participant children. Administrative protocols ensure that as a child reads orally from the text their utterances are reproduced in a systematic way according to conventional recording techniques (Clay, 2005a). Having taken a record, it is possible to check whether a child is reading material of appropriate difficulty, "neither too difficult nor too easy but offering a suitable level of challenge to the learner" (Clay, 2005a, p. 53). Running Records are quantified for error ratios, accuracy rates and self-correction ratios. The highest level text a child can read with 90% accuracy or above indicates the instructional level, that is, an appropriate level on which the child can learn. The record will contain enough error and evidence of problem-solving that an analysis of how well the child's processing is coming together is possible. When the challenges are too great (below 90% accuracy), the record is more likely to show how the child's processing is falling apart.

The final method of data collection combined data from the range of measures previously described. This process is outlined in the following summary.

Narratives, composite illustrations and vignettes.

Several descriptive modes based on a story-telling approach (Stake, 2010) were used to gather together evidence from the various measures described earlier and to assist with the final steps in triangulating the evidence. Story-telling is an alternative form of data gathering in qualitative research designed to illustrate the complexities of a case in ways that bring context alive for the reader. In this study story-telling was primarily used to present compelling illustrations of the teachers and children during critical moments relevant to the research. Forms of story-telling used were narratives, composite illustrations and vignettes. The culmination of these formed a case story for each teacher.

Narratives were used to present summaries-in-progress of data depicting individual teachers' unfolding stories as seen or reported. Narratives were written and emailed to teachers for verification and comment soon after each observation lesson and interview. Corrections to narratives were made where teachers had indicated an adjustment was necessary, ensuring a high degree of accuracy in the evidence. Comments that either corroborated or conflicted with the evidence were added as expansions of the data.

Composite illustrations were used when the analysis of interview data showed extensive overlap between the three teachers. A single fictitious teacher, Rachel, represents the teachers. Each illustration includes actual quotes from the different participants that were representative of their common views and perspectives. Vignettes are short stories that bring to life an issue central to the research or illustrate a complexity (Stake, 2010) particular to individual participants and with relevance to the research. Techniques used for story-telling are highlighted with relevant quotes transcribed from either interviews or lesson observations. All quotes are italicised.

Samples of narratives, composite illustrations and vignettes were emailed to University supervisors for review. Their comment, either leading to a reinterpretation of the data or confirming the current interpretation facilitated further reflection and improving understandings.

Figure 3 shows how the multiple and different sources of evidence used to gather data within different contexts served the purpose of triangulation.

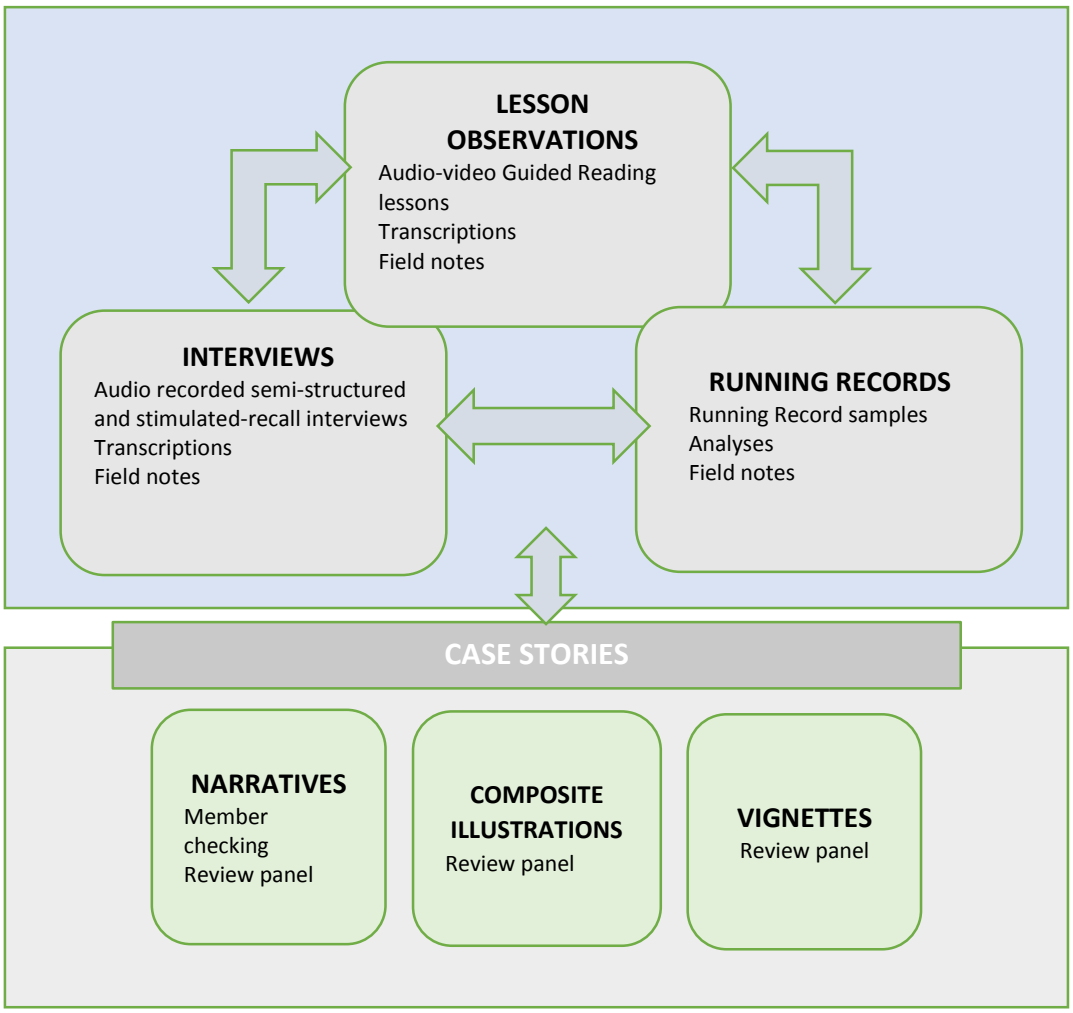


Figure 3: Multiple sources of information serving the purpose of triangulation

Procedures for data collection.

Data collection procedures used are described in the following section. The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee granted approval for carrying out the research on the 13th of April 2015. Principals of identified schools were approached, the research discussed, and Participant Information Sheets (PIS) (Appendix One) were distributed to Boards of Trustees and principals, teachers, parents and children. Each participant gave consent for the research to be carried out. Consent Forms (CF) (Appendix Two) were returned as requested.

Teachers.

Semi-structured interviews.

The research commenced with a semi-structured interview conducted between myself and each teacher participant. Teachers were asked to nominate a time convenient to them, and a place with the least distractions, for an initial interview involving pre-planned closed and open ended questions (Appendix Three). Both researcher and teacher pre-agreed that the interview would take approximately one hour. During the interview audio recording was used so that transcripts could be prepared. An interview guide was used with a list of questions and topics, organised in a particular order and relevant to the research Questions ranged from general to quite specific with the aim of probing for increasing detail. The same questions were asked of each teacher in order that reliable and comparable data would be obtained. Further exploratory questions were asked using the phrase, *"Tell me more about that"* when clarification or interpretation was required.

Each interview began expressing appreciation for the teacher's contribution of time, a reminder of the purpose of the research and preparation for audio recording. The interview then proceeded in a conversational manner in order to develop rapport and ease with dialogue. To avoid bias, I took great care to monitor my own responses to allow teachers "freedom to express their views in their own terms without influence" (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). At the conclusion of the interviews the teachers were again thanked for their time. Each was alerted that the audio-taped interviews would be transcribed, names would be anonymised and that summaries of their responses would be made available to them for verification.

Guided Reading observations.

Observations of Guided Reading lessons occurred with each teacher on three occasions. Teachers were invited to teach Guided Reading as they normally would with a pre-selected group of the early readers in their NE classroom. For the purposes of this study, a Guided Reading lesson began when the children were seated in preparation for the lesson, and ended when they dispersed. Katy and Anna taught Guided Reading while other children in their classrooms worked at literacy task-board activities. These are literacy activities that children work at independently allowing the teacher to withdraw groups. Their groups were seated at curved teaching tables. Julia chose to have her class withdrawn by a colleague while she facilitated her lessons. She sat on the floor with the children arranged in a semi-circle.

The date of the first and then subsequent lesson observations was negotiated with each teacher. Various school commitments reduced the regularity with which observations could be undertaken. Most observations, however, occurred within a 2 or 3-week period although one observation occurred 5

weeks later due to a school holiday interruption. All teachers chose to teach Guided Reading typically in the morning during their normal literacy programme.

On the day of each observation and with agreement from teachers, I arrived between 15 and 30 minutes prior to the lesson. This scheduling was undertaken for the following reasons: to confirm that teachers' permissions remained granted, briefly engage about the purpose and process of the observation, hear any details about the lesson the teacher might want to share, prepare and check the recording device, familiarise the children with a new presence in the classroom and organise an unobtrusive observation point where field notes could be recorded. Prior to the first observation, each teacher briefly announced to the children in the class the purpose of the researcher's presence. From that point I ensured that disruption to the literacy programme and the Guided Reading lesson was kept to a minimum. For accuracy of information being gathered, the authenticity of the phenomenon being studied needed to remain intact.

An iPad was positioned to ensure that all aspects of the lessons featured on the viewing screen and participant voices could be clearly heard. This was the most discreet device available to the researcher with the capabilities and function required for quality recording. At the conclusion of the lessons a brief and general conversational exchange was usually held, with the researcher mindful of the teachers' need to continue on with their normal literacy instruction.

Video recordings of Guided Reading lessons and accompanying field notes were then summarised and integrated with the researcher's initial reactions to the teaching practice and interactions presented as brief bullet points. This process formed a starting point for ongoing interpretation and communicated with supervisors. Narratives summarising the lessons as they unfolded were then written and emailed to teachers for verification.

Stimulated-recall interviews.

Soon after each Guided Reading observation, at a time and place convenient to the teacher, a stimulated-recall interview was conducted. Three for each teacher were undertaken. These interviews were usually conducted within 2 to 3 days after a lesson observation, for about 1 hour. Some haste was necessary to reduce teachers' loss of recall for the lesson and rationales for instructional decisions. Before the interview the video-recorded footage of each lesson was viewed by the researcher and three or four particular segments of interest were selected to share with the teacher. Segments chosen ranged between 30 seconds to 1-minute long.

Stimulated-recall interviews proceeded in similar ways to that outlined previously for semi-structured interviews. During these interviews two devices were required. One was used to replay the video segments (iPad) and the other to record the ensuing discussion (mobile phone). Selected segments of the recorded lesson were replayed to the teacher. Before the replay the teacher was

prompted with either, “What were you doing in this segment?” or, “Tell me about what was happening here” or “What are your thoughts on this?” At times, teachers asked to pause the recording rather than wait until the end of the segment so they could offer an on-the-run explanation. This was happily accommodated as this provided evidence of what the teacher viewed as a priority. A loose guide to questioning was used depending on the teachers’ responses. Questions such as, “Tell me more about that” and a simple “Why?” were typical. Giving wait time for teachers to respond in combination with the style of questioning appeared to empower teachers to focus their thoughts. The more unstructured the interview, however, the higher the risk of influence from the researcher’s views (Ziniel, n. d.). The type of question asked was carefully considered to avoid leading or guiding a teacher’s responses in an unintended direction. The delivery of questions, in an enquiring but neutral tone, aimed to obscure signs of my bias (which must exist). At the conclusion of each interview, the teacher was thanked for her time and contribution. The teacher was reminded that her responses would be transcribed and a narrative summary emailed for verification.

Children.

Running Records of reading continuous text.

Every child present during a Guided Reading lesson was administered a RR. This procedure occurred soon after conclusion of each lesson. Ill health and the flexible movement of children between reading groups, however, meant that the number of children administered RRs, varied.

Before the first round of RRs was administered teachers were asked to introduce the children with the reminder that they would be reading to the researcher. Their agreement was obtained. On subsequent occasions, the teacher merely reminded the children and a quick check confirmed that they were familiar with the researcher and appeared comfortable. Each child was then engaged in brief dialogue to establish a calm and relaxed context for the reading to take place.

The child was invited to read the story they had just read in the lesson, with the following prompt. “I would like to hear you read this. Would you read it to me please?” On agreement the title was read by the researcher and the child handed the book. The written recording proceeded with the researcher in the role of objective observer, intervening only according to the guidelines for administering RRs (Clay, 2005a).

Due to the slow pace of children’s early reading, it was possible for the researcher to jot field notes randomly when a revealing *moment* of interest occurred. Further brief field notes were recorded at the conclusion of the record taking after the child had departed. The RRs were then scored and accuracy rates and self-corrections ratios were calculated. Selected children’s reading behaviour was then analysed for evidence of processing.

3.2 Part Two: Analysis of Data

Teachers.

Interviews.

The following section describes the analysis of interview data. Data from the initial semi-structured interviews conducted at the beginning of the study and from the stimulated-recall interviews held soon after each observation of Guided Reading, was combined for analysis. Despite differences in methods the focus of each measure was similar. That focus involved investigating teachers' views and perspectives on implementing Guided Reading for evidence that reflected knowledge and understanding of how to teach for processing.

Data analysis and interpretation procedures were informed by Cresswell (1990). The analysis began with word-for-word transcription of the audio recordings soon after the conclusion of each interview. Transcription was completed promptly, partly for the purpose of extracting information with which to prepare summary narratives for teachers to verify and partly for the synthesis and interpretation of the data in preparation for the following observations and interviews. The advantage in audio-recording interviews came to light during the constant replays required to accurately reproduce the spoken word in written form. Repeated viewings led the researcher to become very familiar with the teachers' voices and their meanings. This was the beginning of multiple waves of analysis.

Transcription was formatted into a template document for ease of reference for the coding process. Cresswell recommended Teschs' detailed guidance (as cited in, Cresswell, 1990) for coding which informed the process in the following way. Questions posed by the researcher were presented in bold with the teachers' responses recorded beneath. Segmentation in space indicated a change in idea or topic. Key words or sentences appearing as particularly relevant leads were highlighted in the text. Alongside the transcription, on-the-run memos were recorded as noticings or questions, relevant to the research questions. Stake describes this process of analysis and synthesis as ongoing, interactive, habituated enquiry (2010). Several templates to store the responses and memos in a relevant, usable and accessible form were trialled and adapted. The final outcome provided an auditable illustration of how repeated rereading's led to more refined memoing and to the development of a significant number of key topics. These topics emerged from the data inductively rather than from predetermined categories (Cresswell, 2009). Colour coding was used as a key to differentiate between the types of memos. Samples of transcription and preliminary interpretation were emailed to supervisors for review and comment. Confirmation and challenges to the interpretation were embedded at the relevant point in the data collection and italicised for ease of identification. Table 3 shows the template, with an example of memoing and emerging key topics with relevance to the research questions.

Table 3: Recording template with examples of memoing and emerging themes.

Coding	Transcript	Memos	Memos	Possible themes
	When do you start Guided Reading with New Entrants? Straight away. We put them into groups straight away and start them on little readers straight away.	This does not fit with her discussion around their careful transitioning of children to school. Why does she begin straight away?	Not responsive to children's needs.	Engaging in Guided Reading on entry to school.
	They should take home a book on their very first day. And they have a browsing basket of books they can use straight away. It's all those books that say 'a pig, a dog,' those are in their browsing baskets.	Why does a book need to go home on the first day?	Choice of texts for browsing. Two words per page doesn't support the development of processing.	Selection of texts does not facilitate processing. Language structure?
	The difficulty in Guided Reading, one of the difficulties, is that you have to be so on top of what everyone is doing. You have to be so flexible when you move this kid out of this group and into that group.	Can she talk more about this notion of 'flexibility' in grouping?	She sees flexibility in grouping as an important part of the process of GR (tone of voice!)	Grouping.

A synthesis of the data through interpretation and reinterpretation continued for each teacher until a process of grouping and regrouping reduced the number to a smaller collection of reoccurring themes. Similarities and differences were then cross-checked between the different sets of teachers' records. From a large list, four final themes emerged representing the key similarities in teachers' responses that provided relevant information supporting the research investigation. The four themes are developing professional knowledge and experience, introducing early literacy instruction, Guided Reading instruction, and making decisions about texts. Table 4 shows the gradual development of themes during the period of data analysis.

Table 4: The gradual development of themes during the analysis process.

Initial Themes	→		Final Four Themes
- Developing their craft - Building a foundation for success - Establishing structure and routines - Supporting links between speaking, reading and writing - Using Guided Reading - Scheduling Guided Reading - Grouping - Selecting texts - Assessing progress	- Teacher proficiency - The classroom literacy programme - Organising for Guided Reading - The teacher's role in Guided Reading - New book introductions - Monitoring the first reading - Running Records	- Learning their trade - Literacy instruction - Grouping - Form of the lesson - Teaching for processing in reading	- Developing professional knowledge and experience - Introducing early literacy instruction - Guided Reading instruction - Making decisions about texts

The four themes are depicted again in Figure 4 with corresponding categories. Theme 1 contributed to understandings around teachers' opportunities for building pedagogical knowledge of literacy learning and teaching. Theme 2 provided insights about teachers' priorities for early literacy instruction. Their knowledge and understandings around the role of beginning Guided Reading instruction contributed to the formulation of Theme 3 and responses that revealed similar principles guiding decisions about texts, shaped Theme 4. To provide further order to the data each theme was divided into two or three categories that represented a more detailed illustration of the trends in teacher responses.

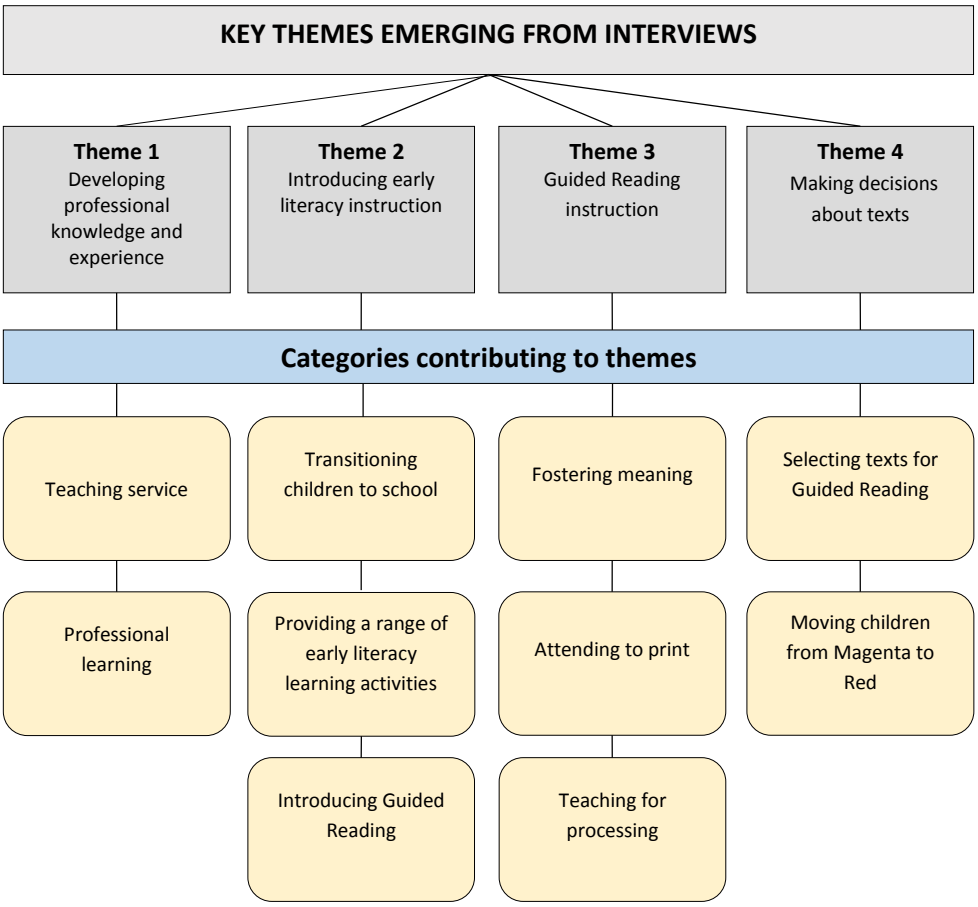


Figure 4: Themes and categories contributing to themes.

Guided reading observations.

The following summaries describe the analysis of the data collected from Guided Reading observations. Waves of analysis began with an examination of teachers' decisions around texts and text levels, then proceeded to investigate teachers' facilitation of lessons. This latter investigation led to a focus on teacher's talk during the introduction to the new text and the type of knowledge emphasised in their interactions with children. Each wave of analysis provided descriptions and interpretations of events around teachers' implementation of Guided Reading with the analysis progressing to a more refined evaluation of how teachers' instructional responses reflect teaching for processing.

Decisions about texts and text levels.

Teachers reported their preferences and rationales for particular text choices for beginning Guided Reading during earlier interviews. Lesson observation provided an opportunity to scrutinise authentic text choices teachers' made for Guided Reading, cross check with their assertions and then

contrast this evidence with the advice and guidance in the literature. A record was kept of the particulars of each teacher's text choice for the three observation lessons.

Teachers were interviewed about their decision making around when they move children from reading texts levelled at Magenta to texts at Red. Lesson observations provided evidence that was used to substantiate their claims. During the sequence of observations records were kept of the number of weeks' children remained on Magenta before moving to Red. Relevant data was aligned with current recommendations in the literature. This process of triangulation between evidence from the interviews and lesson observations contributed to the production of substantive assertions (Stake, 2010).

Facilitating a Guided Reading lesson.

The second wave of analysis to investigate where and how teachers' facilitation of Guided Reading aligned with advice and guidance in teacher support material. Lesson duration of between 10 – 20 minutes in the beginning years is advised as well as a framework of four generally accepted elements. The assumption is that when elements are administered as designed, teachers are more likely to facilitate children's processing systems for reading. Elements, revised and clarified as an outcome of the *Ready to Read* review are: (a) introducing the story, (b) reading the story, (c) discussing the story after the first reading and (d) after reading: practice and reinforcement (MoE, 2015a). During preliminary discussions, teachers were invited to teach Guided Reading as they would normally do during their literacy programme. The researcher did not provide any lead or advice. Observations of Guided Reading lessons provided the primary source of data to guide this examination however interview data offering insights around teachers' views and perspectives on facilitating Guided Reading provided further substantiating information.

The iPad's video-recording application included an in-built timer that was used for the purposes of gathering information on the duration of each lesson. As discussed previously, for the purpose of this study a Guided Reading lesson began when the children were seated in preparation for the lesson, and ended when they dispersed. Minor interruptions and delays occurring during the lessons were included and provided additional information.

The number and type of elements included in teachers' Guided Reading was interpreted through the process of repeated viewings of videoed lesson observations and evaluated alongside guidance from the literature on the framework of a typical Guided Reading lesson. Teachers indicated a shift from one element to another through an observable change in their instructional approach. This was signalled by the emergence of a new activity or change in focus. A description was assigned to every element. Identified elements in every lesson were then timed. The rationale for engaging in this analysis was to establish whether there were any trends in the teachers' allocation of time and if so how might that reflect on teaching for processing. Recommendations for the effective implementation of a Guided Reading lesson such as "introducing a text only takes a short time – no more than a few minutes" (MoE,

2002) and emphasis in the learning and teaching literature that stresses the importance of maintaining children's interest and focus, directed my interpretations. Repeated viewings of parts of the videoed lessons were undertaken to ensure that interpretations were valid and that timing was as accurate as possible and, therefore, credible. A stop-watch was used to record the timing of each lesson element ensuring that the combination of times matched the total lesson duration.

Introducing the story – teacher moves.

The parameters of this study altered when observations and analysis of Guided Reading revealed that teachers incorporated a variable and broader range of elements beyond that advocated by teacher support material. This outcome signalled the prospect of an extended investigation. A revision of boundaries for the study was necessary to contain the scope and, therefore, manageability of the research. A refocus guided the study to a close examination of an element of Guided Reading consistently included in all teachers' lessons called introducing the story. (For the purposes of this study, the word 'story' will be used henceforth, in view of the *Ready to Read* clarification aimed at emphasising children's connections with meaning and language. The word 'text' may be used alternatively to denote what children's eyes have to attend to while reading). As previously discussed a good introduction makes a new text more accessible and is designed to ensure that children engage in a high degree of successful processing on the first reading (Clay, 2014). Finding out what teachers were saying as they introduced a new story would provide evidence for whether teachers were actually making new texts accessible for processing.

To begin the examination audio recordings of teachers introducing a new story were transcribed. A total of nine transcriptions were accumulated. For the purpose of this study introducing the story began when the teacher indicated preparation for this element. In some lessons, this occurred along with an activity such as preparing children for reading a new word in the text, and in other lessons when the teacher held up the new book for children to see. Introducing the story concluded when the children began reading. Teacher talk within the teacher-child episodes of interaction formed the focus of analysis. Teacher talk according to the nature of the moves made was analysed (Boocock, 2012; Hardy 2012; Rodgers, 2004; Watson, 1993). A shift from one idea or part idea to another defined a verbal move. A move could consist of part of a sentence ("Mum is in . . . ?"), a sentence ("What's that letter?") or a series of comments ("This one here is called … I'll tell you the name of it. It's called a sea lion. That's a bit funny isn't it"). Coding did not begin with established categories. As teacher moves were progressively analysed categories emerged from the data.

Categories of teacher moves.

From progressive coding of the transcripts two core categories were identified (Table 5). These coincided with general advice for teachers on introducing a story. They are *activating prior knowledge*

and *introducing new features*. A third category was identified as *Other*. An examination of the properties that defined each category led to the definitions shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Categories of teacher moves when introducing the story.

Categories of Teacher Moves	Definitions
Activating prior knowledge	Helping children make connections between their knowledge and experiences, and information in the text and illustrations.
Introducing new features	Communicating knowledge to prepare children for reading something new or challenging in the text.
Other	Teacher moves that don't fit either of the above categories.

Sub categories of teacher moves.

Further recoding of each of the main categories revealed that teachers were emphasising different kinds knowledge in their talk. When activating children's prior knowledge teachers drew on children to respond from their own resources of knowledge about *meaning, print knowledg*e and *problem-solving*. When introducing new features of the text, new and challenging aspects involving *meaning, structure, print knowledge* and *problem-solving* were emphasised. In Guided Reading teachers are encouraged to "explore, test out and draw on children's knowledge" and "supply novel information on any of the different levels on which language is organised" (Clay, 2014, p. 190) however Clay (2001) cautions about too much attention to detail. In Table 6 subcategories are shown with definitions and examples of teacher moves.

Table 6: Categories and subcategories of teacher moves when introducing the story.

	Categories and Definitions of Teacher Moves	Sub Categories, Definitions And Examples
1.	**Activating Prior Knowledge** Helping children make connections between their knowledge and experiences, and information in the text and illustrations. Teachers draw on children to respond to subcategories by prompting, questioning, reminding, clarifying, expanding, restating or confirming.	**a. Meaning** The story, plot, characters, illustrations, title or linking to other stories or children's personal experiences. *"You know yesterday when we read the story 'In the Pond'?* *"Look in the picture. Who do you see?"(characters from a previously read story)* **b. Print knowledge** Features of print such as words, letters, sounds and punctuation. *"What was the word we were learning?" (yesterday's lesson)* *"What sound is it at the beginning?"* **c. Problem solving** Ways of solving in text reading *"So when you see that word what is your mouth going to look like?"*
2.	**Introducing New Features** Communicating knowledge to prepare children for reading something new or challenging in the text. Teachers draw children's attention to subcategories by modelling, explaining, telling and showing.	**a. Meaning** The story, plot, characters, illustrations, cover or title. *"First of all he's taking his little brother and they're hiding."* *"These animals are at an aquarium"* **b. Structure** The language of the text or pronunciation of words. *"There are butterflies in the park."* *"He's saying 'Come – come with me'."* **c. Print knowledge** Features of print such as words, letters, sounds and punctuation. *"This word is our new word we're learning and it's 'come'."* *"Can you see the word 'go'? (Teacher points to it)* **d. Problem solving** Ways of problem solving in text reading. "*So we're learning to look at the first letter and the picture when we don't know a word."*
3.	**Other** Teacher moves that don't fit either of the above categories.	**a. Providing directions that manage behaviour** *"Sit on your bottom."* *"Just wait Tyler. Let Liam have a go.* **b. General conversational exchange** *"Whoops, I've already got it.* *"Beg your pardon?"*

Inter-observer reliability.

To provide a high level of confidence and reliability in the coding an independent observer was invited to code a selection of transcripts. One transcript was chosen randomly. Approximately 20% of the total number of transcripts were selected. The independent observer had considerable years of teaching experience in a Junior school, had provided sustained literacy leadership to classroom teachers and was trained in the close observation of teachers and children engaged in early literacy learning and teaching. The observer was contacted and an initial discussion provided explanation around the research focus and the purpose of the lesson observations. A copy of the list of categories and subcategories was emailed and consensus was reached on operational definitions.

Reliability was checked on the basis of tallies of agreement and disagreement between the observer's and researcher's coding. The formula for calculating agreement (Agreement divided by disagreement times 100%) provided a percentage of reliability. The observer's coding of transcripts revealed 87% agreement.

Facilitating attention to print knowledge.

Taking into account caution around drawing children's attention to too much detail while introducing the new text the final wave of analysis of teacher talk involved a close examination of the teachers' verbal moves directed particularly at print knowledge. Young learners are gradually introduced to Guided Reading once they have discovered knowledge of the written code and the directional rules of written language (Clay, 2010). Their successful participation in beginning Guided Reading is underpinned by this awareness. Even so, during the introduction teachers are generally advised to keep attention to print to a minimum. The MoE suggests only "one or two features of the text as appropriate" (2002, p. 41). It is recommended that this occurs orally within the natural interactions around the story, rather than in isolation and "should not dismember the flow of the story" (Clay, 2014, p. 190). An analysis of teachers' talk directed at print knowledge provided an opportunity to examine what teachers' understood about this important learning.

Children.

Running Records of Reading Continuous Text.

Running Records were analysed according to procedures recommended by Clay (2002). Accuracy rates and self-correction ratios were calculated for each record. An accuracy rate is determined by dividing the total words in the text by the number of errors. This calculation leads to an error ratio which, when converted to a percentage, provides an accuracy rate. A rate indicates the level of accuracy with which the child read the text. For the purpose of this study children's accuracy rates

were determined as either at or above 90% accuracy, indicating an appropriate text on which to learn, or below 90% accuracy, indicating an unsuitable text on which to learn.

For the purpose of exploring the influence of Guided Reading on children's development of processing, one child from each group was selected for closer examination.

Text reading at the earliest level Magenta was examined using RRs. Reading behaviours were interpreted to reveal the effectiveness of children's processing. Evidence was gathered on whether children actively engaged the earliest processing behaviours. These included whether they drew on their knowledge of oral language, checked pictures for information or agreement, monitored error, and took action to problem-solve.

Ethical considerations related to researcher identity.

Reading Recovery has a vested interest in young children receiving effective teaching in their first year of school. My position as a Reading Recovery Tutor with "the assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation that come with that role" (Merriam, 1998) had the potential to create a conflict of interest and influence participants. Leaders of the three Junior teams were Reading Recovery trained, as well as one teacher participant. To discover, understand and gain insight for this study the schools selected represented a sample of those from which most could be learned (Merriam, 2009). Few schools in the region operated without Reading Recovery and of those even fewer had the characteristics required for this research.

The following rationales and description of actions undertaken are provided to minimise the bias. The research focus was on the implementation of Guided Reading, a classroom instructional approach with which I did not have exceptional expertise. My previous experience as a teacher in a NE classroom was 24 years ago. I ensured that these details were made clear to Principals on my first approach and teachers were informed during the first informal discussions before the research began. As outlined in the PISs participation was voluntary and teachers were free to decline or withdraw from the research, without giving a reason. During the research, case-story narratives summarising lesson observations and interviews were emailed to teachers for verification. Their agreement with the accuracy of the details was sought and obtained. Where teacher's noted amendments for clarity and accuracy, corrections were made.

Concern for integrity and the avoidance of bias ensured that I monitored my body language and verbal responses to convey, as far as possible, a position of neutrality. I clearly conveyed my identity first and foremost as a learner.

3.3 Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter I have presented information about the data collection and data analysis that contributes to this study. The procedures for data collection including teacher interviews, observations of their Guided Reading lessons and RRs of children's reading were outlined along with descriptions of methods of analysis. I concluded the chapter with a short synopsis of ethical considerations related to my researcher identity.

In the following chapter I will describe the results of the data analysis.

4 RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented to answer the following two questions.

- *What knowledge and understandings about processing systems for reading are reflected in teachers' implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school?*

- *How does Guided Reading influence children in the first year of school to build processing systems for reading?*

Within the first 2 to 3 years of school New Zealand (NZ) children are expected to become active, independent and proficient readers. The first year is a pivotal time for children's acquisition of early reading behaviour. Guided Reading is recognised as the core instructional approach for facilitating the development of early reading and is thus the particular focus of this study. This approach is designed around a framework of elements that provide structure to a lesson. Teachers using the elements as designed will have better opportunities to teach for processing. Observations of how the elements are used provide evidence of teacher's knowledge and understanding of how to develop children's processing systems for reading. This led me to inquire into teachers' implementation of Guided Reading to investigate whether a general acceptance of literacy processing theory was actually reflected in their practice.

In this chapter, Part One presents narratives of settings and participants. Teachers' views and perspectives on teaching Guided Reading, gathered through semi-structured and stimulated–recall interviews, are summarised in Part Two. Part Three presents the results of observations of teachers' Guided Reading lessons.

To investigate the influence of Guided Reading on the development of children's processing systems for reading, Running Records (RR) were administered and analysed. The results of examining RRs are described in Part Four.

4.1 Part One: Settings and Participants.

The context within which the research was carried out and the participants involved are depicted in the following narratives. Names of locations, schools and participants have been replaced with pseudonyms for the purpose of anonymity.

Julia.

The school.

Amberley is a small township 15 minutes' drive from Greentown. Amberley School, once a small 2-room country school, was first built in 1879. Now with a roll of 400 Years One to Eight children it is one of the largest schools in the vicinity. The Decile 7 (MoE's socio-economic rating) school's predominant ethnicity is European/Pakeha (74%), with Maori children representing 20% of the population. Only 2% are of Pacific origin. The current popular Principal has recently accepted a new position in a larger school. His vacated seat will be well sought after.

Amberley was identified for this study because of its reputation for being a high achieving school within the local community and, therefore, likely to have the best opportunities to observe exemplary literacy teaching practice. Although the Education Review Office (ERO) has recently visited and a report is pending the Principal has alerted readers to their preliminary findings in his regular blog. "The ERO team was very complimentary about the governance and management of the school and the excellent systems we have in place." The school's records for achievement in literacy indicated that a majority of children reached the level of reading advocated by the MoE after one year at school. A 4-year gap since ERO's previous report is an acknowledgement of their confidence in the school's capacity to provide for high levels of student engagement and achievement.

The teacher.

Julia is a young teacher with a calm and caring demeanour and a beautiful smile. With the new text in mind she initiates a response from the children by asking, "What do you know about cats?" Five little faces suddenly come alive and as she directs her beam at each child in turn, they chatter profusely relishing their time in the spotlight.

Julia has taught for 10 years in a variety of schools and largely in Years One to Four classrooms. During the past 4 years, she has enjoyed teaching New Entrants (NE) at Amberley. "I just love it. I don't think I would like to teach at any other level anymore." A local literacy educator recommended Julia for this study and when approached, key management staff were equally complimentary. The Principal described Julia as "a highly competent teacher with particular expertise in early literacy teaching." While discussing details during the first informal meeting with the researcher she claimed, "I'm so excited. I could learn so much from this."

The children.

Julia was asked to identify a Guided Reading group which comprised the earliest readers. Five children were selected to participate. The 3 boys and 2 girls had attended school for between 1 and 5

weeks. All were of NZ European origin. Julia had them grouped for Guided Reading instruction and had been introducing texts at Magenta.

Katy.

The school.

Manley is a large primary school situated in Fairfield. A majority of the 400 children on the roll are of European/Pakeha descent (78%), 15% are Maori, and a very few have Pacific origins (2%). The school has a stable staff with an experienced and improvement-focused management team who provide a team culture of active learning. The Deputy Principal who leads the Junior team is a well-respected literacy educator, called on to provide professional development for teachers within the wider community.

Manley School has a history of high levels of student achievement. In its most recent report ERO acknowledged that the majority of students including Maori and Pacific achieved at or above expectation. The school has a well-tended appearance with new classrooms and an upgraded outdoor environment providing a modern contrast to the older style construction. In the past 4 years, the roll has increased by more than 100 children. Parents in the community have reflected on the school's record of quality teaching and administration and have voted with their feet. They are reported to play a key role in their children's education and the life of the school.

The teacher.

In one of the classrooms, a composed and quietly spoken young teacher has successfully engaged the attention of her 19 children. Most of the children are NEs getting underway with learning in their first year of school. As she turns to the cover of 'What the Tide Brings In,' an enlarged book placed in readiness on her teaching station, she reads the title and gently ponders, "I wonder what a tide is?"

Katy has been a staff member at Manley for 10 years, her third school in a 15-year teaching career during which time she also trained as a Reading Recovery teacher (although had not taught in this role for 5 years). This year is her third working with NEs. Katy evaluated her experience so far. "It's (about) trying to keep things simple for these kids. You don't want to bombard them with everything, but you need to keep it interesting." Katy was identified as an excellent teacher of literacy by a local Resource Teacher: Literacy, and when approached, the school's Deputy Principal and Principal agreed. When Katy agreed to participate in the study, she voiced her hopes that her involvement would result in a "win-win" outcome.

The children.

Of the 19 children in Katy's class, 17 are NEs. When asked to select participants for this study Katy selected 3 of the youngest children as well as one older child. She described these children as her earliest readers. The two girls and two boys were grouped together and were reading texts at Magenta. The youngest children had attended school between three and 10 weeks while the older child had been at school for 24 weeks. Three children were of NZ European origin and one was Maori.

Anna.

The school.

Martin Street Normal School is one of the largest in the district with a current roll of 522 children. It has a well-established reputation in the community and is a school of choice for many parents employed by significant local businesses and facilities of which Marcellus University is one. The school's ethnic composition is largely NZ/Pakeha (57%). However, a significant proportion of students are from international backgrounds (33%). This figure may reflect the number of international employees engaged in local academic and technical positions. A small percentage of students are of Maori (8%) and Pacific heritage (2%). A Decile 8 rating reflects the school's locality and connection with a high income earning community.

Part of the school's reputation may be attributed to its Normal School status (from L'Ecole Normale, a style of French Teacher's College). As a Normal School, Martin Street has a close association with Marcellus University. Associate teachers from the school mentor student teachers as they develop their teaching practice. The implications of this connection are that teachers need to be at the top of their game regarding knowledge of learning and teaching.

The Principal is recognised by the ERO as "a strategic, innovative leader with a clear vision for the school." He has supported innovative professional learning initiatives for the teaching staff. In a recent report ERO confirmed that "resourcing decisions reflect the emphasis on building the capability of teachers to promote student achievement"

The teacher.

Anna teaches in one of three classrooms at Martin Street comprising children just beginning their first year of school. In a career spanning 17 years she has taught mostly in Years One to Two in local schools but is now in her fifth year of teaching the NEs. She "loves it.".

Her delight in teaching literacy is obvious. While keeping the new little book slightly concealed, she begins her patter. “Wait till you see,” she says, adopting a teasing tone. “You’re gonna be so excited!” The children in the group are captivated.

In discussions with local literacy educators (Reading Recovery teachers, Resource Teacher: Literacy) Anna was identified as “an excellent NE teacher” and certainly “one to approach.” She had participated in local collective professional development and had been recognised for her contributions. Anna’s Principal described her as “highly competent and a superb teacher of literacy.” He considered the school lucky to have her expertise. Anna was happy to participate in the study when invited. She shared reflections on the qualities of her Reading Recovery trained team leader and voiced high aspirations for her own learning through the proposed association with the researcher.

The children.

The group selected by Anna for this study comprised three boys and two girls who were reading texts at Magenta. They had attended school for between one and seven weeks. Two children, one of Indian and the other, of African origin, spoke competently in English as their second other language.

4.2 Part Two: Teacher Interviews

In order to examine evidence of knowledge and understandings influencing the implementation of Guided Reading, each teacher was initially interviewed about their views on early literacy learning and the practice that supports the development of early reading. Stimulated-recall interviews contributed additional evidence. The range of responses were scrutinised for commonalities and 4 key themes emerged, identified as either influencing or reflecting teaching for reading processing. The themes are

- developing professional knowledge and experience
- introducing early literacy instruction,
- Guided Reading instruction
- making decisions about texts

Themes are summarised below. Categories of common teacher responses contributing to the articulation of each theme, depicted in Figure 2, are highlighted. Because the overlap in teacher responses during interviews was so considerable composite illustrations were used as an efficient form of communicating commonalities in teacher responses. Composite illustrations provide an exemplar of teacher voice and serve to reveal and enliven the characteristics of the classroom context for the reader. Quotations are drawn from across the three semi-structured interviews. The individual identities of the teachers will become visible in Part Two.

Developing professional knowledge and experience.

Data contributing to this theme led the researcher to gain insights into teachers' opportunities for building pedagogical knowledge around literacy learning and teaching. Teachers were asked questions about their teaching experience, preparation for teaching early literacy and on-going professional learning. Responses contributing to this theme are categorised under two headings: teaching service and professional learning.

Teaching service.

Teachers acknowledged an accumulation of experience as primary teachers and moderate experience as teachers of NEs. They had between 10 and 17 years in classrooms. Each had taught in at least 3 schools and two teachers had had overseas teaching positions. Among them they identified 3, 4 and 5 concurrent years of experience teaching reading to children in the first year of school.

Professional learning.

Observations of teachers in other schools, engaging the support of teacher colleagues in their schools and drawing on personal experience as teachers of Years One and Two children were reported common preparatory actions for teaching NEs.

Schools were committed to providing professional development for literacy learning and teaching and teachers reported that they were active participants. Observations of their teaching practice including Guided Reading were regularly undertaken by senior leaders and all schools engaged in robust systems of appraisal. All reported high levels of collegiality among teachers in their Junior teams and valued opportunities during meetings to focus on literacy issues and new literacy resources. On-going opportunities to observe in other classrooms and to have regular formal and informal discussions with colleagues around aspects of early literacy learning and teaching were reported by all.

Teachers identified MoE teacher resource material as being helpful to their practice. Effective Literacy Practice: in Yrs 1 – 4 (MoE, 2003a) was described as a useful resource. One teacher mentioned that she used Guided Reading: Years 1 - 4 (MoE, 2002) while another recalled having used the *Ready to Read* online website for support. At the beginning of the research none of the teachers had examined the new *Ready to Read* material or had had time to consider the implications of the *Ready to Read* revisions for their teaching.

Each teacher acknowledged the Reading Recovery trained background of their Junior team leaders and spoke highly of their competence and support. One teacher credited her own Reading Recovery training as being influential in deepening her understandings of literacy learning and teaching.

Professional Learning: Composite Illustration

Rachel shared her enthusiasm for teaching NEs. "*I just love it."* When she first accepted the position she "*knew a couple of people who were NE teachers and I went and observed.*" She also thought that her *"experience with Year One and Two children and seeing what they came in with*" probably helped prepare her. She has used teacher support material for Guided Reading however "*I think when I first started I went to it a lot more whereas now I kind of know. I have my own sort of sequence*."

Rachel reported that her on-going professional learning had come from "*talking to colleagues and trying to get ideas from them*." She also acknowledged that although her school "*offered professional development all the time*," there wasn't any professional development specific to teaching early reading. "*Most of the things are school-wide or team-wide in terms of our PD."*

Introducing early literacy instruction.

Early literacy instruction priorities identified by teachers that appear to influence the early development of children's processing, contributed to the formulation of this theme. Categories of teachers' responses are transitioning children to school, providing a range of early literacy learning activities, and introducing Guided Reading.

Transitioning children to school.

Teachers viewed supporting the transition of children to school an important part of their role. Before school entry teachers introduce children to classroom activities to facilitate the building of relationships with early childhood education services, and parents and children, and to build familiarity with the classroom environment. Teachers shared the view that children who experience a smooth transition to school are more likely to have a foundation for success.

Transitioning Children to School: Composite Illustration

Children are introduced to typical early literacy learning activities and engage with the teacher and other children in the class. Parents accompany their children on at least one occasion to gather information from the teacher *"about their child's first days at school, independent skills, early reading and school expectations. It's a good way for them to see what we do."* Rachel felt it was important that parents understood how literacy was taught and that children were supported to enter school with favourable dispositions for learning. *"The visits are about ensuring the teachers get to know each child, including finding out about their strengths, interests, culture and their parent's aspirations for them."*

Providing a range of early literacy learning activities.

Teachers' reports of their classroom literacy learning activities coincided with that advocated in MoE teacher support material (2003a). Literacy learning is scheduled routinely during the morning period between 9.00 and 12.30 pm. The whole class participates in Shared Reading instruction and teacher modelling of writing, and children are withdrawn in small ability groups for Guided Reading. The newest entrants join with other children in the class to engage in a range of task-board activities. These are reading and writing tasks set up in stations around the classroom. They are organised on a rotation and are designed to support the development of independent learning behaviour.

Providing a Range of Early Literacy Learning Activities: Composite Illustration

Rachel says that she *"does heaps of teaching in Shared Reading to get the children hooked into books and the text.* After Shared Reading children disperse in groups and are assigned task-board activities. *At the beginning of the year we spend time establishing routines and as the new ones come in we buddy them up with someone."* Sometimes Rachel may help children engage with the various tasks that include word and letter learning activities, and reading. *"At this level the word work is like making word puzzles and magnetic letters and as they move on it becomes more about spelling."* The children get to read small copies of the big book used for Shared Reading as well as the joint class stories written by the teacher. While the children are engaged *"It frees me up to pull all my reading groups out.*

Introducing Guided Reading.

Teachers agreed that children should engage in literacy learning on entry to school and were particularly vociferous in their opinions that this included Guided Reading instruction. They claimed a sense of urgency regarding the rapid development of children's early reading and an immediate introduction to Guided Reading was acknowledged as an appropriate and necessary undertaking for that purpose. All teachers appeared particularly cognisant and reflective of the MoE standard of reading achievement required by age 6 (MoE, 2009b). Teachers also reported that children needed to take home little books for practice as soon as possible, and preferably on the first day of school attendance. They shared the view that parents would expect this to happen.

Introducing Guided Reading: Composite Illustration

Rachel introduces Guided Reading to children during their first week of school. *"We start them on little readers straight away. You do that to develop those skills right from the beginning and they take home a book on their very first day."*

Children are summoned from their task-board activities in a group of about four or five and are seated in a semi-circle in front of the teacher. Two teachers use kidney shaped teaching tables while the third teacher sits on the floor. Guided Reading is scheduled on four consecutive days and Rachel reports that lessons take between 15 – 20 minutes. *"Until they are fluent readers you need to see them every day."* Grouping for Guided Reading is based on Rachel's observation of children's ability. *"I put them together for that first week (but) it doesn't take long to see what they can do. They change all the time, weekly, fortnightly sometimes daily.*

Children take home the little book introduced in Guided Reading either that day or in the previous day's lesson. Children also take home an alphabet chart or simple words on cards collected together either on a metal ring or in a small plastic bag. *"First they start with letters. And once they have them, they get their words. Every second day they get an extra word card and they practice saying them at home."*

Guided Reading instruction.

Teachers' were asked to share their views about the role of Guided Reading and the purpose of their instruction. Responses contributing to this theme are categorised under three headings. They are:

- fostering meaning

- attending to print and
- teaching for processing.

The accumulated responses provide a window on the principles of learning that shape their teaching of early reading.

Fostering meaning.

Teachers reported emphatically that the role of Guided Reading instruction is to engage children in reading little books for meaning. They claimed that children should understand what they read, however, this notion was only discussed sporadically and even less so in relation to texts levelled at Magenta. Teachers identified these texts as repetitive in nature without the beginning, middle and end elements of a story. They regarded texts at Magenta as less effective for facilitating reading for meaning. There was unanimous agreement that once children moved to Red where the texts are more like little stories it is easier to teach children to engage with meaning. Relative to this, teachers expressed a common resolve to move children quickly to Red.

Fostering Meaning: Composite Illustration

> While discussing the role of Guided Reading Rachel gave sporadic attention to the importance of reading for meaning. She did acknowledge often however that children needed to learn the very easy frequently occurring words *"as quickly as possible* (while reading texts at Magenta*) and get onto those easy level 3 (Red 1) books that have more of a story-line because meaning is far more important."* While she claimed that *"A book is to learn from. It's giving you a message,"* she viewed texts at Magenta as being designed for a different purpose. Rachel described that the purpose of a text like *"Here is a . . . Here is a . . . ."* is for learning the word 'here' and about building knowledge of concepts about print. She much preferred introducing children to texts at Red because by then children have some known words, letters and sounds to work with as well as one to one matching underway and *"could now develop their independence and comprehension."*
>
> Rachel briefly mentioned that she sometimes chooses consecutive new texts with similar themes or characters but her talk revealed that it's actually whether the texts have similar words, that guides her selection. *"I like doing those two books one after the other because they have a few of those words they should know, the word of the week 'the' and 'I'."*

Once children have moved to Red, Rachel reported that she didn't like interrupting their reading too much because she wanted to focus on teaching for meaning. "*We are using meaning as much as possible, and they are getting the idea of the flow because the best way to work out a word is the flow of the reading."* Rachel claimed that she sometimes even likes to leave the last page as a surprise during her introduction because she loves them to predict the ending.

Attending to print.

Teachers were more insistent and repetitive in their views about attending to concepts about print and print detail as an instructional emphasis during Guided Reading. They expressed similar views about the importance of establishing early learning such as directionality and one-to-one matching and also agreed about the need for children to understand concepts about print such as first word, and first and last letter, and sounds. Using Guided Reading texts levelled at Magenta to build knowledge of high frequency words and to develop children's understanding of the match between beginning letters and sounds was a collective and repeatedly expressed view.

Attending to Print: Composite Illustration

Rachel frequently acknowledged how she used Guided Reading to develop children's *"Very early behaviours. You're obviously trying to teach them the basics like one-to-one pointing, where to start, return and knowing the picture matches the words. It can take a little while getting that."* She also reflected on the importance of knowing concepts about print such as first and last, and words and letters. "*You do have to develop those skills right from the beginning.*

Rachel explained that she facilitates the development of word knowledge by saying, *'You're learning the word 'here' today. This is what this book is all about."* She likes them to make progress learning words. *"Once they know 'here' I'm going to get them straight on to 'come'."*

During Guided Reading Rachel will also draw the children's attention to *"looking at the beginning sound"* if they don't know a word. *"I hope that they would put their finger on 'butterfly, look, glance and then go b-b-b butterfly'."* She shared that *"the sooner they get their eyes looking at print then the easier it has to be. These kids need much more explicit work."*

Teaching for processing.

Two teachers used processing theory terms such as strategies, monitoring, cross checking and self-correcting intermittently, and sometimes confusingly, while the Reading Recovery trained teacher appeared to have a clearer grasp of these expressions. Teachers seemed to view strategies/strategic activity (equivalent terms for processing) as something that could be taught once children move beyond Magenta.

However, all teachers conveyed common expectations for early readers to be active problem solvers and shared that checking a mismatch of the finger to number of words, noticing known words, and using an initial letter sound to problem-solve were key early reading behaviours they should facilitate in their teaching. While they agreed that checking the picture for information and rereading were also critical behaviours, teachers' revealed that their instruction, particularly with texts at Magenta, was actually aimed at directing children to notice and check specific detail in print in preference to other sources of information. Teachers offered a formulaic representation of how early reading progress gets underway.

Meaning took a lesser role in teachers' talk about children's early reading, as previously discussed, but even more rarely mentioned was language structure, beyond teachers agreeing that they encouraged children to use punctuation because reading needs to sound good.

Teaching for Processing: Composite Illustration

> When asked how she taught children to read Rachel reported "*by giving them as many strategies as you can and not just relying on one. I think repetition. Lots of cross-checking. That's what I mean about strategies. Not just the visual. You have to always go for meaning and you have to use your visual. You still need visual cues. You have to give them that strategy. It has to be one of many strategies."*
>
> Rachel explained *"In our planning we have skills and strategies for each colour* (*Ready to Read*) *so there is a kind of check list to look at and guide me."* In Guided Reading, she likes to see that the children are using good strategies, especially once they reach Red. *"If I hear that someone has reread or made the beginning sound I say, 'Oh did you hear what Lauren did?' 'What did she do then?' and we can talk about the strategies that she's used."*
>
> Rachel thinks that once children reach Red they should *"start to realise that it doesn't make sense. They will notice that it's not right or reread to get the meaning."* She often asks children *"How did you know that? If the word was*

'painting' I'd say 'Oh you knew that word. You could see a 'painting' and you could see the 'p'.

Making decisions about texts.

The three teachers made similar decisions when selecting texts for Guided Reading and when moving children from Magenta to Red.

Selecting texts for Guided Reading.

A common preference for texts for Guided Reading were simple books levelled at Magenta consisting of a repetitive one-line structure and clear illustrations. Two teachers clearly stated that they preferred the Price-Milburn (PM) series of texts while this was inferred from the third teacher's comments. Teachers gave similar rationales for their choices of texts at Magenta. They reported that these texts should provide opportunities for teaching early reading behaviours, and high-frequency vocabulary. At first they choose books with basic words that the children can learn such as 'I,' 'am' and 'the.' They then progress to books with longer words like 'come' and 'here.'

Selecting Texts for Guided Reading: Composite Illustration

Rachel preferred texts published by PM. She described them as more suitable for early reading because "*They have predictable sentence structures. The vocabulary is really scaffolded"* and *"They don't have a lot of those interest words that are really difficult."* She professed that she was not *"a huge fan"* of the *Ready to Read* series. *"I find they are really hard at every level. You have to have so much prior knowledge. You have to really discuss every page.*" She shared her view that Magenta is *"for learning all those words"* so that when they come to Red *"they have them under their belt."* She described Magenta texts as having *"no real story."* Texts levelled at Red however, were described as *"easier to teach. It has to make sense, the pictures give you more clues, and you're teaching them the strategies of reading."*

Initially she selects the simplest texts for Guided Reading to facilitate the children's development of *"early reading behaviour"* and *"basic knowledge."* She described these first texts as *"Just two words per page for that first week, like 'The cow,' 'The dog'."* Rachel thought that this was a good start because *"Most haven't read a book before."* She explained that she

would then select texts that have longer sentences but retain the repetitive structure such as, *"Here is a . . ., Here is a . . . "*

Rachel shared a rationale for her most recent selection of a Magenta text for PM. *"You know how some texts just have one (line), this has got two. We talked about 'where do we go now?' It had 'the,' which was our word of the week.* She thought that once they know words like *"look' and 'here' they're ready to move on from that repetitive pattern."*

Moving children from Magenta to Red.

Teachers' repeatedly claimed that they did not like children to linger at Magenta because in their view the texts did not contain stories. One described how children could start reading Magenta texts at the back and go forward. She viewed their repetitive nature as "pages in isolation". Teachers' claimed that an aim was to get children through Magenta to Red, where the little stories provide more meaning and therefore are more effective for supporting children's early reading.

In moving children from Magenta to Red teachers shared that they make careful decisions. Close observations of children's reading was the most common action undertaken. Teachers noted that they look for "confident reading," and for consistency in early reading behaviours. This included children accurately identifying words in and out of the context of reading text, and identifying letter names and sounds. Word, and sound and letter assessments were actively administered.

Although teachers acknowledged that they do not often use RRs to assess early reading one teacher did discuss the results of RRs administered to four children in her Guided Reading group, while another said that she would administer RRs but only if she felt a child was struggling.

Moving Children from Magenta to Red: Composite Illustration

Rachel was quite clear that very early texts at Magenta did not have a story. She didn't like working with texts at Magenta for too long because of this reason. She explained that *"You don't know what they're actually doing when it's repetitive text all the time. Once they know 'Here is the ball, Here is the kite,' they memorise it. I know it's part of learning but when they're on Red they've got to do some more things."* What Rachel meant by 'more things' included being able to *"make meaning, make predictions, and use other clues. You can create a relationship with characters, promote discussions, opinions. It's easier to teach. And children have to look more closely because the text changes."*

Rachel briefly described how she assesses children's early reading before moving them to Red, through close observation. *"You watch for those behaviours and see that they are consistent. If I can see the fluency and if there is no challenge in the text, then they need to move on because you have to have challenge to teach them the strategies."*

Rachel went on to describe how she assessed word and letter knowledge. *"I'm looking for basically knowing most of their letters, name or at least a sound or a word that starts with it. I'm also looking at their words.* All early readers take home letter and/or word cards to learn, and Rachel monitors their progress. She determines through observation whether they are learning them but administers a simple assessment to check letter name, sound and word knowledge. Rachel thought that *"It was hard to do a RR on Magenta because the books are so repetitive and it's not showing you a lot."*

4.3 Part Three: Guided Reading Observations

This section continues the investigation into question one:

- *What knowledge and understandings about processing systems for reading are reflected in teachers' implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school?*

and combines the results of the interviews, discussed in Part Two, with evidence gathered from lesson observations. Four segments comprise this section. Each segment drills down through the landscape of data beginning with a broad analysis of each teacher's decision making during Guided Reading and progressing to a more refined view of the story introduction.

A. provides results from two investigations. Teachers' decisions about texts and text levels for Guided Reading are presented collectively in table form and summarised. Each teacher's decisions around moving children from texts levelled at Magenta to Red are then presented in tables and summarised with quotes providing substantiating information.

B. provides a closer look at the teachers' facilitation of Guided Reading. The results of an analysis of the duration of teachers' Guided Reading lessons, the number and duration of Guided Reading elements and time taken for each element are presented in figures. Summaries provide explanatory comment with reflections gathered from interviews relevant to the observations, providing illustrative anecdotes.

C. presents a more refined investigation of introducing the story, a key element in Guided Reading. The investigation aimed at analysing teachers' talk. Results are provided in figures and summaries. Descriptive accounts of teachers' teaching during the new book introduction are presented in vignettes.

Within the context of introducing the story an even further reduction of the lens in **D.** focusses on teacher's talk that emphasised print knowledge. Examples are presented in tables and summaries.

Decisions about texts and text levels.

Selecting texts for Guided Reading.

In Table 7 is an overview of the texts chosen by teachers for their Guided Reading lessons. Teachers' comments during interviews reflected a preference for the PM series, and this was evident in their actual choices. Despite minor variation in publisher, teachers' selected texts with similar characteristics. The characteristics were similar across classrooms as well as across each individual teacher's sequence of lesson observations.

Table 7: Summary of texts selected for Guided Reading.

Teacher's name	***Ready to Read* level**	**Description**	**Text title**	**Publisher**
Julia	Magenta	One repeated structure on each page	In the Park	Kite
	Magenta	One repeated structure on each page	My Little Cat	PM
	Red 1	Story-like	The Photo Book	PM
Katy	Magenta	Two repeated structures on each page	Big Animals	PM
	Red 1	Story-like	Sam and Bingo	PM
	Yellow 1	Story-like	The Big Hit	PM
Anna	Magenta	One repeated structure on each page	Come	Sails
	Red 1	Story-like	The Merry Go Round	PM
	Red 1	Story-like	Sam's Balloons	PM

Reprinted in Table 7 are examples of the written content of texts selected by teachers and representative of their choices. Texts levelled at Magenta are written with the same repeated language

structures, contrived and controlled by a small collection of high-frequency words, and accompanied by clear illustrations. This selection coincides with teachers earlier expressed views.

During interviews, teachers conveyed a sense of urgency for moving children from repetitive texts at Magenta to Red, where they agree that more story-like options are available. They view little story texts as providing better learning opportunities for children. Similarity between teachers' selections of texts at Red is also evident. Table 8 indicates that children are being introduced to texts with more story-like features at Red.

Table 8: Representative samples of texts selected by teachers for Guided Reading.

Magenta **Come** (Sails)	Magenta **My Little Cat** (PM)	Red 1 **The Photo Book** (PM)	Red 1 **Sam and Bingo** (PM)
Come to the tree. Come to the rock. Come to the water. Come to the mud. Come to the hole. Come to the cave. Come to the tree.	My little cat is in the box. My little cat is in the basket. My little cat is in the bag. My little cat is in the cupboard. My little cat is in the drawer My little cat is in the bucket. My little cat is in the flowerpot. My little cat is up in the tree.	Here is the photo book. Mum is in the book. Dad is in the book. James is in the book. Here is James. Kate is in the book. Here is Kate. Nick is in the book. Here is Nick. Look at Teddy. Teddy is in the book too.	"Look at my farm," said Sam. "The horse is here." "The pig is here." "The cow is here." Here is Bingo. "No, Bingo, no." "Mum, Mum. Bingo is on my farm." "Look Mum. "The horse is here." "The pig is here." "The cow is here." "The dog is here." "Look at my farm."

Moving children from Magenta to Red.

The following summaries and tables present the results of analyses of each teacher's decision making around moving children from texts levelled at Magenta to texts levelled at Red. During interviews teachers expressed a common aim to move children quickly from repetitive texts at Magenta to more story-like texts at Red. While their joint perspectives conveyed some disquiet at the prospect of children

being retained for too long at Magenta, teachers also shared that if children's reading behaviour did not meet their expectations they would not be moved on.

Julia.

Table 9 represents Julia's decisions around moving children from Magenta to Red. Three children spent between 8 and 11 weeks from school entry reading texts at Magenta before moving to Red. Julia's decision to move the three children to Red coincided with the third lesson observation. Two children remained at Magenta after 6 and 8 weeks of school attendance respectively.

Sequence of Observations	***Ready to Read* level**	**Weeks at School**				
		Sam	**Eloise**	**Kane**	**Marama**	**Tom**
1	Magenta	6	4	3	3	1
2	Magenta	8	6	5	5	3 (absent)
3	Red 1	11	9	8	8 Retained at Magenta	6 Retained at Magenta

Table 9: Moving children from Magenta to Red.

Julia reported that after about 12 weeks she wants children to be moving on from the earliest reading level (Magenta). She claimed that this isn't a school policy but rather a guideline. "With National Standards you have to be at 12 (Green) after one year so you kind of want to be on 6 (Yellow 1) half way through. Julia explained that if a child isn't reading it wouldn't happen but she did feel she "used to spend too long on Magenta before National Standards came in." She added "It just gives you a sense of making sure you keep tracking and keep pushing."

Katy.

Katy's decisions around moving children from Magenta to Red are shown in Table 10. Her decision to move children to Red coincides with the second lesson observation. Cameron spent the longest number of weeks reading texts at Magenta and continued receiving instruction at this text level after nearly a year at school. The rest of the group moved to Red between 5 and 12 weeks. Julia

explained that Cameron had made very little progress and “needed a lot more alphabet work and that kind of thing.” Ryan had also caused Katy some initial concern as he “Came in with nothing. He didn’t know any alphabet.” However, she felt he had learnt a lot in the past five months. Katy expressed satisfaction with the progress made by Amber and Madalyn who she viewed as “moving at a good pace.”

Table 10: Moving children from Magenta to Red.

Sequence of Observations	***Ready to Read* level**	**Weeks at School**			
		Cameron	**Ryan**	**Amber**	**Madalyn**
1	Magenta	24	10	5	3
2	Red 1	26 Retained at Magenta	12	7	5
3	Yellow 1	32 Retained at Magenta	18	13	11

On the third observation children had already been introduced to texts levelled at Yellow during two previous lessons. Katy pointed out that Madalyn, whom she described as “amazing,” would be moving to a new group at an even higher level.

Anna.

Table 11 shows Anna’s decisions around moving children from Magenta to Red levelled texts. Children in Anna’s group moved to Red between 4 and 11 weeks after entry to school. This move coincided with the second lesson observation.

Table 11: Moving children from Magenta to Red.

Sequence of Observations	*Ready to Read* level	Weeks at School				
		Max	**Emily**	**Preeta**	**Callum**	**Alex**
1	Magenta	8	4	4	1	1
2	Red 1	11	7	7	4	4
3	Red 1	13 absent	9	Moved to Red 2	6	6

When reflecting on her lesson after the first observation Anna was enthusiastic about Callum's progress in particular. He is in his first week at school. "He has just recognised what a finger space is. He's over the moon." She explained that moving children to Red "completely depends on the kids." She used Max as an example. "He has been here since March whereas another little guy has been here about three weeks and he's already on level four (Red 2)." Anna claimed that moving children from Magenta depended on "their knowledge, their sight words and their one to one." At the time of the third observation Anna had moved Preeta to Red 2. She explained that Preeta had been working in two groups, "double dipping," because "she is really advanced, and a hard worker with lots of family support."

Summary.

Teachers were observed making decisions about moving children from Magenta to Red levelled texts that reflected commonly held views expressed during interviews. The majority of children moved to Red after either 4 or 7 weeks at school.

A. Facilitating Guided Reading Lessons.

This section presents a closer examination of teachers' facilitation of Guided Reading in the following summaries, tables and figures. The results are aligned with the general advice and support available to teachers around the framework of a lesson and include an analysis of each teacher's lesson duration, the number and type of elements included in each lesson and time taken for each element.

Julia.

Guided Reading duration.

Table 12 provides a summary of the duration of Julia's Guided Reading. Her three lessons exceeded the recommended duration for the beginning years. While reflecting on lesson one, Julia reported that "it was longer than normal. I didn't keep track of time, and we got caught up in our conversations" however no rationale was provided for the following two lessons.

Table 12: Summary of Julia's Guided Reading duration.

Teacher	Sequence of observations	*Ready to Read* level	Total minutes per lesson
Julia	Week 1	Magenta (two lines)	25.51
	Week 3	Magenta (two lines)	30.38
	Week 6	Red 1	27.35

Guided Reading elements and time taken for each element.

Figures 5 - 7, which depict the elements and time allocated to elements, correspond to the three Guided Reading observations of Julia. She included between 5 and 7 distinct elements in her lessons. Only 3 of the recommended elements were observed. They are introducing the story, monitoring the reading, discussing the story after the first reading, and after reading: practice and reinforcement. Introducing the story was the only MoE recommended element consistently included in all lessons.

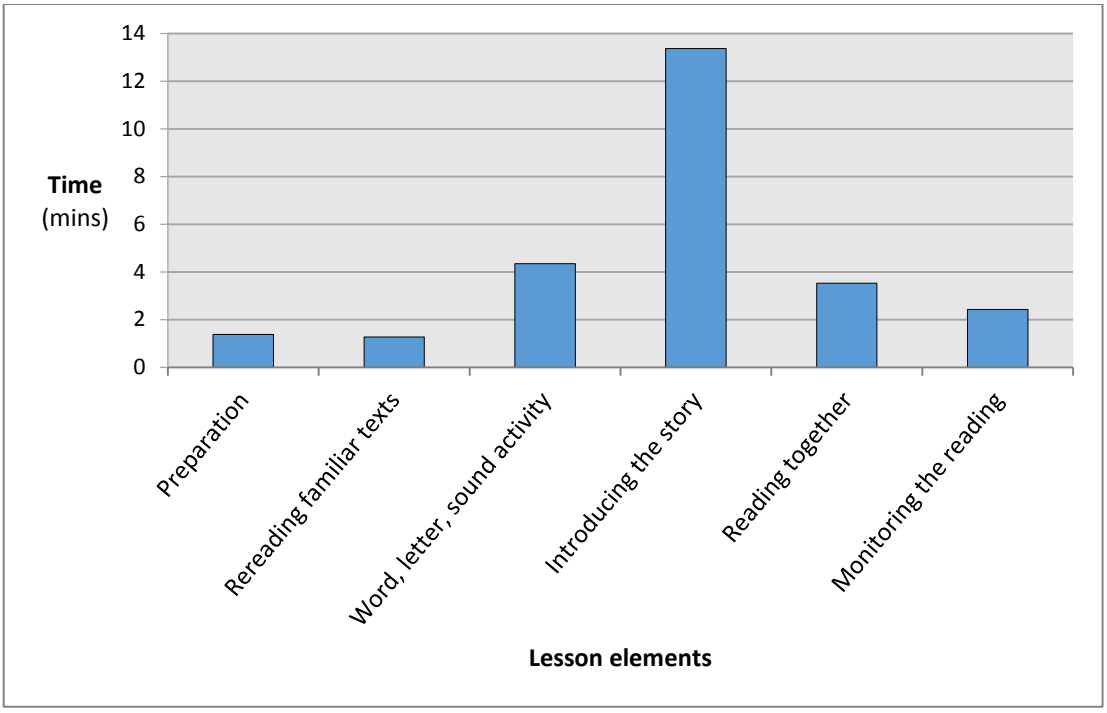


Figure 5: Guided Reading 1 (Magenta) Time allocated by Julia per lesson element.

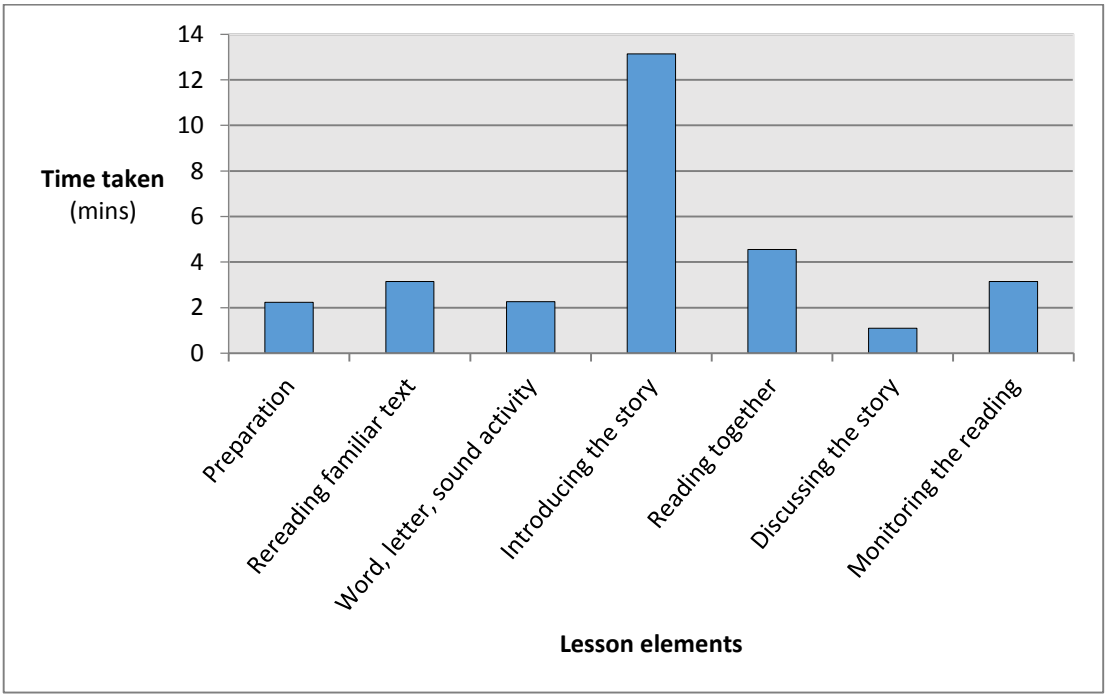


Figure 6: Guided Reading 2 (Magenta) Time allocated by Julia per lesson element

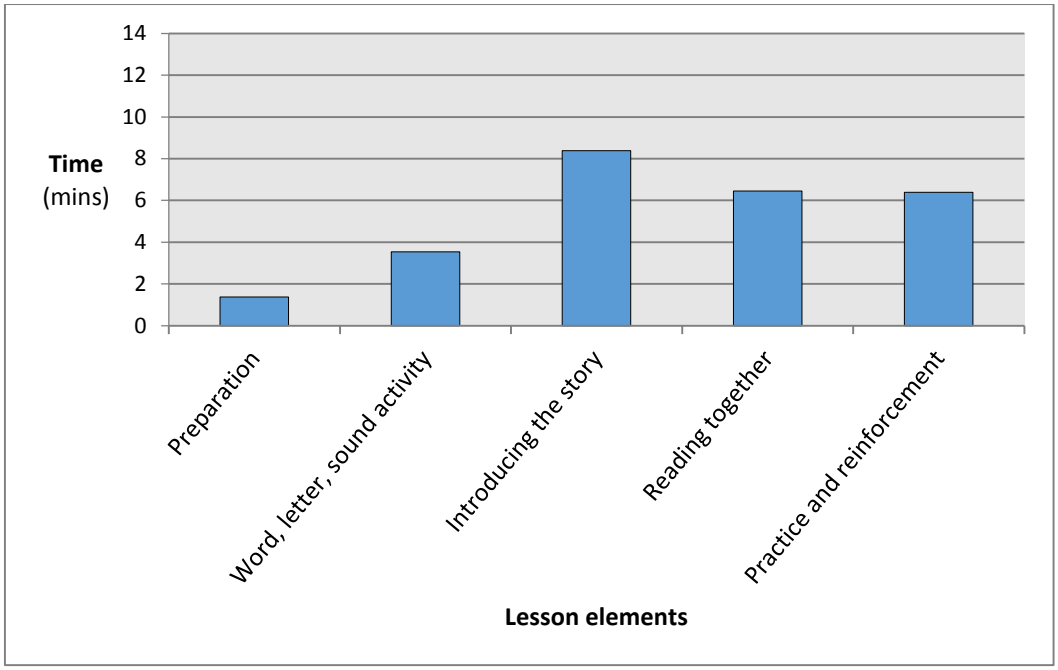


Figure 7: Guided Reading 3 (Red 1) Time allocated by Julia per lesson element.

Julia spent between 8 and 11 minutes introducing a new story in her lessons. This was more time taken than for any other element and longer than the recommended "few minutes" (MoE, 2002, p. 40).

Julia's group had a discussion about a story after the first reading on one occasion only and engaged only once in an activity for practice and reinforcement. Children sometimes completed a generic activity such as putting a cut-up sentence together to practice their one-to-one matching however Julia thought that reading tasks "were normally for Red onwards. Sometimes we have a follow-up but it's normally just words or the letters of the week that we focus on." She shared an example of a child's exercise book with word learning worksheets.

Additional elements to those recommended were included in Julia's Guided Reading. They are identified as preparation and rereading, word, letter and sound activity, reading together, and independent reading.

Julia reported that children needed to learn to prepare for Guided Reading. "When they start school I try to have them 'reading ready.' They need to get out their alphabet cards, word ring, the text they had from the day before and their reading diary." She spends time on this "basic training" at the beginning of every lesson. Observations of children showed that some lost engagement whilst waiting for the newest entrants to learn the 'preparing' routine.

Julia included rereading because she thought children needed "mileage" and because she wanted them "to be pointing, enjoying it and looking at the sounds and just realising that it's a story and has a message." Julia also claimed, "it gives me a chance to listen to them as they read (while I) mark

their (home reading) diaries." In Guided Reading 1 and 2 the children attempted rereading the little book taken home for practice. Not all found this familiar book easy to read and further disengagement was evident. Julia's occupation with organisational tasks meant that she was unaware of children's challenges.

In each lesson, between 3 and 7 minutes was allocated to word, letter and sound activities before the story was introduced. As an explanation, Julia claimed that Guided Reading looks different for different levels. "With my littlies, we do the alphabet each day." The children were observed pointing in unison to letters on a large chart. They chorused each letter name, sound and matching word. "I know it's rote learning, but I'm trying to get it stuck. Julia also introduced a new word the children would be expected to recognise in the text.

After introducing the story, Julia preferred that the children read together. In each lesson, the children chorused the text with Julia guiding their page turning. Time taken for reading together varied between 3 and 6.5 minutes. Reflecting on one video-recorded lesson she stated, "I definitely think there were things they would have learned from each other. They could hear the person beside them say a word before they were up to it, so it helped them."

A very brief time for monitoring the reading was provided at the conclusion of two lessons (Figures 5 and 6). Children dispersed with their texts and Julia positioned herself beside one and then another. She reported that although "it's a good introduction to the book when they all read it together, you make sure when they go away you listen to them individually. You get a lot more from them when they are away from each other."

Summary.

Julia's Guided Reading lessons are an eclectic mix of elements that reflect few of those that are generally accepted as part of the Guided Reading framework. Some of the elements however do reflect confusing advice found in teacher support material distributed by the MoE.

Katy.

Guided Reading duration.

Table 13 provides a summary of the duration of Katy's lessons which are consistent with that recommended in teacher support material.

Table 13: Summary of Katy's Guided Reading duration.

Teacher	Sequence of observations	*Ready to Read* level	Total minutes per lesson
Katy	Week 1	Magenta (two lines)	17.29
	Week 4	Red 1	12.83
	Week 7	Yellow 1	14.50

Guided Reading elements and time taken for each element.

Figures 8 - 10, which depict the elements and time allocated to elements, correspond to the three Guided Reading observations of Katy. Six elements were included in her first lesson (Figure 8) but she then reduced the number to five (Figures 9 and 10). Included in all lessons, were recommended elements. Three were included consistently. They are introducing the story, monitoring the reading and discussing the story.

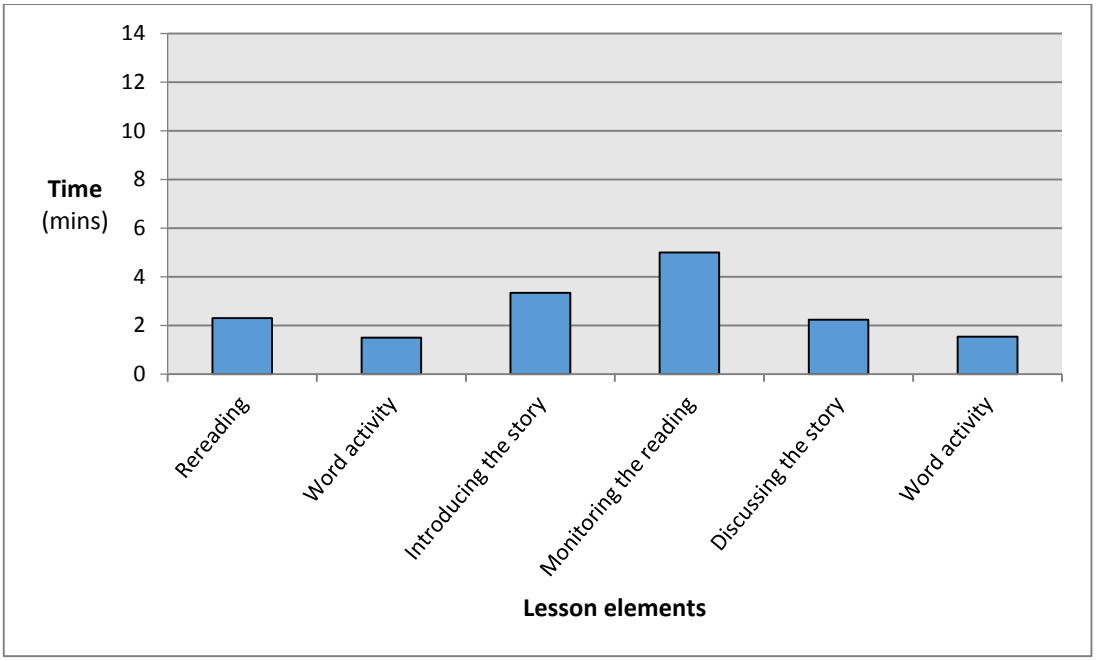


Figure 8: Guided Reading 1 (Magenta) Time allocated by Katy per lesson element .

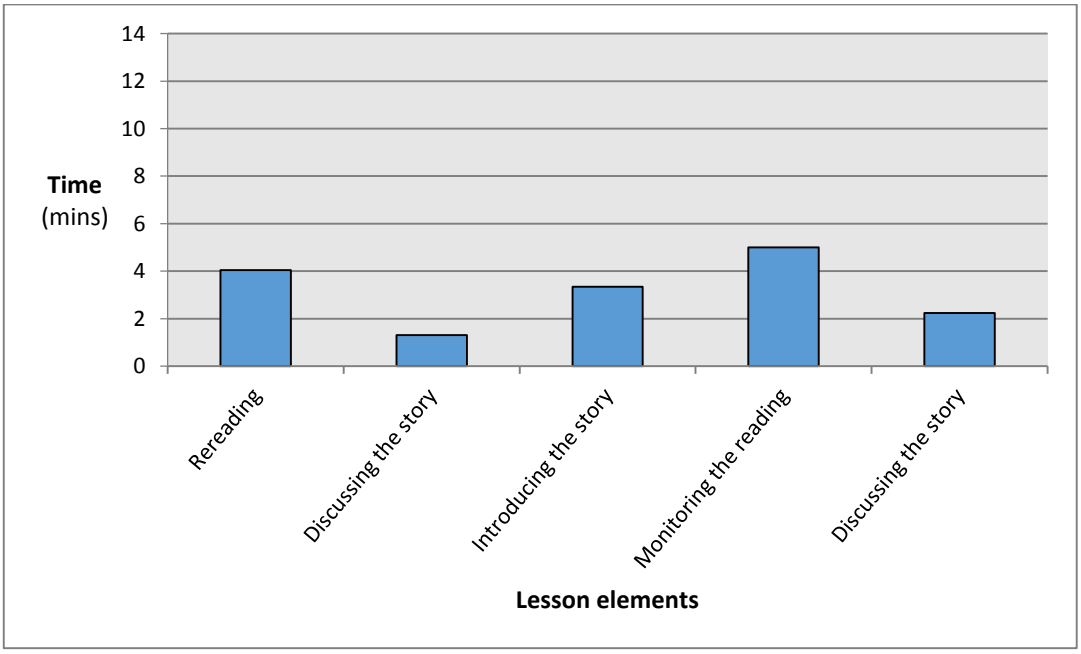


Figure 9: Guided Reading 2 (Red 1) Time allocated by Katy per lesson element.

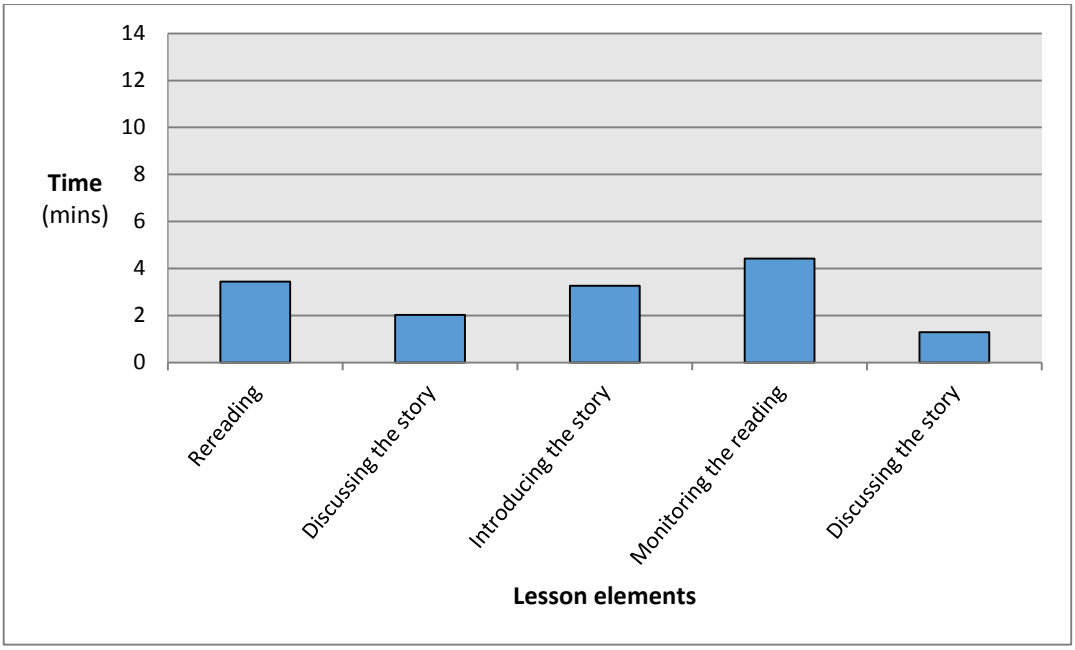


Figure 10: Guided Reading 3 (Yellow 1) Time allocated by Katy per lesson element.

Katy took between 2 and 3.5 minutes to introduce a text. She introduced a new text in each lesson. She spent time discussing texts with the children as advised. She did this in lesson two and three (Figures 9 and 10) after the rereading and after monitoring their first reading of the new story. In one interview she professed reservations about repetitive texts at Magenta however. "Trying to get a little bit of discussion is really hard because there's not much to talk about."

The allocation of most time went to monitoring the children's reading as they read independently. Katy had previously provided a rationale. "While they are reading, I am watching them and assisting them where required."

Katy included a word activity in only one lesson (Figure 8). She explained that she likes to familiarise children with a key new word before they begin reading texts at Magenta. She preferred that the children were "aware (of the new word) before they start." At the end of that lesson, the new word is reviewed again and added to a collection of other small word cards collected on a metal ring. "Every second day they get an extra word on their ring, and they practice saying them at home. They play little games with them." Once children move to Red Katy felt that they "don't need it so much." Figures 9 and 10 show that Katy did not include word activities once the group had reached Red.

Katy always included rereading the previous lesson's new story. She ensured that this second reading "is the first thing that they do" when they gather for the lesson. Katy was observed providing a brief overview before passing copies to the children. She monitored their reading and afterwards engaged them in discussion. After this second reading Katy sent the book home with the children despite not all reading with success and independence.

Katy did not include after reading: practice and reinforcement in any of her lessons. The children instead disperse to “whatever (task-board) activity they were up to”.

Summary.

Katy’s Guided Reading instruction consistently included elements that, interestingly, reflected some of the advice advocated through the *Ready to Read* revisions of the framework for Guided Reading. Katy consistently allocated more time to monitoring the reading than to any other element across the three lessons.

Anna.

Guided Reading duration.

Table 14 provides a summary of the duration of Anna’s lessons which are consistent with recommendations.

Table 14: Summary of Anna’s Guided Reading duration

Teacher	**Sequence of Observations**	***Ready to Read* level**	**Total minutes per lesson**
Anna	Week 1	Magenta (one line)	16.26
	Week 4	Red 1	16.03
	Week 6	Red 1	16.36

Guided Reading elements and time taken for each element.

Figures 11 - 13, which depict the elements and time allocated to elements, correspond to the three Guided Reading observations of Anna. Her lessons consisted of between three and four elements. Introducing the story was the only recommended element routinely included. Anna included monitoring the reading and discussing the story in lessons two and three only (Figures 11 and 12). The order in which she taught the two elements was out of sequence to that advised for the effective implementation of Guided Reading. Discussing the story (Figures 11 and 12) after the reading took the least amount of time.

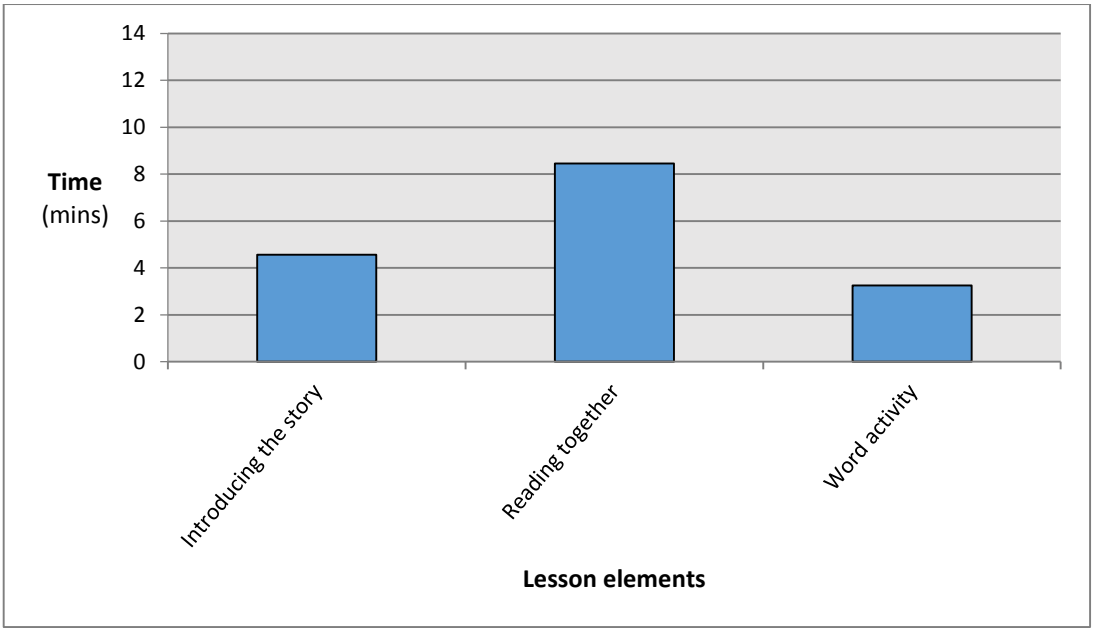


Figure 11: Guided Reading 1 (Magenta) Time allocated by Anna per lesson element.

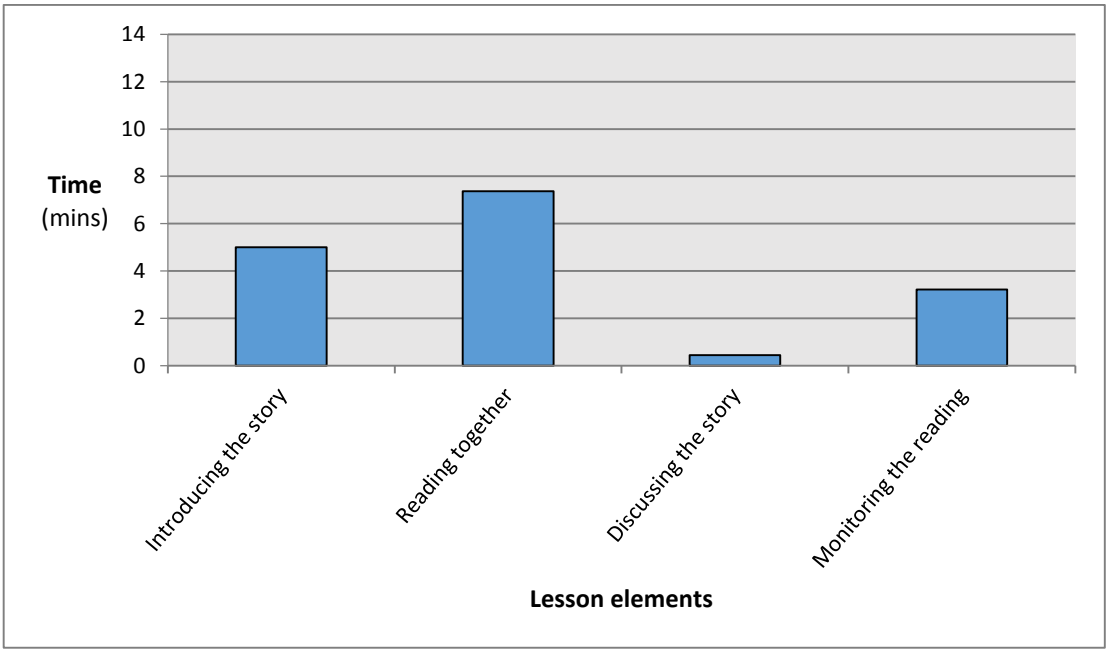


Figure 12: Guided Reading 2 (Red 1) Time allocated by Anna per lesson element.

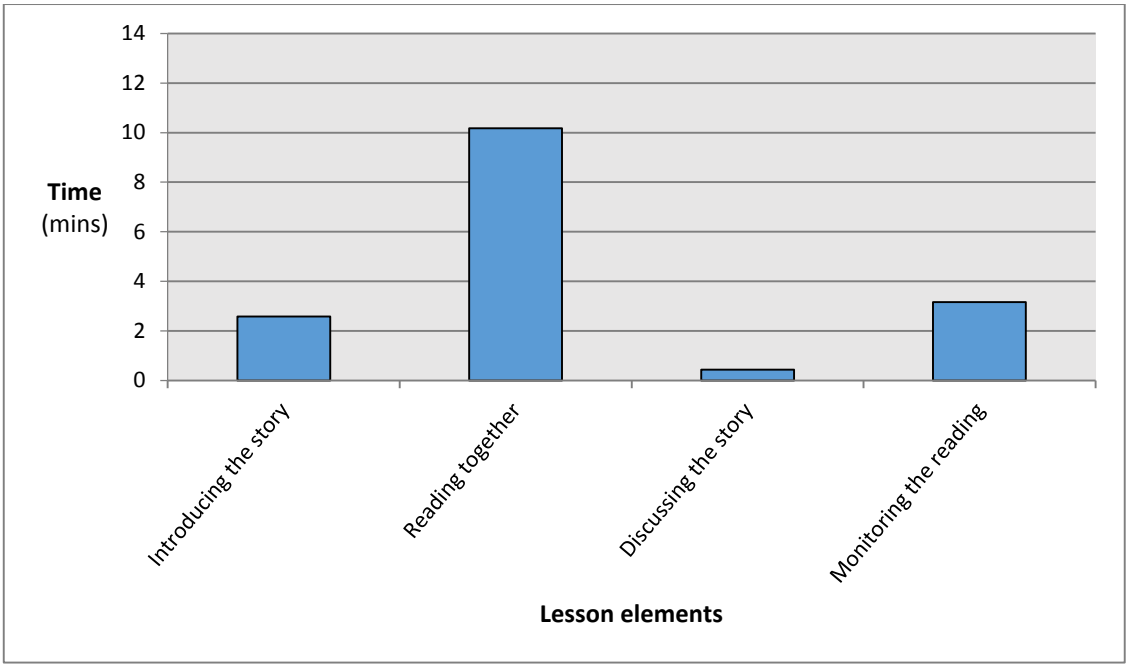


Figure 13: Guided Reading 3 (Red 1) Time allocated by Anna per lesson element.

Anna initiated each lesson by introducing the story. She used a varied approach to this aspect of Guided Reading that in part reflected advice in teacher support material that is now contradicted by the revisions from the Ready to Read review. Anna reported that she particularly enjoyed introducing the new story. “I love literature. I really try and jazz these books up. I can make a five-page book sound really interesting.” Time taken to facilitate the introduction varied between two and a half and five minutes.

Figure 11 shows that Anna included a word activity at the end of the lesson. She asked the children to practice writing words from the text and while they did this she checked each child’s recognition of words on small cards. The cards were taken home for practice.

Reading together was consistently included. Figures 11 - 13 show that Anna allocated the most time, between 8 and 10 minutes to this element. After introducing the story, Anna guided the group to read the text together page by page. Anna explained that this is what she normally does because “The modelling of the other children is a powerful thing.” She often paused the reading, for up to 2 minutes at times, to draw the children’s attention to words, letters and sounds. Sometimes she asked the children to practice writing words and letters on the whiteboard teaching table. When reporting on lesson one, she stated “It’s quite different from my emergent readers to my top ones. With them, it’s absolutely explicit. Today we are learning the word ‘here.’ Quick write it down. Can you find it on this page?”

While reading together, Anna guided much discussion about the story. As a result, she spent no, (Figure 11) or little time, (Figures 12 and 13) discussing the text after the first reading. Observations show that Anna only briefly focussed on final confirming interactions around the text.

In two lessons Anna concluded with monitoring the reading (Figures 12 and 13). She monitored the children as they read their texts for the second time, but this time individually. She "has an ear to them" and can identify "who is struggling and not being fluent." Occasionally she intervened to support a child's problem solving.

The children took home the new book introduced that day. Anna reported that "We feel that the book they take home should have been read at school so we know they can manage it." Not all children were observed managing the new book well without the support of their peers.

Summary.

Anna's Guided Reading included a few of the elements recommended as necessary for an effective lesson, however, the effectiveness of her teaching may have been placed in jeopardy because of her persistent interruptions to children's engagement with meaning and her bias towards print detail.

In the next section, the results from progressively refined waves of analysis are presented with the lens of investigation narrowed to just one key element in Guided Reading, called introducing the story. This element appeared in every teachers' lessons. It was worthwhile exploring this element in more detail for evidence of knowledge and understanding of literacy processing theory in teachers' decision making.

B. Introducing the Story.

Teacher moves.

This section presents the results of an investigation into teachers' talk (described as moves) during a crucial element of Guided Reading called introducing the story. The literature claims that a new story needs to be carefully introduced so that children can process it independently on the first encounter. To do this, teachers are advised to activate children's prior knowledge around the story and introduce features of the text that might be new and challenging.

From progressive coding of lesson transcriptions emerged categories of teachers talk while introducing stories, identified as:

- activating children's prior knowledge
- introducing new features
- managing behaviour ("other")

The following figures and summaries provide snapshots of each teachers talk in relation to these categories as they introduced stories in their lessons.

Categories of teacher moves.

Julia.

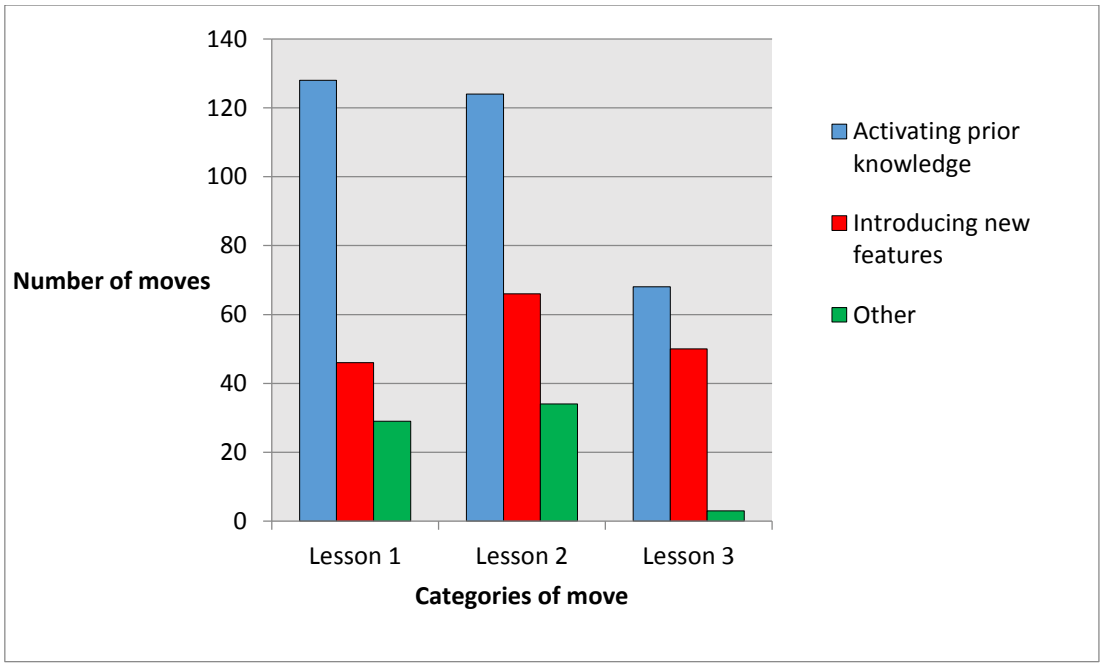


Figure 14: Category and number of moves made by Julia when introducing a story.

A large number of moves were categorised for Julia which may be accounted for by the time spent introducing new stories. She spent between 8 and 13 minutes which was longer than the advised "few minutes in the beginning years" (MoE, 2002). Julia's talk prioritised activating children's prior knowledge (See Figure 14). Observations of Julia's lessons showed that she repeatedly interrupted her lessons (two in particular) to manage children's behaviour.

Katy.

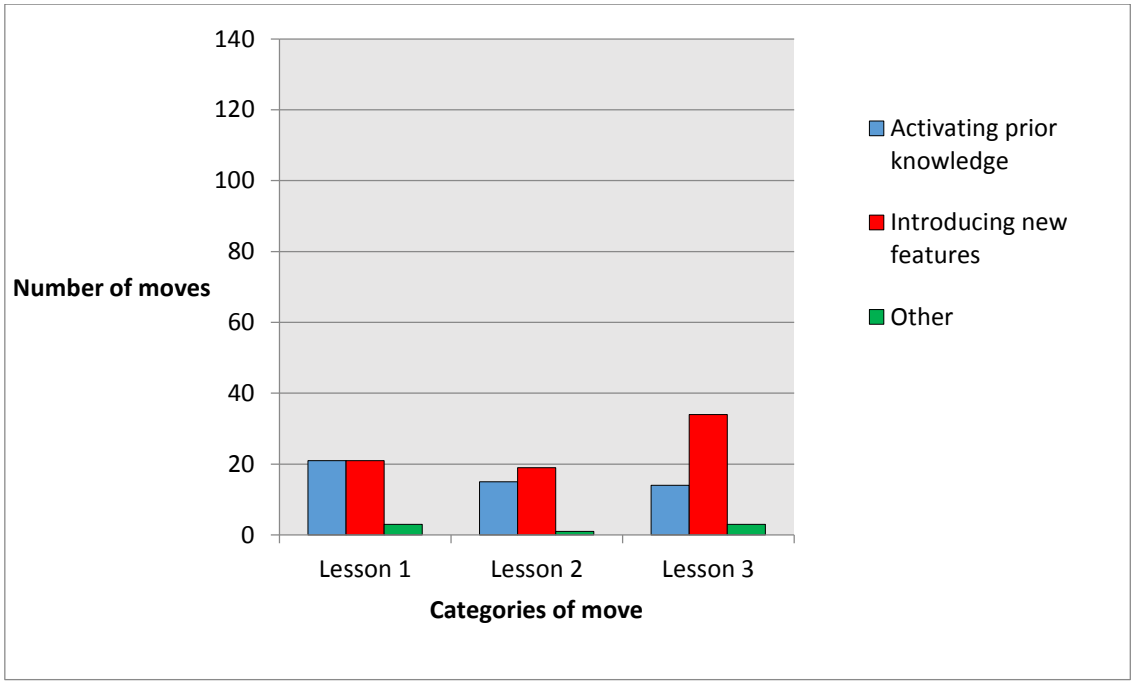


Figure 15: Category and number of moves made by Katy when introducing a story.

Katy took approximately 3 minutes to introduce a new story in each lesson with a moderate number of moves. Figure 15 shows that Katy initially gave priority to both activating prior knowledge and introducing new features but as the difficulty of text level increased her talk progressively focused on the latter category. A minimal number of moves were aimed at managing children's behaviour (other).

Anna.

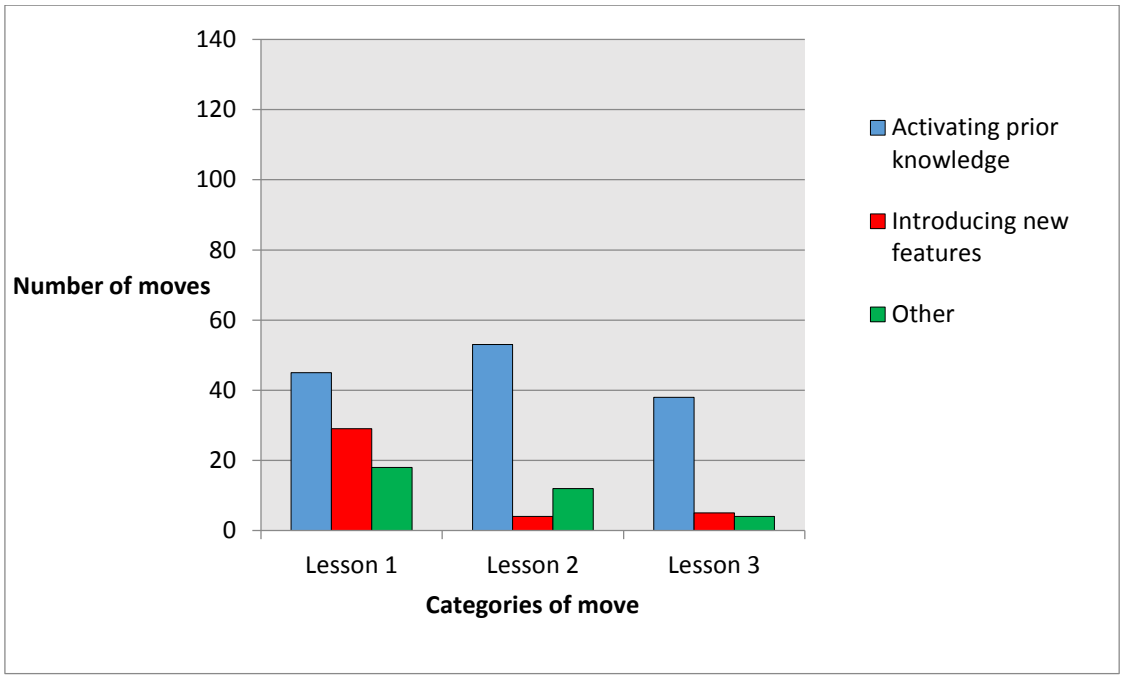


Figure 16: Category and number of moves made by Anna when introducing a story.

Anna spent between 2 and 5 minutes introducing a new text. Figure 16 shows that she gave priority in her talk to activating prior knowledge. As the text difficulty level increased from Magenta in Lesson 1, to Red in Lessons 2 and 3, Anna made fewer moves focussed on introducing new features. Although the data shows she made progressively fewer moves across her lessons categorised as "other" her lessons were interrupted by children in the classroom requiring her attention.

Combined Summary.

Both Julia and Anna indicate a priority in their talk for activating children's prior knowledge during the story introduction. Katy tends to pay moderate attention to both activating children's prior knowledge and introducing new features, however, as the book level increases she tends to talk more about new features in the story. Julia and Anna interrupted their lessons with moves aimed at managing children's behaviour while Katy made minimal moves for this purpose

In this next section, the results of drilling down into two of the three categories (i.e., activating prior knowledge, introducing new features) are presented. (See Table 6).

Subcategories of moves.

The three main categories were coded from grounded theory (Cresswell, 1990) and subcategories emerged from subsequent waves of analysis (Tesch, as cited in Cresswell, 1990). Subcategories represent the different types of knowledge that teachers' emphasised in their talk during introductions to the story. '

When *activating prior knowledge* teachers called on children to respond with prior understandings about:

- Meaning
- Print knowledge
- Problem solving

Of note are that no instances were observed of teachers activating children's prior knowledge of language structure.

When *introducing new features* teachers drew children's attention to new aspects of:

- Meaning
- Structure
- Print knowledge
- Problem solving

The following figures, summaries and vignettes present the results of a more detailed examination of these subcategories of each teachers' talk as they *activated prior knowledge* and *introduced new features* during story introductions. When introducing a story, it is recommended that teachers weave different types of knowledge into the general discussion rather than interrupting the flow to attend to details.

Julia.

Category: Activating prior knowledge.

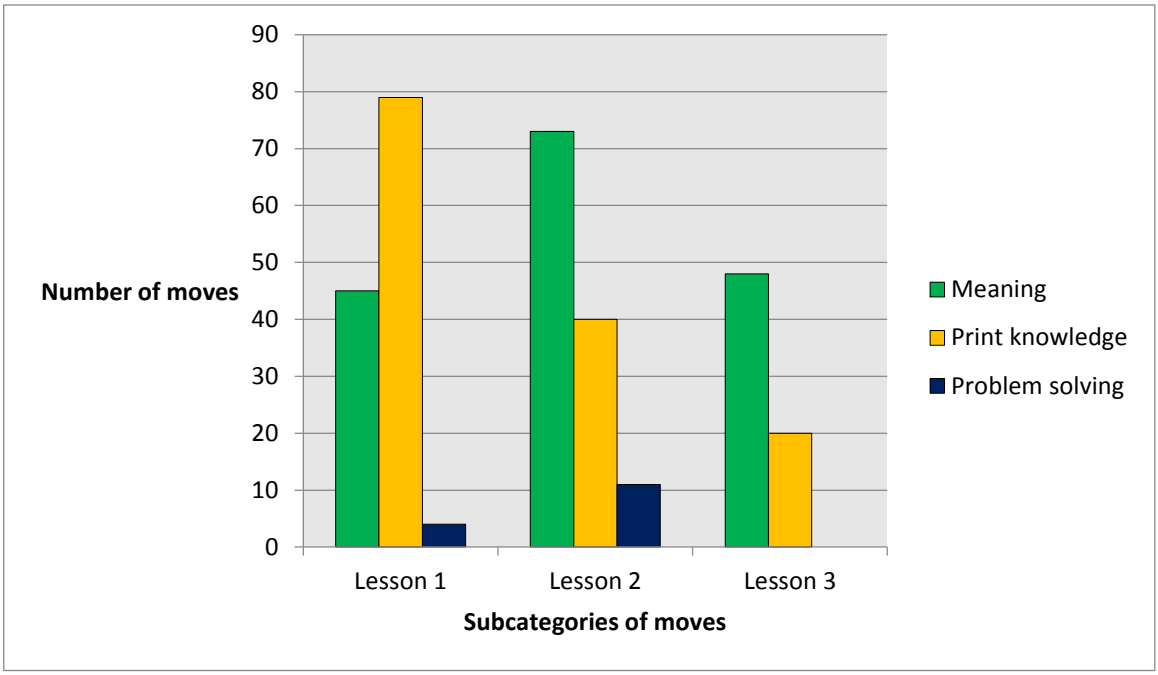


Figure 17: Number of moves and subcategories of moves made by Julia while activating prior knowledge.

Category: Introducing new features.

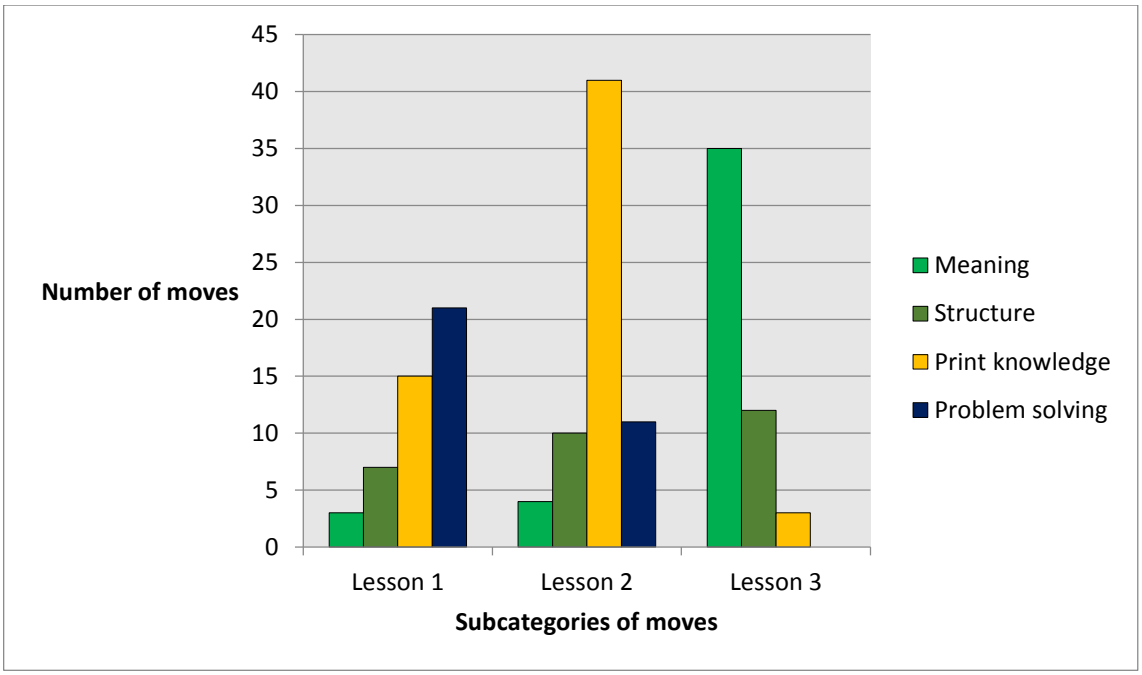


Figure 18: Number of moves and subcategories of moves made by Julia while introducing new features

Figures 17 and 18 depict the subcategories of moves that correspond to Julia. A pattern evident in both figures is Julia's significant focus on print knowledge. Figure 17 shows that while she activates children's prior knowledge around aspects of the story (meaning) she does the same for print. However, observations of her lessons show that when calling on children's prior knowledge of print, she interrupts the flow of the lesson to attend to word, letter or sound details. Julia takes similar action when introducing new features of print (Figure 18).

In 4 lessons Julia either calls on children to recollect what they know about problem-solving (Figure 17) or draws their attention to new ways of problem-solving (Figure 18). In both instances she pauses the lesson to do this thereby interrupting children's connection with meaning and the language of the story. Figure 18 shows that Julia introduces new features of language structure. She does this in every lesson. Observations show that during the story introduction she asks the group to read repetitive structures together while she points slowly to each word in the text.

The following vignette presents an illuminative account of Julia's data in action (See Figures 17 and 18). The vignette is entitled *Ensuring thorough coverage of details* in order to exemplify the approach Julia takes to support children's access to a new text.

Julia in Action

Ensuring Thorough Coverage of Details

Julia draws attention to the word 'is' on a card. *"We're going to find that word 'is' in our book today,"* she declares. Then asks expectantly, "*So when you see that word what is your mouth going to look like?"* The children look at each other and purse their lips. Julia prompts. "/I/, /i/, /i/," she repeats, and they all copy in unison. Recorded on a whiteboard is a learning goal for the lesson. She taps the board to gain their attention. In her lap is 'My Little Cat,' a simple repetitive Magenta text about cats that like to rest in unusual places. *"We are learning to look at the first letter and the picture when we don't know a word. Ok?"* she says. Eloise yawns, Kane and Marama play absentmindedly with their alphabet cards and Sam stares at his feet.

Captured by her first question, the children suddenly attend. *"Who's got a cat at home?"* sparks eager replies. After 5 minutes of cat talk, Julia draws their attention to the title. *"Do you know what that word is?"* she asks pointing to 'My.' Brand new entrant Marama recognises *"A part of my name!"* Julia suspends the introduction to explore the connection between 'My' and 'Marama' in detail. She reads the title and repeats it again for them to hear. Then, as the introduction continues, Julia draws the children's attention to

words, initial letters and sounds. *"That's what good readers do. They look at the letter, make the sound and they're helped by the picture,"* she reminds. The introduction continues and Julia occasionally reads the beginning of the repetitive refrain. Kane and Sam remain fascinated with their collection of word cards. Julia asks the children to read the last page. She points slowly to the text . . . and they read inaccurately. Julia intervenes. Kane twists and tumbles away from the group and Eloise yawns, looks away, and shuffles her feet. The introduction concludes. The children are each handed a copy of the book and under Julia's direction, they slowly begin the task of reading the words together.

Katy.

Activating prior knowledge.

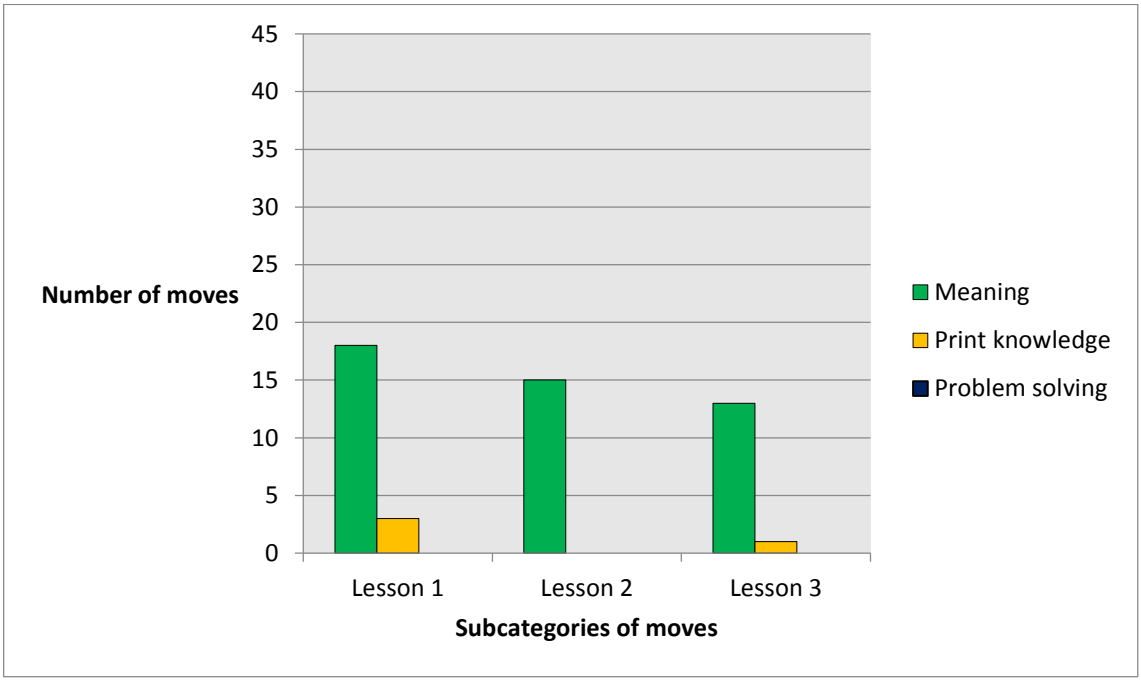


Figure 19: Number of moves and subcategories of moves made by Katy while activating prior knowledge.

*Introducing new features**.***

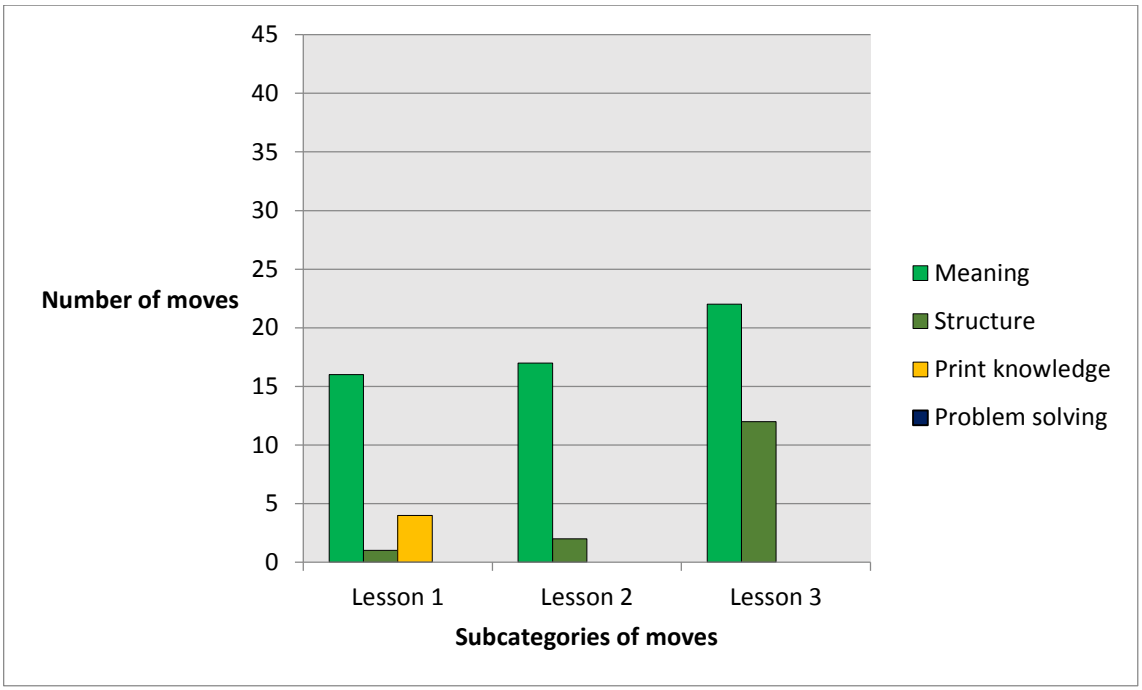


Figure 20: Number of moves and subcategories of moves made by Katy while introducing new features.

Figures 19 and 20 depict the subcategories of moves that correspond to Katy. A pattern evident in both figures is Katy's preference for meaning across all three lessons. Observations of Katy's Guided Reading show that she calls on children to make connections between their prior knowledge and experiences, and the story being introduced, and does this during this generally during the natural flow of discussion. She doesn't pause the group to discuss details.

The following vignette presents an illuminative account of Katy's data in action (See Figures19 and 20). The vignette is entitled *Ensuring intactness of the story* in order to exemplify the approach Katy takes to support children's access to a new text.

Katy in Action

Ensuring Intactness of the Story

Katy holds up the new book, and as the three children crane forward to take a closer look, she shares the title, and a draws their attention to the cover illustration. *"I think you might know this girl"* she smiles. Recognition sparks on two smiling faces and the name 'Sam' is mentioned. "*This **is** Sam, from the story about Sam and Bingo!"* Katy confirms. Madalyn shares what she already knows about Sam. Katy opens the cover and briefly reveals a synopsis of the story. *"Bingo wants to play with Sam and with her toys and her farm."* Amber's

eyes light up with anticipation, and she makes an impulsive prediction. Katy questions her with an inquisitive smile. *"Do you? Why do you think that?" she asks.* As she turns the pages, Katy explores details of the plot. Weaving in the language of the text, she tells the children what will happen, and they listen. Occasionally a child will interrupt with a brief, excited comment.

At one point Katy prompts a communal response. With her finger brushing under the text and a rising tone in her voice she prompts, *"And Sam said to Bingo* (slight pause), *'No, Bingo, No,"* and the children spontaneously chime in. Two pages before the end Katy closes the book and holds it to her chest with a grin. *"I'm not going to show you the end. Sam does something special for Bingo. So when you get up to that part, you can see what the special thing is."* Amber predicts the outcome and Katy raises her eyebrows and smiles. Ryan tries to take a quick but thwarted peek as she hands each child a book. They begin to read to themselves.

Anna.

Activating prior knowledge.

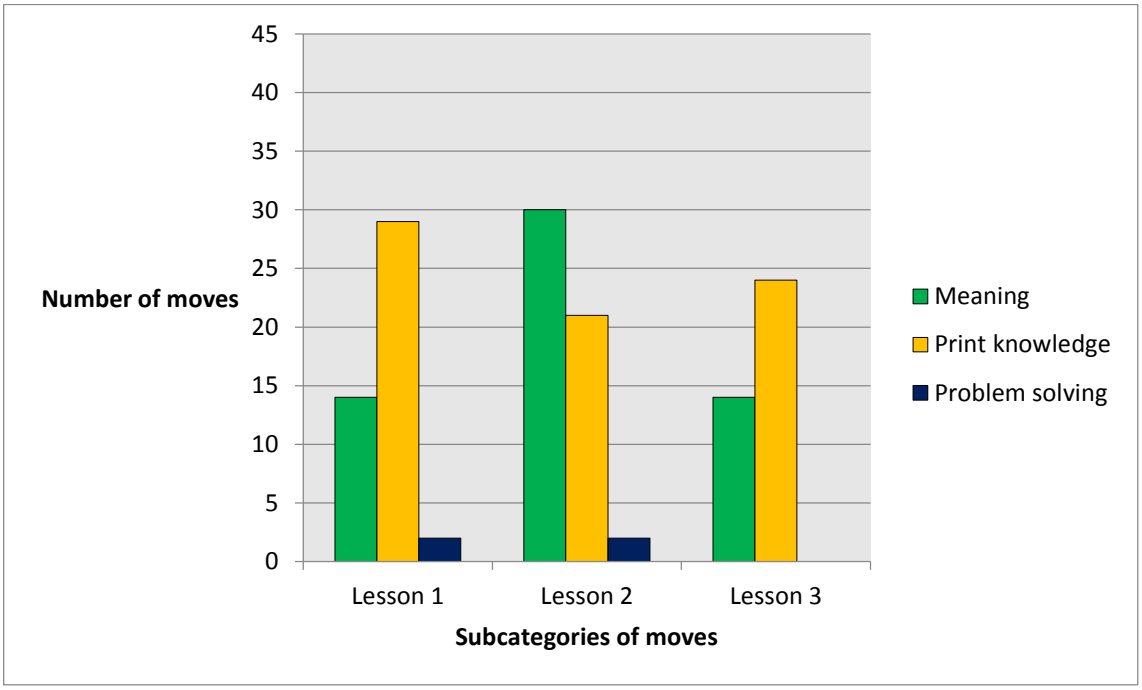


Figure 21: Number of moves and subcategories of moves Anna made while activating prior knowledge.

Introducing new features.

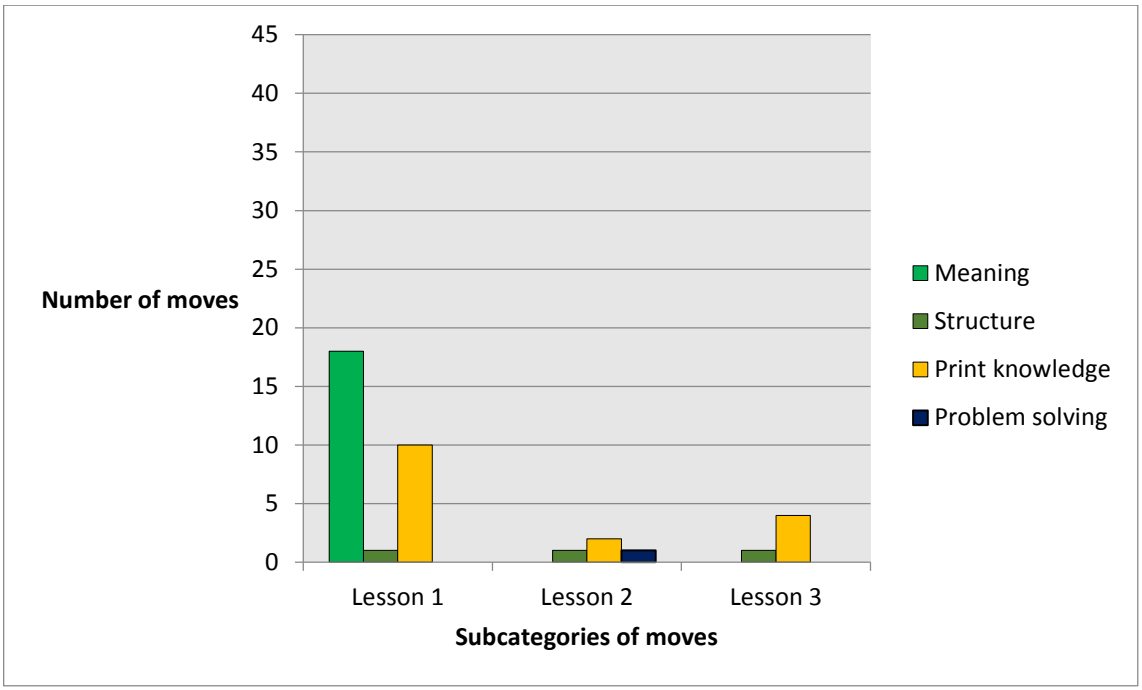


Figure 22: Number of moves and subcategories of moves Anna made while introducing new features.

Figures 21 and 22 show the subcategories of moves that correspond to Anna. Both figures indicate that Anna privileges print knowledge in her teaching moves. Although she calls on children's to share their prior knowledge and experiences related to the meaning of the story she uses the same moves to call on children's knowledge of aspects of print (Figure 21). Observations of her lessons show that she does this by stalling the lesson to examine print in detail. Figures 21 and 22 show that Anna seldom talks about language structure with the children.

The following vignette presents an illuminative account of Anna's data in action (See Figures 21 and 22). The vignette is entitled *Ensuring increased attention to print* in order to exemplify the approach Anna takes to support children's access to a new text.

Anna in Action

Ensuring Increased Attention to Print

Anna hands each child a copy of the new story and tells them they are going to be *"super excited"* about this one. As they catch sight of the 'Merry-Go-Round' (Red), they are! Little voices compete for attention. They know about merry-go-rounds. Anna quietens their exuberance and asks, *"Can you see the word 'go' in the middle of that title?"* She directs them to *"Find 'go'.*

Point to the word 'go'." They all search hard for '*go*.' Anna has to repeat the question. One or two children warily check others for clues. Has anyone found '*go*'? Alex finds 'g,' the letter of the week. Anna praises his initiative *"Good boy. Nice spotting."* Emily looks puzzled. *"Where's 'g?"* she asks, not happy being pipped at the post. She cannot locate the letter she knows. Anna alerts the children to the *"crazy g"* and the book is set aside as each child practices a 'g' on the table. In unison they chorus how the letter is formed. All earn her praise this time. *"Beautiful work, good,"* declares Anna.

Back to the story and Anna asks them to *"Turn to the title page."* Pointing to the text they read the title together. Anna briefly guides talk about the merry-go-round and draws their attention to familiar characters. They recognise Kate. *"Find her in the picture. Now find her name in the words. What does it start with?"* prompts Anna. The requests are repeated and the children excitedly compete to locate the other characters and their names on that page. For their efforts they earn *"Beautiful, lovely,"* from Anna. *"So what do you think Dad wants them to do?"* she prompts. *"Ok, right, point to the first word"* and on cue under her direction they begin to read the first page loudly in unison.

Summary of teacher moves.

Figures 14 - 22 and vignettes present an in-depth analysis of the focus of teachers' talk (moves) as they each introduced stories during Guided Reading. The results show that all teachers activated children's prior knowledge and introduced new or challenging features of the text (Figures 14 - 16). These moves are necessary to support children's successful access to a new text.

However, while Katy's moves consistently privileged meaning Julia and Anna's moves indicate a preference for focussing children's attention on print. Observations of their story introductions show that they interrupt the story introduction to attend to print detail in isolation. Julia and Anna also interrupted their introductions to focus on problem-solving. Their moves indicated that they thought the needs of the children in the group were the same. Both Julia and Anna also paused their introduction to manage children's behaviour. Julia and Katy introduced new language structures to their children, however, while Katy interspersed these through her talk about the story, Julia usually had the children read them slowly from the book. The interruptions to the story introductions in both Julia and Anna's lessons disrupted children's grasp of meaning which is paramount for their successful access to a new text.

In the following section the results of drilling down even deeper into the data on teachers' moves are presented in tables and summaries. While introducing the story, Julia and Anna consistently used moves that either called for children to express their knowledge of print or introduced features of print that may be new and challenging. They interrupted their lessons to bring details in the print to children's

attention. Katy very rarely talked specifically about print knowledge in her story introductions. Examples from Julia and Anna's lessons, therefore, were used for this next analysis.

C. Drawing Attention to Print.

Moves designed to activate children's prior knowledge of print.

Table 15 shows the main category, activating prior knowledge, and examples of Julia and Anna's moves coded to the subcategory of print knowledge. Defined in the third column is the type of print knowledge children were prompted to articulate from their prior knowledge.

Table 15: Facilitating children's access to print by activating prior knowledge.

Category	Examples Of Teacher Moves	Type Of Print Knowledge Activated
Activating Prior Knowledge	- *"What do you think that word says?"* - *"Can you find the word 'bees'?"* - *"What was the word we were learning?"*	Words
	- *"Can you see 'am' in there?"* (Sam)	Word within a word
	- *"What's our letter of the week?'*	Letters
	- *"Remember /th/ when you put your tongue out?"* - *"It's about a little /M/, /M/ . . . ? Monkey!"*	Sounds
	- *"What sound does an 's' make?"*	Letter/sound relationships
	- *"/d//d/. What does 'dogs' start with?"* - *"What sound is at the beginning?"* - *"If it was 'clown' what would it start with?*	Letter/sound relationships and directional control
	- *"Can you point to the first word?"*	Directional control and word
	- *"Can you put your finger on the title please?"*	Title
	- *"Why do we have a capital?"*	Capital letter
	- *"Turn to the last page."*	Last page

Moves designed to introduce new features of print.

Table 16 shows the main category, introducing new features, and examples of Julia and Anna's moves coded to the subcategory of print knowledge. Defined in the third column is the type of print knowledge children were prompted to attend to.

Table 16: Facilitating children's access to print by introducing new features.

Category	Examples Of Teaching Moves	Type Of Print Knowledge Introduced
Introducing New Knowledge	- *"This is our new word. It's 'come'."* (Writes on the white-board) - *"This word is actually 'this'.* (points to the word) - *"That says 'the'. But that doesn't say 'the'."* (Holds up 'the' and 'there' on cards.)	Words
	- *"There's another word inside 'there' as well."* (Isolates here.)	Words within word
	- *"It starts with 'b' though. It's just /b/, /b/, bag.* - *"There's an 's' at the end of Sam as well. Samssss." (Points at the 's'.)* - *"We knew that couldn't be 'pot' because it starts with 'f'."* (Points at 'f'.)	Letter/sound relationships and directional control.
	- *"It's got two letters. I'll show you."* - *"Sometimes in books they do a 'g' shaped like that."* (Writes 'g'.)	Letters
	- *"That's a different 't'. That's a capital 'T'.* (Points to the capital 'T'.)	Capital letter
	- *"Here it is on the front of the book."*	Front

Summary.

Tables 15 and 16 show examples of moves made by Julia and Anna while introducing stories. Both teachers interrupted the flow of their story introductions to activate children's prior knowledge of complex movement patterns and knowledge of the written code, sometimes in complex combinations (Table 15). Table 16 shows that Julia and Anna drew children's attention to similar kinds of complexity. They paused their lessons to attend to these features in detail. In both Guided Reading groups there were children in their first week of school attendance.

4.4 Part Four: Running Records of Children Reading Continuous Text.

The focus of this section is on answering the following question.

- *How does Guided Reading influence children in the first year of school to build processing systems for reading?*

The following tables and summaries provide information on the outcomes of administering and analysing RRs. Tables show the number of RRs administered to children in each teachers' Guided Reading group and the level of text difficulty. A RR taken on less than three occasions indicates either a child absence or a move to a different group. RRs were quantified to determine how well children were able to work at reading on the text introduced and read in Guided Reading. Accuracy rates are broadly depicted as either at or above 90% accuracy, an appropriate text on which to learn, or below 90% accuracy, an unsuitable text on which to learn. Of interest to this study is whether teaching decisions during Guided Reading facilitate or constrain early readers' development of processing. Vignettes present brief illustrative accounts typical of each teacher's interactions during Guided Reading, the responses of particular children, and a sample of their reading behaviour captured on a RR.

Julia's group.

Running Records of continuous text reading.

During two of Julia's Guided Reading lessons children had opportunities to read the new text twice before having a RR administered. Despite this preparation Table 17 shows that across the series of lessons children found at least one of the three texts too difficult.

Table 17: Number of Running Records taken and accuracy rates for children in Julia's group.

Teacher	Child	Weeks at school at beginning of research	Accuracy Rates		Total RRs taken
			At or Above 90%	Below 90%	
Julia	Tom	1		1	1
	Marama	3		2	2
	Kane	2	2	1	3
	Eloise	3	2	1	3
	Sam	4	2	1	3

Marama, in her third week at school, had difficulty rereading a text levelled at Magenta.

Vignette – Marama

During Guided Reading

Marama sits attentively during GR listening to Julia and when asked *"What do you notice?"* about 'the' and 'there', cautiously points to 'e.' Later, she purses her lips misguidedly in a kiss in response to *"Get your lips ready to say the word /p/, /p/, park."* At times, she jiggles in eagerness to look at the pictures of dogs and ducks in the park while waiting for the lengthy story introduction to conclude. Marama is inattentive as Julia guides the children's attention to the 't's and capital 'T's.

Finally, holding a book, she searches in vain to *"Find the title."* Then, when prompted to *"Find the first word,"* she drops her head discouragingly in her hands. As the others begin to read Julia lifts Marama's finger and guides her hesitant pointing.

Running Record

Marama	The	the	✓
Text	There	are	ducks
	✓	✓	pond
	in	the	park.

Invited to read the repetitive text for a third time that day Marama hovers her finger tentatively over 'There' and reads 'The.' She checks the picture and sees ducks. But somehow she knows that 'ducks' is the last of three words on the first line. She carefully points to the next word 'are' and repeats 'the.' Happy now, she reads the remaining words recalling most from memory, pointing slowly but accurately. Problem solved!

Turning the page, Marama anticipates an entirely appropriate language structure. She confidently reads *"The"* and checking the picture, adds *"bees."* She then pauses and beginning again points slowly. Repeating her errors, she ends with another uncertain pause. Appealing for help and receiving it she continues on, reading *"in the park"* accurately. On the next page she checks the picture before pointing, and slowly begins. "Dogs are . . . ."

Summary.

Marama's attempts on her third day at school indicate that some very early but tentative signs of processing are evident but not very effective.

Katy's group.

Running Records of Continuous Text Reading.

Children in Katy's group were given the opportunity to read their new texts once during the Guided Reading lesson before RRs were administered. All children apart from one read all three texts with 90% accuracy or above (Table 18).

Table 18

Number of Running Records taken and accuracy rates for children in Katy's group

Teacher	Child	Weeks at school at beginning of study	Accuracy Rates		Total RRs Taken
			At or Above 90%	Below 90%	
Katy	Madalyn	3	3		3
	Amber	6	2	1	3
	Ryan	12	3		3
	Cameron	24	1		1

Vignette – Cameron

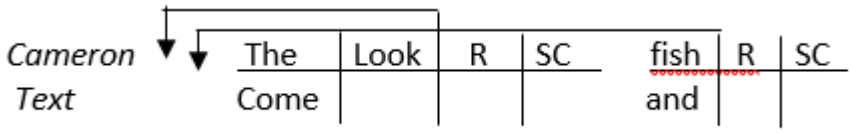
Cameron is the oldest early reader in Katy's Guided Reading group. He was having some difficulty drawing on visual information to support his processing of a text levelled at Magenta.

During Guided Reading

Cameron uses two white cards to isolate the word 'Come' in the familiar text he has just reread. He calls out the letters, *"C-o-m-e."* When Katy asks the children to *"Show me the word 'see',"* on the next page he begins a close search. Madalyn finds it and spells *"S – e – e".* Cameron is perplexed. He thought 'come' started with 'c' (see). He passes the cards randomly across the text. After 24 weeks at school he knows how to use them. When asked to "*Find the word beginning with 'a,'* he demurs. The other children call out 'am' and compound his confusion.

Although the text says 'Come and see . . .' Cameron points to 'Come' and reads *"Look."* He checks with Katy for confirmation. He continues again. *"Look at the."* Katy notices and intervenes. She silently points to 'Come.' Cameron repeats *"Look."* Katy keeps her finger on 'Come'. He tries *'Come.'* By removing her finger Katy confirms his attempt. He continues reading but after every word he checks Katy's expression for clues. Occasionally he slips a page over while she isn't looking.

Running Record



Cameron begins reading the text. He points confidently and reads *"The fish"* in anticipation.

Something signals to him that this is incorrect. He returns to the beginning and tries *"Look."* Still dissatisfied, he suddenly recalls the first word and he's away. The rest of the page is read correctly. On the next page he begins. *"Look at"* but recollects the repetitive phrase, rereads and self-corrects. On the following pages Cameron repeatedly anticipates an alternative option for the same repeating structure, monitors his errors and self-corrects.

Summary.

Cameron's processing is not effective after 24 weeks at school despite consistently self-correcting his errors. He appears to find attending to print detail difficult and so uses other sources of information to compensate.

Anna's group.

Running Records of Continuous Text Reading.

In two Guided Reading lessons Anna's group read and then reread the new text before RRs were administered. Despite this a majority of children found at least one and sometimes two of the three texts difficult to process (Table 19).

Table 18: Number of Running Records taken and accuracy rates for children in Anna's group.

Teacher	Child	Weeks at school at beginning of study	Accuracy Rates		Total RRs Taken
			At or Above 90%	Below 90%	
Anna	Callum	1	1	2	3
	Sam	1	2	1	3
	Lauren	4	2	1	3
	Preeta	4	2		2
	Max	8		2	2

Vignette – Callum

Callum, one of the newest entrants in his first week at school, had difficulty rereading a text levelled at Magenta.

During Guided Reading

Once Callum discovered that *"The new word we are learning is 'come"* and where to find it in the text, he is eager to get underway. While the story introduction is in progress he slowly and deliberately places his finger on the first word on page 3 and begins to read.

Callum	✓	in	✓	✓
Text	Come	to	the	mud.

"I'm reading, I'm reading!" he declares and Anna, interrupting the introduction, praises his *"Nice reading"* and his pointy finger. He reads the next page repeating the inaccuracy. *"Come in the log."* Anna moves the introduction along but notes his error.

As the introduction concludes Callum's request interrupts the flurry of finding 'come' and other words. *"Why can't we read it?"* Anna reassures. *"We are, right now!"*

As they all chorus the first word *"Come . . . , "* Anna abruptly intervenes. *"Look at the next word. What does it start with?"* she asks, pointing to 'to'. Callum sits quietly while the other children shout *"to!"* Then sensing a connection with his earlier writing Callum declares, *"My story starts with 'to!"*

Together they begin page four. *"Come to the tree,"* they chorus. Anna interrupts again. *"How did you know that word was tree?"*. *"Because it has a 'a,"* answers Callum. Anna clarifies. *"It has a 't."*

Running Record

Callum points slowly but carefully and accurately. He reads the repetitive structure correctly until page three when he changes his response to *"Come in . . ."* He continues to repeat this error through to the end of the book. On the last page however he glances at the picture and rereads.

Callum	✓	in	R x2	SC	✓	cave	SC
Text	Come	to			the	tree	

This time he self-corrects. He continues on, placing his finger carefully on 'the,' and concludes the sentence with 'tree'. Pausing, with his finger on 'tree,' he glances at the picture and quickly corrects his error.

Summary.

Callum's responses show very early but fragile signs of processing. While eager to engage he does not appear to have developed the foundational knowledge involving print (letters, sounds and words) that would broaden his opportunities for effective learning during Guided Reading.

In this previous section Running Records of children's reading Guided texts indicate that more children in Julia and Anna's groups experienced challenges with reading despite in some instances having read the new text twice before the record was taken. Vignettes depict how confused children can become in the Guided Reading setting and how that might impact on their reading.

4.5 Summary of Chapter Four.

In this chapter I have presented information about the results of the data collection and data analysis that contribute to this study. Results from an analysis of teachers' views and perspectives on Guided Reading were presented in summaries and vignettes. Results from progressively drilling down into teachers Guided Reading practice, with a particular focus on an element in the lesson called introducing the story, were presented in tables, figures, summaries and vignettes. Running Records of children's reading provided results that attempted to show the influence of Guided Reading on their processing of text.

In the next chapter these accumulated results will be discussed in relation to the research questions.

5 FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this case study is to investigate New Zealand (NZ) teachers' knowledge and understanding of processing systems for reading by examining the implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school and the influence of this important instructional approach on the development of children as early readers.

This chapter firstly presents four findings that emerged from the study, the implications of these findings for learning and teaching, and a final conclusion. The final part of the chapter presents the limitations of the study, and recommendations for teaching practice and further research.

Guided Reading is used to build children's processing systems for reading so that over time they become confident, proficient and independent readers. Effective Guided Reading is predicated on teachers' practice being informed by published guidelines that reflect a theory of literacy learning (Clay, 2001; Doyle, 2015; Holdaway, 1979) and principles of learning that underpin early literacy instruction in NZ (McNaughton, 1999, 2002; Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2002, 2003a). Academics argue that the effectiveness of any practice is dependent on the way it is employed (Allington, 2002, 2004; Boocock, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; McNaughton, Phillips, MacDonald, 2000, Trussell-Cullen, 1996). When implemented effectively Guided Reading has powerful potential for responding to the increasingly diverse population of children entering schools, and the MoE's appeals to lift persistently poor literacy achievement among priority learners (MoE, 2014a).

Given the significance of Guided Reading one would expect that rich research on this approach has been undertaken in the first year of school. Not so. Apart from Clay's (1966) landmark study of 100 children little research within the NZ context exists (Boocock, (2012) and only one overseas study underpinned by a complex theory of reading (McKay, 2004). My interest in conducting this study arose from identifying this surprising gap in the research. A recent review of Ready to Read conducted by Lift Education for the MoE resulted in a number of revisions that will have significant influence on how Guided Reading is employed in the first year of school. This review raised questions about how effectively Guided Reading has been implemented. A search of the literature confirmed that NZ researchers have highlighted issues with the way Guided Reading has been implemented (Boocock 2012; Education review Office, 2009; McNaughton, Phillips & MacDonald, 2003; Smith, 2005; Rogers, 2011; Scanlon, 2015) and overseas researchers have expressed similar concerns (Ford & Opitz, 2008; McKay, 2004).

This study, therefore, proceeded to investigate the following questions:

- *What knowledge and understandings about processing systems for reading are reflected in teachers' implementation of Guided Reading in the first year of school?*

To answer this question, it was necessary to examine teachers' views and perspectives on the implementation of Guided Reading and to observe their lessons. Consideration was also given to how Guided Reading influences children's processing.

- *How does Guided Reading influence children in the first year of school to build processing systems for reading?*

To answer this question Running Records (RR) of children in the observed reading groups, were administered.

The first part of this chapter presents four findings that emerged from the investigation. Results from the data analysis are integrated with information from previous research to explain the findings. Each finding concludes with implications for learning and teaching.

5.1 Findings and Implications for Learning and Teaching.

FINDING ONE

Children's early development of processing systems for reading may be at risk because they are plunged prematurely into Guided Reading in the first year of school.

In this study teachers claimed that common practice was to include New Entrant (NE) children in groups receiving Guided Reading instruction in their first week of school. Indeed, of the 14 children observed in lessons three were in their first week of school attendance. All children entered school on their 5th birthday and the majority had had between 1 and 10 weeks of attendance. One child had attended for 24 weeks.

This practice of introducing all children to Guided Reading in the first days of school contradicts prevailing advice. The gradual introduction of children to Guided Reading was fundamental counsel in early teaching manuals (Auckland Education Board, 1963; Simpson, 1949, 1962) and has been a persistent message in successive teacher support materials distributed to schools by the MoE (MoE, 1985, 1996, 2002, 2003a). Scholars focussed on Guided Reading consistently support this view (Clay, 2010; Doyle, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2012; Holdaway, 1996; Smith & Elley, 1997). In a recent review of the *Ready to Read* series clarifications were distributed to schools that addressed this issue. The Ministry of Education alerted educators to an error in a key NZ Curriculum document that advised teachers that "As soon as students start school, they begin reading texts at Magenta level" (MoE, 2010, p. 10). Due to the existence of this inaccurate statement, however, teachers have been exposed for some time to a mixed message, which may have influenced their teaching decisions.

One rationale for a gradual introduction to Guided Reading is that children need to be engaged and independent in meaningful and productive language and literacy activities before being introduced to more intensive forms of instruction such as Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Jeurissen & Burt, 2015; Richardson, 2009). A number of other rationales support this view.

Firstly, there are participatory requirements, both behavioural and oral, needed to engage effectively in Guided Reading (Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2004; MoE, 2009a). Phillips et al., (2004) described how young children need to learn appropriate expertise situated in literacy activities and they do this through repeated opportunities to engage in that activity. The researchers argue that this is particularly critical for children who have had less opportunities to observe and engage in literate practices that resemble the practices of school. In Guided Reading children need be familiar with the social routines that lead to effective participation. For example, forms of expertise required include knowing how to: engage in a conversation about a story, ask questions, take turns at contributing and engage in dialogue with a partner (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2012). I contend that teachers have facility through other literacy approaches such as Shared Reading, Language Experience and listening to stories to support children's familiarity and development of school practices and habits that will prepare them for effective participation in Guided Reading.

New Entrant children observed in this study in their first week of school, had not yet established appropriate "ways of acting" in the Guided Reading setting (Phillips et al., 2004, p. 310). For example, Marama was puzzled by her teacher's reprimand for speaking out of turn, Corbin held up the story introduction by spontaneously initiating a very slow and cautious reading of one repetitive phrase and Kane was disconcerted by an abrupt interruption to his monologue because his turn was up. All three were anxious to engage but hadn't grasped the appropriate conventions that lead to effective and successful participation. Phillips et al., (2004) claimed that this mismatch between the learners' ways of acting and appropriate ways of performing can create confusion.

Secondly researchers (Doyle; 2015, Holdaway, 1979) cautioned that the written code can be puzzling for young learners when they begin formal instruction. They described important understandings about literacy that children need to acquire in order to lay a foundation for learning to read. Doyle (2015) claimed that when children read the first little books in Guided Reading they need to know "where to look, what to look for and how to fixate and move eyes across print" (sentences and individual words) (p.17). This involves coordinating body, hand and eye movements. When children control these movements they have in place an early working system for processing text (Boocock, 2012; Rogers, 2012). These early behaviours can be absorbed and organised by NE children as they begin to engage in the early reading and writing activities of the classroom such as Shared Reading, reading stories and writing, however, it is gradual learning for some children. In this study children were engaged in early reading and writing activities as soon as they attended school as well as Guided Reading, right from the start.

When asked to explain their decision to get children underway with Guided Reading in the first days at school teachers responded that their prompt initiation was aimed at helping children learn to attend to print. Teachers shared their cognizance of the expectation that children need to read at the Green level after one year at school in order to meet the National Standard (MoE, 2009b). This standard seemed to underlie their practice. Teachers' rationalised that by introducing NEs to Guided Reading they could quickly develop the early learning they saw as necessary for getting children on the pathway

to Green. They acknowledged that for beginning Guided Reading lessons their selection of simple repetitive texts at Magenta was based on helping children establish one-to-one matching, directionality, knowledge of concepts about print. These decisions indicate that teachers were using Guided Reading to help children build foundational habits for early reading. This contradicts with advice that success in early reading is *accounted for* by children having foundational learning already underway (Clay, 2014). Observations of children during Guided Reading lessons showed that some were baffled by the complex literacy demands of the setting. Finding "the cover" and "the title page" or even pointing to the "first word on the first writing page" and matching their finger to one word at a time were tasks that some children could not control. Interestingly, data from Running Records of children's reading showed that seven of the 14 children had to attend very carefully to match their finger to each word and of those children three were unable to match consistently on every page.

In this study, teachers' rationales for a peremptory introduction to Guided Reading overlook principles of learning that inform literacy teaching practice in NZ. For example, during group instruction teachers were challenged to reflect on and use the principle that NEs take developmental and unique pathways towards becoming literate and are likely to be in different places in their literacy learning on entry to school (Bissex, 1980; Doyle, McNaughton, Phillips & MacDonald, 2003). McNaughton (2000, 2011) cautioned that teachers in the first year of school need to be keen observers of children's *transition* into literacy and be unequally attentive to those who may be confused by early encounters with print. This suggests that teaching decisions about introducing children to Guided Reading should be based on observations of individual children's literacy learning profiles.

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching.

An implication of this finding is that a peremptory rather than gradual introduction to Guided Reading may significantly influence the progress of children who enter school least prepared for engaging in the literacy practices of the classroom. Evidence from this study suggests that the chances of some children participating successfully in Guided Reading are reduced because the highly contextualised ways of participating combined with the teachers' complex instructional demands create confusion for those unprepared. Children who are confused by literacy learning can develop expectations that they will not succeed and can lose motivation and become passive very early in their school journeys (Johnston & Allington, 1991; MoE, 2013a).

A further implication is that this issue resonates with Rubie-Davies (2015) finding that a link exists between ability grouping and significantly high achievement disparity. I would contend that this study claims some ground in Rubie-Davies finding in the link between children's achievement and their very *earliest* experiences of grouping for Guided Reading instruction in the first week of school attendance. However, Guided Reading in this context does not conform to notions of ability grouping if the principle of multiple and developmental pathways to becoming literate are considered. This prospect of the earliest experiences of grouping presenting a barrier to achievement appears most disturbing for priority

learners whose literacy learning disparities with other children are apparent at school entry (Clay, 1991, 2014; MoE, McNaughton, 2000, 2004; Phillips et al., 2004).

In order for children to effectively engage in Guided Reading teachers need time to observe and identify each child's current understandings and awareness and NEs need time to make transitions so that their current ways of responding undergo change as they apply them to new tasks in new contexts (Doyle, 2015). Depending on the opportunities children have had to learn in the cultural contexts of their previous 5 years, some children may be closer to achieving this learning on entry to school, while others may need more catch-up opportunities.

Surely, grave risks ensue if ideas of delaying teaching permeate or if notions of waiting for children to become ready for instruction pervade. These views are certainly not my recommendations. Within a supportive instructional environment Shared Reading, Language Experience, writing and listening to interesting stories are literacy approaches providing children opportunities to gain traction with early school experiences and to translate their current responses into novel literacy tasks. These opportunities begin for children on *day one* and provide a greater amount of support with less risk of confusion for the child. The transition to more structured and intensive instruction via Guided Reading may follow for most children in a matter of weeks after school entry.

FINDING TWO

Observations of Guided Reading indicate that not all lessons are structured to facilitate opportunities to teach for processing in reading.

Teachers in this study structured their Guided Reading lessons in ways that differed from each other and from a framework generally accepted as facilitative of teaching that leads to processing. This finding does not come from a belief that a rigid orthodoxy exists about the right way teach but from a need to know what teachers understand and do in their efforts to implement Guided Reading. Ford & Opitz, (2008), discovered that "variation in understandings can often lead to significant differences in how practices get implemented" (p.311). Discovering the ways teachers structured their lessons provided information about their pedagogical knowledge of Guided Reading and how that knowledge influenced their understandings of how to teach for processing.

As previously discussed, a framework for Guided Reading consists of four elements that provide structure to the lesson. An outcome of the *Ready to Read* revisions is that the elements have been clarified and are now defined as: (a) introducing the story, (b) monitoring the reading, (c) discussing the story after the first reading and (d) after reading: practice and reinforcement. A progressive delivery of the elements provides coherence and momentum for children and an opportunity for the teacher to closely observe and investigate and respond to children's processing as they read independently (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). When children read independently teachers have facility to provide

instruction that is responsive to their individual needs which supports their processing and leads to further independence (Schwartz, 2005). Rodgers (2012) stated that the act of close observation can have an immediate impact on teaching decisions and instructional practices. Schwartz (2005) contended that through observation teachers can refine and develop their theories of literacy learning and teaching. When Guided Reading is implemented as designed teaching can respond to individual children's needs, children's processing can be refined and the teacher can learn more about teaching from the interactions.

From an analysis of Guided Reading observations teachers structured their lessons in ways that were more or less facilitative of opportunities to teach for processing in reading.

The following, are aspects of lesson structures that seemed to facilitate *more* opportunities to teach for processing.

- Lessons were 20 minutes or less
- Elements of the lesson were more closely aligned with a generally accepted framework for Guided Reading
- No more than 6 elements were included
- Additional elements selected by the teacher were sequenced for coherency within the lesson
- There was momentum across the lesson
- A moderate amount of time was spent on each element
- The teacher spent most time monitoring the first reading
- All elements were linked with an overriding emphasis on meaning

Lesson structures that seemed to facilitate *more* opportunities to teach for processing were underpinned by the following understandings.

- Children lose interest and focus when lessons take too long
- Lessons need energy and coherency to keep young learners motivated
- The purpose of Guided Reading is to lead children to independence in reading
- The teacher's role is to provide personalised instruction
- Children learn best in a context where meaning is paramount

No one teacher's lesson reflected all of the aspects of lesson structure or understandings as outlined above however some lessons included more aspects than others. Running Records of children's reading texts from lessons that were structured as more facilitative of teaching for processing had more children reading with accuracy rates of 90% or above.

The following, are aspects of lesson structures that seemed to facilitate *less* opportunities to teach for processing.

- Up to 30 minute lessons
- A slow and ponderous pace with interruptions that paused the lesson
- A lesson framework that least resembled recommended guidelines
- A large number of elements (7)
- Disproportionate amounts of time spent on one or two elements
- A loss of coherence between elements

Underpinning lesson structures that seemed to facilitate *less* opportunities to teach for processing were the following understandings.

- Young children can remain focussed and engaged for long periods of time
- Children are unable to read independently without a lot of help from the teacher
- The purpose of early reading is to learn letters, sounds and words
- The teacher's role is to provide group instruction
- Reading a new story accurately is an important outcome of the lesson

More lessons in this study reflected aspects underpinned by understandings outlined as above. Interestingly, McKay (2004) suggests that accurate reading, for some teachers, is an indicator of independent beginning reading. This raises questions about teachers' interpretations of the notion of *independence* in reading. Shifting terminology to *independent problem-solving* in reading could be a simple way to shift understandings that influence teaching decisions that are more facilitative of processing.

Lessons were structured in ways that showed a variation in pedagogical understandings about the recommended Guided Reading framework and an unfamiliarity with rationales for why lessons are more facilitative of teaching for processing if delivered as designed. Significantly, observations of these lessons showed that the teaching was more likely to be interrupted by teachers' moves to manage children's inattentive behaviour. Running Records of children's reading texts from lessons that were structured as less facilitative of teaching for processing had more children reading with rates of less than 90% accuracy.

Instructional conditions such as those most recently outlined do little to stimulate children's thinking and oral language development (Johnston & Allington, 1991) and are not conducive to children's development of processing. It is possible that the teaching is reduced to approaches that resemble a simple view of reading in order to cope with complexities (Clay, 1988; Holdaway, 1979). Priority learners and others with diverse learning needs may be placed at risk of not making progress in these settings. It is acknowledged that they need the most, not the least, facilitative teaching (Clay, 1991, 2014; McNaughton, 2000, 2004; MoE, 2014a).

The variations in Guided Reading practice were surprising as teachers shared details of how they regularly engaged in collaborative professional learning and development focussed on literacy, received ongoing appraisals of their literacy teaching and were familiar with relevant teacher support material.

One possibility for the variance is that disconnections can occur between what teachers say they know and do and what they actually do in practice (Boocock, 2012, Ford & Opitz, 2008). Another possibility is that teachers' actions in this study conform to theories of adaptive expertise (Bryk, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders & Goldenberg, 2009; Peurach & Glaser, 2016) however some adaptations to practice did not remain true to the underlying theories of that practice (Timperley, 2011). Evidence from observations of lessons in this study show that teachers individual reconstructions of the Guided Reading framework did not reflect an underlying theory of reading.

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching.

Implications from this small study are that altering and adapting the framework for Guided Reading disrupts the momentum and intention of the original design and in so doing, lessons lose the critical elements that support effective teaching for processing.

Given the amount of instructional time allocated daily to Guided Reading, it is concerning that instructional efforts constrain rather than facilitate children's processing and, therefore, early reading progress. This issue reflects concerns aired during recent presentations about the *Ready to Read* review (Hancock, 2015b; MoE, 2014b). Hancock (2015b) described anecdotal reports of drift and shift in Guided Reading practice over time. This study provides an empirically driven rationale for alterations to the TSM accompanying new texts in the series (MoE, 2015a; Hancock, 2015a, 2015b) in which the framework for Guided Reading has been addressed.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) described Guided Reading as "good first teaching for all." They proposed that effective implementation of Guided Reading might reduce the number of children needing intervention after the first year of school. If, however, children are not receiving the individual attention that the approach is designed to facilitate then there are issues with how those most at risk of reading failure are being accommodated.

FINDING THREE

Understanding and skill is required to introduce a story to New Entrant children that leads to their independent reading of the new text.

Observations of Guided Reading lessons in this study showed that introducing new stories in ways that facilitated children's independence in reading is an advanced and complex practice.

A key theme in the literature on Guided Reading is that a pivotal element in lessons is introducing the story (Fountas & Pinnell; 1996, Richardson, 2009). The purpose of an introduction is to make a new

text accessible in order that children read it independently on the first attempt. As they read they learn how to process by problem-solving using the information in the text. The teacher monitors their reading and provides supportive prompts (MoE, 2003a; Schwartz, 2005; Smith, 2005). Phillips et al., (2004) described how teachers, trained to carefully manage introductions, supported accelerated gains in achievement for priority learners. McKay (2004) pointed out however, that a traditional interpretation of monitoring is 'hearing children read' and that teachers have found the notion of monitoring individuals challenging. In this study two teachers did find monitoring individuals challenging because they were occupied with directing children to read in unison.

Recently, *Ready to Read* placed more emphasis in their TSM on teachers providing a *rich* introduction. This change was due to anecdotal reports that story introductions were reducing rather than facilitating children's independent reading of the new text (MoE, 2014c).

In this study nine story introductions were observed during which a variety of *teaching techniques* were identified as *more* helpful or *less* helpful in facilitating a good introduction to a new story.

More helpful teaching techniques included:

- A minimum of teacher talk
- Few questions
- Expressive use of face and voice
- Pauses for effect
- Children encouraged to be active participants
- Interactions underpinned by momentum and energy

When teaching techniques like these were used story introductions tended to be no more than 3 minutes. Long enough to motivate children but short enough to maintain their focus and engagement (MoE, 2002). In these lessons children more often remained focussed, engaged and enthusiastic about reading the new text. It seemed that their interest and involvement in the thinking and talking about the story had been the main concern of the teaching.

Less helpful teaching techniques included:

- Considerable teacher talk
- Asking many questions
- Interrupting to manage behaviour
- Drawing attention to detail
- Closely directing activities
- Telling children what to expect
- Concern for accuracy

When teaching techniques like these were used, story introductions tended to be longer (up to 11 minutes). Children were observed off-task and disengaged, and many appeared disinterested in reading the new text. The teaching tended to aim at maintaining children's time on task rather than stimulating their thinking and language development.

Johnston and Allington (1991) point out that teaching is not just a collection of techniques therefore a closer examination of teachers' instructional interactions was undertaken. Two categories of interactions matched recommendations describing effective teaching for introducing a story (Clay, 2014, Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2012; Richardson, 2009).

All teachers *activated children's prior knowledge* and *introduced new features* but variations in the interactions revealed that teaching emphasised different types of knowledge.

In some story introductions teaching that activated children's prior knowledge emphasised *meaning*. For example:

- *"I think you might know this girl!" Aha. This **is** Sam from the story about Sam and Bingo."*
- *"Now you're going to be super excited when I show you this book. Guess why! You're right! Who is there that you already know?"*

This emphasis was more likely to facilitate a successful first reading. Updated design criteria for texts in the *Ready to Read* series ensures that the content of new texts reflect the experiences of NZ children (Hancock, 2015a) so that their own background knowledge can be called to mind. New *Ready to Read* TSM reflect this shift to building a strong meaning base for supporting the first reading.

In other story introductions, teaching that activated prior knowledge primarily emphasised features of *print*. For example:

- *"Can you see 'go' in the middle of that title? Find 'go'. Point to 'go'. Has anyone found 'go'?*
- *"Find her in the picture. Now find her name in the words. What does it start with?"*

Teachers prompts, questions and reminders reflected an assumption that children had reserves of print knowledge to draw on. Details were attended to during the story introduction and any discussion about the story took a lesser role. This emphasis was less likely to facilitate an independent first reading. Clay (2014) and McNaughton et al., (2003) pointed out that some children may need more careful anticipation of text features to make problem-solving easier for them however I propose that this teaching would not constitute placing meaning at risk. It is easier to read a new book if the introduction retains the meaning and intactness.

Similarly, in some story introductions teaching that introduced new features privileged meaning or new language structures or both. For example:

- "*That's called a sea lion." That's a funny name isn't it!"*
- *"Bingo wants to play with Sam!"*
- *"Yes, he hit the ball 'up into the sky'."*

Woven into the flow of the discussion the teaching served to anticipate new or challenging features that might make problem-solving easier during the first reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). This approach was more likely to facilitate an independent first reading.

In other story introductions, teaching that introduced new features privileged *print*. For example:

- *"Ok, so now when you see that word this is what your mouth is going to look like? /i/, /i/, /i/."*
- *Sometimes in books they do a 'g' shaped like that. But we know how to do a 'g'. Everybody on the whiteboard. Show me how to do a 'g'."*

Teaching with this emphasis interrupted the lessons. Scholars point out that one or two new features of print can be addressed with minimal interaction otherwise too much talk produces cognitive confusion (Clay 2001) and distracts children's attention from the story (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Children's inattentiveness and disengagement was evident in lessons when teaching privileged print.

In this study *more* instructional interactions during story introductions expected children to draw on their knowledge of print or called children's attention to new features of print rather than meaning and language. In view of this it is significant that Pearson (2001) argued that teaching places children's achievement at risk if it raises in their minds that reading may not be the point of reading instruction.

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching.

One implication of this finding is that understandings about introducing stories vary and different interpretations can influence the accessibility of a new text.

This study shows that some instructional interactions tended to focus on the intactness of meaning while more often others tended to fragment and disconnect children's engagement with meaning. In light of the anecdotal reports from *Ready to Read* discussed earlier this finding offers some small substance to reports that teaching may be reducing rather than facilitating opportunities for children's independent reading of the new text (MoE, 2014c).

Teaching can reflect the view that learning to read is dependent on an instructional sequence. That perhaps children will find reading difficult until they know or can draw on their knowledge of sounds and letters to decode the words. Children may, under these circumstances, develop a set that reading is about attending closely to the print. An independent reading of a new text is less likely if meaning does not provide a guide for their processing.

A further implication is that *Ready to Read* have repeated calls for teachers to provide 'rich' introductions to new text (MoE, 2013a, 2014b, 2014c; Hancock, 2015b). This could be problematic in light of variations in teaching emphases. How might the notion of a rich introduction be interpreted by teachers who typically emphasise meaning compared with teachers who typically emphasise print?

FINDING FOUR

Children's early development of processing systems for reading may be at risk because they become confused by the language of instruction in beginning Guided Reading.

An analysis of interactions during story introductions revealed a pattern of interruptions during lessons to draw children's attention to print rather than teaching to lay a foundation for comprehending the text. By drilling further down into the data it was discovered that teaching prompts, directions and questions used to draw attention to print could become a compounding source of conflict and confusion for New Entrant (NE) children in beginning Guided Reading.

As discussed earlier, teachers in this study introduced children to Guided Reading in their first week at school. Of the 14 children observed in Guided Reading, three were in their first week at school at the time of the first lesson observations. The rest had attended between 3 and 10 weeks (the majority 3 and 5 weeks) and one child for 24 weeks. It could be assumed that children with the least number of weeks of school attendance were in the early stages of forming hypotheses about letters, words and messages, that is, the foundational learning needed for literacy processing (Doyle, 2015), as well as learning to conform to the participatory practices of the Guided Reading context (Phillips, et al., 2004). Issues have already been discussed regarding a peremptory introduction to Guided Reading earlier in this chapter and the existence of multiple complexities confronting NE children in that setting.

Teachers chose to use simple repetitive texts at Magenta for beginning Guided Reading. They reported a preference for these because they viewed the one line of print on each page as supportive for establishing directionality, one to one matching and concepts about print (e.g. first, last, words, letters and sounds). Recently, *Ready to Read* raised issues with high levels of repetition in Magenta texts and the influence of this on early processing. Hancock (2015a) reported that once children become familiar with the pattern they do not need to look at the print. This appears to be a logical standpoint since processing only occurs when children's eyes are on the print (Clay, 1991). Teachers in this study, however, did not select texts at Magenta for the purpose of fostering processing, rather they viewed these texts as useful for developing knowledge of the written code. A question to be answered, is whether simple repetitive texts at Magenta play a determining role in what is prioritised in beginning Guided Reading rather than evidence and information about children's individual literacy needs. *Ready to Read* have recently revised criteria for Magenta texts and archived texts considered unsuitable.

Interestingly, publishers of other series written for early readers in NZ continue to produce quantities of repetitive texts levelled at Magenta.

As teachers introduced stories at Magenta their language of instruction (prompts and questions) clearly assumed that children could draw on reserves of knowledge consistent with foundational learning. Some examples include:

Print knowledge.

- Directionality: *"Turn to the last page." "Where do we start?"*
- Words: "*Can you find the word 'bees'?" "What do you think that word says?"*
- Letters: *"What's our letter of the week?" "Why do we have a capital letter?"*
- Sounds: *"Remember 'th' when you out your tongue out."*

Complex combinations of print knowledge.

- Letter/sound relationships: *"What sound does an /s/ make?"*
- Letter/sounds and directionality: *"If it was 'clown' what would it start with?"*
- Words within words: *"Can you see the word 'am' in there?" – 'Sam'*

Observations of lessons showed that occasionally older children were asked to demonstrate their understandings to the rest of the group (e.g. *"Sam can you show the rest of the group what a /b/, /b/, /b/, looks like."*). In general, however, the teaching was focussed on all children in the group.

These examples illustrate the complexity of instructional dialogue which must be a source of mismatch and confusion for many NEs who have had little time to construct understandings about what it is the teacher means even within the wider classroom literacy activities. Phillips et al., 2004 described how teachers, when taught to use carefully orchestrated instructional language, contributed to positive shifts in children's reading achievement but these required sophisticated changes in practice. Clay (2001) argued, however, that most children can get underway with reading under different instructional conditions. The complexity of the instructional language combined with the complex idiosyncrasies in the context of beginning Guided Reading pose multifaceted challenges for children. This is particularly so for priority learners who need instruction that resolves rather than compounds confusion about what is required to be a literacy learner (Johnston & Allington, 1991).

The following are illustrative of two children who appeared confused in Guided Reading. Their confusions are tentatively linked with Running Records of their reading the text from the lesson.

Marama – Week 3

Guided Reading: Magenta

After the story introduction the teacher asked the group to "*Find the 'title'."* Marama surveyed the book, turned to the back, opened the book and flicked the pages. Her teacher placed the book flat on the floor. When the group were asked to *"Find the first word,"* Marama placed her head in her hands. Her teacher pointed to the title. *"Do you know this word?'* she asked. Despondently, Marama shook her head.

Running Record

Marama tried hard to recall the structure of the simple text as she searched the picture for clues. She very tentatively pointed matching one to one and contributed an utterance that while matching the number of words did not correspond consistently with the print.

Marama's despondency in the lesson may reflect some confusion with the instructional dialogue and demands of the setting. Although her reading showed signs of early reading behaviour she was not able to process the text effectively. She had difficulty locating information in the print that she could recognise.

Cameron – Week 24

Guided Reading: Magenta

The teacher showed the group 'come'. *"We've been learning this word."* Cameron looked warily at the card. Two in the group said *"Come*" and Cameron quickly followed suit. On the first story page he stopped. He looked at the picture, back to the first words ("*Come and . . .*"), back to the picture and tried *"Look at …"* He searched his teacher's face for clues. Have another look she said and showed him the word 'come' again. After the reading he could *"Find the word 'come'."* But when asked to *"Find the word 'see'*, he found a capital 'C.".

Running Record

> Cameron pointed to the text and tried to recall the words. *"Come and . . ."* he tried two other possibilities before recalling the right phrase. He read slowly. On almost every page he tried to recall the correct repetitive phrase, sometimes to no avail. Although he was rereading and sometime self-correcting he did not appear to be relating his language to print in helpful ways. He had tried to learn by remembering the words. His processing was rudimentary and not very effective.

Implications of this Finding for Learning and Teaching.

An implication for learning and teaching is that this small finding may affirm rationales discussed in an earlier finding for a gradual rather than precipitous introduction of children to Guided Reading. This study adds evidence of a further layer of complexity in the Guided Reading setting by illustrating that instructional dialogue may inadvertently confound children's awareness of print.

A further implication is that teachers' rationales for selecting texts at Magenta for beginning Guided Reading indicated an agenda for early reading instruction that did not reflect understandings that underpin teaching for processing in reading. While it is the teacher-child interactions accompanying the reading of a new text that influence outcomes for children's processing access to quantities of texts written in a style that is less facilitative of processing may influence the teaching interactions and what is prioritised.

5.2 Final Conclusion.

Guided Reading is variously described as an instructional approach that is *pivotal, central, core* or *key* to supporting early reader's development of processing systems for reading. There is significance and validity in these terms. No other social setting within the first year of school offers such robust potential for moving children's reading forward.

In this small study three enthusiastic teachers in the first year of school embraced this conception of Guided Reading. Shared convictions were visible in their inclusion of Guided Reading as an essential part of literacy education in their classrooms and in their steadfast introduction of this instructional approach to children in their first few days at school. The findings of this study, however, highlight some issues with teachers' knowledge and understanding of Guided Reading, that may stem from this peremptory practice.

Before Guided Reading can be an effective setting for early reading instruction children need to develop foundational habits that will help them attend to the written code in continuous texts. Processing

in reading is underpinned by this important learning. What's more, NE children need time to make transitions from what they already know about literacy and learning to the particular requirements of school based literacy activities. Children take different schedules and routes on this journey. By introducing children to the most intensive form of reading instruction in their first days of school, teachers may overlook the crucial significance of individual transitions in preparing rich ground for developing children's processing systems for reading.

This very early grouping of children for instruction led to interesting implications for lessons. The teaching emphasis in beginning Guided Reading, with children who had not yet established foundational learning, focussed on the acquisition of that knowledge. In most lessons this had an impact on the structure of Guided Reading lessons. Firstly, elements were rearranged or creatively adapted to better serve that emphasis overlooking the recommended framework designed to facilitate processing. Secondly, teachers selected simple, repetitive texts, rather than information rich texts, with which to focus their instruction, and thirdly, teaching instruction primarily emphasised print. Observations of story introductions revealed recurring patterns of interruptions to children's talking and thinking, to focus on the text. Emphasising aspects of print may simplify the teaching but it also simplifies what children actually need to do as readers. Significantly, when instructing with this focus the teaching language used can be a source of extra confusion for children. In this study compounding confusion led to loss of focus and interest in reading for some children. Interestingly, Clay (2010) hypothesised that a slow pace of progress in the first year of school may be the result of children becoming puzzled and confused by a too hasty introduction to the complexities of the written code.

Ready to Read's revisions and clarifications are designed to influence teachers' knowledge and understandings of Guided Reading and change practice. However, newly published texts and TSM, accompanied by intermittent communications to schools appear insufficient to support the significant changes they recommend. Opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning to examine the revisions is paramount and then continuous professional learning is needed to ensure that this instructional approach achieves its powerful potential.

5.3 Limitations of This Study.

This case study focussed on the Guided Reading teaching practices of three experienced teachers in three schools working with a small sample of 14 children. Observations of teachers' lessons were conducted within the complex and busy settings of NE classrooms. Two teachers chose to deliver their lessons as usual within their normal literacy learning routines while the third teacher chose a secluded room. All knew that their Guided Reading practice would be under scrutiny.

One important limitation to this study is that I viewed and interpreted teachers practice and children's' early reading through a literacy processing lens shaped by a long career influenced by the work of Marie Clay. There is the possibility that this strong personal bias influenced the findings.

For these reasons, the strength of the evidence places limitations on the generalisability of the findings.

5.4 Recommendations for Practice.

Recommendations for teaching practice emanating from this study echo those announced by *Ready to Read*, as a result of the recent review.

Firstly, begin reading instruction for children on the first day of school but not Guided Reading. Guided Reading can be gradually introduced once close observation of children's literacy behaviours confirms that they have begun to establish the foundational behaviours that underpin effective processing, and once they understand the participatory requirements of the setting.

Secondly, use the new *Ready to Read* TSM as a framework for Guided Reading and sequence the elements as designed. Aim to introduce a new story in order that children have the opportunity to read it independently. Personalising instruction to develop children's processing in reading can only take place when children read independently.

Thirdly, select information rich texts with a story for Guided Reading. Keep the author's message paramount and weave new or challenging features of the text such as language structure or print into the talk about the story. Avoid interrupting the lesson to draw attention to detail.

Finally, schools need to seek out high quality professional support from a literacy coach, conversant with the *Ready to Read* revisions, who can provide professional development sessions for teachers in the first year of school. Models of good teaching, observations of teachers and dialogues that mentor growth in practice are crucial for achieving change in the implementation of Guided Reading.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research.

As a result of this study further research is warranted. Firstly, it would be interesting to examine the current impact on schools in New Zealand of the *Ready to Read* revisions considering the importance of these changes for the teaching of Guided Reading. Informal communications with teachers suggest that apart from receiving and shelving new *Ready to Read* texts some schools remain unaware that revisions exist or are unsure of their implications.

Secondly, where schools and teachers have made changes to their practices is there evidence to suggest that the changes are influencing reading achievement outcomes for children in the first year of school.

APPENDIX ONE

School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Te Kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Te Kura Akoranga o Tāmaki Makaurau
Incorporating the Auckland College of Education

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Parent/Caregiver

Parent/Caregiver:

Researcher: Judy Aitken

Title of research: The development of children's processing systems for reading: The influence of guided reading in Year One.

Date:

Dear

This letter is to invite your child to participate in a small research project that I am conducting as part of the requirements for my Master of Education degree through the University of Auckland and to explain the project in full. The project is under the supervision of Faculty of Education staff members: Professor Jan Gaffney and Helen Villers.

The school your child attends has been selected to participate because I am informed of the high literacy outcomes for six-year-old children. The Principal has also recommended the teacher of the Year One children as an experienced and effective teacher of early literacy and informed by current Ministry of Education teacher resources on early literacy instruction.

The research is motivated by my interest and experience in early literacy and the development of children's processing systems for reading. **The aim of the project is to explore how teacher beliefs influence guided reading and how their responses reflect knowledge and understanding of how to teach for processing in reading in Year One.**

Project description

The time frame for the data gathering field work is from 11 May to 3 July 2015. At a time convenient to the school and the teacher I plan to collect data about the teacher using guided reading, a key instructional approach to reading, as well as data on children's reading of very simple beginning books.

<u>Classroom observations</u>

Teacher:

I intend to make three video recorded observations of the teacher using guided reading with one group of children who are recent new entrants to school; firstly, as they are introduced to simple beginning

texts then again as they progress at intervals to more challenging texts. The observation period will be determined by the progress of the children as their reading processing gains momentum and they are gradually moved through a gradient of text difficulty. During the observations I will make field notes which along with evidence from the guided reading observations will be used in the reporting and dissemination of the research.

Children:

During the three months I would also like to observe and record your child's reading behaviour by taking Running Records. A Running Record is a written record that captures what children say and do as they read simple beginning books. I wish to take Running Records with your child on three occasions. It is anticipated that each Running Record will take approximately ten minutes. Running Records will be used to analyse your child's reading progress.

The approximate time commitment involved for teachers is four hours and for each child, thirty minutes.

Outcomes

During the project all data collected will be stored securely in my home office. At the conclusion of the research all data will be kept for a period of six years and then destroyed (written data will be shredded and video and audio recordings will be erased). To protect the identity of the participants, current forms and data will be stored separately and securely in my home and work offices. Every effort will be made to protect participant's identity and this will be a priority at all times. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your child's name, the teacher's name and the school's name and identifying information will not be included in any reports. Information will not be able to be traced to any participant in this study.

All participants will have access to a summary of the final report that will be given to each Board of Trustees, Principal, and participant teachers. A copy will be mailed to you if you indicate on the Consent Form that you would like to receive one. Any publications that may arise from the project will also be made available. Participants will be invited to attend any local presentations that arise as a result of the research. The final summary will be presented as a dissertation for my Master's degree.

Participation

Written permission from you agreeing to your child's participation will be sought. Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw at any time, and to withdraw their data up until 3 July 2015 which is the final date assigned for the completion of data collection. Participants need not give a reason for their withdrawal.

If your child appears disturbed by being observed, videotaped and/or audio recorded over the period of the project observations and recording would cease immediately. If your child chooses not to participate during any observation the teacher would provide an alternative literacy activity. If your child was experiencing a stressful period unrelated to the study then observations would be rescheduled. Your school Principal has given assurance that your child's participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship or your child's relationship with the school or access to any school services.

If you agree to give consent for your child to participate in this study and your child agrees I would appreciate you signing the Consent Form and assisting your child to complete the Assent Form. Please return both forms to your child's teacher who will then pass them on to me. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Contact details

If you have any questions please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Judy Aitken
Email: judy.aitken@auckland.ac.nz
06 358 0514 (Office)
027 205 7008 (Mobile)

Supervisor: Janet Gaffney
Faculty of Education
University of Auckland
Email: janet.gaffney@auckland.ac.nz
09 6238899 ext 48323 (Office)
027 714 3000 (Mobile)

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact:

The Chair
The University of Auckland Human Ethics Participants Committee
The University of Auckland
Research Office
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142
09 373-7599 xtn. 878030/83761 (Office)
Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON _____ 2015, FOR 3 YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER _____

APPENDIX TWO

School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Te Kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Te Kura Akoranga o Tāmaki Makaurau
Incorporating the Auckland College of Education

CONSENT FORM

Board of Trustees/Principal

(This form will be held for a period of six years)

Principal: (insert name)

Researcher: Judy Aitken

Title of research: The development of children's processing systems for reading: The influence of guided reading in Year One.

Date:

Consent details

I have read the participant Information sheet and have understood the nature of the project and why I have been asked to give permission for the researcher to approach the five-year-old children, their parents/caregivers, and the Year One teacher of those children. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that data collected during the fieldwork for the research will take place between 11 May to 3 July 2015 at a time convenient to the school and the teacher.
- I understand that the Year One teacher will be asked to sign a Consent Form if they agree to participate.
- I understand that parents/caregivers of the five-year-old children selected for the study will be asked to sign a Consent Form if they agree for their child to participate and that they will be invited to help their child to complete an Assent form.
- I understand that the teacher will be asked to be audio/video recorded on three occasions while teaching guided reading and I understand that they have the right to ask that observations and recordings cease at any time, without giving a reason.
- I understand that the teacher will be asked to participate in three audio recorded interviews and I understand that they have the right to turn off the recorder at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that the researcher will take Running Records on children on three different occasions and that children have the right to withdraw from that setting at any time, without giving a reason.

- I understand that the participation of the children and the teacher is voluntary and give my assurance that their participation or non-participation will not affect their employment status (teacher) or influence their relationship with the school (parent/caregiver, children, teacher).

- I understand that the teacher can withdraw from the project at any time and that s/he can withdraw any information traceable to them up until 3 July 2015, without having to give reasons.

- I understand that the parents/caregivers of the children have the right to withdraw their children and the children have the right to withdraw at any time, without reason.

- I understand that all written data and video and audio recordings will be kept securely in the researcher's home office and will be destroyed after six years.

- I understand that the researcher will make every attempt to protect the identity of the school and neither the school name nor the participant's names will be identified through the production of the research or in any presentation or publication.

- I understand that the teacher will be given opportunities to check and ratify summaries of the research for accuracy, at intervals through the study.

- I understand that at the conclusion of the research all participants will have access to a summary of the final report, will receive publications and be invited to any local presentations that arise as a result of the research.

- I understand that I may withdraw permission for the school to participate in this research at any time, without giving a reason.

I agree to the participation of this school, the five-year-old children and the Year One teacher in the research project.

(please circle one)

YES NO

Principal's name: _____

Principal's signature: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

ON _____ 2015, FOR 3 YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER _____

APPENDIX THREE

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

(approx. one hour)

Interview Questions

Background and Experience

1. (a) For how many years have you taught?

   (b) At what class levels?

   (c) At what schools?

2. Were you trained in New Zealand? Where?

3. Do you have a position of responsibility within the school?

4. For how long have you taught new entrants?

5. Did you choose to teach at this year level?

   (If not – how were you selected?)

6. What is the composition of your class? (i.e New entrant students only?)

7. How many children are currently in your class?

8. What preparation or support did you have or were you given for working with new entrants?

9. What preparation or support would you have liked to have had?

Current Experience

1. What support do you currently receive for teaching new entrants?

2. What or who has been a major influence on your teaching of literacy?

3. What or who has influenced your thinking and understanding about children's' literacy learning?

Literacy Learning and Teaching

1. How do you set up your classroom physically for literacy learning and teaching?

2. How do you organise your literacy learning and teaching time?

3. How long do you typically have for literacy instruction?

4. What challenges do you encounter when organising for literacy learning and teaching?

5. When do you start using guided reading with new entrants? Why?

6. Do you access any professional teacher resources for support with guided reading? If so, what?

7. How do you organise groups for guided reading?
8. How many Guided reading groups would you typically have?
9. How would you describe a typical guided reading lesson in your classroom?
10. What would you say is the primary purpose for your Guided reading lessons?
11. How long might a typical Guided lesson take?
12. How many days per week would you meet each group for Guided reading?
13. What texts do you use for beginning guided reading and why?
14. What sorts of teaching decisions might you make during a guided reading lesson?
15. What influences your decisions to move children to the next book level? What would you say was a sign of progress?
16. While you are taking a Guided reading lesson what are the other children doing?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share?

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