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**Exploring the beliefs and practices of first year teachers of
literacy
in New Zealand primary schools.**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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at
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Abstract

The teaching of literacy presents ongoing and complex challenges for first-year teachers at the primary level as they strive to address the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of their students, the requirements of educational policy and the demands of national assessment regimes. This journey is further complicated by the need to develop pedagogy that promotes discerning use of complex multimodal texts, both print and digital, in order to prepare students for the multiliterate demands of current and future societies.

This doctoral thesis provides an in-depth exploration of the journeys of nine beginning teachers as they develop and establish their teaching of literacy practices during their first year of teaching in New Zealand primary classrooms. The participants had all completed the same three-year Bachelor of Teaching degree and secured positions in a diverse range of New Zealand schools. They were fully responsible for the literacy learning of their students in relation to planning, teaching and assessment, while working towards full registration.

The study sought to explore how the beliefs and practices of these beginning teachers of literacy changed over the year, and how these were influenced by their initial teacher education programme and the support they received from within the school community. Using interpretive case-study methodology, qualitative data were collected throughout the year, using a combination of semi-structured interviews, digital surveys and observations of guided reading. Video footage from the observations provided the foundation for subsequent participant theorising of their teaching. Participants discussed their beliefs and evolving literacy practices in relation to a range of factors including their pre-service preparation, the mentoring support provided within their schools, the demands of national standards assessment, the socio-cultural backgrounds of their students and the integration of digital technologies. Based on an analysis of the data, involving a co-construction of meaning between the words of the participants and researcher interpretation, I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the beliefs and practices of each participant as these developed within his/her individual school context. My

interpretation of these data was informed by my own background as an initial teacher education and former classroom teacher.

Findings suggest that an effective theory-practice balance within initial teacher education programmes, and alignment between literacy education papers and classroom practice, eases the transition into the classroom and enables the successful establishment of initial literacy programmes. As the year progressed, participants' teaching became more attuned to student needs and more explicit in nature. Professional conversations with more experienced others were found to be essential to facilitate a reflective stance and further developments in teaching.

Findings also revealed that while participants were aware of the broad nature of literacy, their reflections on teaching focused predominantly on the teaching of reading and writing. There were strong indications that this was in part conditioned by the national assessment policy mandated at the time of the study.

This study has implications for schools in relation to their selection of mentors for beginning teachers and their organisation of ongoing professional learning. The study recommends that both pre-service educators and schools place greater emphasis on literacy across the curriculum, and provide more support for working with the increasingly diverse range of text forms and using of critical literacy approaches.

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This doctoral journey was undertaken during a period of significant change in the Faculty of Education here at the University of Waikato. While these changes have impacted on the writing of this thesis, a number of valued colleagues have also moved on, most importantly my three supervisors: Professor Terry Locke, Dr Amanda Bateman and Associate Professor Beverley Bell. Firstly to Terry, I am extremely grateful to you for stepping in when Beverley retired. I have learned much about the writing process from your thorough critique and conversation. Thank you Mandy for your ongoing encouragement and constructive feedback, most recently from further afield in Wales. To Beverley, my thanks for convincing me that I had a story to tell and for providing the initial scaffolding when designing the project.

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Chapter One

Introduction

As a beginning teacher I thought I would have all the support in the world, but it has turned out to be that you have to do a lot on your own. By doing so much on your own, you never know if what you are doing is right or wrong in the classroom, and in the development of your children's learning. (Monique, survey 1)

1.1 Introduction

As long ago as 1986, Goodman described empowered teachers as those who:

Carefully consider the content of what is taught to children, are active in developing original curriculum based on their own and/or their pupils' interests, and are able to creatively use materials, personal talents and innovative resources in planning and implementing learning activities (Goodman, 1986, p. 2, as cited in Kuzmic, 1994, p.16)

These attributes are still relevant in today's educational settings, although I would also add 'and learning needs' after 'pupils' interests'. Given that research suggests the quality of teaching accounts for up to 59% variance in student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003), developing such teacher attributes as those signaled in Goodman's quote is of critical importance. So how does Monique, as a year-one teacher, move along the continuum from this position of feeling unsupported and lacking in confidence after her first ten weeks of teaching, to one of empowerment where she can confidently engage her students in learning and successfully manage student achievement? In addition, what support will she be given to facilitate this journey?

Questions such as these prompted my interest, as an initial teacher educator, in the transition that our pre-service teachers make, as they move from their initial teacher education (ITE) programme into the classroom. I wondered how relevant the content of our literacy education papers was. Were we equipping pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement successful classroom programmes? Did they have sufficient knowledge to address the learning needs of their students, for whom they had full responsibility? And, how were they supported by their school community as they developed their teaching of literacy?

This chapter shares something of my own experiences as both teacher and teacher educator, especially those that have contributed to my research interest. Next, an introduction to the New Zealand (NZ) context is provided to inform the study. This is followed by a rationale for the research and a presentation of the research questions. An outline of the structure of the thesis concludes the chapter.

1.2 My journey

My interest in this topic stems from various experiences and a number of roles undertaken throughout my career in education. Before taking up a position in initial teacher education as a literacy education lecturer, I taught in a variety of NZ primary schools for over 15 years. During this time I assumed the roles of tutor teacher (the term for the designated mentor for a beginning teacher in NZ schools) and associate teacher (practicum mentor) to support a number of pre-service and first-year teachers. The teaching of literacy has always been a passion of mine, and while supporting these teachers, I attempted to share this passion and to assist them in making connections from the content of their ITE programme to the realities of the classroom. I also supported children through the Reading Recovery programme for a number of years and valued this involvement as a way of developing depth in my knowledge of the reading process to inform my classroom teaching.

In 2002, the opportunity arose to teach in the primary teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. I enjoyed the shift to the tertiary level, the chance to share my knowledge and passion for teaching literacy, and the time to reconnect with literacy theory. As literacy lecturer, I have taught the three compulsory literacy education papers in the primary teacher education programme, through both online and face-to-face modes of delivery. I have also worked alongside these pre-service teachers in schools, in the roles of both liaison and evaluative lecturer during practicums; ensuring requirements are understood by both pre-service and mentor teachers, observing teaching, and providing constructive feedback.

This involvement in liaison and evaluative work has enabled me to observe the emerging competence of pre-service teachers in the classroom, and the challenges that sometimes occur when there is a mismatch between the literacy pedagogy observed in the classroom and the understandings developed during university

papers. My involvement in related, collaborative research projects has further sparked my interest in the topic. These have included investigation of pre-service teacher understandings of curriculum (Bailey, Blakeney-Williams, Carss, Cowie, Hawera, & Taylor, 2010; Bailey, Blakeney-Williams, Carss, Edwards, Hawera, & Taylor, 2011), and tracking of the ways in which repeated visiting by the same lecturer supports students during school-based practica (Ussher & Carss, 2014).

In addition to these projects, my interest in investigating teachers' development in relation to the theorising of literacy was heightened through my role as President of the New Zealand Reading Association (2008-2012, now the New Zealand Literacy Association [NZLA]) and Chairperson of the International Development in Oceania Committee (IDOC), a standing committee of the International Literacy Association charged with promoting professional development among teachers in the Oceania region. These opportunities enabled me to work alongside teachers from a range of backgrounds and levels of experience throughout the Pacific region, supporting both leadership and professional learning relating to the teaching of literacy. Working with both pre-service and qualified teachers across this diverse range of settings has heightened my interest in the transition between the two contexts.

1.3 Becoming a teacher in the New Zealand context

Students attend New Zealand primary schools between the ages of five and twelve years. Class levels during this time are labelled from years 1-8. Years 9-13 are the concern of secondary schools. As students progress through the year levels, they also move through the levels of the New Zealand Curriculum as indicated in Figure 1.1. Years 1-3 are typically classified as juniors, years 4-6 as middle school, and years 7 and 8 as seniors. The class levels involved in my study ranged from year 1 to year 5. The curriculum levels indicate where students would typically be working in relation to their year level; this is not the case for all students, as indicated by the fading at each end of the curriculum bands.

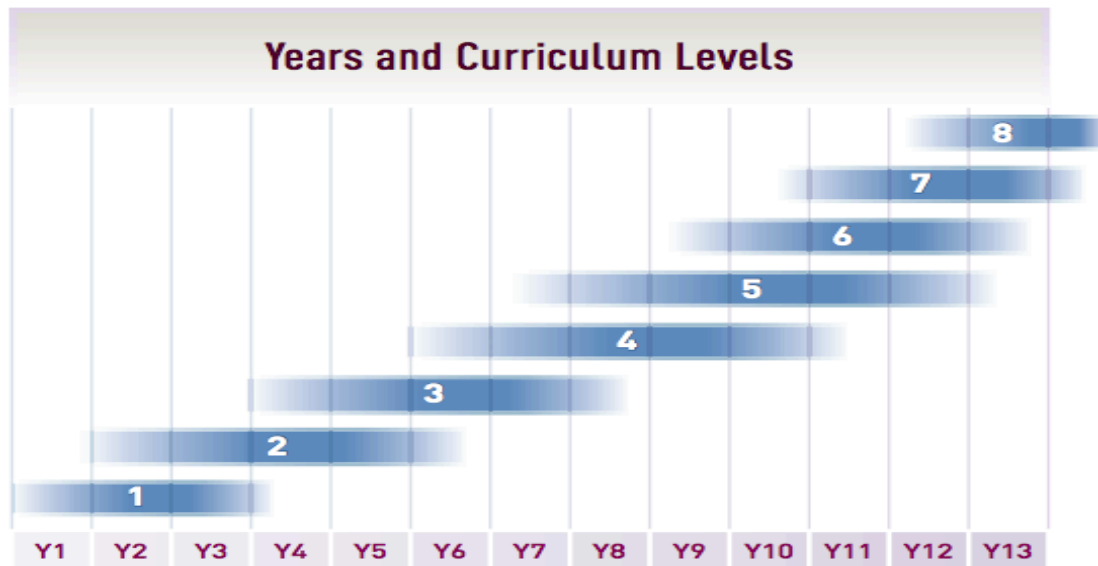


Figure 1: New Zealand Curriculum year levels and curriculum levels
(Sourced from Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 45)

The *New Zealand curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1 – 13* (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2007) is ‘a statement of official policy relating to teaching and learning in English-medium schools’ (p. 6). It includes an overarching vision statement that students will become ‘confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners’ (p. 7). Besides its articulation of principles and values the document also indicates five key competencies:

- thinking
- using language, symbols and text
- managing self
- relating to others
- participating and contributing.

These competencies are viewed as requirements to ‘live, learn, work, and contribute as active members of society’ (p. 12). Rather than stand-alone competencies, however, they are seen as underpinning the learning in each of eight areas (English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences and technology). Each learning area contains achievement objectives that provide foci for learning across the eight curriculum levels. The English learning area statement affirms that literacy in English is

essential and that students should understand, use and create oral, written, and visual texts of increasing complexity. The learning area is structured around two interconnected strands: making meaning of ideas or information through listening, reading and viewing; and creating meaning through speaking, writing and presenting. Each level of the curriculum involves level-referenced achievement objectives which are underpinned by processes and strategies. Students are expected to ‘develop knowledge, skills and understandings related to:

- Text purposes and audiences
- Ideas within language contexts
- Language features that enhance texts
- The structure and organisation of texts’ (MOE, 2007, p. 18).

In addition to the English learning area statement in *The New Zealand curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1 – 13* [NZC] (MOE, 2007) the Ministry of Education provided guidance for the teaching of literacy through the provision of curriculum support documents and handbooks. Currently two handbooks, *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 [ELP 1-4]* (MOE, 2003) and *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 [ELP 5-8]* (MOE, 2006), support the teaching of reading and writing in primary classrooms. In recent years much of the content from these handbooks has been duplicated in the *Literacy Online* website, allowing teachers to access relevant material electronically.

The Ministry of Education also produced two curriculum-companion documents *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1-8* (MOE, 2009c) and *The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the reading and writing demands of the curriculum* (MOE, 2010). These documents were aligned with curriculum levels and provided illustrations of expected levels of achievement. Along with the curriculum document, these support materials will be critiqued in chapter three.

Those wishing to teach in New Zealand primary schools typically complete either a three-year teaching degree, or a one-year graduate or postgraduate qualification, before securing a teaching position. To maintain consistency across initial teacher education programmes, graduates must meet the set of criteria laid down in the *Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand* (New Zealand Teachers

Council [NZTC], 2007, now renamed the Education Council), before applying for provisional registration to teach in a New Zealand school. Provisionally registered teachers then work towards full registration over a two-year period of employment, during which time they are fully responsible for the learning of children in their classes. Concurrently, they participate in a supervised and structured induction programme managed by the principal and staff of their school. This process involves the appointment of an experienced teacher within the school to act as ‘mentor’ or ‘tutor teacher’ as he/she is commonly termed. The induction programme involves mentoring, professional development, observation and focused feedback as the beginning teacher works towards the standards for full registration (Ministry of Education [MOE] & NZTC, 2011).

1.4 The rationale for the study

From my initial queries at the outset of the chapter, regarding the transition from ITE into the classroom, and consideration of the nature of the New Zealand educational context for our beginning teachers, justification for the study can be made. First, it is of critical importance that ITE providers are aware of the extent to which their programmes are preparing pre-service teachers for the realities of the classroom. As Adoniou (2013) noted in her study of 14 beginning teachers in Australian schools, we typically receive student feedback through some sort of teaching appraisal at the conclusion of our papers. Such appraisals critique such factors as teaching style, the degree of support offered and the value of assignments. From my experience, current online systems generate a low response rate. Apart from anecdotal feedback, from past students and colleagues, there are few avenues through which to ascertain graduated students’ reflections on the relevance and support provided by the theoretical and practical components of our degree programme. The research literature indicates a common divide between the theory of ITE programmes and classroom practice (e.g., Allen, 2009; Bainbridge & Macy, 2008; Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009; Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Pomerantz & Condie, 2017; Roness, 2011). Clark, Jones, Reutzler and Andreasen (2013) claim that while there is research relating to the content of ITE programmes and research following beginning teachers through their first few years of teaching, there is limited research examining the extent to which what is taught actually

appears in classroom programmes. They indicate the need for further exploration of the transition from ITE programmes into the classroom.

Local research around the two-year period of provisional registration for beginning teachers appears to maintain a general focus on the transition from student teacher to classroom teacher, and progression and support during this registration period (Anthony & Kane, 2008; Berger, Cameron & Lovett, 2007; Cameron, 2009; Grudnoff, 2007; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003, 2005; Lang, 2001; Langdon, 2007, 2011; Lovett & Cameron, 2011). Other researchers narrow their focus to investigate beginning teacher experiences within specific areas, such as digital technologies (Elliot, 2011; Starkey, 2010), science (Taylor, 2001) and mathematics (Thomson, 2006).

My literature searches have failed to locate significant studies within the New Zealand context investigating beginning teachers and their teaching of the critical area of literacy. The exception was an unpublished Masters thesis with a narrow focus on the evolution of the junior-class guided reading programmes of three beginning teachers (Buckley-Foster, 2006).

I viewed research in this area as essential, given the strong focus conveyed in the New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) on literacy across the learning areas. This document asserts that since 'language is central to learning and English is the medium for most learning in the New Zealand Curriculum, the importance of literacy in English cannot be overstated' (p. 16). Pre-service teachers need to understand that literacy is not an isolated curriculum area, but one that facilitates learning throughout the curriculum.

The investigation I report on here followed beginning primary teachers through the first year of the two-year period of provisional registration, as they developed a range of teaching practices relating to the teaching of literacy. The investigation aimed to generate findings of potential interest to a variety of stakeholders involved in the preparation of teachers to teach literacy in New Zealand schools. I noted above, the need for those involved in initial teacher education programmes to consider the extent to which their paper content informs the teaching practices of beginning teachers. I saw this study as generating findings with relevance for those planning for and teaching literacy education at the ITE level. The study also aimed

to contribute to the field of research relating to the mentoring of beginning teachers (BTs), with implications for principals and other personnel involved in the selection of tutor teachers and the provision of ongoing support. I also imagined pre-service teachers considering the findings useful as they transitioned into the provisionally registered phase of their careers.

This qualitative study employed case study methodology and took an interpretive approach in exploring the experiences, and changing beliefs and practices of beginning teachers. The following research questions framed the inquiry:

- How did the ITE programme impact on the views of the beginning teachers about teaching and learning literacy?
- How do the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during the first year of teaching?
- What influences within the school environment appear to contribute to these changes?

In relation to the second question the following were seen as being of particular interest:

- The ways in which beginning teachers support their students in becoming literate to make meaning of ideas or information they receive and to create meaning for themselves and others.
- The ways in which they acknowledge, integrate and build on the home literacy practices and socio-cultural backgrounds of their students.
- The ways in which they integrate digital technologies into their teaching of literacy.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters. This initial chapter has introduced the topic of the research and provided the reader with an overview of the New Zealand context within which the research was set. My interest in the topic and the rationale for the study are detailed here, along with the research questions.

Chapter two reviews literature associated with each of the research questions. It begins with a critical review of literature on the theory of literacy and the practices

associated with teaching it. Subsequently, I review and critique literature relating to professional identity and communities of practice, followed by an examination of research relating to beginning teachers of literacy. Given the broad research focus and the limitations of thesis length, this review is highly selective.

Chapter three offers an interpretation of the New Zealand research context. It includes a critical examination of the Ministry of Education's English learning area statement and support materials designed to provide guidance for teachers in New Zealand primary classrooms. More specifically, it also allows the reader an overview of the content of the three literacy education papers which research participants undertook as part of their pre-service programme.

Chapter four explains the research methodology and design. The context for the research is described along with the way participants were selected. Methods used to manage and analyse data are explained, along with ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the research.

Chapters five, six and seven present findings based on a thematic analysis of the data. Chapter five explores findings based on initial interviews and discussions surrounding the videoed observations of participants teaching guided reading. Chapter six relates specifically to data from the four online surveys, and chapter seven concentrates on findings that emerged from the final interviews.

Chapter eight discusses the three research questions and considers the findings in relation to the research literature reviewed in chapter two. The views of the beginning teachers in relation to the impact of the content from their ITE papers and practicum experiences are discussed initially, followed by a mapping of trends in teaching practices over the course of the year. Finally, the various ways in which these beginning teachers were supported by their school communities is considered with reference to the literature.

Chapter nine considers the contribution of this study to research related to beginning teachers and their teaching of literacy, and the implications for ITE providers, schools and those involved in developing national policy. The chapter includes reflections on the research process and the limitations of the study. In closing, recommendations for further research are outlined.

Chapter Two

Review of the literature

2.1 Introduction

This review provides an overview of a range of literature pertaining to the focus of this investigation. It provides both a summary and synthesis of New Zealand and international research relating to the key areas of interest and sets the foundation to enable interpretation of the research questions. Where particular concepts are open to interpretation, the alternatives are explored and parameters set for this particular project. The evaluation and analysis of this material enables an identification of gaps in the research literature and thus a justification for the study.

An investigation of the various definitions of literacy forms the basis of the first section following this introduction, providing an essential introduction to my own research which is located in New Zealand primary classrooms. The shift from a traditional cognitive focus on the nature of literacy to more recent socio-cultural definitions is illustrated. Section three reviews literature relating to what is considered effective literacy pedagogy, including two key factors integral to current literacy teaching: the integration of digital literacies; and acknowledging of and providing for social and cultural diversity. In section four, the notion of professional identity is explored to inform consideration of the transition from initial teacher education programmes into the classroom, particularly in relation to the development of agency and the influence of the context within which these pre-service teachers work. This is connected to section five which presents a review of the literature relating to communities of practice and the role of the school community and mentoring programmes. The review relates closely to the focus of the study's investigation. These sections are sequenced with the following headings:

- The shifting nature of literacy
- Effective literacy pedagogy
- Becoming a teacher of literacy
- Beginning teachers and the influence of the school community.
- Conclusion

2.2 The shifting nature of literacy

In order to investigate the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy it is necessary to illustrate, through reference to the literature, the shifting nature of the concept of literacy, and to outline theoretical frameworks that support analysis of literate practices. The concept of literacy has been discussed and debated within the literature for many years as technological advances escalate, and must be theorised in establishing the focus of this research project (Raison, 2007). During an oral presentation at the 2012 Australian Literacy Educators' Association conference in Sydney, Donald Leu, Professor of Education at the University of Connecticut and director of the New Literacies Research Lab, stated that "rapid, disruptive changes to literacy are happening all around us. Never before has a generation lived through such a period of profound change to literacy, learning, and life" (slide 4). Prior to consideration of the impact of this accelerated change on literacy pedagogy, I will review literature demonstrating the various interpretations of what constitutes literacy.

2.2.1 Literacy as a set of skills

In simple terms, the notion of being literate can be viewed as being able to utilise the particular set of skills required to enable learning and communication within one's current social setting. During the early part of the Twentieth Century it was considered by society to be sufficient, after a period of formal prescriptive teaching, for students to leave school being able to carry out 'the basics' which included accurate spelling, legible handwriting, and fluent oral reading (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Price, 2000; Wilson, 1997). This emphasis on literacy as skills-based was challenged by a number of educators, including New Zealand teacher Sylvia Ashton-Warner, who advocated for an organic perspective whereby literacy skills are developed through building on the child's own experiences and natural language. The Language Experience approach allowed the development of the child's own 'organic' texts rather than those foreign to the context of the learner. Ashton-Warner's (1963) work marks an early forerunner to the view of literacy as social practice (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016).

Acknowledgement of the importance of the prior knowledge and experience of the individual student received further attention during the 1970s and 1980s from

cognitive psychologists and psycholinguists such as Goodman (1967) and Clay (1972). Goodman states:

It [reading] involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. (p. 127)

This attention to the interaction of the reader's semantic information, knowledge of the structure of language, as well as visual grapho-phonetic knowledge, contested earlier theories of reading as a precise process of articulating words using associated sounds and letter shapes. Concurrently, Donald Graves was promoting 'process writing' as a creative activity whereby students wrote regularly, managed topic selection and, with teacher scaffolding, became part of a community of writers (Smith & Elley, 1997). These theoretical perspectives, classed by some as 'top down' or meaning-driven, fueled the ongoing debate between phonics and whole language approaches to teaching literacy (Baumann, Hoffman, Moon & Duffy-Hester, 1998, Manzo & Manzo, 1993). They also heralded a shift in focus to a view of literacy as a social practice.

2.2.2 Literacy as social practice

The concept of literacy as a social practice evolved as researchers undertook multidisciplinary studies within the domains of sociology, sociolinguistics and developmental psychology (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Frankel, Becker, Rowe, & Pearson, 2016; Perry, 2012). Literacy became viewed as socially and culturally constructed by the ways in which meaning is communicated within particular contexts and by virtue of the value placed on particular forms of communication (genres) by the discourses operating (Kalantzis, Cope, & Cloonan, 2010; Luke & Freebody, 1999). This sociocultural perspective, underpinning much of the literature, suggests that individuals develop knowledge and skills, not just through what occurs cognitively, but through interactions within the context of their particular family and community, and with the 'cultural tools' provided by the setting (Wertsch, 2002). Their learning is shaped by these interactions and by the accompanying language, culture and social practices of the group (Bell, 2011; Gee, 1990; McNaughton, 2002).

In reviewing literature conceptualising this paradigm, a complex range of subcategories with theoretical perspectives emerges, including multiliteracies, critical literacy, new literacies and digital literacies (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Perry, 2012; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011). To facilitate interpretation of the literacy pedagogy developed by the beginning teachers in this study, consideration of these perspectives is essential.

The work of researchers such as Street (1984) and Heath (1983) laid the foundation for a focus on literacy as a social practice by demonstrating the close link between literacy practices and the socio-cultural contexts within which they are embedded. In broad terms, in addition to the necessary cognitive skills, participants require a degree of context-dependent or cultural knowledge to actively engage in the literate practices associated with that context (Perry, 2012). Gee's (1990) often-cited example of the need for the appropriate words and actions, or discourse, to socialise in conversation with the bikers in a biker bar, exemplifies this. It follows that if literate practices are context-dependent then one masters a range of purposeful literate practices or multiple literacies according to the social context and purpose at hand. These practices evolve over time dependent on purpose and context or 'domains of activity'. Barton and Hamilton (2000) elaborate on the nature of literacy as social practice through the following six propositions:

- Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
- Literacy is historically situated.
- Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of information learning and sense making (p. 8).

While these propositions indicate the fluid nature of literacy and signal the importance of associated values and relationships, it appears evident that the authors are focusing on written forms of literacy, and the interrelationships between written and oral codes of language. Reference is made in passing to the importance of the interaction between semiotic systems, but these are not explicitly acknowledged as essential components of literacy practices.

More recently, but in a similar vane, Frankel et al. (2016), in reconsidering definitions of reading from 1985, define the social practice of literacy as:

The process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal text in the context of socially situated practices (p. 7).

This focus on practices associated with print and oral literacy fails to acknowledge the multiple forms of meaning-making afforded through the use of more complex combinations of language modes (Perry, 2012; Sandretto & Klenner, 2011). Researchers involved in the New London Group (1996) sought to extend the concept of literacy as social practice to address such shortcomings.

2.2.3 A multiliteracies perspective

The New London Group (1996), an international collective of ten literacy educators, coined the term multiliteracies as a way of explaining the increasingly complex nature of literacy resulting from globalisation, growing social and cultural diversity in educational settings, and the rapid development of digital technologies. In explaining this focus, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) drew attention to:

the big picture; the changing world and the new demands being placed upon people as makers of meaning in changing workplaces, as citizens in changing public spaces and in the changing dimensions of our community lives – our lifeworlds. (p. 4)

These factors were impacting on the range and nature of ways in which an individual was required to communicate; consequently the term arose as a way of acknowledging these multiple literate practices (Anstey, 2009; Anstey & Bull, 2006; Kalantzis, Cope & Cloonan, 2010; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Sandretto & Klenner, 2011). This perspective implies that traditional print-based literacy is no longer sufficient and therefore literacy pedagogy must adapt to comply. Rowsell and

Walsh (2011) suggest that a multiliteracies focus is dominated by digital technology, “Multiliteracies scholars claim that the screen governs our understanding of the world” (p. 56). However, although the emergence of the multiliteracies perspective is in part a response to the rapid development of digital technologies, the concept is more inclusive and involves understanding of social and cultural diversity, awareness of text purpose and audience, and the development of “a repertoire of literate knowledge and practices” (Anstey, 2009, p. 8). Anstey argues that flexibility to adapt to change and the ability to be critical and creative thinkers are also essential multiliterate behaviours.

In contrast with social literacy theory focusing on print literacy, and a heightened focus on multiple ways of communicating, the term multimodality gained traction in association with multiliteracies pedagogy. While not a new concept, given that texts have traditionally included visual and linguistic modes, the emphasis on multimodality indicates that texts may involve any combination of audio, gestural, visual, spatial and linguistic semiotic systems (Anstey, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2000).

2.2.4 Critical literacy

Inherent within the research around multiliteracies lies consideration of the relationships of power within social contexts. Paulo Freire refers to this as reading the word and the world and contends that reading “always involves critical perception, interpretation and rewriting of what is said” (Freire & Macedo, 1989, p.36). The need for this critical consciousness, or critical literacy, is seen as a key component in navigating a multiliteracies landscape (Sandretto & Klenner, 2011; Sandretto & Tilson, 2014). Critical literacy is more than just critical thinking. Knobel and Healy (1998, cited in Sandretto & Klenner, 2011, p. 13) explain critical literacy as “the analysis and critique of relationships among language, power, social groups and social practices” (p. 8). Consumers of text at a critical level are involved in mining and undermining the positions and perspectives being offered and reflecting on the implications for themselves in their particular social context. While there are many interpretations of critical literacy, for the purposes of this project, the dimensions of critical literacy considered important by Sandretto and the Critical Literacy Research Team (2006), will be adopted:

- texts are social constructions;
- texts are not neutral;
- authors draw upon particular discourses (often majority discourses) and assume that readers will be able to draw upon them as well;
- authors make certain conscious and unconscious choices when constructing texts;
- which means that all texts have gaps, or silences, and particular representations within them; and,
- that texts then have consequences for how we make sense of ourselves, others and the world. (pp. 23-24)

These key understandings were developed by the team after examination of the research around critical literacy, intensive discussion and critique of observed guided reading lessons. They provide the classroom teacher with the terminology from which to develop their teaching of critical literacy.

2.2.5 Disciplinary literacies

The multiliteracies focus on literate practice within a range of domain-specific contexts, heightened the awareness of particular literacy skills and content relevant to subject-related disciplines, and led to development of the term disciplinary literacies. Moje (2015) defines disciplinary literacies as “the specialised literacy practices of a given disciplinary domain, such as mathematics, or history, or visual art” (p. 256) within particular disciplines. While focusing on adolescent learners, she suggests the development of disciplinary literacy practice is “a human, social construction, rather than merely the learning of discrete skills” (p. 255). She posits a teaching heuristic labelled ‘the four Es’ (p. 260). Teachers are prompted to engage their students with the disciplinary context, elicit existing knowledge and skills and engineer experiences within the context. The establishment of such inquiry allows for examination and evaluation of the disciplinary language within meaningful contexts.

In related New Zealand literature, the term ‘curriculum literacies’ is evident, rather than ‘disciplinary literacies’ (Limbrick & Aikman, 2005; Sandretto & Tilson, 2014, 2016), so for the purposes of this study both terms are considered similar. Sandretto and Tilson (2014) claim that “all teachers are teachers of curriculum literacies” (p.

55) and that the teaching of literacy should be contextualised, promoting examination of specific repertoires of practices, rather than teaching literacy in isolation. Primary-level teachers should therefore be involved in linking the teaching of literacy to curriculum content and inducting students into the age-specific aspects of curriculum domains.

2.2.6 The Four Resources model

In response to the increasing complexity of the nature of literacy and an increase in the diversity of approaches claiming to solve literacy issues, Peter Freebody and Allan Luke developed the Four Resources model in 1990. Their aim was to provide a framework for the broad repertoire of practices required of a literate person in order to access and use multimodal texts in today's society (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke & Freebody, 1999). These four roles, or sets of practices as they were later termed, are seen as being interconnected. No one set is able to operate in isolation and there is no reference to a developmental continuum (Figure 2). To become functionally literate, Freebody and Luke propose one must adopt the practices of:

- Code Breaker: Able to recognise and use the codes of text;
- Text Participant: Able to draw on knowledge of the text and one's own knowledge to create meaning;
- Text User: Able to understand the different cultural and social functions of texts and their associated conventions;
- Text Analyst: Able to critically consider the construction of texts, that they may represent particular views and silence others.

Freebody and Luke (2003) describe their model as “a systematic way of interrogating practice” (p. 57). The framework draws together theoretical perspectives outlined earlier in this review; the cognitive focus on decoding text (code breaker), the focus on literacy as a social practice (text participant and text user), and critical literacy (text analyst). While originally the focus of the model appeared to target printed text and written language, as time progressed it became evident that it could equally accommodate textual practices in a multiliteracies environment. The versatility of the heuristic, in that it can be applied to the use of single language modes or to combinations of modes is a definite strength.

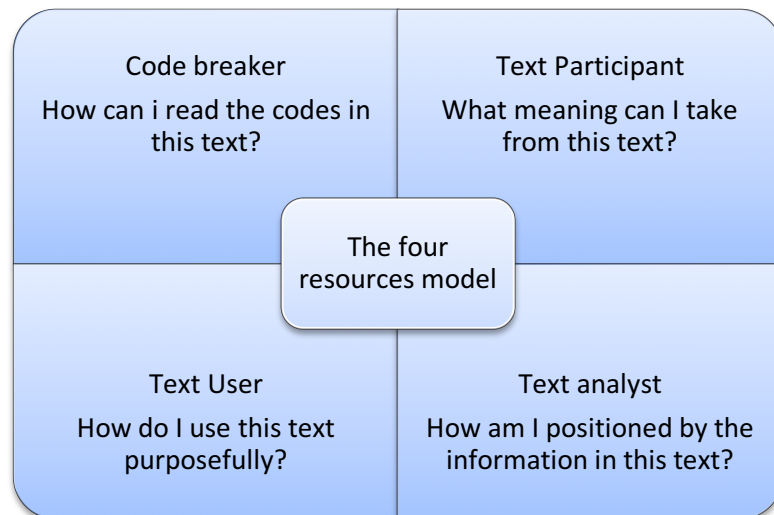


Figure 2: The Four Resources model (Luke & Freebody, 2003)

While designed in response to scepticism around the increase in ‘magic bullets’ designed to remedy literacy problems, Locke (2010) considers it ironic that the model was treated as such to a degree. It has been utilised to inform proposals for curriculum reform, to critique practices associated with literacy teaching and as a theoretical framework to develop teacher content knowledge and pedagogy (Education Queensland, 2000; Freebody, 1992; Serafini, 2012). The Four Resources model has had a significant impact on literacy education in many parts of Australia and is widely referenced in the literature (Anstey, 2009; Anstey & Bull, 2006; de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Honan, 2004; Ludwig, 2003; Sandretto & Klenner, 2011; Serafini, 2012). Honan (2004) encouraged teachers to plot existing teaching practices for teaching reading against the framework. Results enabled participants to note the dominant focus on code breaking and the lack of support for developing the role of text analyst. It has been utilised in New Zealand by McDowall (2011) to map literacy teaching and learning in projects carried out by nine e-fellows (educators awarded a year’s fellowship to explore innovative practice), and by Sandretto & Tilson (2014; 2016) as a framework to enact a future-focused literacy programme. In the United States, Kurumada (2010) also applied the model when tracking three beginning teachers from an alternative initial teacher education programme into their first year of teaching.

Given the strength of the model for mapping a range of literate practices involving multimodal texts, I have used it as part of the conceptual framework to analyse the

teaching practices of the beginning teachers in this project, and as a lens for critiquing both the construction of literacy in the New Zealand curriculum and the Ministry-produced literacy support materials for teachers (see Chapter 3).

So far in this review, I have provided the context for the proposed study in terms of conceptualising literacy as multiliteracies and highlighting the significance of socio-cultural determination of the concept. A major theme in the review is that those charged with teaching literacy are challenged to work with the diverse literate practices their students bring to the classroom, to integrate digital technologies, and to develop multiliterate students competent in creating and making meaning from increasingly complex multimodal texts.

In order to investigate how beginning teachers work within this context, an examination of the literature relating to effective literacy pedagogy is essential. The following section firstly provides a broad overview of this area, followed by a more specific focus on research relating to socio-cultural considerations, oral and written language, and finally the integration of digital technologies to support the teaching of literacy.

2.3 Effective literacy pedagogy

In the opening chapter of *Planting Seeds: Embedding critical literacy into your classroom programme*, Sandretto (2011) provides a vignette involving her four children during a typical evening at home. Engrossed in a variety of digital and print activities including instant messaging, Skype, Facebook, research from library books to support participation in an online game, and internet research for a homework project, their activities reflect the socio-cultural nature of the community within which they live. They are, as Sandretto suggests, “firmly located within a multiliteracies environment” (p. 2).

Given the complexity of literate practices enacted within scenarios such as this, the challenge for teachers involves supporting students to become critical and creative participants, able to access the range of literate practices required to interact in a range of settings within their wider socio-cultural environment. As noted previously in discussing the development of the Four Resources model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) there are no fail-proof recipes for teaching literacy. Each approach or programme has its merits in contributing to the development of particular skills and

strategies. However, as Luke (1998) claims, the question about what to teach involves consideration of “the kinds of literate cultures students are likely to encounter and how we have them design and redesign those cultures and their texts” (p. 306).

2.3.1 Literacy pedagogy: A social process

It is clear that social constructivism provides the theoretical lens for much of the literature relating to literacy pedagogy. The view inherent in this perspective is that learning is constructed through interaction with more experienced others in a social environment (Bell, 2011; Cullen, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1999). Learners observe and interact with these significant others and develop cognitive processes which they are able to use with support, but not yet independently. They are able to construct this new knowledge and integrate it with existing knowledge through scaffolded instruction within this ‘zone of proximal development’. New learning is gradually internalised within this supportive environment and moves from the ‘interpsychological’ plane (between individuals) to the ‘intrapsychological’ plane (within the individual) with the help of more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978).

To address the challenges for literacy educators outlined previously, Kalantzis et al. (2010) suggested the need for a ‘transformative pedagogy’ that acknowledges meaning-making as an active process that prepares students to adapt to future change and diversity. This is in contrast to pedagogical models, where learners are “passive recipients or at best agents of reproduction of received, sanctioned, and authoritative representational forms” (p. 72).

In addition to establishing the term multiliteracies, the New London Group (1996), convened by Kalantzis and Cope established a ‘Multiliteracies Pedagogy Framework’ designed to theorise the essential aspects of a teacher’s role in this complex environment. This framework consisted of:

- *Situated practice*: Planning is grounded in the knowledge, interests and needs of students.
- *Overt instruction*: Active intervention when and as needed, building on what is already known with necessary text and ICT knowledge to enable students to develop a metalanguage to talk about their learning.

- *Critical framing*: Inclusion of critical analysis of the social and cultural nature of texts, and their associated structures and features.
- *Transformed practice*: Working with students to demonstrate understanding of new practices through design and application in other contexts.

Australian researchers, among others, have adopted this framework in order to examine classroom literacy practice (Anstey, 2009; Anstey & Bull, 2006; Cloonan, 2011; Ryan, Scott & Walsh, 2010; Walsh, 2006, 2010). Ryan, Scott and Walsh stress the importance of the roles of overt instruction and critical framing. Their research involved a number of action research projects in classrooms and demonstrated that students quickly became engaged with the superficial aspects of new technologies, but had difficulty analysing associated texts at a more critical level in terms of purpose and audience.

As a result of considerable classroom research, Kalantzis & Cope (2005) reframed these initial four dimensions into what they considered ‘more immediately recognisable pedagogical acts or knowledge processes’ (Kalantzis et al, 2010, p. 73). These are designed to be used in combination and include:

- *Experiencing*: ‘Experiencing the known’, reflecting on one’s own experiences, perspectives and ways of representing the world, and immersion with new and meaningful situations and texts;
- *Conceptualising*: Processing knowledge, generalising, categorising, theorising. Becoming active ‘concept and theory-makers’;
- *Analysing*: Utilising critical reasoning, evaluation and analysis;
- *Applying*: Transferring previously gained knowledge and understanding into a new setting, testing validity. Innovation and creativity are included.

The authors suggest that this map of pedagogical moves may assist teachers to include a more transformative focus in their programmes, enabling students to become active and discerning users of multimodal texts. They also highlight the need to consider alternative pathways and forms of engagement for learning based on student strengths and interests.

A case study by Kalantzis et al. (2010) carried out in 2003, demonstrated the shifts made by an experienced teacher over an eight-month period, when explicit focus

was maintained on using the pedagogical map above and including a more multimodal focus in learning activities. There were positive outcomes in terms of teacher engagement with the theory, a more explicit focus on developing multimodality and increased student ownership of their learning. However, the teacher felt less prepared for explicit teaching of modes other than the linguistic (oral and written). The point is made that for many teachers, the teaching of multimodal literacies remains challenging, partly due to the constraints of literacy policy directives and partly due to a lack of relevant professional development (Kalantzis et al., 2010; Yelland, 2010). Cloonan (2011) reiterates these concerns in relation to the *Australian Curriculum: English statement* (ACARA, 2009-10, cited in Cloonan, p. 24) which includes a strong focus on the grammar of verbal texts but little support for teachers in developing a metalanguage relating to other modes. Working with three middle-school teachers, Cloonan found the transference from theory to practice presented a challenge that required support, exploration, critique and adaptation to develop the metalanguage to explore the five semiotic systems and their various permutations in multimodal texts.

Similar challenges exist for New Zealand teachers since education policy documents designed to support the teaching of literacy also have a predominant focus on written text (MOE, 2003, 2006, 2007). These documents will be critiqued in Chapter Three.

2.3.2 Socio-cultural considerations

The principles of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2007) suggest that consideration of inclusion, cultural diversity, and community engagement should ‘underpin all school decision making’ (p. 9). These principles, among others listed on page 9, reflect the socio-cultural framing of the NZC and should inform the design of school curriculum. As mentioned previously in this review (2.2.2), children’s life experiences contribute to the development of their literate identity. This development is shaped by the language, and social and cultural experiences that occur through interactions within their families and communities (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Bell, 2011; McNaughton, 2002).

The importance of acknowledging and building on these home literacy practices and establishing effective partnerships with students, parents and whanau is clearly

evident in the literature (Alton-Lee, 2003; Gee, 1990; Fletcher et al., 2009; Glynn, Berryman & Glynn, 2000; McNaughton, 2002; Wylie, Thompson & Lythe, 1999). Wylie et al. (1999) in presenting the third report of a longitudinal study following 523 children in the Wellington region of NZ, found that at age eight, there was a correlation between students whose parents had no school involvement and lower achievement levels in literacy, mathematics and communication skills. When interviewing Pasifika families and the teachers of their children, Fletcher et al. (2009) showed that achievement levels in reading were more likely to be enhanced by strong home-school partnerships with families and the acknowledgement and integration of values, languages and cultural knowledge.

Epstein et al. (2002) identified the teacher's facilitation of these partnerships as a significant factor. Epstein's framework of six major types of teacher involvement with families provides a means for categorizing such partnerships:

1. *Parenting*: Helping families to establish home support
2. *Communicating*: Designing interactive forms of communication about school programmes and student progress.
3. *Volunteering*: Organising parent help
4. *Learning at home*: Providing information to families to support school-related activities
5. *Decision making*: Developing parent leaders and representatives
6. *Collaborating with the community*: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to support student learning.

(Epstein, 2002, p. 14)

The need for these partnerships to be reciprocal is worthy of note and should include acknowledgement of home backgrounds and literacy practices, and shared understanding and vision in relation to student learning. It appears this is not always the case, as Warren and Young (2002) discovered in surveying 95 parents and conducting focus interviews to investigate partnerships supporting literacy and numeracy. Parents had a broader view of learning as occurring both inside and outside of school, while in comparison, teachers tended to view the role of the parents as supporting school-based learning only.

The socio-cultural nature of literacy has also long been evident in McNaughton's work with publications such as *Meeting of Minds* (2002) investigating the role of culture in teaching and learning, specifically in relation to literacy instruction and language acquisition. Concern with low achievement rates of Māori and Pasifika students, particularly in low decile schools has fueled much of his research. Lai, McNaughton, Amituanui-Toloa, Turner and Hsiao (2009) worked alongside teachers in seven decile-one schools in South Auckland over a three-year period. Findings demonstrate that through increased collaboration with researchers and colleagues, and basing effective instructional practices on collection, analysis and discussion of evidence, the achievement levels of culturally and linguistically diverse students can be raised.

The Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007) has also had considerable success in improving educational achievement levels of Māori students in mainstream New Zealand secondary schools over the last ten years, through the development of culturally responsive pedagogy. The project team suggests this is accomplished:

When educators create learning contexts within their classroom; where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes. (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 1)

In response to research concerning the perceived tapering off of reading achievement from years seven onwards, Parkhill, Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley and Bridges (2008) surveyed upper South Island schools with year 7 and 8 students, focusing in depth on five case-study schools. Their findings reinforced the view that "literacy learning, including reading, develops from within a social context and as such is viewed as a socio-cultural phenomenon" (Parkhill et al, 2008, p. 2). In addition to the importance of effective teaching strategies, researchers identified acknowledgement of the 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2009), students bring into the classroom as critical when selecting reading materials and other learning content at this level.

Overseas research suggests that such culturally responsive pedagogy is an area that beginning teachers find challenging. Deal and White (2005) tracked two teachers through their second year of teaching literacy and found that instructional decisions were strongly influenced by student needs and interests. However, they suggested such findings lacked substance as there was ‘cultural congruence’ (similar cultural and socio-economic backgrounds between teacher and pupils) and a shared educational philosophy between the teacher education programme and the school context. In comparison, Kurumada (2010) worked alongside three beginning teachers in a culturally and linguistically-diverse school in the United States. The participants found the context of the school challenged the theories and strategies they had gained from their pre-service programme and created tensions when planning and implementing learning experiences. They felt particularly underprepared for working with students with linguistic differences.

Brock, Moore and Parks (2007) monitored 23 pre-service teachers in US as they planned for and taught a series of literacy lessons for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds for one hour per week over a seven-week period. While participants were able to select appropriate instructional strategies and adapt content based on individual needs and backgrounds, there were varying degrees of success. Findings showed that the more academically able pre-service teachers were able to contextualize instruction more effectively than those less able, who often struggled to build effective relationships with the children in their care.

As Brock et al. (2007) suggest, these 3 studies raise issues around the degree to which initial teacher educators prepare beginning teachers to manage diversity and to consider students’ home literacy practices and interests when planning for and teaching literacy. Participants in the proposed project have undertaken a compulsory paper, *Working with cultural and linguistic diversity*, as part of their degree, and the three literacy education papers also attempt to integrate consideration of cultural and linguistic differences when considering effective literacy pedagogy (see Appendices 1-3).

Given the diverse nature of the student group in many NZ primary classrooms and the challenges referred to in this section, the ways in which the participants in the

proposed study responded to the home literacy practices and socio-cultural backgrounds of their students was an area of interest for this study.

2.3.3 The role of talk

The quote in the section above by Bishop et al. (2007) refers to successful learning as ‘interactive’ and ‘dialogic’ and to participants being connected to one another through a common vision. Socio-constructivist views of learning emphasise the central role of talk and much of the associated literature surveyed is underpinned by the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin (Barnes, 2008; Bell, 2011; Mercer & Dawes, 2014, Molinari & Mameli, 2010; Myhill, 2006). Vygotsky’s (1978) work highlights the importance of this dialogue in supporting cognitive development. As noted previously in 2.3.1, interaction with others within the ZPD is a critical feature of learning as appropriate scaffolding is provided according to the context for the task. Vygotsky illustrates this as follows:

Just as a mold gives shape to a substance, words can shape an activity into a structure. However, that structure may be changed or reshaped when children learn to use language in ways that to go beyond previous experiences when planning future action. (p. 28)

Participation in the social context allows the learner to internalise the new learning and develop cognitive understanding, through the complex interplay between thought and language. The significance of interaction can also be explained using Bakhtin’s perspective on the essential role of dialogue in developing understanding “where meanings are not fixed or absolute” (Hardman, 2008, p. 134). Bakhtin (1986) used the concept of ‘utterance’ to explain that meaning emerges when individuals communicate with the listener responding to the speaker: “Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another” (p. 99). Bakhtin termed this awareness between listener and speaker as ‘addressivity’ — “without it the utterance does not and cannot exist” (p. 99). Such interaction allows for co-construction of meaning, developed from the participants’ existing understanding. Translating these understandings into the classroom setting, the notion of dialogue is therefore dependent on reciprocal, informed, and purposeful communication between teacher and students, or between students (Edwards-Groves, Anstey & Bull, 2014; Myhill, Jones & Hopper, 2006).

Mercer and Dawes (2014), in reviewing the field of research into the nature of classroom talk, stated that interest in this field intensified during the 1970s and 1980s, when the advent of audio and video recording facilitated ease of transcription and review of conversations. As a result, teachers and researchers became more aware of the role of talk in supporting learning. Early research established that the most common whole-class interaction pattern between teacher and students involved an initiation question by the teacher (I), a response from the student (R) and feedback or evaluation by the teacher (F or E) (Mercer & Dawes, 2014; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). This three-phase pattern, known as IRF or IRE, often involving closed questions, is widely identified in the literature, and critiqued as a monologic teaching practice that prevents genuine conversation and fails to engage students (Cazden, 2001; Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Mercer & Dawes, 2008, 2014; Myhill, Jones & Hopper, 2006; Perrott, 1988). Teachers are often expecting pre-set answers during such sequences and students are therefore engaged in a process of GWITM (guess-what's-in-the-teachers-mind) (Perrott, 1988). This is often considered 'asymmetric discourse', a term developed by Barnes (1976, cited in Myhill et al., 2006, p. 54) to explain the nature of interaction where the teacher is in control and carrying out most of the talk.

Researchers found this type of talk a common feature of classroom interaction patterns during the late-1990s and into the early 2000s. Alexander (2008) reports on a comparative analysis of classroom discourse across five international sites. In classrooms in England the use of closed questions predominated, students focused on providing correct answers, and the teacher's feedback closed the exchange. Myhill (2006) found similar results when researching teacher use of the 15 minutes of whole-class teaching, implemented as a requirement of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in the United Kingdom (UK). Working over a two-and-a-half-year period, Myhill found this transmissive style was prevalent with the teacher dominating whole-class talk, while students rarely initiated talk sequences. Furthermore, questions tended to be more focused on curriculum delivery than on supporting students to develop greater understanding, and while learning goals were explicit and students could recite these, there often appeared little depth of understanding when researchers probed further. Myhill suggested teachers were "more concerned with talk for teaching than talk for learning" (p. 37). Comparable

findings of asymmetric discourse patterns predominate in other literature surveyed (Molinari & Mameli, 2010; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2004, and Kyriacou & Issitt, 2008, both cited in Mercer & Dawes, 2006).

In response to such findings, the research literature suggests a more symmetrical balance between teacher and student talk is required to support student understanding (Barnes, 2008; Cazden, 2008; Howe, 1992; Myhill, 2006). Barnes describes the use of exploratory talk as appropriate when new ideas are being developed. He notes such patterns of talk, often between students, are often hesitant and incomplete as speakers sort out their thinking and attempt “to arrange information and ideas into different patterns” (p. 5). Mercer and Dawes (2008) elaborate on the benefits of exploratory talk through citing value for small group investigation of ideas and problem-solving. Small-group talk and co-operative strategies such as Think-Pair-Share have been shown to enhance thinking (Carss, 2007; Howe, 1992), by allowing greater student investment in the conversation. However, Edwards-Groves and Davidson (2017) also caution that student thinking may not be challenged at the same level as when talking with the teacher.

Alternatively, the literature presents a more recent focus on dialogic talk or dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2008; Barnes, 2008; Edwards-Groves & Davidson, 2017; Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Myhill, Jones & Hopper, 2006). Alexander’s (2008) report details positive findings from the use of dialogic teaching in the UK and suggests that it “provides the best chance for children to develop the diverse learning talk repertoire on which different kinds of thinking and understanding are predicated” (p. 105). In contrast to asymmetric patterns of discussion, dialogic interaction provides opportunity for teacher and students to work together, sharing ideas as they develop common understandings in relation to new learning. Such dialogue is considered purposeful with teachers planning and steering dialogue towards specific goals, in comparison to conversation where the end point may not be defined from the outset (Alexander, 2008; Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Myhill, Jones & Hopper, 2006). Promotion of higher levels of thinking and the collaborative nature of the interaction are noted as definite strengths in the literature.

Threaded throughout this section is the underlying importance of providing appropriate scaffolding to support students to move towards independence through

integrating new learning with existing understanding. Myhill et al. (2006) suggest the issue for many teachers is acknowledging when to withdraw the scaffolding and action this handover. While in some situations this can be consciously planned for and integrated into teaching sequences, there are also what Myhill et al. term 'critical moments'. They define a critical moment as: "a moment in which a teacher's utterance was significant either in the way a child's understanding was developed or in the way it was confounded" (p. 105). Their findings suggest teachers respond to these emerging critical moments in one of three ways: adhering to their plans and ignoring or dismissing the response, confusing the child through their own lack of knowledge, or 'going with the flow' where the teacher takes an instructional detour and follows the child's lead. The latter option requires flexibility, confidence with lesson content and awareness of the students' learning journeys and prior knowledge, all components that develop with experience in teaching.

This section has reviewed research surrounding the use of instructional talk in the classroom and noted the relationship of this work to the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin. Patterns of teacher-student interaction have been considered and the importance of critical moments noted. Beginning teachers require a repertoire of discussion strategies from which to select that most appropriate for the purpose at hand. At times, IRE patterns are of value, as when carrying out a quick review of previous learning. Whole class, small group and paired strategies all have their uses and dialogic talk sits well alongside of an inquiry focus. Consideration of learning purpose and the most appropriate form and function for the talk, curriculum content and learning needs are essential considerations if talk is to provide an appropriate level of scaffolding to facilitate learning.

2.3.4 Teaching writing

I have separated the review of literature relating to the teaching of writing from the teaching of reading to address the complexity of each. I acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the two modes and the ways in which students draw on this interaction to develop literacy knowledge and skills. However, most of the literature surveyed relates to either one or the other.

Key researchers in the field of primary literacy in New Zealand appear to emulate the focus on the teaching of reading and writing evident in the curriculum support materials introduced in chapter one. This section will review recent themes in this research in relation to instructional support for the teaching of writing. In New Zealand a range of international theoretical perspectives can be seen as informing the approaches teachers use to teach writing (Dix, 2011). It is appropriate to elaborate on these as current pedagogical practices reflect features of each, hence this review will facilitate analysis of beginning teacher practices in relation to the teaching of writing.

The work of Donald Graves (1983) and his colleagues in the United States during the later 1970s and early 1980s is viewed as having a significant impact on the teaching of writing in New Zealand and internationally (Dix, 2011; Petrosky & Mihalakis, 2016; Smith & Elley, 1997). The process writing approach reflects the whole language perspective through promoting student ownership of writing and meta-cognitive decision making within a social environment. The previous emphasis on the teaching of writing as encouraging accurate finished products based on teacher-selected topics, shifted to the process of writing where students control selection of writing content, and construct and refine content through discussion and feedback from the teacher and other students. Writing skills develop within authentic contexts with needs addressed when necessary. The initial focus of instruction through teacher-student conferencing was later identified by Graves, Tuyay and Green (2004) as ‘onerous’ and he acknowledges the work of Calkins (1986) in developing the concept of ‘mini-lessons’ to demonstrate required skills and supplement conferencing routines. The process of constructing text is seen as fluid and dependent on the demands of the writing context. Rather than working through a lock-step process, writers move back and forth in a fluid manner through the various stages of planning, composing, revising and then publishing or sharing the finished piece with an audience (MOE, 1992). The establishment of a community of writers where trust and respect prevails is a key component of this approach to promoting confidence and writer identity.

Although heralded as a ground-breaking approach that encouraged metacognitive awareness of the writing process and promoted writer engagement, there were concerns that while teaching writing through the process approach promoted the

writing of self-chosen narrative and recount forms, it did not prepare students to produce the wide range of transactional genre indicated in school curriculum (Jones & Derewianka, 2016). Associated with this were suggestions that teachers were not providing sufficient levels of in-depth, explicit teaching to meet the needs of their writers (Dix, 2011). To compensate this, a functional approach to writing based on social-linguistic theory proposed by Halliday (1973) became popular in the 1990s. This heralded a transition away from the writer towards an emphasis on “meaning and how language is involved in the construction of meaning” (Derewianka, 1990, p.4). The work of Halliday and colleagues investigated how language is used in social contexts and the importance of register. They suggested the importance of three key variables:

- The field of discourse: social activity, what is occurring or being discussed.
- The tenor of discourse: who is taking part and the relationship of these participants.
- The mode of discourse: the manner in which communication is taking place and how language is used. (Christie, 2004).

From this work, other researchers analysed the major purposes for writing evident in curriculum, learning tasks and set texts, and established five key genre for inclusion in primary literacy programmes. These included narratives, procedures, information reports, explanations and expositions (Derewianka, 1990; Jones & Derewianka, 2016; Knapp & Waikins, 1994).

The focus on the purpose and form of writing, was reflected in the *English in the New Zealand Curriculum* document (MOE, 1994) where teachers were guided towards teaching the functions of expressive, transactional and poetic forms. Unsure of exactly which forms or genre to teach and how they should be taught, New Zealand teachers looked to their Australian colleagues for support and hence a pedagogical focus on genre became firmly established in NZ primary classrooms from the 1990s. Although, as Derewianka (1990) states, the emphasis is on “meaning and how language is involved in the construction of meaning” (p. 4), the teaching of genre became formulaic with a focus on a particular set of text components for each, and progression through what was termed the ‘Genre curriculum cycle’ (Callaghan, Knapp & Noble, 1993). This suggested cycle

involves a familiarisation phase where sample texts are deconstructed or modelled to develop knowledge of purpose and text features, followed by co-construction of the focus genre, and finally independent construction of text using the acquired knowledge from the earlier stages.

This model allows for gradual transference of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), with the expert surrendering control as the novice develops both confidence and competence. However, the genre focus has been criticised as prescriptive recipe-writing focused on a narrow range of functions with few opportunities for creativity and development of writer's voice (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Hood, 2006; Petrosky & Mihalakis, 2016). The approach did serve the purpose of developing teacher knowledge around how texts work. It extended the focus on a wider range of purposes for writing, in comparison to the process approach. However, it also led to what Petrosky and Mihalakis (2016) referred to as 'the culture of the template' (p. 172), as the planning phase regularly involved completion of a structured, genre-specific planning format. To counter this, there have been shifts in the nature of the Australian genre approach to move beyond the formulaic structure and more effectively reflect the challenges of increasing multimodality of texts and the multimedia text-types often associated with learning across curriculum areas (Jones & Derewianka, 2016). Jones and Derewianka elaborate on research involving classification of sub-genres and identification of 'macrogenres', including more than one purpose. These shifts could also be interpreted as a response to critics or to a realisation that in fact all genres are multi-functional and in reality cannot be classified according to a single purpose.

In New Zealand, a report by the Education Review Office (2002), surveying writing practices in year five to eight classes, noted that classes promoting the recipe style of writing with genre templates tended to produce reluctant and disinterested writers. More recently, Jesson and Cockle (2016) investigated the writing programmes in 15 year four to six classrooms in two multicultural schools and found that focused teaching involved identification and recall of elements of genre, followed by students attempting to integrate these elements into their writing. While a small scale study and not generalisable, it does signal concern when writing is viewed as something 'done at writing time' and not as a dialogic process where students are able to interact, draw on their existing expertise as writers outside of school and

thus view writing as a social practice. Echoing such concerns, in a survey of 118 teachers who were asked to rank teaching practices associated with writing, teachers felt least confident in their knowledge of students' out-of-school writing practices and the acknowledgement and incorporation of social and cultural diversity (Parr & Jesson, 2016). International research shows the issues are not just confined to New Zealand, with Myhill and Brackley (2004) and Zumbrunn and Krause (2012) reiterating the need for strategies that encourage identification of, and interaction with students' prior knowledge and existing textual practices to inform teaching.

Parr and Jesson's (2016) research identifies the typical structure of a primary-level writing session as including whole-class discussion and modelling through either examination of a mentor text or co-construction of a piece by teacher and students, followed by independent writing during which time the teacher may take small groups and engage in individual teacher-student conferencing. Teachers felt most confident about identifying student needs, modelling writing, providing feedback and the practice of roving and providing individual assistance. The findings align with other New Zealand researchers investigating effective pedagogical strategies associated with teaching writing (Dix, 2003; Gadd, 2017; Ward & Dix, 2004).

Encouraging student responsibility and belief in themselves as writers is a common theme in the work of these researchers. Dix and Cawkwell's (2011) qualitative case study demonstrates the benefits of peer group response in encouraging revision of text, while Gadd (2017) and Gadd and Parr (2017) report on the practices of nine 'exceptional' teachers of writing. From the eight dimensions of effective teaching practice, they identified as most significant the nature of learning tasks, direct instruction and self-regulation. In choosing writing tasks, Gadd and Parr comment that students should be involved in the selection and construction of writing purposes where appropriate, learning goals are negotiated with students to promote ownership of learning, and writers are encouraged to self-monitor progress, identify when they need support and seek appropriate help. Gadd (2017) considers these three dimensions as "part of an integrated whole within the complexity of effective practice" (p. 44).

In summary, it can be seen that this review of a range of approaches used to teach writing indicates a shift from a teacher-directed, task-driven environment, towards one where students, “experience learning to write as interesting, meaningful and purposeful,” in classrooms “responsive to the knowledge, skills and concerns that children bring to school and supportive to the generation of ideas that take the children into new territory” (Dombey, 2013, p. 19). The role of the teacher is not only about challenging students and scaffolding learning, but also about writing, working and learning alongside as they create texts in more authentic and meaningful contexts.

2.3.5 Research relating to the teaching of reading

This section presents an overview of literature pertaining to the teaching of reading, keeping in mind the previously mentioned reciprocity of reading and writing processes. Using the Four Resources model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) to categorise the literature, I firstly examine models of the reading process and associated perspectives on reading instruction, and then move on to a review of literature relating to key instructional approaches used in New Zealand primary classrooms.

As Dombey (2017) posits, “Reading is much more than pronouncing written words. Children who become avid and accomplished readers focus on making sense from their earliest encounters with print” (p. 117). The fundamental understanding that both decoding and comprehension are critical in order to gain meaning from text, has long been evident in the research literature with New Zealand researchers Don Holdaway (1979) and Marie Clay (1972, 1991) making significant contributions to the field of early literacy development.

Overall, while the literature reflects a preoccupation with particular theoretical perspectives, there is widespread agreement that the essential elements to be targeted in effective reading instruction comprise: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency (Almasi, Garas-York & Shanahan, 2006; Helfrich & Bean, 2011; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; Tracey & Morrow, 2015).

Supporting the role of code breaker

There is a complex array of theoretical perspectives and models to explain the process of reading and the interrelationship between these key components of

decoding and comprehension. Traditionally these perspectives have been categorised as either ‘bottom-up’ or ‘top-down’ (Manzo & Manzo, 1993; Smith & Elley, 1997). Bottom-up theorists such as Gough (1972), typically view reading as a sequential process of mastering a series of sub-skills: beginning with recognition of letters and associated sounds, word recognition, and then higher order processing of meaning at sentence, paragraph and text levels (Manzo & Manzo, 1993). Good readers therefore “translate the visual aspects of print directly into sound and subsequently into meaning” (Smith & Elley, 1997, p. 77), with reading believed to be primarily a process of rapid, accurate word recognition. Subscribers to this viewpoint emphasise decoding and believe that the teaching of reading should focus on the deliberate, isolated, and sequential teaching of phonics to facilitate automaticity.

In contrast, ‘top-down’ theorists such as Goodman (1967) and Smith (1985) counter that reading is meaning-driven and that the reader accesses information initially from prior knowledge and the context of the reading task, in addition to letter cues, to create meaning from the text. Goodman’s theory, derived from an examination of readers’ mistakes or ‘miscues’ suggests that proficient readers use three major cueing systems, or sources of information, in the process of constructing meaning from text:

- Semantic or meaning-related information from the reader’s prior knowledge, knowledge of the text read so far, and illustrations.
- Syntactic information: knowledge of the structure of language,
- Visual grapho-phonetic information: knowledge of letters and sounds, words and conventions of print. (Goodman, 1967; MOE, 2003)

Goodman stated:

Reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. (p. 127)

While emergent readers sampled more graphic information than experienced readers, to process text accurately, they also drew on semantic and syntactic sources of information from the early stages (Goodman & Burke, 1972). Marie Clay’s work (1969, 1972, 1991) similarly promotes a “multiple cues approach”. According to

Clay (1991), readers employ a number of processing strategies to facilitate problem-solving. They attend to the text and search for relevant information from the three sources identified to predict what will come next. They check or cross-check to ensure the prediction fits, and self-correct using further information if needed. This view of processing text in a top-down, meaning-driven manner at the emergent and early levels is consistent with the whole language approach to teaching literacy, prevalent in the 1980s and 90s in New Zealand primary classrooms. It also informs the New Zealand Ministry of Education's stance on teaching reading and is evident in successive literacy handbooks: *Reading in Junior Classes* (New Zealand Department of Education, 1985); *The Learner as a Reader* (MOE, 1996); and the *Effective Literacy Practice* handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006).

While other theoretical models seek to explain the reading process (Gough, 1993; Manzo & Manzo, 1993), it is the debate between researchers subscribing to top-down and bottom-up positions that has driven much of the research literature relating to early literacy instruction. I do not intend to dwell here on the efficacy of phonics versus whole language instructional approaches; rather, I will draw on the two stances to inform the subsequent review of the literature relating to reading instruction below. Linking this back to the Four Resources model (Luke & Freebody, 1999), there is an obvious preoccupation with the roles of cracking the code and, to a lesser extent, making meaning.

Pressley (2002) identifies positive outcomes from research into whole language programmes as including: promotion of early understanding of reading and writing; increased engagement in reading; and increased understanding of story structure and vocabulary, which impact positively on reading comprehension and writing ability. However, the literature also signals issues with the whole language approach. Pearson (2004) argued that a misinterpretation of the intent of whole language and a lack of professional development for teachers led to divergent practices, such as whole-class teaching of reading, in parts of the United States. The most commonly cited criticism of whole language relates to claims that phonics is not taught systematically and the fact that there are early readers who do not develop phonemic and phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabetic principle, and word recognition through immersion in reading and promotion of the multiple cueing system (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Pearson, 2004; Pressley, 2002).

Such criticism is also evident in the New Zealand literature, with some academics citing a lack of attention to constrained skills (phonological awareness, alphabetic coding and fluency) during the first year at school, as one cause of the significant gap between good and poor readers, and the long tail of literacy underachievement evident in data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS] 2016 (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Hopper, 2017; Prochnow, Tumner & Greaney, 2015; Tumner, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow & Arrow, 2013). Tumner and Chapman (2002), in a three-year longitudinal study, found that five-year-olds who reported using word-based strategies to identify new words outperformed those who reported using text-based strategies (associated with the multiple-cues approach) on reading-related assessment data gathered in year three. Additionally, it is claimed that the current policy promoting the multiple cues approach fails to respond to differences in “literate cultural capital” at school-entry level. Literacy cultural capital is described by Prochnow, Tumner and Arrow (2015) as “literacy related knowledge and abilities at school entry that are an outgrowth of activities in the home environment that support early literacy development” (p. 146). This is seen to include cognitive abilities in oral language, familiarity with books, knowledge of concepts about print, knowledge of letter-sound relationships, invented spelling and phonological sensitivity gained through experiences with rhymes, listening to books read, and word games. Those with limited literate cultural capital on school entry are seen to be disadvantaged when teachers fail to respond appropriately to such differences during the first year of school.

Looking at this set of skills and abilities said to comprise literate cultural capital, it would appear, based on my own years of teaching at this level and current evaluative work with pre-service teachers, that there is a close alignment between these needs and the focus of activities that traditionally take place within literacy programmes in New Zealand new entrant classrooms. My own observations suggest that our new entrant teachers *do* in fact provide opportunities to address the range of needs and gaps in literate cultural capital amongst their learners, through offering a balanced programme that addresses both processing and comprehension of text. However, the major concern in the literature appears the extent to which those students with limited literate cultural capital are supported to develop phonemic and phonological awareness and this is perhaps a valid claim (Prochnow et al., 2015;

Turner et al., 2013). Unfortunately, there is little research reporting current practices in New Zealand classrooms in relation to the teaching of phonics, aside from intervention studies such as that by Turner, Chapman and Prochnow (2003). Earlier in 1999, McNaughton noted a difficulty in gathering such evidence from NZ classrooms due to confusion around what constitutes incidental versus explicit teaching of phonics. By analysing research reports, he found there was indeed an emphasis on embedding phonics instruction within the reading of connected text, with accompanying explicit teaching when necessary during guided reading and writing.

Current New Zealand classroom practices appear more attuned to a balanced approach to teaching reading where phonics instruction is combined with other essential components. This position is widely supported in the literature (de Silva-Joyce & Feez, 2016; Davis, 2016; Pearson, 2004; Pressley, 2002, 2014). Pressley and Allington (2014), while against ‘wholly-committed’ whole-language instruction, call for effective early literacy programme consisting of “explicit, evidence-based teaching of a balance of decoding and comprehension strategies with elements of whole language” (p. 16). Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and letter-sound relationships is seen as an essential feature of this balanced programme, but so too are rich experiences with connected text and a range of text types, both digital and paper-based, to extend vocabulary and promote comprehension (Dombey, 2017, Pearson, 2004). Associated with this balanced approach, is the adaptation of instruction to recognise and provide for individual differences whilst engaging learners in purposeful instruction (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Dombey, 2017; Freebody, 2007; Pressley, 2014). The degree to which New Zealand literacy-related policy documents provide support for the various components of this so-called ‘balanced approach’ will be examined in Chapter 3.

Supporting meaning-making

In addition to this somewhat fractious focus in the literature on developing the role of code-breaker, supporting students to participate in the meaning of the text through use of a range of comprehension strategies also figures prominently. The RAND Reading Study Group in the United States [RRSG] (2002) defined reading comprehension as an active and complex cognitive process during which the reader is “simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and

involvement with written language” (p. 11). Comprehension is seen to involve a continual interplay between the reader, the text and the activity, within a sociocultural context (Block & Pressley, 2002; McLaughlin & Allen, 2002; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; RRSB, 2002; Snow & Sweet, 2003). The reader is actively integrating new knowledge from the text with existing knowledge and experience, in accordance with the form of text and his/her reading purpose. While this process is enhanced by fluent text decoding, research signifies the importance of a range of comprehension strategies in facilitating understanding (Duke and Pearson, 2002; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Harp, 1999; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002).

Van Keer (2004) defined comprehension strategies as “conscious, instantiated, and flexible plans readers apply and adapt deliberately to a variety of texts and tasks” (p. 38). Many similar definitions can be found highlighting such conscious, metacognitive selection and application, in comparison to automaticised cognitive processes (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Harp, 1999; MOE, 2003; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002). While, as Almasi, Garas-York, Shanahan (2006) state, readers orchestrate multiple strategies to enable comprehension, research suggests that explicit teaching of a small repertoire of those most commonly used, impacts positively on comprehension levels (Block & Pressley, 2002; Carss, 2007; Dymock, 2007; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Harp, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley, 2006). Such strategies typically include:

- Predicting or forming hypotheses
- Clarifying
- Inferring
- Questioning
- Making connections (including activating prior knowledge)
- Visualising
- Summarising
- Analysing text structure (Block & Pressley, 2007; Duffy, 2003; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000, 2006; Reutzel & Fawson, 2002; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002).

My critical examination of New Zealand MOE policy documents in the next chapter will include some discussion of materials aimed at supporting the teaching of comprehension.

Supporting the role of text user

The inclusion of analysis of text structure in the above list of comprehension strategies signifies the importance of readers understanding how texts are organised and how using features such as keywords, subheadings and diagrams can support comprehension. Dymock & Nicholson (2010) promote the explicit teaching of the most commonly encountered descriptive and sequential text structures as an effective means of supporting students to comprehend non-fiction texts. Such instruction is seen as critical in enabling readers to become text-users, effectively managing the increasing diversity of text-types now encountered in both print and digital forms (Almasi et al., 2006; Ford & Opitz, 2008; Luke & Freebody, 1999).

In the New Zealand context and pertinent to the above, it is of concern that the Ministry of Education has recently modified its policy regarding the publication and free dissemination of non-fiction *Ready to Read* texts to schools (MOE webinar, 2014). I include further discussion of this issue in the next chapter.

Supporting analysis of text

With regard to developing critical literacy and the role of text analyst (Luke & Freebody, 1999) during instructional reading, the absence of focus and support for teachers in Ministry of Education support texts was signalled previously (section 2.7.7). There is also an absence of this dimension in research cited above on reading comprehension, and very little research that addresses this at the primary school level. Given the wide range of text-types now easily accessible to students, it is essential they develop strategies to analyse texts in relation to origin, authenticity, and authorial/authorised positions, views and intentions. As Anstey and Bull (2006) state:

If students are not taught to take a critical perspective with texts and practice critical literacy in all contexts, then they may be marginalised, discriminated against, or unable to take an active and informed place in life. (p. 37)

To facilitate the transfer of this interrogative stance into all aspects of their students' lives, teachers first require understanding of what it means to take a critical position towards textuality (O'Brien, 2001). Modelling of appropriate questioning and use of relevant metalanguage within a supportive environment is required, in addition to allowing space for student questioning and investigation of the positions taken in texts. Students need to understand that there are no right answers as such, but multiple interpretations are possible and that these will vary based on the prior knowledge and experience they each bring to the discussion (O'Brien, 2001; Sandretto & the Critical Literacy Research Team, 2006). The Critical Literacy Research Team, a collaboration between classroom teachers and researchers, explored the use of these critical literacy strategies within guided reading lessons and suggest that this critical focus be integrated into a second reading of a text, once a more traditional guided reading lesson has taken place. They also caution, as does O'Brien (2001), that teachers be aware of various interpretations of critical literacy and that suggested questions and strategies must be tailored to the particular context within which teachers are working. Subsequent publications by Sandretto and Tilson (2014, 2016) prompt educators to consider more broadly the design of critical multiliteracies pedagogy by utilising the Four Resources Model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) as a planning framework.

It is evident from the review of literature surveyed above that processing and comprehending text have been the traditional areas of focus for researchers in the area of early literacy instruction and, as will be seen in the following chapter, this dominance is also reflected in MOE resources and support materials for teachers.

Instructional approaches

As study participants were introduced to the key instructional approaches of reading to, shared and guided reading (see Appendices 1 & 2) during their initial teacher education programme, an overview of the theory and research relating to each is provided in this section. As noted above, a balanced approach to teaching literacy enables effective teachers to provide support for the development of decoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension strategies. Aligned with this position is the claim that a range of teaching approaches should be integrated into the literacy programme according to the purpose of the instruction, the needs of the students, the degree of scaffolding students required, and the challenges presented by the

particular text (Clark, 2017; Davis, 2016; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Frey, Fisher & Gonzalez, 2010).

Reading to students and engaging them in discussion around the text has long been valued as a powerful practice to encourage a love of reading, and develop a raft of language and literacy skills. Promoted in MOE support texts as a required daily occurrence at all levels (MOE, 2003, 2006, 2009), there is a substantial body of research demonstrating significant gains in listening and speaking, as well as a correlation with future reading ability (see Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lowrance, 2004; Lane & Wright, 2007). The importance of the associated discussion is cited as critical in extending thinking and developing vocabulary (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Davis, 2016; Lane & Wright, 2007). Davis (2016) and Lane and Wright (2007) refer to the need to promote dialogic conversation around the text, encouraging depth of thinking by making connections back to students' own lives, using open questions, and giving constructive feedback to encourage inference, opinion and self-questioning.

The role of the teacher as model is significant in 'reading to' lessons. Lane and Wright (2007) signal the importance of modelling fluency, phrasing and expression when reading orally; demonstrating enjoyment of reading motivates students to read independently. In addition, students develop listening comprehension (Morrow & Gambrell, 2002) and an awareness of language structure at both sentence and text level (Hill, 2006). Gibbons (2002) and MOE (2009) note that this is particularly valuable for lower-ability readers and English Language Learners, as their awareness of these elements is supported without the challenges of what may be laborious decoding. In addition to support with verbal language modes, the reading and discussion of picture books can extend students' awareness of visual language (Hill, 2006; Serafini, 2012). Based on classroom observations, Serafini pleads for teachers to extend their own knowledge of peritextual features (end papers, covers, title pages), book design elements and visual grammar, to enable full advantage to be taken of the potential of the text to support student learning.

Although reading to students more often consists of narrative texts, including picture books and novels, Davis (2016), Gibbons (2002) and Lane and Wright (2007) signal the importance of including a range of text types, both paper-based

and digital, to introduce students to transactional text structures and language patterns. Lane and Wright also suggest linking text selections to cross-curricula themes to strengthen the learning focus. Many of the benefits of the ‘reading to’ approach align with those gained during shared and guided reading, as evident below. However, as will be demonstrated, the degree of teacher input changes as students take over more responsibility for the ‘reading work’.

The shared reading approach emerged as a result of Don Holdaway’s (1979) research with a group of Auckland teachers, and his concerns with the phonics approach and the use of oversimplified, repetitive, early-reading materials (Price, 2000). Informed by the enjoyable practice of parents reading *real* stories with *real* language to their children in the home environment, he suggested teacher and students engage in co-operative reading of enlarged text — quality literature with rhythm, rhyme and engaging storylines. The approach has continued to feature in New Zealand reading programmes with repeated readings, typically over a week with varying foci, allowing emergent and early readers to engage in reading in a non-threatening environment. In true Vygotskian style, the teacher leads the reading providing initial scaffolding at the outset, then students join in with successive readings as they develop confidence and text familiarity (Brown, 2004; Depree & Iversen, 1994; Smith & Elley, 1997). In addition to the benefits of reading to, shared reading allows for:

- students to participate in reading texts they are not yet able to read independently;
- teacher demonstration of early concepts of print;
- reinforcement of phonemic awareness and letter-sound relationships;
- the use of the think-aloud strategy to model use of sources of information and processing strategies to read new words and problem solve errors;
- the examination of a range of text structures and features to learn how texts work;
- English Language Learners (ELLs) to develop understanding of vocabulary and reading strategies in the English medium in a non-threatening environment. (Brown, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; Hundley & Powell, 1994; MOE, 2003, 2017)

Shared reading therefore can be seen to lay the foundation for guided reading where students take greater responsibility for reading texts. An additional advantage is the flexibility to adapt the content of lessons around the same text, to suit the range of needs in the class and to use the approach with both whole class and small groups. Shared reading is currently the MOE's chosen approach for introducing nonfiction to early readers.

The literature also highlights the use of shared reading at senior levels (years 5-8) with slight adaptations to allow the approach to benefit more fluent readers (Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2008; MOE, 2006). The initial reliance on enlarged texts has dropped away, so that any text can be used, so long as it is visible for students to read or follow along with as the teacher reads. Thus multiple copies of a small text, charts, or digital text types can be utilised (Davis, 2016). Teaching points are tailored to the needs of the students and may include an increased focus on literacy across the curriculum (Brown, 2004; MOE, 2006). Depending on the purpose of the reading, the text may be visited just once or twice, in comparison to the traditional pattern in junior classes of revisiting the text over a week with a different learning focus each day. Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2008) researched the use of shared reading at more senior levels. After observing 25 expert teachers of grade 3-8 classes during shared reading lessons, a major focus on the use of teacher modelling or think-aloud was identified. This modelling targeted four key areas: the use of comprehension strategies; the modelling of word-solving strategies via a variety of methods including examining word parts (prefixes, suffixes, morphemes), use of surrounding context clues, and resources such as glossaries and dictionaries; using elements of text structure to support comprehension; and the use of text features to establish meaning and importance, such as subheadings, changes in font size, and diagrams. These findings highlighted the need to ensure explicit teaching for identified needs, economical use of time, selection of appropriate texts, and opportunities for students to practice and apply the learning. Taking these factors into account, the shared reading approach is clearly of value in scaffolding student learning in relation to both processing and comprehending texts at all year levels. The flexibility of the approach allows teachers to work with large, mixed-ability

groups and a diverse range of text-types, modelling reading behaviours and encouraging active discussion.

Moving further along the dependent-independent continuum, guided reading is often described as:

The heart of the literacy programme ... It gives a teacher and a group of students the opportunity to talk, read and think their way purposefully through a text. (MOE, 1996, p. 86)

As with shared reading, the approach enables the teacher to target the range of learning needs and rates of progress within a class. Rich discussion is an essential feature in consolidating and extending student understanding and reading competence, and developing metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. However, with guided reading instruction is typically carried out with small groups of students reading at a similar level or with similar learning needs, where the teacher guides the students as they take responsibility for reading individual copies of the text (Davis, 2007, 2016; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). The sheltered social setting for the learning enables students to engage in purposeful dialogue, work co-operatively, share ideas, take risks and receive constructive feedback.

In addition to providing a secure learning environment, the small-group setting allows for ongoing, close monitoring of student progress to inform targeted teaching within the ZPD (Boyd-Batstone, 2004; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). This formative assessment, in addition to data gathered through other means, allows individual progress pathways to be monitored (Clay, 1998) and groupings adjusted as and when required to ensure learners are challenged at an appropriate level. Clay (1991) suggests that 90-94% accuracy with a running record indicates an appropriate level for instructional purposes. She comments:

There must be the opportunity for the child to use a gradient of difficulty for texts by which he can pull himself up by his bootstraps: text that allow him to practise and develop the full range of strategies which he does control, and by problem-solving new challenges, reach out beyond that present control. (p. 215)

However, mere consideration of the accuracy level with a running record is not sufficient in making such decisions. Attention must also be given to levels of comprehension, since accurate decoding does not necessarily imply understanding.

Teachers require knowledge of the developmental continuum and of individual pathways of progress to select appropriate texts, but should also ensure these will engage and motivate readers, and reflect the socio-cultural diversity within the class (Clay, 1991; Davis, 2016). The link between rich experiences with a variety of engaging texts and reading performance is documented in the literature (Ford & Opitz, 2008; Rivalland, 2000; Wilkinson & Townsend, 2000). Ford and Opitz surveyed 1500 junior level teachers in United States regarding their practices with guided reading and found two-thirds of the texts used were narratives. They viewed the utilisation of more non-fiction texts during guided reading lessons as critical in preparing students for the broad diversity of text in their lives, even suggesting that this predominant focus on narrative had impacted negatively on performance in international comparative assessments. This is a further reason to question the MOE's recent decision to stop producing non-fiction texts for guided reading purposes at early reading levels.

More recently, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) suggested teachers must look beyond levels and content, and analyse more closely the characteristics of texts and the related demands made on the reader. In addition to genre, themes, text structure and features, they suggest consideration be given to sentence complexity, vocabulary meanings and complexity of words should be examined in more depth. While experienced teachers are more able to do this, they do acknowledge this is a challenge for those starting out.

The value of discussion around text applies equally for guided reading lessons. During the pre-reading phase of guided reading lessons, this is directed towards setting students up to manage the reading by establishing links between text content, and the reader's prior knowledge and previous learning, to facilitate comprehension and inform hypotheses about the text (Gibbons, 2002). The teacher also tailors the discussion, based on knowledge of the readers, to the learning focus and provides the appropriate scaffolding to manage new challenges that may arise in the text (Clay, 1998; Davis, 2016; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Gibbons, 2002).

To support the development of problem-solving and strategy development during guided reading lessons, teachers often chunk the text into manageable sections providing a purpose for reading each chunk, using dialogue between sections to

explore content, text features and address any challenges in relation to the learning intentions (Davis, 2007, 2016; Gibbons, 2002). Students typically read silently to enable a focus on comprehending the message although emergent readers will read aloud until blue or green on the colour wheel as they master the reading process (5½ - 6 yr reading level) (MOE, 2010). In relation to the nature of reading during guided reading lessons, the literature discourages the use of Round Robin Reading (sometimes referred to as Popcorn Reading), where students read a section aloud, one by one around the group, while others follow along (Clark, Jones, Reutzell & Andreasen, 2013; Cullen & Paris, 2011; Frey et al., 2010; Hilden & Jones, 2012). This practice is seen as preventing each student from processing and comprehending the text independently, as they attend to their allocated section only, and are then distracted or bored while others read. As Hobsbaum et al. (2002, cited in Clark et al., 2013, p. 25) state, “hearing children read individually is necessary when recording their behaviours and analysing their skills, but it is not a way of teaching”. Round Robin Reading is actively discouraged in each of the MOE handbooks (MOE, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006) and in the literacy education papers which participants in this study undertook.

In their work on effective practice, Fountas & Pinnell (2012) caution that guided reading is more than just a procedure that teachers work through with each group. Rather it should involve strategic and differentiated teaching with close monitoring of reading behaviours and contributions ‘minute-by-minute’, responding accordingly with explicit teaching and prompting for use of appropriate strategies, and rich discussion after teaching to consolidate learning and extend thinking around the text. They suggest teachers should be engaged in continual reflection or peer appraisal to hone their teaching.

While the review above has identified many benefits from utilising the small-group, guided reading approach, consideration must also be given to what other students are doing when not working with the teacher. Ford and Opitz (2008) raised this concern in planning their survey of guided reading practices, stating that given most teachers have at least three or four reading groups, students are spending more time away from the teacher than engaged in direct instruction. They comment that teacher planning for these independent activities is often overlooked in professional support materials and is a critical dimension that should work alongside of planning

for instructional lessons. Searches of the literature confirmed that this aspect of the guided reading programme was not often considered. However, New Zealand publications such as Cameron (2009) and (Davis (2007, 2016), suggest independent activities should be meaningful and consolidate or extend the learning from instructional lessons and involve further reading where possible. For example, completing a web diagram of key attributes of the topic would provide a meaningful follow-up after reading a nonfiction text with a web descriptive structure (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). There are, of course, dangers in the overuse of worksheets as time-fillers, as noted by Pincus (2005), in evaluating the use of ready-made commercial literacy packages in NZ classrooms. To avoid such traps Davis (2016) suggests that in selecting activities, teachers consider: best fit for students' current learning needs (are they best used in pairs, groups or independently); and what support will be required to enable students to remain engaged while other groups are working with the teacher.

To complete this section, I reiterate the need for a balanced approach to teaching literacy as introduced earlier (Dombey, 2017; Pressley, 2004). Dombey (2017) notes from her survey of the research that effective teachers attend to processing of text as well as comprehension, they respond to individual needs with differentiated and explicit instruction, and there are high levels of student engagement. While the key instructional approaches to teaching reading have been reviewed above, these should be employed as part of a broad programme where this explicit instruction focuses on developing each of the four roles suggested by Luke & Freebody (1999) using authentic, multimodal learning experiences that integrate a wide range of text-types, paper-based and digital.

In comparison to the New Zealand research focus, Australian researchers appear to have moved into exploring pedagogy relating to the broader concept of multiliteracies (Anstey, 2009; Anstey & Bull, 2006; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Walsh 2006, 2010). While sound teaching of reading and writing print-based texts is essential and research in this area is certainly justified, it is also crucial to address the current nature of literacy as a multimodal phenomenon blending print and digital text-types. Researchers need to contribute to the effort to provide support and direction to enable teachers to develop a more transformative pedagogy as suggested at the outset of this section; pedagogy that scaffolds the development of

multiliterate competencies. Sandretto's (2006) action research in classrooms in the Otago region around critical theorising and the e-learning project analysed using Freebody & Luke's framework (McDowall, 2011) are welcome multiliterate examples in the New Zealand research field and perhaps indicate the beginnings of this shift.

2.3.6 The integration of digital technologies.

The intent of this section of the review is to continue the previous focus on literacy pedagogy, but to more closely target the ways in which digital technologies are integrated into literacy programmes as a means to facilitate the development of literacy. Not only is this inclusion essential to assist students to develop literate competencies but for many students, digital technologies are an important component of their everyday lives outside of the classroom. If teachers subscribe to the sociocultural nature of literacy learning, then digital tools must be included as acknowledgement of the home literacy practices that many of their students bring to the classroom. As Kalantzis et al. (2010) state:

While traditional print based forms of literacy continue to dominate school curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, in their out of school lives students are increasingly participating in online worlds and other forms of digital culture. (p. 62)

As previously indicated, interaction with digital texts requires additional literacy skills and strategies to those typically used to make and create meaning from print based texts (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Walsh, 2006). Hence teachers are challenged to integrate technology alongside of traditional components of literacy instruction and to engage students with these new digital literacies in meaningful learning. There is a danger, as Kalantzis et al. (2010) caution, that schools often engage with these new digital technologies merely as new ways of carrying out conventional tasks, rather than fully exploiting the affordances of the tools at a transformative level. An example of this is the current focus on ipad usage where many teachers begin by integrating these into their reading group rotation as an activity involving repetitive practice reinforcing existing knowledge and skills, such as letter recognition. In comparison, the full potential of these devices in supporting learning at the transformative level might involve students in capturing still or moving images of a particular experience, transferring these into an

application allowing the addition of explanatory captions in either written or audio modes and then sharing the composition via *Seesaw* or email with other students or family. Learning sequences such as this encourage the use of multiple modes to create meaning and learning is reinforced through the use of linguistic, visual, oral and spatial modes.

McGee (2000) commented on the belief held by some, that teachers would automatically transfer their existing knowledge of emerging technologies into the classroom to inform their teaching of digital literacy and that this would be sufficient to implement purposeful learning activities. Along with Watts-Taffe, Gwinn, Johnson and Horn (2003), she challenged the lack of support, both at pre-service and in-service levels, in providing teachers with guidelines and examples of purposeful learning, involving digital technologies. Watts-Taffe et al. (2003) describe their initial attempts at integrating digital literacies into their ITE literacy papers and subsequently tracked three pre-service students into their first year of teaching. Results illustrate the need for beginning teachers to have a strong understanding of the principles of effective literacy pedagogy in order to facilitate sound decision making about the use of available technologies, and also the importance of making time for exploration, discussion and reflection, key aspects of social constructivist principles of learning. Elliot (2011), in her Ed.D thesis investigating beginning teachers and the nature of their experiences of using ICT in NZ classrooms, while not focused specifically on literacy, also identifies this need for strong pedagogical content knowledge and support at both pre-service and inservice levels around the potential of ICT for learning. This research is of interest in the current study as beginning teachers may have undertaken optional papers in ICT and will have had a range of levels of experience with the use of digital technologies to support literacy learning whilst on practicum. Within the compulsory literacy education papers undertaken at the University of Waikato, there is focus and discussion around digital literacies and accompanying pedagogy, but the extent to which this area is explored is constrained by lecturer experience and availability of technology. For example, ipad apps can be demonstrated and critiqued centrally through the data projector but small group work with these is not possible unless students have suitable personal devices.

The TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) is promoted as a possible solution to this struggle to align pedagogical content knowledge with knowledge of technology. With reference to Shulman's (1986) construct of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, the framework provides a way for educators to consider the blending of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge (Figure 3). While the relationships between the three categories are complex, it allows teachers to conceptualise the teaching of content using appropriate pedagogy and technology. Brueck and Lenhart (2015) and Hutchison, Beschorner and Schmidt-Crawford (2012) demonstrate use of this framework in researching teachers' integration of e-books and ipads into their programmes. Although perceived as a useful organisational scaffold for research purposes, Archambault and Barnett (2010) surveyed 596 online educators throughout the United States and found that the model was of limited use for teachers, due to the degree to which the domains overlap. Teachers struggled to identify and measure each component and technological knowledge was the only one of the three domains that could be clearly distinguished.

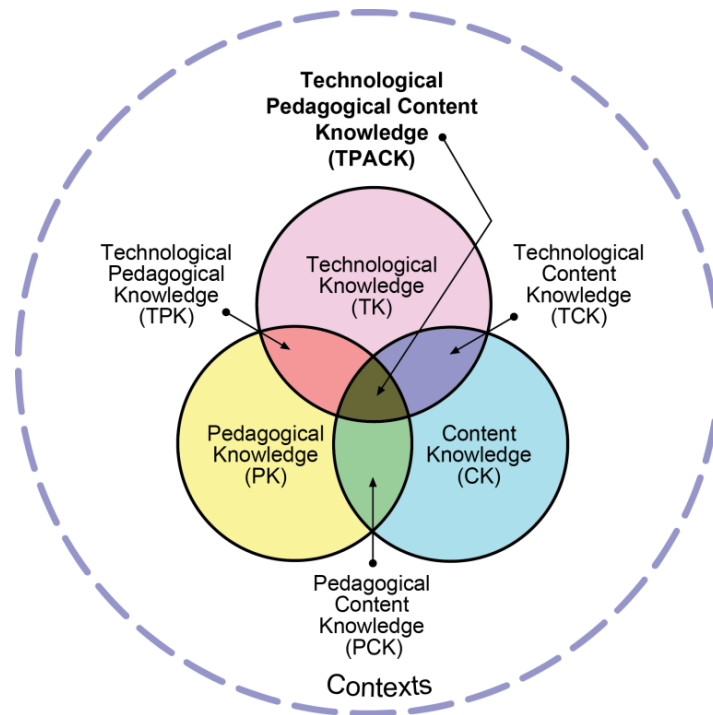


Figure 3: The TPACK framework

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In the New Zealand context, Halsey (2007) an experienced teacher, described the challenges of balancing pedagogical knowledge, her love of literature and the need to implement use of technology, as she developed a class website incorporating podcasts, blogging and online publishing with her class of six year olds. More recently, Walsh (2010), established nine case studies involving 16 primary level teachers working in teams to investigate ways of integrating technology into literacy learning. Teachers were able to successfully combine literacy practices of talking, listening, reading and writing with the digital technology and texts that many students now access regularly in their home environments. While engaging and innovative learning experiences were designed across a range of curriculum areas, Walsh cautioned that within this new learning environment there must be a place for explicit teaching of literacy skills and strategies. She also suggested a more comprehensive description of language and literacy as a result of this multimodal focus and raised queries around the required adaptation of assessment practices.

Such research illustrates the evolving nature of literacy pedagogy as educators attempt to keep pace with the shifting definitions of literacy influenced by rapidly

developing technologies and increasing social and cultural diversity within our schools. Access to technology, examples of successful integration and a supportive school culture are essential elements in this quest.

2.4 Becoming a teacher of literacy

The concept of professional identity (Erikson, 1968) can be applied as a conceptual lens in investigating the transition of pre-service teachers into the classroom. This section of the review will provide a brief discussion of the nature of identity, then investigate the development of a teacher's professional identity and the associated concepts of reflection and agency.

2.4.1 The concept of Identity

Identity can be seen as a relational concept formed within social contexts (Erikson, 1968). Erikson perceives this as something that develops rather than a fixed trait associated with an individual. A person can develop several identities dependent on the social groups within which they interact. Gee (2000) suggests identity is the way a "human being acts and interacts in a given context" and adds that this can change from context to context as each person has multiple identities "connected to their performances in society" (p. 99).

2.4.2 Developing professional identity

Based on the understanding that identities are "multiple and dynamic" (Locke, 2017), the process of developing professional identity as a teacher needs to be viewed as complex, ongoing, and influenced by the social community within which one is located (Chong, Ling & Chuan, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Gee, 2000). Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) state that not only is professional identity about concepts of self influenced by societal expectations of teachers, but about 'what teachers themselves find important in their professional work and lives based on both their experiences in practice and their personal backgrounds' (p.108). This relational concept of teachers' professional identity appears variable in definition and interpretation throughout the literature (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010; Wang & Lin, 2014). In a review of 22 studies of teacher professional identity published between 1988 and 2000, Beijaard et al. (2004) found definitions were either lacking or defined differently. From this review the authors identified four key features considered essential for teachers' professional identity:

- “Professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences;
- Professional identity implies both person and context;
- A teacher’s professional identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonise;
- Agency is an important element of professional identity, meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional development.”
(p. 122)

A teacher’s professional identity can therefore be seen as both an active process of shaping and reshaping through ongoing interaction with significant others and a product — the result of influences from within the particular school context (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, Cumming-Potvin, 2012; Sutherland et al., 2010). Wenger (1998) reinforces the importance of these continuous interactions within a community of practice in the formation of teacher identity. Contextual factors such as the school environment, availability of resources, the nature of the students, and the degree of support from colleagues can impact on this development of identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006).

A substantial body of research has investigated the early stages of development of professional identity during initial teacher education (Chong, Ling & Chuan, 2011; Cumming-Potvin, 2012; Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010; Wang & Lin, 2014). Focus areas within this phase are diverse. For example, Chong et al. (2011) tracked the early formation of identity as a teacher, through comparison of data from entry and exit surveys within initial teacher education programmes, while Cumming-Potvin (2012) examined the construction of identity through student discussion and shared reading experiences.

Longitudinal studies that investigate the development of professional teacher identity during the early years of teaching appear less common, particularly in relation to the teaching of literacy (Beijaard et al., 2004). Flores and Day (2006) tracked 14 novice teachers through their first two years of teaching in junior high schools (10-15 year olds). Although not focused on literacy teaching, they noted the significant interaction between personal histories, contextual factors and the

importance of teaching within a collaborative school culture. Schempp, Sparkes and Templin (1993) reported that beginning teachers must prove their ability to deliver acceptable levels of practice within the school culture and discover a sense of self through succeeding and gaining personal satisfaction. In addition, they noted the use of a ‘silent strategy’ by beginning teachers, who are afraid to voice opinions lest they be judged as lacking in confidence or controversial. As their status as teacher develops they are increasingly able to influence the thoughts and actions of others within the school community.

Critical in supporting the evolution of professional identity and significant in interpreting the data from this current study are the concepts of reflection and agency. The Graduating Teacher Standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2015) identify reflective practice as a necessary standard for those graduating from NZ ITE programmes. However, the construct of reflection is complex and there are multiple types and levels indicated in the literature (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009; Larrivee, 2008; Tilson, Sandretto & Pratt, 2017). In an effort to establish a shared metalanguage and to ascertain the type of reflection teachers engaged in, Larrivee (2008), developed a tool based on four levels of reflective practice. At the *pre-reflective* level teachers react spontaneously to student actions with little conscious thought to adjusting teaching to the particular needs of students. The second level involves *surface reflection* whereby teachers focus at a technical level on what works, and reflect on the success of teaching strategies at face value. Larrivee termed the third level as *pedagogical reflection*; teachers consider the theoretical underpinnings of their practice, or the rationale informing their actions. The highest level of *critical reflection* was deemed to involve reflection on the ethical and social consequences of one’s teaching. Larrivee (2000) adds, “critical inquiry involves the conscious consideration of the moral and ethical implications and consequences of classroom practice on students” (p. 294).

While Larrivee’s (2008) classification signifies a continuum of development, as Tilson et al. (2017) found, in reality the three pre-service teachers in their research used multiple levels, or lens, to reflect on their practice. In contrast, Hatton and Smith (1995) had stated earlier, that while the development of critical reflection needed to be supported amongst pre-service teachers, the ability to reflect at this

level was more likely to develop over time as these teachers moved into their own classes.

In a study that tracked five beginning teachers into the classroom following graduation, Clark et al. (2013) found that participants placed significant value on interaction with others to support this ongoing growth and reflection. Engagement in the current research was seen as providing similar opportunities for reflection, since the nine beginning teachers engaged in conversation during the interviews and video debrief sessions.

Agency, one of the four key features of professional identity identified by Beijaard et al. (2004), is defined by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) as the “active pursuit of professional development and learning in accordance with a teacher’s goals” (p. 117). This involves reflection on existing practice and independently taking necessary action to transform one’s teaching or attain self chosen goals (Campbell, 2012, Sutherland et al., 2010). In comparison to this commonly held explanation, Ticknor (2015) conceptualises agency as ‘resistance’ and suggests that “dissonance that leads to frustration is central to recognising opportunities for agency” (p. 397). In this current study the former explanations of agency are adopted rather than the latter focus on frustration.

As Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) emphasise, research into the development of identity in beginning teachers is essential in order to inform the nature of initial teacher education programmes which prepare teachers for entry into the classroom. In the case of this study the concept of identity, in particular the notions of reflection and agency, was used to interpret the data in relation to beginning teacher identity development as a teacher of literacy.

2.4.3 Moving from ITE into the classroom

The pedagogical content knowledge gained from ITE programmes was a significant consideration prompting this study. How do beginning teachers view the content of their literacy education papers and periods of practical experience in classrooms, as preparing them to teach literacy effectively? Are ITE programmes equipping pre-service teachers with the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge to meet the needs of their students?

The literature surveyed indicates a number of issues with beginning teachers using their theoretical knowledge to plan for, implement, and evaluate classroom practice as they transition into the school setting (Adoniou, 2013; Allen, 2009; Deal & White, 2005; Grossman et al., 2000; Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999; Helfrich & Bean, 2011; Roness, 2011). In a substantial longitudinal research project involving 329 beginning teachers in Norway, Roness (2011) tracked students throughout their one-year, post-graduate certificate in teaching and then through their first one-and-a-half years of classroom teaching. While beginning teachers acknowledged the importance of the ITE papers, they found these had limited impact on their teaching practice and felt unprepared for the realities of the classroom.

It could be argued that the short length of this post-grad certificate impacted on opportunities to develop a depth of theoretical and practical understanding. However, investigations of beginning teachers from two and three-year pre-service programmes report similar findings (Allen, 2009; Deal & White, 2005, Kosnik & Beck, 2008). Kosnik and Beck's (2008) research involved 22 beginning teachers, half of whom had completed a one-year graduate course and half a two-year course. Participants found the broad coverage of topics, terminology and approaches useful, but somewhat overwhelming as in-depth exploration was not possible. On moving into their own classrooms, both groups of participants struggled with the practical aspects of developing long-term plans, and planning for and implementing a literacy programme.

In Australia, a Bachelor of Learning Management programme was developed to deliberately bridge the theory-practice gap with a significant focus on pedagogy and pedagogical strategies rather than learning theory (Allen, 2009). The course was designed to ensure beginning teachers would have the "capacity to implement innovative, transformative practice" (Allen, 2009, p. 653). However, interviews and focus group discussions with the 14 participants revealed that once they entered schools, traditional socialisation practices prevailed as they sought to emulate the practices of their more experienced colleagues in order to fit in with the culture of the school. Similar findings were reported by Grossman, Smagorinsky and Valencia (1999) as they followed 21 teachers from the last year of their ITE programme through their first year in the classroom. Pomerantz and Condie (2017), when

investigating the effectiveness of the literacy coursework in their ITE programme, included eight pre-service teachers in their final practicum, in their participant sample. Even with very recent pre-service instruction around literacy education, the school's curriculum was dominant in informing practice.

Grossman et al. and Deal and White (2005) suggest that this conformity with classroom practice can be partly attributed to contextual influences during the first year, such as pressures of time, high stakes assessment and a lack of confidence to question existing programmes and adapt them to align with their own beliefs. This impact may not be long-term; Grossman et al. (2000) and Korthagen and Wubbels (2001) found that once a significant period of practical experience had been undertaken, beginning teachers made more effective links back to the theory learnt from pre-service papers during their second year of teaching.

Issues with practicum experiences during ITE programmes are also cited as contributing to the theory-practice disjuncture evident above (Adoniou, 2013; Grossman et al., 1999; Grossman et al., 2000; Helfrich & Bean, 2011, Risko et al., 2008). In these studies, pre-service teachers often found inconsistencies between the theory promoted their courses and the practices operating in the classrooms where they were placed. In Adoniou's (2013) research which tracked 14 first-year teachers in Australian schools, reasons given for this mismatch during practicum included shortages of available placements and a lack of moderation of the quality of practicum settings. Participants also reported a lack of any requirement to either observe or teach particular approaches or topics aligned with ITE course content during practicum placements.

Researchers claim that strengthening connections between the various components of the ITE programmes is essential in addressing such inconsistencies (Adoniou, 2013; Grossman et al., 2000; Helfrich & Bean, 2011). In investigating two ITE programmes supporting reading instruction in the United States, Helfrich and Bean (2011) promoted strengthened collaboration and communication between members of the triad – pre-service student, ITE lecturer and associate teacher – to maximise learning opportunities. They suggest that coursework should be closely associated with field experiences involving small group or class teaching and cite the following quote from Wold, Farnan, Grisham, and Lenski (2008):

Quality teacher preparation requires the development of a strong literacy knowledge base coupled with practical literacy teaching opportunities. This balance of research-based teaching and practice generates knowledgeable teachers who know literacy, can explain how to engage students effectively, and are secure in what they know and are able to do. (p. 14, cited in Helfrich & Bean, 2011, p. 234)

In addition to strengthening these links to ensure continuity between course content and practical teaching, researchers suggest: increased focus during university papers on identifying possible dilemmas in teaching literacy and how to manage these; strengthening critique of and reflection on inappropriate practices; and providing a range of alternatives for consideration when such issues arise (Grossman et al., 2000, Helfrich & Bean, 2011). They also promote provision of multiple opportunities to observe, enact and discuss literacy pedagogies in class prior to undertaking fieldwork, and in-depth feedback from both university and school personnel (Hathaway & Risko, 2013; Helfrich & Bean, 2011). Grossman et al., (2009) add that a more in-depth focus is required on meeting student needs in the classroom through assessment of learning, unpacking observations and results, and considering next steps in learning.

Regarding the New Zealand context, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER] recently released a literature review to consider the issues discussed above (Whatman & MacDonald, 2017). The aim was to investigate the features of high-quality practica that impact positively on outcomes for student teachers and to identify the features of high-quality theory and practice integration within other parts of the ITE programme, that have a positive impact on outcomes for student teachers. The review also considered how other professions address the integration of theory and practice. The essential features identified mirrored those considered in the international literature above and included: authentic partnerships, clearly defined roles for each of the participants, and professional learning opportunities for mentor teachers. It also cited as critical, support for pre-service teachers to facilitate observation, relationship building, and the ability to “take agency and to develop adaptive expertise with support” (p. 4).

This literature signals the importance of teacher educators monitoring the effectiveness of their programmes, not just in terms of student feedback on course

completion, but as they move into the school context and establish their literacy programmes. Helfrich and Bean (2011) have this to say:

It is critical that teacher educators examine candidates' perceptions over time, spanning well past the time spent at the university and into their time as teachers in their own classrooms. What teacher candidates identify as areas of strength and weakness during or immediately after completing a teacher education program may be very different than what they identify as areas of strength and weakness after teaching in their own classrooms for an extended period of time. (p. 259)

This section has presented an overview of relevant literature relating to the nature of initial teacher education programmes and the issues evident in preparing pre-service teachers to develop effective classroom programmes. The literature suggests ways in which the partnership between ITE facilitators and schools can be strengthened to overcome the perceived 'theory-practice' divide, through increased collaboration and negotiation. The literature examined here informed my interpretation of participant opinions on the literacy-related content of their ITE programmes as discussed during both initial and final interviews.

2.5 Beginning teachers and the influence of the school community

As previously explained, developing a professional identity is influenced by the particular social group of which one is a member and emerges through continuous interactions with other members (section 2.4.2). Closely related is the concept of communities of practice and the process of becoming a full member of the group (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Given the participants in my study were each located within a different school community, this is a useful construct to take up and utilise. Consequently, I commence with an initial explanation of the concept of a community of practice, then move to a consideration of a specific challenge for my study participants: becoming a member of a school community. A review of some of the associated literature relating to the influence and support provided by the school community follows, including the particular role of the mentor as a key figure within the community. To conclude this section New Zealand research tracking beginning teachers is reviewed.

The term 'communities of practice' (COP) was first proposed by Lave and Wenger in 1991, based on research examining how particular groups with a shared interest

organised themselves. They define a COP as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). At any one time, one may be a member of several communities and these may change over the course of time. More recently, Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015) define communities of practice as, “groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1).

They identify three characteristics as essential in distinguishing a community of practice from other communities:

1. *The domain*: Identity is defined by a shared domain of interest and membership involves shared competence and commitment.
2. *The community*: Members interact by engaging in joint activities and discussions that facilitate learning.
3. *The practice*: Members are practitioners. Over time, through sustained interaction, they develop a shared practice or repertoire of resources. For example, experiences, tools and ways of addressing problems. Hence the term ‘communities of practice’.

An important dimension of this concept is the notion of learning as a situated, social activity. New members participate actively in the community on a peripheral level and over time master the skills, knowledge and practices required to move towards full participation as ‘old timers’. Legitimate peripheral participation is seen as “a way of understanding learning” through interacting within the community, as opposed to a pedagogical strategy as such (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 40). This learning is “not merely a condition for membership, but is in itself an evolving form of membership” (p. 53). The emphasis on participation is central to the concept; Wenger (1998) stresses that while observation is useful, this is only as a prelude to involvement. Through participation and interaction with other members, newcomers become engaged and develop a sense of how the community operates. An additional point of relevance here is Wenger’s comment regarding ‘generational differences’. He argues:

Communities of practice are not havens of peace ... their evolution involves politics of both participation and reification. Generational differences add

an edge to these politics ... The working out of these perspectives involves a dynamic of continuity and discontinuity that propels the practice forwards. (p. 101)

Thus the passage towards full membership of a community may involve disagreement and challenges along the way, but Wenger appears to see these as opportunities to negotiate, and to reflect on and refine existing practice.

This concept of communities of practice is of value in considering the journey undertaken by beginning teachers as they enter and become part of their school community. Through direct involvement with 'old-timers', they are involved in the professional culture of the school and work towards becoming mutually engaged contributors. They develop understanding of how their school community works and shape their practices accordingly as Grossman et al. (2000) discovered when following 10 beginning teachers through their first three years of teaching. Feiman-Nemser (2003) and Roehrig et al. (2008) cite this involvement in the professional culture of the school as critical to long-term success in the classroom. Similarly, strong school leadership and a collaborative school culture were found to contribute to beginning teacher resilience and self-efficacy in Gu and Day's (2013) large-scale research that tracked 300 teachers over a four-year period.

Research by Cameron and Lovett in New Zealand supports these views. These researchers undertook a longitudinal study tracking 57 'promising' primary and secondary teachers for four years (Berger, Cameron & Lovett, 2007; Cameron, 2009; Lovett & Cameron, 2011). This work focused on ways in which schools supported the professional learning of their beginning teachers. Findings highlighted the importance of a supportive professional learning network during the induction period. Factors seen as contributing to successful induction included: the existence of a structured mentoring programme; supportive colleagues; the importance of professional conversations; opportunities to observe others; focused feedback on one's own teaching; and opportunities to self-reflect. Such factors, along with opportunities for focused professional learning, enabled beginning teachers to move from an initial focus on aspects such as time and classroom management to "more sophisticated and sustaining practices of curriculum development, critical enquiry, and reflective practice" (Cameron et al., 2007, p. 7). Teaching is thus viewed as a social and cultural practice. The benefits beginning

teachers gain from a strong and supportive school community, where their values and prior expertise are acknowledged and professional conversations occur, enable self-reflection and professional growth (Anthony & Kane, 2008; Bell, 2011; Cameron, 2009).

As a member of the ‘old-timers’ group (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in this supportive school community, the critical role of the designated mentor teacher is highly valued in the literature (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Hobson, 2009; LoCasale-Crouch, Davis, Wiens & Pienta, 2012). Hobson’s (2009) large-scale longitudinal study, involving a mix of surveys and interviews with large samples of over 1000 participants per year over five years, suggested that mentors are “the single most important providers of support for beginning teachers” (p. 308). Baker-Doyle (2012) found that experienced mentors who are aware of the school culture, school policies and routines are able to effectively support their beginning teachers, and also provide access to professional learning opportunities and networking with other colleagues both within and outside the school community. Similarly, in a cross-case analysis of the experiences of six beginning teachers in the United States (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner and Pressley, 2008), it emerged that the mentors of the more effective beginning teachers were themselves effective teachers who had had significant experience in this support role. Successful mentoring appears to include a willingness to observe the beginning teacher, formative and constructive feedback and collaborative reflection on classroom practice (Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Roehrig, Bohn, Turner and Pressley, 2008). Locasale-Crouch et al. (2012) also noted the apparent benefits of having a mentor teaching at the same level or in the same area in the case of a specialist teacher; increased commonalities and sharing of similar teaching experiences were identified as having a positive impact on the mentoring relationship. In relation to classroom practice, an issue identified in the research was that of mentors imposing pre-existing goals on their BTs, rather than facilitating identification and development of the latter’s own professional goals (Baker-Doyle, 2012). Such findings highlight the importance of carefully selecting mentor teachers (often referred to as ‘tutor teachers’ in New Zealand), to support these early years of a teacher’s career, which Feiman-Nemser (2003) calls a period of “survival and intense discovery” (p. 27).

A related theme apparent in the New Zealand literature is the focus on sequential stages of teacher development over the two-year provisional registration period, with the first six months in the classroom being termed the 'survival stage' where classroom organisation and management is prioritised, followed by a period of consolidation and then the emergence of confident practitioners during the second year of teaching (Grudnoff, 2007; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003, 2005; Lang, 2001, 2002). My own response to this construction is that such a linear sequence appears to indicate a uniform pathway of development with little regard for individual differences such as intellectual ability, background experiences, and contextual factors associated with the school and mentoring processes, as described above.

In presenting findings from a cross-analysis of seven different school sites where year one and two teachers were employed, Langdon (2007, 2011) argued that mentoring programmes should not focus solely on classroom organisation and survival, as is suggested by staged teacher development theories. Rather a spotlight on developing quality pedagogy to enhance student learning should be of equal importance. Given that research suggests that teaching accounts for up to 59% variance in student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003), this is of prime importance.

Highlighted in the research in this section is the importance of a strong and collegial school culture and the critical importance of a mentor teacher who is able to support professional learning tailored to the particular beginning teacher, their personal and professional goals and challenges, and their learning environment.

2.6 Conclusion

This literature review has canvassed fields of research relating to both effective literacy pedagogy and teacher induction and learning during their initial years in the classroom. While there is some intersection of themes emerging from this research in non-New Zealand contexts, locally there appears a shortage of studies around ways in which beginning teachers develop their beliefs and practices relating to the teaching of literacy.

From this review it can be seen that the teaching of literacy presents ongoing and complex challenges for beginning teachers as they strive to address the diverse backgrounds, strengths and needs of their students, the requirements of their school's literacy policy and the need to assess against national standards, focused

solely on competence in reading and writing. There are additional dilemmas regarding the use of available digital technologies and the competencies of both themselves and their students in this area. As the research reviewed demonstrates, literacy is a critical learning area that underpins other disciplines and is multi-faceted.

To interpret the journeys undertaken by the nine participants, this study used a conceptual framework involving both the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 1990) to map the ways in which they supported their students to become literate during their first year of teaching, and the notions of professional identity and communities of practices to investigate the ways in which interactions within the school community influenced their development as beginning teachers.

In the next chapter the focus shifts to the New Zealand educational context to provide the reader with background information relevant to an understanding of both the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis. Literacy-related policy documents and other resources provided by the Ministry of Education are examined in relation to themes associated with the nature of literacy that have been introduced in this chapter. The content of literacy education papers undertaken by the participants is also examined and discussed.

Chapter Three

The New Zealand Context

3.1 Introduction

Given the context for this research, it is vital to consider how the theoretical perspectives relating to the nature of literacy and literacy pedagogy examined in the previous chapter are reflected in current New Zealand policy documents and support materials designed to guide teachers at the primary levels. Adding to this contextual overview, I also introduce the three compulsory, literacy education papers which study participants undertook during their teacher education programme (Appendices 1-3). My critique of these documents and paper overviews draws on the concept of multiliteracies and the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1999) as introduced in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.6. It also considers the extent to which multimodality is addressed.

3.2 Ministry of Education policy documents and the nature of literacy

In order to illustrate the shifts in theoretical perspectives relating to the nature of literacy in these New Zealand documents, they are examined here in chronological order according to publication dates. Currently two handbooks provide guidance for the teaching of literacy; *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 [ELP 1-4]* (MOE, 2003) and *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 [ELP 5-8]* (MOE, 2006). The first ELP text to be published defines literacy as “the ability to understand, respond to, and use those forms of written language that are required by society and valued by individuals and communities” (p. 19). While reflecting a socio-cultural perspective through reference to social context, this definition fails to convey the notions of flexibility and sustainability indicated by Barton & Hamilton (2000) and Education Queensland (2000).

The narrow focus on ‘forms of *written* language’ in the definition also neglects the broad multimodal nature of literacy. In the subsequent paragraph it is acknowledged that “oral language underpins written language; the two are closely interrelated” (p.19), but the handbook maintains a dominant orientation towards print literacy. Visual language receives little mention, aside from the need for students to

understand how meaning is conveyed through symbols and images. These shortcomings appear a significant oversight given the curriculum document at the time *English in the New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 1994) incorporated three strands — oral, written and visual language — and suggested that teachers should recognise that “written, oral, and visual strands each support and extend the others” (p. 22).

When the companion handbook for teachers of years 5 to 8 (MOE, 2006) was published three years later, the above definition of literacy was amended to ‘forms of language’, with the restriction of ‘written language’ deleted. In addition to discussion of written forms of language, understanding of the more complex nature of literacy was evident in this text through reference to the use of language for wide-ranging purposes and contexts ‘across the curriculum’, the interconnectedness of oral, written and visual language, and the need to consider ‘patterns of electronic communication’ (MOE, 2006, p. 18). The text does contain reference to multimodality by signalling the importance of generating communication “through a blend of linguistic, visual, and digital systems”, and to multiliteracies:

It is useful for teachers to think in terms of multiliteracies — a dynamic, shifting set of literacy practices that shape learners, and all people, as social, thinking and creative beings. We need a broader concept of literacy now than ever before. (p. 18)

However, these appear acknowledgements only; the text fails to deliver the support that teachers require to move beyond merely thinking about such concepts.

The Ministry of Education cites use of Freebody and Luke’s Four Resources model (1999) in developing *A framework for literacy acquisition* (Figure 4) in the two *Effective Literacy Practice* handbooks. Rather than explained in the body of the text, this acknowledgement is contained in footnotes and easily overlooked (MOE, 2003, p. 24; 2006, p. 25). While the framework provides the MOE resource writer’s prescription for literacy practice in New Zealand classrooms, there is a lack of congruence with Freebody & Luke’s model, with the four roles being condensed into three (Figure 4). ‘Learning the code’ and ‘making meaning’ equate with the roles of code breaker and text participant, but the role of text user, important in understanding the social functions of texts, is largely overlooked, aside from

mention in the explanation of making meaning of “understanding the forms and purposes of different texts” (MOE, 2003, p. 24).

Similarly, ‘thinking critically’ in the framework fails to equate with critical literacy and the role of text analyst as described previously in this review. ‘Thinking critically’ is described as:

Reading and writing beyond a literal, factual level. It involves analysing meanings, responding critically to texts when reading, and being critically aware when composing texts. It also involves responding to texts at a personal level, reflecting on them, and finding reward in being a reader and writer. (MOE, 2003, p. 24)

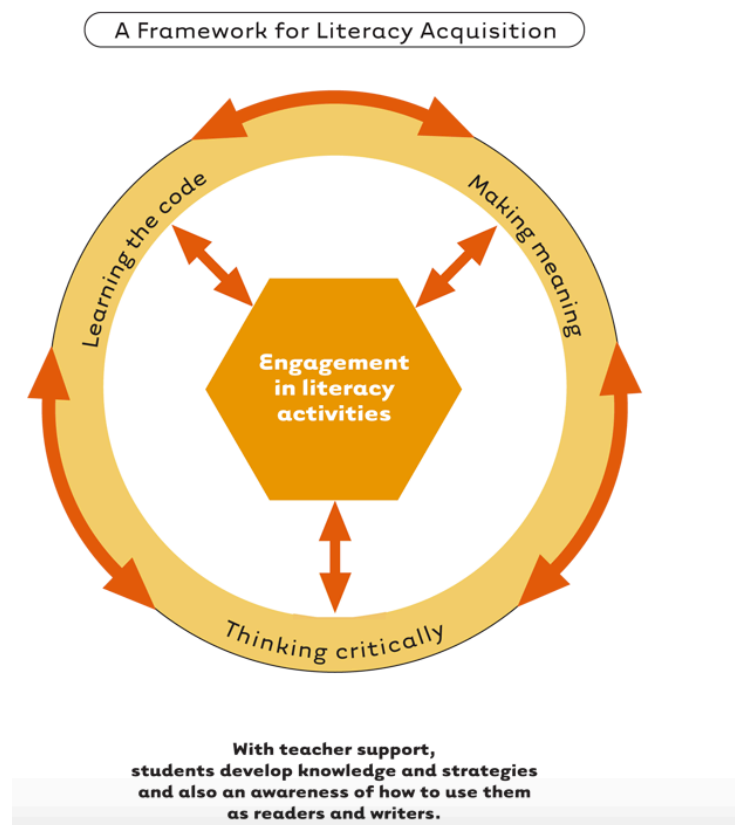


Figure 4: A framework for literacy acquisition
(Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 25)

In the companion version, *Effective literacy practice in years 5 to 8* (MOE, 2006) the explanation of thinking critically suggests a slightly more ‘critical’ stance with its reference to “developing as a discriminating reader and writer” and thinking about “the impact that the text is intended to have on the audience and how the impact is (or could be) achieved” (p. 25). While there are some shifts in these

definitions, there is still very little reference to the dimensions of critical literacy, involving critical consideration of the social constructions of texts (Freebody & Luke, 1999; Sandretto & the Critical Literacy Research Team, 2006). Acknowledgement of the increasing multimodality of texts and consideration of semiotic systems beyond linguistic and visual also appear absent.

The updated New Zealand curriculum document: *The New Zealand curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1 – 13* [NZC] (MOE, 2007) was published just after the second ELP text (MOE, 2006) and included a learning area statement for each of eight learning areas, as outlined in chapter one. A shift towards a broader conceptualisation of literacy is evident in the English learning area statement which constructs literacy as a social process with a focus on socio-cultural contexts incorporating “understanding, using and creating oral, written, and visual texts of increasing complexity” (p. 18). The need to become critically literate is implied through the statement, “Students learn to deconstruct and critically interrogate texts in order to understand the power of language to enrich and shape their own and others’ lives” (p. 18). These principles are also reflected in the key competencies of ‘Thinking’ and ‘Using language, symbols and texts’ (p. 12). An indication of the need to become critically literate, as opposed to thinking critically, gradually emerges through the indicators associated with the achievement objectives — ‘Purposes and audiences’ and ‘Ideas’ — from level two onwards. For example, level three includes indicators such as: “identifies particular points of view and begins to recognise that texts can position a reader” and “recognises that there may be more than one reading available within a text” (MOE, 2007, Chart of achievement objectives for Level Three: English). These indicators are merely examples of what learning may look like for each achievement objective, with the consequence that the development of critical literacy is not explicit at the objective level.

At the same time as this curriculum document was being developed, and to address the demands for a broader focus on literacy in policy documents and resources, the Ministry of Education established the ‘Multiliteracies Working Group’ (Sandretto & Klenner, 2011, Sandretto & Tilson, 2013). The group developed a framework that provided a “multiliteracies lens to the Four Resources Model” (Luke & Freebody, 1999), in an effort to address the need for students to develop:

A range of social, creative, ethical and cultural practices to make meaning in a technology-rich and culturally-diverse world. (Jones, 2009, p. 1, cited in Sandretto & Klenner, 2011, p. 3).

Regrettably this framework was never adopted, and as Sandretto and Tilson (2013) state, this was “a missed opportunity for New Zealand literacy policy” (p. 4).

In contrast to this attempt to modify conceptualisations of literacy in literacy education policy documents, as signalled in chapter one, the Ministry of Education then produced two curriculum-companion documents *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1-8* (MOE, 2009c) and *The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the reading and writing demands of the curriculum*. (MOE, 2010). These documents were aligned with curriculum levels and aimed at lifting achievement by setting expectations in relation to what students should achieve and by when. The nature and influence of these documents will be addressed later in the review in relation to their impact on effective literacy practice. However, the narrow focus of these documents is clearly evident from the titles and represents a continuation of the limitations of the ELP handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006) with their predominant focus on the linguistic semiotic system.

It is clear that in relation to the New Zealand setting, despite the forward-thinking views implied in the curriculum document (MOE, 2007), supporting documents portray a somewhat constrained view of literacy with an explicit focus on reading and writing. Unsurprisingly, this focus continues from policy documents through to the pedagogical support providing for New Zealand teachers of literacy.

3.3 Support for literacy pedagogy in NZ classrooms

A central feature of the two *Effective Literacy Practice* handbooks (MOE, 2003; 2006) is the ‘Dimensions of Effective Practice’ framework (Figure 5) where the authors have identified six dimensions they consider to be the key aspects of effective literacy practice:

1. *Knowledge of literacy learning*: Teachers require knowledge of theory about ‘teaching, learning and the process of becoming literate.
2. *Knowledge of the learner*: This relates to utilising patterns of progress, knowledge of home language and literacy practices of students and individual profiles of learning to inform teaching decisions.

3. *Instructional strategies*: Teachers are expected to have a repertoire of ‘instructional strategies’ or ‘deliberate acts of teaching’ in order to select those appropriate to their knowledge of the learners and literacy learning. This includes the common approaches used to teach reading and writing: reading to students, guided reading and writing, shared reading and writing, and independent reading and writing.
4. *Engaging learners with texts*: This suggests teachers should incorporate and encourage the creation of a wide variety of written, oral and visual texts, including electronic forms. In making selections, factors such as student interests, social and cultural identity and learning purpose should be considered. This is one of the few places in the handbook where the use of digital devices is indicated.
5. *Expectations*: This addresses the influence of teachers’ own beliefs, values, professional and theoretical knowledge. Expectations should be ‘clearly expressed’, shared with all partners and regularly reviewed.
6. *Partnerships*: This dimension indicates the importance of collaboration between teachers, peers, whanau and others significant to the child’s education.

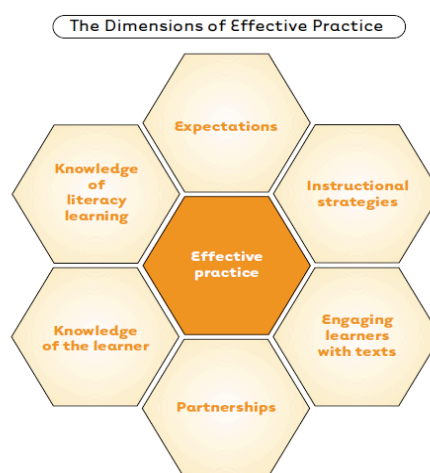


Figure 5: Dimensions of effective literacy practice
(MOE, 2003, p. 9)

The framework provides the structure for the handbooks with each chapter discussing one of the dimensions in relation to teacher practice and student achievement. Each dimension is supported throughout the handbooks by both

national and international research. Comprehensive direction is provided for NZ teachers to assist in constructing literacy learning programmes to develop the written language modes of reading and writing. This kind of direction has been applied subsequently to the two oral language handbooks (MOE, 2009a; 2009b).

Assistance with instruction relating to semiotic systems other than linguistic, is largely absent from all four handbooks. An earlier MOE text *Exploring Language: A Handbook for Teachers* (MOE, 1996) designed to support the former curriculum (MOE, 1994), did include a significant section relating to the teaching of static and moving image. While some of this content is now on the *Literacy online website*, from my observations, the book is rarely used in schools.

As indicated in the previous section, the teaching of literacy in New Zealand is further supported by *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1-8* (MOE, 2009c), which outlined levels of expected expertise in reading and writing for primary students. By making an Overall Teacher Judgement (OTJ), student achievement is ranked as being: above, at, below or well below the relevant standard (MOE, 2012). OTJs are established through collection of a range of relevant evidence gathered over time and should include evidence from the use of assessment tools, as well as from observations and learning conversations.

As a companion document to the national standards, the MOE published *The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum* (MOE, 2010). The aim is to provide:

Illustrations of the literacy related knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to draw on in order to meet the reading and writing demands of the New Zealand Curriculum from year 1 to year 10. (MOE, 2010, p. 3)

While these documents reflect the socio-cultural nature of literacy, outlined at the outset of chapter two, and provide direction and support to assist students to learn the code of written language, make meaning from texts and think critically, their focus is primarily on reading and writing and it could be argued that they do not align with the broader view of literacy previously discussed, which encompasses the need to make and create meaning in terms of a wide range of multimodal text types and to become critically literate.

In the *Literacy Learning Progressions*, for example, the role of oral and visual language modes is acknowledged and there are references to students needing to gain meaning from and use visual features such as headings, maps, diagrams and illustrations. However, such competence is viewed as a requirement only after three years at school (MOE, 2010, p. 14). In the progressions for the ends of years six and eight, students are required to use visual features when writing, but there is no mention of visual language in the accompanying reading progressions, an interesting omission considering the focus of the document is to assist teachers in preparing students for literacy demands across the curriculum. There is mention of using digital media to publish writing at the end of year four (p. 15) and to reading a variety of text including ‘digital materials with hypertext’ by the end of year 10 (p. 18). However, there appears a complete lack of reference to the differing skills and strategies needed to ‘read’ these text-types, which convey meaning simultaneously utilising a range of language modes, and require greater focus on purpose to navigate and gather meaning in non-linear ways (Walsh, 2006, 2010).

The National Standards assessment policy was introduced by a National-led government in 2009 and besides reading and writing standards, also established standards for mathematics. Schools were required to report student progress against these standards to parents twice per year, and to their Boards of Trustees and the Ministry of Education. The policy was designed to raise student achievement and “help the one in five students currently leaving school without the basic skills they need”, according to the Minister of Education at the time, Anne Tolley (2010).

The introduction of national standards was controversial on a number of counts. New Zealand academics Thrupp, Hattie, Crocks & Flockton (2009) were quick to critique the rapid implementation of the policy, without piloting and input from teachers. While supposedly to address underachievement, the government failed to provide accompanying support, in the form of professional learning or resources, to assist teachers in raising student achievement. This focus on student achievement, rather than ‘progress made’, was also a bone of contention, particularly in regards to labelling students as ‘below’ or ‘well below’ and the possible impact on self esteem (Smith, Anderson & Blanch, 2016; Thrupp et al., 2009). The policy failed to provide a comprehensive overview of student strengths in other curriculum areas and ignores socioeconomic factors that may impact on student performance.

Additionally, at a curriculum level, researchers have since reported a perceived narrowing of teaching focus towards the target areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Thrupp & White (2013) tracked the implementation of national standards over three years in six schools and noted teachers were also more focused on teaching the technical skills to attempt to bring lower ability students up to standard. On a similar note, Sandretto & Tilson (2017), in carrying out discourse analysis of teacher transcripts from five years of research, suggested teachers' responses signaled they 'do not have time to "fit [multiliteracies] in" because of ongoing assessment regimes' (p. 228).

The challenges faced by five beginning teachers during their first year of implementing national standards were documented by Smith, Anderson & Blanch (2016). The beginning teachers reported a tension between the assessment driven focus and what they understood to be effective teaching based on experiences during their ITE programme. Other findings reflected those reported above, with concerns expressed over the impact of labelling students as 'below standard' despite progress made and the lack of a comprehensive picture of student achievement in all areas. Participants also felt national standards disadvantaged English Language Learners (ELLs) and impacted on parents' beliefs regarding their child's potential to learn.

While there have been many concerns relating to the implementation of this policy, there were also positive outcomes reported by Thrupp and White (2013). They noted the process of gathering data to establish OTJs had increased teachers' content knowledge in relation to each curriculum level and that interventions to raise student achievement were more closely focused on student needs.

In reviewing literature relating to the teaching of reading in the previous chapter (section 2.3.5), a significant body of research promoted a balanced approach where students were supported to develop decoding, vocabulary, comprehension (including critical literacy) and fluency (de Sylva-Joyce & Feez, 2016; Davis, 2016; Pearson, 2004; Pressley, 2002, 2014). Continuing with the dominant focus on written language apparent in MOE policy documents, I now use the Four Resources heuristic (Freebody & Luke, 1990) to compare the themes in this body of literature with those evident in MOE handbooks and resources.

In relation to the role of code breaker, it appears, although currently unsupported by recent classroom observational data (as noted in section 2.3.5) that a more explicit focus on teaching phonics may be required in New Zealand classrooms as part of this balanced approach. If this is the case, what support is available to our teachers in developing knowledge relating to phonemic and phonological awareness? *Effective literacy practice in years 1-4* (MOE, 2003) provides explanations of these terms and their importance in developing the letter-sound awareness. There is mention of the need for ‘deliberate, focused instruction’ (p. 32) to support students to develop letter-sound relationship, followed by references to development through talk, writing (invented spelling) and reading, and activities such as rhymes, songs, repetitive stories and word games. The recently updated *Sounds Sense* support document (MOE, 2018a) provides more specific direction, and continues to promote phonics instruction to support reading and writing, but not as “an end in itself” (p. 4). The document provides a range of activities to enable a differentiated focus on the manipulation of phonemes according to identified needs. However, consistent with the criticism of *ELP 1-4* (MOE, 2003) by Prochnow et al. (2015) and Tumner et al. (2013), there is a lack of research evidence underpinning the suggested activities and no specific direction for teachers to assess and support those with low levels of literate cultural capital who may be struggling with phonemic awareness.

As noted in the previous chapter, there is a raft of literature promoting the need for readers to develop competence with a range of comprehension strategies to support meaning-making (Block & Pressley, 2002; Dymock, 2007; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Harp, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley, 2006). New Zealand handbooks align with this perspective and *Effective literacy practice* texts (MOE, 2003, 2006) plus content on the *Literacy online* website support teachers with detailed explanations of each strategy and brief suggestions as to how teachers might support readers in developing competence. Participants in the current research were introduced to these comprehension strategies and related instructional strategies during their literacy education papers.

In relation to the role of text user, MOE support texts suggest that variety in relation to purpose, form and content (MOE, 2003, 2005, 2006) is an essential condition to

enable learners to manage the increasing complexity of a diverse range of text types. However, as signalled in section 2.3.5, non-fiction texts are no longer produced for guided reading purposes with emergent and early readers. Instead, the MOE suggests that at these levels, non-fiction should be introduced through shared reading only. It is not until purple level (7-7.5 year reading age, the level students should be reading at after 2.5 years at school) that non-fiction texts for guided reading are introduced. This decision was made as part of the MOE advisory group's review of the *Ready to Read* series (2013/14). Subsequent justification via personal communication argues that nonfiction texts present too many challenges for early readers to manage within the zone of proximal development at the instructional level designated by Clay as relevant for guided reading (Kay Hancock, personal communication, 26 February, 2015). Given that guided reading involves considerable scaffolding by the teacher and group discussion, this argument warrants challenge. After all, the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (MOE, 2010) state: "after one year at school [typically at 6 years], students are reading, responding to and thinking critically about a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts at green level" (p. 12).

Also of concern, as indicated previously in section 3.2 above, is the scarcity of reference to critical literacy in MOE policy document and handbooks. Worryingly, the only locatable MOE resource to support the teaching of critical literacy appears to be a small section in the *NZ Curriculum Update: Issue 23* (Te Kete Ipurangi [TKI], 2012) which briefly explains the link between curriculum literacy and critical literacy, outlines the features of critical literacy, and includes a short case study to illustrate multiple interpretations of text.

In supporting teachers in the implementation of key instructional approaches for the teaching of reading, the handbooks offer guidelines and suggestions in relation to reading to, shared and guided reading (MOE, 2003, 2006). In addition, the Guided Reading handbooks (2002, 2005) contain more in-depth support for the latter approach. As signalled previously, rather than updating these hardcopy texts, content has been transferred to the *Literacy Online* website, a useful strategy given material can be easily revised and immediately accessed. An issue that arises with this means of communication, however, is the need for cross-referencing to ensure

consistency between new material and that already residing in other sections of the website. An example of this involves the suggested degree to which the text is previewed during the pre-reading phase of a guided reading lesson. Ministry of Education handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006), Gibbons (2002) and more recently Davis (2016) suggest introducing significant features and unknown specialist vocabulary or names. MOE (2005) states: “be careful not to take the challenge away from the reading – readers grow through meeting manageable challenges” (p. 44). MOE (2002) also adds, “in general, it’s best to avoid walking through the whole text” (p. 41). In contrast, there now appears a shift in MOE thinking with the *Ready to Read* webinar, presented in November 2014 as an outcome of the *Ready to Read* review, suggesting that teachers should now discuss the unfolding story and images, making predictions and using inference with their students prior to reading, to enable students to independently read the text with little teacher intervention (MOE, 2014).

While the MOE can be commended in producing visual guides which can easily be utilised in a range of contexts, I find myself identifying two issues with these updated resources. The first is that print information on the *Literacy online* website still contains original content from MOE (2003, 2006) in relation to this phase, yet at the time of checking, this particular webpage was labelled ‘updated on: 25 January, 2018’. Maintaining contradictory advice is confusing, particularly for pre-service teachers. The second issue is, as previously noted with regard to MOE (2003) by Prochnow et al. (2015) and Turner et al. (2013), that there is no apparent, readily accessible, research justification for this deviation from the intended purpose of guided reading, i.e. to work through the text *with teacher support and discussion*, and to provide opportunities for independent problem-solving. To support teacher reflection, inquiry and decision-making around pedagogy, access to quality research literature, both local and international, would be a welcome addition to the website to justify such shifts in thinking.

This section has examined current support documents and materials designed by the MOE to assist NZ teachers in implementing effective literacy pedagogy in primary classrooms. Whilst social constructivist underpinnings are evident, with a focus on scaffolded instruction that builds on individual strengths and needs, and there is reference to the broader nature of literacy in today’s society, a discrepancy

between the conceptualisation of literacy presented in the previous chapter and the MOE's provision of support for NZ teachers is clearly apparent.

3.4 Literacy education at the pre-service level

To strengthen reader understanding of the context within which this study was located, I provide here a short description and commentary on each of the three compulsory literacy education papers completed by the participants as part of their degree programme. As pre-service teachers, these participants undertook one of the three papers each year over three years.

The first-year paper (see Appendix 1) consisted of 24 hours of contact time and included:

- theories of oral language acquisition and language development,
- the role of the teacher in supporting language learning,
- the development of procedural knowledge associated with reading to students and engaging them in discussion around the text,
- criteria for the selection of narrative texts for reading to students and examination of associated visual images,
- the language experience approach,
- introduction to the writing process as a cognitive process, and
- the developmental stages of emergent and early writers.

Students were also introduced to the structure of the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) and they planned, taught and evaluated three micro-teaching sessions with junior children at their placement schools. Lessons focused on reading to their students, involving them in a Language Experience (involving talking, writing and reading), and teaching a writing lesson.

In the second year, pre-service teachers undertook the *Literacy Education* paper, involving 48 hours of contact (see Appendix 2). This built on the knowledge and experience gained in the first year and focused predominantly on supporting children to develop written language. Themes included:

- an introduction to the reading process and associated components,

- key approaches and resources used in NZ classrooms to develop reading competence and enjoyment,
- ways to support senior students with writing, and
- the teaching of spelling and grammar.

Students again engaged in micro-teaching sessions teaching guided and shared reading with both junior and senior students, and writing lessons with senior students.

The final paper, *School Literacy Programmes*, (Appendix 3) also involving 48 hours of contact, included examination and critique of literacy assessment tools then in use in NZ schools to assess speaking, reading and writing competencies. The second module engaged students in a more critical stance reflecting on classroom experiences and papers from the previous years, and considering how these aligned with current research and theory relating to multiliteracies. This included consideration of the impact of social, cultural and linguistic diversity and digital technologies on literacy practices (Anstey, 2009; Anstey & Bull, 2006; Luke & Freebody, 1999) and the implications for literacy pedagogy. Theories of critical literacy and the Four Resources framework (Freebody & Luke, 1990) were also examined. During the final weeks of the paper students used their experiences and understandings to consider the nature of their own literacy programmes. In this particular year, the paper culminated in their producing a unit of work integrating literacy learning with a self-chosen focus associated with the Arts curriculum.

For the duration of these papers, reference was made to the MOE policy documents, handbooks and resources referred to throughout this chapter. Students received personal copies of each of the MOE publications and the two ELP handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006) were set texts in all three papers. However, the aim was not just to promulgate MOE constructions of literacy and literacy pedagogy. In addition to these resources, each paper included reading and discussion around a wide range of both national and international texts, some of which have been referenced in various sections of the literature review (e.g., Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Ketch, 2005; Maybin, 1992; Sandretto, 2006; Walsh, 2006; Ward, 2002).

While explicit reference to multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) appeared in the third paper, consideration of the diverse literate practices that students bring to the classroom was woven through all three papers with attention paid to Gee's social view of literacy in year one (Gee, 1990), social and cultural diversity when selecting texts and resources, and adaptation of key approaches to provide appropriate scaffolding to English language learners (Gibbons, 2002).

Applying Freebody and Luke's framework (1990) once again, attention given to developing pre-service teacher understanding of each of the four roles can be tracked across the three papers. As noted above this framework was examined in detail in the third year paper. Awareness of code breaking began in year one with consideration of the elements of visual language in picture books and attention to phonemic awareness when investigating components of oral language and later writing at the early levels. This continued in year two when the reading process and spelling were topics covered; however, more attention was allocated to comprehension (meaning making) and comprehension strategies than decoding in this particular year.

Meaning making received ongoing focus throughout all three years with the importance of discussion and comprehension constantly reinforced when considering the various teaching approaches. Pre-service teachers were prompted to encourage inferential and evaluative thinking rather than focusing on mere recall.

As noted above, a focus on integrating a wide range of text-types was included across all papers as one strategy for addressing the diverse backgrounds of potential students. Content in the second-year paper, relating to guided and shared reading encouraged students to consider the role of text user, particularly when using a range of information texts in their micro-teaching sessions. The integration of digital text types was minimal, and would have added depth in this area.

While the role of text analyst received more substantial focus in year 3, ongoing discussions in other papers included consideration of the origins of text, the position taken by the authors, and how a particular text might position readers.

In terms of modality, the links between oral, written and visual modes of language were made evident from the outset as narrative picture books were examined in

relation to reading to children. This focus continued as an underlying theme that was expanded upon in year three, when the full range of language modes and associated codes and conventions was examined.

From this brief review of the three literacy education papers it is evident that the coverage of literacy-related content and pedagogical knowledge was wide-ranging. Clearly, there were areas that received more attention than others; for example, there was a substantial focus on procedural knowledge relating to key approaches in the first two papers.

While paper overviews prescribed content and pre-service teachers attended lectures with the whole cohort, tutorial groups were taught by a team of academic staff with varying teaching styles and research interests within the literacy field. Along with participants' individual backgrounds and variation in practicum experiences, these factors helped to shape the ways in which literacy was taught.

One of the aims of the current research was to investigate how these beginning teachers used the information from their pre-service programme in supporting their students to make and create meaning. The ways in which they addressed multiliteracies and explored multimodality when supporting their students was also of interest, especially considering the paucity of research in this area in the NZ setting. As will become clear, participants' journeys would be complicated by the nature of the MOE support materials that focused predominantly on the written modes of language, whilst the research they were exposed to over the course of their three literacy papers called for pedagogies that promote the discerning use of complex multimodal texts, both print and digital.

Chapter three has provided the reader with an overview of the context within which the participants developed their teaching of literacy, both in relation to the support provided by the Ministry of Education, and the content of the literacy education papers undertaken. It has established a foundation from which to view the research findings and discussion reported on in subsequent chapters. In the next chapter I outline the methodology used and introduce the research context.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

At the end of the previous chapter I identified the research focus and signalled my intention to investigate how the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during their first year of teaching. This investigation involved a qualitative study undertaken within an interpretive paradigm (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Building on the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, the initial section of this chapter explains and justifies the research methodology employed. The second section then introduces the research context and the participants. Ethical considerations are then discussed followed by an explanation of the research design. The next two sections explain how the data was managed and then analysed. Finally the trustworthiness of the research process is discussed.

4.2 Research Methodology: An interpretive paradigm

Research plays a vital role in enabling educators to increase their knowledge base in order to deepen their understanding of the social realities of teaching. Dependent on their orientations and beliefs, researchers locate their methodology within a particular paradigm or ‘world view’ when designing research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested that a paradigm “represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of ‘the world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (p. 107). They continue that research paradigms allow three fundamental questions to be addressed:

1. *The ontological question:* what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?
2. *The epistemological question:* What is the relationship between the knower (or the researcher) and what can be known (the researched)?
3. *The methodological question:* how can the inquirer go about finding out what can be known? What methods can be used for studying reality? (p. 108)

The literature suggests that over time, as knowledge has developed and research findings have been debated, paradigm shifts have occurred, where boundaries have moved and new paradigms have become the norm (Cohen et al., 2011, Punch & Oancea, 2014). Punch and Oancea (2014) reported that the evolution of qualitative methods contributed to this increasing diversity, but suggest that more recently research literature has simplified the playing field with the main paradigm positions identified as positive, interpretive or critical. Positivist paradigms traditionally involved rigorous quantitative scientific methods and the gathering of evidence to establish regularities and universal explanations. More recently, positivism has evolved and ‘neo-positivism’ is seen to encompass establishment or acquisition of a theory, followed by data collection to test it as a possible explanation for a particular pattern (Blaikie & Priest, 2017). Researching through a positivist lens encompasses a belief that you are independent of your research and an objective stance is maintained.

In comparison, the interpretive paradigm seeks to “perceive, describe, analyse, and interpret features of a specific situation or context, preserving its complexity and communicating the perspectives of the actual participants” (Borko, Liston & Whitcombe, 2007, p. 4). This paradigm suggests participants actively construct meanings for their social world and that situations are fluid and evolving based on context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, Radnor, 2001). Borko et al. (2007) reported that an interpretive stance is commonly adopted by educational researchers to “answer questions about how teacher candidates make sense of learning to teach and manage the complexities of teaching and learning” (p. 5). Similarly, researchers adopting a critical world view, recognise that research cannot be objective; however, adopting a political stance, they seek to bring about change through actively challenging interpretations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

This study focused on nine beginning teachers situated within their particular school environment, their natural work setting, and attempted to describe the theorising they used to explain their practices when teaching literacy; hence an interpretive paradigm appeared appropriate. The research was aimed at interpreting the participants’ understandings and meanings within this particular social context.

4.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methods are typically employed within the interpretive paradigm and hence are appropriate for this study. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) referred to qualitative research as an ‘umbrella term’ encompassing a wide range of strategies, designs, and approaches to data generation and analysis. From the literature surveyed, significant features of qualitative research can be identified as follows:

- Qualitative research is described as ‘naturalistic’; researchers observe people and events in natural settings and are able to locate the meanings people attribute to these
- Data is often gathered over time, which enables examination of process as opposed to defined events or instances
- Flexibility in terms of data collection times and methods is possible
- Flexibility in research design is also possible, as methods can be adjusted if necessary as the research progresses
- These characteristics provide for generation of rich data enabling ‘thick’ description, necessary to portray the complexity of the contexts involved
- Data in non-numeric form is typically analysed inductively for description or generation of themes
- Research generates theorising rather than testing hypotheses
- Qualitative research is suggested as the best strategy for exploring new areas of interest free from rigid testing of existing theory.

(Cresswell, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

These features were considered in selecting a qualitative case study approach for this research.

4.2.2 A case study approach

Located within the interpretive paradigm, case study design is appropriate since the research involved exploration of a bounded system, some beginning teachers in their first twelve months of teaching in New Zealand primary schools. This allowed focus on “the complexity within the case, on its uniqueness and its linkages to the social context of which it is a part” (Glesne, 2011, p. 22). Data from case studies

is typically generated using multiple methods such as observation, interviewing, and collection and analysis of artefacts, but may also include data that is statistically analysed, such as frequency counts. The possible depth of focus and examination over time allows for what Merriam (1998) termed “rich ‘thick’ description of the phenomenon under study” (p. 29). Simons (2009) added that this focus over time is useful in examining “the process and dynamics of change” (p. 23).

Simons (2009) also signals limitations or concerns raised by others, which should be considered when utilising a case study approach. These include: the subjectivity of the researcher, which rather than being a matter of concern, she sees as important in understanding and interpreting the data generated; the intervention in the lives of others, which will be addressed later in this chapter; and the fact that the data reflects one point in time when participants have moved on. There are also concerns around generalisability of findings and in addressing this, Simons states that while generalisability is often not the aim of the research, “there are a number of ways to make inferences from a case or cases that are applicable to other contexts” (p. 24). Cohen et al. (2011) added that case studies can contribute to understanding of similar cases and development of wider theory or perspectives.

Multiple classifications of case study type are described in the literature (Cohen et al., 2011). However for the purposes of this study, Stake’s (1995) categorisation will be adopted. He identified three main types of case study: intrinsic, utilised for in-depth understanding of a particular case; instrumental, where examination of a particular case enables insight into a broader issue; and multiple or collective case studies, where several case studies are described to provide collective understanding of a particular phenomenon. In this project utilisation of collective case studies will enable a more in-depth summary of the way in which these beginning teachers theorise their teaching of literacy across a variety of school contexts and class levels (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Glesne, 2011).

In summary, this section has justified and demonstrated the suitability of the research methodology selected. An interpretive collective case study approach, using a range of qualitative data generation tools would allow an appropriate lens through which to examine the theorising of a group of beginning teachers as they

enter the classroom in New Zealand primary schools and develop their teaching of literacy.

4.3. The context for the study: The participants

Selection of participants

The participants were first-year teachers, recently-graduated with a Bachelor of Teaching degree from the University of Waikato. As is common in qualitative research, purposive sampling was employed in the selection of these teachers. This allowed for the selection of information-rich cases, which Patton (2002) described as “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research ...” (p. 46). In this instance, the initial parameters for selection included graduates from the three-year Hamilton-based Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) degree at Waikato University, who completed their studies at the end of 2012 and secured full-time teaching positions for 2013.

The Bachelor of Teaching degree at Waikato is also offered to distance students through the Mixed Media Bachelor of Teaching programme (MMP), a mix of on campus block courses and online delivery. Due to financial and accessibility constraints, proximity of the beginning teachers to Hamilton was one factor on which selection was based. I am a full-time lecturer in the Faculty of Education and interviews and observations needed to be timetabled around on-campus teaching commitments. While an initial decision was made to exclude MMP students as they were located throughout the North Island, further consideration was given to the fact that they had completed the same three literacy education papers as Hamilton-based students, so those located at a distance between one and two hours’ drive from Hamilton were also invited to participate. In comparison, one-year Graduate Diploma of Teaching students from Waikato were excluded as they complete just one literacy education paper.

The cohort of Hamilton third-year students was informed of the study as they completed their final compulsory paper in literacy education at the end of October, 2012. Given I was one of the team of lecturers in this paper, I was able to present and explain a one-page information sheet during one of the final principal lectures (Appendix 4). The sheet was subsequently emailed to all students enrolled, for future consideration. Those interested were invited to reply to me via email,

signalling their willingness to be involved if they secured a full-time position for 2013. A similar process was undertaken with the MMP students with information delivered via the Moodle learning platform. Initial notification of the project was necessary while the students were still present at university, since once the graduating students leave, official avenues for contact cease and communication becomes more problematic.

Subsequently 17 third-year students expressed initial interest via email in October/November, 2012. Once ethical approval was received from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics committee, respondents to this initial call for interest were invited to submit a more formal expression of interest as they obtained a full-time teaching position. Selection from this group occurred at the end of January.

The initial intention was to include up to ten case studies. This particular year proved lean in terms of teaching opportunities around the Waikato region, but eventually nine of the 17 secured full-time positions within the timeframe and returned their consent forms signalling interest and a desire to be involved. Of these nine, eight had studied in the on campus programme and one online in the Mixed Media Programme.

I had intended to check the level of competency of the beginning teachers in their literacy education papers, to give preference to those achieving a B grade or higher, thus ensuring a reasonable understanding of the links between literacy theory and effective classroom practice. In reality this was not necessary as the nine participants available had all achieved within this range.

About the participants

Table 1 provides information relating to previous background experiences of the participants, school and class details, and the nature of their first-year appointments. Note the use of pseudonyms introduced to protect the identities of the beginning teachers. The gender balance of the beginning teachers was seven females to two males, a ratio that reflects the situation in many primary schools in New Zealand at this point in time. It is also worthy of note that of the nine who volunteered for the study, only one had moved straight from school into a teaching degree. Two others had worked for one or two years and five had established careers in other areas such as the food, IT and film industries. The nature of their teaching appointments

reflects the current trend for schools to ‘try before you buy’, offering initial fixed-term one-year contracts. Just one participant secured a permanent ongoing position and two were replacing permanent teachers on leave.

Participant schools were mostly located in the top half of the decile rating scale with just two below decile five. At the time of selecting participants, the Ministry of Education in New Zealand allocated funding based on a decile rating from one to ten. Decile one schools were those deemed to have the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Five schools were situated in urban locations (three of these in a large metropolis), with one in a small town and three classed as rural. The city schools were diverse in nature including an independent girls’ school (ethnicity data unavailable) and three multicultural sites with just a small number of NZ European students; one decile 9 with 70% Indian Asian students and the other, one decile four with a high percentage of Māori students and the third — decile one with 50% Māori and 50% from Pacific Island backgrounds. In comparison, the three schools classed as either rural or small town, were noted as having rolls of around 75% NZ European.

Participants taught a mix of class levels, with five classed as junior (years 1-3) and four middle school (years 4-6) at the start of the year. However, due to unexpected enrolments at the junior levels, Aroha shifted from a year 4/5 class to a year three class with a high percentage of lower-ability students at the end of the first term.

Table 1: Participant profile information (pseudonyms used)

Name	Background Motivation for teaching	School context	Class	Nature of appointment
Amy	Exchange in France provided motivation. Worked two years before B.Teaching degree.	Decile 9, Roll 110 Semi-rural Contributing primary 76% European	Yr 2 17 students, added 6 term 4 from NE class 1 Muscular dystrophy 1 Autistic - left mid-year	Fixed term Reference passed on from practicum school
Josh	Chef enjoyed teaching new staff. Preference for primary rather than secondary specialisation.	Decile 10, Roll not available. City Private independent girls school	Yr 5 27 female students, Ipad class 1 ELL, 1 dyslexia Teaches class for Maths, literacy, inquiry	One year contract for teacher on maternity leave
Erin	School leaver, many teachers in family, close contact with mother who teaches	Decile 9, Roll 487 City Contributing primary 70% Indian Asian	Yr 2 23 students 5 ELL (fluent readers but issues with grammar when writing)	Fixed term - 3 other BTs all fixed
Sarah	Chef travelled overseas, teaching always in back of mind, two in family. Felt this career was conducive to raising a family.	Decile 7, Roll 156. Rural Contributing primary 75% European	New entrants 8 at start of year Term 4, 32 students in total, class split for morning programme. Unusual to have a BT in a NE class.	Permanent. Practicum here then relieved.

Yvette	From England, prior experience in the film industry there and NZ. Enrolled in Waikato programme as 'best place in NZ for B.Teaching degree'.	Decile 4, Roll 356 City Contributing primary Multicultural with Māori the largest ethnic group.	Yr 2/3 21 students 1 autistic	One year contract for teacher on overseas leave
Aroha	MMP student Worked as outdoor education instructor. Encouraged to train by former teachers. Studying postgrad papers during Yr 1	Decile 1, Roll 576 City Contributing primary 50 % Māori /50% Pacific island.	Term 1: Yr 4 + 4 Yr 5s 20 students Many bilingual but most fluent in English Three chn ELL Tongan, Chinese, Cambodian Term 2-4: Yr 2/3 due to school reorganisation	Fixed term completed final practicum here.
Lauren	OE nannying but thinking about teaching Mum is an RTLB	Decile 8, Roll 160 Rural Full primary 75% European	Yr 1/2 21 students very able	Fixed term
Monique	B.Tourism one semester. Worked in school office then selected Waikato as 'best place to get a teaching degree'	Decile 5, Roll 424 Small town Contributing primary 78% European	Yr 3/4 26 students, NZ European, 4 Māori, 2 Cambodian (ELL)	Fixed term
Sam	IT industry several years Teaching always in back of mind.	Decile 8, Roll 540 City Full primary 67% European	Yr 3/4, 25 students	Fixed term Second practicum here and children attend this school.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Working alongside these participants required consideration of a number of ethical principles which are outlined below.

Access to participants

As explained above, all students completing the TEAL321B: School Literacy Programmes paper (Appendix 3) on campus at the University of Waikato during semester B of 2012 were informed of the project during the final principal lecture on 15 October and given the opportunity to respond through a follow-up information sheet inviting them to signal interest via email. Participants who had indicated a willingness to take part and who had secured full time employment in a teaching position for the 2013 year were then invited to take part. Once I was notified of their tenure I made initial phone contact with school principals to seek approval, prior to official information sheets being emailed.

Informed consent

Information sheets accompanied by informed consent forms were distributed to all participants, including beginning teachers, students in their classes and their respective parents and whanau, and associated principals and boards of trustees (Appendices 5-8). These sheets outlined the project and data collection methods, including video capture, and stated that participation was entirely voluntary. For one beginning teacher the information sheets were amended to remove reference to their 'beginning teacher' status at the school's request. There were six students across the total group of school pupils, who for various reasons did not give consent to be videoed, or whose parents refused consent. The beginning teachers concerned identified these students to me prior to the observation so that they were not captured in video footage. As the observations included just two guided-reading groups in each class, teachers were able to construct their session so as not to include groups containing these students.

Privacy and confidentiality

It was important to protect privacy by explaining the use of the video data to all participants and to state that the information would only be viewed by myself, the beginning teacher involved, and supervisors where necessary (Otrell-Cass, Cowie & Maguire, 2010). Data were stored in secure files on my laptop, which was only

accessible via password, and also in Dropbox and Google Docs, pass-warded web-based storage facilities. Completed consent forms and any paper copies of transcripts were stored in my locked office filing cabinet.

Anonymity

In this thesis and for any publications or presentations emerging from the study, all efforts were and will be taken to ensure anonymity is maintained by using pseudonyms for beginning teachers, their colleagues and students, and schools where necessary.

Potential harm to participants

No harm to beginning teacher participants was anticipated over and above that normally associated with any teacher being observed and interviewed on top of a busy teaching schedule. By way of reciprocity participants had the opportunity for professional reflection with an interested researcher. For the students in beginning-teacher classrooms, there was minimal disruption to their literacy learning with just a one-hour videoed observation. The potential harms associated with being identified in the thesis, publications and presentations, especially in connection with poor-quality teaching, was minimised through the confidentiality and anonymity precautions.

Right of withdrawal

Participants were given the right to withdraw from the research at any point up until the approval of each of the data collection rounds. In total the research consumed no more than six hours of each beginning teacher's time over the twelve-month period: three hours of interviewing, one hour of classroom observation plus a short conversation immediately after the teaching observation, and four short online surveys of 15-20 minutes. Students in these classrooms were involved in the one-hour videoed observations.

Arrangements for participants to receive information

All information was sent to the beginning teachers via email addresses supplied after they signalled interest in participating. Interviews were transcribed and presented to participants for checking and validation before further analysis. At the end of the year, a cumulative spreadsheet of each participant's survey data was also emailed to them.

Conflicts of interest

Of the nine participants, I had worked with five during one or more of the three literacy education papers. I was therefore aware of the potential impact of these previous professional lecturer/student relationships and took steps to ensure the role of research/observer was maintained through consideration of appropriate dress and interactions. The project information sheets outlined my role as researcher, involving documentation and interpretation of their beliefs and practices relating to teaching literacy, rather than to evaluate or provide professional support.

Procedure for resolution of disputes

Participants were advised to make contact with me if problems arose. If they had further queries then contact information was provided on the information sheets for my chief supervisor at the time, Associate Professor Beverley Bell, and chairperson of the department in which I was enrolled, Dr Bill Ussher. In reality there were no major issues during the project.

Cultural and Social considerations

I was aware of the need to contact an appropriate mentor should any cultural or social problems arise at any stage of the project. This was monitored throughout, in particular, in situations where the beginning teacher's ethnicity differed from my own, and in classes where the teacher's ethnicity varied from that of their students. No such issues arose. In regards to associated legal issues, this research conforms to the University of Waikato's copyright regulations (2009) and the copyright of future scholarly publications. Presentations will remain with the researcher. Participants own the raw data within the study, while I own the research data provided from the surveys, interviews and observations for any subsequent publications.

4.5 The research design

In establishing the research design, it was necessary to consider the types of data that would enable the research questions to be addressed and the methods most suited to generating this data. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) defined data as information from the environment gathered "in systematic ways to provide an evidential base from which to make interpretations and statements intended to advance knowledge and understanding concerning a research question or problem"

(p. 173). They suggested factors such as economy and practicality are essential considerations in this selection process. Issues such as availability and ease of usage of required technology, and time constraints in transcribing and analysing multiple data sources, need to be assessed. The researcher must decide how to generate an adequate amount of high-quality rich data to allow useful categories and patterns to emerge, while also allowing for a range of experiences or opinions to be sampled.

Methods selected needed to be orchestrated to produce a rich database, facilitating comprehensive interpretation in relation to the research questions. For example, Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin and Lowden (2011) stated that “people’s underlying meanings and intentions can be quite different to that which might be inferred from their behaviour” (p. 163); therefore combinations such as observations coupled with interviewing of participants support triangulation and informed interpretation of recordings. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) suggested data generation is never neutral, but rather a selective process during which the researcher is making decisions about what is to be sampled and what will be excluded based on their own existing knowledge. A certain degree of interpretation occurs before and during data generation.

After consideration of the research questions and the points noted above, a mix of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and online surveys was decided upon. This mix enabled the generation of quality data required to explore the beliefs and practices of the beginning teachers, as the year evolved over the four school terms of 2013.

4.5.1 Interviews

Interviews were held with participants during March, July and December/January. Interviews can be defined as “planned, prearranged interactions between two or more people, where one person is responsible for asking questions pertaining to a particular theme or topic of formal interest and the other (or others) are responsible for responding to these questions” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 198). Kvale (1996) defines an interview as “a conversation that has a structure and a purpose” (p. 6). He uses the traveller metaphor to describe interviews commonly used in social research, whereby the traveller “wanders along with the local inhabitants [and] asks questions that lead the subjects to tell of their lived world” (p. 4).

Interview types range in degree of structure from being tightly controlled with a schedule of closed questions generating explicit responses that can be analysed in a quantitative manner, to unstructured and open conversations that minimise the researcher's control of coverage or direction (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, Radnor, 2001). For the purposes of this investigation a semi-structured interview format was considered the best fit for the types of information sought in relation to the research questions.

Semi-structured interviews typically consist of prepared questions, both open and closed, that provide a framework for the discussion. In comparison to structured interviews the interviewer, while using the same schedule of questions, is able to probe for elaboration and justification in relation to important themes. The pattern and depth of responses will vary from one individual to the next but it is possible to compare equivalent answers across the group of participants while still taking into account additional or unforeseen information (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Radnor, 2001).

In designing semi-structured interviews one must consider such practicalities as location, possible interruptions or distractions, timing, and availability and use of recording equipment. The interview schedule should allow for recording of identification details such as name (pseudonym), location, date and time of interview. Key questions, derived from the research focus, will be included and may be accompanied by possible sub-topics one is hoping to cover or 'pick up' during the discussion (Radnor, 2001). Questions should be carefully constructed and pretested to ensure transparency and clarity of interpretation so that responses can be compared across the sample. One should also consider that questions are not totally neutral but "couched in the cultural repertoires of all participants, indicating how people make sense of their social world and of each other" (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 268).

The literature stresses the importance of active listening whilst carrying out semi-structured interviewing (Cohen et al., 2011; Radnor, 2001). In order to produce rich data, the researcher should promote a positive, neutral atmosphere, where participant talk around the key questions is encouraged and advice and opinions of the researcher are withheld during the recording.

It is important to maintain the conversation, review contributions and feedback to the participants throughout the interview to allow for co-construction of meaning and to ensure information is being correctly perceived. By noting body language, gesture and voice the researcher can monitor the tone of the interview and the physical and emotional comfort of the participant. Interviews should conclude with an opportunity for participants to comment on the interview, raise concerns or ask questions.

The interview is often recorded using audio or video devices and then transcribed by the researcher or another person for purposes of analysis. Participants own the transcripts and have the right to check for accuracy and validity prior to the researcher beginning analysis. Kvale (1996) suggested that the researcher should take time once the interview is complete, to reflect and make notes, either in writing or orally on the audio track. These immediate impressions provide contextual information later when analysis is underway.

Two types of interview were employed during the study, providing participants with opportunities to explain their teaching of literacy. Semi-structured interviews were held during March after the participants had completed six weeks at school (Appendix 9) and again during either December or January (Appendix 10). A debrief interview of the videoed observation of guided reading was held in July, this will be discussed later in this section.

Interviews were audiotaped using the ipad app Notability and during the first round a digital recording device was also used as a backup to allow my own confidence and competence to develop. All interviews were transcribed and sent to participants for checking prior to analysis.

The initial interview in the middle of term one provided baseline information in relation to participants' backgrounds, preparedness for the teaching of literacy, related strengths and perceived challenges. All participants, given a choice of venue for the initial interviews, elected to meet in their classroom environment, either during out-of-school hours or during their beginning teacher release time. Through being offered this selection of interview site and time, participants were able to choose a familiar environment where they felt comfortable and where time commitment was minimised during a pressured first year of teaching. This also

contributed to the establishment of an initial rapport with the participants as beginning teachers, rather than university students. They were in a position of control in their classrooms and each took pride in showing me their recently-established classroom environment.

Due to an unexpected invitation to attend an assessment conference in the United Kingdom during early December, it was not possible to complete all final interviews prior to the end of the 2013, and three were held during the following January. Each of these three participants commented that the later interview date provided them with more time for reflection without the influence of the last-minute demands of the school year.

In the initial research proposal consideration was given to the possible use of focus groups instead of the final interviews. Creswell (2012) and Lankshear and Knobel (2004) suggested that focus-group interviews of four to six people should be considered as they are economical in terms of the researcher's time and often the interaction between participants adds depth to the information contributed. Conversely there are disadvantages including possible domination by particular participants, reduced time for a variety of questions, and problems with the identification of individual voices when transcribing. In reality, the physical location of the nine participants made use of this research strategy uneconomical in terms of both time and expense.

Rather than analysing the video footage from the observations of guided reading described below, video debriefing interviews were held with each of the participants following the mid-year school holiday break in July. Several researchers discuss the advantages of using interviews to substantiate observational data. Radnor (2001) stated "meanings people attribute to the social situations in which they find themselves are important data" (p. 48). The decision to utilise video footage as a basis for interviews is substantiated by research findings that demonstrate its value in fostering teacher conversation around classroom practice during professional learning sessions (Borko, Jacobs, Eiteljorg & Pittman, 2008; Kleinknecht & Scheider, 2013; Seidel et al., 2011; Tripp & Rich, 2012; Zhang, Lundeberg, Koehler & Eberhardt, 2011). Findings showed that viewing activated teachers' prior knowledge and allowed them to connect with their teaching and

identify gaps between theory and practice. Kleinknecht and Scheider (2013) claimed they “foster an analytical view of teaching situations that enables teachers to build practical knowledge through the integration of theory and practice” (p. 14).

Each debrief interview involved prompting the teacher to view the video and explain their teaching moves and decision making during the literacy session. An initial explanation of purpose and procedure was given at the beginning of the interview, then each participant controlled the playing back of the recording as they theorised their teaching. Although related to multiple viewings, Zhang et al. (2011) found value in teachers having control over selection of their own video content for discussion, in comparison to Kleinknecht and Scheider (2013) who suggested that researcher selection of clips for discussion had an inhibitory impact on teacher contributions.

These debrief interviews occurred two to three weeks after the classroom observation, due to the timing of the school holidays and demands associated with my full-time position as lecturer. This interval appeared inconsequential with participants easily able to recall and explain their teaching as they viewed the footage. Six of these debrief interviews were carried out after school hours in participants’ classrooms using a laptop screen, while three teachers located close to the university chose to visit my office on campus for this interview.

4.5.2 Classroom Observations

This section relates to the observations of guided reading carried out in the middle of the year. Carrying out a semi-structured, non-participant observation in each of the beginning teacher’s classrooms enabled a degree of capture of the participants’ practices when teaching literacy, and formed the basis of discussion during the subsequent debrief interviews noted in the previous section.

Creswell (2005) described observation as “the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site” (p. 211). This allows the researcher to study procedures as they occur. Such data can then form the basis for discussion with the participants as a way of exploring and understanding their thinking about teaching decisions and actions recorded during the observation.

Observations can be classified according to the degree of structure and the level of participation by the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Mentor et al., 2011). Structured observations consist of a set of pre-established categories laid out in an observation schedule. The frequency of identified behaviours may be counted or noted at particular time intervals. In such cases statistical analysis of the descriptive data is often carried out. In comparison, unstructured observations involve the observer noting events that they view as being significant to the research topic. Between these two endpoints on the continuum are semi-structured observations which were employed in this study. An agenda of features significant to the research questions guide the observer and allow for comparison across sites and subsequent theorising in relation to the research questions. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) suggested that due to the sustained concentration required for classroom observations it is essential to have the focus clearly defined ahead of time to ensure sufficient data is generated. In addition, the degree of flexibility with semi-structured observations allows freedom to capture additional information of interest that can be addressed in follow-up interviews (Radnor, 2001).

The role of the observer while generating data may range from being a total non-participant, which may be possible if one-way viewing areas are available, to full participant where for example, the researcher is also a teacher in the classroom, or a student involved in research at the tertiary level. In reality it is not often possible to be a true non-participant observer in a primary school setting as it is necessary to hear and observe verbal interactions and it may be necessary to ask occasional questions of the participants to clarify understanding of the context (Menter et al., 2011). To reduce the effects of one's presence as researcher, effort is required to build positive relationships and trust prior to the observation.

Observational data has traditionally been documented using frequency or time interval notes written on prepared schedules, handwritten notes or audio taping. The digital video recorder offers a more comprehensive representation of activity. Borko et al. (2007) explained that the use of video allows for "capture the richness and complexity for later analysis" and "can highlight aspects of classroom life that a teacher might not notice in the midst of carrying out a lesson" (p. 418). The utilisation of video capture allows for multilayer analysis, mining of data at the

micro level as necessary and produces robust information that can be revisited as themes emerge and questions are refined (Bateman, 2010).

There are practicalities to consider in using video capture; the positioning of the camera is critical in shaping information gained. In addition to informing the research there is also the potential to exclude vital aspects. Technical components such as lighting, focus and noise level must be considered and within the classroom it is sometimes helpful to have one camera focused on the target group, whilst a second camera is focused across the whole class to capture what may be contributing detail, outside the scope of the first. It may also be appropriate to equip the teacher or particular students with wireless microphones (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Otrell-Cass et al., 2010).

In this study, semi-structured, non-participant observations were carried out midway through the year in each of the beginning teacher's classrooms. Care was taken to schedule observations after the mid-year reporting to parents had been completed to reduce stress on the beginning teachers. This resulted in eight observations being completed just prior to the end of the second term and the remaining observation after the July holidays due to the timing of the school production. Ethical issues around informed consent for students will be addressed later in this chapter. Each videoed observation lasted around 50-60 minutes and captured a timetabled literacy block which included the teaching of guided reading. Participants were informed that this was to be a routine literacy session and not a 'special exhibition'.

The decision to observe this particular component of the literacy programme was two-fold. First, the guided reading programme includes a mix of teaching strategies typically beginning with a short whole class focus which may involve shared reading, followed by small group teaching. This allowed investigation of the ways in which social and cultural backgrounds and individual strengths and needs were catered for, the nature and levels of texts used, and the ways in which the teacher scaffolded and prompted students to both process and comprehend text. Students were also involved in a range of independent activities and the observation of these allowed for examination of the nature of these activities, the mix of print and digital texts and technologies utilised, and the consolidation or extension of learning

evident. Secondly, observing the instructional reading programme also ensured a degree of similarity across classrooms to enable associated themes to be examined across sites, when analysing data. In comparison, the teaching of writing tends to follow a less-standardised format where the process for completing a piece of writing may evolve over several days, dependent on the class level and nature of the task.

I ensured time was available for a brief familiarisation period prior to each observation taking place. This provided time to set up the video camera and tripod, taking into account lighting and classroom layout, and enabled students to become familiar with the equipment and to pose any questions about my presence and the purpose of the observation. It also allowed me to put the beginning teachers at ease by re-establishing our previous rapport and for them to explain the sequence of the session about to be observed and share associated materials. Bateman (2010) suggested that with the availability of current technology in many homes, students are familiar with items such as video recorders and with being filmed. This should therefore minimise the Hawthorne effect, where participants may modify their behaviour due to an awareness of being observed (Cohen et al., 2001). In reality this was the case in all classrooms although there were a handful of children across the sample that went out of their way to ensure they were captured in the video footage as they moved around the room between group and independent tasks. Care was also taken to dress appropriately as researcher to blend into the classroom, in comparison to my usual role of lecturer/evaluator.

The observations began with whole class shared reading in five classrooms. All participants taught two instructional guided reading groups with lessons varying from 15 to 25 minutes each and a variety of individual interactions between teacher and students were also captured. The video was set up to focus on the teaching groups and remained fixed throughout the session. Through combining use of a wireless microphone worn by the teacher and video capture it was possible to collect an accurate recording of teacher-student interactions during the lessons. As with the recording of interviews explained above, an ipad was used to capture a back-up sound file by placing it near the teacher to record dialogue. This allowed me the freedom to either document any queries in relation to the focus lessons or to move around the room observing students engaged in independent activities. The

range of independent activities provided by teachers during this time is diverse and the nature of these often necessitated discussion between students, thus providing an additional source of ‘noise’ within the room which had to be considered.

Descriptive data such as location, nature and timing of the session, participants (using pseudonyms), group structure and components of the session were documented prior to and immediately after the conclusion of recording, along with any additional points that emerged during the session. The gathering of relevant artefacts supplemented the information gained during observations. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) and Menter et al. (2011) suggested such materials can be cross-referenced to substantiate the richness of contextual description, one of the key features of the case study methodology. In this study such artefacts included examples of teacher planning and learning intentions for guided reading groups, digital images of task boards or other systems used to direct students during this time, classroom displays, book covers and resources for independent activities. These artefacts added to the shared understanding during the video-debrief interviews.

4.5.3 Surveys

Participants completed online surveys at the end of each of the four terms. A survey can be seen as a tool for gathering either quantitative or qualitative information from a group of participants, for the purpose of analysis (Punch & Oancea, 2014; Stoop & Harrison, 2012). Surveys provide a useful means of triangulating data collected using other research tools (Creswell, 2012). While data is gathered via standardised procedures whereby everyone is asked the same questions; surveys vary considerably in terms of purpose and method for gathering responses. Harlow (2010) claimed, ‘Online surveys are becoming the preferred way of gathering written perceptions from survey respondents in research’ (p. 95). This medium allows for data to be gathered economically in terms of time and resources. In comparison to paper-based surveys the information returned is readily available in electronic format and easily stored. In addition, Glover and Bush (2005) suggested that, dependent on the type of questions asked, it is possible to obtain more comprehensive responses with an online format as space is not limited as in a paper survey.

As part of this study, a decision was made to use short online surveys at the end of each of the four terms throughout the year. The purpose was to gather reflective statements from the beginning teachers at significant transition points in relation to their teaching of literacy during that term, and goals or plans for the upcoming term. The surveys allowed opportunity for the participants to express their ideas using an alternative language mode that did not require face-to-face contact between participant and researcher. The data provided additional evidence of participants' personal views and attitudes around the teaching of literacy and the various factors that were influencing their practice.

Open-source software *LimeSurvey* and *SurveyMonkey* were explored as possible survey platforms as they allow for ease of construction and distribution. However, in consultation with Faculty of Education IT support staff, the decision was made to use Google Forms, a component of the Google site already linked to our faculty systems. This tool allowed for a range of question types and display options so that data entry time was reduced.

The longitudinal survey design allowed opinions and feelings to be gathered and compared over time, through use of a number of standard questions that could be amended or added to if necessary (Creswell, 2012; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Question design was given attention to ensure concise wording and clarity to prompt for the desired information (see Appendix 11). To this end, piloting of the open-ended questions was important and was carried out with colleagues and a provisionally-registered teacher in their second year of teaching (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

The length of the survey was also considered and completion time maintained at 15-20 minutes so that teachers were not burdened with a time-consuming task at the end of the term (Grudnoff, 2007). Links to each survey were emailed using participants' personal emails so that contributions could be undertaken at a time and location of their choice. This proved important in ensuring responses were generated as participants were able to work around end of term events, family commitments and scheduled holidays.

It was important to carry out initial analysis of the survey responses as each cycle was completed as the information gathered had the potential to signal emergent

issues and topics that could be integrated into the following round of interviews. Such data also allowed the researcher to pick up on any themes that had surfaced in the previous round of interviews.

There are some disadvantages to be considered in using online formats, such as the availability of internet access, surveys being consumed in participants’ spam folders and the regularity with which some may check their email inbox (Harlow, 2010). In reality the Google Form tool proved fit for purpose and participants were easily able to access and post their contributions.

In summary, this section has outlined the qualitative research design, including explanation and justification of the use of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and online surveys. Table 2 provides a visual representation of the timing of each period of data generation.

Table 2: Overview of research design showing phases for data generation

Data generation	2013: Term one	Term two	Term three	Term four
Semi-structured interviews	█		█	█
Classroom observations			█	
Online surveys		█		█

Note: The shaded bars indicate the period during which the data was generated.

4.6 Data Management

As the project included interviews, observations and survey data from nine participants, efficient management of this complex data set was essential to allow a comprehensive investigation to be undertaken in relation to the research questions. Glesne (2011) stated that “keeping up with data organisation during the collection process makes the bulk less intimidating and easier to manage” (p. 193).

Audio files from interviews and observations were downloaded from the ipad onto my laptop soon after each data generating round has been completed and were also stored in files in Dropbox and Google Docs. Transcribing of data generated during

interviews can be extremely time consuming, but researchers talk of the value of undertaking this oneself in order to become familiar with the content. However, transcription carried out by others always requires checking by the researcher for accuracy and I found that this less time-intensive process was also effective in terms of ‘knowing the data’ (Merriam, 1998). Funding was secured from the Faculty of Education’s Research and Leave committee to purchase transcribing services for half of the sound files, and two different people undertook this work for me. The second was employed owing to the inordinate time taken for completion by the first. Prior to transcribing, audio files were converted from M4a to MP3 files using free-access software and then put into Dropbox and shared with the transcriber. Once transcriptions were returned, I carried out thorough checking for accuracy and then emailed the amended versions to participants for validity checking. I completed the second half of the transcribing task using the Express Scribe programme to facilitate the process.

Following the completion of the observation round, I downloaded the video footage onto iTunes and viewed it to check for quality, and to note any points requiring clarification or elaboration from the participants. In two classes where teachers used low voice tones when interacting with their teaching groups, background talk of other students at times impacted on the recording clarity of teacher-student dialogue. Consequently, I transcribed the discussions recorded on the iPad for these two participants, prior to the video-debrief interviews. These transcripts were provided during the interviews to ensure a more accurate overview of the lessons.

Survey data were available online as soon as surveys were submitted and these were then downloaded and stored as spreadsheets. These data were stored electronically using two classification systems, one with individual files for each participant and a set of files for each round of data collection. This enabled ease of access to facilitate comparison across cases, as well as consideration of data generated over time for individual participants.

The literature suggests that the processes of data generation and analysis are not discrete steps, but are concurrent (Glesne, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). Reflection occurs as data is gathered, enabling the research design to be adjusted if needed. In this study, initial reading of interview transcripts and viewing of video and survey

data throughout the data generation period influenced the structure and content of the final interviews and allowed me to follow up on aspects raised by each participant earlier in the year. The quantity of data generated also resulted in my adjusting the initial research design where an additional round of interviews had been scheduled during the first term of 2014, the beginning of the participants' second year of teaching. By the conclusion of the mid-year interviews in 2013 I believed that generating data across the calendar year would be sufficient in terms of data quantity and quality.

4.7 Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is described by Punch and Oancea (2014) as 'a process of continuous search for patterns and explication of their meanings, through progressive focusing, reflexive iteration and grounded interpretation, which aims to generate rich accounts of the phenomena studied (and link them to literature)' (p. 219). These authors and others reiterate that there is no single way to analyse qualitative data and that any one set of data can be interrogated from a range of perspectives. Much depends upon the purpose of the research and the research question (Cohen et al., 2011; Glesne, 2011; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

For the purposes of this study and given the nature of the data set, the Miles and Huberman framework was deemed appropriate and adopted to undertake a thematic analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Borrowing elements from grounded theory which employs open, axial and selective coding strategies to categorise the data and generate abstract theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), this model of data analysis can be seen as an iterative process, as opposed to linear, involving:

- data condensation
- data display, and
- the drawing or verifying of conclusions.

Each of these stages is elaborated on later in the sections below. The three concurrent activities interact as one moves through each episode of analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014). Employing this particular framework allowed exploration and interpretation as to how the beliefs and practices of beginning

teachers of literacy changed through identification of patterns in the data in terms of similarities, differences and complexities in relation to the participants' decision-making, practices and theorising of their literacy teaching.

In this study the data analysis was both inductive and deductive, a co-construction between the words of the participants and my own thinking. When beginning the coding process I developed a tentative set of codes informed by the research questions and design. However, inductive coding then became central, as immersion in the data occurred and new codes and concepts appeared. This demonstrated an openness "to what the site has to say rather than determination to force-fit the data into pre-existing codes" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81).

In discussing this process, Cohen et al. (2011) cautioned that researchers must be aware of the encroachment of their own subjective views and must maintain the essence of reflections being conveyed by the participants. They describe data interpretation as a 'double hermeneutic process' where "the researcher interprets the data from participants who have already interpreted their world, and then relates them to the audience in his/her own words" (p. 540). One must check for residual data once coding is complete, ensuring that critical emergent themes have not been overlooked. On the other hand, this process must be balanced with the need to maintain a focus on the research questions and purpose; thus boundaries may need to be established to prevent analysis becoming unwieldy (Glesne, 2011).

Once data generation and the accompanying initial analysis were completed, a period of study leave during 2014 enabled me to 'enter the code mines' (Glesne, 2011) and become immersed in the data. I initially spent time investigating the use of Nvivo, the qualitative data-analysis computer software package. While this appeared to streamline some aspects of the data analysis process, there were several complicating factors that prevented me from using it. Firstly, university protocols dictated that the package be installed on my work computer, which was a Mac, and at that particular time Nvivo licenses for Macs had not been approved for university staff. The technicians kindly set up a remote desktop that would allow me to use it through my Mac. However, the period of study leave necessitated substantial use of home internet data, since the remote desktop could only be accessed online. I also felt uncomfortable with switching my data and associated documents between

two desktops, and preferred to have easy access via one screen. Using some of the ideas I had gleaned from the exploration of Nvivo features and from Hahn (2008) and existing knowledge of Word, I utilised Word documents for much of the data condensation and display phases.

4.7.1 Data condensation

Miles et al. (2014) suggested that data condensation refers to “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written up field notes, interviews transcripts, documents and other empirical materials” (p. 12). Saldaña (2013, cited in Miles et al., 2014) suggested this phase of analysis involves two coding rounds — codes being the labels that assign meaning to chunks of interview data in order to categorise information and facilitate subsequent retrieval and explanation. First cycle coding establishes the foundation and is often descriptive and low inference in nature (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Here, each transcript was converted into a table with participant contributions numbered in one column and labels or codes assigned in another as they were read and reread (see Appendix 12). The set of initial deductive codes arising from the research focus and questions was modified and extended as inductive codes appeared from the analysis and as noted in Table 3; the resulting list of first round codes was extensive in number. As this initial coding was occurring, I was considering second cycle codes or pattern codes (Miles et al., 2014), which involved grouping these first level labels into relational categories or themes to facilitate interpretation.

This coding overview was utilised for each set of data in turn and was adjusted as frequency of response dictated. For example, only one participant referred to undertaking further study across the 63 items of data. It is important to note that the initial deductive codes included Freebody and Luke’s (1999) four roles of a literate person, as I was interested in the elements of the reading process that teachers were addressing and this framework proved a succinct way to categorise this information and identify gaps.

Table 3: First and second level codes

First level codes	Second level codes
Literacy Ed papers Practicum	Influence of ITE programme
Before school begins Establishing routines	Initial preparation for teaching literacy
Release time Tutor teacher/mentor Colleagues Support in class Professional learning/Beginning teacher courses. School policy/ directives/constraints (also links to assessment further on) Contradictions ITE/school	Influence of the school community in terms of teaching literacy
Initial confidence Initiative - moving beyond requirements Reflection → change, future goals Emotions	Personal characteristics
Home reading/homework Meet the teacher Other connections	Home-school partnerships
Range of ability Meeting needs Organisation/resources	Literacy programme after six weeks
Shared reading Guided reading Independent activities during GR Independent reading (includes library) Reading to	Reading Approaches
Comprehension (making meaning) (Freebody & Luke) Comprehension strategies Code breaking (Freebody & Luke) Text user (Freebody & Luke) Critical thinking/ Text analyst (Freebody & Luke) Fluency	Teaching reading process
Meeting needs Purpose Planning Deeper/surface features Conferencing Language Experience	Teaching writing

Sharing/publication Handwriting Spelling Links to theme/ Cross-curricular learning	
Role of talk Making connections Practice Setting expectations	Teaching strategies
Goal setting with chn Modelling books Writing samples Running records Summative school focus/policy National Standards LLP	Assessment
Digital literacy Devices availability Internet speed Time to set up Programmes Ipads availability of apps Teaching Level of use	Digital literacy
Time Range of levels Pitching learning Knowledge of cultural practices Survival Life balance	Perceived challenges
Guiding principles - how do chn learn to be literate? ZPD, relationships with chn Experience What do chn need to know and be able to do to become literate? Definition of being literate Further study	Theoretical understandings

4.7.2 Data display

Miles et al. (2014) described the process of data display as “an organised compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action” (p. 12). Displays such as matrices and charts facilitate ease of accessibility by

allowing the data to be organised and summarised during the analysis phase. Successive iterations of such displays can enable patterns to be observed which facilitate the direction of one’s thinking and enable conclusions to be drawn, thus contributing to robust qualitative analysis (Glesne, 2011; Miles et al., 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

In the analysis of this data set the information in Table 3 above was extended for each data episode to provide a more visual and succinct summary as illustrated in Table 4, and to facilitate ease of writing of the findings. As time was taken to ensure accuracy and consistency during the first and second level coding, the use of the ‘find’ facility in Word easily enabled backtracking to the original data to supplement this information when necessary. Visual representations of the relationship of various aspects under investigation were also created and revised as my thinking evolved.

Table 4: Displaying the data

First level code	Category (second level code)	Evidence in Initial Interviews	Trends/significant factors
		Relevant aspects/quotes/participant name/line no. on transcript.	Summary of evidence in column 3.

4.7.3 Drawing and verifying conclusions

The third element of the Miles and Huberman framework, which tends to evolve concurrently alongside of data condensation and display, involves the formation of conclusions and verification of these through linking back to the themes and patterns identified in the data (Miles et al., 2014). These conclusions must be tested for “their plausibility, their sturdiness, their confirmability — that is, their validity” (Miles et al., 2014, pp. 13-14). These authors then suggest a number of ways in which verification might occur, some of which were applicable in this study. During each episode of data analysis the emerging patterns and themes were noted in a word document for further consideration and exploration. Where relevant, the frequency of occurrence and names of participants were noted in the findings as a

means of substantiation and to indicate prevalence. Contrasts and comparisons were also noted when appropriate.

The validity of the data and conclusions made can also be addressed through considering the trustworthiness of the research.

4.8 Trustworthiness of the research

Unlike quantitative research, where validity and reliability are more easily established due to the assumed objective nature of the data, the validity of qualitative research appears an often debated topic. Glesne (2011) suggested that this is because “we cannot create criteria to ensure that something is ‘true’ or ‘accurate’ if we believe concepts are socially constructed” (p. 49). As an alternative; the concept of ‘trustworthiness’ is commonly accepted as a means of demonstrating the credibility of qualitative research. The literature surveyed refers to various classifications of indicators of trustworthiness (Cresswell, 1998; Glesne, 2011). However, the four evaluative constructs proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) appear most commonly referenced and hence are considered here as a means of evaluating the credibility of this research. The four criterion applied are:

- credibility (rather than internal validity as applied by positivist researchers)
- transferability (rather than external validity)
- dependability (rather than reliability)
- confirmability (rather than objectivity)

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested this is one of the most important considerations in establishing trustworthiness. Miles et al. (2014) stated that the key question relating to this is “Do we have an authentic portrait of what we are looking at?” (p. 312). Several dimensions of this study can be highlighted to demonstrate credibility in the research. These include triangulation, the use of well-established methods, detailed description, long-term observation, member checking and peer review. Such measures also helped to minimise conflict of interest, given the previously mentioned lecturer-student relationship.

Triangulation typically refers to the utilisation of multiple methods for data generation (Cresswell, 2012; Silverman, 2006) and consideration of the degree to which data from these different sources correspond and indicate similar conclusions. If this is not the case, then differences should be documented and explained (Miles et al., 2014). The research design of this study demonstrates the presence of triangulation through the use of interviews and surveys, one involving face-to-face interaction between participants and myself, and the other allowing written communication through an online medium. The nature of interviews used also varied, with initial and final interviews using theorising through recounted experiences, whilst the interviews associated with the video observations enabled the beginning teachers to explain beliefs and practices in association with visual evidence. Time-triangulation was achieved with data gathered over the year rather than during a one-off episode. Shenton (2004) suggested that generating similar conclusions across a range of contexts, as in a collective case study, further contributes to triangulation. The nine case studies occurred in a range of settings as evidenced in Table 1, participant classes varied in terms of location, decile rating, class level and size.

Shenton (2004) also identified the use of well-established qualitative methods as a measure of credibility. Procedures and methods of data analysis should be gleaned from those that have been successfully used in similar projects. In this case, the methods of data generation and analysis were those commonly used in many interpretive case study projects.

The notion of 'rich, thick' description has been referred to several times in this chapter and is a regular phrase in explanations of research credibility (Cohen et al., 2011; Glesne, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). Detailed description is seen as significant in relaying the actual research context to the reader, and in this study the regular use of participant quotations as they explain their teaching of literacy, enhances the clarity of the research findings.

Long-term observation and persistent engagement with the research context is also cited as contributing towards credibility. Glesne (2011) suggested this engenders trust between researcher and participants, and strengthens understanding of the research 'culture'. Data generation for this project was carried out over a ten-month

period with three face-to-face interviews in addition to the classroom observation and written communication through the end-of-term surveys. This regular contact contributed to a high level of trust and enabled me to establish familiarity and understanding of each of the research sites.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, all transcripts from the audio files were returned via email to the participants to allow for member checking to establish accuracy. They were asked to read the transcripts and respond to any inconsistencies. The online surveys were not returned until the end of the year as I wanted these to be a reflection at the end of each term rather than influenced by what they had written previously. Also, as these were submitted in writing, there was no alteration to the participant contributions.

Peer review and opportunities to debrief are identified in the literature as avenues to enhance the credibility of the research (Glesne, 2011; Shenton, 2004). Such opportunities arose constantly throughout the study. Regular meetings with my supervisors presented opportunities for accessing their research expertise and clarifying research procedures and systems for analysis of data. My colleagues in pre-service teacher education provided a means for more informal critique and clarification of ideas, particularly those also engaged in doctoral study. As an additional measure of credibility, Miles et al., (2014) refer to the significance of the ‘That’s right!’ factor, the affirmations one receives from presentations that signal resonance between the research and the audience. This was achieved when I presented initial findings at the ALEA conference in Darwin mid-2014, and the ILA conference in Boston in 2016 (Carss, 2014, 2016). Those in the audience involved in mentoring beginning teachers and the beginning teachers themselves provided affirmation that credibility was evident.

Transferability

This construct refers to the extent to which findings can be transferred or generalised to other contexts. The transferability criterion is contested amongst qualitative researchers, with some believing observations are bound in context and others proclaiming that although each case is unique, it is in some way representative of a wider group (Glesne, 2011; Miles et al., 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that if there is sufficient description and contextual

information then the reader is able to identify with the findings and consider transferability. As mentioned in the previous section, this was enhanced through the provision of thick data such as those included in the findings chapters, where participant voice is clearly evident. Conveying clear research boundaries to the reader is also seen as a measure conducive to this notion of transferability (Shenton, 2004). This is illustrated by information conveyed earlier in this chapter, such as participant profile information, data generation tools and research timeframes.

Dependability

Merriam (1998) suggested that reliability cannot be applied to qualitative research, which is focused on understanding and interpreting from the participants' perspective, rather than the replication of results as in quantitative studies. Instead, the construct of dependability is seen as more applicable, and is closely aligned with credibility. It relates to the clarity and detail in the study, which enable the reader to establish that appropriate and proper research practices have been followed, and that the study could be replicated with a similar group. This is demonstrated throughout the chapter with description of the research design and clear linkages between research questions, data generation and analysis procedures. Consistency between the data generation, findings and discussion is also required. The doctoral research support programme in place at the University of Waikato also contributes to this construct of dependability in the research, through the provision of rigorous procedures encouraging a comprehensive proposal, thorough ethics application, close supervision and six-monthly progress reports.

Confirmability

The fourth aspect of trustworthiness to be considered here relates to the potential for researcher bias in reporting findings and the need to declare inevitable biases that may exist. It is important to ensure that findings are "the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). Declaring my background experiences and interest in the field early in this study alerted the reader to potential bias, and regular meetings with my supervisory panel have facilitated critical discussion and feedback to ensure reflexivity is maintained. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also refer to the need for an 'audit trail' of the study's methods and procedures that would enable an outsider to trace the course of the study and ensure

that conclusions are correlated with the data presented. Data generated should be retained and accessible to others within the bounds of the ethical procedures in place. In addition to the procedures already explained for managing data, a series of log books also contribute to the audit trail in this study and have been utilised to document other aspects of the process. These contain informal jottings such as notes from readings, meetings, and mind maps, diagrams and lists created when brainstorming data analysis and writing findings.

4.9 Conclusion

This study aimed to gain an understanding of how the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during their first year of teaching. To facilitate this process an interpretive paradigm was deemed appropriate and qualitative methods were employed through a collective case study to capture the views of the nine beginning teachers.

This chapter has documented the research process that was undertaken to enable the associated research questions to be considered. Explanations and justifications have been provided for the methodology and research methods selected. The procedures followed in selecting participants have been outlined and a profile of their backgrounds and teaching contexts provided. The research journey involved data generation using interviews, videoed observation and online surveys, and a thematic data analysis was then undertaken to ascertain the findings. Consideration has been given to ethical issues relating to the participants and the elements of trustworthiness in the research have also been identified.

The next chapter presents findings from the first and second rounds of data collection. First, a thematic analysis of findings from the initial interviews held during week six of the school year is presented. This is followed by findings from the video debriefing interviews held mid-year.

Chapter Five

Getting underway with literacy teaching

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate how the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during their first year of teaching in New Zealand primary schools, and how the sociocultural context of the school environment appeared to contribute to these changes. In examining participant explanations, I was interested in the presence of factors such as the theories gained during initial teacher education (ITE) programme, support from their school community, and the ways in which they supported their students to become literate, including the acknowledgement of socio-cultural background and the inclusion of digital devices to support the teaching of literacy.

Data sets from the interviews, classroom observations of guided reading, and online surveys were analysed using an interpretive approach to identify emerging trends. Initial codes were grouped into the themes, which are reported on in this chapter and in chapters five and six. Whilst the analysis of themes was inductive, the influence of my own experiences of teaching literacy at both primary and tertiary levels, and my reading of relevant literature, were lenses which had a bearing on the way I interpreted these data.

This chapter presents findings from two of the four phases of data generation. I will be reporting on teachers' explanations of their literacy teaching practice during the initial interviews, and secondly from debrief sessions associated with my observations of guided reading lessons that were carried out mid-way through the year in June. Reporting of the findings from each phase is subdivided as follows: the influence of pre-existing factors (those in existence prior to the start of the teaching year); contextual factors determined by the particular school community within which the BTs were located; and explanations relating to the classroom literacy programme, including home-school interactions, organisation, use of teaching approaches and strategies, and assessment.

5.2 Findings from Initial interviews: Time to settle in

I carried out the initial semi-structured interviews with each participant during week six of the first term (see Appendix 9). Participants chose to engage in these interviews in their classrooms, either during out-of-school hours or during their release time. They were keen to share and explain their classroom environments prior to engaging in the interviews, which included reflections on their ITE programme and the initial phase of teaching.

5.2.1 Theoretical carry-over from ITE

Participants were asked to reflect on their three-year teacher education programme and how the theory gained from the compulsory literacy education papers and practicum experiences was informing their teaching of literacy at this point. All nine beginning teachers agreed that the three papers were critical in providing the theoretical foundation from which to develop their practice, even if as Amy stated:

I think at uni some of it was quite overwhelming and it didn't really click until you actually start teaching and see it in front of you. (Amy, Interview one [Int 1])

Comments in relation to this prompt focused on theoretical understanding relating to oral language, reading and, to a lesser extent, writing. Common amongst responses was reference to the importance of oral language in supporting learning. Six beginning teachers (Sarah, Yvette, Aroha, Sam, Lauren, Erin) indicated the value of the role of talk and facilitation of discussion through the language experience approach, where students are engaged in a hands-on experience, followed by translation of their thoughts into writing (Ward, 2002). For Aroha this approach also enabled acknowledgement and integration of the students' own language and culture – their particular funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2009):

The oral language focus was useful in getting in there and doing it. The language experiences of doing things. Doing something so it was hands on, they experienced it, now let's try and write it down. And the cultural side because I do have quite a mixed class, which I didn't expect. Being aware ... it is good to be able to relate, not only relate to their world, but their language as well. So those things really stuck out. At this point the oral language is big for me. (Aroha, Int 1)

Seven participants (all apart from Sam and Lauren) also alluded to the importance of reading books to students, although at this early stage of the year they struggled to fit it in every day alongside activities such as swimming. Amy's comment below relates to the 'reading to' lessons carried out during the first literacy education paper and an associated micro-teaching session in a classroom.

I think that as simple as they were, the 'reading to talking with' lessons and the picture books that we shared, just modelling how we talk about them and what we can pull out, like themes. All of that was very useful and it transfers from your reading to talking with to all your other readings I think. Being able to pull that out during guided reading or shared reading times, looking at different things and using different question prompts, that was useful. (Amy, Int 1)

This indicates understanding of the potential to develop thematic awareness and how this practice of text-associated discussion can be utilised within other instructional reading approaches.

In addition to comments on the key role of oral language, five of the nine participants cited the importance of acquiring theoretical understanding of both reading and writing processes and investigating what students do as they engage in these activities. Three participants made particular mention of understanding the range of comprehension strategies utilised by readers (Josh, Sam and Louise) and how this understanding informed their teaching of reading. However, two of the three (Josh and Sam) mentioned the need for more attention to the ways in which readers process text and how this can be developed with lower-ability students, as Josh indicated:

I feel like I'm a bit lost with my lower progress readers for what I should be doing to help them with things that are a lot simpler, like decoding problems and enhancing vocab, like what I can be doing, aside from exposing them to more books, I feel a little bit lost with that. (Josh, Int 1)

These two were working with Years 3-5 students where the spread in reading levels is more noticeable than in earlier year levels.

In addition to acquiring theoretical knowledge around reading and writing processes and the importance of understanding developmental progressions, all nine beginning teachers also referred to the acquisition of pedagogical knowledge

to implement the key instructional approaches used to teach reading, shared and guided reading, and the introduction to associated resources and levelling systems. Amy's quote refers to the value of the associated micro-teaching lessons:

I think I remember doing a lesson ... it might have been second year when we went in [to schools] and did guided reading with groups. At the time it felt a bit random and hard being with kids that you didn't know, but in hindsight it gave me, because we worked with different levels, it gave me some experience working with each level and knowing what was expected, and trialling and "erroring" with what different age children can do or what I can expect from them. That was useful. (Amy, Int 1)

During these lessons pre-service teachers were working with students they had not met previously. However, they were provided with the students' reading levels and given scaffolded support with level-referenced planning.

An aspect of the third-year literacy education paper that featured prominently during the interviews was learning to use running records, a standardised assessment tool developed by Clay (2000) to record and interpret the processing behaviours of emergent and early readers. This tool is commonly used at the beginning of the year as a source of information from which to establish reading levels, and then regularly throughout the year by junior class teachers to gather evidence to promote readers as they progress. One of the three pieces of assessment in the final literacy paper requires pre-service teachers to demonstrate their competence with this tool by recording, scoring, analysing and interpreting data from a recording of a child reading. Seven of the beginning teachers (Amy, Erin, Sarah, Yvette, Sam, Lauren and Aroha) mentioned the importance of running records and the value of understanding and being able to competently use them as Sam notes:

And full credit to the university, the rest of the staff were pretty damn impressed, I showed my mentor and he was like 'you're doing these [running records] better than most of the people here' and I thought 'sweet' and even the AP, she's head of literacy for the school, I went and sat down with her to make sure I was, you know, doing it up to standard and she was impressed as well, so it's all credit to you guys. (Sam, Int 1)

In addition to the running record procedure, discussion of the composition, administration and value of other literacy assessment tools was included in the

paper. Monique mentioned that she would have liked more focus on the analysis of data generated by tools such as STAR, which is commonly used to assess reading comprehension from year three upwards.

The final paper also prompts pre-service teachers to consider further the shifting nature of literacy and the concepts of multiliteracies and multimodality. Josh referred to this and mentioned how interesting he had found this module and how he was trying to encourage his Year five students to consider the multimodal nature of texts. This single reference is perhaps indicative of the early stages of teaching and the predominant focus on the establishment and organisational aspects of one's literacy programme.

Over half of the beginning teachers noted teacher resources they had been introduced to during the papers, in particular, Cameron's (2009) text supporting the teaching of reading comprehension strategies, which is currently used by many teachers in New Zealand schools.

5.2.2 Reflecting on practicum experiences

Three of the beginning teachers (Sarah, Amy and Josh) referred to the benefits of having spent time during either their second or third practicum at the same year level as their current class. Sarah actually spent her second practicum in the classroom she now taught in. They saw this as an advantage when establishing their programmes and sourcing appropriate resources, as Amy mentions:

My last practicum was a year one and two mix so a lot of the things I had seen and I was fortunate to have a great teacher who was awesome at literacy and had some nice tools. The tools were easy to copy and model and sort of 'fake it till you make it' type thing until you saw it work. (Amy, Int 1)

Amy unpacked this term 'fake it till you make it' further by explaining that these 'tools' that her associate teacher used were a set of prompts for students to apply when processing and comprehending texts. For example 'Chunky Monkey' encouraged students to look for known chunks in new words they encountered when reading. She demonstrated her belief in the importance of providing scaffolding for her students by explaining that adopting such resources provided a framework she could implement until she got to know her students better and was able to observe their learning and match teaching content more precisely.

All three practicum periods for these participants took place from the second term of the school year onwards; the fact that they had never been in classrooms on practicum in the first term of the year was identified as a handicap by four beginning teachers (Monique, Sarah, Sam and Josh). Although they had spent increasingly longer chunks of each practicum in full control of teaching literacy, they were adopting their associate teacher's groupings, organisation and routines rather than establishing their own or observing an associate establishing initial routines and groupings. Monique's comment summed up these concerns:

[On practicum] you do a bit here and there, but you're not establishing the programme, you're not testing them, you're not forming the groups. You're not doing all those things that are actually involved when you start at the beginning of the year. (Monique, Int 1)

Aside from this issue, several beginning teachers valued working with quality associates who modelled sound literacy teaching using a wide range of appropriate resources. This enabled them to acquire knowledge of materials, and effective teaching and organisational strategies. To illustrate this, Josh commented on learning from his associate how to incorporate books at an independent reading level to support the development of reading fluency. Sam modelled the organisation of his reading programme on that of his most recent associate.

In concluding this section it can be seen that participants had utilised elements of content and pedagogical knowledge gained from literacy education papers and practicum experiences to establish their initial literacy programmes.

5.2.3 Initial dispositions: Being prepared

When asked to elaborate explicitly on how well prepared they felt for teaching literacy prior to the start of the school year, almost all beginning teachers claimed they were reasonably confident in approaching this phase of their careers. However, they expressed varying degrees of nervousness until they were actually under way and relaxed in their classroom settings. Erin's comments exemplify the feelings expressed by others:

Just before school starts everything's sort of swimming, you've got everything you've been told from your tutor teacher, what the school expects, what you've been taught at uni and it's all swimming because, you know,

when you go on practicum you just pick up another teacher's rotation and I'd never been on practicum with year 2s or anything like that and so it was like, "this is what I know, this is what I've heard from people" all sort of swimming and it's like ok, I've got to put this into practice. (Erin, Int 1)

Erin came from a family of teachers; her mother was a very interested supporter during this initial phase, which possibly contributed to the quantity of information she was processing.

In comparison, two beginning teachers (Josh and Monique) responded negatively to this prompt about confidence. Monique felt there was too much of a divide between the university environment and the realities of the classroom, while Josh had missed critical sessions relating to the teaching of reading due to family health issues.

Not really prepared at all actually. I was really nervous about all aspects of literacy, in particular guided reading because I missed so much of that particular paper during training. I didn't really feel that confident at all about it. Now I feel a bit better, I think some things that I didn't realise I had remembered, have come back to me. (Josh, Int 1)

This initial lack of confidence, which had since eased, was perhaps also related to the nature of the school in which he was teaching.

The participants were also asked to explain what they had done prior to the start of school in order to facilitate the teaching of literacy once the term was underway. Responses from six participants (all except Josh, Sam and Sarah) prioritised a review of teaching strategies, content knowledge and familiarisation with learner expectations through activities such as revisiting teacher handbooks relating to the teaching of writing and comprehension strategies in reading, and checking related online websites. The *Literacy Learning Progressions* document (MOE, 2010) was consulted to familiarise themselves with expectations at their students' year level. To facilitate easy access later in the term Erin created a folder containing what she considered to be useful 'handouts' from university and practicums and had since reorganised this several times as she developed her programme.

Associated with this, and noted by almost everyone, was the perusal of the previous year's student data to establish some sense of the spread of ability in reading and writing, although, as Aroha discovered, these needed to be considered tentatively

as the issue of the ‘summer slide’ in the use of reading skills and strategies can impact on reality (Petty, Smith & Kern, 2017):

I really didn’t expect the range to be as large, even though I had class statistics. They didn’t necessarily reflect where they were at, particularly at the beginning of the year because it was all based on end of year testing. It sort of felt like they’d gone back several levels just because it was, was it seven weeks over the holidays? I didn’t remember to think about that, I didn’t think about that time off, when they may not be reading regularly. (Aroha, Int 1)

Participants noted this was just one source of evidence and that they needed to make their own observations as well.

Demonstrating awareness of the value of independent literacy activities appropriate to the range of learners, seven beginning teachers (except Sam and Josh) referred to the prior preparation of resources such as creating a taskboard for the reading rotation, making classroom displays, creating literacy-related card activities, and gathering library books, nursery rhymes and songs. Some also noted the importance of selecting instructional readers at fluency levels for independent reading until guided reading groups were established (Amy, Sarah, Erin, Yvette, Lauren). Aroha commented how tutor teachers and colleagues both within and outside of the school offered support with these initial selections:

Probably one of the tips that I was given that was most useful was finding something for my high end readers, like 13+, that they can relate to and be interested in at their reading level. That was something I thought ‘oh that’s a good point’. (Aroha, Int 1)

As well as gathering books at fluency levels, Sarah, with her new entrant class, also established an initial central focus alongside such activities and resources, to engage and promote discussion:

I had things like the swan plants and things like that from home. We have had massive discussions about caterpillars and the metamorphosis and how they turn into butterflies and books and literacy around that so that’s been a big kind of focal point for us as well. (Sarah, Int 1)

Sam, citing his lack of experience in setting up a class, found this period a challenge:

[I did] sort of very general long term planning, but that was the other thing. I found, having never been exposed to setting up a classroom from scratch, I didn't really know what I needed or where to start. (Sam, Int 1)

Sam's comments were atypical and contrasted with others who had engaged in a variety of activities prior to the commencement of the school year.

Overall, my analysis of the data showed that most beginning teachers felt confident about beginning the year. They used the time prior to school starting to establish some of the literacy-related components of their classroom environment, and also to both revise and develop familiarity with teacher and student resources. An initial familiarity with the range of ability of their students was gained through examination of class data from the previous year.

5.2.4 Support from the school community

This section provides evidence of support for literacy teaching from within the school community and, in particular, the influence of the designated tutor teacher in encouraging the development of existing practices and beliefs. In some cases this support contradicted understandings gained from their ITE experiences, in relation to the teaching of literacy.

When explaining the role their tutor teacher played, it appeared that the degree of focus on literacy related matters varied considerably across the group. For five participants, ongoing, supportive and encouraging discussions around aspects of organisation of the literacy programme predominated at this early stage. Two had regular fortnightly meetings scheduled for setting goals and reviewing progress. These beginning teachers felt confident with the advice given, which still allowed them to own their programmes and gave them the freedom to trial their ideas. Erin commented that her supportive tutor teacher was in just her fourth year of teaching and she felt heartened that she herself could aspire to such a role within a relatively short timeframe.

Yvette, on the other hand, felt overwhelmed with the support and number of suggestions from her mentor, who was regarded as the literacy expert within the school. This teacher taught Reading Recovery, but had not been in the classroom full-time for some years. Yvette expressed the need for time to consider these suggestions and how they might fit with her own thinking and her existing

programme. An example of this was the recommendation that she should establish a writing table as an independent activity for her students. Yvette was concerned from an organisational perspective about how she would manage student outputs from this and the pieces of paper that might end up spread around the classroom. However, her recount during the interview of a conversation with her tutor teacher demonstrated that she was open in expressing her feelings:

I don't want you thinking that you give [me suggestions] and never see these things happen. They are and will, but you know when it's ... I have a certain amount to do and plan for the next day, these are things that will happen you know, they will happen at some point. (Yvette, Int 1)

This comment indicates she was able to both acknowledge the support provided by her tutor teacher and also indicate that she was needed time to consider suggestions.

At the other end of the scale, Sam felt he had established a positive relationship with his tutor teacher, but their regular meetings had little focus on literacy. Monique with her year 3/4 class commented:

I wouldn't say a lot of support from my tutor teacher, I've kind of been expected to know it. You know, "you're expected to know it, you're out of Uni you should have done this. But if you don't know it, find out about it". (Monique, Int 1)

Monique's tutor teacher was deputy principal and thus carried a heavy workload with additional responsibilities; she had not yet had a chance to carry out an observational visit in Monique's classroom. In comparison, the two other beginning teachers in the school had already received observational visits from their tutor teachers and Monique was feeling under-supported in comparison.

There were also occasional findings of perceived mismatches between the theoretical knowledge and recommended practice developed during the initial teacher education programme and advice given by the tutor teachers. For Josh, this concerned the use of fluency-level reading material. Fluency-level texts are considered to be those at levels below the instructional reading level and are often sent home as easy reading material to support reading mileage and consolidate both processing and comprehension of vocabulary and text. Josh had seen this practice implemented successfully by his practicum associate. However, his mentor teacher suggested that this was unnecessary, firstly because these year-five parents were

accustomed to their children bringing home materials at an instructional level and would query why they were bringing home 'easy' material they could read, and second, she suggested it was appropriate to encourage free choice reading at this level instead. Given the nature of the school community Josh amended his practice based on his tutor teacher's explanation.

For Yvette, the contradiction with what she believed, related to the teaching of writing and the common practice of scaffolding students throughout the writing process by first encouraging a discussion of purpose and planning the writing, and then including discussion to recraft after writing to improve quality. Yvette's mentor teacher, who had been out of the classroom carrying out specialist roles for some time, felt that this discussion and scaffolded support was unnecessary, and that students should just be encouraged to write and get their ideas down on paper without the other stages intruding. Yvette was proactive in managing this issue by calling a meeting with her mentor and the deputy principal, who provided support with teaching Maths in Yvette's room. The issue was resolved through Yvette explaining the writing process to her mentor teacher and referring to current Ministry of Education handbooks (MOE, 2003; 2006) for evidence.

While the mentor teachers carried out a designated role in working with the participants, most of the latter also valued their professional relationships with other teachers within the school and their team leaders, and were comfortable seeking help from these teachers when required. Amy, Aroha, Sarah and Josh commented on the power of informal staffroom conversations to either provide reassurance regarding teaching practices or to provide suggestions to supplement these. In Josh's situation, the teachers who provided literacy support for some of his lower-ability students were of the most help, as he felt they were very experienced and had much to share. He was able to collaborate with them to bridge the divide between the classroom programme and specialist support given, thus extending his knowledge of how to support these priority students.

Sam was concerned that he was the sole provisionally registered teacher (PRT) in his school community:

I think having someone else or more people in the same boat would be useful to me. I think a year 3 [teacher] would be the newest. I would like just

somebody in the same boat experiencing the same sort of problems. The staff here are great, you can talk to them about anything and they'll offer you help but they're not in the same situation. It's been a long time for most of them since they've been in this position. (Sam, Int 1)

This statement is not explicitly related to the teaching of literacy. However, in comparison, five other BTs were single PRTs in their schools; all appeared comfortable and verbalised strong support with teaching literacy from either their mentor teachers or other staff members.

Aside from support from tutor teachers and colleagues, syndicate term-planning offered direction for literacy teaching. In addition, for several participants, there were also factors at the school-wide level that impacted on their teaching, such as policy guidelines, assessment regimes, expectations and focus areas for professional learning. Aroha stated that maths and literacy were considered the target areas in her low-decile school and that the teaching of these had to receive priority; she struggled with this initially whilst swimming was underway. Josh had just been informed that he could no longer include a regular library visit in his programme but he could send his year-five students to the library for independent research as necessary, under the guidance of the resident teacher librarian. He found this decision concerning, given his own passion for visiting the library and sharing sophisticated picture books with his students. For Monique, the structured, school-wide literacy guidelines in place provided a roadmap for the implementation of her literacy programme: 'You have that little bit of flexibility but if they come into your classroom that's what it should look like'. However, she wondered if she might feel constrained by these boundaries after three or four years of teaching.

Professional learning programmes relating to the teaching of literacy provided additional guidance and support in six of the nine schools. Amy's school, for example, was into the second year of a leadership and assessment contract, through the Ministry of Education, with a significant focus on children being able to verbalise their learning. She felt this was having a positive impact on the structuring of lessons:

It's a huge focus of our school as well that children should be able to tell any stranger who walks in the room, what they are learning and how their

activity is supporting what they are learning and what they will know once they have learnt it. (Amy, Int 1)

Two beginning teachers, Lauren and Sarah, worked in schools currently involved in a three-year writing programme facilitated by a private provider. Both found the accompanying structure of value in the initial weeks of teaching in supplementing their existing knowledge of teaching writing. Other target areas for staff development included the teaching of spelling and learning to use movie cameras to capture learning in the classroom. The latter was the only reference to staff development involving technology and a multimodal focus.

In terms of professional learning through the Beginning Teacher support programme, at this point in time only Erin had attended a regional session targeting literacy programmes. The value of this in enabling revision of, and connections with, previous learning is evidenced by the following statement:

My course, that was a huge refresher for me, a lot of it was what I'd learned at uni but it was now that I've had experience, you hear it all again and you've learned it all but you've never really had your own experience to directly link it to. So now it's like cool this is what I learned at uni, I've been in the classroom and we're going back for a refresher and making those connections from what you've learned to what you've experienced, this worked well, this didn't. (Erin, Int 1)

This section has demonstrated the nature of participant interactions with others within their school environment. The data demonstrates variation in the levels and nature of support within the nine schools and this will be addressed further during the discussion chapter. Besides designated tutor teachers, discussions with other colleagues are of benefit, as are syndicate planning meetings and opportunities for professional learning.

5.2.5 Explaining our initial literacy programmes: Routines and talk

Almost all participants (apart from Yvette) commented on the value of an initial phase of whole-class teaching in literacy over the first two to three weeks, a practice suggested during their literacy education papers. This involved utilising approaches such as shared reading and reading to students and gradually introducing procedures associated with independent activities that students undertake during the guided reading section of the programme. They believed this allowed time to build the

classroom culture and to model and promote a love of books and reading which they saw as essential. Just over half of the beginning teachers identified the establishment of routines for independent activities as time-consuming but essential to ensuring uninterrupted teaching once the teaching of guided reading groups were underway. The need for repetition to strengthen these routines was commonly expressed for all class levels. Erin illustrates these thoughts below:

I've learnt this - kids just need things to be gone over. You can go over things ten times and you'll still have some doing it wrong. You just need to keep going over it so if you introduce too much at once it's not going to work and it didn't. So it was a matter of just doing a few at a time. (Erin, Int 1)

In further support of this initial whole-class focus, teachers felt it allowed time to gather information from observations and carry out running records and other literacy assessments to update the previous year's data to accurately inform ability-grouping for guided reading. Also evident here is the regard for multiple data sources to inform such judgements.

Discussion during individual interviews then shifted from the topic of infrastructure of routines, organisation and resources to the use of teaching strategies and approaches. Despite previous discussion of the significance of this communication mode when referring to the impact of theory from their ITE programme (see 5.2.1), the teaching of oral language received less explicit attention than subsequent explanations of teaching reading and writing. However, the important role of oral language in supporting learning is evident within these explanations. Six of the seven participants (Amy, Josh, Sam, Sarah, Lauren and Erin) who made reference to oral language noted the importance of oral competence in participating in either whole-class discussion or small groups. There was mention of news groups and activities such as reciting days of the week and singing a song to develop confidence and to set the tone for the day in three junior level classrooms (Sarah, Amy, Yvette). A more explicit focus on scaffolding oral language use was explained as necessary in just three classrooms (Lauren, Josh, Aroha). Lauren has a word wall where interesting words encountered throughout the programme were recorded, examined and discussed to develop understanding of meaning. Josh, with his year-five students, had them preparing news group presentations where they could use

technology if they wished to present in a ‘slightly formalised setting’. He admitted to correcting grammar incidentally when his students were speaking:

With oral language the focus from me is just correcting so much poor grammar that I hear (laughs). That is one area in oral language that is probably done all day everyday, where as in writing I would never correct every single mistake in writing but in oral language I’m ruthless. (Josh, Int 1)

While the focus here is on oral language, his reference to not correcting everything in writing relates to understanding the need to encourage writer’s voice by focusing initially on quality of ideas and then later addressing proof-reading when publication is considered.

Erin included an explicit focus on extending ideas by prompted for additional information beyond a simple explanation of ‘this is my ...’ and by encouraging students to use open and closed questions to elicit more information. Aroha also valued oral communication, but encouraging speaking and listening was proving a major challenge, particularly with having several bilingual students in her class:

It just seems to be something that even a couple of other teachers have picked up with my class. The communication with my class just isn’t really there, the oral language isn’t there and it’s about really encouraging them to talk things out. Even talking about things that they know and things that we’ve experienced and done in school, like going to Totara Park. Just trying to get them to come up with words to describe or how they felt with things that we did has been quite difficult so that whole communication, the oral language is what I’m really pushing. (Aroha, Int 1)

At this point in the first term, participation, confidence in presenting ideas and developing vocabulary appeared key focus areas in relation to talk. Attention to the achievement objectives of the English learning area relating to oral language (MOE, 2007) seemed limited, with no mention of development of listening skills or speaking for a variety of purposes.

5.2.6 Explaining our initial literacy programmes: Teaching writing

Almost all beginning teachers talked at length about the teaching of writing during this initial phase. Their contributions illustrated some understanding of a number of key principles underpinning the effective teaching of writing as promoted during

their ITE programmes. They also demonstrated evidence of the challenges in developing writing programmes that provide for the range of learners within a class.

Erin was most enthusiastic and commented that she loved teaching writing with her year-two students, as did Yvette at a similar level. Yvette found it more enjoyable than teaching older, less enthusiastic students on practicum. Coincidentally, Sam and Aroha, commented on an initial lack of enthusiasm from their older students, and how they were working hard to build student confidence and pride in their writing by praising the quality of ideas or deeper features first and addressing surface features after ideas were recorded on paper. As mentioned previously in relation to the comment made by Josh, this indicates a belief that students should see the process of writing as a purposeful means of conveying their own ideas to an audience and the need for their students to become confident writers.

Five beginning teachers mentioned they were either less confident or found teaching writing more difficult than teaching reading (Sam, Josh, Monique, Sarah and Amy). Reasons given for this included managing the individual goals of each student, providing for the wide range of writing abilities, and the fact that they saw writing as a creative process and thus differing from reading, where teaching was focused around making meaning from someone else's text with a small group or class. Josh had focused on conveying meaning when writing character descriptions with his year-5 students, but then found this was impeded by his students' lack of knowledge of text structure and language features. In order to address this concern with teaching writing he had decided that this would be his target area for teacher development that term. At the other end of the spectrum, Sarah was addressing the understandable challenge of encouraging new entrant students to write:

How am I going to get a child who doesn't know how to hold a pencil to form letters to write a story down on the paper? How am I going to get what they want to write from their head onto paper, without doing it for them?
(Sarah, Int 1)

In terms of motivating students to engage in creating meaning through print, seven beginning teachers (all except Josh and Lauren) stressed the importance of providing meaningful purposes for writing to engage their students in topics they could relate to and thus more readily generate ideas. These included linking to the

current theme or inquiry topic or using the language experience approach to enable exploration, discussion and thinking prior to writing, in the way that Erin explains:

I do a LE [Language Experience] a week so they've got something cool to write about. We planted sunflowers the first week, we did foam painting last week, this week the policeman came in, we sat in the car with the sirens on, that's going to be next week's writing. In terms of writing, it's having something purposeful to write about and that's been a huge thing for us. (Erin, Int 1)

Erin's belief in the value of language experience reflects her understanding of the importance of shared experiences to provide common ground where discussion can be used to generate ideas, model language structures and extend vocabulary prior to writing. Lauren, who was following the required prescriptive writing programme that was part of her school's professional learning focus, had integrated Language Experience (Ward, 2002), which she didn't think was part of the programme, into her writing. This illustrates her belief that writing needs to have a focus relevant to her learners and that writing in a vacuum is a challenge:

I'm starting to learn that we need to have an experience, lots of experiences especially at this age, otherwise it's really hard to get down our thoughts. So we are 'doing adjectives' and it was really hard just writing about something that we hadn't done with adjectives but as soon as I bought in pieces of pineapple and popcorn ... the writing was so much better. (Lauren, Int 1)

We see here the beginnings of teacher agency where she is using her theoretical understanding of how children learn to write and the language experience approach in partnership with school-wide requirements.

Participants commented that flexibility is required to maximise incidental learning opportunities that engage student interest. For example, Amy was tying her writing into the current theme of 'upcycling', but then a student arrived with a frog that led to close observation and sharing of experiences and the facilitation of wonderful descriptive writing about the classroom visitor. In addition to purposeful motivation and flexibility, three beginning teachers (Monique, Yvette and Sam) also stated that there should also be provision within one's writing programme for student choice in terms of topic, or personal recounts to enable individuals to pursue their own interests and purpose for writing. Monique summed this up as follows:

I think that there has to be choice in their writing too, that everything can't be that structured, like you know that you can't be a dictator and tell them they have to write about everything each day when they're dying inside. That creativity's there and to hold them back is I think is quite ... it's not fair for them. (Monique, Int 1)

Most participants were committed to including daily opportunities for their students to write and to work on a piece of writing at their own pace over several days if need be, to provide for individual needs and strengths. They managed this by working with the whole class at the start of a session to ensure learning purposes were clear and then working with small groups or conferencing with individuals, targeting specific needs as required. Reflection on such organisation was already under way with Josh commenting that carrying out a whole-class writing lesson on a Monday and then expecting his students to continue with the writing task independently during the guided reading programme was not allowing enough individual contact time throughout the week to address writing-related needs.

As well as explaining principles guiding choice of writing topics and organisation for writing, participants also elaborated on writing pedagogy and provided varying evidence of their understanding of the need to scaffold writers at each stage of the process. All but one (Sam) spoke about the critical role of the prewriting phase (Dombey, 2013), which they saw as setting students up for success. This included discussion around the proposed topic using strategies such as 'think-pair-share' (Carss, 2007), or whole class talk, and planning, whether this be through modelling to students, co-constructed planning or individual planning. Other stages of the writing process were noted less frequently. Time for the revision and editing of draft writing was referred to by four participants (Josh, Sarah, Sam, Amy). The importance of conferencing (Dombey, 2013) with peers and the teacher was also rated as a key task by four participants, to enable students to talk about their work, monitor and reinforce learning goals and promote a sense of ownership and pride (Amy, Sarah, Josh, Erin). Sharing and publication of student work were cited as contributing to these goals with three beginning teachers (Amy, Sarah and Yvette) publishing work for their students, due to the inability of younger students to word process their writing in a timely manner. Class booklets for the library corner and posting material on the class blog provided additional avenues for sharing with an

authentic audience, while other ensured that writing was shared orally on a regular basis (Amy, Sam, Yvette).

Associated with these explanations around the teaching of writing, was discussion about assessment of this language mode to enable tracking of student learning and performance to inform focused teaching. As mentioned, the previous year's data had been made available to most participants and this enabled a tentative overview of the range of abilities. The traditional practice of having students complete unassisted writing samples was done by seven beginning teachers and most had moderated this with other teachers in the school to establish strengths and needs. The remaining two were about to engage in this process. Just one school was utilising e-asTTle for assessing writing. E-asTTle is a national online assessment tool designed to assess student achievement in writing, reading and mathematics (MOE, 2017). The data gathered from moderation was used in various ways including one (Amy) where the school programme required the writing levels of each student to be displayed on the classroom walls with the intention of encouraging movement to the next level. At Monique's school the writing sample was used to establish a laminated individual placemat that provided each student with a clear visual representation of their strengths and needs in relation to the curriculum levels and literacy learning progressions. Only three teachers (Erin, Amy and Lauren) referred to gathering data of a formative nature at this point, with systems such as Amy's, whereby individual goals were identified on a rubric in 'child speak' in the back of each student's book, and revisited regularly with the student.

Attention to the surface features associated with writing, in particular spelling and handwriting, was noted by Lauren, Erin, Yvette and Aroha. Lauren and Erin, both junior class teachers, referred to the teaching of handwriting very briefly as just a regular component of their literacy programme. There was no reference to the needs of the children or the way in which it was taught. Yvette, on the other hand, spoke at length about her issues with the teaching of this due to not having had experience with it during practicum. She spoke about lacking confidence and questioning herself as to whether she was teaching it correctly:

Handwriting I was worried about because I have never taught that before and I still don't know how well I'm doing it. I'm sure I'm using the wrong words. You know I was saying capital W, spikey you know and lets do a lower case one it's nice and round you know. Then we are doing M's so it is down and round. I'm sure there is ways you say these things but I don't know them do you know what I mean? (Yvette, Int 1)

Aroha was the only participant with a middle school class level to refer to handwriting. She valued the importance of correct letter formation in creating a legible style and was concerned about the poor letter formation of some of her year 4/5 students.

Explanations relating to spelling were more prevalent, with eight of the nine participants (all except Aroha) making comment. Contributions related mostly to assessment and initial school-wide testing for summative purposes (4 people) and the practice of composing individual weekly lists that were expected to be learnt at home and then tested at school at the end of the week (5 people). It appeared most participants were following school guidelines around the testing of words.

Just one third of the beginning teachers, all teaching year two or three students, referred to the teaching and learning of spelling within their classroom programmes as opposed to just learning words each week out of school hours. Lauren and Yvette stressed the importance of including 'word work', where students learned about word families and spelling patterns to inform correct usage when writing. This was an expected part of the programme for Lauren as it was an essential component of the school-wide writing professional learning programme previously mentioned. For Yvette, her choice to integrate word work into her programme was fuelled by expertise developed during an optional paper on Dyslexia, completed as part of her degree. The third participant, Amy, talked about the provision of practice activities within her reading rotation to encourage consolidation of high-frequency words, for example practising weekly spelling words by painting them with water.

In summary, this discussion around writing indicates an initial emphasis on meaningful writing contexts to facilitate student engagement and an early organisational structure that for most included daily writing. Explanations of teaching indicated scaffolding during the pre-writing phase of the writing process

and the importance of an authentic audience for student writing. Participants had gathered baseline information from writing samples to inform their teaching.

5.2.7 Explaining our initial literacy programmes: Teaching Reading

The participants expressed their views on a variety of aspects of teaching reading. The early use of approaches: reading to and talking with, independent, shared and guided reading were explained with varying frequency, the dominant focus being placed on the teaching of guided reading, which is regarded as the key instructional approach in New Zealand schools (MOE, 2003, 2006).

Seven of the nine beginning teachers (all apart from Lauren and Erin) espoused their belief in the importance of regular reading of books to their students for a variety of reasons. These included opportunities to reinforce and develop aspects of the current theme or inquiry topic, vocabulary development, comprehension, and the development of visual awareness and the associated metalanguage, when sharing picture books. Josh elaborated on the value of reading to students by noting that he found reading books to students could be used to support learning across the curriculum and to stimulate writing. Sam added that by sharing books he loved, his students were motivated to locate these and others by the same author in the library and thus develop and extend independent reading habits. The value of establishing the habit of reading to students and the receptive pleasure of listening to stories being read is summed up by Aroha:

One thing they do enjoy is being read to. I've done that from day one, because I knew that I wouldn't get my literacy programme in place straight away. But reading to them they love, they really, really love it, enjoy it so much ... we use picture books and we use like the little novel type books. We've had lots of Roald Dahl, which they love, we're on our third book now and they just enjoy it, sitting there and being read to. (Aroha, Int 1)

For most participants, reading to their students had become a regular whole-class activity designed to model the joys of reading and encourage listening comprehension (Lane & Wright, 2007).

The inclusion of independent reading received little attention at this point, perhaps due again to time constraints. Only three participants (Josh, Yvette and Lauren) made mention of this aspect of the programme and two of these references were to

the use of fluency reading at a lower level within the guided reading rotation programme.

Shared reading (Brown, 2004) was also not elaborated on to any great extent, although reference was made to inclusion of the approach by the five participants teaching in year 0-3 classes. Both Amy and Lauren commented that this was sometimes missed owing once again to time constraints. It appeared that the established use of the approach in junior classes, with daily rereading of the chosen text over a week with a different teaching and learning focus each day, offered a secure structure within the early weeks of the programme. Amy commented that she also felt confident with this approach, since one was able to teach all students at once:

It sounds bad, but you are teaching [shared reading] in bulk, so you are teaching all the same kids one thing rather than like my writing plan where I've got kids that have got all different goals and it's individual completely. (Amy, Int 1)

As indicated at the start of this section, the teaching of guided reading received significant attention from all participants. They talked about the use of resources, teaching strategies utilised at the small-group level, what informed their selection of teaching focus areas for each group, and the importance of follow-up and independent activities engaged in by groups when not involved in direct instruction by the teacher.

For eight of the nine students (with the exception of Monique), the teaching of guided reading was introduced during weeks three or four with the establishment of four ability groups. However, for Monique, there was a syndicate decision that all classes would not begin until week six, once all school-required testing was completed and for consistency with home reading and associated parental expectations. She felt this was rather late to be starting focused, small-group teaching.

Text selection for guided reading was targeted by all participants. Evident in their responses were key understandings relating to text level, content and the teaching of reading skills and strategies. The availability of reading materials was mentioned by seven of the nine participants and six of these (Amy, Josh, Monique, Sarah,

Aroha, Lauren) commented on the importance of selecting texts with themes that their students could relate to, thus demonstrating their understanding of the importance for readers to engage and make connections with the text to facilitate comprehension. Erin was also impressed with the additional range of dual-language texts in her school library in a large urban, multicultural school and these enabled her to more appropriately meet the needs of her English language learners by allowing them to see both home language and English side by side.

There were, however, challenges evident in the explanations given around availability of resources. Josh and Yvette found it difficult to locate instructional texts that related to the current theme or inquiry topic to support cross-curricula connections in their classrooms:

Maybe I'm meant to be linking it to my inquiry but I haven't got time. I don't know any of these books so I could sit and hunt for really great books that link into us and who we are [current theme] but I haven't got time. So I just pick a book and yep I think the kids will like that and we do that one. Maybe one day when I have more time or a bit more experience I will be able to go 'that's a great book and I can use it for ... now. (Yvette, Int 1)

Also at times, Yvette added, there were insufficient numbers of texts to match group numbers and she felt that this at times impacted on her teaching focus. For Amy, teaching in a school which had experienced roll decline and now regrowth, there was a definite lack of quality instructional reading material available within emergent and early reading levels. Issues regarding availability of texts were definitely impacting on the ability of some participants to effectively match texts to learning focus areas and the selection of learning intentions.

In addition to outlining the organisation for guided reading and the selection of resources, beginning teachers also discussed the teaching of students within their instructional guided reading groups. Currently, it appeared, selection of learning intentions for each group was informed by information from a variety of sources including observational data, syndicate long-term planning and literacy handbooks. Three beginning teachers, all teaching junior classes (Sarah, Amy and Lauren), referred to utilising the ongoing observation of reading behaviours during instructional lessons to direct the following week's learning focus, thus demonstrating commitment to differentiating the learning based on this formative

data. In comparison, three of the four middle school classes were undertaking a more uniform approach across guided reading groups, which suggested less of a focus on utilising observational data. For example, Monique had used running record data to pitch her teaching initially, but was also guided by the required syndicate focus on the comprehension strategies of prediction and making connections. Josh with his year-five students, was focusing on the more advanced strategies of skimming, scanning and summarising, which he had identified as a learning focus for many of his students. In comparison, Sam, with his middle-school class, was using a popular comprehension strategies handbook (Cameron, 2009) to focus his teaching; currently prediction was the focus strategy with all groups. Less cognisance of differentiated learning was evidenced by his comment:

We started with predicting because that seemed like an easy one to kick off with. And basically every group just works on their prediction skills. (Sam, Int 1)

Luke and Freebody's (1999) Four Resources model was introduced in the literature review. It identifies the four roles considered necessary to becoming literate: code breaker, meaning maker, text user and text analyst. The content of guided reading lessons can be categorised using this framework. Eight of the nine beginning teachers (all except Sam) talked about the importance of developing the decoding skills required of a code breaker, particularly for those of lower reading ability. At the new entrant level, Sarah ensured that the necessary focus on alphabet knowledge was reinforced through activities in the reading rotation; other junior-level teachers valued the inclusion of word-chunking activities, while Yvette and Amy referred to the transfer of learning from shared reading sessions as a way of reinforcing high-frequency word knowledge and punctuation conventions. For Lauren's students, the focus on word-level learning was particularly dominant. As part of the school-wide programme, she had implemented a whole class, daily, 40-minute, word-work session, which was having particular benefits for her lower ability students, in her opinion. Developing the ability to use the processing strategy of attending and searching (scanning) through new words continued to receive focus in the explanations of two middle-school classrooms. However, as previously mentioned, Josh admitted he didn't feel he had sufficient knowledge to provide the necessary

support for his lower-ability readers, who still required help at with decoding strategies.

Aside from reference made above to the teaching of comprehension strategies, the importance of making meaning of vocabulary and ideas received little focus in participant explanations of teaching guided reading at this point. Five teachers made brief reference to the need for comprehension to be targeted within guided reading lessons, with Yvette's comment indicating their belief that it's important for students to 'realise pages tell you stuff'. Aligned with understanding vocabulary, just two participants referred to the importance of fluency, one of these being Josh, who found this a problem specifically for his two ELL students.

Participant explanations of the teaching of guided reading included very few references to developing aspects of the role of text user. Erin talked about the importance of learning to read graphs during a maths unit and making meaning from road signs linking to the current theme. She noted the need to introduce a mixture of fiction and non-fiction texts during guided reading lessons and to develop informed use of different text-types such as instructions, poems and plays. Yvette also referred to her students learning to utilise text features when reading non-fiction texts, such as investigating the purpose of the contents page and interpreting diagrams using the accompanying labels. In regard to analysing text, Sam inferred the importance of critical literacy, but there was no mention of explicit teaching to develop this role.

As mentioned previously, the time taken in setting up the routines for independent activities associated with the teaching of guided reading ensured uninterrupted in-depth teaching was able to occur with the target ability groups. When asked to explain what was guiding their selection of these activities, almost all participants demonstrating understanding of the need for authentic and meaningful tasks that matched the learning needs of the group and fostered practice and consolidation of focus knowledge, skills and strategies, as opposed to 'busy work'. Amy's comments illustrate this well:

It's to develop, hopefully develop a whole set of skills they will use in literacy whether it's like with my lower kids, it's as simple as fine-motor skills and memorising high-frequency words. Then for the others it's

learning how to search or how to think outside the box about what a new cover would look, so all of that thinking beyond the text or relating it to something else or skills that you use within literacy and getting them to do it by themselves without me there. (Amy, Int 1)

At this early point, Erin and Lauren had also identified the importance of regular review, and adjustment of these activities to more closely target learning needs and to maintain engagement. As mentioned previously, Erin had already attended a Beginning Teacher session on literacy and she had altered her rotation to include a focus on extending comprehension rather than maintaining the previous dominance of word-level activities.

For Sam, the selection of independent reading activities was not yet quite so focused on literacy learning:

Anything that will keep them quiet and busy ... learning is secondary at this point, for those independent ones, whatever is going to shut these dudes up, so I give them a lot of art. (Sam, Int 1)

However, he did identify the need to revise this procedure and construct some sort of system or task-board during the upcoming Easter break and recounted that his team leader strongly favoured the use of activities to develop reading strategies rather than worksheets that were merely busy work and where students were unable to explain their learning.

This section has demonstrated the complexity of teacher decision-making involved in establishing the effective teaching of reading and the extent to which most participants were already engaged in exploring appropriate teaching strategies and organisational systems to facilitate quality learning. While the focus on the development of comprehension and decoding strategies was clearly exhibited by several participants, there appeared to be components of the reading process that did not yet feature in their theorising. Another element that was barely mentioned during explanations of their reading and writing programmes was the inclusion of digital devices to support literacy learning; the focus instead was predominantly on print and paper-based reading.

5.2.8 Using digital devices to support literacy learning

When asked about the use of digital devices to support learning, it soon became apparent that the availability of reliable technology was impacting on the extent to which digital learning could be facilitated. Apart from Josh, who had four Apple computers and was in a school where ipads were a compulsory purchase for students, most participants had either two or three classroom laptops or computers. Yvette and Sam referred to weekly sessions in an ICT suite. However, these were a source of frustration for Yvette's year 2/3 class with the lack of word-processing capabilities impacting on the profitable use of time. Several cited slow internet and unreliability of devices as factors impacting on current usage, as Lauren's comment illustrates:

We do have a few laptops, but at the moment they are so unreliable or very hard to set up and take a long time with the freezing, or something seems to always be going wrong. We spend more time trying to sort that out than it is beneficial for them. Ideally I'd love to have more use of the technology. (Lauren, Int 1)

In three schools there were sets of ipads or netbooks that could be borrowed for classroom use but it seemed the senior classes had priority with the ipads. Amy commented that the netbooks were very slow and not worth the effort of setting up for her year-two students. There were indications that the provision for digital learning was about to change for some, with Amy commenting that the internet was currently being upgraded in her school and the Board of Trustees was investigating future inclusion of technology. However, it was apparent that at this point in time, for at least half of the beginning teachers, the inclusion of digital learning experiences was either restricted owing to the unavailability of devices or something they did not yet prioritise within the parameters of their initial teaching of literacy.

Even Josh, with individual student ipads and a classroom well-resourced with technology, admitted he had not really had time to explore possibilities for the teaching of strategies required to both locate, interpret and critique internet information and create digital text. However, when prompted, he did recount the following experience which had occurred, it appears, despite any explicit teaching of the digital skills required to integrate language modes:

At the start of the year we did these booklets and they had to choose music that would go with some videos and text, so they integrated it all. Some of the girls did this really well and some of the girls didn't and I didn't really know how to improve it. You could see that the music they had chosen really went with the theme of the visual aide and it matched up with what they were saying so like those sort of links. I don't even think the girls realised how advanced that was. (Josh, Int 1)

His school was involved in professional learning with facilitators from Apple New Zealand and it appeared this was challenging his thinking towards developing a more transformative focus, rather than merely using ipads as a substitute for paper-based tasks:

The idea was to get more towards using the tool in a way that you couldn't do it, live without it, sort of thing. In literacy I'm finding that kind of difficult like I get girls to publish their writing on here, but they could do that on computer or paper still. But there are things like when they are researching they can highlight words on Wikipedia and quickly get a definition of that, but again they could use the dictionary, but it's using the technology to more of an advantage. (Josh, Int 1)

Four participants had begun to integrate some independent digital literacy activities and apps into their reading rotation. Erin commented on a National Geographic app that allowed students to work as a group on her one classroom ipad to critique facts and increase their general knowledge. For Monique, the school requirement to utilise a class blog each day was enabling students to publish quality writing and complete simple, daily literacy tasks relating to the blend or chunk of the week. Even at the new-entrant level, students were able to engage in digital activities independently as Sarah illustrated with the programme Kidpix:

You can do text on there so they've started, like they can find the letters on the keyboard to write their name and things, which has been great. So that is all done by them they have figured all that out. (Sarah, Int 1)

While such examples demonstrate understanding of the need to include digital learning in their programmes as a way of developing real-world literacy skills, the lack of time to source and critique appropriate digital activities relevant to the needs and levels of their students was proving a challenge during this first term of teaching.

5.2.9 Home-school partnerships supporting literacy learning

Another investigative focus was the establishment of home-school partnerships and how the beginning teachers perceived these to be supporting the development of literacy for their students. Given the timing of these initial interviews, midway through term one, it was understandable that all participants would discuss the setting up of routines for home reading which they understood as being essential in promoting reading mileage to consolidate reading skills and strategies. In most instances, the requirement was to read one book each night, or in the senior class, 15 minutes of free-choice reading. Five participants also expected spelling or sight-word learning to occur as well. The provision of a home learning book or pamphlet outlined the requirements to parents for most. Two beginning teachers talked about the value of an interactive document, where both teacher and parents made comments about the reading and added notes to each other when necessary. However, for Sam and Yvette, the establishment of the home reading routine was a challenge. Sam admitted he didn't make expectations clear or monitor students from the outset, and was now re-establishing the practice. Yvette meanwhile found the whole procedure stressful with the time required to record details of books taken and check returns.

The first opportunity for Aroha, Lauren and Yvette to meet their students' whanau was through an informal family event organised by the school:

To break down firstly the perception that school is out of reach and it's a 'them us' sort of feeling, especially if they've had bad experiences at school, and also to build relationships in a less formal way with the teachers and the parents. (Aroha, Int 1)

More formal meet-the-teacher sessions were held in other schools and participants reported they were consequently able to outline their programme and explain expectations for home reading. Attendance at these events varied considerably across schools, from Amy's semi-urban school where only one quarter of families were represented, to Erin's setting in a high-decile, multicultural urban school, where the majority of parents were in attendance. Erin explained that parents were always looking for more ways to help at home and often they perceived such help as their providing more formal learning after school hours:

The parents are very supportive, they all want to know what else they can do for their kids at home. I said, “read with them, it’s expected that you do that with them but you know, taking them outside and looking at their surroundings, doing cooking with them and having them help you read the instructions, it can be little things like that so don’t fret if one day we didn’t get through GR and they don’t have a book, read to them.” Sometimes they think that helping their kids learn is just sitting down and doing lessons at home, they need to hear they can be doing it in other ways as well. (Erin, Int 1)

Erin recounted an example of this perception around home support, with a mother who made her six-year-old daughter copy handwriting each night because it wasn’t yet as neat as her teacher’s. Both Erin and Aroha appeared cognisant of the home literacy backgrounds of their students. For Aroha, the nature of the school community was such that often books were not returned and many students were unable to complete requirements at home owing to caring for younger siblings whilst parents worked:

I’m quite aware that doing reading at home just doesn’t work. Although when we did statistics we used a lot of their junk mail, so Harvey Norman, the Warehouse and things like that. So I said to them get the newspaper and read comics, I don’t care if you are reading comics. I don’t care if you’re reading the newspaper, magazines; if you have got a Spiderman magazine, but I said to them I just want you reading. It could be anything at all, anything that you enjoy reading, like if you’ve got a rugby book at home do that. (Aroha, Int 1)

In addition to the suggested substitution of home reading materials, Aroha also reported allowing her year 4/5 students to use the classroom computers before and after school, since not all homes had access. She was also aware that many students had parents or grandparents that didn’t speak English and therefore needed their child or a community representative to translate school communications, and this impacted on home reading support as well.

Erin was also concerned with the language backgrounds of many of the parents and part of this was an understanding of the need to preserve competence in her students’ home languages as well as balancing parents’ high expectations around their children learning English:

So my parents try to do exactly what I've said to them, but for the majority English isn't their first language and I've made it clear to the parents to talk in their language at home, don't feel they just have to focus on English, we do that at school. If they're ESOL[English speakers of other languages] they go to ESOL and I know parents appreciate that, but they'll say 'oh but his English is not so good'. I'll say 'he's doing fine, he's where he needs to be you know'. So a lot of the time it's sort of me trying to tell them, no you can talk in your own language at home. (Erin, Int 1)

In comparison, for Yvette also in a multicultural school, there was little contact with parents. Parent conferences had been scheduled for the following Friday, but at the time of the interview just a quarter of the families had scheduled appointments. Both Monique and Josh stated the importance of knowing about students' home literacy backgrounds but felt they didn't have as much contact with parents as they would have liked.

For Lauren the high expectations of parents in her rural environment provided an additional pressure for the teaching of literacy. Parents were very aware of the school's major focus on spelling as part of the previously mentioned writing, professional learning project. So concerned were some parents with progress that emails had recently arrived in Erin's inbox on a Friday afternoon requesting the score for their child's spelling test that morning.

It can be seen from these examples that while all participants valued the importance of establishing home reading procedures and conveying their expectations to parents and whanau, verbalisation around the acknowledgement and accommodation of home literacy practices was far less common. Diversity in the socio-cultural nature of the parent community can be clearly seen and it is evident above that some participants were already embracing this diversity and striving to accommodate it.

5.2.10 Reflections

The final section of the interviews encouraged participants to explain their perspectives on what they considered children needed to know and be able to do to become literate, and then what they considered to be the guiding principles in supporting children in this process. The most common response by five participants (Monique, Sam, Sarah, Aroha, Erin) to the first part of this prompt

related to having command of reading and writing processes to make and create meaning for a range of purposes. Erin's reply illustrates this thinking:

It's about 'writing for different purposes, reading for different purposes, I think that's a huge part of being literate. It's not just about being able to read your reader, it's being able to read the newspaper, being able to read a recipe, it's being able to read road signs. Being literate is being able to transfer what you're learning in school so that you can participate and be an active member of society. (Erin, Int 1)

Understanding the importance of oral language was added by four beginning teachers (Josh, Aroha, Lauren, Sarah) who stressed that students needed to be able to express their thoughts and views confidently. In addition Lauren and Sarah included the need for literacy across the curriculum,

"They need literacy for maths, for art and for science and for all the topics it's kind of the central thing." (Sarah, Int 1). Ability to use and interpret visual language was also included by Erin, Sam and Lauren.

Lauren was the only participant to include reference to technology: "I definitely think technology needs to be in there, like that's a huge part of today and at the moment we are not getting that exposure." (Lauren, Int 1).

Earlier it was mentioned that no one referred to the development of critical literacy (the role of text analyst) when explaining their current teaching of guided reading. This component was also absent from their theoretical perspectives on what it meant to become literate. Sam's response was the exception:

Being able to read something and think there's more to this, kind of thing. I guess I don't think spelling and all that should be the outright goals of it, being a perfect speller. I think it's more that they can understand the various types of literature out there. At this stage even on the internet, there's an ad you know 'You've won a thousand dollars, wow, click here' and it's like 'woah, woah, woah' and it's just the ..., I guess literacy is becoming more and more complex and less literal, there's a lot behind it that you need to understand so you're not sort of sucked in by, even advertising and all that sort of stuff, so I guess my ultimate goal in literacy, at this stage it won't happen, but at least start making them aware of the deeper meanings and even in picture books. That's why I include visual language ... I guess critical thinking, being able to read something and think there's more to this, kind of thing. (Sam, Int 1)

At this point, however, there appeared a gap between this understanding and the literacy practices being promoted in his classroom.

When asked at the conclusion of the interviews about their guiding principles in supporting this development of literacy, it was clear that explanations reflected much of their theorising throughout the discussions. The need to engage students in purposeful experience and to make learning enjoyable but challenging was common. Amy, Sarah and Yvette referred to working within the child's zone of proximal development in establishing this level of challenge. Aligned with this was the need to provide opportunities to practise to consolidate learning and the importance of making connections with and linking to prior experiences and learning – to work from the known to the unknown. Several beginning teachers also mentioned that it was essential to allow for choice and creativity.

Analysis of the initial interviews demonstrated the complexity involved in establishing a literacy programme and the challenges faced by first-year teachers as they move from the initial teacher education setting into the realities of the classroom. It can be seen that the understandings and theoretical perspectives they held as they began the first term of teaching were both supported and challenged by various aspects of the school community: the physical environment and availability of resources; the school's literacy guidelines; and the knowledge and support offered by their tutor teachers and colleagues. Their thinking was further modified as they become acquainted with their students and the responsibilities attached to addressing a range of needs and strengths. As they theorised their teaching of literacy during these interviews it was evident from the data that routines, organisation and the implementation of procedures dominated their thinking during the first few weeks of the term.

5.3 Observations of the teaching of reading

Towards the end of the second term of the school year, I observed each participant teaching during a one-hour literacy block that involved the teaching of reading. In five classrooms (Amy, Yvette, Sam, Sarah, Monique) this began with whole-class shared reading, followed by small-group guided-reading instruction while other students engaged in a variety of independent activities. In the other four classrooms students moved straight into the guided reading and activities phase. The video-

recorded observations were viewed with the beginning teachers, who each controlled the playing back of the recording as they explained their teaching. This allowed them to explain their beliefs and practices as they supported their students in extending their knowledge of reading skills and strategies.

5.3.1 Shared reading

Findings documented in this section demonstrate participant beliefs in relation to the use of the shared reading approach to scaffold development of several components of the reading process including prediction, development of metalanguage, vocabulary and processing strategies. These findings relate mostly to the development of the two roles of code breaker and meaning maker.

Observations began with the teaching of shared reading in five classrooms as noted above, across a variety of year levels from new entrants to years 3/4. Four teachers engaged students with an enlarged narrative text while Monique used a series of short poems. All teachers appeared to follow the traditional pattern of repeated reading of the same text over a week with different teaching foci each day:

I'd probably in reality read it three times a week although I plan for four, and build on each thing each day, so just a focus on punctuation or just comprehension. First day is normally predicting and linking to prior knowledge and understanding what the story is about, I'd still use pictures and things but a lot less breaking down of words, punctuation. On other days punctuation, word families, all those types of things (Amy, Reading observation [RO]).

Sam added that with his year 3/4 class he also emphasised the visual aspects of the text and included a creative response on Fridays to strengthen the purpose for reading. For the particular text used during the lesson observed this consisted of making hot air balloons. Participant use of this sequence of lessons demonstrated their understanding of the need for students to first comprehend the ideas in the text to facilitate engagement before investigating particular text and word-level features on subsequent days.

In relation to choice of texts for shared reading, those chosen by these five participants each reflected their understanding of the need for high-interest narrative texts with rhyme, repetition and elements of fantasy that would sustain student engagement in repeated readings across the week. For Yvette with her year

2/3 class, this was not always the case. She explains below her selection of higher-level texts to introduce comprehension-promoting activities to be used subsequently as follow-up for guided reading lessons:

After that Beginning Teacher (BT) course, I went to story books that were more at year four level ... ones with character and actually explicitly taught some of the things that I then made them do in their groups. Sort of question and thoughts chart which would be really hard to do on those fun repetitive books ... I picked the higher level texts to teach strategies I wanted them to be doing themselves ... once they'd read a book in their instructional group they could go off and do a thoughts and questions chart because we'd modelled it together as a group. (Yvette, RO)

She considered this focus on promoting comprehension as more appropriate to the level and needs of her learners.

Amy used the approach to support the development of processing strategies and use of semantic, syntactic and visual-graphophonic information to decode; she indicated that she valued an initial discussion around the cover to encourage use of semantic information when encountering new words:

So at this point so far I've been trying to build a whole lot of prior knowledge about the cover so when we get to words they're unsure of or pictures they can make some sense of it to help them decode. (Amy, RO)

With a similar purpose in mind, Sarah used a technique learned at the BT literacy session whereby various words through the text were blocked out with post-it notes and students encouraged to predict what each might be:

I'll cover up some words through the text and the kids love it, we just talk about different words we can use in place of that ... which is quite good to help their vocab. I record everything they say to start with and then we go back and put each word in the sentence and they check if it makes sense or not and perhaps why. Sometimes we do words like 'went' you know how else could they go, well they walked, they ran, they jumped and things ... we read it through, does this makes sense, sometimes there will be a couple of words that are the same or similar and we'll go [uncover] letter by letter. Or something with a different tense, if it's 'running' I might put up 'ran' so they can see it doesn't make sense or fit with the tense of the book. But I think on watching this I could probably do a bit more on why it doesn't make sense. (Sarah, RO)

Through using this task Sarah demonstrated understanding of the process of decoding words by encouraging her students to predict new words using meaning and syntactic sources of information, and then to cross-check this information with visual grapho-phonetic information as the word is uncovered, thus leading to either self-correction or confirmation of the word.

Also in relation to the use of visual grapho-phonetic information for processing text, three of the five participants (Sam, Sarah and Monique) alluded to the importance of focusing on rhyme or building awareness of word segmentation to facilitate decoding new words. In Sam's class this included the use of small, individual whiteboards where students were able to generate word patterns by changing the initial sound [onset] while the remainder of the word [rime] remained constant.

The focus on rhyming words was to link into our spelling programme, onset and rime etc but spelling isn't something I do very well. They like the board work it involves them instead of me writing all the words. Doing this again I would probably write 'went' on the board so they can more easily visualise the onset and rime, how the words are made up. (Sam, RO)

The use of a weekly poem as part of shared reading was also considered valuable by Sarah, Amy and Lauren, in developing word knowledge as Sarah's comment indicates:

Last week we did Jack Spratt and just talking about the rhyming words in that and words like 'betwixt' what it all means, we'll really break that down which has been quite good. A lot of them struggle with rhyming, like what rhymes with 'fat' they're looking at 'finger' or 'frog' looking at the initial sound rather than the rime, so that been really good. (Sarah, RO)

Developing understanding of new vocabulary was also highlighted as important by Sarah, Amy, Sam and Monique:

Sometimes I'll stop and discuss vocabulary like 'furious', some of them may not have heard that language before or maybe what other words could we use instead. It was quite interesting, we were reading a book this week and it's got the word 'cross' in it and they're saying we could use 'furious' instead, so they are making connections. (Sarah, RO)

Amy and Sarah also alluded the importance of prompting for the use of comprehension strategies to develop the role of meaning-maker during shared

reading, with prediction and inference receiving explicit mention even at the new-entrant level.

So there we're inferring, making inferences from the story and from the pictures, about how to gather more clues from the text to gain meaning from it ... inference again from the picture and using the pictures to talk about the emotions, how do you think he's feeling and why do you think that? Using the pictures and the text to read between the lines. (Sarah, RO)

These two participants also referred to modelling reading fluency during shared reading to enable students to hear fluent, correctly phrased reading and to practise it by reading along with the teacher. Amy, whose students were reading beyond the emergent reader stage, felt that moving her pointer from line to line was more appropriate than individual word-pointing at this level; however, she did vary this technique throughout the reading to target the variety of needs within the class:

I'm using the pointer so they can keep up with where I'm at, but I'm trying to read fluently and with expression so to model how they should be reading and seeing how the pictures relate to the words ... So there I reverted to pointing to each word to demonstrate the pause so they could see visually what I was doing and again just trying to build punctuation knowledge. And with the Marshmallows [her low ability group] trying to model how it looks and sounds and make it personal for them as well. (Amy, RO)

The role of text user received little focus, with just Amy referring to understanding various features of the text: "I'll just add there I'm trying to develop their knowledge of books and being able to understand what each part is, who it's by and who's illustrated it."

The comments included here signal beginning teacher awareness of the value of shared reading in modelling and scaffolding the use of reading skills and strategies, relevant to the reading levels and needs of their students, within a collaborative and supportive environment. More specifically, contributions illustrated ways in which the repeated reading of enlarged texts over successive days can aid the development of processing strategies, using sources of information to problem-solve new words. There was also reference to supporting the role of meaning maker and establishing fluency, other essential components of the reading process.

5.3.2 Organisation for guided reading

The teaching of guided reading was by now well established as part of the literacy programme after initial testing and shuffling of individuals into a manageable number of ability groups. While utilising four instructional groups was still the most common form of organisation, there were still two teachers (Yvette and Amy) juggling five and six, although they worked with only three or four groups daily. There appeared to be more flexibility and frequent movement in groupings at the junior levels as these teachers responded to daily observations and more regular running records owing to the narrow division of levels on the *Ready to Read* colour wheel (MOE, 2018b). This difference was illustrated by Sarah who carried out ongoing running records to substantiate shifts but also used her own judgement to make changes, “I’ll pop you in here and see how you go today” (Sarah, RO). Lauren also referred to this need for flexibility in grouping, “Yes it [grouping] has changed quite a bit because I’ve had some just fly, at the start of the term they were on level 6 and now they’re on level 15, so I’ve had ones just take off” (Lauren, RO). As participants were aware from their ITE work, a child typically moves through 14 levels during the first year of reading between magenta and green colour bands, whereas from years four to eight, reading materials are graded by ‘reading year levels’ (MOE, 2014). Therefore, in comparison to Sarah; Josh, teaching year 5 students had made very few changes since the initial grouping was established. His groupings were based on summative Probe data but his comment also illustrates use of teacher knowledge of the students to justify groupings:

They’re changing next term though, like I’ve noticed a few girls who were not finding it really easy, but are probably not as challenged as they could have been. I’ve got a couple who are going up and I’ve probably got two who should go down, but they already go out for support. There are other girls who based on Probe, could go up, but I’m not going to as I think it would shatter them if they found it too hard as they are already quite low. I don’t want to put them up and pull the carpet out from under their feet. (Josh, RO)

Sam, on the other hand, was unaware of the need for shifts until he carried out midyear testing:

That [regrouping] didn’t really happen until this term, that was mainly because we had to do Probe running records on everyone for the school reports and I suddenly realised I had people reading in groups they shouldn’t

actually be in, like “this fellow’s actually reading two levels above where he really is, no wonder he’s bored”. I realised I needed to be aware of that sort of thing. (Sam, RO)

It is clear that most of the participants mentioned above were conscious of the need to observe progress closely and group students at an appropriate instructional level for guided reading; a level of challenge that facilitates new learning but does not produce frustration or boredom.

Participants identified a number of issues with the teaching of guided reading groups, including pressure to teach a particular number of groups each day. Yvette, teaching years 2/3, struggled to balance the quality of teaching with the time available:

I don't understand how you're meant to just do ten minutes and try and see every group for just ten minutes. You've got to talk about it, show them the pictures and read it, so where does this time come from? (Yvette, RO)

She also referred to issues with student awareness of reading progress and levels:

Kids are so obsessed about where they sit and I know in some classes they list it [on the wall] and even at my school they do, but I prefer them just to concentrate on what they need to do. (Yvette, RO)

For Amy, who was juggling six groups in her year 2 class, there was more of an ethical dilemma involving a very low-ability reader:

James, who's at level two [emergent level], I used to read with him every day which is what everybody would want me to do and I totally understand that, but then you've got these kids who're at risk who are just below, they're not well below. So I've now chosen, rightly or wrongly to put my energy into reading with them more than I read with James, which is hard but it's kind of like, he's making progress but he's always going to be behind. These others need a bit more of a push and I can give it to them and so it's kind of, that's been hard. But I've had those types of conversations with Naomi [tutor teacher]. (Amy, RO)

In relation to these issues experienced by Yvette and Amy, it is clear that both are concerned with maximising opportunities for student learning with a focus on quality of teaching relevant to student ability.

5.3.3 Independent activities

Each of the nine observations of guided reading (one per participant) involved students working on a range of independent activities while small group teaching was proceeding. Related beginning teacher contributions can be grouped into two themes: management of the programme and selection of appropriate tasks. It was noted that organisational aspects dominated conversation in comparison to the purpose of the activities in reinforcing development of reading skills and strategies.

As previously mentioned, management of independent activities is a fundamental component of a guided reading programme as student engagement ensures small group instruction is able to proceed unimpeded. Monique commented: “I have this rule in guided reading sessions, they can only come and see me if they’re dying or bleeding, otherwise I don’t want to see you. Otherwise there are too many interruptions” (Monique, RO). Five participants (Monique, Josh, Amy, Erin, Lauren) referred to the importance of students developing independence and the key competency of ‘managing self’ (MOE, 2007) during this time.

All except one participant (Sam) explained the use of some form of visual representation to indicate expected tasks to students. Six teachers utilised a display board with rows for each group containing moveable symbols for each activity that are rotated each day. Two (Josh and Monique) preferred digital formats involved an interactive whiteboard and ‘Evernote’, an ipad app. Josh found use of this app with his year five ipad class allowed him to indicate the range of activities required to be completed over the week, rather than daily as with junior classes, and to group these according to ‘must do’ and ‘can do’ categories.

Accountability for completing required activities was managed in different ways including marking worksheets with students during their next instructional session and encouraging peer checking. For Yvette a rigorous checking regime had tapered off as she felt more comfortable with the level of engagement. She explained that during the first term:

I used to mark their work every day and I was really hard on them if I didn't think they'd done enough and if the quality was poor they had to redo it the next day... [I felt] I must dictate everything they do so I know they're on task and learning all the time, and I haven't lost that completely but I think I've realised how much learning is going on here. (Yvette, RO)

Meaningful engagement was a key factor mentioned by three beginning teachers (Lauren, Yvette, Aroha). At the time of the observation Lauren was excited about her organisation:

Some [activities] they love, like this morning they had a look on the task board first thing as they came into the room and said, 'Oh, we're not doing reading around the room today, aww'. So it's good that that's happening because I wanted them to engage with the activities, because I noticed that was lacking at the start of the year. (Lauren, RO)

Teacher justifications for activity choice varied in the degree of consideration given to the learning needs within the class. Amy stated "so it's normally any literacy skills, it could be spelling, reading a book to a furry friend or a buddy or it could be looking at word families, anything, anything literacy based I'm fine for it to happen during that time" (Amy, RO). On the other hand, Lauren with students at the same class level related selection more closely to student needs:

I noticed when I did my Word Work stuff in the morning, word families were definitely something they needed so that's why I made up all the word family sheets. For the sound of the day stuff I did that sound of the day book [because] we're talking about the sound of the day so they might as well go and find those sounds. (Lauren, RO)

Just four participants (Sarah, Josh, Erin, Aroha) referred to the inclusion of digital activities within their bank of independent reading tasks. In the new entrant room Sarah continued to use 'Kidpix' for multimodal follow-up activities and had just loaded a set of digital books onto the computer to provide reading mileage. She reported her students were keen to access these as soon as they arrived at school. Sarah and Erin were also exploring learning possibilities on recently-arrived class ipads (one per class). Josh used a range of literacy apps in his year 5 ipad class as would be expected, however he was concerned with the predominant focus on apps consisting of games to develop spelling and word level knowledge, as opposed to those supporting development of comprehension and suitably challenging for use with upper primary classes. For Aroha a commercial tool involving literacy and mathematics activities and progression through a series of levels was currently proving of benefit. At Monique's school the school-wide blog activity continued, whereby students were required to post three or four times a week. The week of the observation this focus related to character descriptions.

There was variation in the predominance of worksheets as support materials within the guided reading programme, with this being influenced by school-wide policy for some. Two teachers (Amy and Erin) preferred not to use them at all, with Erin explaining that the use of worksheets was actually prohibited at her school. Instead they encouraged activities that supported further reading of books and word games where discussion presented opportunities for additional learning. In comparison Sam's school had developed a bank of worksheets relating to a wider range of school journal texts on the school server for teachers to utilise. Sam did add that while these comprehension-focused worksheets were of value he often added higher order 'why' questions and those requiring evaluation to these. He also incorporated worksheets that led on from word work during shared reading and felt that while these were completed by everyone, regardless of level, they provided opportunity for collaborative learning that might benefit less able readers. An additional comment was made that they're also "to keep the kids quiet while I'm reading, doesn't always work." In the new entrant room Sarah included one worksheet per week for each group, focusing on either comprehension or consolidation of sight words:

It's good to get them onto doing that worksheet kind of thing because they use them right through the school, one day a week and they're sitting down concentrating on one thing which is good if they can do that. (Sarah, RO)

Others critiqued the use of worksheets, with Yvette preferring not to use a particular set that accompanied commonly-used instructional readers at the junior levels, commenting "I find that PM worksheets that go with their books terrible though, a waste of time almost, just like missing words. Some are ok like if you've got to put the right structure, the word in like 'I slept' or 'I sleep' (Yvette, RO).

Aligned with this, two teachers spoke about challenges of providing independent activities for the range of ability in their classrooms, how to challenge more able readers and at the same time provide for ELL students who lacked competence in English to undertake particular activities. Aroha explained:

I'm constantly asking for ideas/resources to copy from others. I spend my evenings when I'm not studying, in front of the TV, cutting, laminating. It will last though and I can use it again but it's time consuming. I do use worksheets but I would like to have them doing broader activities, we do

have the ipads when we can get them and we've had our internet upgraded so that's a huge improvement. (Aroha, RO)

Common practice in NZ primary classrooms is for groups to be given a follow-up task upon completion of the instructional lesson to reinforce the learning focus. Students complete this activity prior to moving onto independent activities as described above. Six participants (Josh, Erin, Yvette, Aroha, Lauren, Monique) engaged in this practice during the observations, whilst two others commented that they did this sometimes. The nature of these follow-up activities varied in the degree of relationship to the learning focus of lesson just completed. For example, Josh focused on developing the summarisation strategy with the instructional group observed and then directed students to complete a story board for the rest of the text requiring summarisation in a visual form and thus enabling independent practice of the strategy. In comparison Yvette used a generic book review template as a follow-up to reading a narrative.

As has been demonstrated, independent activities are an essential component of a successful reading programme to ensure focused small-group teaching is able to proceed whilst others are purposefully engaged. While participants approached the selection and organisation of these in varying ways, it appears that most were aware of the importance of their students being involved in focused and relevant learning during this time.

5.3.4 Guided Reading: Selection of learning intentions and texts

Findings from the initial round of interviews indicated decisions around the selection of learning intentions for guided reading lessons were informed by information from a variety of sources. During this second data gathering round there appeared to be an increase in the number of beginning teachers referring to learning intentions as being directly informed by the needs of their students. Five teachers (Amy, Aroha, Lauren, Erin and Josh) provided evidence of this and Lauren's quote typified their thoughts:

The main things that have changed about my reading from the start of the year is how I use my modelling book, how I'm feeding the things that I see in my reading groups into my plan for the next week, I don't think I was doing that so much. I was just randomly picking things to focus on I wasn't

using the information I was getting from the students very well. (Lauren, RO)

Sam, Sarah, Monique and Yvette used a variety of documents to support their selection of focus areas. Monique and Yvette were using a chart of guided reading targets supplied during a BT course; this appeared to be the facilitator's break down of guidelines in the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (MOE, 2010). Sarah used a similar chart provided by a previous associate teacher. In Sam's school existing guidelines had not yet been realigned with National Standards (MOE, 2009c) so selection was guided by the LLP document itself:

At the moment there's not really any reference I can go to, literacy guidelines, to see how to structure it. The Learning Progressions are good though, I get a basic idea of what they should be able to do from there, and try and figure out what aren't they doing and try and fix it. (Sam, RO)

The handbook, *Teaching Reading Comprehension Strategies* (Cameron, 2009), referred to in the initial interviews, was again referenced by Josh, Lauren and Sam as supporting their selection of teaching focus. Critique of other teacher support materials appeared in the reflections with comments such as that made by Amy:

Now and again I'll refer to that [MOE levels booklet] and see what they should be doing for like red, orange [on the Ready to Read colour wheel]. But I'm finding it's like so much gibberish to get my head around that at the moment I'm finding the comprehension strategies and the breaking down of the word strategies is actually plenty and a lot of the stuff you do automatically as well. (Amy, RO)

It is clear from the evidence presented above, that by this point in the year several teachers appeared more familiar with student needs in relation to the teaching of reading, and the skills and strategies relevant to each level. They had also developed systems for recording this data and were able to use this acquired information to inform planning.

In recounting selection of learning intentions, three teachers at a variety of class levels, theorised the importance of linking teaching across language modes and referred to the reciprocal nature of reading and writing. For Josh's year five students the focus included examination of topic sentences and links between paragraphs so that this knowledge might feed into current writing projects. In Erin's year 2/3 class the use of similes was being encouraged in writing as they composed

character descriptions and the learning intention for guided reading targeted identification of these in the focus text. Aroha had noticed students were struggling to make connections and considered links to oral language as well, ‘we’re going to work on making connections across the board as we go along and sort of see where their gaps are between their writing, their reading, and even their oral language’ (Aroha, RO).

Hand in hand with selection of learning intentions, the selection of texts utilised in the observed lessons was a critical component explained by seven of the participants (mentioned by all except Aroha and Sam). As Yvette’s statement illustrates the two processes are closely interwoven, “... and that’s kind of what we were taught at uni ... pick your book and go from what they need, or go from what they need, pick their book. It’s a mixture of both” (Yvette, RO). Three beginning teachers (Yvette, Josh and Erin) spoke again of attempting to source texts that linked to inquiry or topic focus areas. This reflected their beliefs in integrating curriculum content to enable students to more easily make connections and to develop understanding that literacy informs learning across the curriculum. For Josh this enabled embedded teaching of research skills, which were an important component of the school’s International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP). At the year 2/3 level, although valuing the use of linked texts, Yvette found this more of a struggle:

I do find it hard to pull in our inquiry topic into a lot of other places because you know at this level they’re learning to read and there aren’t that many books at these levels that could link in. Maybe when they’re into the journals you could be a bit more confident about grabbing things from other places, you know that whole “learning to read and reading to learn.” My kids aren’t at that level yet. (Yvette, RO)

As cited in the initial interviews, familiarity with the range and level of texts and the time taken in locating these continued to be a challenge. Josh’s lesson reflection on using a text relating to his Isaac Newton study illustrates this:

In retrospect the texts were a lot harder than I was anticipating; I can’t look at a text and go that’s an 8 yr reading level. I can’t do that yet. I don’t feel I have the resources to even do that very well, I’ve only got things that I’ve seen, a limited repertoire to be able to do that. (Josh, RO)

For Monique, the use of instructional texts with teaching suggestions in the back went some way towards alleviated this lack of familiarity, “I try and use those books that have suggestions in the back because it’s easier for me to understand it more, what kind of questions to ask” (Monique, RO). Both Monique and Sam mentioned issues with matching books to all individuals within a particular ability group in terms of interests of the students and learning needs.

At the new entrant level, Sarah considered the repetition of high frequency words in texts as a key consideration for her emergent readers. These books at the magenta level on the colour wheel are very repetitive and have little in the way of story line. Sarah countered this by grouping similar texts together in the same week:

I try and get some sort of comprehension, there's a series, 'Me', 'Mum', 'Dad' and 'Mums and Dads' as well, so I try and do those as a week block too because it's the same, you know Dad does the same as Mum does and the same as I do. (Sarah, RO)

She found the repetition of characters useful across levels in the commercial Price Milburn (PM) series of readers (Cengage Learning) and felt this enabled comprehension with students able to bring prior knowledge to new texts. In both her setting and Yvette’s the use of PM readers was promoted over the MOE’s *Ready to Read* series supplied free to schools. Sarah explained PM texts offer simple, more repetitive sentence structures, along with multiple exposures to high-frequency words and illustrations that support processing. *Ready to Read* texts in comparison, integrate a wider variety of both interest vocabulary and sentence structures. Both teachers were following their particular school policy here, based on the understanding that the nature of the PMs will promote success as a child moves to a new level of text difficulty. Once initial confidence is gained, students are introduced to the *Ready to Read* texts at the same level. For the three other participants teaching in the junior area (Amy, Lauren, and Erin), this did not appear to be an issue.

Monique was the only beginning teacher to make comment in relation to selection of texts for ELL readers, stating the need to consider images in texts to ensure her student is able to utilise these to support use of semantic information when processing text. Also worthy of note is the lack of consideration given to the use of digital texts as an instructional focus within guided reading lessons.

While debriefing on their teaching of guided reading, participants demonstrated increased awareness of students' needs and selection of texts to address these. Although growing familiarity with instructional series of texts was evident, there appeared ongoing issues around locating and establishing levels for texts relating to other curriculum areas and inquiry themes.

5.3.5 Guided Reading: Pre-reading strategies

As expected, since participants were explaining their teaching while viewing the video footage, commentaries included significant reference to the pedagogical principles underpinning their teaching of guided reading.

Eight participants (all except Monique) signalled the importance of pre-reading discussion around the title, author and the cover illustration, making connections to prior knowledge, reviewing previous learning and discussing the learning focus, introducing what may be challenging vocabulary into discussion, and making predictions before students started reading the text. The significance of this phase in setting students up for success during the lesson had been emphasised during ITE coursework. Sam's explanation depicts common thinking among the group, "I generally start lessons that way to orient them to the text, think about what they're going to read and hopefully engage with the text" (Sam, RO). For Amy this had not always been common practice and had been included upon reflection when she realised the necessity of discussion to establish knowledge of relevant concepts, thus providing students with a foundation upon which to make predictions and engage with the content of the text:

I'm letting lots of talk happen, because at the start of the year, because time is so precious I kind of skipped through the talk and kept reading. Then I realised that was a big mistake and it's better to let them talk it out and build up their concept of the thing, use the words they might find in the book.
(Amy, RO)

This pre-reading discussion also allowed the teacher to ensure they were not making assumptions about student prior knowledge of key concepts as Aroha's lesson illustrated:

I had taken for granted that they knew what a 'pipi' was and I think some of that is cultural because I was brought up where pipis were just like grass, they were just there. I didn't realise they didn't know ... some of them knew

what mussels were, but pipis I don't know what else they would call them.
(Aroha, RO)

Five teachers (Amy, Erin, Sarah, Sam and Lauren) referred to the importance of discussion of the learning focus during this phase. At junior levels this included reminding students about word processing strategies and the need to integrate all three sources of information when predicting new words and cross-checking. Amy's commentary demonstrates this:

“Can you tell me what you're learning to do when you're reading?” Here I'm reminding them to make our reading make sense, check it looks right, sounds right. We're discussing 'Fix up bear' I try and use these characters for comprehension and processing strategies so they can associate a behaviour with something tangible ... they connect to it instead of having just a whole lot of words for the learning intentions, they seem to connect to it quite well. (Amy, RO)

'Fix-up bear' is one of a set of characters Amy had seen used by her associate teacher and she consistently utilised these throughout her own teaching to encourage application of a range of reading strategies and development of metacognitive awareness. Whilst the origin appears unclear, there are numerous online references to these 'Beanie Baby reading strategies'. Another addition to the usual pre-reading phase of guided reading, as promoted during ITE papers, was observed in Lauren's room with the use of 'vocab boxes'. At the start of the lesson, children in her lower-ability group were presented with a grid of high-frequency words which were present in the text about to be read. Independent reading of these words prior to reading the text had been suggested by the Resource Teacher of Literacy (RTLit) as a way to review known words and increase exposure to promote automaticity.

Reviewing previous learning was also cited by five teachers (Amy, Aroha, Josh, Lauren, Erin) as important during this pre-reading phase. With her group of more-able readers who were engaged in reading a novel, Aroha commented:

We're just recapping so when we carry on reading they've got a picture in their head, making sure we're all on the same track, and checking if there was any information we needed to go over to catch up those who'd been away. (Aroha, RO)

Making links was common in Lauren's lessons. At one point she noted, "here I've linked back to previous learning around adverbs in writing and word work and compound words in shared reading, finding ways to practise and reinforce the learning" (Lauren, RO).

For Yvette this pre-reading segment had presented opportunity for deliberation with her tutor teacher, an experienced Reading Recovery teacher, around the practice of previewing the whole text as well as the cover/initial page:

She [tutor teacher] said 'did you not know that' [to flick through the whole book] and I said 'no because quite a lot of the time you're wanting them to predict so if you're showing them the whole text, how do you encourage them to do this?' I didn't realise how much help you've got to give them before they read. She said all the way up you should be doing it but most definitely those low ones. (Yvette, RO)

This contradicted established practices she had observed during literacy education papers and in practicum classrooms and she felt maybe having little experience at the junior level, as indicated in the initial interviews, was the reason she had not seen this previously. In reality there is sound justification for both methods of previewing text (Harp, 1999; MOE, 2003).

From the findings presented it is evident that participants valued the inclusion of pre-reading discussion as an essential feature of a GR lesson. They saw this as enabling students to establish links to the content of the text, relevant vocabulary and the learning focus appropriate to learner needs. In doing so, they are providing the scaffolding required to enable students to manage challenges during the reading.

5.3.6 Guided reading: During-reading strategies.

All participants explained a variety of what they considered appropriate teaching strategies used after the pre-reading discussion, whilst students were engaged in reading. As will be shown, these included dividing longer texts into sections to allow scaffolding and discussion during the reading, the importance of ongoing discussion, questioning, modelling, telling and monitoring individual progress. The practice of chunking the text into sections and providing clear direction and purpose for reading each section is promoted in set readings during ITE literacy education papers (Davis, 2007; MOE, 2006), and allows reinforcement of

learning, discussion of vocabulary and ideas and addressing of any issues as students engage with the text. For Sam this was a more recently adopted strategy:

I've been getting new [teaching] techniques from observing in other class levels as well ... I realised I wasn't talking enough or giving them a purpose to read. I should have been saying "now read this page and think about this question and be prepared to talk about it" and just having more discussion during reading. So I've started having more of that, it just helps with engagement instead of leaving it all until the end. You're keeping the pace steadier so those better readers aren't firing ahead and sitting for five minutes doing nothing. (Sam, RO)

Monique valued the discussion during reading as a way of challenging student thinking and promoting comprehension:

So here I'm reminding them there's just not one right answer, there can be others out there, it not always one answer is correct. I'm trying to get them to think outside the square and more deeply about alternative answers. (Monique, RO)

Aroha also valued the opportunity to promote rich discussion. In comparison to those who focused explicit instruction around the learning intention from the lesson outset, she felt this was too constricting and preferred to promote talk around the text and postpone attention to the particular learning intention until further into the lesson:

I don't always explicitly state this is what we're doing, making that WALT [We Are Learning To] obvious because I sort of felt that sometimes it was narrowing our conversations too much. So I try to do things and then come back it and say 'oh so what we just did was ... making a connection because we knew something in our personal life and this is what we read. I try to do it that way because they were kind of trying to give me the answer I wanted, if that makes sense, rather than thinking on their own, so I've tried to take it a different way. It opens it up so they're not sort of just narrowed down to only doing one thing, thinking is this right or wrong? I don't want it to be a right or wrong exercise if that makes sense. I try to focus on where I think their gaps are. (Aroha, RO)

It is clear that both Aroha and Monique understand the importance of talk in refining one's ideas and enhancing comprehension of text as an individualised process based on prior knowledge (Davis, 2016).

This reference to ongoing discussion was common at all year levels. With her recently arrived new entrants, Sarah saw this as essential in helping them to develop one-to-one correspondence by feeding in the repetitive structure of the emergent-level text and confirming use of semantic information as the pages were turned.

They said 'Fire truck' and the book says 'Fire engine' so I try to feed in that it's fire engine rather than fire truck. Then just that conversation because it [the structure] is 'a something is big' so just trying to say 'yes you're right a crane is big' 'yes a ship is big' so just trying to feed it into them so they can see the pattern. (Sarah, RO)

The manner in which the participants directed students to read the text during guided reading lessons provided an area for comment for five of the beginning teachers (Sam, Sarah, Aroha, Lauren, Josh). The practice of 'round robin reading' whereby students take turns at reading a section aloud around the group, received explicit comment from Sam and Sarah. This procedure is discussed and discouraged during literacy education papers and Ministry of Education literacy handbooks state it is 'never appropriate' (MOE, 2003, p. 98; MOE, 2006, p. 107). Despite this, the practice is still alive in some New Zealand classrooms, as Sam had discovered on practicum. Both Sam and Sarah elaborated on the negative impact of its use where readers focus just on the sections they are asked to read and are therefore prevented from reading and constructing meaning across the text independently (MOE, 2003). Sam had initially used the strategy earlier during the year, modelling practice on that of his practicum associate.

I used to do round robin, but you've got one kid reading and the others not really doing anything and then 'right your turn' and it's like 'where are we up to?' so this was something I picked up from the BT course with Louise [Dempsey]. That's the way I'd seen it done on practicums [round robin] and stuff but there was always a lot of fidgeting and stuff and when Louise brought up the 'reading radio' I was like 'that makes more sense' I'll give it a try and it works a lot better. (Sam, RO)

The 'reading radio' referred to, consists of students reading the text silently or quietly to themselves and should the teacher be concerned about the way individuals are processing the text he/she moves beside the student who then 'turns up the volume' accordingly for a short period while others continue reading. This was promoted at the Beginning Teachers' in-service reading session and referred to as a useful strategy by three participants who attended.

One of the reasons teachers give for maintaining use of round robin reading is that they feel they need to hear students read during guided reading and feel they lose touch if students read silently. Although her students were reading aloud together rather than one-by-one, Lauren illustrated this teacher insecurity around not hearing students, as she reported on moving a group to reading silently:

I shifted this group to reading silently because I thought they were ready ... these three girls are so competitive they were so worried about how fast the other one was reading. And if they are focusing on hearing their neighbour reading they haven't really comprehended it at all ... I think they enjoy it more now as well; they get more into it. [At first] I didn't know what was going on, it was about relinquishing control but they're more than capable of doing it. I felt how will I know if they're reading? Then I thought, it's about my questioning, so I've been really careful about that when there's tricky words. Since we've been doing that we've been looking at strategies for finding meaning from those more difficult words. It's much better for that group now. (Lauren, RO)

The second section of her comment demonstrates her understanding of the value of comprehension and knowledge of vocabulary in comparison to making judgements solely based on student ability to read aloud accurately.

For emergent and early readers not yet able to process text silently, the common practice amongst the participants mirrored that in many junior classrooms, where students read the directed section aloud at their own pace. There is a danger, as Lauren and Aroha found, that this can become stilted choral reading:

It was really clear where I was, at the start I was kind of doing that all reading together in unison. I didn't realise at the time, but now I look at it, it wasn't working because they weren't working at their own speed, they were really slow and stilted. (Lauren, RO)

Five participants (Amy, Sarah, Erin, Yvette, Lauren) elaborated on how they supported their students as they were reading. Responses demonstrated a commitment to addressing the needs of the individual and the goal of developing readers who can manage their reading and problem-solve difficulties independently. Amy's comment demonstrates this process of scaffolding:

Rather than going straight to the word I asked her if she could find the mistake she'd read, then narrowed it down to the line, to figure out what was

wrong on that line to try and help her do it by herself rather than just giving her the answer. (Amy, RO)

For Lauren, developing questioning strategies to enable this development was a priority as part of her self-selected teacher inquiry focus for the year:

I think my questioning skills have changed a bit and prompting is a goal that I'm working on ... am I always giving them words when they ask or am I just telling them when they make a mistake, or am I getting them to work it out? I'm making a conscious effort to encourage them to self-monitor. In the first term I was just directing them to the errors and they weren't doing that thinking for themselves. (Lauren, RO)

There were several examples of teacher modelling of reading behaviours during guided reading lessons and five teachers talked explicitly about this deliberate act of teaching (Josh, Aroha, Amy, Yvette, Sarah). For Aroha and Sarah this involved demonstrating correctly-phrased reading to model fluency and support understanding of ideas in the text; Aroha also modelled the comprehension strategy of 'making connections', which was her teaching focus for the particular group:

I'm trying to model it for them but I didn't show the connection of where I got it from, in the story. I should have maybe made it more explicit so 'this part in the story reminds me of ...' instead of saying 'this story reminds me of ...' because they were struggling with the idea. I'm trying to set them up so they know what they're doing, that's why I'm going around individually [asking what the story reminds them of], although it's so time consuming doing that. (Aroha, RO)

At the year five level, Josh discussed modelling as part of the process of gradually reducing the level of scaffolding, a process he was finding difficult to manage. His students were focusing on summarising and he initially modelled this using 'The Three Little Pigs', then moved onto the focus text about space and the forces of gravity, part of an inquiry focus. His students verbalised the process of summarising then used a chart where they bulleted main points from each paragraph as steps towards the creation of a summary in comic strip form. He supported them with this process during the observation lesson, then expected them to do it independently with the next chapter the following day:

I find that really hard, it's easy to do too much for them, then they're high and dry when they have to do it themselves. I think the scaffolds are too supportive almost ... I don't know how to do that yet, to have incremental

steps towards independence. With maths you have materials everywhere then I'll take one away and then both but you've got the written form, it's very discrete steps. Reading's a bit trickier. (Josh, RO)

He then offered his own solution for the future, suggesting he use a more basic text for the shift towards independence on the second day so that the content was more easily summarised. This demonstrates his commitment to both reflecting on his teaching and problem solving to address issues identified.

All nine lessons concluded with either review of the content of the text and/or revisiting the learning focus and then providing directions for the follow-up activity. This typically involved justification of the purpose of the activity in regards to lesson focus, explanation of specific requirements and checking to ensure students were clear about the procedure for the task. Erin's comment illustrates the process:

So throughout the whole thing it's getting them to understand those similes and how they help us to picture what's happening. It's not happening literally but it's comparing it to something else - what it looks like. I'm encouraging links back to purpose with descriptive writing. Then here I go over things because they need examples [of the activity requirements], how their books need to look and what the instructions are. I'll give them examples in their book of what I'm wanting, then I get them to feed it back to me. (Erin, RO)

As well as ensuring the purpose and procedure are clear, this depth of instruction allows uninterrupted teaching of subsequent groups, as previously explained.

The evidence in this section illustrates participant awareness of the range of teaching strategies typically utilised within guided reading lessons to support the development of the knowledge, skills and strategies required reach an independent reading level. These beginning teachers understand and are committed to the use of questioning, discussion and modelling to support development of both processing and comprehension of text. The findings also demonstrate ability by participants to reflect on their journey and modify practices where necessary.

5.3.7 Guided Reading: Professional knowledge of the reading process

In addition to investigating participant beliefs and practices in relation to pedagogical knowledge, the data can also be examined to ascertain professional knowledge of the reading process. Again the Four Resource Model (Freebody &

Luke, 1990) has been applied as a way of mapping the development of reading knowledge, skills and strategies.

Seven of the nine participants referred to a focus on elements of the code breaker role when teaching. In comparison, Josh and Sam were observed teaching fluent readers with high accuracy levels, so prompting for the use of skills and strategies associated with processing text were not evident in their lessons.

The focus evident in the initial interviews on building letter and high frequency word knowledge continued, but the seven teachers (aside from Josh and Sam) also identified other aspects essential to successful code breaking. Sarah, with her emergent readers, outlined the importance of developing automaticity, recognising high frequency words instantly no matter the location or font characteristics:

So just focusing them in on those individual words 'a, is' sometimes I might write it on the white board, "find the word 'is, where else can you find it? Find it on another page, write it in another three places on the whiteboard, what does this say, what does that say? It says 'is' all the time no matter where it is, or what colour it's written in or how it's written. (Sarah, RO)

Along with Amy and Monique, she also explained the need for recognition and awareness of word families, referring in this instance to onset and rime patterns, for example: hop, chop, flop. Amy referred to this component of processing text in relation to ownership of learning:

I'm trying to teach word families and things they might come across ... so they can apply it in other parts of reading, not just to get stuck on it, be told it and move on. We try and use the modelling book to keep track, it helps the kids to feel they've got ownership of their learning as well, it's their book. It helps me to remember as well what we've worked on and that's the type of thing I can go back and see that perhaps a worksheet on 'ight' or something can be used or finding books with lots of 'ight' words so that it sends it home. (Amy, RO)

Aroha demonstrated application of knowledge of compound words when her students struggled with the word 'cobweb'; although on reflection she questioned the type of scaffolding provided.

So I was demonstrating how to break it down, and I broke it down into two words 'cob' 'web', but just looking at that [the video footage] I'm not sure I helped them to sort of sound out the letters as we went along because I

don't think he got it, although these two got it, there were a couple that didn't. I should have maybe brought it back a bit to sounding it out a little bit more. Should I break it down more than doing cob web? Because I took it for granted that they knew it was two words. (Aroha, RO)

Also essential for accurate decoding is the ability to draw on the three sources of information that readers integrate to solve new words. As explained when reporting findings from the initial interviews, these include semantic information, relating to the meaning drawn from prior knowledge and from words and images in the particular text; syntactic information, awareness of grammatical structures; and visual and grapho-phonetic information, incorporating the visual aspects of print and phonetic knowledge (Clay, 2013). Just two participants, Amy and Yvette, made reference to these three sources of information essential in enabling accurate processing. Amy's example illustrates appropriate prompting to achieve integration:

So Cody said 'shirts' instead of 'clothes' even though it made sense, but I was trying to get him to work out where it had gone wrong. So it still made sense but it didn't look right ... I'm prompting him to use all three sources of info. (Amy, RO)

In comparison, Yvette was finding members of her lower-ability reading group were focused on visual information from the print and neglecting other information sources:

I've focused a lot on decoding of the words [using letters and sounds] because they didn't seem to have any strategies and so then I had to pull them back into using other ways to sort out words not just visual. So if I can I encourage them to think, what is this word? Use information from your head, rather than just your eyes, I guess. (Yvette, RO)

Partnered with these sources of information, mastery of processing strategies is required to facilitate accurate processing (MOE, 2003). The processing strategies typically taught in New Zealand primary classrooms include attending and searching for particular information, predicting, cross checking to ensure reading is accurate and confirming, and self-correcting when errors are detected. Four participants at the junior class levels (Lauren, Erin, Aroha and Sarah) regarded these as important for their students to use and understand. Lauren commented:

We always talk about the strategies we use, because they were just trying to sound words out and it wasn't working, or they'd just keep reading. They haven't got the idea of reading on and coming back [to search for further information to facilitate prediction of new words]. (Lauren, RO)

To assist in scaffolding metacognitive awareness of these strategies she had since developed a tracking sheet in their modelling books so that if they get stuck on a word they write it down, who got stuck on it, what strategies they used. She continued, 'then we've got a record each week of what strategies they're using and whether they worked or not and which ones worked the best for us' (Lauren, RO). This tracking sheet had evolved from revisiting one of the readings used in the second year literacy education paper that contained a similar list compiled by a teacher with their students.

Similarly, Aroha had created a bookmark listing the key processing strategies to prompt her students:

Yes, it says if you come across a word you don't know you break it down, reread, go back, miss it and go ahead then rerun. So it gives them a small list of items five or six bullet points on it to remind them. (Aroha, RO)

There was also a significant focus on the role of making meaning from words and ideas in texts during guided reading lessons, a shift from the beginning of the year when programmes had just been established. Six teachers (Amy, Aroha, Josh, Sam, Lauren, Erin) signalled the importance of scaffolding understanding of newly encountered vocabulary to facilitate comprehension. Observations of the reading lessons revealed a variety of strategies were used to support this understanding. At the year five level, Josh felt it important for his students to focus on 'rich vocabulary' and he expected them to note down words they did not understand so meanings could be researched, "I like them to do this independently, they've got resources, ipads, dictionaries, thesauruses to do that" (Josh, RO). In comparison, with her year 2 students Lauren provided scaffolding at the group level through use of the group's modelling book:

They're level 21 so there's been words they don't know the meanings of and they'll keep reading so we've had a meanings chart in our books so they'll write it down, have they seen it before? tick yes, no, what do they think it means? Check the dictionary etc. I'm also trying to encourage them

to get the meaning from the clues around the word by reading on and reading back. (Lauren, RO)

In addition to the use of contextual information, there was comment on the need to support student attempts to develop understanding and clarification of new vocabulary. As Erin explained: “I get what they’re saying and clarify it a bit more building on their ideas and scaffolding them a little bit more” (Erin, RO). Aroha also emphasised pronunciation to support student understanding of vocabulary:

I’m reading it to them putting emphasis in certain places to try and make it easier for them to get an understanding of what ‘hydrothermal’ is. Sometimes they stop and start and put pauses in the wrong places because they had gone over and reread it but it still wasn’t working, so I read it thinking that maybe it might help to make more sense if they heard it. (Aroha, RO)

Evident in these comments is a strong belief in providing students with strategies to locate meaning in unknown words, whether it be through use of dictionaries, context clues within the text or consideration of morphemes.

Continuing to examine how participants scaffolded the role of meaning maker, the comprehension of ideas and the teaching of comprehension strategies received attention from seven participants (all except Monique and Yvette). Common themes included prompting students to substantiate their ideas with information from the text and the teaching of comprehension strategies; prediction, inference and summarisation. For Sam, with his year 3/4 class, scaffolding the development of comprehension appeared part of a continuum where students learn to decode first, then comprehend and then understand and use text features:

At this age they can often decode really well, but they don’t have a clue what they’ve read or they’re missing parts of the text that help it make sense. It was more about focusing on comprehension stuff for me and it still is, inference is a big one at the moment. I know there’s looking at diagrams and using labelled diagrams in non-fiction texts and all those other WALTs you could be using and I’ll probably do that next term. But I’d rather they understood what they’ve read and were able to dissect it and ... ask questions about it. (Sam, RO)

This inferred sequence in development, where readers learn to decode and *only then* develop comprehension, was not evident in other responses and does not reflect

theoretical understanding from the literacy education papers or the intersection of the roles of the Four Resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). As noted in Appendix 2, these BTs were introduced to the *Literacy learning progressions* (MOE, 2010) and the early reference to making meaning and using comprehension strategies is highlighted on page ten of this document.

The development of inference was a teaching focus explained by four beginning teachers (Sam, Sarah, Yvette and Lauren) who were aware of the need for readers to use their own prior knowledge in addition to information in the text to comprehend beyond a literal level. Lauren focused on this with her group reading at turquoise on the colour wheel:

I felt we'd gone over the summarising and those things quite a bit and because they're all reading really well and comprehending well I wanted to stretch them further and make them aware we weren't always getting the information straight from the text, we're using what's in our heads as well, we've been talking about being powerful thinkers and what that means. (Lauren, RO)

For those teaching both prediction and inference, their theorising indicated the importance of substantiating ideas with evidence from either the text or their experiences. At the year 2 level with a lower ability group Yvette commented, "They're reading pretty ok, they can decode a lot of the words but just that taking in what's happening and understanding what the story's about, what's going on, how do you know that?" (Yvette, RO). Josh's running commentary on this teaching illustrates this at a more sophisticated level:

Here I'm reviewing previous learning around inference. Now I've changed this focus to "we are learning to support our inferences." They could make them, but where is the info coming from? ... Here I'm trying to get them to use all the clues [and illustrations], not just taking it at face value ... Now they're creating stuff but that's why I've changed it now to looking for the evidence, "have you got something to back that up? No, then it's probably not a good inference". [Later in the lesson when students are using evidence ...] Good, this shows they are thinking, considering prior knowledge and applying it to the situation. (Josh, RO)

Reference was made to the functional uses of texts by Sam, Josh and Erin. While not explicitly using the term 'text user', they spoke of the importance of ensuring identification and discussion of the purposes of various text features was included

during guided reading lessons to support comprehension of ideas across a range of text types. At junior levels this included discussion of the role of the author and illustrator, extracting information from diagrams and associated labels and identifying verse and chorus structure in a song. Identification of text type was a focus for Erin's year 2 group, where she was extending on a recent inquiry focus relating to bees. Students were reading a text about worms and slugs written in explanation form. She commented:

Here I'm asking them what sort of a text format it is, because I am trying to introduce all my groups to a wider range of text types. So especially for my higher groups I might use a newspaper article or last time I gave them books on bees and they ended up making their own bee books. (Erin, RO)

Sam was introducing narrative structure with his groups, as a way of supporting a future syndicate writing focus, "I have to teach narrative in the next few weeks so I'm developing knowledge of this with problem, setting etc and so I'm selecting fables and such" (Sam, RO).

Josh felt that the structure of themes in the PYP programme in existence in his school actively supported reading of different types of texts for different purposes:

Last term we did a lot of reading of non-fiction, finding facts and figures, learning about new concepts; now we're reading for enjoyment and to inform our writing and there are opportunities to build on comprehension strategies. (Josh, RO).

The evidence here indicates some participants have given consideration to the need for students to understand the social and cultural functions of text. However, as noted above, this was decided by the syndicate or school policy rather than the participant themselves.

As evidenced in the initial interviews, there was again little reference to critical literacy or the role of text analyst. In her lesson involving the reading of a crocodile's song, Yvette attempted to prompt discussion around the choice of words and 'voice' of the author. However, students were confused as they considered they themselves had read it so it was their voice:

That was quite a hard question, "What do you mean, we've just read it" so she was right to say yes I was reading it, but in writing we talk a lot about our voice, how the reader can read it and hear our voice, the author's voice.

Maybe it's a hard concept anyway for this age. It's meant to be something that they're thinking about but I think it's quite a hard concept so that was a bit of a trick question. (Yvette, RO)

With students of a similar level, Lauren had experienced more success:

Mmm, [flicking through modelling book], yeah we've done a lot of talk about what makes a good book and what we like in our books. We don't have to agree with everything the book says and we've done a lot of that in previous sessions and especially with them as they pick up on what they like and what they don't like, it's just discussing why and those reasons behind it. We're definitely moving into, 'what's the author trying to say? Why are they saying it?' sort of questions. (Lauren, RO)

Taking into account the content of the lessons in addition to the theorising by the nine beginning teachers, it appears that at this mid-point in their first year of teaching, the dominant teaching and learning foci during guided reading lessons relate to the scaffolding of processing and comprehension of texts. Most appear to see the roles of code breaking and meaning making as most significant at this point.

5.3.8 Support for teaching reading

Throughout the video reflections participants referred to a range of people and programmes that supported their development as teachers of reading. As recounted during the initial interviews these included their tutor teachers, other colleagues and professional learning opportunities.

Findings from interviews with seven beginning teachers (all except Sarah and Monique) suggested those designated as tutor teachers continued to provide support with ways of managing ability levels and grouping. For Sarah this was not the case. Her mentor teacher approved her planning but had never taught new entrants, so instead, Sarah relied on the former new entrant teacher who taught at the school and had previously been her associate teacher:

Because Lanah my tutor teacher hasn't taught NEs before, so she's good for the school stuff. But I talk to Kate a lot, specifically about the classroom and she had a couple of the kids last year as well, which is good. She'll say "oh, you can access them through doing this or by doing this and they respond well to this" which is good. (Sarah, RO)

The role of tutor teachers in observing the teaching of their beginning teachers varied in frequency. To date, Amy had not had any observations of her teaching of

reading and Lauren had had an observation but felt she was very much in control of her own programme. In comparison, Yvette was still receiving weekly visits from her tutor teacher, an experienced teacher but first time tutor teacher, who continued to provide abundant notes and suggestions as noted in reporting the initial interview data:

It took me a while in the beginning of the year to sort of figure out our relationship but now I really like here, so it's not a big deal, but I feel like saying if you're going to be in my class, just help me out. (Yvette, RO)

This was a unique situation amongst the participants. It wasn't as though the tutor teacher was concerned with Yvette's teaching as she had commented to Yvette, "you're doing so well. The kinds of things you're doing, I thought you'd still be getting right in term 3" (recounted by Yvette). Yvette had taken steps to remedy the weekly 'surveillance' by commenting to her:

I think we need to start looking at the bigger picture and things like the Graduating Teacher Standards soon and do that ... it's doesn't just have to be about what's happening in the class and problem solving. (Yvette, RO)

Sam and Aroha discussed the role of their tutor teachers in providing appropriate resources, with Sam commenting on the cupboard full of resources his tutor teacher was happy to share. Aroha had retained the same tutor teacher despite moving levels at the beginning of term two. Her tutor teacher had previously taught in junior classes which she valued, given what she perceived as a lack of direction in this new area of the school:

She gave me these fantastic cards, these resources because I was struggling to come up with learning intentions at a more basic age... it just sort of helps to guide me in the things they need to be learning about ... because there were things that I took for granted that they would already know how to do. (Aroha, RO).

In addition to support from their tutor teachers, Sam and Lauren also spoke of assistance from other colleagues within the school. In Lauren's situation this included the RTLit, referred to earlier in relation to her teacher Inquiry.

Since the initial interviews had taken place, four participants (Monique, Amy, Sarah and Sam) had attended the Waikato literacy session held as part of the BT support

programme. This mirrored the Auckland session Erin attended earlier in the year and similar comments were made:

She just reinforced that guided reading was time for them to do the work, and I knew that, but it's kind of been a reminder, so I've probably backed off a little bit. I don't know that I've actually changed, but my mind set has been reminded to make them do more work and to try and reflect in shared reading about what I want them to do. I'm just seeing the links a bit more rather than being so disconnected. I'm not trying to squeeze so much in and I'm not worried if they get over it, just to stop it. I'm not trying to push on through and get blood out of a stone. So I think probably my attitude towards it has become a little more relaxed, probably a bit more realistic. (Amy, RO)

It appeared the value of such sessions lay in reconnecting to previous learning, confirming current practice (or not for some students), and challenging thinking to further develop their teaching of literacy.

Monique and Yvette valued a resource shared by the facilitator during the year 0-3 session, which systematically categorised suggested learning intentions for each level of the colour wheel. Monique explained:

Louise gave us a sheet with a whole lot of WALTs for each reading level group, eg L13-15, these are the kind of WALTs you could be working on ... The sheet's really handy, 'Draft Guided Targets' (Learning Smart), fluency, comprehension, strategies - a really great resource ... When you're starting out you don't know where to go with them and being able to see the next level up on the sheet is great, it gives you somewhere to go from. (Monique, RO)

Sam, who attended the senior session, commented that it provided a much needed refocus in direction:

She [the facilitator] covered heaps, some of it not in great detail but it made me realise ways I can improve, what I'm not doing and what I should be focusing on. Like I sort of got to a point in reading where I thought "I don't even know what to cover any more, there's so much". It was good that she basically broke it down, here's one way to do this, here's another way you can do this. (Sam, RO)

Attendance at this session prompted Sam to arrange observations of others teaching reading in his school at both lower and higher levels. As a result of these visits and

the BT session he began using modelling books, ensuring students were aware of the purpose for reading, and scaffolding the development of vocabulary.

Sarah also spoke of the value of observing other teachers and had been fortunate in visiting a neighbouring school for this purpose. Three other participants (Josh, Erin, Lauren) referred to impending observations they hoped to undertake during coming weeks.

For Lauren, an additional source of information to support teaching came from the students themselves. As part of her teacher inquiry (previously discussed as a school requirement) she interviewed her low ability readers to garner their views on reading:

I talked to my lower ability readers about if they thought they were good readers, they all had that confidence that they were great readers but that sometimes it's hard. It was interesting to get their perspective on what books they like, that was good to hear; what they don't like in reading. They don't like it when the person next to them is reading loudly. It was good to have that conversation. I just wanted to get their opinions since I was doing an inquiry about their reading. (Lauren, RO)

In addition to providing information about text interests this also reinforces Lauren's previously mentioned decision, to encourage silent reading as soon as students are developmentally ready.

Just one participant referred to use of the Ministry of Education handbooks and documents during these interviews. Yvette commented that she'd pulled out the *Effective Literacy Practice* handbook (MOE, 2003), prior to the beginning teacher session, to check that she was targeting the relevant comprehension strategies and then added, "I do like the literacy progressions. I don't know why I don't look at them, it's probably because they're in the cupboard, but um, they are very clear."

Support for the teaching of reading appeared to have come from a variety of sources. Most participants benefitted from the ongoing assistance of their tutor-teacher, although for some, there were other people more suited to provide this help. There appeared variation in the frequency with which their tutor-teachers observed their practice but they were beginning to organise observation of other teachers. Along with attendance at the Beginning Teachers' course and resources supplied there,

they found these visits of value in reflecting on and adjusting their teaching practices.

5.3.9 Reflections on the process

The process undertaken to facilitate the generation of this set of data appeared of value for participants in allowing concentrated, uninterrupted reflection on their practice of teaching guided reading. For all except Amy this was the first time they had observed themselves teaching. While the findings reported above consisted of mostly explanation and justification of beliefs and practices, several participants also included spontaneous critique of their teaching. The majority of these comments related to the nature of interaction with their students and the pace of their teaching.

Monique and Josh were both concerned with the dominance of teacher talk during their lessons. From this Monique resolved to include increased opportunities for buddy talk. While Josh utilised the ‘think-pair-share’ strategy to engage all members of the group in talk around the text, he also noticed his use of ‘Guess what’s in the teacher’s mind’ (GWITM) or ‘initiate-respond-evaluate’ (IRE) structures, whereby the discussion consisted of short interchanges between teacher and students, rather than dialogic conversation. He chuckled at these occurrences, knowing we had discussed the negative impact of such strategies during literacy education papers, and commented ‘looking at the video I don’t foster a lot of discussion amongst the group, I’m doing lots of the work for them.’

Lauren utilised pre-planned questions to guide discussions during the reading, but was not happy with segments of her discussions either, “It seemed a very teacher-child-teacher-child response, there wasn’t much questioning amongst themselves, it’s something I’d look at” (Lauren, RO).

Lesson pace and the number of teaching points was of concern for three teachers. For Sarah in her new entrant classroom, the pace of her teaching was revealing:

I didn't realise how 'bang, bang, bang, fast it is, it's a lot to get through, but man I'm going a hundred miles an hour! Man, I hope I'm not like that all the time. (Sarah, RO).

Lauren was also astounded at how many learning areas she tried to introduce during the pre-reading phase:

Watching this now I've focused on so many things, we talked about inferring, we talked about the contents page, we talked about strategies, my gosh, they'd be so overwhelmed! Far out! And they haven't even started to read it yet. There was too much going on in there, too many questions; I might need to think about what I'm focusing on ... I stopped and started them a lot, I need to think about that. (Lauren, RO)

Meanwhile Aroha felt she spent too long with each group and observed their waning concentration levels; she vowed to keep things 'shorter and sweeter' in future. Observing her teaching also provided an opportunity for her to monitor levels of student contribution:

The focus on language, vocabulary is important, getting them talking. I find a lot of my kids are spoken to, not spoken with so they don't have that chance for interaction so I really try to push that. (Aroha, RO).

In addition to targeted critique of their lessons, five beginning teachers shared more general reflections in relation to learning to teach literacy. For Sarah this was an opportunity to reflect on the evolving nature of her teaching of literacy and aspects that contribute to this evolution:

Yes, when I think back to like my first couple of weeks I know it's different and next term it'll be different again, because of attending courses, my own research and through how things have gone well and how things haven't. (Sarah, RO)

Josh spoke of it being harder to teach literacy than maths, due to what he termed the 'creative nature' of the curriculum area. He found it a challenge to support his less able readers:

The common thread seems that good readers can put everything they read together and include their life experiences, things they've written, things they've done, they can make really strong connections. The ones who can't do that seem to be the ones that struggle, they can't learn something in one context and apply it to another, I don't know what the solution is. (Josh, RO)

He suggested he may be able to address this by taking longer with each learning focus rather than just two or three days and by ensuring he targeted this focus within a range of different contexts, for example with fiction and nonfiction texts.

While his reference to the teaching of writing could be critiqued, Josh's comment at this midpoint in his first year sums up the complexity involved in teaching reading and the statements made by others throughout the commentaries:

Teaching reading is hard, writing I do find hard, but you're kind of following a logical sequence; almost like model, this is how you do it, here's another model, you go practice, now I want you to write your own. You can kind of almost follow a prescriptive sort of formula. But reading's really hard, you've got so many choices you have to make and you have to make them while you're teaching as well. There's the planning side of it, selecting texts, why am I selecting this text? The strategies, which strategies should I teach? ... Making choices in reading about what to teach and what to do at certain junctures, there's so many teachable moments that I just pass up because it might only apply to one or two of the girls, because of the diversity within the groups. (Josh, RO)

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reported descriptive analysis of data gathered firstly from the initial interviews during week six of the school year, and then from discussion of the recorded observations of the teaching of reading during the middle of the year. The data provide evidence of the beliefs and practices of these beginning teachers as they develop their teaching of literacy during the first six months of the year, and support their students to develop related knowledge and skills. It has included evidence of theory gained from their initial teacher education programme and the support provided by those within their school communities.

These findings highlight many of the multifaceted decisions teachers engage in on a daily basis to facilitate a literacy programme that targets the range of needs of their students. The data suggest that in the midst of their initial year of teaching, these participants are grappling with issues such as: how to balance time available with quality teaching; how to ensure the appropriate level of challenge and support for each student; and how to implement effective organisation of independent activities that maintain a focus on learning needs, in comparison to merely keeping students busy. An issue largely absent from the findings and yet to be addressed by

these participants, is the support required to prepare students to manage digital texts effectively. Also significant is the lack of focus on developing the roles of text user and text analyst (Freebody & Luke, 2003), with the majority of instruction supporting decoding and comprehension of text. Despite these omissions, there was a significant focus on reflective practice throughout the data, possibly enhanced by the research project. The following chapter presents findings from the four online surveys completed at the end of each school term.

Chapter Six

Findings from online surveys

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present findings from the online surveys completed at the end of each of the four terms. This chapter provides a bridge between findings from the initial interviews and video observations, and the final interviews. Survey data were an additional source of evidence, gathered in a written form, generating findings which were triangulated with those generated orally during the interviews.

Participants completed an online Google Forms survey as they transitioned from the end of each school term into the next, and at the end of the year. The survey items were open-ended and allowed for thematic analysis (see Appendix 11). The surveys prompted reflection on the challenges and successes relating to the teaching of literacy, and provided an opportunity to consider proposed changes for the term ahead. Survey questions were purposely framed using the label ‘literacy’ to allow for response around the particular aspects of literacy most pertinent to participants at the time. Survey items related to confidence levels, successes and challenges, new learning, factors influencing the teaching of literacy, proposed changes for the term ahead and an opportunity to comment on other issues (Appendix 11). Responses focused predominantly on the teaching of reading and writing with little reference to broader notions of the concept of literacy. Clearly the need to establish successful reading and writing programmes was paramount in participant thinking as reported in Chapter 5.

6.2 Support for the development of literacy teaching

The BTs were asked which factors contributed to the development of their teaching of literacy during each of the previous terms, and a thematic analysis of data produced the themes recorded in Table 5 below. The table shows the terms of the school year during which each factor was reported. Findings signal the importance of support from other educators with four dominant sources evident: professional learning courses, interaction with tutor teachers, and both observation of and professional dialogue with other teachers.

Table 5: Factors reported as contributing to the development of literacy teaching

(T = school term).

Factors identified in surveys (Terms 1-4)	Amy Yr 2	Aroha Yr 3	Erin Yr 2	Josh Yr 5	Lauren Yr 1/2	Monique Yr 3/4	Sam Yr 3/4	Sarah Yr 0/1	Yvette Yr 2/3	Total no.
Professional learning courses (* course for first year teachers)	T2*	T4	T1*, 3, 4	T2*	T1,2, 4	T1, 2*	T2*	T1, 2*	T2*	15
Professional dialogue with tutor teacher	T3		T1, 2		T1, 2	T1, 2, 4		T4	T1, 3, 4	12
Observation of other teachers	T1	T3, 4	T1,2, 3, 4	T2	T1,3		T3	T2, 3, 4		14
Professional dialogue with other teachers	T1, 2, 3		T2		T1, 2, 4	T1	T1	T3	T4	11
Professional reading	T2		T4		T2, 3, 4	T1		T3		7
Presence of digital tools				T1	T4				T3	3
ITE papers				T1, 4	T2	T1				3
Nature of the school				T3 PYP school						1
Participation in this project					T3	T3		T2		3

All participants, except Aroha and Lauren, attended the literacy course for first-year teachers. Aroha, Lauren, Erin and Sarah attended a variety of other professional learning opportunities. These addressed topics such as running records, ipad usage and phonics programmes. Sarah and Lauren attended a writing course as part of the intensive writing initiative that their schools were involved in. Comments reflected the value of such sessions in enabling review of the content introduced during their initial teacher education programme. Aroha summed up the thoughts reflected by other participants: “PD sessions have helped to remind [me] or refresh information received during training (i.e. at uni)” (Aroha, Survey [S]4).

The thematic analysis showed that interaction with other teachers was noted as significant with similar frequency to tutor teachers (see Table 5). Participants were proactive in engaging in professional conversations with a variety of other teachers in their schools. For some this was their team leader, as in Sam's case. The presence of other beginning teachers within the school also facilitated comparative and supportive dialogue, as noted by Monique and Erin. For Monique and Yvette, the development of professional relationships with their tutor teachers was seen as vital, with both identifying the value of their mentors in three of four survey returns. However, both appeared to have issues with the nature of relationships with their tutor teachers in term one. For Yvette, the concern and anxiety she felt over differences in the teaching of writing, reported in the initial interview findings (Chapter 5: 5.2.4), had gradually been replaced with appreciation of the wealth of knowledge held by her tutor teacher. In survey four, she noted that although she had less interaction with her, "she is normally the biggest contributor to my literacy development" (Yvette, S4). In survey one Monique commented:

As a beginning teacher I thought I would have all the support in the world, but it has turned out to be that you have to do a lot on your own and by doing so much on your own, you never know if what you're doing is right or wrong. (Monique, S1)

In comparison, her comment in survey four stated, "my tutor teacher and release teacher sharing their ideas with me has been most beneficial for me in my professional development" (Monique, S4).

Lauren's undertaking of the teacher inquiry project, focused on what an effective junior guided reading programme would look like, impacted on the frequency of references to dialogue with other teachers and professional reading in Table 5. The dialogue referred to interaction with the local RTLit, which Lauren found valuable in clarifying her thinking and prompting links back to the theory covered in ITE literacy papers.

Regarding less-frequently reported factors, Josh was the only one in a BYOD class, and this proved a major influence on his teaching during term one as he considered how ipads could be utilised most effectively. Yvette and Lauren received ipads (Yvette just one) during terms three and four, which they noted as opening up the possibilities for multimodal learning. The integration of digital devices to support

learning will be discussed towards the end of this section of the findings. Josh, Lauren and Monique were the only participants to refer to the influence of university papers during the surveys. Josh's comment related to the way in which the third-year ITE paper promoted the significance of what he termed 'a multiliteracies approach' to teaching literacy. For Monique, the reference to the ITE programme was made to supplement her previously mentioned issues regarding what she perceived as a lack of support in term one:

Teaching literacy this term has been a little bit of a roller coaster. I believe university prepares you to a certain degree for teaching but it's very different when you [become a]'real life' primary school teacher... (Monique, S1)

Monique did not have the same level of close interaction with her tutor-teachers as other BTs in her school.

Amongst the survey responses were three references to the value of involvement in this project (Table 5). Lauren and Monique referred specifically to the merit in observing and discussing the video footage of themselves teaching guided reading, while Sarah referred more generally to the opportunity for reflection: "Really enjoying being a part of this project, it helps me be more reflective about my own practice as well as confident in my abilities" (Sarah, S2).

In summary, the value of professional interactions with a range of educators in various roles is clearly signalled in these findings. These interactions, involving discussion, observation and participation in professional learning opportunities can be seen as significant in supporting these beginning teachers as they developed their teaching of literacy over the four terms.

6.3 Teaching writing

Participants were asked in each survey to identify aspects of their literacy programmes they felt confident about and what they considered their greatest success at the end of each term. In addition, they noted what they had learned about teaching literacy and the challenges involved (Appendix 11). Within these response categories the teaching of writing was mentioned by everyone apart from Monique. Findings generated from a thematic analysis of this focus on writing across the four surveys are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Survey responses related to teaching writing

(T = school term)

Factors identified in surveys (Terms 1-4)	Amy Yr 2	Aroha Yr 3	Erin Yr 2	Josh Yr 5	Lauren Yr 1/2	Monique Yr 3/4	Sam Yr 3/4	Sarah Yr 0/1	Yvette Yr 2/3	Total no.
Confident about teaching writing.	T1, 3	T3, 4	T1, 2, 3, 4	T2, 3, 4	T1, 2, 3, 4		T1	T1	T2	18
Greatest success identified as teaching writing		T1, 3	T2, 4		T3				T2	6
Aspects identified as significant when teaching writing										
Establish clear authentic purposes for writing				T2	T1, 4				T1, 2, 4	6
High expectations					T1, 2					2
Student awareness of next steps, responsible for their own learning	T2, 4	T3	T3		T1	T1			T1	7
Pre-writing: modelling, using exemplars	T3, 4	T1, 2, 3	T1, 2	T2, 4	T1				T2, 4	12
Targeted teaching		T2		T2	T1					3
Teaching structure		T1		T3					T2	3
Spelling/word-work to support problem solving, accuracy.					T1, 3			T1	T1, 2	5
Handwriting to support legibility.	T1							T3	T4	3

Challenges associated with teaching writing										
Identified writing as their greatest challenge	T3, 4	T2, 3, 4	T4	T1		T1		T4	T1, 3	11
Assessment of writing: moderation of writing samples	T2		T1,3, 4	T1	T1	T1	T4		T2, 3,4	11
Maintaining effective routines for feedback and feed forward	T3, 4			T2	T1	T1, 2			T1, 4	8
Time management	T1, 3, 4			T2	T2			T2	T1, 2, 4	9
Supporting students with particular needs			T2			T1		T1	T3	4

Confidence in teaching writing was evident early in either the first or second surveys (apart from Aroha) and most BTs attributed this to seeing their students engaged in writing and responding to focused teaching. Such comments demonstrate their belief in the importance of engagement to promote development of writing ability. Erin was most effusive in relation to this:

I love seeing the progress that my students are continually making in their writing ... they are developing a love of writing which many of them lacked at the start of the year. This in itself is a huge success for me :). (Erin, S2)

6.3.1 Significant aspects of teaching writing

Participants made a number of statements which indicated some of the principles underpinning their teaching of writing. These statements were mostly a response to the prompts ‘What have you learned about teaching literacy this term?’ and ‘What will you change next term and why?’ Each of the principles indicated received attention in the course content of all three compulsory ITE literacy education papers (Appendices 1-3).

Selecting authentic and relevant purposes for writing was noted as critical by Lauren, Josh and Yvette; all three referred to the value of integrating writing with

the current topic or inquiry. In addition, in survey 1, Lauren highlighted the importance of the Language Experience approach, with a strong connection between hands-on activity and discussion to generate quality writing. Also associated with developing quality writing, all participants, aside from Josh, Sam and Sarah, indicated the need for students to develop awareness of their learning through goal-setting and identification of subsequent steps. Monique stated in her first survey:

The children must know their goal so they are able to easily recall it and be able to identify for themselves what their next step is in their learning. (Monique, S1)

In order to facilitate the development of this responsibility for their own learning, Lauren stated the importance of immediate feedback in the first survey, and Erin and Aroha, the incorporation of routines for peer and self review in survey 3.

In terms of supporting students through the phases of the composition process, once again the importance of prewriting teaching strategies (including modelling, co-construction by teacher and students, and the use of quality exemplars to demonstrate) was the most commonly noted aspect across year levels and survey iterations (all BTs except Monique, Sam and Sarah). Participants saw this phase as essential in motivating students, demonstrating subsequent steps and the use of specific language features, and setting students up for success.

Another critical aspect of support, identified by Aroha, Josh and Lauren, was the targeting of specific needs of students during writing workshops. For Lauren this involved careful analysis of writing samples to identify common needs. Aroha and Josh referred to the importance of flexible grouping and mini-lessons to effectively address these needs.

Aroha, Josh and Yvette referred to the teaching of structural elements associated with particular genres as important. Both Aroha and Josh commented that these required more attention than anticipated; Josh had initially focused on ideas, purpose and audience, but found this needed to be extended by the end of term 3 as his students were not competent with the various structural features of particular genres.

Reference to spelling and handwriting as essential tools to support fluency in writing was evident in eight surveys submitted by Amy, Lauren, Sarah and Yvette (all junior level teachers). The need to develop accuracy in spelling was noted by Sarah and Lauren, who both taught emergent and early writers. For Lauren, the intensive 40-minute, whole-class, daily ‘word-work’ programme that aligned with her school’s writing programme was seen as providing a solid foundation for her early writers.

Sarah noted in survey 3 the importance of developing fine and gross motor skills with her new entrants to facilitate legible handwriting. Handwriting was not a major focus across the group, but Amy and Yvette, teaching year two students, stated that regular sessions were necessary due to issues with the legibility of student writing. For Yvette, this comment came in the final survey when she admitted that handwriting was a neglected component that she needed to take more seriously owing to poor letter formations amongst her students.

6.3.2 Challenges associated with teaching writing

Despite an overall level of confidence with teaching writing in these findings, participants (with the exception of Sam and Lauren) identified a number of challenges at various points throughout the year. There were 11 references in this category compared with six references to writing as the greatest success (Table 6). Yvette’s first survey provides an indication of what others were feeling:

Writing is hard work! Inspiring my class is not an issue as they all seem to want to write and have something to say, but the logistics of teaching writing are hard. (Yvette, S1)

Three themes were evident in these challenges: assessment, establishing systems for responding to student writing, and time management. As evident in Table 6, assessment of writing was most commonly cited and appeared to generate the most anxiety amongst all but two of the beginning teachers (Aroha and Sarah). There was an evident initial lack of both confidence and experience with assessing students’ writing. At the end of term one, Josh noted that he found it difficult to identify students’ needs and ability in writing and to differentiate his teaching accordingly. Erin’s comments were similar and she felt the subjective nature of writing impacted on this process. However, in term four, both commented that

while the identification of student needs would require ongoing attention, moderating across teaching teams had helped to develop confidence with this. In comparison to Josh and Erin's remarks in term one, Sam noted in term four that he needed to develop a greater awareness of the progressions in writing to inform his assessment.

The current assessment practice of moderating writing samples across classes to establish overall teacher judgements against the National Standards sparked ongoing commentary from Yvette in surveys two, three and four. She felt constrained to focus most of her teaching on the particular writing form on which her students were to be assessed for this moderation task. In her term three response she documented her greatest challenge as:

Mentally overcoming my internal pressure to keep the kids working on writing that they are assessed on and doing reports. I totally believe in a wide curriculum and that all children need to be introduced to lots of different things, in writing — the opportunity to experience different writing styles. But it is their personal writing that they are moderated and judged on. Whether this is the pressure of National Standards or just me adjusting to my first year of teaching, I don't know. (Yvette, S3)

By the end of the year, with further experience and confidence, Yvette added that she had enjoyed the moderation process. This was possibly fuelled by the discovery that her students had progressed and some were actually at a slightly higher level than she had anticipated.

The development of systems to engage in constructive dialogue with each student and to ensure effective and timely response to their writing, was the second most frequently reported challenge across the four surveys (Table 6). Josh, Lauren, Monique and Yvette noted this issue during the first half of the year and both group rotation and individual systems were trialled and modified as the year progressed. Amy's comment in term 3 illustrated the feelings of the group in relation to this issue:

Marking writing well has been the biggest challenge ... I've changed my programme to conference with two groups a day, and mark the third after school. Marking the third group after school goes a little against my philosophy — I think it's almost meaningless for a student to read my comment without having a dialogue about the writing with it. (Amy, S3)

Time management when teaching writing was the third challenge noted, identified as an issue by four teachers. For the two at each end of the levels continuum (Josh at year 5 and Sarah with new entrants) these comments related to the amount of time it took to teach writing in general. Amy and Yvette in comparison found it difficult to fit in the attention required at their levels for spelling and handwriting with Amy commenting:

I'm finding it difficult to maintain the "little" bits of literacy that are so important but fall off the timetable so easily! The cost is huge if these things aren't taught, but it's so difficult to prioritise them in the timetable. (Amy, S3)

In addition to the more common challenges above, four participants referred to the need for additional support to address the needs of particular groups of students. Erin and Yvette faced challenges with English language learners. Yvette had two new arrivals in term two who were not able to write for themselves, and found she needed strategies to move them from the copying stage. Erin reported her ELL students required extra help with grammatical features such as the use of tense. At the end of term one, Monique documented her biggest challenge as motivating three reluctant boys to write, her initial response being to suggest they stay in at playtimes to finish their work, a strategy that failed to foster engagement. Again, Sarah expressed an issue unique to the new entrant level, feeling that she lacked strategies to support those beginning school with no experience of writing.

Evident throughout this analysis of references to the teaching of writing is the desire of participants to both engage and support their students to create meaning through print. Providing authentic purposes for writing through linking to current class themes or using the language experience approach, using modelling to set students up for success, and ensuring students are aware of their learning goals, were all noted as important factors in facilitating effective writing. Comments also demonstrated the importance of focused teaching and constructive dialogue to provide necessary scaffolding. The focus on what are often considered 'surface features' of writing – spelling and handwriting – was appropriate to the level of the writers but did not overshadow considerations relating to making meaning. These aspects of teaching writing, along with the challenges of providing quality feedback,

moderation of writing, and assessment against national standards, will be revisited in the discussion chapter.

6.4 Teaching reading

Survey findings relating to the teaching of reading are presented in Table 7 below. In comparing this information with Table 6, it is evident that the teaching of reading was cited more frequently overall than the teaching of writing in relation to feelings of confidence and success. Each of the beginning teachers identified reading in relation to these first two categories at least once, and there were multiple references across surveys from all except Lauren and Aroha. Over half these comments were noted in the first two terms, signalling an early level of confidence overall. Almost all initial remarks related to use of the guided reading approach, emphasising the importance these BTs placed on what has been termed ‘the heart of the reading programme’, owing to the level of scaffolding provided (MOE, 1996). Monique’s comment illustrates this:

I feel quite confident in asking suitable and thought-provoking questions in guided reading enabling groups to have in-depth discussions around the guided reading text. (Monique, S1)

Another important feature to note in relation to indicating success was that for all participants apart from Josh, these comments appeared fuelled by observing growth in reading ability amongst their students. As Amy stated after mid-year reporting:

I’ve helped all of my students to reach the standards and beyond, and have identified learning needs and discussed these with their parents to make a learning plan. It’s exciting to see students making progress, knowing that I had a part to play. (Amy, S3)

For Erin, Lauren, Monique, Sam and Sarah such comments related explicitly to the accelerated progress made by lower-ability readers. For some this involved provision of one-on-one support in addition to the usual small-group organisation for guided reading.

Table 7: Survey responses related to teaching reading

(T = school term)

Factors identified in surveys (Terms 1-4)	Amy Yr2	Aroha Yr3	Erin Yr2	Josh Yr5	Lauren Yr1/2	Monique Yr3/4	Sam Yr3/4	Sarah Yr0/1	Yvette Yr2/3	Total no.
Confident about teaching reading	T3, 4	T2	T1, 2, 4	T1, 2	T1	T1	T2, 4	T1, 2, 3, 4	T3, 4	18
Greatest success identified as teaching reading	T3	T2	T1, 3	T2	T3	T1, 2, 3, 4	T1, 2, 3	T2	T4	15
Factors considered important in teaching guided reading										
Developing the role of code breaker	T1	T4			T1	T1, 2		T1, 3	T4	8
Developing ability to make meaning		T1	T1	T1, 2, 4	T2, 3	T1			T1	9
Developing fluency					T3				T2	2
Monitoring students reading			T1			T3	T2			3
Provision of meaningful follow up activities			T1	T2		T4				3
Selection of resources	T2			T3					T3	3
Targeting the range of needs	T1				T2, 3, 4	T2, 3, 4				7
Challenges associated with teaching guided reading										
Greatest challenge	T1, 2	T1	T1, 2, 3	T3, 4	T1, 2, 3	T3	T4	T3	T2	15
Assessment	T3		T1	T1	T1	T1	T1	T2	T1, 3	9

Organisational factors: Grouping and time	T1, 2, 3		T2	T1, 3, 4	T1, 3, 4	T2,3	T4	T2, 4		15
Provision of meaningful follow up activities		T1	T3		T1, 2	T1, 2, 4			T1, 2	9
Reference to other instructional reading approaches										
Shared reading	T2, 3	T1, 2, 4			T1	T1, 2, 4	T2	T2	T2, 4	13
Reading to		T1, 2			T1	T1, 4				5

6.4.1 Significant aspects of teaching reading

Luke and Freebody's (1999) Four Resources model was again applied to categorise survey findings relating to pedagogical content knowledge when teaching reading. As for findings relating to the teaching of writing reported above, these findings were compiled from data involving the questions, 'What have you learned about teaching literacy this term?' and 'What will you change next term and why?' They included the development of knowledge of components of the reading process and utilisation of effective teaching strategies.

Apart from Monique, teachers referring to the importance of developing aspects of the role of code breaker were all teaching in junior level classrooms (Table 7). Comments reflected those already reported in findings from the video observations, with the dominant focus on alphabet knowledge, word knowledge and processing strategies consistent with scaffolding of emergent and early readers. Once again there was no reference to the terms phonemic awareness, phonological awareness or phonics.

The essential role of processing strategies such as monitoring errors, cross checking and self-correcting was mentioned by Sarah, Amy (who again referred to the range of scaffolds involving animal prompts such as stretchy snake and chunky monkey), and Monique who wrote:

My biggest success so far, is teaching my lowest reading group several strategies to decode words that they are unsure of. It has been brilliant to see the children go back to the beginning of the sentence and try again or look to the text's pictures to help them decode the unknown words. (Monique, S1)

By the end of term two, Lauren's comments included the roles of both code breaker and meaning maker as she struggled to integrate the two into her guided reading lessons with her year 1 and 2 students. Having had less experience with junior readers on practicum she noted: "I am unsure whether I am focusing too much on decoding strategies and not enough on comprehension strategies" (Lauren, S2). Meanwhile Yvette and Josh were the only other two to refer to teaching comprehension strategies with comments noted in both term one and two surveys. Josh indicated the need to model the strategies and then provide opportunities to scaffold use during guided reading lessons. At the end of the year he reiterated the importance of a sustained focus on a particular strategy to allow time for learners to consolidate usage.

In terms of Luke and Freebody's framework, these comments relating to focus areas for guided reading focused predominantly on cracking the code and making meaning. There was a lack of reference to the roles of text user and text analyst. The relative occurrence of these foci will be commented on in the discussion chapter.

The development of fluency was the only other component of the reading process to receive particular attention. Lauren had received her ipads by the end of term three and planned to encourage students to self-monitor fluency and expression using a recording app, while in term two Yvette reported encouraging lower-ability readers to 'read like a reader' rather than like a robot. The issue of round-robin reading and alternative use of the 'radio technique' outlined in chapter five (5.3.6) was again mentioned by Erin and Sam as a valuable outcome from the BT professional learning session.

In terms of organisational factors associated with guided reading there were four references during surveys two and three to the importance of selecting quality resources to engage readers. In teaching year-five students, Josh stated in survey three that he felt confident:

Using a wider range of resources. I select journals purposefully, and feel I use them well to encourage high engagement through relevance and the interests of the class. (Josh, S3)

In comparison, and reflecting comments made in earlier findings, Amy and Yvette both stated the need to allow time to develop familiarity with what was available and to marry this up with the learning needs of particular groups.

6.4.2 Challenges associated with teaching guided reading

The teaching of guided reading was signalled as the greatest challenge by four BTs in each of terms one to three, and more often in total than the teaching of writing. All nine participants referenced it at least once in this category (Table 7). The frequency of challenges here was, however, matched by the number of times teaching reading was referred to as a success, and there was clear evidence of beginning teachers problem solving when responses were tracked across individual surveys, as in Lauren's case below. Examination of the nature of the challenges revealed three issues that dominated the teaching of this key instructional approach: assessment of learning, organisational factors and selection of independent activities for students when not engaged in small group instruction. The first two are the same as those identified in relation to teaching writing.

Lauren identified her greatest challenge in term one as “implementing a successful reading programme”. This was prompted by her not seeing the same shifts in learning that she'd observed with her students' writing. This appeared again in her term two response, when she wondered if what she was doing was actually ‘correct’ (Lauren, S2). Viewing the video footage from her guided reading observation and engaging in follow-up discussion appeared to have clarified her thinking:

I was planning way too much and it began to feel very onerous. After watching the video I learnt that I need to have more focus and direction in my guided reading lessons. (Lauren, S3)

By the end of the year, she felt less constricted by her planning and more able to capitalise on teachable moments. The depth of focus on guided reading in her survey responses was probably more apparent than for other participants, owing to her teaching inquiry focus on effective, junior guided reading programmes.

For six participants the challenge of reading assessment was documented in the first survey (Table 7). Lauren noted:

My confidence is beginning to grow... it is a very daunting task especially in the year 1-2 age group. I feel there is a huge amount of pressure to get students to reach the National Standards and the expectations of the school. (Lauren, S1)

For Erin and Monique such challenges related to school policy around assessment practices, with Erin finding the required monthly running records difficult to keep up with. Monique found it difficult to use assessment tools with which she had little experience, and had the added complication of the school policy of not teaching guided reading until week six when all middle-school data had been collated. Yvette discovered that issues can arise when other people offer to carry out initial assessments of an observational nature with your own students; she felt she would have grouped her students more appropriately on the reading continuum had she been able to undertake her own running records.

In contrast, Josh and Sam's comments related to formative anecdotal data gathering. Whilst Josh was confident with teaching comprehension strategies, he struggled to find a way to assess independent usage to inform future steps. Similarly, Sam stated:

I'm probably less confident about reading ... and I'm not yet particularly adept at recognising where kids are struggling and what they need to focus on. (Sam, S1)

The second identified area of challenge in relation to teaching guided reading encompassed organisational issues, such as establishing a manageable number of guided reading groups in relation to the range of reading levels in the class, and the necessity to allow time for quality teaching focused on the needs of each group. Recognising the range of learners was signalled as important by Lauren, Monique and Amy. At the end of term one, Amy noted the necessity of acknowledging the differing pathways students take to learn, and the range of strengths and needs that have to be addressed. In catering for this range, both Lauren and Monique indicated the need to ensure sufficient time was spent with each guided reading group to allow quality teaching and learning to occur. Monique's statement at the end of term 2 sums this up effectively:

Never rush a guided reading lesson, it is better that you spend quality time discussing the book rather than rushing through to see all of your groups in a day. The children will get nothing out of it if you rush it! (Monique, S2)

Monique, Sarah, Lauren and Josh indicated difficulties with 'getting through' the number of instructional groups at various points throughout the year. Amy solved these problems by term two, but in doing so found that shared reading sessions, which she also valued for their potential to model reading knowledge and strategies, tended to occur less frequently. The arrival of new students, either from another school or as a group owing to class reorganisation, proved challenging in terms two and three for Erin and Lauren, especially when their reading levels failed to align with existing groupings and in some cases required one-on-one support to bring them up to the required standard. While guidelines for group size and managing guided reading programmes exist in MOE documents (MOE 2002; 2005) and are examined during ITE papers, in reality accommodating challenges such as these requires initiative and flexibility.

The selection and organisation of purposeful independent activities was the third significant challenge. Five participants reported this component of the reading programme as a challenge eight times, mostly during the first half of the year (Table 7). Erin, Josh and Monique noted the importance of rich tasks that consolidate or extend the learning focus from instructional sessions. For Erin, this occurred early in term one:

I have now put in place more meaningful activities which prompt higher order thinking and often use graphic organisers for follow up activities. (Erin, S1)

In comparison, Monique felt it took until the second half of the year to fully understand the importance of quality follow-up tasks. Aroha's comment indicates the need for careful consideration of the nature of these activities and avoidance of worksheets that can be classed as merely 'busy work':

I find that the use of comprehension sheets, while useful, can be either rushed with many wrong answers or are simply not done. Activities that allow the students to just read (whether big books, poems, books etc.) were too 'loose' and they often went off track. (Aroha, S1)

In refining their practice, Yvette and Josh both emphasised the importance of tailoring activities to the needs of each group and providing more able readers with a sufficient degree of challenge, whilst also allowing less able students a range of activities they can manage independently.

6.5 Other approaches

In addition to the dominant focus on organisation, selection of activities and assessment associated with guided reading, findings pointed to other pedagogical approaches associated with reading, namely shared reading and reading to students.

The use of the shared reading approach received comment from seven BTs (all except Erin and Josh), mostly at the end of either the first or second terms (Table 7). These statements reiterated those contained in previous findings. Monique, Lauren and Yvette wrote about the benefits of shared reading in terms of introducing new ideas and language to the class group, modelling reading strategies and expression, and enabling success for students through participation in a collaborative activity. These benefits were reinforced by Amy, who wrote in term two: “shared reading is really valuable for demonstrating lots of skills to all the kids, it’s good ‘bang for the buck’ in terms of time” (Amy, S2).

Yvette and Sam found that the BT in-service literacy session in term two prompted revision of their focus on shared reading, reminding them of the power of modelling in relation to the current instructional focus areas for small-group, guided reading. However, in contrast to this comment, at the end of the year Yvette wrote that due to increased diversity within the class, mainly the arrival of two ELL students, she had reverted to her initial practices of using it merely as a class read-along with less modelling of instructional strategies. This occurred because she found it more difficult to target the broader range of needs within a whole-class, shared reading session. A confusion between the approaches of shared reading and reading to, which is common to our third year pre-service teachers after they return from practicum, was evident in Aroha’s term one comment, where she referred to shared reading as involving reading Roald Dahl novels ‘to’ her students. This often arises due to a blurred use of the approach labels by associate teachers.

Findings indicated just five references to the approach of reading to students. These were made by Aroha, Lauren and Monique (Table 7). They viewed the approach as

an essential daily occurrence, which modelled enjoyment of reading and fostered vocabulary development. Lauren paid particular attention to the benefits for those who struggle with decoding; ‘reading to’ allowed them to engage in the pleasure that can be derived from books without the demands and accompanying frustration.

There was just one reference to independent reading. In term four Sam identified his greatest success as:

... probably getting kids excited about going to the library and finding new books. It took a while (and lots of modelling) for them to understand that the library has all sorts of awesome books and they just have to take the time to look and they'll find something that interests them. (Sam, S4)

From the survey evidence it appeared that by the end of the year most participants had developed a reading programme that suited the needs of their particular student group. Examining the final challenges identified in survey four, four of these related to reading and each identified time to fit in the various components of the reading programme as an ongoing issue. Monique’s comment summarises this situation effectively:

I feel a lot more confident in teaching literacy compared to the beginning of the year. The children now know their rotations and activities which makes for a smoother programme. I feel that I have found the rhythm ... however I still struggle to fit shared book, shared poem, read aloud and guided reading all in one day as well as all the other curriculum areas. (Monique, S3)

6.6 Reflecting a broader focus

As stated at the outset of this chapter the majority of comments in the surveys related to pedagogical content knowledge associated with the teaching of print-based reading and writing, often within a decontextualised literacy block. However, there was reference to the broad concept of literacy in the survey responses and consideration of the ways in which this underpins learning across the curriculum. The integration of digital devices to support literacy learning was also identified.

Mention was made in the first section of this chapter of three participants citing the impact of digital technology on their teaching of literacy (Josh, Yvette and Lauren). For Josh, this provided an immediate challenge, with every student owning an ipad

for classroom use. In his first survey he commented: “I have learned much about how to integrate technology to enhance the teaching of literacy” (Josh, S1). After approaching the Board of Trustees with a proposal to purchase a set of iPads, Lauren referred to the introduction of these in her final survey and noted the collaborative and reciprocal nature of learning as her class explored the potential of the tool:

Introducing the iPads this term has been a big focus in my literacy programme - ensuring my students are digitally literate. This has meant I have also had to become more digitally literate myself. I am learning and finding ways to incorporate the iPads into my literacy programme in meaningful ways ... as a class we have been learning and experimenting with the iPads together ... I'm learning with them and sometimes they teach me. (Lauren, S 4)

Other participants, Amy and Sarah, referred to confidence in using digital technology but without elaboration. Erin identified this as her final challenge:

The use of ICT in my literacy programmes, this will be something I'll continue to focus on next year. It will hopefully be easier as we will have access to a larger range of ICT equipment. (Erin, S4)

Although not prominent in the survey responses, all participants included some reference to the importance of using literacy in a range of contexts across the curriculum. For Sam, Sarah and Josh, the ease of integrating literacy throughout their classroom programmes was noted in term one, and for Josh, this was an essential requirement of the inquiry-focused PYP programme operating in his school. In comparison, Yvette found that her BT release time in term one impacted on opportunities to do this. Other beginning teachers indicated their confidence in this area in the second half of the year with the benefits evident in purpose-driven learning contexts such as the following:

Linking the W.A.L.T with the inquiry unit gave the students the skills/knowledge to find key points and the main ideas in relation to their inquiry topic while researching through different information sources. (Monique, S3)

For Lauren this was noted as a challenge to be addressed during her second year of teaching:

This year any topic we have covered has been quite standalone from my literacy programme. This is not the way I intended it to be and I would

definitely look at rectifying this next year. I would like to have a more integrated classroom programme. (Lauren, S4)

Just two participants made reference to the broad nature of literacy and the concept of multiliteracies. For Yvette this was an unsubstantiated comment in survey one: “Multiliteracies is also a weak area, in fact I do nothing on it yet,” There was no evidence of her understanding of the concept or how she might ‘do’ it. In comparison Josh noted:

I have maintained an interest in teaching literacy (where appropriate) through a multi-literacies approach. I have enjoyed the limited opportunities to do so as I find the girls are highly motivated by these kinds of multimodal tasks. (Josh, S1)

It appears from the evidence in this section that understanding of the broader view of literacy, as explained in the literature review, is not underpinning the literacy programmes of these participants at this point. There is evidence of participant understanding that literacy underpins learning across curriculum areas, and there are attempts to broaden the focus. The arrival of new digital devices later in the year also produced renewed interest in the use of these to support literacy learning.

6.7 Conclusion

In concluding this section it is worth noting one final trend in the findings. When prompted to report their greatest success in the term-four survey, evidence showed that all participants, apart from Monique, Sam and Josh, were motivated by the success their students had achieved over the year. Amy and Aroha measured this success in relation to national standards and the progress their students had made, in Aroha’s case from ‘below standard’ to ‘at standard’. The requirement to report to parents in the final term appeared to have facilitated this reflection on progress as Erin’s comment illustrates:

Seeing the progress of my students in their reading, writing and oral language. Term 4 is a busy time in terms of end of year assessment and reporting to parents. Through these things you are really made aware of what the students have achieved, their next learning steps and the huge progress that they have made throughout the year. (Erin, S4)

These survey findings demonstrate both the complexity involved in developing effective teaching of literacy, in particular of reading and writing, and the ability of

these participants to monitor their progress throughout the year. There was a 100% response rate for the four, end-of-term surveys and the tool provided opportunities at significant points throughout the year for these beginning teachers to independently reflect on and consider future directions to enhance their teaching of literacy.

In the following chapter findings from the final interviews are reported. These interviews allowed participants to reflect back on the journey they had undertaken during their initial year in the classroom.

Chapter Seven

Findings from the final interviews

7.1 Introduction

This chapter documents findings from the final round of semi-structured interviews carried out at the end of the fourth term of teaching. The interview schedule (see Appendix 10) provided opportunity to reflect on the first year of teaching literacy in relation to: the impact of their initial teacher education programme; contextual support from the school community; changing beliefs and practices whilst supporting the range of learners in their classes; and the integration of digital technologies to support literacy learning. In addition to this common structure, interviews allowed for discussion of matters noted during earlier data generation phases, pertinent to each individual.

7.2 After one year: Reflections on the Initial Teacher Education programme

Participants were asked to reflect on how the literacy education papers and practicum experiences influenced their teaching practices. While responses from each participant signalled the positive value of the literacy education papers in informing the teaching of literacy, there were variations in the extent of contributions as well as some dominant commonalities. Amy, Josh and Yvette elaborated on the importance of paper content in establishing the theoretical foundation to inform practice. Yvette's comment clearly illustrates the need to link theory and practice and to revisit and extend understanding as the programme progresses:

I was someone very involved and active and awake in all three years [and making connections], and I do, it's still there. Honestly, I don't know how grads go out and teach literacy [after a one year programme]. That time in between the years to figure it out, readjust and think and realise what these things are for and even after all that, I still got shared reading wrong at the beginning of the year. (Yvette, Final Interview [FI])

Gaining understanding of key pedagogical principles was also articulated by these three participants. This included the importance of facilitating student ownership

of learning through providing opportunities for talk and examination of appropriate text models prior to writing, as Amy describes:

Giving the kids ownership ... tapping into their prior knowledge and having them know what they're writing about and having it mean something to them. If they're reading it's not just words, it can connect to them and that it's powerful, yeah opportunities, that's the big thing. Obviously it takes a while to click in, I went from having no talk to realising it's actually important to talk about the book [when reading to students]. The same with writing, no models, then — oh it's actually quite important to spend time on that. It's actually putting that into practice. (Amy, FI)

Other reflections relating to literacy education papers focused on specific components of the programme, namely resources and assessment strategies. While Amy identified the importance of selecting appropriate resources to enable the application of theory to practice, and Josh the need to share sophisticated picture books to challenge student thinking and develop awareness of multimodality, Monique's comments focused around acquiring procedural knowledge of the levelling of guided reading texts and the relationship of these to the national standards. All participants except Josh valued the importance of time spent in developing competence with the running record procedure, reiterating similar comments made during the initial interviews. Aroha, who shifted to a junior class in term two, illustrates this thinking:

We were really well prepared for the running records, to understand them, how to do them, interpret them. I remember thinking when we were doing them, I'm going to be in a senior class, I don't really need this. I was going through the motions. But that was really, really good and I've gone back to that, pulled out my notes. (Aroha, FI)

Whereas Josh had a high percentage of fluent readers who did not require analysis of their processing of text through running records.

Reflecting on the development of literacy practices around the teaching of writing, it appeared knowledge of 'levels of writing' (as opposed to the 'developmental continuum'), moderation of writing samples, and the nature of programmes at different year levels were areas beginning teachers felt less informed about on moving from the pre-service environment. Five of the nine participants expressed

such concerns (Sarah, Erin, Aroha, Lauren and Monique). Erin summed up this concern thus:

It would have been really cool to have more of a focus on writing and look at the different levels and why they're there, like moderating type discussions we have at school ... maybe ways that you might work with different groups, what would you look at with different levels and focus on, how you go about teaching to their needs. (Erin, FI)

Aroha accepted responsibility for this lack of knowledge, suggesting it was perhaps due to being less engaged in course content relating to writing:

I kind of wished I had taken more notice of the writing side of things, because I found that, more than the reading, is probably more my weakness. Trying to think how do I respond to this piece of writing, how do I interpret it, where do I go to next? That's probably been the hardest part ... I just felt like I didn't really know where to go, it's like a ball of string and I couldn't find the beginning of it. That's not to say it wasn't addressed, but for me personally I didn't feel as prepared for the writing. (Aroha, FI)

In addition to the literacy education papers, practicum experiences were cited by Amy, Sam, Aroha and Monique as essential in facilitating the translation of theory into practice and development of competence with the key literacy approaches such as shared, guided reading and language experience. Furthermore, Josh and Monique emphasised the benefits of close and discerning observation of effective teachers with a strength in literacy. Josh felt that this degree of observation could be extended to promote more in-depth understanding, for example, of developing student competence with a reading comprehension strategy:

Maybe if associates were asked to demonstrate, say, the scaffolding that happens between guided reading with a comprehension strategy and then they [students] do it on their own. How do you get from starting a new strategy to getting them to try it on their own, and what does that look like? Because I had this idea for a very long time that it happened in the space of one lesson, and that was just so wrong. (Josh, FI).

Beginning teachers also identified aspects of practicum that they considered had inhibited opportunities for developing competence. Laura felt associates were sometimes loath to hand over responsibility for teaching, and, along with Sam and

Monique, felt the short practicum timeframes prevented development of an overview of the total literacy programme and the accompanying decision-making:

You're there for a snippet, you're not there for the whole year seeing the assessment, the activities, how you change them, how you change groups for the children ... (Monique, FI).

With a full year's hindsight, it appeared participants were able to reflect more critically on the influence of their ITE programme in comparison to responses given during the initial interviews, when comments were of a more pragmatic nature. These differences will be addressed further in the discussion chapter that follows (Chapter 8).

7.3 Working within the context: Interaction within the school community

As with findings previously reported, participants referred to the influence of their school support networks on their beliefs and practices. As they reflected on their first year of teaching, themes that emerged included reference to evolving professional relationships with their tutor teachers, ongoing support from other colleagues and professional learning opportunities.

7.3.1 Relationships with tutor teachers

Interaction with one's tutor teacher was cited as having had a major impact on the development of their literacy pedagogy by Josh, Erin, Yvette, Amy and Lauren. Their comments focused on discussion and support from their mentors in refining organisational aspects of their programmes to ensure appropriate learning for students and more efficient management of time. For Josh, the impact related to the value and organisation of relevant, independent literacy activities when he found he had too many tasks and his students were not able to manage them independently. Similarly, when Amy's class numbers increased, she struggled to effectively target the writing needs of her students and provide relevant feedback. Her tutor teacher provided support with the establishment of guided writing groups to facilitate more effective learning conversations with students.

Josh, Erin, Amy and Lauren reported ongoing positive relationships with their tutor teachers throughout all data generation phases. For Yvette, the initial conflict with

her mentor had become resolved over the course of the year to the point where she commented:

It's just gone 180, and maybe we were just getting used to each other. You know, Kate, never doing it before, not really knowing what her role was. I still think that sometimes she might overstep slightly ... because she'd been out of the class for so long, and there'd been that conflict. She's now part of our team meetings, and she's learning ... I think she was looking at some of the stuff I was doing and not getting it. Now she's realising that that's the expectation anyway. And there's less of me going nicely, 'but, but, but' so yeah, we get on really well. (Yvette, FI)

Yvette now identified Kate as the major influence on her teaching of literacy, stating: "definitely Kate my tutor teacher ... we talk a lot about literacy it's our big thing. She gives me lots of ideas" (Yvette, FI). While her tutor teacher was a literacy specialist and taught small groups and individuals with high literacy needs, it appeared her time out of the mainstream classroom had contributed to these initial tensions.

For Monique, Sarah, Sam and Aroha, the tutor teacher relationship was not referenced as a significant influence on their literacy teaching. Reasons given included difference in levels taught, other school-wide responsibilities held by the tutor teacher that impacted on availability, and differences in teaching styles. Sarah and Aroha both had mentors who taught at more senior levels and found that while their tutor teachers were supportive, their feedback from observations was less relevant. Sarah also cited a difference in personality as a contributing factor. Sam approached his tutor teacher when necessary, but the variation in teaching styles meant support was less appropriate than for other participants:

I observed him and if I got stuck with things I went to him. Sometimes what he told me didn't gel with what I thought. By going and observing I could think, 'Oh I like that I'm going to use that'. Whereas he's quite detail orientated and that doesn't suit me; some of it was good and other times I thought, 'No there's no way I can do that.' (Sam, FI)

Of the nine beginning teachers, Monique appeared to feel the least supported by her mentor. This person was assistant principal and not the literacy leader in the school. While meetings were held fortnightly they usually related to the operation of the

classroom as a whole. Monique had engaged in initial discussions with her tutor teacher around the range of text-types and associated learning intentions, but her teaching was observed just once and planning never checked during the year. Monique was in a position to directly compare the depth of support provided for another beginning teacher within the same school and this emphasised for her the extent to which she was left to her own devices.

These reflections on tutor teacher relationships raise questions around the selection of teachers for this critical role and the support offered in relation to literacy pedagogy. Factors such as availability, class level taught and interest or depth of experience in teaching literacy appear significant and will be further addressed in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

7.3.2 Relationships with colleagues

Each of the beginning teachers referred to interactions with colleagues other than their designated mentors, which had an influence on their beliefs and practices relating to the teaching of literacy. Such interactions comprised informal discussion, syndicate meetings, and observations both of others and of themselves by others.

Six participants (aside from Josh, Yvette and Lauren) identified the importance of seeking out colleagues within the school for informal discussions relating to their teaching of literacy. They identified their workplaces as supportive environments where their journeys as first-year teachers were acknowledged and affirmed. For Monique, opportunities to talk informally with others in their classrooms, particularly with other beginning teachers, provided the support she felt was missing from her own relationship with her tutor teacher. Aroha found informal conversations critical in extending her own cultural knowledge, and this facilitated adaptation of her pedagogy for the English language learners in her class:

Talking to other teachers has been a big influence, not just my tutor teacher, speaking to teachers in the Samoan bilingual unit who deal with those who are speaking Samoan as their first language, that is really helpful, even the Te Reo Māori group. (Aroha, FI)

She did however, signal caution in relying on staffroom conversations, where you do not necessarily have the relevant documentation, such as student assessment information, with you to support some discussions.

In addition to informal dialogue, Erin, Sam and Aroha acknowledged the contribution of more formal conversation and collaboration relating to literacy pedagogy, within syndicate meetings. For Erin in particular this provided a secure framework within which to develop her programme:

I love the way we plan [in our syndicate] it's done collaboratively. Everyone brings their resources to the meetings and we produce this plan that's got website links and ways to integrate it into other curriculum areas, and ways you can be using it to support your inquiry. And the expectations are very clear. Expectations that you've got a shared book a week, a poem a week, you do reading every day from 10 till 11 and writing's from 9.15 till 10. (Erin, FI)

In comparison Monique felt more support for the development of literacy pedagogy within the syndicate would have been useful and she placed less value on the nature of existing meetings:

We don't really have that many literacy-focussed team meetings. We'll get given a piece of paper with a spelling outline, a reading plan for the school as such, but it basically is a piece of paper. And it's just a meeting for the sake of a meeting. Like you put that piece of paper in a folder, you read it altogether in the staffroom and that's it, it doesn't mean much. (Monique, FI)

Scheduled observations of other teachers were signalled as a critical ingredient in the refining of literacy practices by Amy, Sam, Lauren, Monique and Aroha. Such observations were carried out with colleagues teaching at the same level and also at a level below to extend their knowledge of the earlier stages of literacy learning and their associated teaching practices, thus supporting reflection on the stage-related alignment of their own teaching of literacy.

Amy also made reference to the value of arranging observations of particular aspects of her own teaching, which enabled the refinement of her teaching of writing:

We were doing a recount about something ... I did a really short model, and sent the kids off. She encouraged me to slow down and do a really good quality, way better quantity [of time] on the model and don't worry if they only spend five minutes writing. They can carry on tomorrow, rather than trying to get the whole story written, edited and finished today. (Amy, FI)

She had been reluctant to do this previously as she felt her year-two students would not sustain the thread of ideas across multiple writing sessions.

7.3.3 External influences and school policy

In addition to interaction with colleagues within their schools, all participants apart from Amy made reference to the influence of engagement in professional learning opportunities delivered by outside providers. These included either individual attendance at one-off sessions, or participation in whole-school development, such as the intensive writing programme that Lauren and Sarah's schools were engaged in, and the school-wide assessment contract at Aroha's school. Aroha found this added considerably to her understanding of the range of assessment types required to inform Overall Teacher Judgements against the National Standards. She had initially found the process of gathering literacy data overwhelming.

Already signalled in earlier findings, the value of the one-day literacy seminar as part of the Beginning Teacher support programme was reiterated by Erin, Sarah, Amy, Yvette and Monique. The opportunity to reconnect with aspects of effective literacy pedagogy introduced during the pre-service programme and to glean organisational tips to enhance one's practice were cited as the main benefits of this session. Evidence can be seen in Monique's comment:

She [the facilitator] gave us a whole list of WALTs that were nonfiction, and a whole lot that were fiction. That reminded me of what we had done and I thought 'that's what I should be doing'. (Monique, FI)

Alongside the influence of professional learning opportunities were the parameters set via school policy for the teaching of literacy. Amy and Erin noted the high expectations and requirements for detailed planning within such documentation. These policies provided a framework for the scheduling of literacy activities, as is evident in Amy's statement:

I know that in our school curriculum we have to teach reading and writing four times a week for at least 45 minutes, so there's those sort of expectations and it has to be deliberate teaching and it has to be groups but its probably not very different from what I would do anyway. (Amy, FI)

For others the pressure of such directives was openly expressed, with Lauren stating: “I wanted to tick the boxes and do it right, to the letter” (Lauren, FI) and Josh commenting on the impact of his school’s assessment regime:

The environment is high pressure and high assessment. We do a lot of assessment and I don’t think it’s a great thing, I think we do too much. I’m probably guilty of worrying quite a lot about that and that’s obviously going to affect my judgement. (Josh, FI)

These comments reflect the diversity in requirements relating to the teaching of literacy across school settings and the varying views of participants in relation to such policies.

This section adds to the findings from chapter four, where initial influences within the school community were described. Here participants reflected on their interactions with tutor teachers and other colleagues over the year. Findings also reflect differences in participants’ views on the value of planning collaboration and add further insight into the influence of observations and professional learning. These findings will be discussed in the following chapter in relation to the development of teacher identity and communities of practice (Wenger, 1999).

7.4 Addressing the literacy needs of students: Teaching reading

During the final interviews, participants were asked to talk about how they had addressed the literacy needs of the range of learners in their classes. Two dominant focus areas were evident in the data: the teaching of reading and the teaching of writing. Findings will be reported in relation to each of these key components of the literacy programme. In relation to the teaching of reading, findings emerging from this interview data demonstrated current beliefs and practices, and shifts over the year in relation to pedagogical content knowledge.

7.4.1 Selection of resources and activities to support the teaching of reading

All participants other than Sam elaborated on the extent to which the selection of resources for teaching reading had become more intuitive, and the importance of matching resources both to the needs and interests of their learners and the current theme in the classroom programme.

Those teaching below year 3 (Amy, Yvette, Sarah, Lauren and Erin) identified the importance of understanding the developmental continuum for emergent and early

readers, and the associated skills and strategies for each level. Once this understanding was consolidated they felt less pressured in selecting texts for guided reading groups. Yvette, however, identified a major issue with text selection in the fourth term. Her school promoted the use of Price Milburn (PM) readers for their English language learners and lower-ability students, due to their predictable structure, repetition of high-frequency words and the support offered through the illustrations. Once placed on a new reading level, students read these PM texts initially and were then introduced to the MOE's *Ready to Read* texts at the same level, typically considered to have less predictable text structures and a higher percentage of interest vocabulary. Yvette felt she had misinterpreted the length of time students should remain reading these PM readers, and that her students' reading levels had suffered as a result.

Josh made a concerted effort to build on and extend the reading interests of his students, in addition to selecting texts that linked to aspects of their inquiry themes:

When we were looking at how groups and communities work well together, one group was totally gaga over NASA and the idea of space travel, so when we came to our science unit we talked about physics, I think that was when you came, Newton's three laws and how it all works. So I chose a lot of books on physics that would explain that sort of thing. (Josh, FI)

For some participants, decisions relating to text selection were contextualised according to the social and cultural backgrounds of their students. Lauren, in her rural farming setting, selected books about Motocross to engage a group of reluctant male readers. Erin and Aroha, with their culturally-diverse student groups, both shared their belief in the importance of locating texts reflecting the cultural backgrounds of their students, for example referencing Diwali and White Sunday. This was an issue for Aroha in particular, as she was unaware initially, when shifting classes in Term 2, that she had English language learners in her classroom:

We went right back to things like White Sunday and going to church and having family events. I had to change my way of thinking to be able to get them to talk about their experiences and write about them or even to find literature that they could relate to. I learned that if I introduced a new book I had to do quite a bit of background work first. I couldn't just say, 'Today we're going to read about this,' and there would be stunned looks. That was quite a big factor for me and changed the way I thought about literacy. (Aroha, FI)

These findings regarding considerations around text selection will be considered further in the discussion chapter (Chapter 7).

In addition to text selection, eight beginning teachers (apart from Sam) also articulated their thoughts around the changing nature of the independent activities supporting their guided reading programmes. The theme evident in most related comments was the need to link these activities to the learning focus for the guided reading group in order to review or extend the learning. Monique's statement illustrates this thinking:

My major challenge was my follow-up activities, making sure they linked to the WALT, and where I wanted the children to go. So it wasn't just an activity from the Sheena Cameron book; it actually meant something to the children, it meant something to the text ... that's something major I learnt. (Monique, FI)

For Erin, the school-wide focus on the SOLO taxonomy provided a framework for structuring such activities; for example, a group was currently comparing and contrasting two characters from a text they had read. Others expressed their belief in the importance of rereading and further reading to consolidate fluency and word recognition during this activity time. For Lauren and Emma, this involved the use of CDs and digital pen and book sets, where students could either follow along with texts read to them or record themselves reading the text, then play back to self-assess their degree of fluency and use of phrasing. Josh and Yvette appeared to value a more integrated focus, whereby students also engaged in progressing their writing when not working with the teacher.

The use of worksheets as follow-up appeared to be valued in different ways by participants. As mentioned in earlier findings, in Erin's school these were not allowed owing to the school's perception of their limited learning value. Amy and Yvette discussed the use of these, but noted they were employed 'where appropriate' to check understanding and were directly related to the particular texts read. In comparison, although he talked about needing to address specific needs within his guided reading groups, Sam's comments illustrated a continued focus on management through the use of worksheet tasks. His final comment indicates uncertainty as to what he might use instead:

I've been fairly old school in that I sit down and give out worksheets and 'here's your reading'. I'd like to find more interesting ways to teach it, where they're learning without knowing they're learning, not just sitting down, shutting up and doing that exercise. And I think language experience and things like that are good ways to do it. (Sam, FI)

Sam did, however, provide an example where able students carried out experiments based on texts they had read, but commented that his less-able readers had insufficient self-management skills to enact such tasks. His comment regarding students learning "without knowing they're learning" appeared to contrast with his later statement that he needed to work on sharing learning intentions and leaving time at the end of lessons for reflection.

For the majority of participants these comments relating to text choice and provision of independent activities illustrate shifts from a predominant focus on organisation during the initial establishment phase of their programmes to one of concern for meeting the specific needs of their learners. This will be explored further in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

In relation to the teaching of reading, six of the participants made explicit reference to the value of reading to their students and the need to continually model enjoyment of reading (Josh, Monique, Aroha, Erin, Yvette, Lauren). Josh, working with the most senior class in the group, illustrated this as follows:

Even though they're 9, 10 or 11-year old girls, they still need to hear the teacher reading to them often. We [use] sophisticated picture books, and that sort of thing. It wasn't always just, 'Here are some readers and here's an activity.' I read to them and I'd ask them to respond to those texts. I would try and choose really rich texts ... I never choose books just because they look pretty. I always try and get some challenging idea that I would try and communicate through that. (Josh, FI)

He went on to comment that in making selections of texts he looked at the 'multimodal stuff', as it was important to consider how the images support the print. At the junior levels, Lauren elaborated on the importance of reading for pleasure with time spent in the library engaged in independent reading and discussing reading choices with her students.

7.4.2 Applying the Four Resources model

As with previous findings reported, the Four Resources heuristic (Luke & Freebody, 1999) can be applied here to categorise the explanations of the participants in relation to their teaching of reading.

Developing the role of code breaker

Examining the transcripts from these final interviews, there appeared to be less explicit discussion around scaffolding the role of code breaker than in previous interviews. For junior-level teachers, Lauren, Erin and Yvette, whole-class daily work on alphabet recognition, sounds, rhymes and word patterns were viewed as essential components of their literacy programmes. For Yvette, this decontextualised focus was aimed at supporting her English language learners in particular, with sound-letter correspondence in English. For Lauren, this consisted of the ‘Word Work’ programme previously explained in association with the whole-school writing focus. During the year, Lauren had adjusted this to cater more specifically for the range of abilities in her class. For example, when Elkonin sound boxes were used to practise segmenting the sounds in words and developing phonological awareness, her more capable readers were given more challenging words to segment. She justified the use of the Word Work programme in relation to the transfer she saw occurring, as students identified the components of words studied when reading and writing.

In comparison, in Amy’s class at a similar level, the teaching of sounds and words was done in the context of shared and guided reading. She felt there was a need for a more explicit focus but had passed this on to her release teacher due to the pressures of time:

When my release teacher comes in [one day per week], instead of doing a writing block with the kids, she'll do literacy skills and work on handwriting and word families and stuff like that, because I was finding it so hard to fit these elements into my week deliberately. I felt guilty for not getting it done, because they do need it. (Amy, FI)

These teachers of emergent and early readers appeared confident in supporting their students with code-breaking, and were able to explain and justify their practices. Their comments focused on developing letter and word knowledge with early readers. In this set of findings there were no references to the teaching of processing

strategies, such as attending and searching, cross-checking or self correction; or to encouraging the integration of semantic or syntactic information in addition to the visual grapho-phonetic.

By contrast, at the middle-school level, Sam identified the teaching of decoding as being his main challenge over the year, and it appeared he struggled with the developmental sequence of the skills and strategies his readers required to process new words:

You know your low group needs help with decoding, but how do I incorporate that into this lesson? How do I teach decoding well? I can sit there and say, 'No it's not that word, d, d, dis, discovery.' That's not teaching them anything. I had a chat to my tutor teacher about it last week ... he sort of talked me through chunking and ways to deal with it. So hopefully next year it'll be better. I guess it's more giving them routines to help when they get to a word. 'Ok here's what I need to do.' But at least I recognised that that was their need and was trying to address it. I found I often wasn't starting at the bottom; I'd start somewhere in the middle, then realise they don't really have anything underneath it, so they're getting confused. It's understanding what might be causing the issue at hand and how to fix it.
(Sam, F1)

He had signalled this problem in the initial interviews, but did not appear to have developed his understanding during the year. Sam's comments illustrate the need for all teachers, regardless of the year level taught, to have a depth of theoretical understanding of the decoding process and the continuum of associated knowledge and strategies required by readers.

Developing the role of meaning maker

The focus on supporting students to develop their textual comprehension appeared to receive greater attention than in previous interview data-sets. Themes included the importance of ensuring that comprehension develops alongside decoding of text and the teaching of comprehension strategies.

There is often a tendency for teachers to promote students through the levels based predominantly on the accuracy percentages evident from running records, without consideration of accompanying levels of comprehension. Six beginning teachers demonstrated awareness of this issue (Josh, Erin, Yvette, Lauren, Monique, Sarah) and had taken steps to ensure this mismatch was averted.

For Josh, with his year 4/5 students, his concern with reading levels portrayed this understanding of the importance of comprehension and reading to learn. While there was no school policy as such, he felt it more important for his students to comprehend a range of text-types across the curriculum, than to continue to promote his students through the levels:

I've kind of said I'm not going to push them too far. I say, 'Well can you read at a 12 year reading level across the curriculum, like if I gave you a text at that level that's about physics, are you going to be able to comprehend it?' I kind of work sideways rather than finding a place to punch through to the next level. (Josh, FI)

Working with early readers, Erin and Lauren expressed similar thoughts. Lauren had addressed this issue as part of her teacher inquiry, when she felt she had over-emphasised the decoding of text:

I just kept on pushing, going up and up. And then when I stopped and looked at their comprehension, I thought, 'You might be reading really well, but you're not understanding or you're not asking questions' ... They'd come to tricky words and they wouldn't use the knowledge of what they've read to figure out the words. So that became a focus and we stopped moving up and went sideways... we moved into non-fiction. (Lauren, FI)

The second trend relating to comprehension was the focus on developing the use of comprehension strategies. All nine participants touched on this when explaining their beliefs and practices around the teaching of reading, thus signalling the crucial nature of this component of the reading process. Once again the need to tailor teaching to the needs and reading level of the student predominated. Sam used a blanket approach early on, teaching one particular strategy with the whole class. But he soon discovered that this was not appropriate to the range of reading abilities in the class:

There were some groups who were still struggling with decoding and here I was trying to push inference when they couldn't understand what they were reading, just taking stabs at the words. (Sam, FI).

Yvette and Monique discovered the need to teach these strategies according to the level and complexity of thinking involved. For example, Yvette found it difficult to teach skimming, scanning and summarising when students were still developing their ability to infer and make connections, while Monique's students struggled to

read for a purpose, particularly online, and found synthesising across online sites difficult. The need for explicit teaching of a particular strategy over successive lessons was articulated by Josh, who stressed that he initially thought mastery of a strategy might occur after one lesson. While this singular teaching focus is common during guided reading lessons in primary classrooms, Amy referred to the reality of fluent readers orchestrating a series of comprehension strategies in complex combination and noted the importance of prompting for use and reviewing of various strategies during a lesson.

Developing the role of text user

Examination of the data revealed general references to assisting students to comprehend both fiction and non-fiction. The previous examples of matching text to cultural backgrounds and interests (7.4.1) provide further evidence of participant understanding of the need to ensure students work with a diverse range of text-types. However, in this data set there were no instances reported of explicit teaching to develop the role of text user.

Developing the role of text-analyst

In contrast to the marked absence of a focus on examining the conventions used to tailor texts for particular contexts, four of the nine participants described practices that indicated support for the early development of critical literacy skills (Erin, Josh, Yvette, Lauren). The role of text-analyst was explicit in Josh's use of Shaun Tan's sophisticated picture books:

We'd talk about the imagery, basically a critique, 'Why do you think the author's made this decision, why has the author included this picture?' And when they learnt more about the author, about how he creates the books and the illustrations too, there's no miscommunication between the author and the illustrator. That was something that I really focussed on with them. (Josh, FI)

When reading the text, *The world according to Warren* (Silvey, 2007), Josh's students noted the visual reference to the Beatles song *Eleanor Rigby*, so they listened to this and critiqued how meaning was created through the different semiotic systems in the two texts.

For Erin, Yvette and Lauren, with younger students, this focus was more in tune with critical thinking than critical literacy as such (Sandretto et al., 2006). However,

their comments did signal a move towards encouraging analysis and evaluation through establishing opinions about texts. Lauren illustrated this with her comment in relation to writing persuasive texts:

A lot of the time we started with an idea from our books, such as, ‘Should Little Red Riding Hood have stayed on the path? Should Jack have stolen the beans from the giant?’ Things like that, it was such good discussion because it was them developing those critical thinking skills, and we did so much talking about it that when it came to writing they had really clear opinions and reasons to go with them. (Lauren, FI)

She also encouraged her students to form their own opinions about books they had read, considering what makes a good book and why, and how it is acceptable to have a different opinion to their peers.

This report of findings, emerging from the data relating to the teaching of reading, has demonstrated shifts in participants’ focus on the various components of the reading process and on addressing their students’ needs. These themes will be picked up in greater depth in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

7.5 Addressing the literacy needs of students: Teaching writing

As with the teaching of reading, there was much discussion relating to beliefs and practices associated with teaching writing during the initial year in the classroom. Aligned with findings reported from the online surveys, teaching writing was noted as an area of significant challenge by most participants, but also identified as an area of success in developing their teaching practices. The challenges encompassed issues such as synthesising their beliefs about teaching writing with those expected in their respective schools, addressing the range of needs in writing, the moderation of writing for assessment purposes and lack of knowledge of teaching strategies specific to particular levels. Josh’s comment illustrates the thinking of several participants as they reflected on their teaching of writing:

I had a good understanding of the theory to guide my practice, but I didn't really know how to implement it ... writing was a huge learning curve, writing was really hard. I guess reading is kind of like a linear progression whereas with writing I tended to do it as a whole class, but the gaps were just big in terms of lower writers and higher writers. Lower readers you're grouping them by abilities anyway. That's why it's a bit more linear I guess,

whereas writing you're teaching to the whole class and trying to pick up the ones that are getting behind. (Josh, FI)

Josh had the most senior class level of the participants and was likely to have been working with a broader range of needs than his colleagues.

7.5.1 Selecting a focus for writing

The ways in which participants provided for student needs were conditioned to a degree by the theoretical perspectives reflected in school literacy policies. The genre approach, with a concentrated focus on particular text-forms and their associated features, was noted as determining the writing focus in six of the schools (Sam, Monique, Amy, Lauren, Sarah, Yvette). Sam noted this as a challenge, signalling the need to “make sure you’re teaching everything that that genre requires” (Sam, FI). There was evidence of critique of this perspective on teaching writing and modifications were made to more adequately and effectively meet student needs and year level, and to maintain interest in writing. In Amy’s school, for example, a new literacy programme had been implemented with teaching of the key genres split across four terms. She found this problematic at the year-two level, preferring to address particular writing forms within authentic contexts:

So this term is meant to be explanation, which I've found so awful for year twos. I taught a couple of lessons then dropped it and thought, ‘Stuff that.’ But even though I would do deliberate teaching on that, I’m not one to drop everything else or not doing any writing if its not linked in with that. I’m pretty much, ‘If something like Anzac Day comes up we’re going to make Anzac biscuits and write the recipe’ or ... ‘If we’ve been on a trip, write a letter, how do we write a letter?’ (Amy, FI)

Similarly, Monique implemented a mix of writing purposes to alleviate boredom. She allowed free-choice writing on Mondays, and sometimes used images to spark creative writing. She commented: “I’m now more flexible in moving ‘outside the box’ and adding a mix of purposes” (Monique, FI).

Sam stressed the need for students to not just focus on the determined genre but to be able to apply acquired knowledge of other text-forms when the need arose:

Also, making sure they can write outside of the genre as well. Like if I want them to sit down and read and write something, can they do it and call on their knowledge without having to look at the genre requirements? (Sam, FI)

While participants acknowledged the importance of applying literacy learning across the curriculum, just five noted the advantages of integrating their writing instruction with their inquiry focus and other learning areas (Amy, Josh, Erin, Aroha, Sarah). Erin shared an example of this when focusing on the celebration of Diwali:

We read books on it, we did writing on it because they wrote how to make Barfi and they made their pattern and explained what it symbolised to them, so it all links in. (Erin, FI)

In comparison, Yvette felt constrained by the syndicate programme and the required focus on personal writing, but, like Lauren and Sam, she articulated a desire to develop a more integrated cross-curricular writing programme the following year.

7.5.2 Supporting students through the writing process

Central to participant discussion around teaching writing was a focus on the writer, their particular needs and how to best address these to enable success in conveying meaning through print. Challenges were noted across the year levels and included moving emergent writers from the scribbling stage to recording letters and words, making connections for ELL students, and providing for the wide range of writing abilities evident in the upper levels. Associated discussion demonstrated some awareness of cognitive theories of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1991) and the ways in which beginning teachers might support their students through each stage of the process including forming intentions, generating ideas, shaping and revising content, and sharing with an audience.

The prewriting or forming intentions phase received considerable attention from six participants, and the importance of talk to facilitate connections to existing knowledge and to formulate ideas was paramount (Aroha, Laura, Amy, Yvette, Erin, Sarah). Aroha, for example, struggled to encourage her ELL students to write freely, but found that once she located relevant texts and topics to talk about, the level of engagement lifted:

I know there is cultural stuff in the school journals and books ... I went on the internet, went back to families to say is there anything you know, drew on the teachers in the school (“What resources have you got”) — the Samoan teachers, the Niuean teachers — and used that because they could relate to it, they knew what it was and could understand it. They could

converse about the topics and started writing more because they knew what they were writing about. (Aroha, FI)

Aroha also found the language experience approach (referred to earlier in my reporting of findings from the survey data [6.3.1]) of benefit in generating discussion and promoting the synthesis of ideas:

We've been doing a lot of experiences like cooking and baking and getting them to write down recipes — what did we have to do? — then reading it back and then they had to make whatever it was ... It got them talking a lot more .. 'How does your Nan do it? Does this taste different to that' — senses, smells, sights. When I think about it that was a success. (Aroha, FI)

Erin, Sarah and Lauren also highlighted the value of the language experience approach in enabling a transition from engaging in a hands-on activity and talking, to writing ideas on paper. In addition, Erin found this a positive means of supporting cross-cultural understandings; when they made jelly, Muslim parents provided Halal jelly for their children to cook.

Complementing opportunities for talk, allowing time to examine models of good writing was noted as an important pre-write strategy by five beginning teachers (Amy, Lauren, Erin, Sam and Yvette), although for Sam this was something he intended to do in future rather than a current technique. Lauren's comment typifies this thinking and illustrates that such models can be teacher-created and may include illustrations of the ways language can be "borrowed" and applied from other writers:

I don't think I've ever been a great writer, but this year has forced me to reflect on my own writing, and look at what makes good pieces of writing, and reading lots. When I read bits, I take them and show [the students] how I've borrowed it from the book and used it in my writing ... I've written about myself lots of times and told them my own experiences. (Lauren, FI)

With his year-five students Josh identified consideration of audience and the impact of this on content as an important component of the pre-writing phase:

I think I did a really good job of trying to get exciting ideas going and things like who you're writing the story for. Are you writing it for someone else in the class? [Are] you writing it for me? For your Mum? What sort of things are they going to want to read? (Josh, FI)

An additional pre-writing focus was included by Yvette, who shared her belief in the importance of introducing students to the metalanguage associated with writing so as to facilitate student understanding of language features and their use:

I like that I've taught them nouns and verbs, and now I can teach them adverbs and adjectives. I like the fact that I can use those terms. They still might occasionally, when I say, 'What's an adverb?' get confused, but they know what I mean when I say I want your writing to contain these. We haven't done any activities on similes, but they're coming through in their writing because we just talk about them, so highlight how other people are doing it in their work. (Yvette, FI)

Yvette was one of the few to refer to the terminology associated with parts of speech. She appears to be assisting students to develop this understanding through both explicit activities and within authentic contexts as they arose.

Findings in this section demonstrate the continuing awareness of the importance of the pre-writing phase of the writing process and of providing meaningful experiences that students can identify with. There is an increased emphasis on using models of writing and the idea that writers can borrow language from these.

7.5.3 Revision of text and publication

In addition to articulating the value of, and demonstrating success with a range of pre-writing strategies, participants also referred to support for revision of text and the publication of writing. Five of the beginning teachers noted challenges in supporting students with text revision (Sam, Monique, Amy, Yvette, Lauren). For Monique and Sam, the major challenge appeared to be the editing of surface features. In Monique's case, this related to the use of capital letters and spelling of high-frequency words. She had expected this to be in place when students moved into her room and found a significant number of writers did not trust their own judgements in making corrections. Sam referred to student issues with editing of sentence structure (syntax). Otherwise there was no explicit reference in the interview data to supporting students with the revision of their ideas or reflecting on the quality of vocabulary used — the deeper features of writing.

The other challenge noted in relation to supporting the reworking of text was an organisational issue around time management – how to manage routines for one-on-one conferencing with each student. This concern, evident in Amy's interview,

illustrated a belief in the importance of giving quality feedback to encourage revision of text. Amy attended to this issue by encouraging independence through self-reflection of writing goals and sharing with a buddy prior to teacher conferencing.

The benefit of sharing writing with an audience through digital means was again acknowledged by Josh and Yvette, but it appeared that the level of competence with managing digital devices was still an issue impacting on the practicability of achieving this for Yvette's students. For Josh's students, development of the skills associated with multimodal presentation of work was encouraged through the school's PYP programme.

7.5.4 Surface features: Supporting the development of spelling and handwriting

The final interview data revealed a range of comments indicating participant confidence levels around scaffolding students' use of the tools required to encode text fluently. In comparison to a dominant focus on developing decoding within the context of shared and guided reading, the statements relating to the teaching of spelling and handwriting involved mostly stand-alone activities.

Pertinent comments by six participants illustrated the belief that spelling instruction should involve developing knowledge of spelling patterns in addition to the weekly testing of words. Lauren and Yvette's confidence in scaffolding student knowledge of spelling patterns was attributed, in the former's case, to the word work and spelling programmes advocated by the outside professional facilitator employed by her school, and in the latter's case to the depth of knowledge provided by the optional paper on dyslexia she undertook during her degree. Both teachers noted the transfer of such learning across reading and writing activities, as did Sarah, who commented on how well her students were able to approximate the spelling of unknown words when writing. As noted earlier, Monique also highlighted the chunking of words alongside weekly testing to address the initial weakness with editing of spelling errors.

In comparison, Sam found the teaching of spelling a challenge owing to his own lack of knowledge. He hoped that a phonics programme his syndicate was implementing in the following year would offer relevant professional learning:

Spelling I gave up on and just did essential lists, rather than trying to teach specific spelling patterns. We did the essential list tests ... these are the ones you got wrong so just learn them. But it seems they learn them that week then forget them the next week. (Sam, FI)

Given the time constraints associated with attempting to address all components of the literacy programme and the desire to give adequate attention to individual needs, both Josh and Amy made the decision to hand the teaching of word analysis and handwriting to their release teachers. Amy explained:

She [the release teacher] does the literacy skills and work on handwriting and word families and stuff like that, because I was finding it so hard to fit everything into my week deliberately, and I felt guilty for not getting it done, because they do need it; but it's really hard to prioritise. (Amy, FI)

Yvette and Lauren each made explicit reference to the teaching of handwriting but from different perspectives. Yvette had not prioritised handwriting in her programme until later in the year when her tutor teacher explained the importance of correct letter formation in supporting writing fluency. In comparison, Lauren had religiously incorporated handwriting from the beginning of the year but had become more flexible in her time management, and no longer felt stressed if handwriting was not attended to each day. She commented, "It's tedious and I hate it," and planned to deviate from her current whole-class lessons and differentiate instruction according to individual needs of students the following year.

As the evidence illustrates, responses were variable with regard to supporting the development of spelling and handwriting. For those most confident with teaching spelling, it appeared additional support from school-wide programmes or option papers had provided necessary content and pedagogical knowledge. The minimal references to the teaching of handwriting suggest it was not of concern for most participants.

7.5.5 Assessment of writing

These beginning teachers viewed assessment of writing as integral to targeting student needs effectively. Evident in the data was an understanding of the need to consider the use of both macro and micro-level components when analysing writing samples (noted by Josh, Amy, Erin, Yvette, Aroha, Lauren). Participants illustrated their ability to do this. However, their critique of the summative moderation of

writing, both within and across syndicates, and the allocation of curriculum levels to writing samples, reflected a mix of opinions.

Lauren and Erin, in particular, noted the examination of writing samples as a rewarding process demonstrating the massive gains their students had made during the year as a result of focused instruction:

Every time I've done a writing sample throughout the year ... it blows me away the things that they've picked up on and the things that we've talked about, they've just taken it and run with it. That shift in their writing is massive ... I can see the interventions that I've done, I've really analysed their writing samples and [been] really clear about what direction I was going to take and what I was going to teach to bring them up. (Lauren, FI)

In addition to the benefits of this close examination of writing samples to inform the next steps in instruction, Amy counted her developing familiarity with curriculum levels as a major success:

Getting my head around the levels and not having to think too hard about them anymore, it just comes with experience. Being able to gauge where my kids are at and know — cause you can compare and kind of know whether they're doing their best or whether they could be doing better — and you can compare them to other kids. But it takes a while to look at a piece of writing and go, 'That's level one two' (Amy, FI)

The allocation of curriculum levels to writing samples is an essential component of the assessment regime for New Zealand schools, and participants such as Erin, Monique and Josh, who worked in larger schools, found the accompanying moderation process time-consuming and challenging. One reason given for this was the subjective nature of assessing content against the 'ideas' and 'purpose and audience' achievement objectives (MOE, 2007). Josh commented that he found the use of structure, spelling and grammar far easier to assess, "because it's black and white." He found the associated negotiation required between staff particularly arduous:

We spent so many hours assessing writing, just because what somebody's idea of 3B looked like compared to someone else's of 3B; there was this huge gap ... It was about 70 hours worth of work, just assessing writing once a term. (Josh, FI)

Josh felt the moderation process disadvantaged writers at each end of the scale in particular. He gave an example of a lower-ability student and the difference between the use of macro and micro-level features:

So a piece of writing where everything was spelt incorrectly, and you could look at it and they'd be saying overall this is a 1A, and I thought, 'Hang on, if you take the time to read the story, you'll find that she has tried to reach the audience; it's really good.' If you typed this out for her, I'd say it was a 3B. The ideas are really mature ... and even the grammar was ok, but the spelling was just so terrible. (Josh, FI)

Variability between school expectations and the national standard exemplars was also noted. Erin felt that her school tended to assess writing at a higher level than indicated in the exemplars:

I think our school marks quite hard and so you have all these teachers saying they think this one's this level, but you look at the exemplars from the national standards and from the Ministry and it's quite different. So just getting that consistency because it is really subjective. We've had lots of meetings and debates about it and it just does my head in every time I have to allocate writing levels ... I love teaching writing, but levelling is hard. (Erin, FI)

Another criticism shared in relation to the moderation process was the nature of the topic given for the moderation sample. Erin explained that for the first sample for her year-level, writing was based on a language experience using bubbles, which allowed students to use rich language and to extend on their ideas. For the second round of moderation, a recount of a class trip to MOTAT (Museum of Transport and Technology) was used. The teachers found the quality of writing to be substantially lower overall due to the students having to describe a whole day which features a series of 'big activities'. As a consequence, she emphasised the need for a range of writing samples from various sources to be considered in making an overall teacher judgment against the standards. Aroha was the only other participant to refer to the need for multiple sources of evidence to establish an Overall Teacher Judgement. It had been highlighted during a recent presentation associated with her school's professional learning focus on assessment.

In relation to gathering ongoing formative data of student progress in writing, all BTs (apart from Sam), referred to at least one means of data collection. Alternatives

included evidence in modelling books, notes documented on planning, and tracking individual writing goals.

This discussion of findings relating to the teaching and assessment of writing adds depth to earlier findings by showing how participants reflected on and critiqued teaching practices across the whole year. The key themes of supporting writers throughout the writing process, and issues around moderation and assessment of writing will be taken up in the discussion chapter in relation to the literature surveyed in chapter two.

7.6 Integrating digital technologies into the teaching of literacy

As previously signalled, the beginning teachers valued the integration of digital technology into their teaching of literacy. However, issues such as the availability of devices and reliability continued to impact on their intentions. While Josh had the luxury of individual ipads, for each of the other participants there were no more than four devices permanently located within each classroom, as shown in Table 8 below. For Aroha, Sarah and Amy, additional sets of devices were available to support learning opportunities; but, as Amy found, these were time-consuming to set up and student capability impacted on usability: “If they lose the literacy or maths task or whatever you’re doing, it just becomes a computer lesson and I’m not interested in that at the moment” (Amy, FI). Coincidentally, four beginning teachers were excited about the arrival of new devices for year two and the affordances that these would provide in supporting literacy learning (Lauren, Erin, Monique and Sam).

In addition to accessibility and reliability, time to locate and evaluate suitable resources in relation to the needs of their particular students continued to be an issue, as Yvette and Aroha commented. Yvette’s school had introduced the ‘Clicker 6’ tool to support English Language Learners and reluctant writers with word processing, but she had delayed the integration of this into her programme until she’d had time to evaluate its potential for her particular students: “I know what I’m like, I need to process how I’m going to make it work for my class. I’m not one of those action people” (Yvette, FI). Aroha also commented that selection needed to be based on appeal as well as learning potential. Her students quickly lost interest

in apps that were ‘boring and basic’ compared to the more sophisticated games they engaged with on Nintendo and play stations at home.

Despite issues around accessibility, participants attempted to integrate digital learning into their literacy programmes in a variety of ways. As part of their literacy rotations during guided reading, five participants (Amy, Aroha, Erin, Lauren and Erin) valued the option to include digital texts as a substitute for print texts. Sites such as Sunshine online, the PM e-collection, and traditional stories on YouTube were used to develop and reinforce fluency, letter-sound relationships, high-frequency word recognition, and reading mileage. Lauren appreciated the recording potential of tools, allowing students to record themselves reading and then engage in self-assessment of fluency and phrasing.

Table 8: Availability of digital devices

	Year level	Devices available during term 4	Physical challenges	Planned for the following year
Sarah	NE/1	1 ipad, 3 computers 14 netbooks for the school	Accessibility with 1 ipad	More regular rotation of netbooks
Lauren	1/2	3 computers		5 ipads arrived term 4 after Lauren’s proposal to BOT
Amy	2	1 ipad in class 30 netbooks on rotation rarely used.	Time to set up netbooks, student capability	Recently upgraded internet speed
Erin	2	1 ipad, 2 computers Apple TV screen – flexible use	Accessibility with limited number of devices	3 computers
Aroha	2/3	3 computers Ipads on rotation		
Yvette	2/3	1 ipad, 3 computers	Accessibility Students’ word processing ability	
Monique	3/4	2 computers	1 broken not replaced Accessibility	4 laptops
Sam	3/4	2 computers, 1 working	Reliability Accessibility	20 ipads school rotation

Josh	5	BYOD class, individual ipads 4 computers		
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To encourage digital competence, Monique, Lauren, Aroha and Josh articulated the necessity to develop online research skills. They had included learning opportunities to encourage: the use of key words when searching, selecting valid sources of information, reading with a clear purpose, and synthesising information from different websites, rather than cutting and pasting. Similarly, Yvette, Monique, Amy, Aroha and Erin acknowledged the value of digital publication of writing, through the use of class blogs and opportunities to insert images into texts.

Although not as frequently cited, transcripts also revealed that the beginning teachers were aware of, and valued, the transformative potential of digital learning allowing for modification and redefinition of task design beyond that previously possible with print-based technology. With younger students, Erin, Sarah and Yvette identified apps such as *Puppetpals* and *Book Creator* as providing opportunities to create and recreate meaning through the integration of linguistic, audio, gestural and visual language modes. They saw this as an area to develop during their second year of teaching, with increased student access to devices. Josh, the only participant to refer to the transformative potential of digital learning during the initial interviews, had also encouraged his students to retell and share narratives through the creation of plays and the use of iMovies and other recording tools:

It was my first year teaching and my first year with iPads, 24/7 ipads. As I got through the year I got more confident with the technology and how it should be used. But I always had the idea that it needed to be more authentic than just saying go and use your ipad to retype your work basically, just to reproduce something that you've already finished. (Josh, FI)

The points noted above indicate that despite limited access to devices, most participants were keen to integrate digital devices into their literacy programme to support learning. The issues involved, along with the increasing level of competence, will be further discussed in the following discussion chapter (Chapter 7).

7.7 Broader views of literacy

Towards the end of the final interviews, in order to ascertain their current beliefs around the expanding notion of literacy, participants were asked how they would explain the concept of multiliteracies. Several themes were evident across the responses, including the importance of both productive and receptive forms of communication (making and creating meaning), the multimodal nature of this communication, and the notion of literacy across the curriculum. Amy, Josh, Sarah and Sam highlighted effective communication of ideas through a range of means as paramount, with Sarah stating: “I think it’s being able to communicate effectively with other people – that’s the heart of it. There’s all the different forms of communication” (Sarah, FI). Josh added:

It involves the ability to make critical decisions of how to present your own ideas. So how to comprehend ideas that you’re getting from all these different sources and seeing things like song as a form of literacy. (Josh, FI)

Extending on this point, Sam highlighted the need for creating ideas appropriate to audience and context:

It's being able to create it as well, understanding that if I want this person to know that, I need to do this; or if I use this program to do that, then it's probably going to be those people over there who will understand it better than these people here because they've got no experience of it. (Sam, FI)

Others, like Amy, elaborated on the notion of multiliteracy as being literate, able to make meaning, in a range of contexts:

It’s more than reading and writing, I would say it’s more broad than that, that’s just one type of literacy. Having the ability to play the piano, that’s a literacy. I guess the process of making meaning from whatever their skill is and being able to communicate back with it. (Amy, FI)

Other forms of literacy such as song (Josh), problem-solving in mathematics (Yvette), screen literacy (Sam), digital and cultural literacies (Lauren and Yvette) were cited as additional examples of this broader view. Also in their responses, the beginning teachers referred to communication incorporating a variety of language modes, with visual and oral receiving explicit mention alongside of written language. For example Erin, Lauren and Aroha referred to the importance of interpreting and creating meaning using visual signs and symbols in contexts

such as advertising, packaging, street signs and non-fiction texts. Audio and spatial semiotic systems were absent from these discussions.

Aroha shared a more explicit link to literacy underpinning learning across the curriculum. Her statement illustrates the importance of students understanding the ways in which literacy skills are contextualised and transferable, rather than learned in isolation:

I've seen how it [literacy] can go across the board in terms of the curriculum, it's not just a stand-alone isolated subject. Even though I kind of knew that, I now have a much better understanding of that and how it can actually be a lot easier than you think. [It's about] not letting it just be 'over there' so we don't have to use it 'over here' and trying to get them to realise that writing is writing or reading is reading, it doesn't matter what context it's in, that we still apply the same things. (Aroha, FI)

Considering necessary long-term competencies were also important for Aroha and Erin. Erin saw it as essential that students be able to use the literacy knowledge and skills gained to communicate effectively and make sense of the world:

It's learning the different skills and abilities to be able to go out into the world, survive and make sense of it. Transfer the skills they're learning and understand why they're using them. I've had to do that a lot with Buzz groups and their oral language, teaching them that it's really important that you ask open questions and are able to give longer responses and more information than what they ask for. When you get older, you have to do things like job interviews and you're going to be asked these big questions. I often have them explain or brainstorm when they might use it or what it might be helpful for, just making the learning more meaningful to them, and it's always based on meaningful experiences. (Erin, FI)

However, responses from three beginning teachers (Amy, Sam and Monique) signalled the reality in many classrooms, where understandings of the broader notion of literacy are constrained by the current assessment regime, reducing the teaching focus to reading and writing. Amy summed up this preoccupation with written literacy, as opposed to the more multimodal view of student learning, by stating:

But in a school context when we talk about literacy across the curriculum, I'd only think about reading and writing, probably just because that's what we report on. (Amy, FI)

7.8 Key goals for literacy learning

During the final interviews, participants were asked to summarise what they considered the key goals for literacy teaching and learning, for their students, at their particular year level. I was keen to investigate the possible correlation between the broader views presented in the previous section and the focus areas identified as critical for their level.

Although the question was purposefully constructed using the term ‘literacy’ to encourage a broad response perhaps incorporating a range of language modes, the dominant theme in responses centred on the development of reading and writing competencies with five participants referring to the development of written language (Amy, Josh, Yvette, Lauren, Monique). Erin added the importance of oral language and critical thinking along with reading and writing, whereas Sam referred to just reading.

Sarah, Erin and Aroha emphasised the significance of developing oral capabilities as a foundation to enable connections between home experiences and classroom content to enhance the development of written language. This was significant given that Sarah was the sole new-entrant teacher in the group, and Erin and Aroha had the highest percentage of students from culturally and linguistically-diverse backgrounds. Sarah’s comment illustrates the critical importance of establishing these meaningful relationships:

If they have very limited oral language ... you will struggle with their writing and reading, articulating their needs or their wants becomes hard... If you can form those good relationships, then when we’re reading, you discuss the books in relation to personal experiences, like, “do you have a cat at home, does your cat do that?” Just general life experiences that you take for granted. If you don’t have it, then that becomes tricky so just building on those experiences at school. That’s the crux of it at this level. From that comes your letter-sound knowledge, your basic words and those kinds of things. I think having that oral language communication at this level is very important. (Sarah, FI).

Erin, with her year 2 students, elaborated on this establishment of connections and oral conversation, by emphasising the asking and answering of questions with prompts such as: “Is it deep? Is it interesting? Are you able to given an opinion about the answer?” (Erin, FI). Her school’s previously mentioned focus on the

SOLO taxonomy possibly contributed to her inclusion of higher-order thinking skills in her response to the interview prompt.

Commonly shared by participants across year levels was the critical importance of developing reading skills and strategies to both decode and comprehend text (Amy, Erin, Yvette, Monique, Sam and Josh). Erin, Josh and Monique emphasised comprehension and the need to scaffold the use of comprehension strategies to enable students to access, talk about and critique ideas in the text. Erin's emphasis on comprehension over decoding, in comparison to other participants at this early-year level, possibly related to the fact that her students, aside from two, were reading 'above the standard':

Sure they have to be able to sound their words out in chunks, and be able to read without finger pointing and develop that fluency, so that's sort of on the surface level. But then making inferences and starting to link what they're reading to their own personal experiences, so applied knowledge type questions are important. Giving evidence from the text on why they've given a certain answer, that's huge for my students, 'Where in the book does it say that, how do you know that?' ... It's preparing them, so that when they move on, they have those basic comprehension strategies to extend upon. (Erin, FI)

This focus on justification of ideas had been a prominent one throughout the year for Erin and was indicated in the initial interviews when she commented on discussion with her students (section 5.2.5).

In comparison to the focus on comprehension by the participants above, Sam, with his year 3/4 students, highlighted decoding, problem-solving unknown words and understanding of vocabulary as critical, with the higher-order comprehension still being "at a fairly basic level" (Sam, FI).

In relation to text selection Sam, Monique and Erin stressed the need for careful selection of reading materials to ensure exposure to a wide range of text-types, both paper-based and digital, and to foster enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading independently. Erin also saw it as important to "go sideways", selecting a range of text-types across a reading level, to consolidate breadth of understanding, rather than continuing to promote students up the levels, once they were reading above

standard. The latter action can result in students reading material beyond their age and social levels.

As with reading, the six participants who focused on writing when discussing their key goals for literacy learning, referred to both development of competence with the skills required to encode, as well as the importance of communicating ideas with clarity (Amy, Josh, Erin, Lauren, Monique and Yvette). With their year-two students, both Amy and Erin noted the importance of encouraging extension of ideas, using a variety of language features and considering purpose, audience and writer's voice. In contrast to this broader focus, two participants with slightly older students portrayed a narrower view with Yvette's response based on writing 'stories', perhaps because she was currently engaged in writing narratives, and Monique stressing the need to spell high-frequency words correctly at the year 3/4 level.

In concluding their final interviews, some participants referred to key shifts made during the year, in relation to both their confidence and style of teaching. Comments by Amy and Josh centred on the translation of acquired theoretical knowledge around the teaching of literacy into practice in their classrooms. Josh summed this up by stating:

I had a good understanding of the theory to guide my practice, but I didn't really know how to implement it. I think looking back I did really well in reading compared to how I thought I was going to do. Especially when I got a chance to look at the assessment data at the end of the year, to see that I hadn't actually made them go backwards or stagnate. (Josh, FI)

Aroha, Sarah and Lauren voiced similar thoughts, identifying initial concerns around providing for the wide range of needs while trying to implement and manage a workable programme. The other theme evident was that while they felt their teaching of literacy had become more explicitly focused on student needs and strengths and more organised, they were less stressed about delivering a tightly structured programme and more flexible in their approach. This enabled emergent possibilities to be pursued, as exemplified in Lauren's statement:

As the year's gone on I've become more flexible and more able to run with things as they crop up. If something is happening such as a hangi, you can stop and spend more time talking about that, or if someone wants to know

about gurgling. Whereas before it was very much, we need to be do this, we need to do that, we need to be done by this time ... I was wanting to tick boxes and do it right. (Lauren, FI)

It is evident from the content of this section that while there were similarities between participant understandings of broader views of literacy and key areas for development with their students, in reality, the latter portrays a more constrained vision of literacy with the continuing focus on the linguistic mode. These differences will be revisited in the discussion chapter following.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has documented findings from the final interviews and allows the reader to gain an overview of shifts in both the beliefs and practices relating to the teaching of literacy across the year. Also significant is the BTs' depth of reflective thinking as they recount their experiences and identify their own individual pathways of development. Themes presented here have included a focus on: contextual aspects contributing to literacy teaching; the teaching of reading and writing; the inclusion of digital tools; understandings of broader views of literacy; and the key literacy goals relevant to their students. As signalled throughout, many of these themes will be explored further in the following discussion chapter.

Chapter Eight

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy during their first year of teaching in New Zealand primary schools. I wanted to investigate what happens when graduates transition from an ITE setting into the classroom, assuming the role of teachers of literacy who are fully responsible for scaffolding the development of literacy skills and knowledge with their students. I was interested in the beginning teachers' reflections on their ITE experience and how it impacted on their teaching and learning of literacy. I also wondered how their beliefs and practices about teaching literacy would change over the year and how they were supported by various members and groups associated with the school community. Using multiple case studies and an interpretive stance, the research involved a mix of interviews, video debriefs of classroom observations and online surveys to critically examine these areas of interest.

In this chapter I reflect on the findings presented in the previous three chapters and consider their significance in relation to each of the three research questions and the literature discussed in Chapter Two. The initial section relates to the question '*How did the ITE programme impact on the views of the beginning teachers about teaching and learning literacy?*' During both initial and final interviews beginning teachers were prompted to consider their pre-service experience and preparation for entering the classroom. Findings highlighted their views on the content of literacy education papers (Appendices 1-3), the value of the micro-teaching and practicum components of their programme, and their initial thoughts regarding what their students needed to know in relation to literacy, and will be discussed in relation to both the structure and content of their pre-service programme.

The second and most substantial section of the chapter relates to the question *How do the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during the first year of teaching?* The discussion is based on relevant themes reported in chapters five ("Getting underway with literacy teaching"), six ("Findings from online surveys"), and seven ("Findings from final interviews"), which focus on literacy

practices and changes across the year. Firstly, I discuss the ways in which participants appeared to gather knowledge of their learners to inform their teaching; this includes reference to findings relating to home-school partnerships and the role of talk.

Following this, the literacy pedagogies relating to the teaching of writing and then reading are discussed. Consideration of both what they were teaching and how they engaged their learners are examined. Challenges experienced in attempts to integrate digital literacy are also included in this section.

The third research question: *What influences within the school environment appear to contribute to these changes?* is then considered in relation to both the formation of identity as a teacher of literacy and participants' involvement in a community of learning. The chapter concludes with a summary of key findings and implications, along with a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

8.2 The impact of the ITE programme on teaching and learning literacy

As a teacher-educator involved in teaching literacy education papers, I was keen to explore participants' thoughts relating to the relevance of paper content and practicum experiences, and how these experiences supported their development as teachers of literacy (see chapter 5, section 5.2.1 [5.2.1] & chapter 7, section 7.2 [7.2]). Interview prompts utilised during these conversations referred to the influence of the ITE programme on their preparation for teaching literacy. The discussion firstly addresses participant views on the inter-relationship of the various components of the ITE programme, including the impact of micro-teaching sessions and practicum. It then moves to consider the content of the literacy education papers and associated thoughts around teaching and learning literacy.

To set the scene, I would like to consider the overall tone of participant responses around the content of the literacy education papers. Findings from both initial and final interviews showed that all participants agreed that the content provided in the three compulsory papers was of value to them in establishing both content and pedagogical knowledge. In addition, most felt well prepared to teach literacy,

informed by the content of these papers, associated experiences with small-group teaching in schools, and practicum experiences. An exception here was Josh, who had missed a significant section of the second paper relating to the teaching of reading due to family illness. These findings are incongruent with the much of the research surveyed in Chapter 2, where a theory-practice divide was found to be evident as early-career teachers moved into the classroom (Adoniou, 2013; Allen, 2009; Grossman et al., 2009; Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Pomerantz & Condie, 2017; Roness, 2011).

8.2.1 Reflections on the structure of the ITE programme.

The structure and length of this particular ITE programme and the nature and composition of the associated literacy education papers may offer an explanation for this disparity with much of the research. Most literature reviewed in this area involved short, one and two-year graduate and Masters teacher education programmes (Grossman, 2000; Helfrich & Bean, 2011; Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Roness, 2011). Consequently, the assumption can be made that the number of hours dedicated to literacy education would have been significantly less than the time allocated within a three-year programme. This information was not always evident in the articles reviewed. However, as an indication of the hours that were devoted to literacy education in these graduate courses, Kosnik and Beck's (2008) research context referenced one compulsory course of either 36-hours (for participants in the one-year programme), or two, 39-hour courses for those in the two-year programme. Both courses offered significantly less time than the 120 hours spread over three years in the Waikato programme. As Yvette commented in the findings, the three papers allowed for revisiting and reflection to develop depth of understanding of key content and pedagogical knowledge over time (7.2). While this amount of time is not possible in shortened graduate and post-graduate courses, the findings do signal the need for ITE providers to consider whether sufficient emphasis is placed on literacy education to enhance overall levels of both confidence and competence.

The use of small-group teaching in schools during two of the three literacy-education papers in this study may have also reduced the theory-practice divide for this group of participants. Participants were positive in their reflections on the value of the micro-teaching sessions in classrooms. These small-group lessons, embedded within the first and second-year papers, provided opportunity to translate

theoretical learning into practice. While they involved teaching unknown students, they did allow experimentation with teaching strategies to support both junior and senior students with reading and writing. This occurred within a supportive environment with opportunity to debrief and reflect on their experiences with the ITE lecturer. This type of pedagogical support was absent in Kosnik and Beck's (2008) research setting, where struggles with theoretical understanding were reported.

The findings also included comment by some participants on the benefits of the scaffolding provided in the lead-up to these lessons (5.2.1). Often, prior to planning lessons, these participants would have observed teaching sequences or approaches being modelled, usually via video, followed by deconstruction and discussion which focused on connecting theory and practice. Similarly, when investigating, as pre-service teachers, the practice of taking and interpreting running records, these participants would have enjoyed opportunities to administer, analyse, interpret, and then consider application of findings to address student needs. The value of this scaffolded support is cited in the research as being significant in facilitating learning and addressing the translation of theoretical understanding into practice (Adoniou, 2013; Grossman et al., 2000; Grossman et al., 2009; Hathaway & Risko, 2013; Helfrich & Bean, 2011).

In addition to comment relating to micro-teaching sessions in schools, participants also reflected on the nature and value of their practicum experiences as a vital component of their preparation to teach. In comparison to Adoniou (2013), Grossman et al. (2000), and Helfrich and Bean (2011), who found issues in inconsistencies between the content of papers and the teaching occurring in practicum classrooms, beginning teachers in this study reflected positively on their practicum experiences. Several noted that they had worked with associates who demonstrated what they considered, sound literacy practices. A combination of depth of support and focused feedback from these associates enabled the participants to develop confidence in the use of literacy strategies introduced in university papers, and in the subsequent establishment of their own programmes. Such findings concur with those by McElhone, Hebard, Scott and Juel (2009), who suggested that pre-service teachers, who experience at least one practicum where

classroom practice aligned with the principles inherent in university papers, are able to develop a clear vision for literacy teaching.

For participants in this study, an additional factor that may have contributed to the congruence between theoretical content in ITE papers and practical experiences in the classroom was the provision of clear direction for minimum teaching requirements for each of the three practica (see Appendix 2). These provided guidance for both associates and pre-service teachers around the implementation and practice of teaching strategies introduced in class. In contrast, Adoniou (2013) reported that many of her participants experienced a disconnect between the theoretical content in papers and practical experiences in the classroom, compounded by the lack of specific requirements to view and teach particular approaches and topics from their university papers.

Those who had completed a recent practicum at a similar class level to their first-year appointment were appreciative of the advantages this offered; many comments made reference to the practical knowledge gained that informed the initial establishment of their own literacy programmes (5.2.2). This included gathering appropriate resources and utilising their associate's organisational framework and routines in setting up for the teaching of reading. For some, this appeared to provide security and initial confidence until they developed a more in-depth knowledge of the learning needs of their own students and how best to address these.

In contrast to the generally positive view of the contribution of practicums, there were also issues raised. Two beginning teachers noted that the timing of practicums meant they were bound to operate within their associate's organisational framework and gained little experience with establishing the organisational structures and routines required for the start of the year. Issues relating to the degree of responsibility that participants were able to assume in the classroom were also noted (5.2.2). Occasionally associates were reported as slow to shift responsibility for full control to the beginning teacher. However, in contrast, Josh commented on the importance of ensuring that sufficient observations of the associate's teaching are undertaken prior to assuming control, including observations of the scaffolding of learning of particular strategies over a series of lessons. These findings signal the critical nature of the relationship between associate and pre-service teacher and the

importance of experienced associates, who not only model effective practice in meeting the needs of their students, but also monitor competence levels and are able to build effective working relationships with pre-service teachers. As noted in the NZCER review carried out by Whatman and MacDonald (2017), authentic partnerships that provide support for pre-service teachers to develop agency are critical. Associates must be able to interpret when to hand over responsibility, ensuring that a positive learning environment is maintained for both student teacher and students (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Grossman et al., 2009).

8.2.2 The content of ITE papers and views about literacy learning

While participants felt well prepared overall, there were components of the literacy papers identified as being of particular value, and also some gaps indicated. During the initial interviews the importance of supporting the development of oral language was highlighted by most. Participants made reference to questioning and facilitating discussion to promote thinking through such activities as language experience sessions and reading to students, and commented on the transfer of these skills into other approaches such as shared and guided reading. Grossman et al. (2009) identified this ability to elicit “student thinking during interactive teaching” (p. 280) as one of a core set of practices that should form the basis of teacher education. Participants also felt well informed about models of reading and writing processes (addressed during year 2), along with associated pedagogical approaches and strategies, and how to select relevant resources for teaching reading. Their comments typically reflected an understanding of the need for students to read and write for a wide variety of purposes, with two participants extending this to the need to use literacy across the curriculum. Other aspects of literacy noted by just a few participants in each instance were: the need to use and interpret visual language, the importance of critical literacy, and the importance of integrating digital technology into their literacy programmes. Despite the focus on multiliteracies in the final literacy education paper, there was little explicit reference to this concept, possibly due to participants’ preoccupation, at the time of the initial interviews, on the initial organisation of their programmes. This may also relate to the late introduction of the concept in year three, and insufficient attention being placed on implications for pedagogy, as suggested by Rowsell, Kosnik and Beck (2008) who investigated the literacy pedagogy of first-year teachers.

Participants also identified perceived gaps in their knowledge of what is required to teach literacy. At the time of the initial interviews, these gaps related to the teaching of reading. Providing for lower-ability readers that require support with decoding in a middle-school class was one area of need. Monique suggested the in-depth focus on the running record procedure could be replicated in the ITE programme with other assessment tools such as STAR (a test of reading comprehension), since she felt unsure how to interpret and use STAR data. Such identified gaps in their knowledge of teaching reading occurred at the start of the year. In comparison, during the final interviews, the same interview prompt elicited identification of gaps in relation to the teaching of writing. Half of the participants felt they would have benefitted from additional practice in moderating writing samples during their ITE programme and from a greater focus on expectations at different levels and how to support writers accordingly. Spelling was also suggested as an area requiring further attention.

The dominant focus on feedback relating to reading in the first round of interviews suggests that participants were absorbed by the complexities of setting up an initial reading programme, with the need to establish reading levels and routines for their guided reading programmes, and to select relevant texts. In comparison, as will be discussed later in this discussion, the teaching of writing proved a challenge for several of the beginning teachers throughout the year, and appeared to be a major concern when they reflected on paper content during the final interview. Such shifts in the focus of responses relating to literacy education papers and their preparedness to teach support Helfrich and Bean's (2011) suggestion that teacher educators must monitor the reflections of beginning teachers over time if they are to gain a comprehensive overview of student feedback to inform their own teaching and paper design at the ITE level.

In addition to these mostly positive reflections on the various elements of their ITE programme, all participants, aside from Sam who stated he did not really know "where to start or what was needed" (5.2.3), indicated that they had been proactive in using their knowledge and experiences to prepare for teaching literacy prior to the commencement of school. Findings demonstrated a degree of initiative and

independence in gathering resources, revisiting curriculum documents and handbooks to aid in establishing appropriate expectations, and viewing student data from the previous year. These participants appeared to realise the importance of developing an initial overview of knowledge of literacy and instructional strategies to inform teaching at a particular year level. This differs markedly from participants in Kosnik and Beck's (2008) study who were 'shell-shocked' and wanted more specific direction regarding what exactly to teach, which resources to use, and how to set up their programme.

8.2.3 Conclusion

The discussion above has reviewed findings related to the question: *How did the ITE programme impact on the views of the beginning teachers about teaching and learning literacy?* While responses were not always positive, it appears this particular group of beginning teachers felt fortunate in being well supported by both university staff and associate teachers in schools in developing both content and pedagogical knowledge to establish their own literacy programmes. A number of factors have been suggested as contributing to this initial confidence: the inclusion of three literacy education papers over three years enabling reciprocal cycles for the development of theoretical knowledge; the scaffolding provided within papers to enable the transfer from theoretical understanding into planned lesson sequences taught during the micro-teaching lessons in schools; the availability of supportive associates and practicum requirements which encouraged further development of pedagogical content knowledge; and the degree of consistency between paper content and literacy practices in the classroom. The importance of a professional and respectful triad involving pre-service teacher, lecturer and associate teacher can be viewed as critical in providing a positive setting within which pre-service teachers are able to begin the establishment of their identities as teachers of literacy (Adoniou, 2013; Helfrich & Bean, 2011).

To further contextualise these findings, I need to indicate that this apparent congruence between the ITE programme, associates and schools does not imply that the ITE programme was focused on simply 'following a recipe' to prepare teachers for a particular way of teaching literacy in New Zealand classrooms. As noted in chapter three, while there are two *Effective Literacy Practice* handbooks (MOE, 2003, 2006) available to guide literacy practice in New Zealand schools,

these participants were directed towards a wide range of international literature in their papers (see Appendices 1-3) and encouraged to synthesise and critique content in relation to observed classroom practices in order to develop their own principles for teaching literacy. In the New Zealand context, each school is able to develop an individual programme to guide literacy teaching, there are no nationally mandated programmes or reading materials that must be followed systematically. Consequently, teachers have a degree of autonomy to develop their teaching of literacy in accordance with their own principles and beliefs. However, accompanying this is a responsibility to be informed about current theory and how this might impact on one's practice, and to be critical of and reflective on the impact of one's teaching practices. The following section will elaborate on these beliefs and practices and changes noted as these participants moved through their first year of teaching.

8.3 Supporting students to develop a repertoire of literacy skills.

In this section I discuss the second research question: *How do the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during the first year of teaching?* In the course of this discussion I will reflect on relevant findings from initial and final interviews, from online surveys and, in relation to the teaching of reading, from the debriefing of video observations. I was interested in the beginning teachers' views on home-school partnerships and the degree to which they acknowledged and integrated students' literacy backgrounds and interests into their teaching. Associated with this, and emphasised in the findings, was participant acknowledgement of the importance of talk, which is addressed as a separate topic. Although participants had been introduced to the concept of multiliteracies and had explored the implications for practice during the third year of their programme, in reality, when prompted to discuss their teaching of literacy, the dominant focus related to scaffolding students to develop competency with written language — the teaching of writing and the teaching of reading. These are addressed accordingly along with consideration of the use of digital technologies to support literacy learning. A discussion of the beliefs and practices of participants in relation to the notion of multiliteracies concludes this section.

This discussion is framed within a social constructivist view of learning as reflected in much of the literature surveyed in Chapter 2. Learning is viewed as situated and

contextualised, involving active and meaningful communication and collaboration between teacher and students. This communication builds on what the learner already knows as a meaning-maker, and learning is constructed through interaction with more experienced others. This particular perspective on learning is widely referenced in the literature (e.g., Bell, 2011; Cullen, 2002; Rowsell, Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998).

8.3.1 Home-school partnerships

Here I consider the findings in relation to these social constructivist principles of teaching as social practice by first discussing how the beginning teachers gathered information about their learners to inform their teaching and the ways in which they responded to the home literacy practices and socio-cultural backgrounds of their students. Research demonstrates that the establishment of reciprocal and supportive home-school partnerships impacts positively on student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Warren & Young, 2002). Such partnerships enable the two-way sharing of information necessary to facilitate focused teaching, informed by the existing knowledge and home literacy practices of students. Findings in my study reflected considerable variation in the degree to which participants were able to establish home-school partnerships (5.2.9, 7.3.4). Using Epstein's (2001) typology of essential areas for parent involvement, it appears that category four (providing information to families to support school-related activities) was most prevalent. All participants initially took responsibility for conveying home-reading requirements to parents, although for some the organisation of this was challenging. Aroha was a good example of a participant who demonstrated cognisance of her students' backgrounds through promoting activities using home materials such as junk mail, since books were often not returned to school. While there was evidence from two beginning teachers of interactive documents used, such as a journal which both Sarah and the families wrote in (5.2.9), this initial communication was largely one-way, reinforced through a series of meet-the-teacher events early in term one.

Throughout the year a range of formal and informal communication opportunities were reported by participants. The schedules of working parents and students bussing to school were both cited as restricting communication between beginning teachers and parents. However, most of the participants involved were not concerned about the lack of regular communication, reporting that when issues

arose they made contact via phone and email. In comparison to this lack of concern, Aroha believed that many of her Pacific Island parents were uncomfortable in the school environment and actively sought ways to overcome this, thus acknowledging the importance of learning more about her students' home backgrounds as indicated in related research (Fletcher et al., 2009; Glynn, Berryman & Glynn, 2000; Maybin, 1992; McNaughton, 2002). In line with the literature, the advantage of regular communication with parents was illustrated in settings where parents were regularly involved (Epstein, 2002). Josh, Erin and Lauren noted the high degree of parental accountability, and occasional anxiety (such as Lauren's parents' insistence on having spelling results via email), but there was also evidence that such dialogue helped to develop shared understanding of school and home literacy practices. An example of this was Erin's discussion with parents over the use of home languages and formal homework; this reflects Epstein's (2002) first category, as referenced in the literature review — helping families to support their students as learners.

Findings were consistent with research identifying the benefits of utilising this acquired knowledge of home literacy practices and learners to enhance student engagement, through selection of appropriate resources and learning activities (Bishop et al., 2007; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2009; McNaughton, 2002). Study examples included provision of buddy reading, and increased computer access before school to counter a lack of home support with home work (Aroha and Yvette). Lauren and Josh selected texts to allow for student interests, in Lauren's case, to successfully engage reluctant male readers. Indications of cultural considerations were also evident through such examples as Aroha's selection of White Sunday texts to establish links to prior knowledge, and Erin's suggestion that parents supply Halal jelly so as not to miss out on a valuable language experience activity.

While keen to address the particular needs of ELL students, participants felt they required more support with this. Aroha was proactive in seeking support from colleagues. While Yvette considered text selection carefully in terms of the level of vocabulary and the relationship between text and image, she also noted that she didn't have a lot of time or experience to inform her selection. This lack of preparedness for dealing with linguistic differences is consistent with findings by Kurumada (2010) who tracked beginning teachers in a linguistically diverse school. It suggests that both ITE providers and schools employing beginning teachers could

increase support in this area, particularly since New Zealand schools are becoming increasingly diverse.

In summary, findings revealed variation in the apparent level of involvement in establishing effective home-school partnerships. For several participants, the relationship appeared markedly one-way, thus consistent with Warren and Young's (2002) finding that many teachers viewed the role of parents as supporting classroom learning, rather than a partner in the sharing of information. While this study's findings included few references by these participants to the importance of partnerships, it should also be noted that for most of these 'one-way' relationships there was cultural congruence between teacher and students, a similarity in cultural backgrounds, perhaps negating the need for depth of consideration (Deal & White, 2005). In comparison to this latter group of participants, this study's beginning teachers who were in schools where parents had high expectations of teachers, and those in schools with culturally diverse student populations, appeared accountable and proactive in managing two-way partnerships and seeking ways to accommodate student backgrounds and interests into their programmes. These findings suggest the need for greater emphasis on the importance of establishing effective reciprocal home-school partnerships, regardless of the nature of the school's student population (Alton-Lee, 2003; Epstein, 2002; Warren & Young, 2002).

8.3.2 The role of talk

When discussing culturally responsive pedagogy, in addition to responding to the social and cultural needs of students, Bishop et al. (2007) include the need for interactive and dialogic learning. Given the frequent reference to discussion and talk throughout each of the findings chapters, usually in relation to the teaching of reading and writing, this appears a significant component of the teaching practices of these participants and one worthy of consideration in relation to the literature surveyed. An understanding of the critical role of talk is also of relevance given the focus on oral language and the importance of discussion in the first-year literacy education paper. Discussion relating to these findings is informed by the concept of dialogic talk — acknowledging Bakhtin's (1986) concept of utterance whereby contributions are not made in isolation, but contextualised according to content, language style and the meaning constructed between speakers. In the classroom setting dialogic talk is purposeful and reciprocal communication occurs between

teacher and students or between students to construct meaning (Bakhtin, 1986; Barnes, 2008; Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Molinari & Mameli, 2010; Myhill et al., 2006).

I should note that since in-depth analysis of the nature of interaction during discussions was not an aim of this study, it was not possible to examine discussion sequences in relation to teacher-student or student-student interactions to substantiate the precise nature of the talk that occurred. My analysis was rather based on self-reporting by the participants during interviews and surveys.

As noted earlier in this chapter (8.2.2), during initial interviews beginning teachers identified the importance of promoting discussion, both whole-class and small-group, to enhance learning as one of the key understandings gained from their ITE papers (Barnes, 2008; Vygotsky, 1986). Findings indicated the early use of cooperative activities such as language experience, the teacher reading to the class and engaging students in talk around the text, and news groups to encourage engagement and confidence in using oral language (MOE, 2009a, 2009b). The nature of talk in such instances might be classified as discussion involving the exploration of ideas and sharing of information, rather than dialogue — discussion directed towards achieving common understanding, as classified by Edwards-Groves et al. (2014).

The use of language experience (Ward, 2002) in particular, was mentioned throughout the year by several participants. Findings confirm participants' belief in the strength of this multimodal approach, which uses engagement with a shared experience to provide opportunities to explore vocabulary, and share, clarify and extend ideas. Through talk, understanding is developed in an interactive setting prior to writing and then by reading individual texts, as described by Turbill (2002) and Ward (2002). Aroha found this approach critical in encouraging her ELL students to talk and elaborate on their thinking. Both Aroha and Erin indicated an additional value in promoting cross-cultural understanding and comparison through using culturally relevant resources, as indicated in the previous section. Landis, Umolu and Mancha (2010) cite similar cross-cultural benefits, through their focus on the creation of reading materials through language experience.

When examining participant comments related to the pre-writing and pre-reading phases of writing and guided reading lessons, I noticed a tighter alignment between the nature of the discussion and dialogic talk, when compared to the exploratory learning activities above. Participant comments relating to discussion during these phases indicated a closer focus on student needs and scaffolding towards the achievement of learning goals. Findings revealed the BTs' understanding of the importance of this explicit discussion to enable links to prior knowledge of the topic, connections to previous learning, discussion of the learning focus and the formulation of ideas (when writing) and making predictions and clarifying vocabulary (when reading) (5.3.5, 7.5.2). Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding within the ZPD is evident here, with the sequence of explicit discussion enabling shifts from prior knowledge to new learning reflective of what is found in the literature (e.g., Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Molinari & Mameli, 2010; Myhill, 2006; Myhill et al., 2006).

However, there were instances of a more monologic focus and IRE patterns of discussion during my observation of the teaching of guided reading; discussion patterns which research has consistently critiqued as inhibiting genuine discussion and engagement (eg. Cazden, 2001; Edwards-Groves et al., 2014; Mercer & Dawes, 2008, 2014; Myhill et al., 2006; Perrott, 1988). When observing the video footage, several commented on monopolising the conversation and the presence of teacher-child-teacher-child strings of discussion or GWITM (guess what's in the teacher's mind). However, these did not dominate to the extent that Molinari and Mameli (2010) discovered in the three primary classrooms they studied. An exception to this monologic focus during guided reading discussion was Josh's use of think-pair-share, a co-operative discussion strategy that has been shown to enhance reading comprehension (Carss, 2007). On a positive note, findings showed evidence of teachers self-reflecting on their discussion styles and determining a need to change to more interactive styles (Johnston, 2004). These reflections show the value of viewing video footage and analysing discussion sequences as proposed by Myhill et al. (2006).

Besides comment on the nature of discussion sequences, Amy mentioned that she initially skipped the talk when reading, due to time constraints, but was now letting lots of talk happen as she realised it was essential to develop understanding. As

well as time constraints, Myhill et al. (2006) refer to discussion opportunities being stifled by curriculum demands. We find an example of this in Aroha, who felt that an over-emphasised focus on learning intentions can lead to missing other valuable opportunities for learning.

While this section has focused on the role of discussion in supporting learning and comprehension, I was concerned to note a lack of focus in the findings on explicit teaching to enhance oral language capabilities. Erin and Aroha, two of the three teachers with significant numbers of ELL students, referred to the need to explicitly encourage sharing and elaboration of ideas and understanding of vocabulary during discussions; thus relating to the associated achievement objective of *Ideas* in NZC (MOE, 2007). However, further reference to the development of oral language skills was minimal. While it appears beginning teachers understand and value the role of talk, my findings indicated a lack of focus on supporting students to develop oral competencies. I suggest that this was partly due to the National Standards' assessment policy and the narrow focus on achievement in reading and writing. Study participants did not assess the use of oral language. Yet evaluation of students' oral capabilities is essential to facilitate focused teaching (Winch & Holliday, 2010). There are implications for both ITE literacy educators and schools here to ensure this essential foundation area for learning is addressed. There appears to be a definite need for increased professional learning in this area.

This section has reflected on findings indicating the extent of beginning teacher awareness of the role of talk to facilitate literacy learning and create new meaning within a social context. Understanding the importance of oral language as underpinning the development of written language is evident here. Findings indicate the purposeful use of discussion in relation to the level and needs of their students, and the learning context. These beginning teachers appeared to be moving, at varying rates it must be conceded, towards the facilitation of effective dialogic discussion. As Tilson (2014) suggests, increased use of video recording of classroom interactions and analysis of patterns of dialogue should be considered both in ITE and classroom settings to enhance this process of reflection.

8.3.3 Teaching writing

Given the design of the research project, I was unable to observe the teaching of writing. Hence these reflections are based on findings generated by my analysis of comments from interviews and surveys. Themes generated included: attitudes towards teaching writing, knowing the writers, providing authentic contexts for writing, supporting learners through the writing process, spelling and handwriting, and the assessment of writing.

The initial tone of participant thinking around writing is conveyed through Yvette's survey posting:

Writing is hard work! Inspiring my class is not an issue as they all seem to want to write and have something to say, but the logistics of teaching writing are hard. (Yvette, S1)

Though written at the end of term one, such thoughts were reflected by others throughout the year and summed up by Josh during the final interview with his reference to having the theory but not feeling confident about implementing it (7.5). However, it should also be noted in conjunction with such statements that almost all of the participants expressed confidence in teaching writing in their survey contributions (6.3). In subsequent paragraphs I unpack these views through discussing participants' efforts to translate their theoretical understanding into classroom practices that motivate and support the range of learners in their care to develop confidence in themselves as writers.

Knowing their writers

As demonstrated in the previous two sections, participants valued the importance of knowing their learners. In relation to writing, most undertook early analysis of unassisted writing samples to establish baseline data, and identify student needs and strengths. However, while this was helpful in focusing the initial teaching of writing, findings failed to reveal consideration by participants of student attitudes towards writing, or preferred writing styles and textual practices, both of which have been shown to impact on writing performance and self-perception of writers (Myhill & Brackley (2004); Parr & Jesson, 2016; Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012; Zumbrunn et al., 2017). While this may have been partly due to the proportion of junior classes taught by these beginning teachers, given the nature of writing as both

a cognitive and socially located process, and the increasing diversity of text-types, this is certainly an area requiring further attention and development by both initial teacher educators and inservice providers.

However, in noting this shortcoming in finding out about their learners, the nature of writing activities did reflect a socio-cultural focus in relation to the selection of authentic and meaningful contexts to engage learners, as promoted in the literature (e.g., Dombey, 2013; Gadd & Parr, 2017; Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). This focus was clearly evident from the initial interviews onwards, with the previously mentioned benefits of language experience lessons promoting connections with cultural practices such as Diwali, and providing opportunities for the exploration of ideas and vocabulary to facilitate writing. Further evidence of participants' commitment to the need for relevant contexts included reference to flexibility — being able to adjust one's programme should an emergent opportunity arise, such as the arrival of frogs in Amy's class.

In addition to providing authentic student-related contexts for writing, research shows the benefits of student involvement in the selection and construction of appropriate writing purposes (Dombey, 2013; Gadd, 2017; Gadd & Parr, 2017). There were few instances of this in the findings, beyond the citing of free-choice writing sessions to alleviate boredom with the current genre focus, or having Monday recounts of weekend experiences. This suggests an area for beginning-teacher development, to enable them to help their students assume increased responsibility for devising writing experiences, rather than the apparent dominant focus in this study on teacher-directed writing. Dix (2011), and Gadd and Parr (2017) emphasise this point.

Continuing with the theme of contexts for writing, comments relating to the teaching of genre occurred in two-thirds of the final interviews when these beginning teachers reflected on their year (7.5). Four of the BTs, referred to a focus on writing function as being embedded within the current theme or inquiry (Josh, Erin, Aroha, Sarah). Their writing tasks involved consideration of appropriate purpose and form and engaged students in writing associated with a range of curriculum areas. The proportion of participants referring to such contexts for writing increased throughout the year. For other participants (Sam, Yvette and Amy)

however, the school-wide writing programme continued to prescribe a genre focus with recipe-style identification and regurgitation of accompanying elements, a practice widely identified in the literature as producing reluctant and disengaged writers (ERO, 2002; Hood, 2006; Jesson & Cockle, 2016; Petrosky & Mihalakis, 2016). While these participants did not actively challenge this particular version of a genre approach in their school setting, their understanding of the associated issues appeared evident in concerns expressed during interviews. This included the relevance of some genres for early writers, as noted by Amy when faced with encouraging year two students to write explanations (6.5). Other concerns included boredom for students with a continual focus on one genre. Sam referred to what might be termed the constraints of such an approach. He wanted his students to be able to write, according to purpose, without having to look at the particular genre requirements. Findings showed, however, that these beginning teachers ensured that a mix of writing purposes were included alongside of the genre focus.

Supporting students with writing

Walshe (2015) comments that to teach writing effectively teachers should be 'sensitively aware of the nature of the writing process' (p. 15) in order to provide appropriate support when required. For participants in this study, evidence of this awareness appeared throughout the year, in varying degrees and accompanied by a range of associated challenges. From the outset, almost everyone alluded to the importance of the pre-writing phase, previously referred to as essential in allowing learner connection to relevant prior knowledge and task-related talk prior to writing. In addition to the inclusion of language experiences, and discussion around the topic and purpose for writing, a range of other support strategies were identified by participants as assisting writers in setting the parameters for the task. These included demonstration, through either co-constructed writing or examination of a mentor text, and the provision of opportunities to model planning or to allow individual planning to occur. The value of this initial pre-writing phase, usually with the whole class, is widely identified in the literature as essential in supporting students to organise their thoughts in preparation for drafting (Dix, 2011; Dombey, 2013; Gadd, 2017; Gallagher, 2014; Locke, 2015; Parr & Jesson, 2016; Walshe, 2015). While a number of participants referred to the use of models to demonstrate particular forms of text and the 'borrowing of language' to enhance meaning (Dix

& Amoores, 2010), only Lauren commented on her own writing journey, reflecting on her personal writing and sharing ‘herself as a writer’ with the students during this phase (Locke, 2015). It is evident that a focus on the modelling of one’s identity as a writer is largely missing from among my participants. This is of concern given their unanimous support for, and articulation of the importance of reading to students to model a love of reading.

The nature of teacher support during subsequent phases of the writing process — crafting and revision — received significantly less attention from participants. Evident in survey results was understanding the importance of students being aware of their learning goals and subsequent steps; this was monitored through a variety of systems such as recording goals in writing books. Scaffolding to support this learning during the crafting phase occurred through either flexible grouping and mini-lessons, or through teacher-student conferencing, thus allowing opportunities for differentiated learning and focused talk. Such teaching strategies were inherent in Graves’ (1983) original process writing approach, the work of Calkins (1986), and more recently in literature by Dombey (2013), Gadd (2017), and Zumbrunn and Krause (2012).

Two areas of challenge were identified by participants in relation to providing this support. The first, which emerged in each data set, was associated with the range and nature of writing abilities within classes. Based on the evidence presented throughout the findings chapters (Chapters 5-7), participants appeared to be operating successful and engaging writing programmes. However, these teachers felt challenged in providing for particular groups such as ELL students, reluctant writers, emergent writers, and students at either end of the ability-range in senior classes. Given the restricted hours available in core literacy education papers at the ITE level, sufficient attention to providing for such sub-groups of students is not always possible. I would also suggest that such attention is not always heeded when given until one finds oneself in an actual teaching context (Grossman et al., 2000). It was pleasing to note participant initiatives in this study, where reflection on the nature of writing tasks was undertaken, and help sought from colleagues within the school.

The second area of significant challenge in providing support during the writing or translation phase (Flower & Hayes, 1981) related to the provision of timely and constructive feedback on student writing within the limits of the classroom programme. Participants struggled to create efficient systems that aligned with their belief that feedback should involve face-to-face dialogue (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). Amy's comment in survey three illustrated this: "I think it's almost meaningless for a student to read my comment without having a dialogue about the writing" (Amy, S3). As the year progressed some BTs trialled buddy-response systems, thus lessening the pressure on the teacher for teacher-student conferencing. Such systems are referenced in the literature as a means to support the development of self-review and independence (Hood, 2006; Hsu, 2009; Locke, 2015).

While acknowledging the recursive nature of the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981), students do require modelling and scaffolding to learn to improve the clarity of text at both macro- and micro-levels (Dix, 2006; Locke, 2015). Across the findings, reference to supporting the revision of drafts was limited in relation to both the level of revision and the nature of support provided. During final interviews, there were references to revision of surface features and text structure. However, revision of ideas at the macro-level was absent and it appeared that so too was the demonstration of revision through teacher use of think-aloud protocols or the examination of models, signalled as useful strategies by Dix (2003). Teaching writing is a complex process, and there was much for participants to discuss during the interviews. However, I was concerned that further attention to the revision of the deeper features of writing was not evident, given that levels of revision are addressed and translated into practice during ITE papers (Appendices 2 & 3), and the process of moderation which will be addressed below, includes attention to both the quality of ideas and textual revision.

Essential in developing engaged and confident writers, is the provision of an authentic audience to acknowledge and respond to a student's writing. As with the revision of text, this component was also less evident in the findings. During the initial interviews some BTs referred to the oral sharing of writing, and publication on blogs and in class booklets; digital publishing was noted again in the final interviews. Student self-publishing appeared an issue owing to the lack of word-processing competencies in some junior classes, for example, in Yvette's class. In

others, teachers carried out this task, as was the case in Sarah's class. While digital publication was used in several classes, it was evident from the contributions made throughout the year, that, apart from Josh (located in a PYP school where multimodal presentation was an expectation), most of these beginning teachers considered writing as mono-modal (writing) rather than in relation to the production of multimodal texts. While a variety of contributing factors are obviously at play here, such as the availability of digital devices, this narrow focus could also be considered a by-product of the current policy of national standards assessment policy and the associated practice of moderation of print texts. I discuss both these matters in subsequent sections.

Spelling and handwriting

Before moving on to the assessment of writing, I will comment on findings around the teaching of spelling and handwriting, both of which received minimal focus in this study, but are essential in supporting the writing process (Adoniou, 2014; Parr & Jesson, 2016). The teaching of spelling in particular requires attention, as it was identified during participant reflections on the ITE programme as an area requiring further support. During initial interviews participants referred to summative testing and establishing the traditional pattern of weekly lists that are compiled on a Monday, learned in isolation during the week and tested on Friday (Croft, 2002). Participants viewed spelling accuracy as essential in supporting fluency in writing and believed attention to spelling patterns was also required. However, reference to elements such as spelling rules and the morphological aspects of spelling were largely absent.

Given a possible lack of both content and pedagogical knowledge in this area, participants dealt with the teaching of spelling in a variety of ways. Josh and Amy passed the task to their release teachers, who taught their students one day each week, Yvette utilised knowledge gained from her Dyslexia option paper, and Lauren appeared well supported by the word study and spelling programmes operating school-wide. However, in Lauren's case, one would have to question the justification for spending 40 minutes per day engaged in a decontextualised, whole-class word programme with year-two students. The associated regular testing of 40 words every Friday morning is also a questionable practice for students at this level. As Croft (2004) suggests, the time is perhaps better spent in authentic writing

activities where practice and repeated exposure to this vocabulary occurs in meaningful contexts, rather than testing words in isolation. While Lauren modified these practices over the year, reducing the timeframe and differentiating the tasks, she was sure that the learning was impacting positively on her students' progress in reading and writing. However, being her first year of teaching, comparisons of progress with other student groups she had taught prior to her involvement in the programme were not possible.

While this overall lack of attention to the teaching of spelling suggests we should re-examine the focus on the teaching of spelling in our ITE programme, this is not an isolated issue. In tracking first-year teachers in Australian schools, Adoniou (2014) also found content and pedagogical knowledge relating to the teaching of spelling to be lacking. It also appears an area given less attention in New Zealand schools with Parr and Jesson (2016) reporting the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar as one of the foci allocated the least amount of time over a week. I would contend that consideration should be given by ITE literacy educators, schools and professional learning providers to the complexity of the process of spelling and to developing teacher understanding of not just phonological knowledge, but also morphological, orthographical and visual elements.

In comparison to these issues around spelling, participants demonstrated understanding of the need to support the development of fine motor skills, and legible and fluent handwriting. Most junior-class teachers carried out regular, whole-class handwriting lessons and were generally prepared for this by their practicum experiences. While Yvette signalled this as a challenge during the first interview, she then downplayed its importance until reminded by her tutor-teacher that letter formation needed to be addressed. Some participants responded to the tedious nature of such whole-class lessons by passing them on to their release teacher, as in the case of spelling. In contrast, Lauren, who appeared to constantly strive to address learning needs more effectively, proposed to implement a differentiated programme in the following year.

Assessment of writing

Writing assessment was a dominant theme in both interviews and surveys. Findings identified the assessment of writing as the most commonly cited challenge,

typically identified at the end of terms one, three and four, when summative data were required for school assessment purposes (6.3.2, Table 6). As noted above, initial unassisted writing samples within the first six weeks of the year provided summative, base-line evidence of strengths and needs. Some participants, such as Amy, used these data to establish individual goals, recorded in students' writing books and revisited each week. By the end of the year, it appeared that each beginning teacher had developed their own system for recording ongoing anecdotal records to inform focused teaching. This demonstrates their belief that such a system is fundamental to providing immediate information on which to base teaching decisions, in comparison to utilising more formal writing samples for summative purposes (Boyd-Batstone, 2004).

The process of moderating writing samples across classes for summative purposes was viewed as both a useful tool in assisting with the establishment of OTJs against the National Standards (MOE, 2009c), and as a source of anxiety and frustration owing to the time and effort involved. Even though these data also informed classroom practice, there were a number of issues signalled by these beginning teachers. A lack of practice with moderation was initially cited by some as being of concern. While these BTs had been introduced to moderation and had done some analysis of writing samples during tutorials and course assignments (see Appendix 2), the limited number of hours available during their ITE programmes precluded substantial periods of practice. However, the practice of repeated moderation across their first year of teaching appeared to address this issue.

In their case study of an Auckland school involved in moderation, Hipkins & Robertson (2012) identified the tension, particularly with beginning teachers, in balancing a consideration of both macro and micro-level components of writing when establishing levels. This finding, influenced by recognition of the subjective nature of writing, was reflected in the current study, particularly when considering samples from those students at either end of the ability scale. In addition to this variability in interpretation between staff, variability between schools and National Standards exemplars was also noted as an issue. Erin felt her school had higher expectations than those exhibited in the exemplars, reflecting findings by Smith et al. (2016) in their work with NZ teachers.

These beginning teachers also had issues with the purpose and form of the writing samples used for moderation. Erin and her colleagues noted difficulties in comparing a descriptive response to a language experience lesson sampled early in the year and a trip recount at a later date. The necessary text features of each prevented a direct correlation. Also in relation to the form of writing, Yvette felt constrained having to focus most of her teaching around a particular genre prior to moderation. Such issues raise questions around the validity of the moderation process and reinforce the need for a range of samples of a child's work to be considered in making an overall teacher judgement.

In larger schools, such as the one where Josh was located, moderation spanned several classes and the hours involved each term appeared considerable. While not discussed in the literature, this does raise the question as to whether such intensive moderation is effective use of time for a beginning teacher, who could be focusing these hours on developing learning experiences to address the range of student needs.

Hipkins and Robertson (2012) and Smith et al. (2016) found that the moderation process can strengthen professional learning and provide teachers with evidence of their effectiveness in teaching writing. This was reflected in findings here, with participants noting how their interventions were working and clear indications of subsequent teaching required. By the end of the year, they reported more confidence with levelling and increased understanding of developmental progressions in writing. However, it does appear that a balance is required between the amount of time committed to moderation and the time available for beginning teachers to develop their teaching practice to support the needs of their learners.

Conclusion

This discussion of findings relating to writing instruction demonstrates the complexities involved in teaching it and the challenges experienced over the year by these beginning teachers. As indicated in their comments regarding student progress at the end of the year, they were mostly successful in developing engaging writing programmes to motivate and support their students. There were also a number of issues raised and implications to consider, by both ITE providers and schools employing beginning teachers. These include developing beginning teacher

understandings of writing as a multimodal process that more closely represents the use of written language in text forms that their students access and create in their home environments. In conjunction with this, closer alignment of writing tasks with learning across curriculum areas and involving students in task development are recommended. It appears that demonstration and scaffolding to help students revise their drafts could be addressed more, particularly in relation to macro-level revision. The teaching of spelling is the third key area for attention; beginning teachers appear to require increased support to develop both content and pedagogical knowledge to enable their students to develop understanding and competence in spelling to support their writing.

8.3.4 Teaching reading

In this section I reflect further on participants' understanding of the need to utilise a range of teaching strategies to support literacy learning. Findings relating to the teaching of reading complement those discussed previously, reflecting the utilisation of both pedagogical and content knowledge gained during the literacy education papers. While the beginning teachers cited the teaching of reading as an area where they experienced success, it was also an area of challenge across the four terms (6.4), as they worked to integrate their prior knowledge with the realities of the classroom. Findings across the year concur with literature relating to the teaching of reading, suggesting that teachers should implement a variety of approaches to develop student use of the various components of the reading process (Davis, 2016; Frey, Fisher et al., 2010). I begin by focusing on the use of this procedural knowledge across the four terms, followed by some reflections on the resources and activities employed to support learning. The Four Resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1999) was used to map the focus of teaching in each data set and I conclude this section with a critical review of the findings, discussing the extent to which these beginning teachers developed each of the four roles with their students.

Reading to

The inclusion of 'reading to' sessions (Lane & Wright, 2007) appeared a regular and valued component in all classrooms, with participant reflections on this approach evident throughout the findings (5.2.7, 6.5, 7.4.1). In addition to the benefits of generating talk around text, as discussed earlier in 8.2.2, emphasis was

placed on the importance of fostering vocabulary development and modelling enjoyment of reading to encourage positive attitudes and independent reading. These understandings are consistent with those outlined in the literature by Davis (2016), Hill (2006) and Lane and Wright (2007). While Lauren articulated the benefits of listening for those students who struggle to decode, the added advantages for ELL students, such as hearing correctly-phrased English, as suggested by Gibbons (2002), were not identified by those challenged in providing for such students. There were also few references to the more explicit instructional uses of the approach such as: challenging thinking around issues or themes (Josh and Lauren only), examining the interplay between images and print in picture books (Sam and Josh), and sharing text-types across curriculum areas to examine language patterns and ideas (only Josh). Davis (2016) and Gibbons (2002) suggest the latter is important in introducing students to transactional text structures and language patterns.

The shared reading approach

As with reading to students, the use of shared reading (Brown, 2004) received comment from most participants (5.2.7, 5.3.1, 6.5). Indeed, five teachers began with this approach during the observed reading sessions. It was clear that most BTs understood the traditional procedure of shared reading, as undertaken in junior classes and outlined in the literature (Brown, 2004; Davis, 2016; Depree & Iverson, 1994; Holdaway, 1979; Hundley & Powell, 1999). Participants utilised enlarged narrative texts with engaging content, undertaking repeated readings over the week, each with a specific learning focus. They understood that the texts utilised needed to have impact to sustain interest over multiple readings. Those used during the observed lessons had a range of features, including alliteration, rhyme and cumulative storylines to engage students (Depree & Iverson, 1994; Hundley & Powell, 1999).

Despite overall confidence in using the approach, it appeared that Aroha and Yvette initially confused shared reading with 'reading to' students. From my experiences in working with pre-service teachers, this confusion appears from time to time as a result of the blurred use of terminology by associates during practicum. Associates sometimes ask them to 'share a book' with the class, meaning they should *read to*

the class and so the confusion arises. This is more likely to occur at senior levels where the traditional shared reading approach is not in use.

Given the usual whole-class grouping for shared reading in junior classes, Amy's reference to shared reading being "good bang for the buck" (S2) sums up participants' early use of the approach, with students participating in an enjoyable whole-class collaborative activity within a supportive environment (Hundley & Powell, 1999). Shared reading can be seen as a time-efficient way to support the development of both processing and comprehension strategies through teacher modelling, leading to scaffolded use during guided reading and subsequent independence. The focus on comprehension during the initial reading was seen as important in engaging readers and establishing the context for attention to text features, vocabulary, fluency, expression, processing and comprehension strategies in subsequent readings.

Examination of participant reflections on the content of such lessons revealed that some tailored lessons more closely to students' needs, engaging in more explicit teaching to address these. Examples include Sarah's use of the disclosure technique to address the challenge of new words and Amy adapting the use of the pointer to model fluency and to emphasise attention to punctuation conventions (5.3.1). Yvette refined her teaching of shared reading after the BT literacy course, to more closely address strategies she wanted to scaffold towards student independence. However, comments in her final survey showed she had reverted to her initial practice of using it as a 'class read-along' due to the increased spread of ability with the arrival of new ELL students. This contradicts the literature promoting the use of shared reading to provide specific support for English language learners (Brown, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; Te Arihi, 2014). An alternative option for Yvette may have been to use the approach in a small-group setting to allow needs to be more closely addressed, as suggested by Davis (2016).

The use of shared reading, as evident throughout the findings and described above, conforms very much to the traditional procedure typically carried out in junior classrooms with repeated readings of an enlarged text over a week. Adaptations of the approach, as outlined in the literature review, were not evident (Davis, 2016; Fisher et al., 2008). From the findings presented, it appears the full potential of

shared reading was not yet recognised by these participants. Through using a variety of text-types and mediums, including digital texts, shared reading can be used across the curriculum in one-off lessons, to model and discuss particular aspects of literacy such as: critique of ideas and themes; identifying transactional text structures and associated text features; and developing strategies to determine the meaning of new vocabulary (Fisher et al., 2008). This versatility would extend the focus of the approach beyond the development of decoding and comprehension of text, which predominated in this study, to support development of the roles of text user and text analyst (Luke & Freebody, 1999). I will discuss further the development of these roles below.

Teaching guided reading

Described as “the heart of the literacy programme” (MOE, 1996, p. 86), the teaching of guided reading was a significant component in each of the nine literacy programmes. Involving small-group teaching and providing explicit guidance and support to scaffold students towards independent use of reading skills and strategies, the approach received considerable attention in the literacy education papers (see Appendices 2 & 3). In this section I discuss the following components of the guided reading programme: organisation for guided reading; selection of learning intentions and texts; the sequencing of guided reading lessons; and the use of independent activities to support the programme.

As with shared reading, the organisation of guided reading programmes in participant classrooms mirrored that suggested in the literature and promoted during ITE papers and microteaching sessions (Davis, 2007; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). Video observations and the associated discussion of these recordings confirmed findings by Grossman et al. (2000) and Clark et al. (2013) that beginning teachers do transfer much of what they are taught about reading instruction into practice. Most participants had established four guided reading groups and group teaching was underway by week three or four of term one. Where the spread of reading levels necessitated more than four groups, teachers limited the number of groups taught each day to three or four to allow quality teaching time. Concerned with maximising opportunities for student learning, this balance between quality of teaching versus the number of groups taught was noted as a challenge by most participants (5.3.2, 6.4.2). They were committed to catering for the wide range of

reading abilities and were challenged to provide for ELL students and new arrivals who did not easily fit into existing groupings. The need for flexibility in grouping was noted, particularly for those in junior classes, where the BTs reported that ongoing observations and regular running records facilitated adjustment of groups as necessary to cater for the differing rates of progress and different pathways to reach expected outcomes, as noted in Clay's (1998) work. In contrast, at the more senior level, where early reading strategies were in place for most readers and rates of progress were more gradual, Josh had made few changes by the end of term two to his initial groupings on the basis of Probe results. However, he was monitoring progress and articulated the need to consider any change in relation to additional support being provided from specialist help outside the classroom, and the degree of challenge that any shifts might engender. This close attention to student progress and formative assessment was missing from Sam's comments. In contrast, he noted the misplacement of students only after mid-year Probe testing, commenting of a particular student: 'No wonder he was bored' (Sam, RO). Overall, however, by mid-year most had systems in place for recording data and used this to inform planning. This attention to ongoing observation of progress to inform grouping and teaching decisions reflects an understanding of the advantages of small-group instruction and of the need for formative assessment to ensure students are correctly placed within the zone of proximal development to encourage new learning (Boyd-Batstone, 2004; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Variation was evident in the selection of learning intentions designed to focus the teaching of guided reading. Initially just four participants were differentiating instruction based on their observation of students' needs (Sarah Amy, Lauren, Josh). In comparison, others reported 'blanket teaching' with all groups focused on a particular learning intention at one time (5.2.7). These focus areas were either derived from Cameron's (2009) teaching reading comprehension strategies handbook (as in Sam's class), or directed by a school or syndicate term plan as in Monique's school, where the comprehension strategies of prediction and making connections were set for term one. By mid-year there appeared a closer correlation between observed student needs and learning intentions (5.3.4), with participants reporting increased familiarity with the particular needs, skills and strategies relevant to each level. It appeared that resources such as Cameron (2009) and charts

of strategies, either provided by the BT literacy day facilitator, or derived by schools from the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (MOE, 2010), were used to support, rather than drive the selection of learning intentions. Also, when we discussed their focus for teaching during the video debriefs, it was evident that some were now considering the reciprocal nature of reading and writing and connecting learning across language modes. For example, Aroha focused on making connections in relation to reading materials, writing and oral language.

There are two points important to note before moving on. The first is that while ITE programmes are able to support pre-service teachers in developing both content and pedagogical knowledge in relation to reading, this is in part dependent on practicum class levels. BTs may not have had the opportunity to secure in-depth experience relating to their initial class level. While it is certainly the responsibility of ITE providers to ensure there is sufficient opportunity for practice in a range of situated contexts, it is not possible within the boundaries of ITE programmes to provide experience at all levels. I therefore suggest that it is the school's responsibility to support their BT in refining their teaching practices for the particular class level if required. Second, while levelled charts such as those described above are useful resources in supporting this induction, the scheduling of whole-class teaching of comprehension strategies across the year, as with the prescribed teaching of writing genre referred to earlier, should be discouraged. Rather as Davis (2016) suggests, such teaching should be based on identified student' needs. Such an approach is likely to inhibit the growth of beginnings teachers' ability to observe and assess individual student needs and to plan and teach accordingly.

To meet individual needs, Davis (2016) suggests that teachers must consider the level of challenge and students' interests when selecting texts for guided reading. In addition, this selection needs to be informed by the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge and their knowledge of text structure and features that contribute to the overall level of difficulty. Orchestrating these various components to make appropriate choices was initially challenging for most participants. Student engagement emerged as a key consideration in making selections during the initial interviews, and this was reiterated in surveys two and three (6.4.1). However, a lack of familiarity with the range of texts, the range of levels and consequently the

time required to make selections that matched learning needs, were cited as compounding issues (5.3.4). This reflects suggestions made by Fountas and Pinnell (2012) that the ability to analyse texts in terms of the demands expected of the reader takes time to develop.

As noted above in 8.3.1, some participants gave consideration to the social and cultural backgrounds of their students when selecting texts. In addition to the examples already shared, Monique and Erin acknowledged the value of dual-language texts and the need to consider links between images and text for English-language learners. Such examples are consistent with the literature that argues that texts should reflect the diversity within classrooms and the differing pathways students take in developing literacy skills (see Clay, 1991).

School-based factors impacted on text selection for some participants. Shortages of texts made selection difficult for Amy and Yvette, and school policy around the use of the two most common series of instructional readers, PM readers (Nelson Cengage) and *Ready to Read* texts, impacted on usage for Sarah and Yvette. I have failed to locate written evidence that establishes comparisons between these two series. However, a view that PM texts present more regular text structures, repetitive exposure to high-frequency words and characters, and close links between text and illustrations, and are therefore more suited for use when students are first promoted to a new level and for ELL students, has been wide-spread for a number of years. Parr, Aikman, Irving and Glasswell (2004) in their review of commercial literacy packages reported that teachers chose the PM+ texts owing to the way they introduced new vocabulary gradually, with repeated characters and vocabulary across different texts, thus promoting reader familiarity. The PM+ series is a companion series to the PM readers, so one can assume the same characteristics apply to the latter. Given that the review of the *Ready to Read* series completed in 2014 included new levelling tools to ensure a more uniform gradation of the colour wheel levels (MOE, 2014), and the introduction of a number of new publications at the early levels, it may be that purported differences are no longer significant.

The other theme evident in the findings was the selection of texts to align with the current inquiry or theme to support cross-curricular learning. Gibbons (2002)

suggests that such an integrated approach enhances comprehension owing to students developing greater depth of understanding of concepts and associated vocabulary. Availability of such resources at more junior class levels and the time taken to search prevented Yvette from integrating such resources, although she was aware of the advantages of doing so. Josh struggled with locating such texts initially and found it difficult to establish reading levels for such material. However, he persevered, driven by the nature of the PYP inquiry programme, his personal beliefs and the need for his students to develop research skills. By the end of term three he reported confidence in both selecting and using a wide range of resources to build on and extend his students' reading interests, and to make connections with the inquiry topic. Others signalled that this was something they were still hoping to work on in year two. During the final interviews, those teaching in junior classes reported that the selection of texts had become more intuitive as they developed familiarity with the developmental continuum for emergent and early readers, and the associated skills and strategies.

While it appears these beginning teachers were concerned with matching instructional texts to interests, student backgrounds, learning needs and other curriculum areas, and had developed confidence over the year, another point to note here is that apart from Josh's mention of developing research skills with his students, there was no reference in the findings to the inclusion of digital text-types for instructional purposes. This will be discussed below when support for digital literacy is addressed.

Findings based on the video debriefs revealed some competence in facilitating the various stages of the guided reading approach. Findings relating to the nature and value of discussion during guided reading lessons were addressed in section 8.2.2. As in the literature, discussion prior to reading the text was viewed as essential in setting students up for success through alerting them to the learning focus for the lesson, making connections to relevant prior knowledge and previous learning, and providing purposeful scaffolding to predict and manage challenges presented during the reading (Clay, 1998; Davis, 2016; Smith & Elley, 1997). For Yvette, this pre-reading phase sparked debate with her mentor teacher regarding the degree to which the text should be previewed. Ministry of Education handbooks (MOE, 2002, 2003) which have not been updated, suggest that the introduction should not

reduce potential challenges and opportunities for students to problem-solve while reading. In particular, *Guided Reading: Years 1-4* (MOE, 2002) states that, “it’s best to avoid ‘walking through’ the whole text” (p. 41). Eve’s justification mirrored this thinking, arguing that previewing the whole text took away opportunities for readers to predict during the reading proper (5.3.5). In contrast her mentor teacher viewed this stage as requiring a more in-depth ‘walk-through’ to reduce significant challenges. As noted in chapter 3, the MOE has since changed their stance on the degree of scaffolding, but currently both perspectives are evident in online materials and research underpinning this revised stance is lacking.

During reading, students were encouraged to read the text themselves with teacher support provided through modelling, explaining or questioning to encourage problem-solving as appropriate for the reading level. With more able readers, texts were divided into chunks with discussion interspersed to support comprehension and development of the learning focus. For most participants, their practices were consistent with those encountered during ITE papers and practicum, and reflected those promoted in the literature (Davis, 2007, 2016; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Gibbons, 2002; Ford & Opitz, 2008). The manner in which students read during guided reading lessons was an area of concern for some participants and the resolving of these issues demonstrated differences in their ability of independently address problems. Practicum experiences with Round Robin Reading appeared to influence Sam’s adoption of this practice, despite discussion, role modelling and the provision of literature discouraging the practice during his second literacy education paper (Cullen & Paris, 2011). Although aware of issues with student inattention, he continued the practice until provided with an alternative at the BT course. His experience was similar to findings by Clarke et al. (2013), who found that two participants out of five utilised a similar ‘popcorn’ technique not promoted during ITE programmes. Lauren also noted insecurity around needing to hear students reading to know they are comprehending, although for her it involved a group ready to shift to the silent processing of text. She was able to rationalise this issue for herself and felt comfortable monitoring comprehension through discussion instead.

It was evident throughout the findings that participants had developed the procedural knowledge to implement guided reading as promoted by Davis (2007,

2016). However, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) suggest that the reality of effective teaching of reading requires teachers to ‘think on their feet’ and respond to student contributions to promote rich discussion, prompt for use of sources of information and reading strategies, and make learning explicit. They suggest the ability of teachers to orchestrate such a repertoire of teaching strategies during lessons in a flexible and explicit manner requires focused effort. There is evidence of this differentiated response to individuals in some participant explanations of teaching in 5.3.7 but, as expected of first year teachers, this was clearly an area for further development.

During guided reading, students not involved in small-group learning with the teacher should be engaged in independent activities to support literacy learning, preferably in relation to their current instructional focus (Davis, 2016; MOE, 2002, 2005; Smith & Elley, 1997). In line with this recommendation in the literature, the organisation and associated routines for such activities were given early attention by almost all participants. In addition, they communicated an understanding of the need to select authentic and meaningful tasks that reflected the literacy learning needs of their students. Sam was the only ‘outlier’ in the data, suggesting that literacy learning was secondary to his initial selection, which included “anything to keep them quiet” (5.2.7).

Participants were also mindful of the key competencies in the curriculum, linking the development of independent activities to self-management (MOE, 2007). To assist with this, most developed a means for students to track their required tasks through either a taskboard or use of a digital app. In both the survey data and the observations of guided reading, it was evident that some BTs were constantly reflecting on the nature of their independent tasks and the ways in which these supported student learning, striving to engage and challenge learners at an appropriate level, including ELL students and more-able readers (5.3.3, 6.4.2). These activities ranged from involving the students in further reading to develop reading mileage and fluency to the development of activities to consolidate letter and word knowledge or the use of graphic organisers to promote higher-order thinking, thus reinforcing strategies and skills associated with both processing and comprehension of text. As the year progressed there appeared to be closer links to the students’ learning focus in order to review and extend the learning (7.4.1).

Amongst this mix of tasks, worksheets were utilised in various ways and received various degrees of critique in relation to their value. For Erin, their use was prohibited in the school's literacy policy, and she regularly linked activities to the school focus on the levels of thinking in the SOLO taxonomy. Yvette noted that some of the PM worksheets requiring insertion of missing words had little value, which concurred with teacher comments in Parr et al. (2004) that the related PM+ worksheets were too basic. There appeared to be some agreement that these were appropriate at times, for example, to check understanding in relation to particular texts and specific learning goals. This reflects guidelines for new teachers provided by Pincus (2005) in evaluating worksheet effectiveness. Not all participants demonstrated this level of critique however. Sam, located in a school where a bank of worksheets relating to school journal content were provided on the school server, explained mid-year that he did amend these at times by adding higher-order questions. However, in the final interview, it appeared his practices had not shifted, as he commented he was "old-school" and still handed out worksheets so his students were "sitting down, shutting up and doing that exercise" (7.4.1). He did though signal a desire to find new, interesting ways to manage this independent learning, but the data-gathering phase of this study did not allow his progress to be tracked further.

Ford and Opitz (2008) contend that the nature of learning tasks when students are away from the teacher is just as critical as the interaction with the teacher during a guided reading lesson. It was apparent in these findings that most beginning teachers were aware of this issue. From the outset they prioritised the establishment of routines to facilitate this independent component and gave thought to the nature of activities that would benefit their learners. As the year progressed these activities were critiqued and refined as they sought to provide a closer match with the range of learning needs amongst their students.

8.3.5 Professional knowledge of the reading process

The previous sections have examined how this group of beginning teachers organised their teaching of reading, and the teaching approaches and strategies adopted to address student needs. I now consider what they taught during guided reading lessons through discussing findings in relation to each of the four roles of Luke & Freebody's (1999) Four Resources heuristic, which have been applied as a

framework in each of the three previous chapters. In doing so, it is necessary to acknowledge the interdependence of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) and therefore it is not always possible to discuss one without the other. Also in examining each of the four roles it is necessary to be cognisant of the complexity of the reading process and the constant and complex interplay between all four 'resources' as meaning is created and interpreted from texts. Having stated this, it is clearly apparent that participant explanations of teaching gave predominant attention to just two of the four roles.

The role of code breaker

For Sam and Josh, working with more fluent readers, supporting their lower ability-students to process text was challenging. Josh signalled this during the first interview, possibly concerned at his absence from this component of the literacy papers due to family issues, and at the practicum class levels he had experienced. For Sam, this area of challenge was not signalled until the final interview (7.4.2). It was apparent he had not gained the level of understanding of the required content knowledge, or of the developmental continuum of reading skills and strategies, as had other participants during the year.

From the initial interviews and BT interpretations of reading observations, it was evident that those teaching junior classes understood the importance of decoding and the various components of the reading process that facilitate accurate reading of text. The elements attended to were level-appropriate in relation to the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (MOE, 2010), from Sarah reinforcing letter-sound relationships and automaticity with her new entrants, to Yvette, Lauren, Aroha and Amy using knowledge of common chunks of words and morphology to encourage the solving of new words with year two and three students. Such findings concur with Clark's (2017) conclusion, after summarising research surrounding the teaching of phonics, that there is no one proven method, and that the teaching of phonics is of benefit when taught within a balanced programme. Lauren's whole-class, word-work programme was the only example of the systematic teaching of phonics. While she noted a positive impact on her low-ability readers, it is not possible to attribute the results solely to this programme owing to the reinforcement of phonological knowledge in other parts of her programme as well.

From the examples noted in the reading observations (5.3.7), it appears these participants were confident in their understanding of the three sources of information (semantic, syntactic and visual grapho-phonic) and of processing strategies, and were learning to use this knowledge to prompt individual students as necessary during guided reading lessons. In addition to ‘on-the-spot’ prompting, these teachers prized the development of metacognitive awareness and encouraged independent use of processing strategies through discussion and the development of prompts such as the ‘chunky monkey’ strategies (5.2.2), bookmarks and modelling books. The ‘on the run’ interpretation and encouragement to check neglected information and integrate all three sources, and the promotion of metacognition indicates movement towards the effective teaching referred to earlier by Fountas and Pinnell (2012).

The role of meaning maker

Discussion around the importance of teaching comprehension increased as the year progressed. In considering findings across the data sets, it appears that these beginning teachers valued comprehension as an active process required by their students to construct meaning from text. As mentioned above when discussing the selection of learning intentions, some participants initially employed a whole-class focus on particular comprehension strategies, either through selection from Cameron (2009) or as dictated by syndicate planning. However, in findings from the reading observations (5.3.7), the pattern again became more needs-focused with participants able to articulate why they were teaching particular comprehension strategies and supporting their students with understanding vocabulary. Findings aligned with the literature suggesting that focus on the explicit teaching of a small set of commonly used strategies has a positive impact on comprehension (Almasi, Garas-York & Shanahan, 2006; Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Harp, 1999; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pressley, 2006). Participants appeared cognisant of the common understanding that teaching should involve scaffolded development of one comprehension strategy per lesson using a sequence consisting of discussion, demonstration and supported use, as promoted in Block and Pressley (2002), and Dymock and Nicholson (2010). As Josh had discovered through trial and error, developing competence with using comprehension strategies requires focus over several lessons, not just one (Almasi et al, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000).

Almasi et al. (2006) also indicate that readers should be aware of comprehension as a co-ordinated process where the reader orchestrates multiple strategies to enable understanding. Amy made reference to this with her survey comment signalling the need to constantly review strategies already covered.

Readers also require strategies to solve the meaning of unknown vocabulary encountered when reading. Six of the participants explained their promotion of such strategies during the debrief interviews. As in Fisher, Frey and Lapp's (2008) research involving expert teachers of shared reading, these BTs supported their students to develop a range of strategies in addition to using the dictionary. These including rereading and reading on to gain cues from the context, examining morphemes within the word, and engaging in discussion to clarify understanding.

Awareness of the need to balance these two roles of making meaning and decoding text was evident across the findings, and especially so in the final interviews. This balance was indicated at all levels, with Sarah taking initiative to ensure she grouped the basic, one-line, magenta-levelled texts into themes where possible to promote understanding (5.3.4). At times achieving this balance was expressed as a concern. Lauren, owing to her lack of previous junior-class experience, wondered in her term 2 survey whether she was focusing too much on decoding at the expense of comprehension. Again, Sam's thinking differed from others with his comment in 5.3.7 indicating a commitment to a developmental sequence for the four roles rather than an interactive pattern – he suggested his students could decode well but could not comprehend so that was his current focus, then he would work on text features the following term (develop the role of text-user).

The role of text user

In comparison to the focus on cracking the code and making meaning, there were fewer explanations in the findings that could be classified as supporting students to understand the purpose of different texts. Several references were made to the use of non-fiction texts and broadening students' textual knowledge, such as Erin's comment about needing to develop "informed use of different text-types" during the initial interviews (5.2.7 and similar in 5.3.7). Erin, Yvette, Lauren, Amy and Josh provided examples of unpacking particular text features such as reading graphs in maths, and making meaning from road signs and text features such as diagrams

and labels in non-fiction texts. There was also some evidence of various text-types being explored within current themes such as Josh's work with physics texts (7.4.1), Erin's reading focus on information texts relating to the recent bee inquiry (5.3.6), and her reference to teaching online research skills (7.6). Participants were not hesitant about the use of non-fiction texts; as Ford and Opitz (2008) and Dymock and Nicholson (2010) state, explicit teaching of how to access diverse text-types is critical to enable students to effectively manage the increasing diversity of texts they encounter on a daily basis.

The current MOE policy, indicated in a series of webinars (MOE, 2014), of promoting the reading of non-fiction texts through shared reading only, until students reach the purple segment of the colour wheel (in their third year at school) appears counter-productive to this aim, despite the goal to "best support students to become independent enthusiastic readers" (Kay Hancock, personal communication, 26/2/15). The rationale provided in the MOE webinar (2014) and referred to in chapter 3 (3.3.6) does not adequately explain why students reading at lower levels cannot engage in guided reading of unfamiliar texts with teacher support and discussion, two key tenets of the guided reading approach according to MOE support documents (MOE, 2002, 2003, 2006). Given the reference in MOE (2010) to students "reading, responding to and thinking critically about a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts" (p. 12) after one year at school, and the reality that students self-select non-fiction texts for independent reading in both paper-based and digital form from an early age; surely a range of instructional approaches, including guided reading, should be employed to support these increasingly competent text users, and to introduce students to curriculum literacies.

The role of text analyst

An essential component of the repertoire of practices required to become literate is the ability to understand that texts are created and situated within particular social contexts, and to critically evaluate the particular views being presented and/or silenced (Anstey, 2009; Honan, 2004; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Sandretto & Klenner, 2011). As the teachers in Honan's (2004) research discovered when mapping existing teaching practices, my participants made scant reference to encouraging students to critically analyse texts. Sam implied this as being essential in the initial interviews and saw it as his ultimate goal, but felt it would not be

achievable at this point (5.2.10). Later in the year there was evidence of shifts towards critical analysis, such as Josh's consideration of Shaun Tan's decision-making around the comparative placement of text and illustrations (7.4.2). Others encouraged critical thinking, as opposed to critical literacy, through such activities as evaluation and analysis of character decision-making in fairy tales (Lauren, 7.4.2).

I would suggest that the dominant emphasis on decoding, comprehension and thinking critically in the *National Standards* and *Literacy Learning Progressions* documents (MOE, 2009; 2010) has narrowed both participant and school perceptions regarding the nature of critical literacy and how this might be supported in classrooms. The decision not to adopt the framework suggested by the Multiliteracies Working Group (Sandretto & Klenner, 2011) has no doubt also impacted on this lack of focus. While ITE providers should strengthen their focus on critical literacy to provide beginning teachers with a stronger understanding, there are few relevant New Zealand references to support teachers in their development of teaching and learning sequences that encourage the critical analysis of texts. Sandretto and Tilson have made a valuable contribution to this field through research reported in a range of publications (Sandretto & Klenner, 2011; Sandretto & Critical literacy research team, 2006; Sandretto & Tilson, 2014), and the provision of professional learning opportunities. The only locatable MOE resource to support the teaching of critical literacy appears to be a small section in the NZ Curriculum Update: Issue 23 (Te Kete Ipurangi [TKI], 2012). In comparison, Sandretto and Tilson's more recent publications (2014, 2016) provide a way forward, demonstrating how the Four Resources model can be utilised as a framework for curriculum literacies design.

8.3.6 Using digital technology to support literacy learning

This group of beginning teachers appeared very much aware of the need to include digital technology in their literacy programmes to generate connections with their students' digital lives outside the classroom (Kalantzis et al., 2010). However, as noted in 5.2.8 and in 7.6, availability of devices, connectivity and reliability were ongoing issues that impacted on their ability to incorporate blended learning opportunities. Similar findings were reported by Long and Szabo (2016) when researching the use of e-books during guided reading. As Table 8 in the previous

chapter shows, two to four classroom-based devices was the norm by term four, apart from Josh's BYOD iPad class. The sets of netbooks available to Amy and Sarah proved to be time-intensive in terms of set-up and ease of use for junior students. Similarly Yvette found the weekly sessions in the ICT suite of minimal value given the dependence of students. This particular year may have been part of a transition phase for NZ schools in relation to becoming digitally equipped. Writing at a similar time, Falloon (2013) reports a 'frenzy' by schools to purchase hand-held devices as the government was at that time committed to upgrading schools to ultra-fast broadband. Schools in this study were benefitting from both initiatives, as Table 8 and comments from Aroha and Amy demonstrate. Erin and Lauren, among others, were enthusiastic about additional devices arriving to support learning the following year.

The other challenge expressed by some participants, in addition to operating issues, was that of time — time to source relevant software and apps, and to explore and critique possibilities. As first-year teachers establishing their classroom programme, this was signalled as an extra that needed attention and mirrored findings by Watts-Taffe et al. (2003) when tracking three beginning teachers. For Monique and Yvette, school-wide requirements partly addressed these issues, although Yvette delayed the introduction of Clicker-6 into her programme as she wanted time to investigate the value of this for herself.

A dominant theme in the literature surveyed is the importance of teachers acquiring a strong understanding of literacy pedagogy and content knowledge to inform decisions around the use of digital tools (Watts-Taffe, 2003; Walsh, 2010). As McGee (2000) noted, it cannot be assumed that simply transferring their own digital knowledge into the classroom will suffice. This was apparent in Sam's case, where his background in the IT industry did not appear to provide any advantage in utilising digital technologies to assist his students' learning. As signalled in the literature review, classroom use of digital tools can be analysed in relation to the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) by considering content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015; Hutchison, Beschorner & Schmidt-Crawford, 2012). Findings included some examples of developing participant awareness of the TPACK components. Having the advantage of 1-1 devices, Josh appeared more closely focused on considering

relevant content knowledge, with his concern mid-year regarding a lack of suitable apps relating to comprehension. He also had the advantage of engaging in school-wide professional learning prompting teachers to consider more transformative use of digital tools, rather than merely using apps in a supplementary way. Others, such as Erin, Sarah and Yvette noted similar affordances in using creative apps such as *Puppetpals* to integrate a range of language modes, multimodal online publication of writing, and the explicit teaching of online research skills.

Participant awareness of the potential of digital learning appeared to shift as the year progressed towards more considered and effective integration of digital activities to support learning, in addition to the frequent use of digital activities in reading rotations to provide practice and reinforce learning (5.2.8, 5.3.3, 6.6). One of the key messages here, and reflected in the literature (Elliott, 2011; Walsh, 2010), is for ITE providers to reflect on the extent to which they provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to consider the importance of integrating the components of the TPACK framework, or similar, rather than merely supplying opportunities to explore and critique digital tools and their potential for literacy learning.

8.3.7 Participant views on the nature of literacy and multiliteracies

During the final interviews I asked participants how they would explain the concept of multiliteracies (7.7). The responses were global in nature and reflected a view of literacy as a social construct, referring to effective communication through a range of means, comprehending information from different sources and making decisions about design and how to present information. Consideration of context and audience were noted, along with communication through oral, visual and written modes. Aroha referred to curriculum literacies, and Erin the transfer of skills and knowledge into real life contexts outside of school. The notion of being literate in different contexts – such as literacy in playing the piano and mathematical literacy – was also indicated.

Both initial and final interviews included prompts for participants to reflect on what their students needed to know and do to become literate. I was interested in how they translated their thinking about the concept of multiliteracies (as above) into the realities of designing literacy programmes for their students. While some elements

from the above paragraph were again evident, their responses in both interviews focused predominantly on the teaching of reading and writing. Responses were similar across both and reflected many of the findings discussed throughout 8.2. During the final interviews there was an added emphasis on particular elements of reading (decoding, comprehension, the use of inference) and writing (purpose, audience, writer's voice, clarity and extension of ideas). Oral competence was identified as important (with less frequency than written). In the final interviews this emphasis came from the BTs in classes where oral language required particular focus — Sarah with her new entrants, and Erin and Aroha with their ELL students.

The need for students to understand and use the visual language mode was also noted (5.2.7, 7.7), with Lauren, Erin and Aroha referring to the interpretation and creation of meaning using visual signs and symbols in a range of environmental contexts. This matched examples provided in the findings where multimodal learning was promoted, such as through the use of the *Puppetpals* app for creative responses to reading texts, and Josh's comparison of differences in presentation modes between the text *The World according to Warren* (Silvey, 2007) and the sound track of *Eleanor Rigby*. Such examples were not widely reported throughout the year, however. Participants also referred to the need to make and create meaning for a range of purposes and the importance of using a range of appropriately-levelled text-types (paper-based and digital). Only two (Lauren and Sarah) made reference to curriculum literacies in the interviews, but this was a developing trend in the findings as more participants attempted to teach literacy within the contexts of inquiry topics or themes from other curriculum areas. Lauren was the only participant to indicate the critical role of technology in response to these questions.

In considering the differences and similarities between their views on the concept of multiliteracies and the knowledge and skills they thought their students needed, and those evident in the findings, Amy's comment provides a probable explanation for the predominant focus on written language throughout the study. After offering her views on multiliteracies she added:

But in a school context when we talk about literacy across the curriculum, I'd only think about reading and writing, probably just because that's what we report on. (Amy, FI)

I will further address this emphasis on written language in the conclusion to this section and when discussing the final research question.

8.3.8 Conclusion

Discussion of findings in relation to the second research question: *How do the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy change during the first year of teaching?* demonstrates the challenge and complexity evident in establishing a literacy programme that caters for the needs and strengths of the range of learners within each classroom. As Clark et al. (2013) and Grossman et al. (2000) discovered when considering the establishment of reading and writing programmes respectively by beginning teachers, these programmes reflected much of the content and pedagogical knowledge gained during their ITE programmes. In comparison to Kosnik and Beck's (2008) study, there were close links between what was covered in the ITE programme in relation to teaching literacy (Appendices 1-3), and what these participants appeared to have learned. Conversely there were very few instances where what was taught did not align with programme content. Pedagogical knowledge was demonstrated in relation to the teaching of reading, through the approaches of reading to, shared and guided reading, and in supporting writers through each stage of the writing process. These beginning teachers became more attuned to students' needs and appeared to develop competence in managing these as the year progressed. However, there was also evidence that additional help was needed with addressing the needs of ELLs and those of lower ability in literacy; this corresponds with similar findings Clark et al. (2013). Also, as Clark et al. described, there were beginning teachers in this study who were teaching a level which they had not worked with on practicum. This is unavoidable given that the Bachelor of Teaching degree in this study is mandated to cover a wide range of levels from Years 0 to 8. The principles guiding participants' teaching in this study reflected a belief in learning as a social process, where learning experiences are linked to students' prior knowledge, purposeful, but also challenging for students within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Several also noted the importance of promoting choice and creativity.

However, despite the positive aspects concerning the beliefs and practices of these beginning teachers as discussed above, when I aligned the findings against the theory around broader views of literacy and the notion of multiliteracies, there were

also a number of areas requiring attention if teachers are to connect with the multiliterate environment within which their students live (Sandretto & Klenner, 2011). Literacy in schools has traditionally focused on the teaching of reading and writing and the importance of oral language as underpinning this development has long been acknowledged (Sandretto & Tilson, 2014; Yelland, 2010). In addition, a focus on broader notions of literacy is now required and beginning teachers must consider how they connect to the home literacy practices of students and how they support them in developing the competencies required to become multiliterate citizens (Anstey, 2009; New London Group, 1996, Rowsell, Kosnik & Beck, 2008). In particular, based on the evidence presented here I suggest a need for increased focus on:

- Establishing reciprocal relationships with families and whanau to develop awareness of out-of-school literacy practices and the need to provide for social and cultural differences;
- Including more of a multimodal focus in the planning of teaching and learning sequences, acknowledging the need for students to utilise all five semiotic systems, not just the linguistic codes, in interpreting and designing texts;
- Extending the use of technology to support literacy learning, including consideration of technological, pedagogical, content knowledge and the design of learning experiences of a more transformative nature;
- Including greater emphasis on developing the roles of text-user and text analyst through inclusion of a more critical perspective that allows for examination of the construction of texts and positioning of the reader;
- Extending the focus on the literacy demands of other curriculum areas.

8.4 Teaching within the context of the school

Here I consider findings in relation to the third research question: *What influences within the school environment appear to contribute to these changes?* The previous section demonstrated the unique nature of each beginning teacher's journey throughout the year, as they supported their students in becoming literate and developed their identities as teachers of literacy. Each journey was influenced by previous experiences and knowledge about teaching, understandings and

experience from the initial teacher education programme and personal experiences. In addition, in considering the four essential features of developing professional identity, as noted by Beijaard et al. (2004), context is also critical. Findings illustrate how each participant actively participated within a unique community as they developed as teachers. The engagement process can be viewed as moving from a position of peripheral participation to full membership of the community as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991). Of course, this requires time and interaction.

In this section I focus on the interaction of ‘newcomers’ with colleagues within the school community. The nature of this interaction can be classified as formal, as with the officially designated mentor (tutor teacher), and informal, with other personnel within the school. In addition, other contextual influences included professional learning opportunities and both school and national policy. I will address each of these in turn.

8.4.1 Relationships with tutor teachers and others

An important component of the concept of communities of practice [COP] is the relationship between ‘old-timers’ and the ‘newcomers’ (Wenger, 1999). The formal relationship between beginning teacher and tutor-teacher exemplifies this. Hobson’s (2009) findings suggest that mentors are “the single most important providers of support for beginning teachers” (p. 308). In this study, such support was not consistent, according to the BTs, and relationships with mentor teachers varied considerably in both the degree and nature of the interaction (5.2.4, 7.3.1). Over half the participants were continually positive in explaining the impact of these relationships on the development of their literacy programmes. They valued the relationship, felt comfortable in asking for advice and were given relative autonomy to develop as teachers of literacy. Other participants expressed concern with the nature of the interaction with their mentor and managed these concerns in different ways. Issues included tutor teachers who held middle-management positions within the school and were not readily available, as in Monique’s situation. She was able to compare notes with other BTs in the school and felt the difference in levels of support was significant. While meetings were regular, they were largely focused on organisation; there appeared little support with planning or feedback on her teaching. Sarah, Sam and Aroha also cited this relationship as having less impact on their teaching, due either to tutor-teacher responsibilities, differences in

class levels taught, or personality differences. Yvette's situation was unique in that her literacy-specialist mentor had been out of the classroom for some time. Yvette felt she was out of touch with some aspects of current literacy pedagogy (5.2.4) and also, as a first-time mentor, unsure of the degree of support required. Yvette felt overwhelmed with the information and suggestions given and the weekly critique of her teaching, despite the tutor teacher praising her progress.

Wenger (1999) suggests that conflict is a natural feature of COPs and part of the process of moving towards full membership. Yvette's concerns over her mentor teacher's views regarding the teaching of writing, and subsequent negotiation with those concerned, demonstrate this progression where existing beliefs were challenged by the newcomer and a compromise reached which included refinement of previous practices. Kate, her mentor teacher, was subsequently involved in team meetings to become more attuned to current pedagogical understandings. By the end of the year, the relationship had evolved to a point where Yvette cited her as a major influence on her teaching and was most appreciative of her wealth of knowledge.

This variation in support for participants raises questions about the role and responsibilities of a tutor-teacher. Baker-Doyle (2012) suggests that the role of mentors should involve assistance in the classroom on a regular basis and should help teachers meet their own professional goals, rather than impose theirs, as in Yvette's example. While the Education Council (2015) provides guidelines for the role of mentor, on the basis of my findings I suggest the following as essential considerations for schools when selecting staff for this role:

- The level of experience in mentoring and recent classroom teaching.
- The provision of professional learning to support this role if necessary.
- The responsibilities the mentor teacher already manages; will they have the time available to provide regular support and observation and engage in discussion?
- The degree of familiarity with the BT's particular class level.
- The ability of the mentor teacher to allow the BT autonomy in developing their teaching, but also to monitor and ensure quality learning is occurring for students.

- Their ability to provide constructive feedback and engage in professional dialogue around content and pedagogy rather than just classroom organisation. This dialogue should include establishing the beginning teacher's existing knowledge of content and pedagogy and considering how this aligns with school policy.

Participants in this study, who were fortunate to benefit from professional relationships where such criteria were present, felt supported in becoming a part of the professional culture that Feiman-Nemser (2003) and Roehrig et al. (2008) cite as critical.

While the role of tutor-teacher is crucial in supporting beginning teachers as 'peripheral participants', the mentor cannot be expected to be the sole provider of support. The literature demonstrates the importance of collaboration with others within the school context (Gu & Day, 2013; Hobson, 2009; Locasale-Crouch et al., 2012) and such was the case in this study. Support was accessed via a range of avenues and for various purposes. This ranged from staffroom chats to more targeted discussion with personnel such as RTLits and specialist teachers who supported low-ability or ELL students. Baker-Doyle (2012) suggests that BTs turn first to their peers for advice. For most participants here, findings contradicted this suggestion. However, owing to the perceived lack of support from her mentor this was the case for Monique, who relied on support from other BTs within the school, who had closer relationships with their respective mentor teachers. Sam claimed he would have benefitted from having other less-experienced teachers in his school to confer with. His comments across data sets indicate his understanding of the need to promote a broader view of literacy. However, in contrast, during the final interview, such phrases as: "I'd like to find more interesting ways to teach it" (7.4.1), and his reference to lack of understanding of developmental continuums, indicated a lack of movement in this direction. Given that findings failed to reveal a close relationship with a literacy mentor, in his case supportive relationships with other BTs may have provided impetus for the development of both pedagogical and content knowledge.

8.4.2 Organisational structures and the influence of policy

Also located within the school community, teaching teams and school policy contributed to the development of literacy teaching and learning. Such organisational structures enable beginning teachers to develop knowledge of how the community operates (Wenger, 1999).

There appeared to be variation in the nature of the relationship between members of the teaching team and the BTs in this study, who were not always encouraged to contribute ideas and resources and thus be ‘mutually engaged’ contributors, acknowledged for their ideas and growing expertise (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). This relationship ranged from collaborative planning and open sharing of a range of resources in Erin’s context, to being handed completed paper plans at Monique’s team meetings. As in Hobson’s (2009) research, most participants valued opportunities to work collaboratively and felt empowered through such experiences.

Associated with team planning, for some there was the provision of resources detailing suggested focus areas for each level of the curriculum, and tight expectations around the daily timetable for teaching literacy (Erin, Amy and Monique). As beginning teachers, such direction provided structure and support initially. However, I would suggest that schools should also consider allowing flexibility for beginning teachers to adapt their programmes based on their developing knowledge of student strengths and needs, and emergent learning opportunities. For some participants, growing self-efficacy was evident over the year as they developed confidence to manage these structured requirements. Lauren’s comment in relation to the required, school-wide sequence of topics, and the word-work and writing programmes exemplifies this growing autonomy:

[Initially] I was wanting to tick the boxes and do it right, to the letter ... and [next year] if it doesn't work for me, I'll be more able to say that it doesn't work for me doing this at this time, so I'll do it two weeks later or whenever.
(Lauren, FI)

Amongst the various school communities there were aspects of policy that appeared non-negotiable and participants had to adapt to the particular context-located practices even if these did not necessarily align with their own understandings and those gained during their ITE programmes. Mostly, these practices related to

conditions put in place in response to the sociocultural nature of the students who attended. For example, in Josh's high-decile setting, these practices appeared designed to ensure harmonious home-school relationships. The principal preferred that parents did not know he was a beginning teacher, due to issues with the previous year-one teacher, and he was asked to change his practice of sending home texts at a fluency level (below the instructional level) so that parents would not complain about the 'easy texts' their children were reading. Adapting to the practice of using PM instructional readers prior to *Ready to Read* texts in schools with a high percentage of ELL students was another example of this, with Yvette and Sarah needing to adjust existing practices and understandings. It is clear that beginning teachers need to be cognisant of such contextual practices and able to adapt their thinking and behaviour accordingly.

As a directive from outside the school, the National Standards assessment policy (MOE, 2009) in place when the data were gathered appeared to have a significant impact on the teaching practices and confidence levels of these participants. Making the required twice-yearly judgements of each student in relation to the standards was noted as a source of tension by seven of the nine participants throughout the findings from surveys and final interviews. This significant majority matches findings by Smith et al. (2016) where five of six beginning teachers viewed the implementation of the standards policy as a key challenge. For Sarah teaching new entrants this was not an issue, since students are not assessed in relation to the standards until the end of their first year at school. The concerns with moderating writing samples to inform judgements against the standards have already been discussed in relation to the time required, the need to prepare students for the focus genre, and lack of consistency (8.2.3). In addition, there was widespread concern in both the surveys and final interviews around students not meeting the standards. Participants worried about having conversations with parents whose students might be below standard and how this would reflect on them as teachers. The amount of assessment required also appeared to impact on confidence levels for Josh and Aroha. Pillen et al. (2013) and Smith et al. (2016) suggest that acknowledging such tensions and learning to manage them is a critical part of developing one's identity as a teacher. Smith et al. reported that one of their six participants was excited by the end-of-year success of his students in relation to meeting the standards. In my

study, six of the eight participants appeared motivated by the number of students ‘at or above standard’. This success appeared to validate their effectiveness as teachers and reinforce their sense of professional identity.

Yvette expressed an additional concern, identified in the literature (Smith et al., 2016; Thrupp & White, 2013), that the narrow focus on teaching associated with the standards contradicted her belief in teaching a wide curriculum. I have already raised this issue in discussing findings related to question two. However, I restate my concerns here, that this regime of standards-based assessment constrains literacy teaching to reading and writing paper-based texts and reduces opportunities for the development of curriculum literacies. At the time of writing this chapter, the governing political party in New Zealand had just changed from a National-led to a Labour-led coalition (October, 2017), and National Standards has been dropped as a compulsory reporting system. The opportunity now exists for a broader focus on teaching literacy consistent with the aims of the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007).

8.4.3 Reflection and agency

While the above paragraphs focus on interaction and participation within the school context and the shift from peripheral participation towards full membership, I would like to return to the development of professional identity prior to concluding this discussion and to consider in particular the importance of agency and reflection. Campbell (2012) and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) suggest that agency involves undertaking necessary action to refine one’s teaching in accordance with self-identified goals. There were numerous examples of participants taking action to resolve issues and achieve goals, such as Amy’s decision to work less often with a student with severe special needs to allow more time for readers just ‘below standard’, and Yvette proactively managing the issue relating to the teaching of writing with her tutor-teacher.

However, I have chosen to focus here on Lauren’s self-selected inquiry as an example of planned and ongoing investigation with multiple episodes that enabled her to refine her teaching of reading. School policy in her school dictated that each teacher select an inquiry focus. Having had very little practicum experience of working with junior students, she chose to investigate the question: ‘What would

an effective junior guided reading programme look like?’ She engaged the support of the RTLit, who was working with a student in her class, to discuss her concerns and to request a targeted observation of her teaching, revisited relevant readings from her literacy education papers, observed her tutor teacher taking guided reading, and planned and implemented a survey with her reluctant readers. My own videoed observation of guided reading in her class just happened to occur within the inquiry timeframe, and as the evidence in section 4.3 demonstrates, this provided another effective opportunity for reflection on Lauren’s part. Although a school requirement, this inquiry focus was self-chosen and self-driven. It enabled her to extend her professional content and pedagogical knowledge to provide focus and direction in targeting the range of student needs in reading. A level of critical reflection was apparent (Larrivee, 2008) with evidence of revisiting related research and a sense of agency was demonstrated throughout the inquiry. The supportive school environment within which she worked, facilitated this process. This aligns with the ‘teaching as inquiry’ model promoted as an aspect of effective pedagogy in the NZ Curriculum (MOE, 2007). I suggest that for beginning teachers this is of particular value in supporting the transition from ITE programmes into the classroom, and progressing the development of teacher identity. It allows a concentrated focus on one particular goal at a time and builds theory-practice connections which should be an ongoing feature of effective teaching, but may be overlooked with the flurry of demands of managing one’s first-year literacy programme.

Forming a professional identity as a teacher of literacy is regarded as an ongoing process involving continual reflection as beginning teachers interact with others within the school context (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Cumming-Potvin, 2012). I believe this study’s findings demonstrate this process of reflection, and that engagement as participants in the study itself helped to enhance this process by providing opportunities to articulate beliefs, and justify emergent practices in both oral and written forms. The process of observing and discussing guided reading lessons was of particular value in supporting reflection as demonstrated in 4.3.9, and participants reiterated the advantages during final surveys. Opportunities for professional development also contributed to this ongoing development of identity as noted by Hobson (2009). The targeted Beginning Teacher literacy days were

cited as being particularly helpful in enabling reconnection with knowledge gained during ITE programmes and providing opportunities to extend this in relation to individual class contexts. While these sessions were of value, it appeared that long-term, school-wide professional learning opportunities, such as Lauren's engagement in the writing project and Aroha's assessment focus, had more impact in providing shared, ongoing, professional conversations and targeted feedback to support teacher reflection. Similar findings were noted by Valencia et al. (2006) when following four teachers through their first three years of teaching.

8.4.4 Conclusion

In response to the third research question: *What influences within the school environment appear to contribute to these changes?* this section has presented an overview of the contextual influences that helped to shape each participant's unique journey. The intricacies of interactions, opportunities and school requirements within each school community certainly influenced the development of these participants' identities as teachers of literacy. The essential role of the mentor teacher in supporting this journey is one that schools should think hard about, to enable informed and constructive encouragement, while also facilitating the growth of independence and confidence in beginning teachers. The findings support the African proverb that 'it takes a village to raise a child' — it takes a school to support the development of a beginning teacher. Colleagues, resources, professional learning opportunities and school policy have the potential to combine to offer a secure community within which each participant is able to journey along the continuum of peripheral participation towards full membership (Wenger, 1999).

In this chapter I have discussed findings in relation to each of the three research questions. There is clear evidence that while the transition into the classroom presented challenges, the majority of participants felt well prepared and were able to utilise knowledge gained from their literacy education papers and practicum experiences to inform their teaching of literacy. Findings relating to the beliefs and practices in teaching literacy reflected a transfer from their ITE programme, of pedagogical knowledge and understanding of professional content knowledge in relation to reading and writing. Throughout the year, organisational issues were grappled with and participants developed strategies for managing these issues and enhancing their explicit focus on student learning needs. In general, areas for

development to promote multiliterate competencies include: the establishment of stronger reciprocal relationships with families to inform teaching, the extension of both a multimodal focus to include a wider range of semiotic systems and the use of digital technologies, and the development of critical literacy practices. As evident in relation to question three, teaching was influenced through interaction within the school context. It is certainly possible that existing literacy practices within the school and the pressures of the National Standards regime impacted on the predominant focus on written language in the literacy programmes established.

The next chapter concludes this thesis by aligning the main points from this discussion with implications for associated parties. A critical review of the research process enacted is followed by a number of considerations for future research.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I consider the contribution of the findings from this study to the research field concerning beginning teachers and their teaching of literacy, and implications for various stakeholders involved. I then reflect on the research process and associated limitations. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

The aim of this research was to explore the beliefs and practices of first-year teachers of literacy in NZ primary schools. I was interested in the transition from the initial teacher education programme into the classroom and in the extent to which knowledge and practice gained from literacy education papers informed the development of literacy teaching. While all nine participants had completed the same teacher education programme, the same literacy education papers and equal periods of practicum experience, I was keen to examine how the professional content and pedagogical knowledge gained enabled each participant to establish a literacy programme to meet the needs of their students within their particular school context. To this end, examination of the influence of this school context was also of interest.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrates, literacy is a complex, socially determined, multi-faceted phenomenon with multiple interpretations and debates occurring in relation to the way it is constituted. A broad view of literacy framed this study with a focus on the following understandings:

- Literate practices are located within, and conditioned by social and cultural settings.
- A diverse repertoire of literate practices is required along with understanding of purpose and audience and how this impacts on the formation and interpretation of texts.
- Language modes and technology are selected to convey meaning in relation to purpose and audience.

- The ability to critically examine texts is essential.
(Anstey, 2009; de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Luke & Freebody, 1999).

I wanted to investigate the extent to which the literacy programmes of these beginning teachers reflected these dimensions. The literature also revealed a lack of research investigating beginning teachers and the teaching of literacy in New Zealand primary schools. Along with my professional interest as an initial teacher educator and former classroom teacher, these factors determined the selection and direction of the research focus.

9.2 Contributions and implications

The findings and discussion in relation to each of the three research questions combine to provide a comprehensive overview of the process and challenges of establishing a literacy programme during year one. The study contributes to the fields of research relating to the teaching of literacy, ITE programmes and beginning teachers, and the intersection of these fields. As these contributions are discussed below, the associated implications for relevant parties are identified.

Firstly, the findings inform research relating to the connection between initial teacher education programmes and schools, and the transition from one to the other. By focusing on the ways in which content from the ITE programme informed participants' teaching of literacy, the research demonstrated that when there is an effective theory-practice balance within the ITE programme, and a relative degree of alignment between the ITE papers and classroom practice, beginning teachers report feeling well-prepared to establish their own programmes. Such a balance can be seen as demanding research-informed instruction in literacy education papers and opportunities for pre-service teachers to make connections between formal theory and classroom practice. In their own classrooms, BTs are then able to use this theoretical knowledge to provide appropriate instruction for the range of students in their care.

In contrast to much of the associated literature, this particular group of first-year teachers appeared well supported by both the academic staff teaching their literacy education papers, and associate teachers during periods of practicum. The theory-practice divide evident in the literature was not apparent in the evidence gathered

from these participants. Factors contributing to this included the cyclical structure of the three literacy education papers and the inclusion of associated micro-teaching sessions that facilitated the theory-practice link. The degree of scaffolding prior to teaching, including examination of videoed model lessons, was cited as valuable in supporting planning and teaching. Content from the literacy education papers (Appendices 1-3) appeared to align with classroom literacy practices for most participants, although there was very little reference in the data to the notion of broader views of literacy and the implications of this for teaching. In relation to practicum, placements with teachers with a strength in literacy were cited as most valuable, along with associates' ability to model literacy teaching and to hand over responsibility to allow pre-service teachers to develop competence within a supportive environment.

While there was some reporting of feeling over-whelmed, there was no evidence of the so-called 'silent period' or 'culture-shock' reported in earlier research (Flores & Day, 2006; Pillen, Beijaard & den Brok, 2013; Schempp et al., 1993). More specifically in the New Zealand context, where local research has focused on the connections between ITE programmes and practicum sites (Grudnoff, Haigh & Mackisack, 2017), this research moves a step further with the addition of transition into the classroom as beginning teachers.

In relation to the connection between ITE programmes and classroom practice there are a number of implications for ITE providers and those working in association with the university in providing professional practice opportunities. While ITE programmes are constrained by the length of the qualification and associated hours available for literacy education, thought must be given to maximising opportunities to balance theoretical understanding with classroom practice, both within the context of each paper and during periods of school-based experience. Provision must also be made within both contexts to support the development of both professional content and pedagogical knowledge. While the NZ curriculum (MOE, 2007) contains eight stipulated learning areas, including English, the notion of curriculum literacies (Sandretto & Tilson, 2016) needs to be prioritised. In support of this, schools and ITE providers should consider the ability of associates to model appropriate literacy practice for the needs of their students, when making selections.

A second area of contribution to the research literature is provided through the mapping of beliefs and practices associated with teaching literacy during the first year of teaching. Given the complexity of literacy, these findings are substantial and embrace a number of components. I will reiterate here that although the main emphasis in the findings concerns the teaching of reading and writing, prompts used in both interviews and surveys referred to the teaching of literacy. The narrower focus reflects the participant emphasis during interviews and survey responses.

My searches of the literature have failed to reveal any substantial New Zealand based research in relation to beginning teachers and their literacy practices. Internationally the focus has often tended to single out beginning teachers and reading instruction (Valencia et al., 2006) or beginning teachers and writing instruction (Grossman et al., 2000). Rowsell et al. (2008) focused on multiliteracies pedagogy, but from the perspective of ITE educators. My findings provide evidence that beginning teachers are able to transfer much of the content and pedagogical knowledge from an ITE setting to establish their own literacy programmes. As the year progressed their teaching became more attuned to the needs of their students and more explicit in nature. While they were not expected to teach at the level of their experienced colleagues, they were all able to successfully facilitate learning for their students.

This study has, however, identified gaps in beginning teacher knowledge to enable the scaffolding of multiliterate learners. When prompted, participants were able to provide explanations of the broad nature of literacy in general terms with reference to multiliteracies, consideration of purpose and audience and use of more complex multimodal text forms. But there was a disconnect in this regard with classroom practice, which focused predominantly on the teaching of reading and writing, underpinned by oral language. There were some examples of attention to the visual language mode and evidence of an increased multimodal focus on text interpretation and creation in the final interviews, but along with critical literacy, this was an area for development.

Associated with these gaps, are implications for ITE literacy educators, schools and those involved in provision of literacy support at the MOE level. At the ITE level,

regarding the content of literacy education papers and related practical experiences, the following areas require additional consideration:

- The importance of acknowledging students' attitudes towards literacy and out-of-school literacy practices. In association with this, pre-service teachers require additional knowledge and strategies to work in culturally and linguistically diverse settings.
- Additional emphasis on developing dialogic pedagogy and ways to support the development of oral language.
- Developing confidence in themselves as writers to enhance the connection with their students. Emphasising strategies for supporting revision of text, particularly revision of ideas and vocabulary to enhance meaning.
- Increasing awareness of multimodality beyond written and visual language modes, and developing associated learning opportunities alongside a greater emphasis on curriculum literacies.
- Increasing the focus on investigation of digital affordances to support literacy learning.
- Developing pre-service teacher competence with critical literacy and associated pedagogies.

Given the extent of this list and the limited hours available to initial teacher educators, schools should also review the ways they support the literacy teaching of beginning teachers. Providing for the literacy needs of various sub-groups is one way this support could be provided; participants requested more support for addressing the needs of ELL and lower-ability students and it is appropriate that this be tailored to the particular students within the school community.

Findings also suggest action at a national level is required to support teachers more appropriately in developing multiliterate competencies. Current resources require updating and clarification, particularly in relation to the teaching of reading; the development of resources, and professional learning to support the teaching of critical literacy are urgently needed.

Interactions with colleagues within the school community are essential in developing one's confidence and competence when beginning classroom teaching. Discussion relating to the third research question provides insight into the ways beginning teachers are supported within the school community. Teaching teams appeared to operate in a variety of ways, and this was shown to impact on the opportunities to contribute to decision-making as a valued team-member.

Participants dealt with a variety of tensions over the year, ranging from relationships with mentor-teachers, decisions regarding the teaching of low-ability students, discussions with parents of these students and the pressures of the National Standards assessment regime. Learning to manage such issues is an essential component of developing resilience and identity as a teacher of literacy. Ongoing opportunities for professional learning are another key component of this process. In this study, it appeared whole-school professional learning programmes and individual teacher inquiry relating to self-selected goals had more long-term impact in extending teaching competence than one-day seminars.

Findings also demonstrate the importance of professional conversations with more experienced others to develop and critique teaching practice, and suggest a number of considerations necessary when schools select mentor teachers. While several participants reported an effective working partnership with their designated mentor teacher, for others a range of factors such as other commitments, personality differences, lack of experience and a difference in class levels impacted on the value of the relationship. As an attempt to address this issue, I have developed a set of criteria that might be considered in allocating the role of mentor teachers (7.4.1) to supplement those on the Education Council website. From a literacy perspective, mentors should be able to guide the beginning teacher towards the additional support mentioned above in relation to addressing the needs of ELL and low-ability students, and to assist in managing the various tensions that occur.

There are two other implications for schools to consider when employing beginning teachers. The first is to ensure that progress is monitored and that the BT is allowed a degree of autonomy to develop their own style of teaching and acknowledged for their growing expertise, while working within the constraints of school policy.

Second, there are also implications for schools in promoting the use of teaching as inquiry. The example provided in the discussion illustrates the benefits of this, even for first-year teachers making sense of the complexities of teaching. In this case, the participant was enabled to focus on one particular goal and to continue to develop their content and pedagogical knowledge in relation to this, as opposed to becoming consumed with the day-to-day management of the classroom and teaching.

This section has considered the contribution of findings to the research environment along with associated implications for those working in the ITE and primary sectors, as well as considerations for those charged with supporting the Ministry of Education to develop literacy policy and resources. In this next section I reflect on the research process and identify some limitations in the study.

9.3 Reflection on the research process

The aim of the research was to explore beliefs and practices of nine beginning teachers as they progressed through their first year of teaching literacy in a primary-level classroom. It was fortunate that the nine self-selected participants were teaching in a variety of school settings, which ranged in size from small country to large city schools. The class sizes varied and were socially and culturally diverse, including two classes with large numbers of ELL students. This mix enabled observation of the ways in which the beginning teachers worked within a range of different contexts thus adding richness to the data.

The research design, involving interviews, four online surveys and a debrief discussion of a videoed guided reading session, produced a significant quantity of data and gave participants opportunities to express their views in both verbal and written forms. The online surveys enabled distance between researcher and participant, which may have provided opportunity for greater freedom of expression. The value of videoing participant practice has been noted in reflections throughout the findings; having them control the playing of the video during the follow-up discussion promoted autonomy in the way they reflected on their teaching practices.

There were a number of limitations to the study, as is common with any research project. These do not detract from the findings but must be declared to those reading the research report. First, the research captures the views of nine beginning

teachers over one particular twelve-month period. Consequently, generalisation to the wider group of beginning teachers is not possible. However, the diversity of teaching locations and the gender balance of two males and seven females suggests a reasonably representative cross-section of BTs in New Zealand primary schools. A smaller sample, however, does allow for depth of investigation not always possible with a larger sample (Silverman, 2014). Second, the participants were self-selected and therefore likely to be more-able students, already reasonably confident in their teaching of literacy based on their practicum experiences. Third, this study was completed part time, so five years had passed since the data were gathered. While there would most likely have been changes in relation to the availability of technology in this time, much would have remained similar in today's classrooms in relation to the teaching of literacy. Fourth, the videoed observations were not analysed as such, but formed the basis of the debrief discussion. However, as researcher I viewed these sequences both prior to and alongside the participant during the discussion, and was able to validate what was said. Finally, my position as literacy educator as well as researcher may have impacted on the information shared by the participants. To address this, my role as researcher, as opposed to evaluator, was made clear from the outset and I was able to establish effective relationships with each participant. They were keen to invite me into the classroom during each visit and spontaneously shared classroom displays and other artefacts.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

One of my intentions in carrying out this study was to explore the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers of literacy and in so doing note the ways in which they assisted their students in developing the multiliterate competencies required to participate in today's global environment. As is evident from the findings and discussion, participants were at various stages in developing such competencies with their students. For several participants, there were limitations imposed through lack of access to user-friendly digital devices, which prevented exploration of the potential of these to support learning. The assessment regime at the time also appears to have constrained practice to a dominant focus on written language, rather than allowing opportunities to fully explore multimodal learning. Given the gap in time since these data were collected, and the current changes taking place in relation to national assessment requirements, similar research with another first-year cohort

would enable the influence of these changes to be explored. Ongoing research of this nature is essential in assisting ITE providers to gather feedback regarding the value and relevance of their paper content as Helfrich & Bean (2011) noted, and to maintain links with pedagogical developments in school contexts.

Of concern during this study was the variability in the nature and degree of literacy-related interaction between beginning teachers and their designated mentors. While some were well supported, others appeared to struggle with securing the help required; perhaps their mentor had curriculum strengths in other areas. This inconsistency raises the question as to whether additional avenues of support can be established. While the literacy-related beginning teacher days appeared helpful, they were one-off events with no provision for follow-up or individualised support. I propose that research into the establishment of cohorts of beginning teachers, who are located within a particular geographic region and who meet regularly out of school hours, may be of value in addressing the identified inconsistencies. Such groups could be facilitated by an ITE lecturer, who oversees the programme and offers support as necessary. Research by Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) suggests that such cohorts provide a neutral space independent of the school context where beginning teachers can openly share queries and concerns. More specifically, in regard to the establishment of literacy teaching, it would provide opportunities to maintain links with theoretical understandings, to translate these into effective practice, and strengthen the transition process from ITE into the classroom.

9.5 Moving on

The implications and recommendations in this document were generated from the experiences of this particular group of beginning teachers and their journeys from ITE into the classroom. As the researcher, I was privy to the findings as they emerged from the data and simultaneously involved in teaching and reviewing annually the three literacy education papers during the time of writing the thesis. Subsequently, there have been a number of shifts in emphasis, such as: increased attention to phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle, and how students might be supported to develop these components of the reading process; greater emphasis on dialogic pedagogies in year one, so that this translates into other aspects of the literacy programme in the second and third year papers; and an increased focus on the importance of purpose, form and audience when supporting

writers. More recently, the teaching team has introduced the construct of literacy at the start of the year one paper, and briefly examined varying forms of communication and the notion of multimodal texts. This has enhanced pre-service teacher awareness of the overarching umbrella of literacy, as content and pedagogical knowledge are developed around the various components. In year three, there is now increased attention to multiliteracies and in particular, critical literacy, with the final assignment requiring students to outline for a potential principal, the principles that would inform their literacy teaching.

Although the importance of curriculum literacies is interwoven where possible, for example when considering the selection of resources, my vision is to integrate the teaching of literacy instruction with other curriculum areas to allow examination of specific repertoires of practices and extend understanding of the way in which literacy underpins learning across the curriculum. The Four Resources model (Freebody & Luke, 2003) provides an appropriate framework for the design of such a focus as Sandretto and Tilson have demonstrated (2016). Structuring learning around each of the roles would facilitate awareness of the particular metalanguage of the curriculum area, the ways in which meaning is constructed, the range and structure of text-types typically associated with the curriculum area, and the ability to critique these texts. With the recent restructuring of our degree programme and more time allocated to most curriculum areas, there is potential for such collaboration to become a reality.

9.6 Final thoughts

It's all about taking risks, giving things a go and finding what works and what doesn't. Knowing your kids as well. I think more than just changed, I've developed. Like with writing, now I'm familiar with what's at the different levels for writing and what they need to be able to do. Same with reading, at each level, what do they need to be able to do. You just build off that. (Erin, FI)

Erin's comment summarises the experiences of the participants in this group as they established their teaching of literacy during their first year in the classroom. It indicates the journey, the need to be proactive in taking risks and solving problems, and also the ways in which knowledge was acquired along the way as she worked to establish her identity as a teacher of literacy. As this research demonstrates, the

journeys of each of the nine participants were unique and influenced by their personal background, the ITE programme and the school community within which they taught. While there are trends in the development of their beliefs and practices in teaching literacy, there are no common stages of development evident. Challenges were faced and addressed in different ways as they occurred. Some appeared to have a stronger sense of agency and initiative, but based on evidence related to participant learning at the end of the year, most appeared comfortable with their achievements and those of their students.

Becoming a teacher is a complex and multifaceted process and the research has demonstrated this through examination of the influence of the ITE programme, the developing beliefs and practices, and the support from the school community. While participants were mostly confident in their ability to provide for the reading and writing needs of their learners, there are concerns when comparing this provision with that required to enable students to become multiliterate. In reflecting on the broader view of literacy as promoted in the literature review, there are a number of key implications for ITE providers, schools and professional learning providers. Beginning teachers must be better supported with knowledge and strategies to work with increasing student diversity in classrooms, to effectively create authentic, curriculum-based learning using both traditional and new technologies, and most importantly to support their students to become critically literate. The latter was a glaring omission in the findings and it is becoming increasingly necessary for students to become discerning users of texts.

This is not just the responsibility of ITE providers, although they must continue to research current trends in literacy learning and the transfer of key understandings from their programme into the classroom, reviewing and adjusting their content as necessary. The scope of teacher knowledge and practice required to teach literacy effectively extends beyond the limits of literacy education papers. It must become a joint responsibility, that schools and professional learning providers also assume, to support the development of competent, reflective and proactive teachers of literacy.

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- Yelland, N. (2010). Multiliteracies and learning in a new age. In J. Fletcher, F. Parkhill, & G. Gillon (Eds.), *Motivating Literacy Learners in Today's World* (pp. 133-146). Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Zumbrunn, S., & Krause, K. (2012). Conversations with leaders: Principles of effective writing instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(5), 346-353.
- Zumbrunn, S., Ekholm, E., Stringer, J., McKnight, K., & DeBusk-Lane, M. (2017). Student experiences with writing: Taking the temperature of the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(6), 667-677.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of year one paper 2010

Please note that administrative detail such as class times and assessment regulations have been removed from this document.

TEAL120-10A Learning and Teaching Language and Literacy

PRESCRIPTION

This paper provides an introduction to the teaching and learning of language/literacy education in the primary school.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students should:

- Develop an understanding of how children learn language and become literate.
- Explore some of the major teaching approaches to language/literacy education.
- Develop the understanding, competence and critical thinking required to assist children's language development in ways that are constructive and sensitive to children's varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Become familiar with *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*, and its implications for planning and teaching.
- Become aware of the early writing stages children progress through.
- Become aware of children's literature and other resources that can support children's language literacy development.

GRADUATING STANDARDS

The content of this course links to the following graduating standards:

Professional knowledge

- Graduating teachers know what to teach
- Graduating teachers know about learners and how they learn
- Graduating teachers understand how contextual factors influence teaching and learning.

Professional practice

- Graduating teachers use professional knowledge to plan for a safe, high quality teaching and learning environment
- Graduating teachers use evidence to promote learning.

Professional values and relationships

- Graduating teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of learning communities
- Graduating teachers are committed members of the profession.

COMPULSORY TEXTS

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Learning through talk*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 7903 3378 6] **(It is highly recommended that you purchase this text)**

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 7903 2615 3]

Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective literacy practice: Years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 0 478 12940 8] **(It is highly recommended that you purchase this text)**

TEAL120-10A Book of Readings for *Learning and Teaching Language and Literacy*. **(Please purchase this book and bring to each session as directed).**

Locke, T. (2008). *Guidelines for the preparation of assignments*. University of Waikato

SUPPORTING TEXTS (Ministry texts are available from the School of Education library)

Ministry of Education. (1992). *Dancing with the pen*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Exploring language*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1999). *Non-English-Speaking-Background Students: A handbook for teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 0 478 21237 2]

Internet website URLs

English On-line can be found at: <http://english.unitechnology.ac.nz/>

Te Kete Ipurangi <http://www.tki.org.nz> (The online learning centre of the Ministry of Education.)

Ministry of Education: www.minedu.govt.nz

Learning Media: www.learningmedia.com

OVERVIEW OF PAPER

ORAL, WRITTEN, VISUAL			
ORAL LANGUAGE/ ACQUISITION	READING TO/ TALKING WITH	LANGUAGE & LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM	LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE
LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY			
INTRODUCTION to VISUAL LANGUAGE			
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE			
WEEK	Theme	Tutorial content	Readings
9 1 March MODULE ONE: Reading To Talking With (RTTW) Approach	Paper overview Developing language/literacy through the RTTW approach. Narrative structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to study this paper: Reading and independent study • A focus on literature. • Exploring meaning through narrative structure. • Selecting a text for RTTW. 	Hill (2006) Book of readings (BoR) ELP (Y1-4) pp.91-93 See Mills reading in Moodle
10 8 March RTTW (Visual Language)	The power of the visual image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and interpreting images. • Construction of images 	Gibbons (1999) BoR

11 15 March RTTW	RTTW: The approach. RTTW: The teacher's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTTW approach • Identifying RTTW purpose • Power of voice • Prompting/questioning for deeper understanding/comprehension • Planning a RTTW lesson 	LTT p. 77; 47-61 Mooney (1990) BoR Wilson & Wing Jan (2009) BoR Wolfgramm et al (1997) BoR Curriculum document (MOE, 2007) See Moodle for lesson plan
12 22 March Reading To Talking With (RTTW) Approach	Learning through the RTTW approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for listening and comprehending • Vocabulary and speech development • Refine planning a RTTW teaching sequence 	LTT 65 Gray BoR LTT pp. 42-44 LTT p. 71-74 Elley (1983) BoR Kindle (2011), The Reading Teacher, 63 (3) pp.202-211 Access through library catalogue and EBSCO electronic access
13 29 March TEACH RTTW lesson in school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing and reflecting on RTTW lesson 	
14 and 15 5-18 April	RECESS and School holidays	RECESS and School holidays	RTTW Essay due: -
16 19 April		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of OL acquisition 	See Power point on Moodle Gee (2000) BoR LTT pp.11-14

<p>MODULE TWO:</p> <p>Oral Language / Oral Language Acquisition</p>	<p>Interpreting the world through language.</p> <p>Learning language.</p> <p>Theories of language acquisition and language development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language/literacy; visual, oral and written forms of communication • Functions/purposes/register for speaking and listening. • Linguistic diversity 	<p>LTT Glossary pp.95-97</p> <p>LTT pp.15-16; 32-33; and under bilingual students in index.</p> <p>Maybin (1992) BoR</p> <p>LTT (Expectations) pp. 83-87</p>
<p>17</p> <p>26 April</p> <p><i>MODULE THREE</i></p> <p>Language and learning in the classroom</p>		<p>Teacher-student interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talk, discourse analysis • Feedback • Teacher initiating conversations-questioning • Cambourne's conditions for learning language 	<p>LTT (Assessment) pp. 36-38; 44</p> <p>LTT pp. 56-58</p> <p>LTT pp. 75-76; 55-56</p> <p>Perrott (1998) Paper Readings</p>
<p>18</p> <p>3 May</p> <p>Language and learning in the classroom</p>	<p>Developing oral language learning in the classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising for further talk • Discussion and group work • Story telling • Review teaching, reflective practice 	<p>LTT pp. 63-66</p> <p>LTT pp. 67-70</p> <p>Howe (1992) Paper Readings</p> <p>Peck Paper Readings</p>
<p>19</p> <p>10 May</p> <p>MODULE FOUR</p> <p>The Language Experience Approach</p>	<p>Exploring the LE approach</p>	<p>Language Experience approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating the language modes • Using language rich experiences • Experiencing LE Planning a LE lesson • Ashton Warner's contribution to LE 	<p>ELP pp. 1-4; 102-104; 175</p> <p>LTT p. 78</p> <p>Deprea & Iversen (1994) BoR</p> <p>Smith & Elley (1997) BoR</p> <p>Ward (2002) BoR</p> <p>Middleton (2009) BoR</p>

20 17 May The Language Experience Approach	Extending talkers and writers	Teacher's role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk for exploration and thinking • Encouraging talk and a written response • Refining a LE lesson plan 	ELP pp. 1-4; 144-148 See lesson plan on Moodle
21 24 May MODULE FIVE The Writing Process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing process • Developmental stages • Refine lesson plan 	Ward (Buddy writing) BoR ELP pp. 1-4: 142-143; 43-45 ELP pp. 1-4: 42; 138-143 Heenan (1986) BoR See lesson plan on Moodle
TEACH LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE LESSON IN SCHOOLS			
22 31 May		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on lessons and children's learning 	
TEACH WRITING LESSON IN SCHOOLS			

ASSIGNMENT 2: FINAL TEST: Tuesday 8 June 9.00-10.30am

Assignment One (45%)

Essay

Reading To Talking With as an instructional teaching approach

Due date: Friday 9 April

Posting box: Foyer SOE or post to your lecturer c/o The University of Waikato, School of Education, Arts and Language Education Department, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton

1. Select a quality picture book that you did not use for your RTTW lesson in schools, and that is suitable for reading aloud to junior school children. *Please state title, author and illustrator of the book at the top of your assignment.* Justify, using the *Paper Readings*, set texts and other resources, why you would use this book for RTTW by commenting on:
Plot # Characterization and relationships # Setting

Theme # Power of visual images (450 words)
4. Define the RTTW instructional approach. (100 words)
5. Describe, using specific examples from the *Paper Readings* and other resources, how you could best facilitate different kinds of discussion based around the book you have chosen. Include in this description, using correct terminology, how you would facilitate discussion of the visual features in the text. (450 words)

Word limit for the essay: 1000 words

- Please use *Learning Through Talk* and other resources to acknowledge children of diverse cultural backgrounds with reference to oral language development and teaching.
- Please refer to a range of *Paper Readings*.
- Please include reference to an electronic article.
- Reference accurately throughout your essay and list references at the end of the essay in APA format. Use the Guidelines available from the library.
- The word limit is **1000 words** total. Assignments must be within 10% of the word limit. All assignments must have an accurate word count on the cover.
- Refer to p. 3-4 for further assessment criteria.

Assignment Two (55%)

Test on paper content, theory and practice

Date: Monday 8 June, 9.00-10.30am

Multiple-choice and short answers test which will include Paper content from all modules and associated readings.

Appendix 2: Overview of year two paper 2011

Please note that administrative detail such as class times and assessment regulations have been removed from this document.

TEAL220-11A LITERACY EDUCATION

PRESCRIPTION

TEAL220-11A provides an introduction to some reading and writing theories, processes and approaches to teaching and learning in literacy education.

AIMS

The aims of this paper are for students to develop:

- Understandings of how children learn language and become literate.
- Knowledge of some of the major approaches of literacy education used in New Zealand classrooms.
- Understandings, competence and critical thinking required to assist in children's literacy development, in ways which are constructive and sensitive to children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Critical appreciation of some Ministry of Education literacy documents and Course Readings.
- An awareness of some of the resources in literacy/language education including children's literature that can support the professional development of teachers.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

This paper aims to extend students' understandings of literacy learning that were components of the first year paper (TEAL120). It focuses on the teaching of reading and writing.

Students will gain knowledge in the following areas.

- Effective teaching and learning practices in the reading and writing classroom.
- How teachers can scaffold and extend learners' literacy development.
- How learners can meet the challenges provided by oral, written and visual texts.
- Senior writing programs.
- Supporting senior writers when composing and revising texts.
- Setting appropriate purposes, and selecting materials to support literacy learning.
- The reading process; developing strategic readers.
- Historical methods of teaching reading and writing, and the theories and approaches that underpin these.
- Reading comprehension and reading strategies.
- Developing phonological awareness and the teaching of decoding skills.
- How to develop students' vocabulary.
- Shared Reading as a teaching and learning approach.
- Guided Reading as a teaching and learning approach.

- Taking Running Records (an introduction).
- Planning a language unit (to be implemented on practicum).

GRADUATING STANDARDS

The content of this course links to the following Graduating standards.

Professional knowledge

- Graduating teachers know what to teach
- Graduating teachers know about learners and how they learn
- Graduating teachers understand how contextual factors influence teaching and learning

Professional practice

- Graduating teachers use professional knowledge to plan for a safe, high quality teaching and learning environment
- Graduating teachers use evidence to promote learning

Professional values and relationships

- Graduating teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of the learning communities
- Graduating teachers are committed members of the profession

REQUIRED READING

A. Paper Readings. *Please bring these to every session*****

B. Compulsory Texts:

Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective literacy practice in Years 1 to 4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2006). *Effective literacy practice in Years 5 to 8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1992). *Dancing with the pen*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-Medium Teaching and Learning in Years 1-13*. Wellington: Learning Media.

C. Supporting Ministry Texts:

Ministry of Education. (1996). *The learner as a reader*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Exploring language*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1997). *Reading and beyond: Discovering language through Ready to Read*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1999). *Non-English-speaking-background students: A handbook for teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2000). *Developing programmes for teaching Pacific Islands languages*. Wellington: Learning Media.

- Ministry of Education. (2000). *Books for junior classes*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2002). *Guided reading: Years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2005). *Guided reading: Years 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2003). *The New Zealand curriculum exemplars*. Wellington: Learning Media. (Also see TKI site.)
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *Learning through talk: Oral language in years 1-3*. Wellington: Learning Media
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *Learning through talk: Oral language in years 4-8*. Wellington: Learning Media
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *Literacy learning progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media.

D. Internet website URLs

School Journal surf	www.waikato.ac.nz/library/resources/login/journalsurf_login.shtml
Ministry of Education	www.minedu.govt.nz
Te Kete Ipurangi	http://www.tki.org.nz/
Learning Media	www.learningmedia.com
Ready to Read teacher support material.	www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/professional/teachers_notes/ready_to_read/
Reading on-line can be found at	www.readingonline.org
English online	http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/
Literacy online	http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/

Week	Weekly theme	Content	Suggested Readings	Assessment
9 28 Feb – 4 March	<u>Introduction: Teaching reading</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models and theories of the reading process • Analysis of reading in NZ over time • Reading processes and the brain • Introduction to the reading process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price (2000) • Manzo & Manzo (1993) 	
10 7-11 March	<u>The reading process</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic awareness • Concepts about print • Cues: Semantic, syntactic and Grapho-phonetic information • Processing strategies • Sight vocabulary • Fluency and phrasing • Preparing for school visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELP Yrs 1-4 (2003) pp.19-39 • Nicholson (2005) • Stahl et al (2006) • Beimiller (2011) • LaaR (1996) Chpt. 2 	
11 14-18 March	<u>The reading process: Text comprehension</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension strategies • Preparing for in-school experience • In schools – listening to students read (see assignment one) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELP Yrs 1-4 and 5-8 (2005) • LaaR (1996) • Davis (2007) • Smith & Elley (1997) • Harp (1999) 	
12 21-25 March	<u>An introduction to the Guided Reading approach: Juniors</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergent readers • Questioning, scaffolding and conversations • Strategies for assisting readers • Selecting texts • Library visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Reading: Yrs 1-4 (2002) • ELP Yrs 1-4 (2003) • MOE (2010) Lit. Progressions 	

13 28 March – 1 April	<u>Guided Reading approach:</u> • Working with senior students • Developing comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching comprehension strategies through guided reading Planning lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dymock & Nicholson (2010) Ketch (2005) ELP Yrs 5-8 (2005) Guided Reading: Yrs 5-8 (2005) Davis (2007) 	Assign one due. Thurs 31 March (Report on reading behaviours of a student).
14 4-8 April	<u>Guided Reading: Working with second language learners</u>	In-school - Guided Reading lessons (One junior/one senior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided Reading Yrs 5-8 (2005) Lamont (1995) Gibbons (2002) 	
15 11 -15 April	<u>Shared Reading approach: Introduction</u>	In-school - Guided Reading lessons (One junior/one senior) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Reading approach and justification Resources for shared reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELP Yrs 1-4 (2003) Depree & Iversen (1994) Hundley & Powell (1999) Davis (2007) 	
16 and 17 Recess				
18 2-6 May	<u>Running Records</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features of junior and senior shared reading Selecting texts Planning lessons Running records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dymock (2007) Depree & Iversen (1994) Brown (2002) ELP Yrs 5-8 (2005) Davis (2007) 	Assign two due Thurs 5 May (GR Lesson and justification)
19 9-13 May	Theories of writin	In-school - Shared Reading lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (One junior/one senior) Theories of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELP Yrs 5-8 (2005) Loane & Muir (2010) 	

20 16-20 May	<u>Introduction to senior writing programmes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing process • Writing purposes • Planning for writing lessons • Scaffolding writers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELP Yrs 5-8 (2005) Hood (1997) • Education Dept, W. Australia (1998) 	
21 23-27 May	<u>Senior writing programmes in action</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can writers do? • Analysis of writing • Conferencing • Comparison of junior and senior programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croft (1997) • Henry (2003) 	
22 30 May - 3 June	<u>Teaching spelling and grammar</u>	In-school lesson - Writing (One lesson: seniors) Teaching Grammar and spelling		
				Test Tues 7 June 9.00am

Assignment one: Report on a child's reading. (1200 words) To be completed in pairs

Weighting: 35%

Due: Thursday 31 March 4.00pm

Posting box: Assignments are to be submitted via the posting boxes in the foyer of the TC Block at the School of Education reception.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your understanding of the reading process, including learning about the skills and strategies children develop when learning to read. The first three weeks of this paper deals with this subject and culminates in you visiting your allocated school to record a child reading an instructional text and talk to him/her about this subject. This will form the basis for a report you write (in pairs) about the reading behaviours of your child.

You and your partner will be allocated a junior school student and told of their instructional reading level. In week 11 during your two-hour workshop session you will attend school to record the child reading. It will take approximately 30 minutes and will form what you need to fulfil the requirements of this assignment.

You will be issued two books – one at the child's instructional level and one at a higher level. You will also need to source a **digital recorder** of some kind to record the child reading. It is also advisable to take an item (such as a special fluffy toy or object) and a picture book to use as a source of breaking down barriers when meeting with your child.

Procedure

1. Take your child to a quiet part of the school. Introduce yourself and ask your child about themselves (name, age, interests, brothers/sisters, etc). Introduce a fluffy toy or object that is special to you and talk about it. Encourage the child to talk about his/her special toys.
2. Talk about your assignment and ask if your child would mind reading a specially chosen book to you, and if it would be okay to record him/her reading.
3. Explain the consent form to the child and ask him/her to complete it. Answer any possible questions he/she may have.
4. Introduce the text by reading the title and showing the cover, and explain briefly who are the characters and what the book is about (don't reveal too much though).
5. Turn your recorder on and check that it is recording.
6. Ask the child to read the book to you, watching very carefully (taking notes) the mannerisms of the child as he/she reads.
7. After the reading is completed compliment the child for his/her great reading and ask if he/she liked the story and why.
8. Ask them to retell the story.
9. Ask two comprehension questions. Based the questions on what has been modelled to you in class
10. Ask about the things he/she did (skills/strategies) to help them comprehend the text (i.e., use prior knowledge, phonemic knowledge, guessed, looked at the picture, read past the word, looked around the room for information, created images, questioned themselves, etc)
11. Thank the child again for their reading, turn off your recorder and return him/her to class.

Following the reading

12. As a pair, transcribe the reading, noting all his/her reading behaviours. Analyze the child's use of skills and strategies (including information you received from your interview with him/her).
13. Research the themes around the reading process and write a report on the reading of your child. Consider also what skills they will need to continue to develop in the future (to be part of the analysis).

Note: If there are any equity issues in respect to completing this assignment, please see your lecturer before the assignment is due.

Your report will include the following sections.

- Introduction: stating what you will cover in your report
- A brief description of the child including pseudonym, age, reading level, interests, enjoyment of reading, etc.
- A full transcript of the child's reading
- An analysis of the reading behaviours he/she displayed and did not display
- A discussion about your child's comprehension of the text, including what your post-reading interview revealed
- Outline the skills and strategies the child should develop in the future
- Link your analysis and discussion to your understanding of the reading process making reference to appropriate readings
- References: A full list of the references used in your report using APA style

Assessment guide

- Report clearly shows you have analysed the child's reading behaviours well and have a good understanding of the child's reading skills and strategies and those he/she should further develop in the future
- Links to at least four readings from the Book of Readings
- Use of clear headings for each section in your report
- Use of paragraphs with clear focus
- Formal academic writing using appropriate spelling and sentence structures
- Use of APA referencing in your reference list

Assignment Two: Guided reading lesson and justification (35%)

Due date: Thursday 5 May (4.00pm)

Posting box: Assignments are to be submitted via the posting boxes in the foyer of the TC Block at the School of Education reception.

Task

1. You must submit one **Guided reading lesson plan** (junior or senior) from your final teaching session. (5%)
2. Justify each of the following components of a GR lesson plan, explain how you incorporated these in your lesson and evaluate the effectiveness of each.

- Selection of learning intentions
 - The choice of text
 - Pre-reading discussion
 - Discussion and questioning during the lesson
 - The teaching of comprehension strategies
 - The teaching of processing skills
 - Discussion after the reading
 - The follow up activity to support the lesson (20%)
3. Focus on one child and provide a detailed discussion of the extent to which he/she achieved the Learning intentions you had set. Based on what you have learnt working with this student, discuss future learning objectives for this student. (10%)

Marking guide:

- Lesson plan demonstrates a depth of understanding of the teaching approach and procedures.
- The contents of the New Zealand Curriculum are reflected in the lesson plan.
- The specific outcomes/learning intentions must be based on the chosen text and needs of the learners.
- Justification is clear, concise and reflects what the literature states regarding guided reading
- Discussion regarding student's reading behaviours is detailed, and reflects a sound knowledge of how the child performed in the lesson and where they need to further develop in the future.
- Writing reflects a sound understanding of the ideas in course texts and articles, and other recommended articles.
- Your writing is clearly structured and correctly referenced

Assignment three: Test (Senior writers) (30%)

Date/time: Tuesday 7 June 2001 (9.00am – 10.30am)

Venue: TBA

Details of the format of this test will be provided in the weeks prior to the test

Associated tasks for the six-week practicum

With your associate teacher, plan, teach and evaluate a literacy-based unit, or sequence of lessons. This may relate to cross curriculum content. The planning, teaching and formative assessment should include the following components:

- Reading to students daily: keep a log with details of the texts (author, title, topic content) read to the class.
- Shared reading: Develop an appropriate sequence of lessons using digital or print-based texts.
- Writing: Develop a series of lessons related to the topic or writing purpose. This should include learning conversations/conferencing with a small group of students.
- Guided reading: Keep on-going instructional lessons for two reading groups. Use the practicum planning sheet on Edlinked.
- Observe your associate take a running record. Practise taking running records with your reading groups and calculate the accuracy rate and self-correction ratio.

Appendix 3: Overview of year three paper 2012

Please note that administrative detail such as class times and assessment regulations have been removed from this document.

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

TEAL321-12B (HAM)
SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAMMES
PAPER OUTLINE

PRESCRIPTION

A critical examination of school literacy programmes, including curriculum requirements, classroom processes, forms of monitoring and assessment, and partnership with parents.

This paper provides opportunities for students to develop the skills, attributes, and knowledge related to the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education, BTchg graduate profile and the academic rationale and goals for its teacher education programmes, particularly those that relate to the purposes, principles, practices and issues of curriculum and assessment development. It is therefore desirable that student teachers have completed a third year practicum. This paper also builds on professional knowledge, practice, values and relationships as outlined in the Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand. Specific standards are identified in this paper on page two of the outline.

TEACHING/LEARNING OUTCOMES

Paper members will be helped to develop the critical thinking and competencies required to:

- Reflect on language/literacy education programmes in New Zealand primary schools, and the theoretical understandings and research findings which inform those programmes
- Examine a range of material which
 - (i) examines current issues, principles, and theoretical understandings in literacy and literacy education
 - (ii) evaluates these in light of recent research
 - (iii) considers/applies these understandings to the design of an effective literacy programme.
- Develop and explain supportive literacy practices that:
 - (i) are based on current understandings and research
 - (ii) demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and linguistic backgrounds
 - (iii) incorporate constructive forms of monitoring and assessment
 - (iv) meet the requirements of *English in the New Zealand Curriculum* and are consistent with Ministry of Education policies and documents
 - (v) have strategies for establishing effective relationships/partnerships with parent and school communities, particularly with respect to cultural diversity and language/literacy education.

LINKS BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The content and learning outcomes of TEAL321 School Literacy Programmes are closely linked to the current research and professional development activities undertaken by language/literacy education lecturers. The content of the paper is also consistent with current Ministry of Education policies and initiatives in literacy education.

GRADUATING STANDARDS

The content of this course links to the following Graduating standards.

Professional knowledge

- Graduating teachers know what to teach
- Graduating teachers know about learners and how they learn
- Graduating teachers understand how contextual factors influence teaching and learning

Professional practice

- Graduating teachers use professional knowledge to plan for a safe, high quality teaching and learning environment
- Graduating teachers use evidence to promote learning

Professional values and relationships

- Graduating teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of the learning communities
- Graduating teachers are committed members of the profession

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

As a teacher education paper, this course is contributing to your formation as a teacher. When you graduate from the Faculty of Education here at the University of Waikato, we are required to attest to the New Zealand Teachers Council that you:

- are of good character
- are fit to be a teacher and
- have met the graduating teacher standards.

The indicators below connect your participation in this paper with the above NZTC requirements and are a reflection of your commitment to the profession you have chosen to enter. Course lecturers will report on these standards in order to ensure that your contribution to this paper is recognised in the attestation process. Concerns will be passed on to the co-ordinator of Primary programmes.

Professional indicators

- Attendance is regular and punctual
- A positive contribution is made to class processes
- There is evidence of a positive ability to relate to others
- Preparation and planning is of a professional standard
- Reliability and trustworthiness in respect of tasks

- All paper requirements are met

See:

- Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand
- <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/required/gts.stm>
- Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers
- <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/required/ethics/codeofethics.stm>
- Good character and Fit to be a Teacher Policy
- <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/required/goodcharacter2007.stm>

PREQUISITE

This paper aims to extend students' understandings of literacy learning based on components of the first year paper (TEAL120) and second year paper (TEAL220). Students are reminded that a pass in both papers (or equivalent) is the prerequisite for TEAL321 School Literacy Programmes.

COMPULSORY TEXTS

Hardcopy Book of Readings. Please bring this book to every session.

Ministry of Education (2003). *Effective literacy practice: Years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 0 478 12940 8]

Ministry of Education (2006). *Effective literacy practice: Years 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.[ISBN 0 478 12940 8]

Ministry of Education (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. Wellington: Learning Media. [978 0 7903 2615 3]

Ministry of Education (2008). *The English language learning progressions: A resource for mainstream and ESOL teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 790 3]

Ministry of Education (2009a). *The New Zealand curriculum reading and writing standard for years 1-8*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 7903 3481 3]

Ministry of Education (2009b). *Learning through talk: Oral language in years 1 to 3*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 7903 3378 6]

Ministry of Education (2009c). *Learning through talk: Oral language in years 4 to 8*. Wellington: Learning Media [ISBN 978 0 7903 3379 3]

Ministry of Education (2010). *Literacy learning progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media. [ISBN 978 0 7903 3511 7]

Supporting Ministry texts:

Ministry of Education (1992, 1996). *Dancing with the pen*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (1996a). *Exploring language*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (1996b). *The learner as a reader*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2000). *Using running records: A resource for New Zealand classroom teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2002). *Guided reading: Years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2005). *Guided reading: Years 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

RECOMMENDED READING

Internet Website URLs

- Ministry of Education
 - Australian Literacy Educators Association
 - Christchurch City Libraries Reading on-line (International Reading Association)
 - Learning Media *Te Pou Taki Korero*
 - Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) The online learning centre
 - English online
 - Literacy online
 - ESOL online
 - Reading on-line (International Reading Association)
- <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pdinliteracy>
 - <http://www.alea.edu.au/>
 - <http://library.christchurch.org.nz>
 - <http://www.learningmedia.co.nz>
 - <http://www.tki.org.nz>
 - <http://englishonline.tki.org.nz>
 - <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz>
 - <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz>
 - <http://readingonline.org>

TEAL321 SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAMMES WEEKLY OVERVIEW

Module One: Different assessment measures in classroom literacy programmes.

This section has a two-pronged focus. Part A and B are taught concurrently within module one, in preparation for assignment one.

Part A

Running records and related programmes.

Part B

The purposes and uses of assessment measures, and for each:

- Why use this assessment tool
- What information does it provide
- When would it be used
- How would it be used
- Implications for classroom programmes.

Module one: Part A

Topic	Core Readings	EdLinked	Ministry Texts
Running Records: Recording/scoring and analysis Weeks: 29 - 32	Askew & Fountas (1998) Clay (2002)	Check for podcasts & sound files, analysis sheets	<i>Using running records</i> (MOE, 2000) <i>Learner as a reader</i> , chpt 4. (MOE, 1996), <i>Effective literacy practice yrs 1-4</i> (MOE,2003)

Module one: Part B

Topic/focus	Core Readings	Ministry Texts	Edlinked/other sources
Week: 29 16 July – 22 July Theoretical understandings about assessment & literacy	Tierney (1998) Boyd-Batstone (2004)	<i>Using running records</i> (MOE, 2000) <i>Effective literacy practice yrs 1-4</i> (MOE,2003) <i>Learning through talk</i> (MOE, 2009)	<i>Learner as a reader</i> , chpt 4. (MOE, 1996),
Week: 30 23 July – 29 July Early Literacy: (Oral Language) JOST, ROL, SEA Running records + Observation <i>Diagnostic Survey</i>	Clay (1997) Ministry of Education (1997) Williams & Dixon (1997)	<i>Effective literacy practice Yrs1-4</i> (Chpt.3)(MOE, 2003) <i>Learning through talk</i> (MOE, 2009)	
Week: 31 30 July – 5 August Assessing Reading PAT, STAR, Probe	Greaney (2001) Limbrick (2000) PATS – refer to curriculum and assessment paper; similarly E-asTTle	<i>Effective literacy practice: Yrs 1-4</i> (Chpt.3); 5-8 (Chpt.3) (MOE, 2003,2006) NEMP: Reading & Speaking	Watson, V (2008). FAQs about the new PAT: Reading tests. <i>SET 2008: No 1</i>

Week: 32 6 August – 12 August Assessing Writing	Smith & Elley (1997) Ward (2000)	<i>The New Zealand curriculum exemplars</i> (MOE, 2003) <i>Dancing with the pen</i> (MOE, 1992) NEMP: Writing	Fletcher, Parkhill & Fa'foi (2005). <i>What factors promote and support Pasifika students in reading and writing.</i> SET 2005: No 2 (relates to STAR and ASTTLE)

Module two: The changing faces of literacy

Topic/focus	Core Readings	Other readings/sources and edlinked
Weeks 33 & 34 [two wks] 13 August – 26 August Broader views of literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be literate? • Using and Recognising diverse literate practices • Multiliteracies, multimodality 	Anstey (2009) Luke & Freebody (1999) McDowall (2010) Wilson (1997)	www.abc.net.au/4corners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You only live twice (second life) • The high frontier (space & technologies) • Access denied (filtering information) www.youtube.com use key words e.g. medialiteracy, multiliteracies and be critical ASSIGNMENT ONE - FRIDAY 17/08 – 90 minute test
STUDY BREAK	WEEKS 35 & 36	27 AUGUST – 9 SEPTEMBER
Topic/focus	Core Readings	Other readings/sources and Edlinked
Week 37 10 Sept – 16 Sept	Feuerverger (1994)	Ministry of Education (1999) <i>Non-English speaking</i>

<p>Socio-cultural diversity and literacy</p> <p>Supports and links</p> <p>Challenges for teachers</p> <p>Parent – community - school partnerships</p>	<p>Hartley (2000)</p> <p>Sneddon, R. (2008)</p> <p>Timperley & Robinson (2002)</p>	<p><i>background students: a handbook for teachers.</i></p> <p>Book of Readings: <i>Working with Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.</i></p> <p>E.g. Heath, S.B. (1986). <i>What no bedtime story means: narrative skills at home and at school.</i></p> <p>Kale, J. & Luke (1991). <i>Doing things with words.</i></p> <p>www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/PDFs/ManyVoices_27_2008.pdf</p> <p>Bull, Brooking & Campbell (2008). NZCER report to the MOE: <i>Successful home-school partnerships.</i> Executive summary.</p> <p>www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/28415/28416</p>
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<p>Module three: School Literacy Programmes</p> <p>Week 38</p> <p>17 Sept – 23 Sept</p> <hr/> <p>Week 39</p> <p>24 Sept – 30 Sept</p> <p>Developing a literacy programme: Reading</p>	<p>Planning a classroom literacy programme</p> <p>Nicholson (2006)</p> <p>Walsh (2008)</p> <hr/> <p>Davis, A. (2007)</p> <p>Elley (1998)</p> <p>Fountas, Irene C., & Pinnell, Gay Su (1996)</p> <p>Walsh, M (2006)</p> <p>Wilkinson, I., & Townsend, M. (2000)</p>	<p>Assignment two: Monday 17th September (Online test)</p> <hr/> <p>You tube: authors, titles, movie versions, trailers ...</p> <p>Google for authors' websites, theme websites and resources as well as the library.</p> <p>Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi & Tufulasi Taleni (2008). Influences on Pasifika students' achievement in literacy. <i>SET 2008. No 1.</i></p> <p>Parkhill & Fletcher (2008). Asian students in New Zealand classrooms: Their perceptions of supports and barriers to reading achievement. <i>SET 2008 No 2.</i></p>
<p>Week 40</p> <p>1 October – 7 October</p> <p>Developing a literacy programme: Writing</p>	<p>Bromley, K. (2003)</p> <p>Dix, S. (2006)</p> <p>Dix, S., & Amooore, L. (2010)</p> <p>Gadd, (2009).</p>	<p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ_sXJKiiSA</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPRM2ZXyrS0&feature=related</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjKLvvMxXwM&feature=related</p>

<p>Week 41</p> <p>8 October – 14 October</p> <p>Developing a literacy programme: Visual and critical Literacy</p>	<p>Callow (2006)</p> <p>O'Brien (2001)</p> <p>Sandretto (2006)</p>	<p>Ministry of Education Handbooks</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byaMd_PNyIY</p>
<p>Week 42</p> <p>15 October – 21 October</p> <p>Integrating literacy in your programme: Bringing it altogether</p>	<p>Cambourne (1997)</p> <p>Cazden (1992)</p> <p>Serafini (2011)</p> <p>Assignment three (25th October (literacy unit))</p>	<p>www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/primary_mainstream/classroom/principles/index_e.php</p> <p>Ministry of Education (2009) <i>Learning through talk: Oral language in Years 4 to 8</i> (pp.61-80).</p>

Assignment 1: Running Records with written report (35%)

Module one: Assessment and Literacy

In-class test: Taking, scoring and analysing a running record with written report

Date: Friday 7th August

Venue: L.G.03

Time: 9.00 – 10.30 am

You will be required to:

Prepare a written report on a child's reading behaviour from an audio recording, during a 90 minute in-class test session.

The report must include:

1. The completed running record error and self-correction rate and estimation of the child's understanding.
2. Analysis of the sources of information
3. A summary of what you learned from your recording and analysis of the child's reading behaviour and retelling.
4. A discussion of the programme you would implement with this child

Note:

- Your report must demonstrate sound understanding of, and critical reflection on course materials, paper texts and articles.
- The time allocation for this report to be completed and submitted is 90 minutes.
- Adhere to APA (6th edition) conventions for any references cited in the text.

Assignment 2: A Written response to Paper Readings (30%)

Module two: The Changing Faces of Literacy

In-class test. This requires a written response to three short answer questions based on module two course readings. This is not an open book test.

Date: Monday 17th September

Venue: LG.03

Time: 9.00 - 9.45 am

Purpose and requirements:

There will not be a PL on Monday 17th September. Instead this will be replaced by a 45 minute test that will take place in the same lecture theatre LG.03. You will be required to provide a written response to three questions based on Module Two course readings: Broader views of literacy and socio-cultural diversity. Parent-community-school partnerships are also included within this.

Specifically, the questions relate to the paper readings/articles from weeks 33, 34 and 37 (13 August, 20 August, 10 September). Refer to the paper outline and your book of readings.

The test is designed to assist you to apply critique and analyse the paper readings with greater depth and reflection. Preparation involves close reading of the weekly articles as allocated in the paper outline for Module Two. Tutorials will provide some support to guide your reading and thinking.

Note: Test papers will not be returned.

Assignment 3: Literacy Unit (35%)

Module three: School literacy programmes

Due: Thursday 25 October, 4:00 pm

- There is no overall word limit but quality rather than quantity is the prime goal.
- Submit as printed hard copy stapled.
- Group assignment

The intended purpose of this assignment is to plan and develop a two-week **literacy unit**. The unit will incorporate aspects of 'The Arts' to reflect a multiliteracies approach. In addition, the use of some digital resources/practices must be evident.

You are required to work collaboratively in groups of two or three to develop this literacy unit using the data from the profile of children you have collected while on practicum. This may take some negotiation with others in the group (20 children only are required).

The profile of data forms the basis for planning your literacy unit. Assume this literacy unit would occur during term one after you have determined your students' needs.

Note: The profile of data must be attached as an appendix when the literacy unit is completed.

The literacy unit requirements must include:

1. An overall *description* of the class (include: the year level, gender, age range, ethnicity, ability groups for reading and writing). This should be based on data collected on practicum (20 children only).
2. Topic: Write a paragraph which identifies the focus of your unit linking to implications and challenges discussed in Module Two (Word limit: 150 - 200)
3. Relevant Achievement Objectives from NZC: English.
4. An overview of key learning intentions, key learning experiences/activities and relevant resources for the literacy unit. These may be presented in table form
5. From this overview prepare two weekly planners that show where these learning experiences and other aspects of your literacy programme occur.
6. **Planning and assessment of the reading and writing components of the unit (whole class).**

A guided reading plan for one week, which will show how you organise and teach four guided reading groups.

This should include: students' names, reading ages/levels, learning intentions for each group (reflecting processing and comprehension of text), texts for teaching and key prompts for each lesson.

You will need to construct a taskboard or something similar, to show follow-up activities and demonstrate what each group is doing during the guided reading block.

Explain how you will monitor and collect anecdotal/formative assessment data over the week.

Shared reading for the whole class (not groups) for one week, which includes the text, two learning intentions which indicate processing and comprehension goals and key teaching prompts which differ for each session.

A writing plan for one week which must show the context and purpose of the writing. You must include appropriate learning intentions, demonstrate how you will scaffold the writing across the week and provide for the range of writing needs (consider motivation, conferencing, teacher demonstrations). Show how resources are incorporated.

Explain how you will monitor and collect anecdotal/formative assessment data over the week.

Note: All planning and assessment resources taken from the internet must be acknowledged. Other resources should be referenced where appropriate.

Appendix 4: Initial Information sheet to be distributed to students enrolled in TEAL321 Literacy Programmes 2012

Title of project: How do beginning teachers theorise their practices when teaching literacy?

This information sheet is to inform you of a research project I am undertaking next year as a student enrolled in the Ph.D programme through the Faculty of Education. I am investigating the ways in which primary beginning teachers theorise (explain) their developing literacy pedagogy in their classrooms.

As an experienced teacher who has always been passionate about the teaching of literacy and who is committed to providing support to pre-service teachers through literacy education papers and liaison work in schools, this study is a natural progression for me and an area in which I am particularly interested. I would like to investigate how the theory and practice included in our literacy education papers and other factors such as the mentoring support from schools and beginning teachers' own values and world views influence their practice during the first five terms in the classroom.

There is very little research in this area within New Zealand or internationally so the investigation will contribute to the literature around the early years of teaching and illustrate the ways in which beginning teachers build on the existing literacy knowledge and skills of their students and equip them for living and learning in society. The findings will inform those involved in teaching literacy related papers within initial teacher education programmes, other beginning teachers, school principals and other participants in beginning teacher mentoring programmes, and providers of professional learning support to schools.

Participation in the study would require completion of a short online survey at the end of each term about the successes and challenges related to your literacy programme. In addition I would like to interview you three times over the course of 2013 and once during term one of 2014, and to visit your classroom for one observation during the middle of next year.

This is an interpretive study to help me understand how you go about implementing your teaching of literacy and in no way is it intended as an evaluation of your teaching or the progress being made in this area. As a participant in the project you will have the opportunity to engage with an interested professional in discussion and reflection around your classroom literacy programme.

Your principal and the families of children in your class will be given information about the project and asked to consent to the project taking place but all data gathered will be confidential and stored in a secure place. You will not be identified

in the writing up of the data, anonymity will be maximised. You will have the right of withdrawal from the project at any time, up to the end of the data gathering period.

You are in no way obliged to participate and it is not essential for all beginning teachers to do so, it is a choice for you to make independently.

At this point, I know that many of you are still to secure teaching positions for 2013 but as you are about to leave the university environment shortly, I would like to obtain email addresses now from those of you who may be interested should you win a full time teaching position within one hour's driving distance of Hamilton before the end of January next year. Please email me within the next two week period if you are interested at wcarss@waikato.ac.nz.

I will email all those who contact me now in late January to follow up on your interest and to explain the process for completing the required consent forms should you still wish to take part.

Thank you for considering my request, if you have any queries I would be happy to discuss them with you. You can either include these questions in your email or contact me on 07 8384500 extn 7862.

Yours sincerely
Wendy Carss

Appendix 5: Letter and consent form for beginning teachers

Wendy Carss
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Date

Dear (Beginning teacher)

This letter follows your expression of interest last year, in being involved in my Ph.D research project. As stated in the initial information sheet, I wish to investigate the ways in which primary beginning teachers theorise (explain) their developing literacy pedagogy in their classrooms.

As an experienced primary teacher and lecturer in Literacy Education, I have always been passionate about the teaching of literacy and committed to providing support to pre-service teachers through literacy education papers and liaison work in schools. I am interested in how the theory and practice included in our literacy education papers and other factors such as the mentoring support from schools, beginning teachers' own values, world views and knowledge of their students, influence their practice when teaching literacy during the first year of teaching.

There is very little research in this area within New Zealand or internationally so the insights gained will inform those involved in teaching literacy related papers within initial teacher education programmes, school principals and other participants in beginning teacher mentoring programmes, other beginning teachers and providers of professional learning support to schools.

This is an interpretive study to help me understand how you go about implementing your teaching of literacy and in no way is it intended as an evaluation of your teaching or the progress being made in this area. As a participant in the project you will have the opportunity to engage with an interested professional in discussion and reflection around your classroom literacy programme.

I would value your participation in this project and the contributions you would make as a beginning teacher in a primary classroom. Should you choose to participate it would involve:

- Interviews of approximately one hour duration each, held in your school or a venue of your choice, outside of school hours. These will occur in the middle of term one 2013, after the mid-year classroom observation, in the middle of term four, and the middle of term one, 2014.
- A videoed classroom observation during a routine timetabled literacy block while guided reading is underway. This will be held mid-way through 2012. Parents/whanau and students will receive information sheets and consent forms prior to this taking place and the anonymity of students will be preserved.
- Short online surveys (15-20 mins) using Limesurvey at the end of each term, which you may complete in your own time.

Your identity and that of your school will remain anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained in any reporting or presentation of the research findings and pseudonyms used. You have the right to read and revise interview and observation transcripts and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage up until the final interview transcript is verified.

The project has the approval of the Faculty of Education's Research Ethics committee and if there are questions or you require more information please contact me, Wendy Carss, phone: 838 4466 extn. 7862, email wcarss@waikato.ac.nz. You may also contact my supervisor, Associate Professor Beverley Bell, phone: 8384104, email: beebell@waikato.ac.nz or the chairperson of the Professional Studies Department, Dr Bill Ussher, phone: 8388534, email: bussher@waikato.ac.nz.

If you are willing to be part of this research please complete the attached consent form and either post it to me at the above address or scan and email it to me; wcarss@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you for your anticipated support.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Carss

Consent form for Beginning Teacher participants

I _____ have read the attached letter and am willing to participate in this study. I understand that:

- My anonymity is assured and that students' names and that of the school will remain confidential to the researcher
- My participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time prior to the verification of the final interview transcript.
- This research will require up to six hours participation up until May, 2014.
- Data generated will be confidential and securely stored
- Data obtained may be used for publications and presentations.

I understand the Faculty of Education's Research Ethics committee has given approval for this study, and Associate Professor Beverley Bell may be contacted should there be any concerns about the conduct of the project.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date:

Appendix 6: Letter and consent form for Principals and Board of Trustees

Wendy Carss
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Date

To the Principal and Board of Trustees of _____ School

I am writing to seek permission to work with your beginning teacher _____ as part of a Ph.D research project I am undertaking through the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. I am investigating the ways in which primary beginning teachers theorise (explain) their developing literacy pedagogy in their classrooms.

As an experienced primary teacher and lecturer in Literacy Education, I have always been passionate about the teaching of literacy and committed to providing support to pre-service teachers through literacy education papers and liaison work in schools. I would like to investigate how the theory and practice included in our literacy education papers and other factors such as the mentoring support from schools, beginning teachers' own values, world views and knowledge of their students, influence their practice when teaching literacy during the first year of teaching.

There is very little research in this area within New Zealand or internationally so the insights gained will inform those involved in teaching literacy related papers within initial teacher education programmes, school principals and other participants in beginning teacher mentoring programmes, other beginning teachers and providers of professional learning support to schools.

Your beginning teacher _____ has expressed an interest in participating in this study. Prospective beginning teachers were invited to indicate interest as they completed their final Literacy Education paper at the Faculty of Education in October 2012. I am aware that the first year of teaching is a demanding and challenging experience and the project has been designed to minimise additional workload.

Their participation in this study will involve:

- Interviews of approximately one hour duration each, held in your school or at a venue selected by the participant. These will occur in the middle of term one 2013, after the mid-year classroom observation, in the middle of term four and the middle of term one, 2014.
- A videoed classroom observation during a routine timetabled literacy block involving the teaching of guided reading. This will be held mid-way through 2012. Parents/whanau and students will receive information sheets and consent forms prior to this taking place and the anonymity of students will be preserved.
- Short online surveys (15-20 mins) using Limesurvey at the end of each term. These will be completed by the teacher in their own time.

Both the beginning teacher's identity and that of your school would remain anonymous during this study. Teachers would have the right to read and revise interview and observation transcripts and the right to withdraw their participation at any stage up to the point of validation of transcripts from the final interview. Confidentiality will be maintained in any reporting or presentation of the research findings and pseudonyms used.

The project has the approval of the Faculty of Education's Research Ethics committee and if there are questions or you require more information please contact me, Wendy Carss, phone: 838 4466 extn. 7862, email wcarss@waikato.ac.nz. You may also contact my supervisor, Associate Professor Beverley Bell, phone: 8384104, email: beebell@waikato.ac.nz or the chairperson of the Professional Studies Department, Dr Bill Ussher, phone: 8388534, email: bussher@waikato.ac.nz.

If you are willing for your beginning teacher to be part of this research please complete the attached consent form and either post it to me at the above address or scan and email it to me; wcarss@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you for your anticipated support.

Yours sincerely
Wendy Carss

Consent form for the Principal and Board of Trustees.

I have read the attached letter and understand that:

- Our beginning teacher has volunteered to participate in this project and has the right to withdraw at any time
- The students in this class will be involved in a videoed observation of one hour duration
- Both the teacher's name, students' names and that of the school will remain confidential to the researcher
- Data generated will be confidential and securely stored
- Data obtained may be used for publications and presentations.

I understand the Faculty of Education's Research Ethics committee has given approval for this study and that I can contact Wendy Carss with any questions or problems I have about the research. Email wcarss@waikato.ac.nz Phone: 07 8384500 ext 7862.

For any unresolved issues I can contact the supervisor Beverley Bell. Email beebell@waikato.ac.nz telephone: 07 8384104.

I give consent for _____ to take part in this study under the conditions stated above.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 7: Letter and consent form for Parents/Whanau of students

Wendy Carss
Faculty of Education
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Date

Dear Parents and Whanau

I am working with your child's teacher as part of a project to investigate how beginning teachers theorise or explain their teaching of literacy. I am a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato and this research is a Ph.D project. The findings will be of use to those involved in working with pre-service and beginning teachers. I have the approval of the principal and board of trustees as well as your child's teacher to undertake this project but I also require your approval for a component of the data generation process.

As part of this project I will be undertaking a one hour classroom observation and your child may be videoed while taking part in a small group guided reading lesson or in other whole class or independent literacy related activities. Prior to the observation I will introduce myself and explain the purpose of the visit and equipment to be used. Children will then have an opportunity to ask questions and to complete a consent form or to decline from being videoed if they choose. Your child has the right to withdraw from the research at any stage prior to the analysis of the video footage.

The video footage will be used for discussion with the teacher as they reflect on their classroom practice and it will be analysed as part of the research process. During the session samples of children's work may also be gathered to aid the discussion. Please note that the focus of this project is not on individual children or their levels of achievement.

Your child's identity in this video footage will remain anonymous and confidentiality will be maintained in any reporting or presentation of the research findings that may occur. Both the teacher's name and the name of the school will also remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used where appropriate.

If you are willing for your child to be part of this phase of the research could you please discuss the project with your child and then complete the attached form and return it to your child's teacher by xxxxx.

If there are any questions please contact me via email: wcarss@waikato.ac.nz or phone: 838 4466 extn. 7862. You can also contact my supervisor, Associate Professor Beverley Bell, email beebell@waikato.ac.nz or phone: 8384104.

Yours sincerely
Wendy Carss.

Parental/Whanau consent form

I have read the attached letter of information and am happy for my child to be videoed during the classroom literacy session.

I understand that:

- My child's anonymity is assured
- My child's participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw him/her at any time until the video analysis is complete
- The video data will not be made public and will be seen only by myself, my supervisors and the teachers.
- Data and findings of the study will be used for the research purpose only and findings may be published or presented at conferences.

I can contact Wendy Carss with any questions or problems I have about the research. Email wcarss@waikato.ac.nz Phone: 07 8384500 ext 7862.

For any unresolved issues I can contact the supervisor Beverley Bell. Email beebell@waikato.ac.nz telephone: 07 8384104.

I give my informed consent for _____ to participate.







Name.....

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 8: Consent form for students in classrooms of beginning teachers

Wendy Carss has talked to our class about the reasons for videoing our literacy session and I have had a chance to ask questions about this.

<p>I am happy to be videoed during this literacy session today. (Circle the face that shows how you feel about this)</p>	<table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>yes</td><td>no</td></tr></table>			yes	no
					
yes	no				

Name _____

Room _____

Appendix 9: Initial interview schedule round one – mid term one, 2013.

Gather biographical and school data:

- Name, age, gender, school, decile, type of appointment – permanent or fixed term, previous experiences in this school.
- Gather details of the class:
- Year level, number of students, gender and socio-cultural mix, special needs/abilities

Theoretical perspectives

- Tell me about your personal literacy history (eg interests in reading, writing, oral or visual uses of language, significant home literate practices)
- How would you define literacy at this point?
How do you think children learn to be literate?
- How would you describe your theory around teaching literacy at this point?
- What do you see as the key principles guiding your teaching of literacy at this point?

How well prepared do you feel for teaching literacy this year?

Can you identify 3 or 4 things from your literacy education papers that you think will be most helpful?

What do you feel confident about in terms of teaching literacy?

What do you think may be difficult in terms of teaching literacy?

Classroom practice

Talk about resources you have available to support teaching of literacy (including type and availability of technology).

Talk about your first six weeks of teaching literacy.

- Organisation
- Setting up of routines to support literacy learning
- Independent activities
- Other components for example reading to and talking with children, Shared reading,
- Assessment used to gather baseline data in relation to oral, written, visual language
- Addressing children's needs in literacy
- Use of technology within your literacy programme
- Support being given at this point in time to aid teaching of literacy

Any further comments?

Appendix 10: Final interview schedule - end of term four.

Expectation vs reality – question starters

- At the start of the year you said you felt well prepared (or ...) for teaching literacy, looking back would you maintain that stance and why?
- What have been the major challenges over the year? (have asked for each term but would like reflection on whole year now)
- What have been the major successes?

Major influences

- Talk about the contextual factors that have shaped teaching of literacy over the year (eg social nature of school, school philosophy, professional learning community - tutor teacher, other staff, resources, PD for BTs, whole school PD, other)
- Or, what have been the most critical influences on your teaching of literacy this year?
- Looking back over the past four years, how have the literacy education papers and practicum experiences influenced your teaching of literacy? Areas where you felt well prepared, areas where you might have been better prepared.

Assessment - talk about the role of assessment in your literacy programme (formative, summative, OTJs/National Standards)

How have you integrated the digital technologies into your literacy programme?

How have you catered for the range of needs and diverse backgrounds in your class?

Individual discussion points from data gathered thus far (Note this was tailored to each participant).

Eg Yvette (survey term 1) 'Multiliteracies is a weak area, in fact I do nothing on it yet'

Theoretical perspectives

- How would you define literacy/multiliteracies at this point in time?
- How do you think children learn to be literate? What do they need to know and be able to do at this class level to become multiliterate?
- What do you see as the key principles guiding your teaching of literacy at this point?

- How has your teaching of literacy changed over the year?

Future contact: (check emails to accommodate any shifts in schools for year 2)

- Are you willing to supply clarification or further information on data gathered if needed?

Appendix 11: Survey questions: initial online survey end of term 1, 2013

- Describe how you feel about teaching literacy at the end of term one
- What have you learnt about teaching literacy in the past term?
- What factors have contributed to the development of your teaching of literacy?
- What aspects of your literacy programme do you feel confident about?
- What has been your biggest success?
- What aspects are you feeling less confident about?
- What has been your biggest challenge?
- What will you change about your teaching of literacy next term and why?

These questions were adjusted for surveys 2.3.4.

Appendix 12: Example of initial coding with allocation of first level codes

Initial interview with Amy (p.8 of 12).

Turn	Speaker	Transcribed text	First level codes
119	W	Well done (laughs). It's called sanity.	
120	A	Yea (laughs). I wasn't getting there and I would just it was depressing and I would end up not seeing any of them in a day because I felt like if I couldn't see them all then I just couldn't fit it in so whatever, we would go and do something else. We've had swimming all this term and part of Matangi's marketing is that we swim everyday, so that's a huge chunk out of the day.	EMOTIONS depressing not seeing groups ORGANISATION impact of swimming
121	W	Yes it is.	
122	A	Luckily for literacy it comes before maths but yea it's tricky to fit it all in. So the kids now know that they are not going to get to see me everyday but I'll try and see my lower groups everyday and higher groups I'll only see twice.	CHALLENGES no. of groups for reading
123	W	So what dictates the choice of independent activities that you put in place? How do you decide what you are going to have on your task board?	
124	A	It varies for each group so they are not getting bored. It varies at their ability for other literacies so my turquoise group and I think orange as well they will do dictionary skills and I will put up words and they have to find them. Whereas I know with some of my lower groups they couldn't do it as independently. The higher groups I expect them to use the dictionaries in their writing. So that sort of transfers, whereas my pink and red groups they will be making words out of high frequency words, the, can, is out of play dough and the other kids get really jealous but it's just fitting it to their level.	ORGANISATION MEETING NEEDS EXPECTATIONS
125	W	What do you see as the purpose of those independent activities? The main purpose besides keeping them out of your hair when teaching.	
126	A	It's to develop hopefully, develop a whole set of skills they will use in literacy whether it's yea like with my lower kids it's as simple as fine motor skills and memorising high frequency words. Then for the others it's learning how to search or how to think outside the box about what a new cover would look, like so all of that thinking beyond the text or relating it to something else or skills that you use within literacy and getting them to do it by themselves without me there.	MEETING NEEDS MAKING MEANING INDEPENDENCE
127	W	Okay so you'd be pulling more on comprehension with your more able groups.	COMPREHENSION
128	A	Yea.	
129	W	In terms of addressing the children's needs in literacy you've talked probably quite a bit about that in terms of your different levels and different activities for different levels and talked about the challenge of it. Is there anything else about addressing their needs that we haven't covered? Addressing that range of needs anything else that you do to cover the range? Like if you think about guided reading does the focus of the lesson change depending on the level of the group?	
130	A	Yea it does. Like with my top group at the moment we are using <u>iggy the inferring iguana</u> so that's a little bit beyond what the two groups below them are doing like <u>jabber the reteller</u> which is a bit more basic.	COMPREHENSION RESOURCES

			STRATEGIES MEETING NEEDS
131	W	So where does Iggy come from (laughs) I haven't heard this one.	
132	A	Iggy is the same as the stretchy snake and chunky monkey, it's a comprehension set. So you've got Iggy the inferring iguana and spinner the spider who makes connections	
133	W	Is it Australian?	
134	A	I don't know yes it must be yep. Then they have got Rocky the racoon as well.	
135	W	So does that come in a commercial pack?	
136	A	It comes off Google I don't know who invented it but it works a treat.	
137	W	Oh okay that's interesting.	
138	A	But for some of my kids they really connect to it and if I ask them what the learning intention is some of the kids who couldn't previously tell me what they are learning they can say we are learning how to use stretchy snake to stretch out the words. <u>I find it keeps them a lot more focused if they can attach it to something</u> . For my lower groups it's definitely more those decoding strategies with talk around the book during and after and sometimes before as well but that's not their learning intention unfortunately.	RESPONSIBILITY Using iggy etc CODE BREAKING MAKING MEANING